BILL HASLAM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NINTH FLOOR, ANDREW JOHNSON TOWER
710 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY
NASHVILLE, TN 37243-0375

CANDICE MCQUEEN
COMMISSIONER

August 2, 2017

RE: Charter Agreement Amendments

Dear Operators:

Due to changes in the law and ASD policy it is necessary that we amend all charter agreements. All charter operators are receiving this amendment. While the amendment effectively deletes the prior agreement in its entirety, you will find that a majority of the changes were not material. This sweeping amendment was prepared to clarify language in the agreements and to ensure uniformity in terms for all charter operators. The amendment does not change the initial term of the agreement and it should be noted that the substantive changes would have been included in any amendment we proposed this year. Please execute the amendment and return to the ASD prior to the first day of the 2017-2018 school year. If you have any questions regarding the amendment please feel free to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Lee N. Danley, Esq.
Deputy General Counsel
Lee.Danley@tn.gov
615-253-1550

Tennessee Achievement School District Charter Agreement

AMENDMENT NUMBER 2

This Amendment is made and entered into by and between the Tennessee Department of Education's organizational unit of the **Tennessee Achievement School District**, hereinafter referred to as the "**ASD**" and **Libertas School, a Tennessee Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation**, hereinafter referred to as the "**Operator.**" The ASD and Operator are collectively referred to as the **"Parties"** to this Amendment. The Amendment revises the Agreement signed and effective **July 6, 2015**, between ASD and Operator for the operation of **Libertas School at Brookmeade (SCHOOL ID #8095**), hereinafter referred to as the **"Agreement**." This Amendment supersedes any and all prior understandings, representations, negotiations, and agreements between the Parties, whether written or oral and is subject to T.C.A. § 49-1-614 and the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act, T.C.A. § 49-13-101 et. seq.

For good and valuable consideration, the sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, it is mutually understood and agreed by and between said, undersigned Parties that the subject Agreement is hereby amended as follows:

The Agreement is deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:

This Charter Agreement (Agreement) is entered into by and between the Tennessee Department of Education's organizational unit of the Achievement School District (hereinafter referred to as "the ASD") and **Libertas School, a Tennessee Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation** (hereinafter referred to as "the Operator") in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-1-614 and the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002 (TPCSA). The ASD and the Operator are collectively referred to as "the Parties" in this Agreement.

Definitions
The following are definitions of terms used in this Agreement.

> **Achievement School District (ASD)** – An organizational unit of the department of education, established by the commissioner for the purpose of providing oversight for the operation of the total program for individual schools or LEAs.

> **Application** – The document submitted by the Operator in response to a request for proposals or qualifications to operate a school to serve students eligible to attend ASD schools.

Local Education Agency (LEA) – Any county, city or special school district, unified school district, school district of any metropolitan form of government or any other school system established by law.

Operator – In this Agreement, "operator" refers to either the sponsor of an application to receive a charter from the ASD; the governing body of an approved charter school or charter management organization (CMO); or an individual, governmental entity or non-profit entity entering a contract with the ASD to "manage the day-to-day operations of a school or schools within the ASD."

1. Grant of Charter

The ASD hereby grants a charter to the Operator for the management of **Libertas School at Brookmeade** for ten (10) consecutive school years, beginning with the **2015-16** school year. In accordance with the terms of the Operator's Application, the Operator will operate grade(s) **PK - 1** during the **2015-16** academic year.

The Operator shall serve students who are eligible to attend **Libertas School at Brookmeade** in the applicable grades for which there is zoned attendance in any given year. Operator shall only serve grades that the school **(ID #8095)** served at the time the Commissioner assigned the school to the ASD, and subject to Section 3.5 of the Agreement below. Per these requirements, the Operator shall serve, at a maximum, grades **PK - 5** at **Libertas School at Brookmeade**. However, Operator may apply to the LEA that oversaw the school prior to its placement in the ASD to expand the grades the school serves as provided in state law. In accordance with the terms of the Operator's Application, the Operator will operate grades PK - 1 during the 2015-16, and add one (1) grade each year thereafter, until reaching the maximum grades to be served.

The ASD shall remain the chartering authority through the duration of the charter agreement and the school shall remain under the authority of the ASD. Upon expiration of the charter agreement, or sooner, provided the conditions for transfer set forth in state law are met, the school shall return to the LEA that operated the school prior to its inclusion in the ASD, subject to the applicable state statutes. The Agreement may be renewed upon submission of an application by the governing body of the charter school to the LEA.

Pursuant to the TPCSA, a charter agreement shall be effective upon approval of the charter application by the chartering authority. The charter shall expire ten (10) years after the first day of instruction.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The ASD shall ensure that the charter school is governed and operated as set forth in the Application and in accordance with this Agreement and all other applicable laws and regulations. The Operator shall be accountable to the ASD for ensuring the implementation of the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

During the term of the charter, the ASD shall retain the right to review the academic, operational and financial performance of the Operator.

The Operator will use reasonable, good faith efforts to educate children and demonstrate progress in achieving the goals outlined for all ASD schools and those goals the Operator established in its application.

3. General Terms and Conditions

3.1 The Application
The application in response to the Request for Proposal (Application), submitted **April 1, 2014**, attached as **(Exhibit 1)**, sets forth the goals, standards, and general operational policies relating to the management of the Operator's charter school. The Application is incorporated by reference into this Agreement. To the extent that the Operator desires to implement specific policies, procedures, or other specific terms of operation that supplement those set forth in the Application, they shall be permitted to implement such policies, procedures, and specific terms of operation, provided that such policies, procedures, and terms of operation (i) are not otherwise prohibited or circumscribed by applicable law or this Agreement, and (ii) are not materially different from those set forth in the Application.

To the extent there is a conflict between the terms of this Agreement and the Application, the terms of this Agreement shall govern.

Material changes to the approved Application must be approved by the ASD prior to implementation. The ASD agrees to provide a written response to the Operator within fourteen (14) calendar days of notification of material changes by the Operator. Changes that are almost always material and which require review and approval include but are not limited to:
- increased or decreased enrollment constituting 15% of the school's student population or 50 students, *whichever is less*;
- changes to curriculum or pedagogical approach that are inconsistent with the Application; or

- changes to operational specifications in the Application including but not limited to transportation or facility plans.

3.2 Governance

a. General Requirements**.** The Operator shall include parent participation in governance through membership on the board of directors or establishment of a school advisory council pursuant to the TPCSA.

The Operator shall comply with all applicable provisions of the Tennessee Open Meetings Act, including with regard to the scheduling of Governing Body meetings, meeting agendas, public notice of meetings, and records of those meetings. At the start of each school year, the Operator shall provide to the ASD a schedule of Board of Directors meetings for that school year.

Operator's Board of Director/Trustees must sign and submit a signed conflict of interest form annually in compliance with TPCSA.

b. Grievances. The Operator shall be the first avenue for response in case of any complaints or grievances filed against the school or its employees and volunteers. The Operator will ensure policies and procedures are established for receiving and addressing complaints or grievances directed toward the Operator or its employees and will make those policies available to students, parents/guardians, employees, and any other persons who request it. If grievances persist following the actions of the Operator, complaints regarding alleged violations of law or the Agreement may be investigated by the ASD. Grievances that are not resolved by the Operator, or a pattern of serious grievances, may be considered in any application for renewal of this Agreement or any action to revoke the charter.

The Operator shall notify the ASD immediately if at any time the Operator receives notice or is informed that it is a party to a lawsuit.

c. Reporting of Corporate Status. The Operator shall report any change to the Operator's corporate legal status or any change in its standing with the Tennessee Secretary of State's Office to the ASD within five (5) days of change. Any change to the Operator's corporate legal status as a not-for profit organization shall constitute grounds for immediate revocation unless, during the term of this Agreement, the law is amended to allow charter schools to be operated by organizations other than not-for-profit organizations.

3.3 Funding
3.3.1 State and Local Funds

a. <u>Distribution of Funds</u>. The ASD shall allocate and pay an amount equal to the per student state and local funds (Basic Education Program or BEP) received by the ASD from the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), to the Operator in August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, and June. Payments will be based on the schedule published by the ASD prior to the start of each fiscal year. The final payment will not be released until the Average Daily Membership (ADM) for the year has been reconciled.

    i.   <u>Allocation of Funds Based on ADM</u>. All BEP payments will follow the schedule published by the ASD prior to the start of each fiscal year. Initial payments will be based on estimates of enrollment determined by the ASD and reflected in the Operator's Board-approved budget for the upcoming fiscal year by June 1 each year.

    ii.   <u>Special Education Funding</u>. The ASD may implement the special education tiered funding model (included as **Exhibit 2**) and distribute said funds based on the model in lieu of funding based on the full state and local per pupil allocation provided in the TPCSA. The tiered funding model is designed to reallocate funds for providing special education services to students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The model will have five (5) tiers based on disability types and service minutes that are determined annually by the ASD. The funding model will prioritize tiers 3-5 first, then tier 2, followed by tier 1. The ASD will provide projected allocations by May 15 every year. The true up of the distribution of the allocation based on this model will align with BEP true up and be implemented in accordance with the protocol that will be shared will all operators by May 15 of each year. For the ASD to implement the model, all ASD operators must consent in writing annually to participate in the model. A separate consent form must be submitted for each school each year. For operators to agree to participate in the model, they must waive the right to receive the full per student allocated portion of the BEP funding provided under state law and federal funding provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for the sole purpose of participating and contributing to the special education tiered funding model in **Exhibit 2**. Operator understands that by agreeing to this funding model, it may receive less BEP funding. Operator agrees to contribute up to 3% of allocated BEP funding and up to 100% of IDEA funding to the tiered funding model fund.

b. <u>Authorizer fee.</u> Pursuant to the TPCSA, the ASD shall receive an annual authorizer fee of up to three percent (3%) of the charter school's per student state and local funding as allocated under the TPCSA, even if the special education funding model is implemented. The authorizer fee will for the upcoming academic year will be set no later than May 1.

c. Use of Funds. All BEP funds distributed to the Operator shall be used for the School authorized under this Agreement subject to all applicable laws and regulations. In compliance with state law, the Operator shall not charge tuition for any student for any and all activities that are required for school credit or that take place during the official school day. The Operator may charge for preschool and/or before-and-after-school programs, unless prohibited under applicable law.

d. Fees for Services. Any educational or operational services the ASD provides for a fee shall be specified in a separate agreement between the charter school and the ASD. Fees for services provided to the Operator by the ASD or the originating LEA may be deducted from the BEP payments provided to the Operator.

3.3.2   Grant Funds

a. Eligibility. Each year, the ASD shall provide to the Operator the school's appropriate share of applicable federal, state, and other grants received by the ASD for which the Operator's school is eligible. Schools are eligible for such funds upon approval of their plans for such funds either by the ASD and/or the TDOE as required.

b. Fund Distribution & Reporting. Funds shall be distributed on a documented expenditure reimbursement basis with the required documentation in compliance with 34 C.F.R. § 80.21. The Operator shall submit grant reimbursement reports to the ASD at least quarterly and no more frequently than monthly.

c. Use of Funds. The Operator shall comply with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding such grant funds.

3.3.3   Financial Management & Operations

a. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year for the Operator's school shall begin on July 1 of each year and end on June 30 of the subsequent year.

b. Financial Management & Records. The Operator shall control and be responsible for financial management and performance of the school, including budgeting, expenditures, controls, and reporting. At the end of the fiscal year, the Operator shall prepare the school's annual financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America for not-for-profit organizations (GAAP). During the fiscal year, the Operator shall operate the school in accordance with GAAP, the cash basis of accounting, or any other basis of accounting, provided that the school's accounting methods allow it to prepare reports required by the ASD, the TDOE, and any other grantors.

c. Records. The Operator shall record and report the school's financial information during the fiscal year and at the end of the year using the Tennessee Uniform Chart of Accounts (TN COA) and appropriate use of account codes and functional codes, including grant codes using templates provided by the ASD. The Operator shall record all financial transactions in general, appropriations, and revenue and expenditures records. Appropriate entries from the adopted budgets shall be made in the records for the respective funds. Separate accounts shall be maintained for each of the funds. All financial records pertaining to the management and operation of the school are subject to inspection and productions as required for fulfillment of the ASD's fiduciary responsibilities.

d. Audit. The Operator shall undergo an independent financial audit annually in compliance with the TPCSA. The audit shall be furnished to the ASD, the Commissioner of Education, and the Comptroller of the Treasury, as approved by the Operator's governing board by December 31 of each year. Each school operated under the ASD is required to have both a network level and a school level audit. The school level audit may be included in a combined network level (or consolidated) audit report, including school level balance sheet, statement of activities and changes in net assets, and a schedule of functional expenses. In addition, the Operator shall transmit the final trial balance to the ASD using the TN COA with the submission of the annual independent financial audit. The Operator will pay for the audit. If such audit is not received by December 31 of each year, it shall be considered a material breach of this Agreement, which the Operator shall have fifteen (15) days, or such other time as the Parties may agree, to cure. The financial audit shall include, without limitation:

   i. An opinion on the financial statements (and Supplementary Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards, if applicable)
   ii. A report on compliance and on internal control over financial reporting based on an audit of financial statements performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards
   iii. An independent auditor's report on compliance with requirements that could have a direct and material effect on each major program and on internal control over compliance in accordance with OMB Circular A-133, if applicable.

e. Interim Expense Reports. The Operator shall prepare or cause to be prepared quarterly expense reports, in accordance with ASD instructions, which shall be submitted to the ASD no later than forty-five (45) calendar days after each of the first three quarters, and no later than ninety (90) days after the end of the fiscal year.

f. Charter Management Organization (CMO) Fees. Operators must include in their financial reports a description of fees paid to charter management or other non-profit organizations, showing the name of the organization, amount of fees paid, and the purpose for which the fees were paid.

g. Budget. The Operator shall prepare and provide to the ASD a draft of the school's annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year by no later than May 1. The Operator shall adopt and provide a copy of its final annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year by no later than June 1.

h. Financial Policies. The Operator shall use and follow a written set of financial policies and procedures, the Tennessee Uniform Chart of Accounts, and appropriate use of account codes and functional codes, including grant codes using templates provided by the ASD.

i. Fund Compliance. In the event that the Operator accepts state or federal funds, the Operator shall adhere to state and federal guidelines and regulations regarding the appropriate budgeting, expenditure, accounting and reporting for such funds.

j. Dissolution. Upon termination of this Agreement for any reason by the ASD, upon expiration of the Agreement, or if the school should be closed or cease operations or otherwise dissolve, the ASD shall meet with the school's governing body and leadership to establish a transition team composed of staff from the charter school, staff from the ASD, and anyone else the ASD deems necessary who shall attend to the closure, including: (a) the submission of financial statements to the ASD or department; (b) the disposition of school funds; (c) the disposition of school assets; and (d) a school audit pursuant to the TPCSA.

k. Disposition of School's Assets upon Termination or Dissolution. Upon termination of this Agreement for any reason or if the school should be closed or cease operations or otherwise dissolve, then, at the sole discretion of the ASD, any assets fully funded through the ASD and owned by the Operator on behalf of the ASD-authorized school that will no longer be operated by the Operator, including tangible, intangible, and real property, remaining after paying the Operator's debts and obligations directly related to the operation of the School during the Agreement period and not requiring return or transfer to donors or grantors, will become the property of the ASD.

l. Insurance. Operator will be required to maintain Directors and Officers insurance and professional liability insurance for combined single-limit coverage of not less than $5,000,000.00 per occurrence.
    i. Crime exposures to be covered include:

1. Employee theft
2. Money and securities while on premises or in transit
3. Forgery
4. Funds transfer fraud
5. Computer fraud
6. Money order and counterfeit currency fraud
7. Credit card fraud
8. Optional client coverage
9. Coverage for investigative costs for covered losses

ii.   Such other insurance on the Premises in such amounts and against such other insurable hazards which at the time are commonly obtained in the case of property similar to the Premises.

iii. If not covered by the insurance coverages listed above, charter or contract operators shall maintain a fidelity or surety bond to cover all of the operator's employees that handle, process, or otherwise have responsibility for school funds, supplies, equipment, or other assets in amounts of not less than $50,000.00 per occurrences.

State of TN shall be named as an additional insured on the charter school insurance policy.

Certificates of insurance, in a form satisfactory to the ASD, evidencing coverage shall be provided to the ASD prior to commencement of performance of this Agreement. Throughout the term of this Agreement, Operator shall provide updated certificates of insurance upon expiration of current certificates.

m. Charter School Debt. The Operator is solely responsible for all debt it incurs, and the ASD shall not be contractually bound on the Operator's account to any third (3rd) party. The ASD shall not be liable in any instance for the Operator's unpaid debts if the Operator does not have sufficient funds to pay all of its debts.

The Operator shall notify the ASD immediately of a default on any obligation owed to the ASD, which shall include debts for which payments are past due by sixty (60) days or more. If debts are incurred in the provision of employee benefits pursuant to state law, including the TPCSA, the ASD may withhold the amount owed from the monthly payment until such debts are satisfied. Any other debts owed to the ASD must be satisfied prior to release of the last annual payment.

3.4 Academic Program and Assessment

a. The Operator shall implement the academic program in accordance with this Agreement, the Application, and applicable state and federal law, rules, and policies of the State Board of Education (SBE). SBE policies include the Special Education Guidelines and Standards regarding evaluations for Specific Learning disabilities (SLD), which is the RTI[2] model.

b. The Operator shall have the autonomy to devise its own student assessment programs, beyond the following requirements:
    i. Administer all TDOE-required student assessments, including but not limited to TNReady, TCAP, End of Course Assessments, ACT, and EL Assessments for the required grades and testing windows.
    ii. Administer ASD-required student assessments, as defined by ASD policy.

c. The Operator shall comply with all TDOE- and ASD- required assessment administration, security and reporting requirements.

3.5 Student Population and Enrollment

a. The Operator may only serve eligible students, as defined by T.C.A. §§ 49-1-614 and the TPCSA. The Operator is required to offer priority to students zoned to the School during the initial student application period, reserving the building's program capacity (85% of the building capacity) or 130% of the prior year's average daily membership (ADM), whichever is smaller.

b. The Operator shall conduct an initial student application period of at least thirty (30) days. During this period, all students zoned to attend or currently enrolled in a school that is eligible to be placed in the ASD may enroll. If, at the end of the initial student enrollment period, the number of eligible students seeking to be enrolled does not exceed the school's capacity, then the school may enroll additional students outlined in the TPCSA; provided, however, that no school's total enrollment of such students shall exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the total school enrollment.

3.6 Serving Students with Disabilities

3.6.1 Authorities. Special education services, related services, and accommodations for students who are eligible under the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or any applicable provisions of State law, shall be provided in accordance with applicable State and federal law and this Agreement. The ASD is the LEA responsible for ensuring compliance with the IDEA and State special education law and regulations.

3.6.2 Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties.

a. The Operator assumes responsibility for the identification of students in need of special education services, provision of services, development and implementation of IEPs, etc. for students identified as eligible for special education services. The Operator shall have a qualified special education coordinator who will be responsible for monitoring individual case management of all special education students and for arranging the provision of services required by their IEPs. The Operator shall maintain a file documenting Operator's compliance with special education requirements.

b. As the LEA, the ASD retains the authority to oversee and require that the Operator take corrective measures with regard to special education. The Operator is responsible for the management of its special education budgets, personnel, programs and services. The ASD reserves the right to audit the use of special education funds provided to the Operator to ensure compliance with the law and program and fiscal requirements.

c. The Operator shall ensure that its special education personnel or contracted personnel are appropriately licensed and endorsed consistent with federal requirements and State laws and regulations. The Operator shall implement the programs and services, including providing related services, required by the IEPs of the students enrolled at the School(s). The Operator shall rely on its discretion to determine whether or not to contract with outside entities, such as consultants or local districts, for the provision of any mandated special education or related services. Upon request by the ASD, the Operator shall provide all requested or appropriate documentation to demonstrate the licensure status of School personnel providing special education or related services and of independent contractors providing special education or related services, the training received by said personnel, and the steps taken by the Operator to comply with applicable credentialing the requirements. The Operator shall promptly provide the ASD with documentation that updates this information during the course of the school year to the extent that it has changes in its personnel, independent contractors, or training for staff.

d. The Operator shall promptly report to the ASD any and all alleged infractions, filed due process complaints, administrative complaints, and other non-compliance issues relating to IDEA for special education and Office of Civil Rights complaints for disability accommodations within two business days of the Operator's notification of such occurrences.

e. The Operator will meet the needs of the students who enroll. In the rare instance that the Operator believes itself unable to provide an appropriate placement or services for a student with special needs, the Operator shall contact the ASD to discuss placement and service alternatives. The IEP team convened at the school shall have the authority to make offers of a free appropriate public

education (FAPE) and decisions regarding the staffing and methodology used to provide special education and related services at the school pursuant to an IEP.

f. The Operator shall indemnify the ASD for any costs, attorney fees, and/or financial penalties imposed on the ASD by state and/or federal authorities arising out of actions or omissions of the Operator relating to special education.

3.6.3. Costs for Special Education.
All costs associated with student identification, providing services, and evaluations and assessments to enrolled students with disabilities are the responsibility of the Operator.

3.7 English Learners.
The Operator shall address the needs of English learner (EL) students pursuant to applicable federal and state laws and regulations (including Title III of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI)). In addition, the Operator shall ensure that Limited English Proficiency (LEP) parents and guardians have meaningful access to school-related information.

3.8 Student Discipline/Due Process.
The Operator is responsible for administering its discipline policy in a manner that ensures students' due process rights are satisfied, including the provision of appropriate informal or formal hearings. The Operator shall promptly notify the ASD and the LEA in which the student resides of students expelled. If the LEA in which the student resides determines that the expelled student is eligible for its Alternative School program, the ASD shall work with the LEA in which the student resides to provide an expelled student access to the LEA's alternative school programs.

3.9 Hiring and Contracting Practices.
a. **TBI/FBI Criminal History Records Checks** - Operator shall maintain documentation that all current employees of the Operator working at charter school **(ID #8095)** who have or who will have contact with children at the Charter School within the scope of the individuals' employment or will be on school grounds when children are present, and employees of contractors or sub-contractors of the Charter School **(ID #8095)** who have contact with children within the scope of the individuals' employment or will be on school grounds when children are present, have undergone a complete criminal history records check as required by state law using the originating agency identifier (ORI) assigned by the TBI to the Operator, the ORI number of the ASD, or the ORI number of the LEA where the school is located. Operator shall hold all entities it contracts with accountable for maintaining compliance with the state law regarding criminal history records checks.

b. **Background Check by the Department of Children's Services -** Operator shall meet the requirements of state law for ensuring that no individual is hired or retained that has been found by the Department of Children's Service (DCS) to have committed child abuse, severe child abuse, child sexual abuse, or child neglect, or poses an immediate threat to the health, safety, or welfare of children.

c. **Pre-Hiring Screening Practices-** Operator shall never make hiring decisions based solely on a resume, TBI/FBI criminal history records check and/or DCS background check. Multiple measures should be utilized to perform pre-hiring screening. Reference checking should be conducted to include previous employers and should not be limited to references provided by the applicant. Operator shall implement and document pre-screening protocols prior to hiring employees or contracting with individuals that include, at a minimum, answering the following questions:

     i.   Is the applicant or contractor who she says she is?
    ii.   Has the applicant been convicted of a felony
   iii.   Has the applicant been convicted of a crime of dishonesty?
   iv.   Is the applicant's employment history accurate?
    v.   Are the stated academic and professional qualifications true?
   vi.   Has an applicant who claims military service provided a DD214?
  vii.   Have at least 2 verbal or in person reference checks been conducted?

d. **Teachers.** The Operator shall ensure that teachers are licensed and endorsed in accordance with state law, rules, and policies of the SBE, and ASD policies.

3.10 Facility
The school shall be located at **3777 Edenburg Drive, Memphis, Tennessee 38127**. The Operator may use the school building and all facilities and property otherwise part of the school and recognized as part of the facilities or assets of the school prior to its placement in the ASD and shall have access to such additional facilities as are typically available to the school, its students, faculty and staff prior to its placement in the ASD. The Operator shall be responsible for and obligated to provide for routine maintenance and repair such that the facilities and properties are maintained in as good order as when the right of use was acquired.

3.11 Transportation
Transportation, if provided by the Operator, shall be free of charge to and from the School on regularly scheduled school days for all zoned students:
a.   residing outside of the LEA's defined Parent Responsibility Zone;
b.   required to cross hazard zones between home and school; and/or

c. with transportation requirements included in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

Operator must also comply with all state and federal laws and State Board of Education rules and policies regarding student transportation regardless of whether Operator employs drivers and owns school buses or contracts for school transportation services. Transporting students in buses that have not been approved for operation by the department of safety or employing or contracting with drivers who do not meet the legal qualifications to drive a school bus may be grounds for non-renewal or revocation of this agreement. Operator shall conduct regular audits of school buses and drivers, used to transport students, to ensure all requirements are met by employees and contractors regarding the transportation of students.

3.12 Student Information Systems.

a. <u>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act & Tennessee Data Accessibility, Transparency and Accountability Act.</u>

The Operator shall comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (20 U.S.C. 1232(g)) and its accompanying regulations (34 C.F.R. § 99) ("FERPA"). The Operator warrants that the Operator is familiar with FERPA requirements and that it will comply with these requirements in the performance of its duties under this Agreement. The Operator agrees to cooperate with the ASD when requested, to ensure compliance of FERPA, in the performance of its duties under this Agreement. The Operator agrees to maintain the confidentiality of all education records and student information. The Operator shall only use such records and information for the exclusive purpose of performing its duties under this Agreement.

The Operator shall also comply with Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-1-701, *et seq.*, known as the "Data Accessibility, Transparency and Accountability Act," and any accompanying administrative rules or regulations (collectively "DATAA"). The Contractor agrees to maintain the confidentiality of all records containing student and de-identified data, as this term is defined in DATAA, in any databases, to which the ASD or TDOE has granted the Operator access, and to only use such data for the exclusive purpose of performing its duties under this Agreement.

Any instances of unauthorized disclosure of data containing personally identifiable information in violation of FERPA or DATAA that come to the attention of the Operator shall be reported to the ASD within twenty-four (24) hours. Operator shall indemnify and hold harmless the ASD and TDOE its employees, agents and representatives, from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, or causes of action that may arise, accrue, or result to any person or entity that is injured or damaged as a result of Operator's failure to comply with this section.

b. **Data Protection, Privacy and Information Technology Security**

Pursuant to the Operators obligations to the ASD with respect to FERPA and data privacy, the Operator shall furnish the ASD with a copy of their most recent Information Systems Policy (ISP) document. The ISP shall apply to all hardware, infrastructure and information systems, regardless of physical location, that manage student data of any kind or personally identifiable information of any kind related to students, staff and parents. The ISP shall include at a minimum a description of the Operator's policies and procedures related to:

   i. Acceptable Use, Best Practices and Training for all staff and students related to safe and secure use of information systems and devices, including; email, Internet access, student management systems and other line of business applications and data sources.

   ii. Directory Services and Management, including; authentication, user management, password complexity and group policy.

   iii. Access Controls and Authorization, including; granting and revoking access to information systems by staff and student, including access to; networks, email and communication systems, on premise applications, data sources, information technology resources and applications provided by a third party, including storage, email and business applications, with emphasis on on-boarding and off-boarding.

   iv. Physical access controls to data centers and on premise infrastructure.

   v. Device Patching, including operating system and installed application updates and service packs.

   vi. Administrator Rights to Devices, including; approved applications and configuration changes.

   vii. Data Retention and Data Disposition, including; data stored locally, data stored with a cloud provider or data stored as part of a managed service by a third party.

   viii. End Point Protection, including; anti-virus and anti-malware, detection of out of date signatures and other safeguards.

   ix. Own Devices (BYOD) by staff or students, specifically; network policy and controls

   x. Mobile Device Management (MDM).

   xi. Off Premise Access to Information Systems, including; systems and data located on premise or in cloud-based resources.

   xii. Content Filtering, White- and Black-listing of Web Content, with emphasis on student access.

   xiii. Backup, Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery.

   xiv. Firewalls, Network Monitoring and Security.

   xv. Contractual Obligations Conferred to Third Parties, including; cloud and software as a service (SaaS) providers.

c. The ISP shall be provided to the ASD no less than 30 days from the signing of this Agreement and not less than thirty (30) days prior to the transfer of any data that contains any personally identifiable

information (PII) or otherwise sensitive content from the TDOE or ASD to the Operator in subsequent school years if changes to the ISP are made.

The Operator shall permit authorized ASD or TDOE personal appropriate access to information systems utilized by the Operator in the delivery of the Service, including those located in schools and head office locations as needed to audit the policies and processes outlined in the ISP.

The ASD shall notify the Operator in writing of any concerns related to the ISP or a subsequent audit and the Operator shall have thirty (30) days from the date of such notice in which to remediate any concerns identified.

3.13 Asset and Inventory Control

The Operator shall, upon receipt of assets on record from the local LEA, complete a physical inventory of the acquired assets and reconcile with the local LEA to ensure matching records. In coordination with the ASD, the Operator shall provide to the local LEA written documentation of the assets physically counted and received, identifying the assets not counted for which the Operator would not be responsible. The Operator must also complete an annual inventory of the assets received from the local LEA, as well as assets purchased with State, local and federal funds, and provide documentation of a completed inventory to the ASD indicating the source of the assets (local LEA, Title I, BEP, etc.), year acquired and inventory/asset tag numbers. Additionally, the Operator shall follow state and federal regulations and ASD policies regarding disposing of public or federally-funded assets, maintain records of damaged, stolen and/or disposed assets and provide documentation to the ASD upon request.

3.14 Compliance with Applicable Laws, Regulations and State, Federal and ASD Policies, Reporting Requirements and Grant Commitments

By signing this Agreement, the Operator warrants that it has specific knowledge of:

a. Its obligations to comply with all federal, state and local laws, reporting and record retention requirements applicable to the provision of public education in a charter school in the ASD. Further assurances are provided in the Application. The Operator acknowledges that the waiver of education statutes and rules of the SBE or TDOE, granted by the Commissioner, does not include a waiver of any of the regulatory or statutory requirements listed in T.C.A. § 49-13-105(b) or any of the provisions of the TPCSA, including the requirement that all teachers in public charter schools must have a current valid Tennessee teaching license prior to serving as a teacher in a charter school. The Operator further acknowledges that all waiver requests must specifically list the statute or rule that Operator is requesting to be waived and shall include a description of how the SBE rule or statute currently inhibits

or hinders the Operator's charter school's ability to meet its goals or comply with its mission statement.

b. Its state and federal grant obligations and that it will comply with all grant assurances to which the Operator has agreed.

3.15 School Performance Framework

The school's performance will be monitored and evaluated on the following components:

a. Academics: Academic achievement and improvement will be evaluated, at a minimum, to determine if the school's performance is in compliance with the state's current accountability model.

b. Finance: School financial reports will be evaluated for stability in budgeting and actual revenues/expenses.

c. Compliance: School compliance will be evaluated to determine if the school is complying with all relevant federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Compliance will be monitored, both via desktop audits and onsite visits.

Measures for each of these components will be monitored regularly, discussed during performance cycles, and reported annually in publicly available information.

The ASD shall have broad oversight authority over the School and may take all reasonable steps necessary to oversee compliance with this Agreement and applicable laws, rules, and policies. This oversight authority includes, but is not limited to, the right to visit, examine, and inspect the School and its records during the pre-opening year, during the annual monitoring visit, and when there is a material complaint. The ASD may interview Operator employees, Board members, students, and families as necessary to resolve complaints and grievances. With respect to complaints and grievances, all of the foregoing is subject to Section 3.2.b.

3.16 Hold Harmless

The Operator agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the ASD and the TDOE and the local government entity which owns any building in which the school is located, as well as their officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, and causes of action which may arise, accrue, or result to any person, firm, corporation, or other entity which may be injured or damaged as a

result of acts, omissions, or negligence on the part of the Operator, its employees, or any person acting for or on its or their behalf relating to this Agreement.

In the event of any such suit or claim, the Operator shall give the ASD immediate notice thereof and shall provide all assistance required by the ASD or TDOE for its defense. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed to accord to the Operator, through its attorney(s), the right to represent the ASD or the TDOE in any legal matter, such rights being governed by T.C.A. § 8-6-106.

3.17 Notification of Closure and Dissolution

In the event that the Operator is required to close charter school **(ID #8095)** for any reason, including but not limited to closure, non-renewal, revocation, or voluntary surrender of the charter, the Operator shall cooperate with the ASD to ensure orderly closure of the charter school in compliance with the TPCSA **(ID #8095)** including, but not limited to:

a. Providing the ASD with 30 days written notice prior to making a public announcement that Operator is initiating the closure of charter school **(ID #8095)**
b. Collaborating with the ASD to provide timely notification of parents and teachers of the closure decision;
c. Securing student records and transferring them to the LEA in which the charter school **(ID #8095)** is located;
d. Assisting in placing students in appropriate schools;
e. Managing all financial records consistent with the ASD's school closure requirements and policies;
f. Disposing of school assets in accordance with the state and federal law and this Agreement; and
g. Complying with any closure policies or protocols established by the ASD.

3.18 Termination.

This Agreement may be revoked pursuant to the TPCSA if the ASD determines that the Operator did any of the following:
a. Committed a material violation of any of the conditions, standards, or procedures set forth in this Agreement;
b. Failed to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or
c. Performed any of the acts that are conditions for non-approval of a charter school under the TPCSA.
d. Receives identification as a priority school as defined by the state's accountability system pursuant to state law at T.C.A § 49-1-602 for two (2) consecutive cycles.

4. Contract Construction

4.1. Waiver.

The failure of either of the Parties to this Agreement to insist on strict performance of any term or condition of this Agreement shall not constitute a waiver of that term or condition, even if the Party accepting or acquiescing in the nonconforming performance knows of the nature of the performance and fails to object to it.

4.2. Non-assignability.

No right or interest in this Agreement shall be assigned by anyone on behalf of the Operator, and delegation of any contractual duty of the Operation shall not be made without prior written approval of the ASD. A violation of this provision shall be grounds for immediate termination of this Agreement and revocation of the Agreement.

Should the Operator propose to enter into a contract with another non-profit entity to manage the school, the Operator agrees to submit all information requested by the ASD Authority regarding the management arrangement, including a copy of the proposed contract and a description of the management company, with identification of its principals and their backgrounds. The Operator shall not enter a management contract without written approval from the ASD.

4.3. Agreement.

The Parties intend this Agreement, including all attachments and exhibits hereto, to represent a final and complete expression of their agreement, which shall be considered the Agreement. All prior representations, understandings, and discussions are merged herein, and no course of prior dealings between the Parties shall supplement or explain any terms used in this document. The Parties recognize that amendments to this Agreement may be executed from time to time hereafter.

4.4. Survival of Representations and Warranties.

All representations and warranties hereunder shall be deemed to be material and relied upon by the Parties with or to whom the same were made, notwithstanding any investigation or inspection made by or on behalf of such Party or Parties. The representations and warranties covered in this Agreement will survive the termination or expiration of this Agreement.

4.5. Severability.

The provisions of this Agreement are severable. Any term or condition deemed illegal or invalid shall not affect any other term or condition, and the remainder of the Agreement shall remain in effect unless otherwise terminated by one or both of the Parties.

4.6. Authority.

The individual officers, agents, and employees of the Parties hereto who execute this Agreement do hereby individually represent and warrant that they have full power and lawful authority to execute this Agreement.

4.7. Change of Law.
If, due to any change in applicable law, regulation, or interpretation thereof by any court of law or other governing body having jurisdiction subsequent to the date of this Agreement, performance of any provision of this Agreement or any transaction contemplated hereby shall become impracticable or impossible, the parties hereto shall use their best efforts to find and employ an alternative means to achieve the same or substantially the same result as that contemplated by such provision.

4.8 Notice.
Any notice required or permitted under this Agreement shall be in writing, sent via electronic or other means, and shall be effective immediately upon personal delivery, subject to verification of service or acknowledgment of receipt, or three (3) days after mailing when sent by certified mail, postage prepaid. Such noticed shall be sent to:

If to the ASD:
<u>Mailed to:</u>
Tennessee Department of Education
Achievement School District
Attn: Malika Anderson, Superintendent
710 James Robertson Parkway
12th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243
<u>and emailed to:</u>
Malika.Anderson@tn-asd.gov

If to the Operator:
<u>Mailed to:</u>
Bob Nardo
Head of School, Libertas School of Memphis
3777 Edenburg Drive
Memphis, TN 38127
<u>and emailed to:</u>
bob.nardo@libertasmemphis.org

Either party may change its address for notices under this Agreement by notice to the other party.

5. Effective Date

This Agreement shall not be binding upon the parties until it has been signed first by the Operator and then by the ASD.

6. Exhibits

    a.   Exhibit 1: Application

    b.   Exhibit 2: Special Education Tiered Funding Model

IN WITNESS WHEREOF,

OPERATOR:

_____

OPERATOR SIGNATURE   **DATE**

_____

PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF OPERATOR SIGNATORY (above)

OPERATOR (ADDITIONAL SIGNATORY AS APPLICABLE):

_____

OPERATOR SIGNATURE   **DATE**

_____

PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF OPERATOR SIGNATORY (above)

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

_____

CANDICE MCQUEEN, COMMISSIONER   **DATE**

_____

MALIKA ANDERSON, SUPERINTENDENT, ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT   **DATE**

EXHIBIT 1: APPLICATION
[INSERT APPROVED APPLICATION]

EXHIBIT 2: Special Education Tiered Funding Model

1. Special Education Tiered Pool

    1.1. Background

    The special education tiered model is a mechanism to redistribute BEP funds among school sites in the ASD. All operators must agree to the pool in writing annually, and participation is completely voluntary. Both funding amounts and tier definitions must be approved annually, including any changes, as part of the written authorization. If at any point a school opts not to participate, the ASD will not implement this model.

    1.2. Calculation of Overall SPED Pool Need

    To determine how much is needed to fund the overall special education tier pool, each tier amount is multiplied by the number of students categorized in each tier. Therefore:

    TOTAL SPED POOL = (TIER 5 AMOUNT × TIER 5 STUDENTS) + (TIER 4 AMOUNT × TIER 4 STUDENTS) + (TIER 3 AMOUNT × TIER 3 STUDENTS) + (TIER 2 AMOUNT × TIER 2 STUDENTS) + (TIER 1 AMOUNT × TIER 1 STUDENTS)

    1.3. Inclusion of IDEA, BEP Need, and initial per-pupil reductions

    Since the district received IDEA funds, each school will contribute 100% of their IDEA funds to the overall pool. The individual school IDEA allocations will be held constant each year unless the district's overall IDEA allocation changes. The remainder will be funded from the BEP.

    TOTAL BEP SPED POOL = TOTAL SPED POOL – ASD IDEA ALLOCATION

    In order to contribute the appropriate amount to the Total BEP SPED Pool, each school must contribute an amount per pupil.

    BEP SPED PER PUPIL CONTRIBUTION = TOTAL BEP SPED POOL – DISTRICT ADM

    While the initial per pupil contribution is uniform, the application of the 3% safe harbor will cause variations in each school's contribution to the SPED pool.

    1.4. Initial School Level Allocations

    Similar to the district level calculation, first, each school's pool is calculated.

    School SPED Pool = (TIER 5 AMOUNT × TIER 5 STUDENTS) + (TIER 4 AMOUNT × TIER 4 STUDENTS) + (TIER 3 AMOUNT × TIER 3 STUDENTS) + (TIER 2 AMOUNT × TIER 2 STUDENTS) + (TIER 1 AMOUNT × TIER 1 STUDENTS)

Then the school's IDEA allocation is subtracted. Note, the IDEA allocations remain constant unless the district's overall IDEA allocation changes.

TOTAL SCHOOL BEP SPED POOL = SCHOOL SPED POOL – SCHOOL IDEA ALLOCATION

The school must also contribute to the overall BEP SPED Pool.

SCHOOL BEP SPED CONTRIBUTION = BEP SPED PER PUPIL CONTRIBUTION × SCHOOL ADM

Making the net change in the school's BEP:

SCHOOL SPED BEP ADJUSTMENT = TOTAL SCHOOL BEP SPED POOL – SCHOOL BEP SPED CONTRIBUTION

It is possible for the School SPED BEP Adjustment to be negative. A negative adjustment indicates a school is a net contributor to the SPED pool. It is also possible that the Total School BEP SPED Pool will be negative, indicating that more IDEA was allocated than the tier model would have allocated. Rather than adjust IDEA, which begins a budget revision cycle, the difference is removed from BEP. However, any such reductions are subject to the 3% safe harbor.

1.5. 3% Safe Harbor

Within a fiscal year, no school can lose more than 3% of their BEP allocation (pre-authorizer fee). So the safe harbor is calculated as:

SCHOOL SAFE HARBOR AMOUNT = 3% × ANNUAL SCHOOL ALLOCATION

If the School SPED BEP Adjustment exceeds the Safe Harbor Amount, the adjustment is reduced to the Safe Harbor Amount. In this case, a remaining amount is established that must be funded.

SCHOOL BEP REMAINDER = SCHOOL SPED BEP ADJUSTMENT – SCHOOL SAFE HARBOR AMOUNT

The district then has an unmet need of all the school BEP remainders.

DISTRICT BEP REMAINDER = ∑(SCHOOL BEP REMAINDER)

The district remainder must be split among all the schools that did not originally hit the 3% safe harbor amount.

SCHOOL BEP SPED CONTRIBUTION ADDITION = DISTRICT BEP REMAINDER ÷ ∑(SCHOOL ADM OF SCHOOLS STILL WITHIN THE SAFE HARBOR)

It is possible that the additional contribution will drive more schools below the safe harbor amounts. In that case, the above steps will be repeated until no schools fall outside of the 3% safe harbor.

School Year 2017-2018 Operator Consent to Participate in the Special Education Tiered Funding Model

We the undersigned operator agree to participate in the special education tiered funding model included as part of our agreement and with the terms described below:

1. Background

The special education tiered model is a mechanism to redistribute the state and local funds provided for in the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act among school sites in the ASD based upon service minutes and disability classification. All operators must agree to the pool in writing annually, and participation is completely voluntary. Both funding amounts and tier definitions must be approved annually, including any changes, as part of the written authorization. If at any point a school opts not to participate, the ASD will not implement this model.

2. Tier Definitions

As provided in the included chart, disabilities are divided into various tiers based on type and number of service minutes. By signing, the undersigned operator is confirming these definitions as the basis for the tiers.

Disability Type	Tier				
	1	2	3	4	5
Autism	-	-	0-420	421-1260	1261+
Developmental Delay	-	-	0-420	421-1260	1261+
Emotional Disturbance	-	-	0-420	421-1260	1261+
Intellectual Disability	-	-	0-420	421-1260	1261+
Hearing Impairments	-	0-420	421-1260	1261-1680	1681+
Visual Impairments	-	0-420	421-1260	1261-1680	1681+
Multiple Disabilities	-	-	-	0-1260	1261+
Traumatic Brain Injury	-	-	-	0-1260	1261+
Other - Health Impairments	-	0-1260	1261+	-	-
Specific Learning Disability	-	0-1260	1261+	-	-
Functional Delay	-	All	-	-	-
Intellectually Gifted	-	All	-	-	-
Orthopedic Impairments	-	All	-	-	-
Language Impairments	All	-	-	-	-
Speech Impairments	All	-	-	-	-
Blind	-	-	-	-	All

3. Tier Funding Amounts

Tier	Amount
1	$ -
2	$ -
3	$ 6,600.00
4	$ 11,250.00
5	$ 15,000.00

Each tier from the definitions chart is associated with a specific amount for purposes of calculating the pool amounts for each school, included here. By signing, the undersigned operator is confirming these amounts as the funding amounts per tier for the special education tiered model.

4. Safe Harbor

By signing, the undersigned operator is confirming that the safe harbor amount for fiscal year 2017-2018 is 3% of the original state and local funds allocation provided for in the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act.

5. Potential for Loss

By signing, the undersigned operator understands that participation in the special education tiered funding model might result in a school receiving fewer state and local funds than it would have had it not participated.

6. Effective Dates

The model set forth herein shall be effective through the end of the 2017-2018 school year.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF,

_____   _____
OPERATOR SIGNATURE   **DATE**

_____
PRINTED NAME AND TITLE OF SIGNATORY (above)

ACHIEVEMENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Tennessee Achievement School District Charter Agreement

This Charter Agreement (Agreement) is entered into by and between the Achievement School District (ASD) and **Libertas School**, **a Tennessee Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation** (Operator), dba Libertas School of Memphis, or Libertas School at Brookmeade. This Agreement may be assigned by the Operator to a wholly-owned Tennessee nonprofit limited liability company.   This Agreement is subject to Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-1-614 and the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act, T.C.A. § 49-13-101 et. seq.

Definitions
The following are definitions of terms used in this Agreement as defined in State law.[1]

Achievement School District (ASD) – An organizational unit of the department of education, established by the commissioner for the purpose of providing oversight for the operation of the total program for individual schools or LEAs.[2] . The ASD may contract directly with individuals or non-profit corporations to manage schools, or authorize charter schools to serve students zoned to attend ASD schools.

Application – The document submitted by the Operator in response to a request for proposals or qualifications to provide educational services to students zoned to attend ASD schools.

Charter School Management Organization (CMO) – A non-profit entity that operates multiple charter schools at least one (1) of which is in Tennessee.

Local Education Agency (LEA) – Any county, city or special school district, unified school district, school district of any metropolitan form of government or any other Tennessee school system in which schools under the jurisdiction of the ASD are located.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) – An agreement secondary to this contract, specifying further details of the working relationship between the ASD, the Operator and/or an LEA or LEAs.

Operator – In this Agreement, "operator" refers to either the sponsor of an application to receive a charter from the ASD; the governing body of an approved charter school or CMO; or an individual, governmental entity or non-profit entity entering a contract with the ASD to "manage the day-to-day operations of a school or schools within the ASD."

1.   <u>Grant of Charter</u>
   The ASD hereby grants a charter to the Operator for the management of **Libertas School at Brookmeade** for ten (10) consecutive school years, beginning with the 2015-16 school year. In accordance with the terms of the Operator's Application, the Operator will operate PreK-1st grades during the 2015-16 academic year, and add one (1) grade each year thereafter, until the academic year **2020-21** at which time the charter school will consist of grades PreK-6. The Operator is

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[1] Pursuant to Tennessee TCA § 49-13-104. All Tennessee laws may be accessed online at
http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/tncode/.
[2] Pursuant to Tennessee §§ 49-1-602, 614.

expected to serve ASD-eligible students who are zoned to attend **Libertas School at Brookmeade** in the applicable grades for which there is zoned attendance in any given year, up to the maximum number identified in the Operator's ASD application and subject to Section 3.3 of the Agreement below. Enrollment in each year of operation shall be no less than 95% of projected enrollment reflected in the annual Board-adopted budget that the Operator submits to the ASD. An Operator who does not meet or exceed enrollment projections of students may be subject to further review by the ASD.

The ASD shall remain the chartering authority through the duration of the charter agreement and the school shall remain under the authority of the ASD. Operator will remain in good standing if school or program performance meets key threshold and performance criteria set forth in the School Performance Framework **(Exhibit 4)**.

Upon expiration of the charter agreement, or sooner, provided the conditions for transfer set forth in state law are met, the school shall return to the LEA that operated the school prior to its inclusion in the ASD, subject to the applicable state statutes[3]. The Operator will also be given the opportunity to renew the charter agreement with the ASD or seek a new charter agreement with any other charter authorizer allowed under state law[4].

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-121, the initial term of the charter shall commence on the effective date and end on the thirtieth (30th) day of June following the tenth (10th) anniversary of the effective date.

2. **Roles and Responsibilities**
The ASD shall ensure that the charter school is governed and operated as set forth in the Application and in accordance with this Agreement and all other applicable laws and regulations. The Operator shall be accountable to the ASD for ensuring the implementation of the terms and conditions of this Agreement.

During the term of the charter, the ASD shall retain the right to review the academic, operational and financial performance of the Operator. The ASD plans to conduct semi-annual performance reviews, which include desktop and scheduled on-site reviews of accountability and federal grant management, student access and equity compliance, and operations. If the criteria are not met, the ASD retains the right to review any and all written material and data as well as conduct site visits as frequently as necessary until all criteria are met. The ASD agrees to provide a minimum of five day's notice of any site visit and will allow a minimum of five business days for an Operator to provide requested documentation. Decisions to revoke or renew the charter shall be made pursuant to this Agreement and state law[5].

The Operator shall be the first avenue for response in case of any grievances filed against the charter school or its employees, pursuant to the ASD's Parent and Community Grievance Resolution Policy

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[3] T.C.A. § 49-1-614 [link]
[4] T.C.A. § 49-13-121
[5] T.C.A. § 49-13-122

in its Student Handbook **(Exhibit 5)** and the Operator's parent and community complaint procedure. The Operator will establish policies and procedures for receiving and addressing grievances directed toward the Operator or its employees and will make those policies available to students, parents/guardians, school employees, the ASD and any other persons who request them. Grievances that are not resolved by the Operator, or a pattern of serious grievances may be considered in any application for renewal of this Agreement or any action to revoke the charter.

The Operator will use reasonable, good faith efforts to educate children and demonstrate progress in achieving the goals outlined for all ASD schools and those goals the Operator established in its application. The goals and performance expectations of all Operators authorized by the ASD are detailed in the School Performance Framework **(Exhibit 4)** attached to this Agreement.

3.   General Terms and Conditions of the Charter Agreement

3.1   The Application
The application in response to the Request for Proposal (application), submitted April 1, 2014, attached as **(Exhibit 1)**, sets forth the goals, standards, and general operational policies relating to the management of the Operator's charter school. The Application is incorporated by reference to this Agreement. To the extent that the Operator desires to implement specific policies, procedures, or other specific terms of operation that supplement those set forth in the Application, they shall be permitted to implement such policies, procedures, and specific terms of operation, provided that such policies, procedures, and terms of operation (i) are not otherwise prohibited or circumscribed by applicable law or this Agreement, and (ii) are not materially different from those set forth in the Application.

To the extent there is a conflict between the terms of this Agreement and the Application, the terms of this Agreement shall govern.

Material changes to the Application must be reviewed by the ASD prior to implementation. The ASD agrees to provide a written response to the Operator within fourteen (14) calendar days. Changes that are almost always material and which require review and approval include but are not limited to:

- adding grades not included in this Agreement;
- increased or decreased enrollment constituting 15% of the school's student population or 50 students, *whichever is less*;
- changes to curriculum or pedagogical approach that are inconsistent with the Application; or
- changes to operational specifications in the Application including but not limited to transportation or facility plans.

3.2   Funding
3.2.1 State and Local Funds

a. <u>Distribution of Funds</u>. The ASD shall allocate and pay one hundred percent (100%) of state and local Basic Education Program (BEP) funds to the Operator on a per pupil basis as provided in T.C.A. § 49-13-112 and as calculated by the formula provided by the Tennessee State Department of Education. Beginning with distributions in the 2015-16 school year, the ASD will withhold $200 per pupil from the BEP funds distributed to the Operator. One-tenth of that amount ($20) per pupil will be withheld from each of the ten BEP distributions noted in Section 3.2.1, based on each school's ADM in TDOE's EIS on the business day closest to the 6th day of each month in which payments are distributed. The ASD will, by December 1 each year, provide an itemized accounting of its revenue and expenses, including the allocation of the authorizer fee. The ASD will not increase the authorizer fee more often than once every two years.

b. <u>Allocation of Funds Based on ADM</u>. New charter schools or charter schools adding a new grade shall be funded based on anticipated enrollment in the charter agreement, as amended and submitted to the Office of Portfolio Management for initial budgeting purposes no later than April 15 of each year. Initial payments will be based on this anticipated enrollment, which must be agreed upon by the ASD and the Operator and reflected in the Operator's Board-approved budget for the upcoming fiscal year by June 1 each year. Upon completion of the grade expansion period, the Charter School's state and local funds will be allocated based on the current year's Average Daily Membership (ADM) as reported in TDOE's EIS System as of October 1, and consistent with TCA 49-3-351.

c. <u>Funding Timing</u>. The ASD shall allocate and distribute one-tenth of state and local funds to the Operator by the 15th of the month in August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, and the 30th of June. Each state and local payment from October through April and the final payment in June is calculated based on the School's ADM in TDOE's EIS, as reported by the Operator on the business day closest to the 6th day of each month. Each payment starting in October will be reconciled to the reported ADM for the period before being released. The final (tenth) payment will not be released until the year's ADMs have been reconciled.

d. <u>Use of Funds</u>. All BEP funds distributed to the Operator shall be used for the School authorized under this Agreement subject to the terms and conditions of section 3.2.3(f) below. The Operator shall not charge tuition for any student for any and all activities that take place during the official school day. The Operator may charge for preschool and/or before-and-after-school programs, unless prohibited under applicable law.

e. <u>Fees for Services</u>. Any educational or operational services the ASD provides for a fee shall be specified in a separate agreement between the charter school and the ASD. Fees for services provided to the Operator by the ASD shall be deducted from the BEP payments provided to the Operator.

3.2.2 Categorical Funds

a. <u>Eligibility</u>. Each year, the ASD shall provide to the Operator the school's proportionate share of applicable federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act funding (e.g. Title I, Title II, Title III, Title IV or Title V) and other categorical grants received by the ASD for which the Operator's school is eligible. Schools are eligible for such funds upon approval of their plans for such funds either by the ASD or the Tennessee Department of Education as required.

b. <u>Fund Distribution & Reporting</u>. Funds shall be distributed on a documented expenditure reimbursement basis with the required documentation. [6] The Operator shall submit grant reimbursement reports to the ASD at least quarterly and no more frequently than monthly. The ASD shall distribute to the Operator categorical reimbursement funds within 7 days of the ASD receiving funds from the State.

c. <u>Use of Funds</u>. The Operator shall comply with all federal regulations tied to such categorical funds.

3.2.3 Financial Management & Operations

a. <u>Fiscal Year</u>. The fiscal year for the Operator's school shall begin on July 1 of each year and end on June 30 of the subsequent year.

b. <u>Financial Management & Records</u>. At the end of the fiscal year, the Operator shall prepare the school's annual financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America for not-for-profit organizations (GAAP). During the fiscal year, the Operator shall operate the school in accordance with GAAP, the cash basis of accounting, or any other basis of accounting, provided that the school's accounting methods allow it to prepare reports required by the Achievement School District (ASD), the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE), and any other grantors.

c. <u>Records</u>. The Operator shall record and report the school's financial information during the fiscal year and at the end of the year using the Tennessee Uniform Chart of Accounts (TN COA). The Operator will have the option of initially recording transactions using their National Chart of Accounts and then posting summary transactions using the TN COA. The Operator shall record all financial transactions in general, appropriations, and revenue and expenditures records. Appropriate entries from the adopted budgets shall be made in the records for the respective funds. Separate accounts shall be maintained for each of the funds.

d. <u>Audit</u>. The Operator shall undergo an independent financial audit [7]. The audit shall be furnished to the ASD's Chief Financial Officer, the Commissioner of Education, and the Comptroller of the Treasury, as approved by the Operator's governing board by December 31 of each year. In addition, the Operator shall transmit the final trial balance to the ASD using the Tennessee Uniform Chart of Accounts with the submission of the annual independent

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[6] 34 C.F.R. § 80.21.

[7] Conducted in accordance with TN 49-13-111(m) and 49-13-127(c).

financial audit. The Operator will pay for the audit. If such audit is not received by December 31 of each year, it shall be considered a material breach of this Agreement, which the Operator shall have 15 days, or such other time as the Parties may agree, to cure. The financial audit shall include, without limitation:

   i.   An opinion on the financial statements (and Supplementary Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards, if applicable)
   ii. A report on compliance and on internal control over financial reporting based on an audit of financial statements performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards
   iii. An Independent Auditor's Report on Compliance with Requirements that Could Have a Direct and Material Effect on Each Major Program and on Internal Control Over Compliance in Accordance with OMB Circular A-133, if applicable

e.   <u>Interim Financial Reports</u>. The Operator shall prepare or cause to be prepared quarterly financial reports, in accordance with ASD instructions, which shall be submitted to the ASD no later than forty-five (45) calendar days after the end of each quarter and no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the end of each fiscal year. Quarterly financial reports are not required to be submitted in the LEA Chart of Accounts format.

f.   <u>CMO/EMO Fees</u>. Tennessee's Basic Education Program (BEP) allows local education agencies (LEAs) and the ASD significant discretion in spending. Tennessee law specifically prohibits a charter school operator from contracting with for-profit entities for the management or operation of the school[8]. Beyond that requirement, however, school and district operators determine how to spend BEP funds. BEP funds may be spent, for example, in an LEA or within the ASD for shared overhead for direct-run schools. Charter operators may pay similar fees to local or out-of-state non-profit charter management organizations or to a sponsoring non-profit entity. In order to ensure compliance with the law and to help the ASD study and share financial practices that improve student achievement, ASD transformation partners and charter operators must include in their financial reports a description of fees paid to charter, education management, or related non-profit organizations, showing the name of the organization, amount of fees paid, and the purpose for which the fees were paid.

g.   <u>Budget</u>. The Operator shall prepare and provide to the ASD a draft of the school's annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year by no later than May 1. The Operator shall adopt and provide a copy of its final annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year by no later than June 1.

h.   <u>Financial Policies</u>. The Operator shall use and follow a Financial Policies and Procedures Handbook, the Tennessee Uniform Chart of Accounts, and appropriate use of account codes and functional codes, including grant codes using templates provided by the ASD as mandated by the TDE.

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[8] T.C.A. § 49-13-124(a)(1)

i.   <u>Fund Compliance</u>. In the event that the Operator accepts state or federal funds, the Operator shall adhere to state and federal guidelines and regulations regarding the appropriate budgeting, expenditure, accounting and reporting for such funds;

j.   <u>Dissolution</u>. Upon termination of this Agreement for any reason by the ASD, upon expiration of the Agreement, or if a school for which part of this contract applies should be closed or cease operations or otherwise dissolve, the ASD will supervise and have authority to conduct the business activities related to the closure or phase-out and other affairs of the school; provided, however, that in doing so the ASD will not be responsible for and will not assume any liability incurred by the school beyond funds allocated to it by the ASD under this Agreement. The Operator's personnel and its governing body shall cooperate fully with any activity related to school closure or phase out.

k.   <u>Disposition of School's Assets upon Termination or Dissolution</u>. Upon termination of this Agreement for any reason or if a school which is a part of this Agreement should be closed or cease operations or otherwise dissolve, then, at the sole discretion of the ASD, any assets funded through the ASD and owned by the Operator on behalf of the ASD-authorized school or schools that will no longer be operated by the Operator, including tangible, intangible, and real property, remaining after paying the Operator's debts and obligations and not requiring return or transfer to donors or grantors, will become the property of the ASD.

l.   <u>Insurance</u>.   Directors & Officers insurance and professional liability insurance for combined single-limit coverage of not less than $5,000,000.00 per occurrence. Crime exposures to be covered include:

1. Employee theft
2. Money and securities while on premises or in transit
3. Forgery
4. Funds transfer fraud
5. Computer fraud
6. Money order and counterfeit currency fraud
7. Credit card fraud
8. Optional client coverage
9. Coverage for investigative costs for covered losses

ii.   Such other insurance on the Premises in such amounts and against such other insurable hazards which at the time are commonly obtained in the case of property similar to the Premises.

iii. In addition to the foregoing insurance, charter or contract operators shall maintain a fidelity or surety bond to cover all of the operator's employees that handle, process, or otherwise have responsibility for school funds, supplies, equipment, or other assets in amounts of not less than $50,000.00 per occurrences.

3.2.4   Financial Performance Requirements

a. Annual Audit
    i. The annual audit will be submitted to the ASD by no later than December 31, of each year, related to the prior year.
    ii. The audit should express an unqualified opinion on the financial statements. A qualified audit opinion will result in an automatic review and explanation from the Operator's board.
    iii. No material weaknesses in controls should be disclosed during the audit. A material weakness will result in a potential review and explanation from the Operator's board.

b. Financial Indicators
    i. A prior year operating deficit by the Operator will result in a potential review and explanation from the Operator's board.
    ii. End of year Operator current ratio of less than 1.1 will result in an automatic review and explanation from the charter school board.
    iii. Average end of year Operator unrestricted cash balance (based on the four quarter-ending cash balances) of less than 30 days of current fiscal year operational expenses will result in an automatic review and explanation from the charter school board.

c. Compliance Items
    i. Reporting should be consistent with agreed timelines for the annual report/audit, the annual budget and the annual financial report (AFR).
    ii. Quarterly financial statement submissions should be received by the ASD within the agreed timeframe.
    iii. Revenue reimbursement reports for non-BEP funds should be submitted at least quarterly and no more frequently than monthly.
    iv. Operator's Board of Director/Trustees must sign and submit a signed conflict of interest form annually.
    v. Operator's board should be able to provide documented minutes and agendas from finance committee and full board meetings throughout the fiscal year, upon request.
    vi. The annual audit will be presented, reviewed and approved at a regular board meeting.

3.3 Student Population and Enrollment

a. The Operator may only serve eligible students, as defined by T.C.A. §§ 49-1-614, and § 49-13-106. The Operator is required to serve all students zoned to its school, up to the building's program capacity (85% of the building capacity) or 130% of the prior year's average daily membership (ADM), whichever is smaller. For schools phasing in, this shall be scaled based on grades served in a particular year, compared to the grades served by the LEA in the school's last year of operation prior to placement in the ASD. In SY 2015-16 only, the Operator may restrict enrollment of zoned students up to the program capacity the Operator defined in its approved charter application and enrollment projections approved by the CFO as the basis for 2015-16 ASD budgeting by May 1, 2015.

b.   If space exists after planned enrollment of zoned students, students zoned to attend other ASD-eligible schools in Memphis may enroll or be included in an enrollment lottery, Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-113, as reflected in **(Exhibit 5)**.

c.   Once the school is at enrollment capacity, students who are zoned to attend the school shall be reassigned to a different ASD school where space is available. Students enrolled at the charter school may transfer to any other ASD schools pursuant to ASD intra-district policies, and to other LEA schools pursuant to LEA intra-district transfer policies.

3.4   Special Education

3.4.1   Authorities.   Special education services, related services, and accommodations for students who are eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or any applicable provisions of State law, shall be provided in accordance with applicable State and federal law and this Agreement. The ASD is the local education agency (LEA) responsible for ensuring compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and State special education law and regulations.

3.4.2   Roles and Responsibilities of the Parties.

a.   The Operator assumes responsibility for the identification of students in need of special education services, provision of services, development and implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs), etc. for students identified as eligible for special education services. The Operator shall have a qualified special education coordinator who will be responsible for monitoring individual case management of all special education students and for arranging the provision of services required by their IEP. The Operator shall maintain a file documenting Operator's compliance with special education requirements.

b.   As the LEA, the ASD retains the authority to oversee and require that the Operator take corrective measures with regard to special education. The Operator is responsible for the management of its special education budgets, personnel, programs and services. The ASD reserves the right to audit the use of special education funds provided to the Operator to ensure compliance with program and fiscal requirements.

c.   The Operator shall ensure that its special education personnel or contracted personnel are appropriately credentialed and licensed consistent with federal requirements and State laws and regulations.   The Operator shall implement the programs and services, including providing related services, required by the IEPs of the students enrolled at the School(s). The Operator shall rely on its discretion to determine whether or not to contract with outside entities, such as consultants or local districts, for the provision of any mandated

special education or related services. Upon request by the ASD, the Operator shall provide all requested or appropriate documentation to demonstrate the licensure status of School personnel providing special education or related services and of independent contractors providing special education or related services, and, the training received by said personnel, and the steps taken by the Operator to comply with applicable credentialing the requirements. The Operator shall promptly provide the ASD with documentation that updates this information during the course of the school year to the extent that it has changes in its personnel, independent contractors, or training for staff.

d.   The Operator shall promptly report to the ASD any and all alleged serious infractions, filed due process complaints, and other significant non-compliance issues relating to special education.

e.   The School will meet the needs of the students who enroll. In the rare instance that the Operator believes itself unable to provide an appropriate placement or services for a student with special needs, the Operator shall contact the ASD to discuss placement and service alternatives. The IEP team convened at the school shall have the authority to make offers of a FAPE and decisions regarding the staffing and methodology used to provide special education and related services at the school pursuant to an IEP.

f.   To the extent that the ASD provides training opportunities and/or information regarding special education to the staff of other operators, such opportunities and/or information shall be made available to Operator's staff. To the extent that the ASD elects to offer to the Operator administrative and/or programmatic services relating to special education, the Operator may avail itself of such services at a previously agreed upon fee.

g.   The Operator shall indemnify the ASD for any costs, attorney fees, and/or financial penalties imposed on the ASD by state and/or federal authorities arising out of actions or omissions of the Operator relating to special education.

3.4.3. Costs for Special Education. All costs associated with providing educational services to enrolled students with disabilities are the responsibility of the Operator. Part of the Basic Education Program (BEP) funds are generated based on special education needs of the ASD during the prior year. The ASD will make IDEA Part B funds available to schools for direct reimbursement, in accordance with ASD policy.

3.5   Facility
The charter school shall be located at **3777 Edenburg Drive**, **Memphis, TN 38127**. The Operator may use the school building and all facilities and property otherwise part of the school and recognized as part of the facilities or assets of the school prior to its placement in the ASD and shall

have access to such additional facilities as are typically available to the school, its students, faculty and staff prior to its placement in the ASD. If a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is in effect between the ASD and the LEA that owns the facility (Exhibit 2), the terms of such MOU shall govern facility use by the Operator.

3.6   Transportation

Subject to the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, transportation shall be provided by Operator pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-114, free of charge to and from school on regularly scheduled school days for all zoned students:

a.   residing outside of the LEA's defined Parent Responsibility Zone;

b.   required to cross hazard zones between home and school; and/or

c.   with transportation requirements included in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

3.7   Assessment

a.   The Operator shall have the autonomy to devise its own student assessment programs, beyond the following requirements:

    i.   Administer all TDOE-required student assessments, including but not limited to TNReady, TCAP, End of Course Assessments, ACT, and ELL Assessments for the required grades and testing windows.

    ii.   Administer ASD-required student assessments, as defined by district policy.

b.   The Operator shall comply with all TDOE- and ASD- required assessment administration, security and reporting requirements.

3.8   Compliance with Applicable Laws, Regulations and State, Federal and ASD Policies, Reporting Requirements and Grant Commitments

By signing this Agreement, the Operator warrants that it has specific knowledge of:

a.   its obligations to comply with all federal, state and local laws applicable to the provision of public education in a charter school in the ASD. Further assurances are provided in the Application. The Operator acknowledges that the waiver of education statutes and rules of the state board or department of education, granted pursuant to Rule 0520-14-03 does not include a waiver of any of the regulatory or statutory requirements listed in T.C.A. § 49-13-105(b) or any of the Tennessee Public Charter School Act, T.C.A. § 49-13-101 et seq.

b.   its state and federal grant obligations and that it will comply with all grant assurances to which the Operator has agreed..

c.   State, Federal and ASD compliance reporting requirements, as reflected in **(Exhibit 3)**.

3.9   School Performance Expectations

a.   Federal and Tennessee Compliance

    i.   The ASD will complete an annual audit and periodic reviews of the Operator's compliance with federal and state laws and regulations, including but not limited to:

operational and student and staff safety, employment and service requirements. The compliance checklist will be provided in advance of any reviews.

    ii. Non-compliance with any state or federal laws may trigger review and may result in revocation of the charter. Prior to revocation, the ASD shall notify the Operator and give reasonable opportunity to cure the violation, unless the ASD determines, in writing, that the violation constitutes a severe and imminent threat to the health or safety of the students.

b.   Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) and ASD Achievement

    i. The ASD will complete an annual threshold test of all schools to determine their fulfillment of the ASD's academic performance targets

    ii. Schools must meet or approach ASD school accountability goals to remain authorized by the Operator.

    iii. New schools in their first year of operation in the ASD are not held accountable to the TDOE's or ASD's school accountability system.

    iv. In the event that the Operator's school fails to meet or approach ASD school accountability goals for two years in a row following the first year of operation, the Operator's authority to operate the school may be revoked.

c.   ASD School Performance Framework

    i. The ASD School Performance Framework **(Exhibit 4)** establishes school performance indicators with targets that are equal to or exceed TDOE performance targets.

    ii. The ASD will publicly report annually schools' performance according to the ASD School Performance Framework on School Report Cards. Operators shall make available data required to report achievement and progress, according to the ASD School Performance Framework.

d.   ASD School Performance Composite Score

    i. The ASD School Performance Framework includes a subset of metrics that combine to create a Composite Score **(Exhibit 4)** to determine if schools are on track to dramatically improve outcomes for students.

    ii. The Operator's individual performance targets within the Composite Score and broader ASD Performance Framework must be reflected, to the degree required, in applicable grant applications, including, but not limited to the Title I and SIG grant applications. If the Operator commits to performance targets in a state or federal grant application that exceed targets reflected in the ASD Performance Framework, the Operator must adhere to its grant obligations.

    iii. The ASD will use the Operator's School Composite Score(s) to determine school action decisions, including the rate of replication or replacement of the Operator's schools in the ASD **(Exhibit 4)**. The ASD's Superintendent is the final authority on ASD school action decisions.

3.10 Hold Harmless

Hold Harmless. The Operator agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the State of Tennessee and, subject to the Operating Agreement, the local government entity which owns any building in which the school is located, as well as their officers, agents, and employees from and against any and all claims, liabilities, losses, and causes of action which may arise, accrue, or result to any person, firm, corporation, or other entity which may be injured or damaged as a result of acts, omissions, or negligence on the part of the Operator, its employees, or any person acting for or on its or their behalf relating to this Agreement. The ASD shall promptly defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Operator, its officers, directors, employees, agents, representatives, volunteers, administrators, successors, and assignees from and against any and all alleged or actual breach of any obligation imposed on the ASD under this Agreement, or any other actual or alleged breach of any duty or obligation owed to the Charter School, the Operator, or any third party, arising from the ASD's sole or separate negligence, or any obligation imposed on the ASD, the Charter School, the Operator, or any third party, by Federal or state law concerning the operation and maintenance of any building in which the school is located, including but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or any private claim based thereon.

In the event of any such suit or claim, the Operator shall give the State immediate notice thereof and shall provide all assistance required by the State in the State's defense. The State shall give the Operator written notice of any such claim or suit, and the Operator shall have full right and obligation to conduct the Operator's own defense thereof. Nothing contained herein shall be deemed to accord to the Operator, through its attorney(s), the right to represent the State of Tennessee in any legal matter, such rights being governed by T.C.A. § 8-6-106.

3.11 Monitoring, Inspection and Certification of Records

The ASD shall at all times have authority to enter the charter school to monitor Operator's compliance with applicable law and the terms of this Agreement. The Operator shall designate a representative to serve as the point person for ensuring compliance, reporting, and other communications related to the Operator's compliance.

3.12 Services Provided by the Local Education Agency (LEA)

The parties agree that services provided by the LEA to the Operator shall be based on a schedule developed by the LEA and the Operator, or a schedule developed by the ASD.

4. Incorporation by Reference

Each of the following documents is included as a part of this Agreement by reference:

a.   Application in response to Request for Proposal
b.   Memorandum of Understanding between the ASD, Operator and/or LEA.

5. Effective Date

This Agreement shall not be binding upon the parties until it has been signed first by the Operator and then by the ASD.

ACHIEVEMENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT

X
Chris Barbic
Chris Barbic (Apr 21, 2015)
Chris Barbic
Superintendent, Achievement School District

X
Bob Nardo
Bob Nardo (Apr 21, 2015)
Bob Nardo
Head of School, Libertas School of Memphis

X
Gregory Polley
Gregory Polley (Apr 17, 2015)
Gregory Polley
Board Chair, Libertas School of Memphis

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Exhibit 1 – Operator Application in response to Request for Proposal

Exhibit 2 – ASD-LEA Memorandum of Understanding (if applicable)

Exhibit 3 – ASD List of State and Federal Compliance Reports

Exhibit 4 – ASD School Performance Framework

Exhibit 5 – ASD Student Handbook

Libertas School of Memphis

Response to Charter School Request for Proposals
"Innovative" Model
Tennessee Achievement School District

April 2014

Applicant team
Bob Nardo
Michelle Boyle
Sara Nardo

Board of Trustees
Gregory Polley
Markise Rogers
Joshua Shipley
Ellison Bakelaar
Vinessa Brown
Joan Lange

The mission of Libertas is to be a school for human flourishing –
to cultivate the minds, hands and hearts of children in Memphis
for lives of wonder, work and love.

Table of Contents

ACHIEVEMENT
SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHARTER SCHOOL REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Schools Opening Fall 2015 and Beyond

released February 3, 2014

Section I. Introduction from Superintendent Chris Barbic

Dear Charter Applicant,

On behalf of the Tennessee Achievement School District (ASD) students across the state, we sincerely thank you for your interest in applying to operate a high-performing school as part of our district. Whether you are applying to operate a single charter or to add to an existing network of schools, we understand the tremendous amount of work and commitment required to open and run a high-performing school.

Our mission is bold: move the bottom 5% schools (Priority Schools) to the top 25% in five years. We believe that high-performing charter partners are critical to accomplishing this ambitious goal because high-performing charter schools give principals and teachers the freedom to use their best ideas to ignite student learning, and great charter schools put power back in the hands of parents.

The development and release of this Request for Proposals (RFP) marks the ASD's fourth generation of charter authorizing. With this year's process comes a refined focus on specific needs not addressed by our current high-quality options. The RFPs will narrow the focus of the 2015 authorization process to alternative programs, innovative models, and specific grade-divisions needed in the neighborhoods we serve across Tennessee. Applicants who choose to move forward in this process must meet one of these three needs, and in exchange will be provided the opportunity to lead the way and create powerful "proof points" for what is possible for all students in Tennessee.

The ASD is committed to quality in every aspect of our operation, and we firmly believe that quality authorizing leads to quality schools. We want to be clear that we are committed to authorizing charters only to the leadership teams and organizations we believe demonstrate the capacity necessary to operate high-performing schools. Our goals are too ambitious, and the nature of our work too difficult, for us to provide our students and families with anything less than the very best the charter community can provide. To that end, we are contracting with experienced evaluators locally and across the country to review the applications we receive. All of the evaluators were selected through a rigorous process, and we are confident that we have created a demanding, thorough, and transparent application and review process.

As you complete your application, please feel free to contact us with any questions. You can direct questions to Margo Roen, Director of New Schools, at mroen@tnasd.org. Our team is committed to responding to your questions within 48 hours and ensuring the application and review process is fair and transparent.

Again, thank you for your interest in joining our effort to build the possible and deliver a life-changing education to every ASD student in Tennessee.

Sincerely,

Chris Barbic
Superintendent

Section II. Achievement School District at a Glance
Demographics
The pie charts to the right show the demographic breakdown of the seventeen current ASD schools by ethnicity, gender, economic status, special education status, and English Language Learner status. The graphs below show current and projected ASD enrollment for Memphis and across Tennessee.
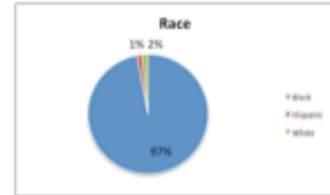
Enrollment

High Quality ASD School Choices for Memphis Families
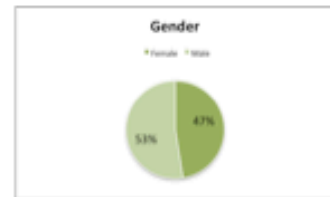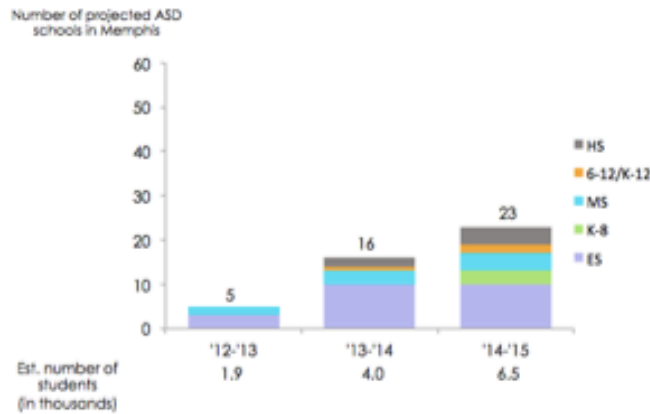
High Quality ASD School Choices for Tennessee Families
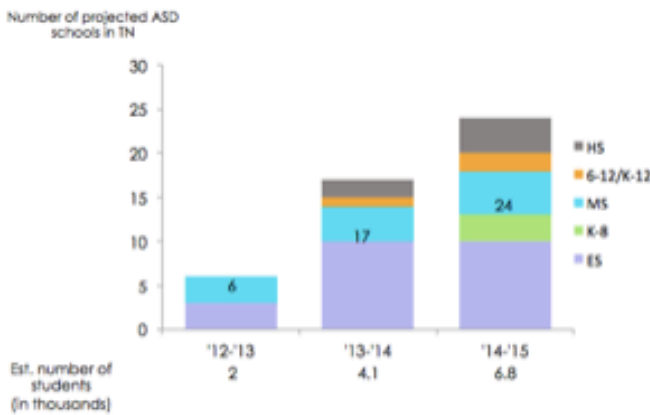
Section III. Start-Up and Experienced Operator Application Tracks

The Charter School Proposal process is a phased process with multiple feedback points. Applicants will first submit an Intent to Apply packet. For Start-Up applicants, this will consist of a Founders Application, school summary template, and eligibility requirement check; the Experienced Operators will complete a data request, school summary template, and eligibility requirement check. Invited applicants will then submit a proposal in response to the ASD's Request for Proposals, which includes a section on Meeting the Need, Academic Plan, Operations Plan, and Financial Plan, followed by an interview for those who qualify. The interview may include performance tasks and scenarios based on actual experiences from the ASD's current schools as well as targeted questions based on the submitted Plans.

The process will also provide charter applicants with a choice of customized application tracks most relevant to their background and organizational capabilities:

1. Start-Up Application Track – appropriate for groups that have little to no experience running autonomous charter schools. Start-Up applicants should ensure that plans for a new school are explained in depth in place of a track record (applications may be up to 75 pages, excluding the required attachments) and have a school leader identified by the time of application. Start-Up applicants may apply to open only one school.

2. Experienced Operator Application Track – appropriate for experienced charter operators that have one or more successful schools in operation in Tennessee and/or nationwide. This track will immediately focus on the recent performance of existing schools and the operational elements of the applicant's plan to expand into high need, high priority communities in Tennessee (application may be up to 75 pages, excluding attachments). Experienced operators are eligible to apply to open multiple schools utilizing this application (see page 12 for details). *The ASD will evaluate the academic track record of each Experienced Operator candidate upon receipt of their mandatory Intent to Apply packet. The ASD will invite qualified operators to proceed to Phase 2 of the application process within one week of receiving the required data (included in the Intent to Apply packet). Intent to Apply packets are due no later than 5:00pm CT on March 3, 2014, and may be submitted on a rolling basis prior to that date.*

These different application tracks will have slightly different requirements and different independent evaluation elements, all most appropriate for an applicant's background and proven capabilities. *Applicants should select the appropriate application track using the following table for guidance.*

Track	Qualifications	Eligibility to Apply
Start-Up Track	The non-profit group: • has never operated a charter school or currently operates a charter school that has been open for one full school year*	• The non-profit must submit a signed eligibility confirmation form, acknowledging that all eligibility requirements will be met at the appropriate time (see the Intent to Apply packet) • The applicant must submit the Founders

	or less • does not intend to employ an educational service provider or intends to employ an educational service provider that has not operated a school for more than one full school year *applicants with one full school year of operation should reach out to Margo Roen for further instruction (mroen@tnasd.org)*	Application responses in order to advance to the second phase of the application process • The instructional leader *(principal, head of school, etc.)* MUST be identified by April 21st in order for applicants to proceed to the third phase of the application process (school leader bio and evidence of track record are required as a part of the proposal due April 21st; failure to supply the required school leader information by this date will result in disqualification from the application process)
Experienced Operator Track	Non-profit group: • has operated one or more charter schools for at least two years or intends to employ an educational service provider that has operated one or more schools for at least two years	• The non-profit must submit signed eligibility confirmation form acknowledging that all eligibility requirements will be met at the appropriate time (see the Intent to Apply) • The existing organization must submit the requested academic and demographic data and meet performance thresholds to advance to the second phase of the application process • In order for applicants to proceed to the third phase of the application process, the regional leader *(Regional Director, Executive Director, etc.)* MUST be identified by and present for the interview for any operator proposing to open in the fall of 2015 * * *Note: Not applicable if the non-profit applicant or the educational service provider currently operates ONE or more schools that have been open for at least four years*

Applicants may propose one of three models for the ASD's 2015 authorization round:

1. Alternative Model: Alternative education providers are needed for all grades and may be for alternative settings, services for expelled or suspended students, for reenrollment to engage student dropouts, and/or to serve as a regional center of excellence for special education exceptionalities. Alternative proposals will be accepted for Memphis only.

2. Innovative Model: Innovative models must introduce a new or developing approach to educating students (e.g., blended learning) that is substantially different from the highly structured model used by many high-performing schools. We welcome innovative proposals for all grades and regions (Shelby County, Davidson County, Hamilton County). Innovative model applicants may apply as a New Start or turnaround operator (Phase-In or Full Transformation). Please see descriptions below:

   - *New Start* is for applicants intending to find or develop a facility separate from that in which a persistently low performing school – as identified by the state – is located, OR intending to operate in a persistently low performing school side-by-side with the existing school and without any students assigned to the proposed school. No students will be assigned to a New Start school. Enrollment is by affirmative choice of eligible families.
   - *Phase-In* is for applicants intending to take over an existing Priority List school in a phased approach. For example, a high school Phase-In might start with a 9th grade that replaces the existing school's 9th grade while the rest of the existing school (grades 10-12) continues to operate. In the second year, the Phase-In school would serve grades 9-10 while the existing school serves grades 11-12. This proposed phasing continues until the Phase-In school serves all grades previously served by the identified school. Students in the Phase-In grades will be assigned to your school as their default neighborhood option. They will need to affirmatively opt out of your school if they wish to attend a different school. Students not assigned to your school but otherwise eligible to attend an ASD school may enroll contingent on availability of seats.
   - *Full Transformation* is for applicants proposing to assume immediate responsibility for all students in all grades of a persistently low performing school. The previous school will no longer exist. Students in all grades will be assigned to the turnaround school as their default neighborhood option. They will need to affirmatively opt out of your turnaround school if they want a different option. Students not assigned to the turnaround school but otherwise eligible to attend an ASD school may enroll contingent on availability of seats.

3. Neighborhood Schools: Based on academic performance trends, the ASD realizes there is still a need for more elementary school turnaround partners in northwest and southwest Memphis, middle school partners in northeast and southeast Memphis, and additional elementary and middle school partners in Nashville. Neighborhood charter schools must agree to turn around a current failing school. In doing so, Neighborhood School models must serve all students zoned to attend the neighborhood school, regardless of disability, and must provide the same transportation currently afforded to its students. Specific schools and feeder patterns will not be decided until after 2013-14 school year performance data is released this summer/fall. Operators may elect to apply as phase-in or full transformation models only (see descriptions above).

Automatic Waivers of State Statutes and Rules

By submitting this application, the applicant requests a waiver of all education statutes and rules of the State Board or Department of Education, except those listed in T.C.A. § 49-13-105 or included by reference (such as statutes and rules related to licensing of charter school teachers) in Title 49, Chapter 13 (the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act).

Section IV: Charter Application Evaluation

The 2015 charter application process will assess applicants on the qualities that have been demonstrated to contribute most significantly to school success. Each submission is narrowly tailored to focus on specific qualifications:

	Start-Up Applicants	Experienced Operators
Phase 1 Eligibility	• Submits Intent to Apply packet with Founders Application • Meets basic eligibility requirements	• Submits Intent to Apply packet and Data Request • Meets basic eligibility requirements • Has a demonstrated track record of positive student outcomes, with a focus on student growth and achievement (% proficiency) with student populations similar to those they will serve in Tennessee
Phase 2 Defining Quality & Addressing the Need	• Ambitious, cohesive, relevant and feasible core academic plan for transforming the lowest performing schools in the state • Understanding of responsibility to provide essential school functions (finances, special education, discipline, etc.) • Capacity to financially and operationally manage a school and a strong plan to do so • Proper fiscal oversight, controls, checks and balances • Appropriate educational service provider contract, if applicable • Appropriate, feasible, equitable, and adequately-resourced plans for systematic student intervention and support (including discipline, special education and technology) • Specific plan for addressing the needs outlined in the RFP • *By April 21, 2014:* Qualified school leader with demonstrable success with target student population (track record of positive student outcomes, with a	• Clear and relevant educational model for transforming the lowest performing schools in the state • Comprehensive and feasible scale plan, both academically and operationally • Capacity to financially and operationally manage a network ofschools and a strong plan to do so • Proper fiscal oversight, controls, checks and balances • Appropriate educational service provider contract, if applicable • Appropriate, feasible, equitable, and adequately-resourced plans for systematic student intervention and support (including discipline, special education and technology) • Specific plan for addressing the needs outlined in the RFP

	focus on student growth and achievement (% proficiency) with similar student populations)	
Phase 3 Capacity	• Opportunity for applicants to exhibit required leadership and operational capabilities, as well as appropriate Board capabilities and oversight	• *By June 23, 2014:* Qualified regional leader identified, if applicable • Opportunity for applicants to show what they have accomplished in existing schools • Opportunity for applicants to exhibit required leadership and operational capabilities, as well as appropriate Board capabilities and oversight

In addition to providing applicants with an opportunity to demonstrate their leadership capacity, Phase 3 will also provide applicants with an opportunity to clarify, in an in-person interview, information presented in their application documents. Applicants will receive feedback on Phases 1 and 2 of their application prior to Phase 3 so that they are better equipped to address areas of need and prepare to present a clear and comprehensive plan. *Only applicants that approach the standards for the majority of the sections outlined in the RFP will be invited to the Capacity Interview phase.*

All submissions will be evaluated by an independent Evaluation Team that includes both national charter school experts as well as community members and employees of the Tennessee Department of Education and/or Achievement School District. All evaluators will have demonstrable expertise in academics, operations, and/or finance. Evaluators will receive training on best practices in application evaluation and applying the evaluation criteria in their reviews. Evaluation Teams will use standardized forms and reports to support consistency and transparency. ASD staff will also observe the evaluation and interview processes.

Evaluation Teams and the ASD serve different roles in the charter evaluation process:

- Evaluation Teams evaluate each proposal on its own merits and develop recommendations to the ASD based on written application materials and interviews, due diligence, performance tasks and, potentially, site visits. In developing their recommendations, the Evaluation Teams will consider only the application packet as submitted by the deadline, the applicant's capacity interview, performance during a practical exercise, and objective information (such as past school performance data).

- The duty of the Evaluation Teams is to recommend approval or denial of each application based on its merits, the responsibility of the ASD is to decide. The ASD is responsible for considering all information in making the most informed decisions possible. In addition to the input and data considered by the independent review teams, the ASD's decision also considers external factors, such as an applicant's overall alignment with the ASD (spirit of collaboration, ambitious goals, serving the highest need).

The overview on the following page describes the evaluation process in greater detail.

Charter RFP Evaluation Process

Milestone	Date (2014)
PHASE 1: LETTER OF INTENT AND ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION	
RFP Release	February 3
The ASD releases three separate Request for Proposals, each including instructions for groups applying to operate an ASD school beginning in the 2015-16 school year and a description of the need.	
Online Submission Portal Launched	February 3
Requests for Proposals, as well as required template documents for the applicants' use in preparing applications, will be posted in the Box portal, found HERE. Proposal submission instructions for the application will be sent following completion of the Intent to Apply packet.	
Web-based Orientation Session for Prospective Applicants	February 12, 3:00 pm CT
The ASD will conduct Webinar orientation sessions for prospective applicants. This session will provide an overview of the Achievement School District as well as discuss the application timeline, eligibility requirements, and provide interested groups with a demonstration of the Box online application upload process. **Webinar Access:** https://global.gotomeeting.com/meeting/join/658729557 Use your microphone and speakers (VoIP) - a headset is recommended. Or, call in using your telephone. United States: +1 (267) 507-0017 Access Code: 658-729-557 Audio PIN: Shown after joining the meeting Meeting ID: 658-729-557	
Intent to Apply Packet Due	March 3, 5:00 pm CT
The MANDATORY Intent to Apply packet and all required attachments must be submitted via upload to Box by 5:00 pm CT. Files must be submitted by emailing HERE. Do not place content into the body of the email submission, only attached documents will be reviewed. Late Submissions will not be accepted. Applicants who fail to submit a complete Intent to Apply packet will be discontinued from the application process.	
Notification of Eligibility (based on due diligence)	By March 10th
The ASD will invite qualified experienced operators to proceed to Phase 2 of the application process within one week of receiving the required data (included in the Intent to Apply packet). All Start-Up applicants will proceed to Phase 2.	
PHASE 2: APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION	
Web-based Orientation Session for	March 12, 3:00 pm CT

Prospective Applicants
This webinar session will provide eligible applicants with information about the RFP content and evaluation process, including a brief discussion of the interview process. **Webinar Access:** https://global.gotomeeting.com/meeting/join/874136325 Use your microphone and speakers (VoIP) - a headset is recommended. Or, call in using your telephone. United States: +1 (773) 945-1032 Access Code: 874-136-325 Audio PIN: Shown after joining the meeting Meeting ID: 874-136-325

Proposals Due	**April 21, 5:00 pm CT**
All application documents must be submitted in complete and final form by 5pm CT via upload to the Box online application submission platform. Submission instructions will be sent following completion of the Intent to Apply packet and will be demonstrated in the Webinars. Late or incomplete documents will not be accepted.	

Application Evaluation	**April 21-June 13**
Evaluation Teams will evaluate proposals using the published evaluation criteria. Those applicants who receive a mark of "Falls Far Below the Standard" in two or more of the four categories (Academics, Operations, Finance, Meeting the Need) will not be invited to proceed to the final phase.	

PHASE 3: CAPACITY DEMONSTRATION AND DECISION MAKING	
Applicant Capacity Interviews	**Week of June 23** (specific dates/times/locations TBA)
Evaluation Teams will interview applicant teams to explore questions and concerns raised during proposal evaluation and to assess group capacity to implement the proposed program effectively.	
Superintendent's Decisions	**July 21**
The Superintendent will make qualification decisions based on Evaluation Team recommendations. Please note that, by law, all Achievement School District authorization decisions are final and may not be appealed.	

Section V: Opportunity to Apply for Multiple Schools

Experienced Operator applicants are eligible to apply for multiple schools. Start-Up Applicants may only apply for one school and should disregard the instructions below.

Experienced Operator applicants should utilize the following growth plan:

Year 1   Applicants may be approved to open multiple schools in Year One of operation

Year 3+   Experienced operators may outline their multi-year and multi-school expansion in Tennessee in their response to the RFP. If the operator is approved, the multi-year, multi-school plan is conditionally approved. The ASD will analyze Year One data and may green-light an operator to open schools in Year Three and beyond if Year One data is satisfactory. Note that the growth plan cannot include additional schools in year 2.

Section VI: Resources

The ASD has a strong desire to see qualified charter applicants succeed in the proposal process. The following resources have been assembled to:

(a) Ensure that applicants recognize the choice option they are most qualified to provide; and

(b) Provide applicants with information and guidance that may be helpful in putting together a successful proposal.

It is recommended that applicants review these external resources before proceeding with the charter application process.

Resource	Description	Location
Tennessee Department of Education – Charter Schools Office	• Includes multiple resources about starting a charter school, completing charter applications, TN state law, etc. *(Note: The charter application posted on the state website is different than the ASD's Request for Proposals and does not need to be completed for ASD authorization)*	http://www.tn.gov/education/fedprog/fpcharterschls.shtml
Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act	• Outlines the rules and regulations that govern charter schools	http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/tncode/
Tennessee Charter School Center	• Provides education leaders the tools, training, and support to transform Tennessee's lowest-performing schools into the next generation of great charter schools in Tennessee	http://tnchartercenter.org/
ASD Website	• Check frequently for: o Webinars for charter applicants o Charter applicant office hours o New resources	http://www.achievementschooldistrict.org/asd-news/

Section VII: Achievement School District Priorities

Applicants must meet various eligibility requirements at each stage of the application process. Operators must acknowledge that they meet these requirements by submitting a signed copy of the Eligibility Notification Form included as part of the Intent to Apply packet.

In addition to legal qualifications, the Achievement School District has other strategic priorities:

Feeder Pattern Focus	The ASD believes in a "feeder" pattern focus—groups of elementary, middle and high schools feeding into each other—to ensure community collaboration and to maximize the impact of the turnaround work.
	Feeder patterns of focus exhibit one or more of the following criteria:
	High Concentration of Need – a large number of schools in the feeder pattern are on the Priority List **Lowest Performing Schools** – one or more of the schools in the feeder pattern are of the highest need **Ongoing Turnaround Work** – one or more schools in the neighborhood are currently being transformed by the ASD or the LEA (iZone school)

Priority List	The applicant seeks to acquire a charter for a school that will be located in the Achievement School District, which: • May only serve students zoned to attend a Priority List school (schools performing in the bottom 5% of Tennessee's schools) • In the case of a Phase-In or Full Transformation model, will commit to serving *every student* currently zoned to attend the school to which the operator is matched to turn around and will provide transportation in accord with the ASD transportation policy

Transformational Change	The applicant seeks to create transformational change for the communities they serve, meaning they: • Put forth a model that will result in double digit academic gains • Seek to take schools from the bottom 5% to the top 25% in TN within 5 years • Believe that the work goes beyond the classroom – transforming communities in partnership with community members

Section VIII: Priority List School Profiles

Aggregated data for Priority List schools is available to applicants on Tableau. Data is sorted by city, geographic region, feeder pattern, and tier level and is intended to provide applicants the opportunity to create a targeted plan to meet the needs of the community to be served. A sample profile is provided below.

Memphis and Davidson Priority School Overview (2012-13 Data)
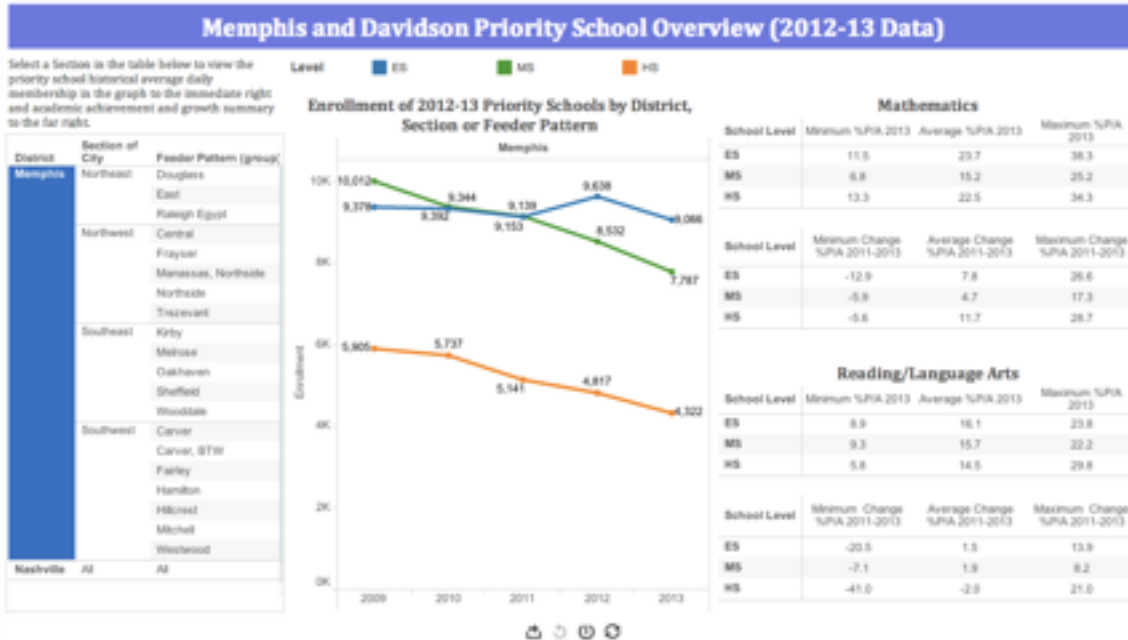
Section IX: Operator Request for Proposals

OPERATOR APPLICANT INSTRUCTIONS

Specifications

- Applicants MUST submit applications electronically through the Box platform and must use the following templates:
  - Intent to Apply Template (MS Word Document); *Note: There are separate Start Up and Experienced Operator versions. Please select the correct one.*
  - Application Coversheet and Enrollment Projection Template (MS Word Document)
  - Proposal Narrative Template (MS Word Document); *Note: There are three separate RFPs outlining different needs. Please select the correct one.*
  - Charter School Board Member Information Sheet Template (MS Word Document); *Note: There are separate Start Up and Experienced Operator versions. Please select the correct one.*
  - Board Membership Template (MS Excel Document)
  - Statement of Assurances Template (MS Word Document)
  - Financial Plan Workbook (MS Excel Document)

  All elements of the application must be typed with 1-inch page margins and 11-point Calibri font, single-spaced.

- Each major section (Executive Summary, Meeting the Need, Academic Plan, etc.) must begin on a separate page, as indicated in the RFP document. Do not exceed 75 pages for the full proposal narrative. Attachments are not included in the narrative page limit.

- If a particular question does not apply to your team or application, simply respond "Not Applicable," AND state the reason this question is not applicable to your team or proposal.

- All required attachments should be clearly labeled and uploaded in the file format specified and with the file names provided.

- The following is a list of attachments to accompany the application:
  1. Letters of Community Support/Partnership
  2. Student/Parent Handbook
  3. Leadership team job descriptions
  4. Resumes and student achievement data for school leader (*if applicable; Note: required for Start-Up applicants*)
  5. Competencies used for school leader selection
  6. Regional Director resume or job description (*if applicable*)
  7. Teacher evaluation tool(s)
  8. School leader evaluation tool(s)
  9. Network organizational charts (*if applicable*)
  10. Board Member Template

11. Board Member Information Sheets
12. Board Bylaws, Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policies
13. Incubation Year Planning Table
14. CMO/ESP documentation *(if applicable)*
15. Operational execution plan
16. Facility MOU *(if applicable)*
17. Insurance coverage
18. Budget narrative
19. Network historical financial documents *(if applicable)*
20. Financial Plan Workbook

- When submitting resumes and biographies, label each document with the individual's affiliation with the proposed school (board member, principal, teacher, etc.).

- Complete all sheets in the Financial Plan Workbook.

- Review all elements of your application for completeness before submitting.

- Late submissions will not be accepted.

Submission Instructions

1. Prepare your application **using the templates and online submission process established by the ASD. The complete online process, including all templates and detailed instructions, will be available on February 3, 2014.** You will upload each element of the application (intent to apply, cover sheet, narrative, financial workbook, attachments, etc.) separately using the online portal.

2. Submission information will be provided following completion of the mandatory Intent to Apply. Upload each of your documents to the online application system using the instructions provided. **Be sure to upload the documents in the file format specified.** An overview of how to use Box will be included in the ASD's orientation sessions for potential applicants.

3. To be eligible to submit a full proposal for the 2015-16 school year cycle, **applicants must first submit the Intent to Apply packet by 5:00 pm CT on March 3, 2014.** *Note: Experienced operators will be notified by the ASD (as indicated above) if they meet the academic track record standards to apply.*

4. **Box will automatically shut down access to all applications at 5:00 pm CT on April 23, 2014.** Be sure to allow adequate time to upload all documents before the deadline. Applications not SUBMITTED, including applications that are partially uploaded, will not be accepted. Emailed and/or printed copies of sections will not be accepted.

Section X: Application

Application – SCHOOLS OPENING FALL 2015

All applicants must submit their response to the Request for Proposals (RFP) no later than 5:00 pm CT on April 21st, 2014. Applications should include only the information requested below, *saved in a single PDF file with page numbers and clearly labeled section headings (applicants are encouraged to use a bookmark function to organize their work).* Applications should be no more than 75 pages (not including the requested attachments) and should be submitted via the submission platform.

Please submit an application that addresses the following questions / issues. There are no page limits for individual sections except for the Executive Summary. The total application may not exceed 75 pages (not including the requested attachments).

Please keep in mind that your application is a professional document. The quality of the document that you submit should reflect the quality of the school that you propose to open. Review teams will be able to navigate well-organized, effectively edited documents easily, thereby focusing their energy on reviewing the content of each application. Grammar, spelling, and formatting all make an impression on a reviewer.

The purpose of this RFP is to assess the potential of charter applicants to produce high-quality student outcomes, bringing Tennessee schools in the bottom 5% to the top 25% in five years.

Executive Summary

4 Page Limit

Provide a brief overview of your proposed school, including:

- Proposed model (Alternative, Innovative, or Neighborhood Charter School model) and target community
- The outcomes you expect to achieve
- The key components of your educational model
- The values, approach, and leadership accomplishments of your school leader or leadership team
- Key supporters, partners, or resources that will contribute to your school's success

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What would education be like if our goal were true human flourishing? We would equip students "not only to earn [a] living, but to *live*." [1] Most of us are familiar with the unequal educational and economic opportunities in America. As of 2012, our city, Memphis, had the highest concentration of the lowest-performing schools in a state that was 47th in the country in achievement; just 28% of Memphis elementary school students were proficient in reading or math on state tests; barely 67% of students graduated high school,[2] and only a fraction were actually college and career ready.[3] These are perhaps unsurprising when correlated with the fact that Memphis is among the poorest metropolitan areas in America; in the Frayser neighborhood in particular, nearly 40% of people are in poverty, and about one in five are unemployed. [4] Yet those public schools that do prepare students for college or careers often fail to foster in students a sense of purpose in learning or stewardship in community. That is an impoverishment of our culture.

These dual poverties give rise to Libertas, an "innovative," neighborhood-based, phase-in PreK-6 charter school offering truly rich learning to students in a high-need area of Memphis. *The mission of Libertas is to be a school for human flourishing – to cultivate the minds, hands and hearts of children in Memphis for lives of wonder, work and love.* Partnering with families and neighbors, we will build on the best of the college-prep charter school movement to advance the lowest-performing students to the upper tier in the state, while filling its gaps with personalized Montessori teaching methods, Core Knowledge curriculum, and the pursuit of moral and intellectual virtue – amounting to a rigorous liberal arts education for each student's calling. *Essentials of our approach:*

Building on what works: Our co-founders will apply 17 combined years of experience in effective urban schools, which have demonstrated that hard work, order, and data-informed instruction can help children subjected to educational inequity achieve far more than many expect of them.

Personalizing learning: Libertas students will develop habits of inquiry and independence through Maria Montessori's developmentally responsive method of individually paced work and freedom within the limits of a carefully structured environment.

Broadening horizons through the liberal arts: In his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," Martin Luther King Jr. exemplifies how his education in humanistic literature and world history enabled him to powerfully apply the timeless idea of justice to the crisis of his time. For too long, such an education was intentionally denied to African Americans. And so Libertas will teach a truly rich Core Knowledge curriculum, providing cultural literacy while inviting each child to a vision of goodness, truth and beauty.

A school culture of virtue: Structure helps children focus. More than just reward and punishment systems, though, school culture can mean ordering our selves toward excellence – hence "Libertas," a Latin word evoking the self-governance to use freedom well. We will present students with admirable historical and literary figures as compelling models of striving for the moral and intellectual virtues that children need to thrive as students, citizens and human beings. Our culture will focus upon the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance, along with gratitude, humility and love.

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[1] Charlotte Mason, 19th century British educator, contended that "[A] well-educated man with cultivated imagination, trained judgment, wide interests...is prepared to master the intricacies of any profession," as well as "make use of himself… for his own

[2] "Rival Strategies for Running Schools Put Memphis in Hot Seat." *Education Week*. 1/3/14. http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2014/01/09/16hotseat.h33.html?tkn=PSOF04uEUopiELLKyEpUpOjDsFXSB41Tygkn&cmp=clp-edweek&intc=EW-QC14-EWH

[3] Cf. citywide ACT scores: http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2011/aug/17/act-scores-dip-tennessee-education-commissioner-sa/. As per a Teach for America publication, this rate equated to just a few hundred students college ready.

[4] Estimated rates vary from 17-25%, depending on counting of discouraged workers, etc. Community Lift "Frayser Data Book," accessed 1/23/14: http://www.communitylift.org/sites/default/files/datafiles/Frayser%20Data%20Book.pdf

Cultivating an "attachment village": Knowing that a school is one part of a community, we will utilize 3-year looping and multi-age classrooms to foster close connections among teachers, students and families; study local history; serve our neighbors in need; and work closely with families, wraparound service providers, churches and other neighborhood pillars to support healthy development in a nurturing village of inter-generational attachments.

Preparing students for higher learning and their personal calling toward stewardship: Healthy societies need craftsmen, farmers and artists as well as doctors and engineers. But zip code need not dictate one's occupational horizons. Informed by Lincoln's dictum that the "citizens of a free country are expected to work with their heads as well as their hands," Libertas will enrich all children with music and fine arts, manual crafts and small-scale agriculture (e.g. music, neighborhood garden, woodworking, bicycle repair). Most of our graduates will pursue college or post-secondary education. But our program of "integrating thinking and doing" will uniquely ensure that all students have both useful skills and that sense of purpose that together will flower into the full range of postsecondary callings.

Beginning with grades Pre-K – 1, we propose to phase-in to a neighborhood elementary school, or open as a co-located, fresh-start school. If authorized for the latter, we ask the district to help create a comprehensive plan for proportionality between area need and total school seats offered and; we also wish to utilize a public facility, including possible co-location. We prefer to serve in the Frayser neighborhood, where we can expand the diversity of neighborhood-based educational options. We have been intensely engaged in community outreach here since last summer, and have close relationships with other school operators, dozens of residents, and several local organizations. Potential partnerships include: wraparound services from local providers; a 0-5 early learning program with members of the Frayser Neighborhood Council's education committee; sharing services with nearby charter operators to obtain economies of scale; and a cooperative enrollment and transportation program with other schools that would create a sphere of quality, neighborhood-based choices for families that ultimately transcend the dichotomy of zoned versus lottery-based schools.

Our proposed school leadership, Board of Trustees, and key partnerships provide a strong foundation for organizational success. Our Head of School has nearly ten years of experience on the frontiers of urban education, focusing on design and management of high-quality, fast-growing business operations, including senior leadership roles at high-performing urban charter school networks and the Tennessee Achievement School District. He has been recognized nationally for his effectiveness with educational support systems, and is completing a yearlong Education Entrepreneurs Fellowship with the Tennessee Charter School Center to round out his skills. Our Head Teacher has stood out among her peers during eight years of experience as a classroom teacher, special educator, and grade-level chairman in high-performing urban elementary and middle schools, including generating double-digit gains in student achievement. Our founding Board already includes longtime / lifelong Memphians who are active in the civic and local community, executives of local banks and family enterprises, a national education expert. We are developing a partnership with the Jackson, Tennessee-based Montessori Education Institute of North America teacher training program. We will also affiliate with Challenge Foundation Academies, a national philanthropy that provides ongoing professional development resources and collaboration opportunities with other schools teaching Core Knowledge with high-need student populations.

II. MEETING THE NEED

MEETING THE NEED – INNOVATIVE MODELS

The Achievement School District is excited to launch a Request for Proposals for innovative school models. Innovative models must introduce a new or developing approach to educating students (e.g., blended learning), one that is substantially different from the highly structured model used by many high-performing schools. We welcome innovative proposals for all grades and regions.

SCHOOL TYPE & REGION

Type:
☒ New Start

☒ Turnaround

| Applying for either |

☒ Phase-In

☐ Full Transformation
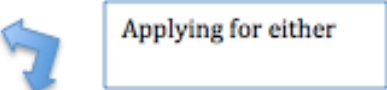
Region:
☐ Davidson County

☐ Hamilton County

☐ Knox County

☒ Shelby County

1. INNOVATIVE MODEL

> (1) Identify any **innovations** in your model in each of the following areas and explain how they will contribute to student success. - Staffing; - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment; - Scheduling and Time; - Provision of Services

Libertas will transform the learning environment, responding to students' developmental needs and an expressed need for richer options in the neighborhood, and guarantee learning thorough careful progress monitoring and adaptation. Because of space constraints, this section aims mostly to highlight some of our innovations, contingency planning, and so on. The full details, rationale, and expected outcomes can be found in the corresponding sections of the application: e.g. Transformational Change, Curriculum, Calendar/schedule, Staffing, and Operations/Finance.

Staffing: Responding to general developmental stages and differences in individual academic skills, Libertas students will be grouped in multiage cohorts subsuming a 3-year age span, rather than strict grade levels. Teachers will "loop" with the same students for 3 years. And all primary and lower elementary classrooms (i.e. through "3ʳᵈ grade") will have two full-time teaching faculty members. These "looping" and dual teacher structures mean that students and their families will have a continuous relationship with the same teacher(s) for 3 years, helping to increase trust and

communication between home and school, and thereby all adults' knowledge about student progress and needs. In addition to these direct benefits to children, the additional support should also indirectly benefit students by improving sustainability and retention of our best teachers.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Building on what cognitive science tells us about how students learn, our school will be organized around "personalized learning" through the Montessori method toward a rich, coherent, Core Knowledge curriculum. Each student will have an individual work plan and goals that they pursue on a flexible pace, tied to their readiness (i.e. working toward the same "what" with flexibility around "when" and "how"). Students will develop responsibility and self-direction in learning by experiencing freedom within the structure of an environment that is meticulously designed to draw them into concentrating on work with high-quality materials, coordinated across the curriculum and backward-planned to ensure mastery of key knowledge and skills. Most teaching will take place individually or in small groups, improving teacher-student ratios for instruction, and in a multi-age setting to facilitate peer learning. Individual student progress will be carefully monitored through, and adjustments made based on, flexibly scheduled benchmark assessments. Lastly, we will start early, with a developmentally responsive PreK program, building the oral language, physical and socio-emotional background children need to be ready to learn. We present the evidence for how these approaches should support student achievement in the appropriate sections.

Scheduling and Time: Since most of our students will begin school already behind more advantaged peers in cognitive development, our school will feature more time on task – an extended school day and year, and multi-subject work periods that efficiently reduce conventional transition times – when students will expand their knowledge and skills and enrich their education.

Provision of Services: We intend to partner with neighborhood-based organizations (including potentially Rangeline CDC, Agape, and Lifeline, among others) to help provide the wraparound services and skill development needed by students and families. We have begun conversations with other schools in the neighborhood about sharing programs to expand opportunities for students, back office services to achieve economy of scale, and creating an enrollment and transportation network that would expand families' access to neighborhood-based public school choices. With regard to providing services to meet students' diverse learning needs, we discuss in the Special Populations section and At-risk subsection that our philosophy and structure of support reflects a heavy focus on prevention of unnecessary classification and inclusion in services. Furthermore, under our Response to Intervention model (or RTI, explained under Driving Results and Special Populations), our Tier 1 education model – with individualized plans, tracking and instruction for all – is much like other schools' Tier 2.

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(2) How will you ensure that **students and families are aware** of the opportunities within your program? How will you market your innovative model in a way that makes families want to attend your school?

One of the staff members at the Leadership Empowerment Center and Innovation Church in Frayser said in support of our ideas that "we need richer options in the neighborhood so that families don't feel they need to choose between the community and their child's education." As discussed extensively in our parent and Community engagement section, we have a comprehensive plan for reaching families through channels familiar to them. In order to make our model accessible to families unfamiliar with Montessori, our plan includes hands-on exposure to materials, touring parent delegates to similar, existing schools and discussing their reactions with other families, among other strategies.

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(3) Given that many innovative models are new in concept and have little research to support the work – or– given that many innovative models have not been implemented in a turnaround setting, what will be your process for **monitoring quality** and making adaptations to the model?

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(4) What **contingencies** will be put in place as new programs and models are developed? How will you ensure that students maintain academic progress in spite of any implementation issues?

As demonstrated in the Transformational Change section, our key educational elements – Montessori and Core Knowledge – are established models: both are well-supported by cognitive science, were explicitly developed to meet the needs of educationally high-need students, and have been used for years by highly successful schools serving diverse populations (worldwide, in Montessori's case). Having acknowledged that, our model is certainly fresh for public schools in Memphis and Frayser. Therefore we are being intentional about identifying possible challenges and workarounds, especially in areas like our PreK investment, multi-age settings, and flexible benchmark assessments. We will monitor the effectiveness of these innovations with the help of an array of student data (discussed in the Assessment subsection), regular feedback from family and faculty stakeholders via our survey protocol (discussed in the Goals subsection), and scheduled data-informed planning times. These are part of our aspirations toward an attachment village and culture of craftsmanship in teaching.

As strongly as we believe in our research-based, principled proposal, we recognize that education is a practical art, best conducted without the fetters of ideology. We see our "innovations" not as ends in themselves, but as means toward the end of student achievement. Our founding leadership team brings expertise not just with our proposed innovations but also the effective techniques of urban charter schools. Consequently we have a broader set of tools to employ in adjusting our model as student needs and growth require; indeed, we very much see our innovative plan as another kind of structure: freedom with responsibility.

(5) Describe any cost savings or increased **efficiencies**, if any, which will result from the innovation? To what will these funds be reallocated?

We expect to achieve efficiencies in student and teacher time through our multi-subject work periods, meaning more time on task. We also expect that greater personalization of school-wide RTI Tier 1 will accelerate achievement for more students and thereby prevent unnecessary intervention cycles. We hope that the dual teacher model and pre-established quality curriculum will increase teacher retention and reduce the direct and indirect costs of high turnover experienced by so many urban schools. The corollary of our dual teacher model is that higher teacher quality of life makes for an overall employee "value proposition" that permits us to offer the more modest salaries required to have a higher ratio of teachers to students (as low as 12:1 in some classes). Our other re-investments include expanding the early learning program in later years (including growing the 4 year-old PreK and adding a 3-year old program) as well as a greater range of enrichment programs (music, art, gardening, etc). Lastly, our long-term plan to have a full PK-12 school on a single campus generates economies of scale in terms of capital outlay avoided (aside from the peer learning benefits we postulate).

(6) As proposed, will your school model comply with Tennessee statutes? If not, please describe how Tennessee's **waiver** law and the ASD-specific waiver rule (found HERE) will allow your model to be legally sound if approved.

We understand that state board rule 0520-14-03.01 provides for ASD schools to receive waivers of all allowable regulations under T.C.A. 49-13-105. The flexibilities permitted that are especially important to our innovations relate to class size and student grouping. Though our dual teacher model means that student:teacher ratios will be smaller than is often the case, the overall class size may be

larger. We will use restricted funds only for those student populations within mixed-age setting for which they are allowed.[5]

Another area we intend to explore is the alternate route certification program options that the Department of Education continues to expand. Our program has unique training needs often neglected in conventional teacher preparation programs. Knowing that charter school teachers are not exempted from certification requirements (though we do plan to utilize the licensing exemption for charter school leaders), we hope to work with the Department and a TN-based Montessori teacher preparation program to become a state-approved alternate route certification program. Similarly, we will rely upon the waiver for certification of charter school leaders.

2. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT [6]

(4) Identify any organizations, agencies, or consultants that are **partners in planning** and establishing the school, along with a brief description of their current and planned role and any resources they have contributed or plan to contribute to the school's development.

(3) Discuss the **community resources** that will be available to students and parents. Describe any partnerships the school will have with organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships, including any fee-based or in-kind commitments from organizations or individuals that will enrich student-learning opportunities. Include, as Attachment 1, existing evidence of support from intended community partners such as letters of intent/commitment, memoranda of understanding, and/or contracts.

Our proposal has been heavily influenced by our close work with people in Frayser who are leading its revival. During the course of planning, we have met regularly with organizations like the Frayser Neighborhood Council (FNC) education committee, Frayser Community Schools (FCS), Rangeline CDC / Ambassadors program, Frayser Exchange Club, Ed Rice Community Center, Agape Child and Family Services, Frayser Community Association, Frayser CDC, Tennessee Mentor, Leadership Empowerment Center, former school board member Tomeka Hart, Union Grove Baptist Church, Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Porter-Leath, and city councilman Lee Harris, to name just some. Letters of support for our application from some of these entities are appended. We are also thankful that a leader of one of the most active and respected persons among this group – Vinessa Brown of Lifeline to Success – is serving on our founding Board. And due to our Head of School's previous service as founding COO of the ASD, we have a close relationship with the leaders of the schools in Frayser. Of course a large and diverse group like these organizations have varying views. But a few key themes have emerged from our conversations and are present throughout our plan: Inter-cooperation of schools and community toward common aspirations; wraparound services for social-emotional needs; and enriching the range of educational options in the neighborhood.

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[5] While details remain, our broad concept for multi-age settings with braided public funds has been vetted in writing with the ASD's general counsel, officials in the state PreK and Human Services child care programs, and other LEAs, via personal communication (various throughout 2013). Tennessee's PreK scope of services requires providers to meet TN's Child Care Standards. SBE Rule 0520-01-03-.03 seems to permit multi-aged or split-grade classes when underlying student:teacher ratios are honored within. The MOU between TN Dept. of Education and Head Start permits "braiding funds [and] blending services... when funds are not comingled and federal funds are not supplanted." T.C.A. 49-6-107(e) permits supplementing state or local PreK funds. T.C.A. 49-6-101 (f)(3) seems to permit schools to participate in the Human Services child care program, and (4) requires sites to serve the greatest need, such as areas with the most poor families.

[6] Please see the Mission & Vision section for our philosophy of family and community engagement.

Our school will be a lively part of the neighborhood through study, service, and local partnerships. [7] Students will study local history and nature. Sciences and history courses at all levels of the school will send students to nearby parks, farms, and historical sites. We have spoken about support for this idea with the University of TN - Shelby County Agricultural Extension Service, and would also utilize the Civil Rights and TN History Museums. These lessons will come to life when students participate in small-scale, self-sustaining agriculture and manual crafts. We will have a school community garden, tended by children from every class with the guidance of community horticultural enthusiasts; produce from our garden will be served in school meals and brought home for family meals. Likewise, we are seeking community partners and artisans to help sponsor manual craft enrichment activities like bicycle repair, woodworking or animal husbandry. [8] At the primary level, children will participate appropriately in the care of their classrooms. And students will provide service to the community, whose members in turn will be present in the school. From elementary onward, every student will serve at least annually with one of many existing community options. To truly realize the demands upon us of our fellow creatures - beyond mere gestures of vague sympathy - we will emphasize concrete, personal service, such as neighborhood cleanup days with Lifeline, block captain work with FNC/Rangeline ambassadors, Impact food pantry, OLS clothing closet, or visiting the elderly or imprisoned (a not insignificant portion of the community). In a neighborhood with inconsistent civic participation, students will also grow as citizens through study of local issues, submitting testimony or letters to public officials and the media, and registering and informing voters; please see the Curriculum section for more details on this strand. We hope to bring the community into the school, through help from the TN Mentor program. We will expand the range of safe and fun activities for our kids made available by Ed Rice Center and at Union Grove's new after school programs. Together, we hope these elements will both endow students with clear-eyed gratitude for what they have received from family and neighbor, as well as recognize themselves as members already capable of contributing to sustaining that community.

Another way a school interacts with its community is how it spends money. It is an oft-cited concern at civic meetings in Frayser that public funds disproportionately flow away from the area. We will track the percentage of dollars from Libertas' annual budget that remain in the neighborhood, either through salaries/wages to employees who reside there, or to contractors/service providers based in the area, such as considering using Frayser's Blight Patrol for grounds care and/or cleaning service. Depending on baselines, we may set a goal to increase this rate annually.

A second theme among the voices of Frayser reflected in our plan is social-emotional needs. Many impoverished students experience toxic stress, and as a result need support and wraparound services, such as individual counseling for dealing with anger, to job-search support for family members. We have begun conversations with several entities, including Rangeline CDC and Agape Child and Family Services, about possibly providing these services for our families.

A third theme is coordination among schools – regardless of governance – in the neighborhood to ensure that all children are reading in 3rd grade and graduate high school ready for college, career and community (i.e., the vision of the FNC education committee). This is where our close relationship with so many of the other schools in Frayser will be a unique strength. We are close with the other current ASD schools as well as the founder of Frayser Community Schools. We are also in touch with four of the Shelby County Schools principals, the two largest private schools, and multiple childcare centers. Recognizing the importance of early learning and the opportunity for improving it in Frayser's many

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[7] In addition to Lasch's *Revolt of the Elites* and Crawford's *Shopclass as Soulcraft*, mentioned elsewhere, our programmatic vision is influenced by Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America*, and EF Schumacher, *Small is Beautiful*.

[8] Although most of Dr. Maria Montessori's work focused on early childhood and elementary education, she did muse that education for adolescents should include the opportunity to attain confidence and find a place in the world by running a small enterprise, with adult assistance, such as a farm or store.

free-standing day care programs, Libertas has, at the suggestion of the FNC's site director, led the development of a joint proposal for a model 0-5 program that would provide professional development for selected child care centers in exchange for increases in quality as well as creating a pipeline of additional opportunities for Libertas families. We also hope to share part-time enrichment teachers or programs with other schools that also may not be able to provide them on their own. And finally, we plan to cooperate with at least ASD schools around common enrollment and transportation systems, so that families have true neighborhood-based choice among a variety of quality options.

A final educational theme we have noted among Frayser's residents is the need for a greater array of options right in the neighborhood. Frayser residents are emphatic that they should not have to leave their neighborhood to find good jobs, nice stores, or least of all good schools. These kinds of amenities help a neighborhood's healthy pride. Perhaps this is one of the admirable legacies of Frayser's history prior to annexation by Memphis, or even just a few decades ago when it was still an attractive destination area for families, rather than a transient one as it is now for many.[9] Nevertheless, roughly 20% or more of students zoned to priority schools are opting-out today. Even with the promising transformation of several schools by the ASD, most are following a common instructional approach; though this will surely work for many students, a program like ours could prove complementary. One aspiration for us is to help reverse the opt-out rate of Frayser families from its neighborhood schools and, with other initiatives like the proposed Town Center, contribute to the sense that Frayser is the place to be. Perhaps this is why our plan was recently lauded at a public meeting by one Frayser-area district school principal, who said that a program like ours "would be great" for children here. Indeed, though still newcomers to the area, we have been welcomed by a preponderance of voices, who seem willing to employ the support of whomever will cooperate with them to meet their goals.

As discussed in other sections (Leadership, Governance, and Professional Development), we have a few other important partners in our planning and future. The TN Charter School Center (TCSC) sponsored our Head of School's customized fellowship this year, and will surely be a useful partner across the charter school sector in years to come. The Montessori Educational Institute of North America in Jackson, TN, is a nationally certified teacher-training program that is recognized by the TN Higher Education Commission. We are in discussions with MEINA about providing summer training for our new teachers. And we plan to formally affiliate with Team Challenge Foundation Academies (Team CFA), a national philanthropic network of Core Knowledge schools. Team CFA has provided input on our academic, governance and business plans, and will provide support in these areas as well as educational collaboration opportunities.

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(1) Describe how you will **engage parents and community members from the time that the application is approved through the opening of school**.

Libertas will continue our intensive engagement plan with parents and neighbors to and through the matching process and school opening.

A. *Targeted outreach* via door-to-door and direct mail to homes in projected zones – including proximal zones prior through the matching process, and assigned zone(s) between then and opening.
B. *Grassroots outreach* in the projected zone(s). We will continue to be present at, and ask to present at, established local institutions and events, such as the Exchange Club, Rice Community Center, Rangeline and Frayser CDC, day care centers, churches where we have good relationships such as Innovation, Union Grove, Promise Land, Our Lady of Sorrows, etc. We will post signs and have informational tables at shopping centers and stores (e.g. North Gate, Frayser Plaza, Frayser Village,

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[9] The Frayser area has ~23% annual mobility. http://factfinder2.census.gov/ We thank Frayser Community Schools for this link.

Georgian Hills, Kroger, Walgreen's, etc.), apartments (we have a relationship with the company that manages six complexes in the area), parks and other gathering places. And we will try to work with interested day care centers around student matriculation, especially the ones we know well on Rangeline and Millington roads.

C. *General outreach via earned media*: We will attempt to leverage our past experience in campaigns to earn some exposure in local media for our unique proposal in order to catch the interest of families not otherwise reached directly.

D. *Hands-on opportunities to learn about this unique program*: It will be critical for Libertas to help parents understand our model, because personalized learning is such an unfamiliar way of "doing school" for many. We need to help parents understand the importance of elements like practical life / care of self and environment as opportunities for children to build skills that will not only help them govern themselves but also dignity. We need to help prospective parents see beyond any initial misperception of disorder ("the kids are doing different things, on their own") as in fact the evidence of the micro-structure of Montessori. Based on the work of other Montessori schools serving high-need populations, we are confident that the ideas can be made accessible and appealing, as they are after all based on the study of how we really learn. And so the aforementioned outreach efforts will not only solicit parent feedback about current options (what they like about current options and what they would like to see otherwise), but more importantly invite parents to informational meetings - scheduled at convenient times - when they can engage with our model come to life: Families will be able to interact with tactile examples such as mathematics or language materials; see/hear/feel examples of the art, music, gardening and other enrichment programs (plant a seed in a pot of dirt with their child!); find out about the literature and exemplar persons we will study; and so on. In later years, older students will do these demonstrations. Variations of this opportunity will be offered during the "recruitment" phase (hosted in a space by one of our neighborhood partners), during summer orientation and summer school, back-to-school / "open house," or scheduled by timeslot. For those families who cannot make in-person events, we will show them catalogs of materials, photographs / print materials, videos, etc, as well as distribute a questionnaire .

E. *Early registration:* During the spring before the prior school year ends, we will work through the existing sending-school(s) as well as through our other communication channels to try to have all families re-register for school. By getting all necessary paperwork done as early as possible, we can adequately plan for all students (including begin to identify special needs), we can flesh-out information and enable easier contact moving forward (e.g. email, SMS).

F. *Welcome mailing & phone call*: Information about what to expect, to hang on the refrigerator

G. *Home visits & individual family meetings*: In the months before school launches, we will schedule individual visits with each enrolled family, either in their home or somewhere nearby, where we can build the relationship, answer any questions and review mutual expectations for school, family and student. We intend to continue this practice annually with new families.

H. *Schoolwide family orientation and picnic:* During the summer and before the program begins, we will invite all registered and interested families (who still need to register) to an orientation where they can meet faculty; experience classroom environment (e.g. the tactile/hands-on curriculum experience mentioned above); practice some of the school routines; and then enjoy a celebratory picnic, with our Head of School trying his hand at the grill.

I. *Late registration*: Flexible as needed.

J. *Student orientation*: The first week(s) of each school year will be focused on acclimating students to school culture, procedures, and relationships. The first few days will include new students (PreK, Kindergarten, and students entering older grades for the first time), before returning students arrive. We slightly extend the end of the year to make up for this time, as explained in the Calendar section.

K. *Enrollment phase-in*: As discussed in the phase-in plan, we will phase-in grades over time, allowing time and space to get to know each family.

Describe how you will engage **parents in the life of the school** (in addition to any proposed governance roles). Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement. Describe any commitments or volunteer activities the school will seek from, offer to, or require of parents.

One of our top priorities at Libertas is strong partnership between school and family, based on what we know about the role of adult relationships in child development. (Please see the Transformational Change section for further discussion.) Libertas will foster an "attachment village" of strong partnership with families through the following means:

A. *Enrollment process* (discussed above): Home visits; In-depth, personal exposure to unique learning environment; Welcome mailing and phone calls; Home visits; School-wide family orientation/picnic; Orientation; Family nights and Saturdays; Enrollment phase-in.

B. *Long-term relationship*: With our multi-age cohort classes, teachers "loop" with students in the same classroom for 3 years, fostering long-term relationships between teachers and families.[10] This also encourages older children to demonstrate responsibility and mentorship for younger children.[11]

C. *Frequent, positive communication*: Faculty proactively update parents with "good news" at least monthly, and communicate daily by phone, text or email as needed (with critical conversations logged for records); studies show that calls home on student work and behavior have a big impact.[12] Teachers in turn are available for parent or student calls by cell phone during certain time ranges. We will provide a regular school newsletter, and online access to our student information system (with computers available at school for parent access).

D. *Support to understand and monitor children's work*: We will help set parental expectations for students' work by providing cards visually depicting an overview of "What students will learn" in each division and over time, as well as make available copies of the Core Knowledge "What your __ Grader Should Know" books. Each week (probably Thursday) families will also receive students' weekly work plans with a progress report, which we will ask to be signed. At least twice per year we will host conferences to review standards-based mastery of student work. Families will be invited to observe periodic presentations of student work. Finally, we will offer conferences and meetings for parents on subjects like how to help your young child read with our method of phonics, use mathematics materials, etc, and possibly other topical matters like trends to be aware of in youth culture. We will endeavor to make these kinds of events accessible to parents by, when possible, soliciting their availability and scheduling them flexibly (or at least alternating day and evening events) in consideration that some of our students' families may work night shifts.

E. *Volunteering and/or participation in school activities*: Aristotle said that in the good regime, the citizen rules and in turn is ruled. We encourage all families to contribute to the school at least once

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[10] Paula Polk Lillard describes the "parent-assistant" as becoming a "true participant in the [child's] learning process," 146. For further positive analysis of the relationship between families and Montessori, see *Montessori: A Modern Approach*, 145-149.

[11] It may be worth noting that strong attachment is decisively not tantamount to overbearing. Ample recent accounts highlight the risks of such approaches to child-rearing (see for instance "Spoiled Rotten" in the July 2012 *New Yorker*, or July 2011 article in *The Atlantic*, "How to Land Your Kid in Therapy"). Instead of an uncritical acceptance of either common middle-class or working-class parenting styles, we are seeking to leverage the strengths and habits our students may bring from their neighborhoods, such as the greater unstructured time and contact with extended family that are common in working-class neighborhoods, as discussed in Annette Lareau's *Unequal Childhoods*.

[12] Cf. http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/E6CFSz8WtxnSJThzq8R8/full#.UsRQZPYR6TZ , accessed 2/14.

per term through participation or helpful work, such as tutoring, helping in crafts and agriculture programs (e.g. teach children to knit, work with wood, assist with school garden, etc.), providing school supports (office work, crossing guard, cleaning / light maintenance, etc.), guest read-aloud in class, and chaperoning field lessons. We will ask all families to have at least one person participate in quarterly Saturday school enrichment events. Families will be invited to observe weekly school community meetings, attend lunch as guests, attend school leader coffee discussions, etc.

F. *Family association* (tentative): To be developed in year 2 or after for support, fundraising, etc.
G. *Family/community outreach person on staff*, at least part-time
H. *Parent and student surveys*: Formal survey twice per year, as per our Goals subsection, as well as informal surveys after major events.
I. *Resources offered*: Eventually a parent center with computers for parents looking for jobs, working on resumes, sign up for training with Trezevant Career and Technology Center, etc. This will also provide a space for parents to meet and talk, conduct parenting classes, and so on.

In these ways, Libertas hopes to support our children's first teachers – their families. We wish to ensure that our students consistently hear affirming messages from the adults in their lives. And we believe that our collaboration will help families pursue the horizons open to them.

3. PHASE IN/FULL TRANSFORMATION PLANNING (TURNAROUND ONLY)

The ASD welcomes applicants who wish to provide new opportunities to underserved students by transforming chronically underperforming schools through either a Phase-In or Full Transformation Model. Applicants must have a clear plan for dramatically improving persistently underperforming school cultures, working effectively with an existing school community, significantly raising student achievement, and meeting the needs of at-risk populations. Phase-In and Full Transformation operators are expected to establish strong partnerships with the school community. If you are applying for a New Start school, please mark "n/a".

(1) Describe your organization's experience in taking over or turning around an underperforming school.

(2) Describe specific ways that you will engage and transform the existing school culture as you prepare to open and during the first year of operation.

(3) Outline how you will build community understanding and support of the school's turnaround.

(4) For Phase-In Schools (co-locating). If you plan to apply as a Full Transformation Model School, please put "n/a." (a) Explain how the phase-in school will establish a visual identity while simultaneously respecting and reinforcing the building history, role in the community, and campus identity. (b) Describe how you will transition to a shared campus, including your approach to shared space, resources, and services, and your approach to facilitating solutions to building-wide issues and supporting campus collaboration Be sure to outline any essentials for co-location

Our Head of School learned about the distinct challenges of school transformation during the two years he spent as a founding officer of the Tennessee Achievement School District, helping to operate or support the launch of 15 such efforts. As we are proposing either a phase-in or new start school, these lessons permeate many aspects of our application, especially our Community Engagement section, which explains several specific ways that our plan responds to neighborhood needs.

Community and family engagement: As we learned from numerous meetings about school transformation, many parents profess bewilderment that their child's school is "failing," insisting nevertheless that its teachers have cared for their children for years. Other community members may know about the schools' data but are wary of education policy churn. Even those who support reform rightly caution that you cannot well serve people you do not know.[13] In short, people must "know that you care before they care what you know." That is why we have invested months in listening to the people we intend to serve, building relationships and trust to pre-empt some of the challenges that have undermined some operators seen as "outsiders." Our founding Head of School resides in the Frayser zip code, and participates routinely in community activities. Many advocates, such as the Frayser Neighborhood Council, also want schools to prioritize, and work together rather than in isolation to support, the whole web of academic, early childhood development, and social-emotional needs. In response to these demands associated with school transformation, we have an integrated Pre-K program, and a budget for wraparound services such as health screenings and social work. Likewise, our relationship with several different school operators means we can facilitate cooperation around programs such as our proposed enrollment and transportation network, calendars, and so on. Please see the Parent & Community Engagement section for more about the attachment village.

Culture: ASD schools have been wise to incorporate positive aspects of the school cultures they find while encouraging new elements of culture aligned with student success. Several sections of this application – namely Parent and Community Engagement, School Culture and Discipline, and Facilities – list specific approaches that we hope to emulate, from respecting aspects of history and building layout, to providing parent and neighborhood ambassadors with palpable examples of what improvement will look like, and so on. One of the challenges in transforming school culture that has drawn some negative attention is the way that some fast-growing operators have felt they needed to implement standardized discipline systems, which have erred toward strictness. Our phase-in model should allow our team the time to build the relationships that permit appropriately balancing the warmth and consistent firmness that characterize healthy school culture.

People and program: Another challenging experience we had in transforming multiple ASD schools was finding the people suited to the work and giving them sufficient tools. Our phase-in model limits the number of teachers we need to find and train with the will and skill needed. In fact, we already have several high-quality leads with decades of experience in Memphis, as well as leaders, an established curriculum, planning and PD model, and aligned assessment plan, all of which will make work that can be overwhelming somewhat more manageable.

Colocation: As discussed in our facility plan, we have experience with several examples of more and less effective co-locations. Effective co-location is built on relationships, clear plans, communication, and commitment to the best for all kids – easy to neglect amidst a fast pace of change. We must involve our counterparts with routine meetings and progress reports. We can help both schools' faculty build social capital through joint events, orientation, and resource sharing such as opening training to teachers of the other school. We can accommodate the "receiving school" in little ways, such as not disturbing parking layout, or keeping historic names of public spaces. Experience also teaches that we can minimize surprises with a thorough space plan, covering hallways, contiguous classrooms, building exits / entrances, common area scheduling, transportation and technology logistics, long-term plan with annual adjustment for the gradual addition of classrooms, and the like. Signage, banners, and the selective painting of hallways, doors and even handrails can gently indicate transitions to passersby.

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[13] In his classic work, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, the great black scholar Carter G. Woodson said that it is certainly possible for people from outside a community to serve in it, but you must "take out naturalization paperwork."

III. ACADEMIC PLAN
Educational Philosophy

1. MISSION & VISION

> *The mission of your non-profit should describe the purpose of your school, including the students and community to be served and the values to which you will adhere while achieving that purpose. The vision of your non-profit should describe what success looks like for students, for the school as a whole, and for any other entities that are critical to your mission. The mission and vision statement should align with the purposes of the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act and the mission of the Achievement School District and serves as the foundation for the entire proposal.*
>
> (1) Provide the mission of your proposed school and describe how it will inform daily activities.
>
> (2) Describe the vision for your school, clearly illustrating what success will look like in terms of life outcomes for students and the impact on the local community and/or larger society. (A) Articulate clear guiding purposes and priorities that are meaningful, measurable, and attainable.

America is in a peculiar cultural moment: Prosperous in parts, yet afflicted with inequality and unhappiness. Our overall wealth (at the time of this writing, the Dow is over 16,000) masks a rising inequality of condition: 40% of people born into the bottom quintile of income remain stuck there.[14] Barely half of black and Hispanic students graduate high school on time, and those that do have the equivalent of a ninth-grade education.[15] College matriculation rates are higher than ever, and yet across America, only half of the workforce has the skills to get or advance in jobs that pay family wages.[16] Driving from East Memphis to Frayser reveals that we are a microcosm of the country. As mentioned above, 40% of Frayser is in poverty, something like one in five people are out of work, and the large majority of public school seats are in schools on the state's priority list.

Facing these facts, we are right to prioritize education. But what kind? To be sure, increasing access to college for poor and minority students is a matter of rectifying the injustice of inadequate preparation. Yet even many students who face fewer obstacles still do not finish college, for reasons such as skyrocketing costs, and its uncertain relevance to their future. While 90% of America's fastest-growing occupations require postsecondary training, only 7 out of the top 30 require a Bachelor's degree.[17] Forty percent of recent college graduates do not have jobs at all or in their chosen fields.[18]

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[14] Charles Murray, "The New American Divide," *Wall Street Journal*, 1/21/12. Accessed 11/18/13 at http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052970204301404577170733817181646

[15] These figures have not changed substantially since reported by Thernstrom and Thernstrom in *No Excuses*. See also the data presented earlier regarding college readiness among Memphis students.

[16] According to 2011 estimates from the US Chamber of Commerce; cited in Murray.

[17] *Idem*., US Chamber of Commerce 2011, cited by Murray. Other mainstream sources on the possibilities for a greater range of postsecondary education options than the BA include Harvard's Pathways to Prosperity study or SGA Middle Skills report. Of course, the simple fact that an occupation is growing does not make it necessarily a good one!

[18] Through prescriptions diverge, the problem of the college bubble is noted by politically diverse thinkers. See Charles Murray, *Real Education* (summarized in a September 2008 article in the "American Enterprise"); John Marsh, *Class Dismissed: Why We Cannot Teach or Learn our Way out of Inequality*; Michael Petrilli, "Why College Isn't for Everyone," *Slate.com, 3/14/14*; or Paul Krugman, who said in the New York Times on 3/7/11, "the notion that putting more kids through college can restore the middle-class society we used to have is wishful thinking. It's no longer true that having a college degree guarantees that you'll get a good job, and it's becoming less true with each passing decade."

The problem is more than merely economic. Deteriorating social conditions – in forms like drugs, crime, family collapse, and reduced public involvement – take a harsh toll on the poor.[19] Yet we also find alarming trends amidst the college-educated: increasing (even disproportionately high) rates of anxiety, depression, mental illness, social phobias, and employees' disengagement from their jobs (70%!), etc.[20] One gets the nagging sense that even many of those who have succeeded by the material standards of our day still struggle to know who and what they are. Indeed, this cultural poverty is precisely what Stanford University psychologist William Damon calls "*the most pervasive problem of the day*":

> "… a sense of *emptiness* … has ensnared many young people in long periods of *drift* during a time in their lives when they should be defining their aspirations and making progress toward their fulfillment"; [youth need a] "serious *purpose* that can give meaning and direction to life." [21]

Finding our usual correlatives of success confounded, it is increasingly apparent that the usual solution of college matriculation is no cure-all for the ills of our day, and that we must nuance the conversation about both PK-12 education and postsecondary pathways.

Since economics and culture – body and soul[22] – are equally irreducible dimensions of our educational dilemma, *the **mission** of Libertas is to be a school for human flourishing, cultivating the minds, hands and hearts of children in Memphis for lives of wonder, work and love*. The American Founders believed occupations like artisan, farmer and commercial proprietor not only provided the material conditions for independence, but also encouraged stewardship precisely because the ownership by ordinary people of their land or workshop – seeing what was necessary to bring "seed to table" over generations – made them think of their posterity. Unfortunately, the division of labor between thinkers and doers – also part of the denigration that was slavery – has accelerated since the Industrial Revolution; we see this keenly in Frederick Winslow Taylor's "scientific management." Hence the poor reputation among many today of "vocational education." [23] But vocation rightly understood should be the essence of the good life: work endowed with deep purpose, integrating all our faculties. Because the liberal arts train us for the self-governance demanded by freedom, they ought not wait for college, or be the province of an elite few; at the same time, the crafts of a self-reliant life are emphatically not some kind of consolation prize for non-college students. Thus Libertas will offer all students a liberal arts education in core academic subjects as well as civics, the fine arts, manual crafts and small-scale agriculture. In this way, we will provide all students with useful skills, and envision the flowering of the full range of sustaining vocations – whether through clearing obstacles to Bachelor's degrees for those students who aspire to be engineers, physicians, and lawyers, or by opening a variety of rigorous postsecondary options for children who may be happy as artists, early childhood educators, homemakers, technicians, craftsmen, farmers, and all that a thriving community needs.

A community, Augustine teaches, is based on common love. While some see education as an escape hatch, we recognize that a people's heritage can be an ongoing source of vitality, if its members in turn nurture it. Inasmuch as we recognize the definition of love as giving oneself for the good of

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[19] cf. Charles Murray, *Idem*. See also Murray's book-length study upon which the article was based, *Coming Apart*, which shows how these forms of suffering are further entrenching as the social classes become more isolated.

[20] For a roundup of social scientific citations of such instances of rising *anomie*, including research from the CDC, UCLA, Temple University, and Gallup research, see Peter Lawler, "Moderately Socially Conservative Darwinians," *New Atlantis*, Winter 2013, accessed 11/18/13: http://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/moderately-socially-conservative-darwinians

[21] Damon, *Path to Purpose*, xii and 7; quoted in Seider, *Character Compass*, 177. Emphasis added.

[22] Read here the "soul" referred to by the pagan philosophers.

[23] Our discussion of democratic equality, modern specialization of labor and management, the resulting dependency on "experts," and implications for how we think about vocation, draw heavily upon Matthew Crawford, *Shop Class as Soulcraft* (whence the phrase "separation of thinking and doing"), Matthew Stewart's *The Management Myth*, and Arlie Russell Hochschild's *The Outsourced Self*, along with Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and Christopher Lasch's *Revolt of the Elites*.

another, stewardship is a fundamental dimension of our school's mission. Moreover, our nation's founders believed that a republic could survive only if the people have the character and capacity for self-government. Tocqueville identified almost two centuries ago how Americans' distinct civic participation in lively intermediary institutions sustains our responsible freedom from lonely individualism. For all these reasons, we cannot ignore how endangered this culture has become in America, especially in some inner cities.[24] Therefore an important objective for Libertas will be to help students recognize and live out their duties to those who came before us and those will come after.

Since beginning this project with a focus on Frayser, we recognized that trying to meet children's needs starts with truly listening to people's stories. One unintended consequence of high-stakes school accountability has been that many residents have internalized the label of "failing school" as the message that "outsiders are saying we're not good enough" – echoing the bad news about Frayser disproportionately seen in the news. This dynamic is unhealthy and actually far from the whole story. However "poor" it may be economically, Frayser is rich in spirit, with an incredible array of civic activity [25] aimed at recapturing the sense that once, according to the memory of one 38-year resident, "Frayser meant the finest." And we believe that personalized, liberal arts education, virtue, and the attachment village will continue to resonate with the revitalization already underway.

Vision of success: We will have a sense that we are succeeding in our mission when we stroll through the school and detect the hum of collaboration in classrooms, where teachers unobtrusively enable students of different ages and abilities to concentrate with wonder on their work. Our sense of success will deepen when we enter common spaces and witness evidence of rich content knowledge and engagement in students' writing, speech, and artistic and manual work products. Growth by all student groups toward and beyond proficiency on state and curriculum-based tests will confirm our confidence. We will witness our students' self-governance accompanied by regular acts of service for their neighbors and environment. And our hope will come to fruition when we see all students ultimately commence to college or other rigorous postsecondary means of preparation for true vocation.

Human being and citizen; stargazer and navel-gazer; free and equal Americans who must work to live but feel a nagging in our souls to live for more than just work: A few of the paradoxes that confound any neatly-encapsulated philosophy of education.[26] Today we tend to shrug our shoulders at this sort of mystery and say that we just need to give people more education so they have more choices. This too-easy answer seems to us inadequate: It relativizes our duties to family and neighbor and the very idea of virtue as mere preferences, ignores the incipient fact that simply more choice does not in fact make us happy,[27] and elides the question of precisely what kind of education prepares one to make choices well.

More on vision of success: Our task at Libertas will be to prepare our students to wonder and inquire into the meaning of life, work with dignity, and serve others with love. These questions are, of course, the substance of a person's entire formation, not just at school. But educators cannot ignore them in favor of exclusively utilitarian concerns. That is why we will provide our students with a liberal arts education worthy of the search for goodness, truth and beauty – venturing beyond the naught of the lonely self, toward living responsibly in community.

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[24] See Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, and Charles Murray, *Coming Apart*.

[25] Though civics include more than merely politics, voter participation is unfortunately one of the less consistent features in Frayser, where only a bit over half of its ~45,000 residents are registered to vote, and barely 5,000 cast ballots in the 2013 referendum on Pre-K funding. Our civics curriculum should contribute toward Memphians' civic resources.

[26] Our efforts to address these paradoxical yearnings are informed by Eva Brann in *Paradoxes of Education in a Republic*, where she urges that educators give place to wonder, as well as Walker Percy's *Lost in the Cosmos: The Last Self-Help Book*, which reminds us of Nietzsche's remark that "We knowers are unknown to ourselves." Peter Lawler also helpfully explores this condition in *Postmodernism Rightly Understood*.

[27] See Barry Schwartz on "The Paradox of Choice."

2. TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

The ASD is committed to authorizing applicants that seek transformational change for the communities they serve, meaning the operator:
- Puts forth a model that will result in double digit academic gains, and
- Has a solid plan to move schools from the bottom 5% to the top 25% in TN within 5 years.
(1) Articulate your approach to education. Describe the most essential features of a school to ensure it will meet the ASD's ambitious academic goals.

(2) Describe the fundamental features of your educational model that will drive outcomes in your proposed school. Key features may include:
- Programs (e.g., curriculum, PD, afterschool program, parent program, etc.)
- Principles (e.g., no excuses, individualized learning, learn at your own pace)
- Structures (e.g., blended learning, small learning communities, small class sizes, etc.)

(3) Describe the mechanisms by which the fundamental features you described in (2) will dramatically influence student success. Please provide evidence where possible.

The principles, mission, and vision for students and society that we have outlined translate into a specific educational program with a base of evidence for how they will achieve ASD's and our goals. In our founders' combined 17+ years of experience with some of the highest-performing CMOs in the country, we have seen the difference that high expectations, strong school culture, and data-driven instruction can make for high-need students. Building on that foundation, we aim to address persistent challenges with which "no excuses" schools continue to wrestle: Student gains in language lagging behind those in math; graduates struggling with self-direction in the less-structured postsecondary environment; schools' sustainability undermined by high faculty burnout. The aspects of our program that we believe will result in transformational change are (A) helping students find purpose in learning through the liberal arts; (B) an attachment village of wraparound supports for students' social-emotional needs; (C) content-rich, coherent curriculum that gets students reading to learn and comprehend; (D) personalizing learning to facilitate growth and develop non-cognitive skills, intrinsic motivation and self-direction; (E) integrating research-based early-childhood education so children are kindergarten-ready. We submit this plan in pursuit of the ASD's rigorous growth goals and a fuller concept of education.

A. To "Dwell above the veil": Finding purpose in learning through the liberal arts
Liberal arts education – the training for free people – addresses itself to young people's most burning questions: Who am I? What should I be? What is my place in the world? How should I respond to injustice? And so on. Students refine their thinking and communication about these enduring questions by engaging with "the best that has been thought and said" in the humanities and sciences.[28] Students thereby develop a mental map of the world – a "guide for the perplexed"[29] – for entry to The Great Conversation of historical and intercultural dialog, preparing students to use their freedom well.
The liberal arts have a fine pedigree in overcoming the pernicious phenomenon of "academic dis-identification" among many black and poor students in America.[30] Frederick Douglass said about a

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[28] Matthew Arnold, preface to *Culture and Anarchy*, recommending "culture as the great help out of our present difficulties..."
[29] Originally the title of a great work by the Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, used also - and in the sense intended here - in a work of the same name by the British economist and social theorist EF Schumacher.
[30] Commentators from Carter G. Woodson a century ago to Professor Lisa Delpit and others today have addressed the phenomenon. Delpit illustrates the point, noting that attending to culture "does not mean turning every lesson into rap."

book of British oratory he often read as a child that the orations "gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance… What I got from [the authors] was a bold denunciation of slavery and a powerful vindication of human rights." W.E.B. DuBois about his own intellectual self-development: "I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas … I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn nor condescension. So, wed with Truth, I dwell above the veil." [31]

Perhaps one of the most compelling images of the inspirational potency of liberal education may be found in Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail." Sitting in his jail cell, King drew from the inscriptions his own fine education had inspired in his mind - notably the lessons of Sophocles' *Antigone* and the Plato's *Apology of Socrates* and *Crito* – which he scrawled onto the corners of newspaper scraps in formulating his famous indictment of the injustice of the laws of his time. Like the Greek slave-philosopher Epictetus, King's captors could chain him physically, but were unable to contain his mind.

The case for liberal arts education is best made by exemplars such as Douglass, DuBois and King, echoed by recent teachers like Marva Collins, and valued for its own sake by all who have benefited from its riches. But there have been some social scientific attempts to document the benefits, as well.[32]

B. Building an attachment village among school, families, neighborhood

A key focus for Libertas will be fostering an "attachment village" of strong relationships between teachers, students and families. Child psychologist and noted "attachment parenting" researcher Gordon Neufeld argues, perhaps counter-intuitively, that strong adult attachments provide the unconditional love that children need to be confident, independent and capable of dealing with conflicting emotions as they grow up. In contrast, excessive "peer orientation" makes children reliant on the fickle opinions of other immature persons for their sense of self-worth, contributing to diminished self-image, conformity, bullying, and other pathologies. Consequently, Neufeld advocates that teachers and parents together create an "attachment village" for children: reinforcing primary bonds between children and the grownups who care for them most and subordinating relationships with peers to adult guidance.[33] Building the attachment village is just as important as the liberal arts for finding purpose in learning – and it is of special important for children whose home environments often experience trauma. Please see the Parent & Community Engagement section for more about our plans to build the attachment village as well as provide wraparound services to support families.

C. "The Great Equalizer" (Or, Overcoming the Matthew Effect): A content-rich, coherent, aligned curriculum to get students reading to learn

In education, as in many other arenas, the rich get richer while the poor get poorer ("The Matthew Effect"). Poor students start school already behind their higher income peers, then see the gap widen over time – infamously manifest in the "fourth-grade slump," when so many students struggle to

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[31] These quotes can be found in Arthur Schlesinger Jr,, *The Disuniting of America*, chapter 3.

[32] Over recent decades, hundreds of poor adults across the US and internationally have participated in semester-long sessions of the "Clemente Course," college-level courses in the arts and humanities. One scholar, a Dr. Inclan, conducted a small study of the behavior of the early participants, and "found that the students' self-esteem and their abilities to divine and solve problems had significantly increased; their use of verbal aggression as a tactic for resolving conflicts had significantly decreased." Anecdotally, many of the alums went on to college. http://clementecourse.org/docs/restlesspoor.pdf , accessed 2/14.

[33] Neufeld and Maté, *Hold Onto Your Kids*. This perspective is ratified by research in sociobiology – see Sarah Blaffer Hardy's *Mother Nature*, 91 – and other fields – as per "Hardwired to Connect: The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities," by the Commission on Children at Risk, found at http://www.americanvalues.org/search/item.php?id=17 . Accessed 2/14.

make the transition from learning to read to reading to learn.[34] While many literacy programs attempt to overcome this through greater emphasis on abstract reading comprehension skills alone,[35] cognitive science demonstrates the futility of such an approach divorced from students' essential need to acquire relevant background knowledge to access the meaning of texts they encounter.

In a recent meta-analysis of dozens of cognitive science research studies, University of Virginia Professor of Psychology Daniel Willingham argues that, once you have mastered the basic skills of decoding text (no small feat – our approach is described under Curriculum), your ability to comprehend a reading passage depends *not* upon abstract "skills" like "identifying the main idea of a passage," but rather on your grasp of the context and recognition of the vocabulary; in other words, background knowledge.[36] Skills simply cannot be exercised separately from their related content knowledge.[37]

Students from middle and upper income generally acquire the background knowledge required for advancing in reading comprehension in their homes and families. Low-income students, on the other hand, tend to be "school-dependent" for their access to this background knowledge.[38] And so, as urban education expert Professor Lisa Delpit has written, schools must have high expectations for the level of content for high-need students, including "complex material, domain knowledge and vocabulary," to

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[34] The much more substantial challenges the ASD has encountered in making progress in students' reading achievement as compared to math reflect a national phenomenon: "In Raising Scores, 123 Is Easier Than ABC," Motoko Rich, *New York Times,* 5/29/13. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/30/education/reading-gains-lag-improvements-in-math.html?_r=0

[35] Neglecting curricular content ignores what we know about nations with higher performing public schools. See the "Equity Commission" report, *For Each and Every Child…*: "unlike in America, teachers in high-performing countries can draw on common instructional materials aligned with rigorous, national curriculum frameworks that all students are expected to master and that form the basis of teacher development and training," 22. http://www2.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/eec/equity-excellence-commission-report.pdf Such frameworks are more explicit about content knowledge than CCSS, as per http://blog.coreknowledge.org/tag/jeffrey-litt/. A 2012 study by Chingos and Whitehurst found that curriculum quality can have as large, if not larger, an effect size on student learning outcomes than having a higher-rated teacher. www.brookings.edu/research/reports/2012/04/10-curriculum-chingos-whitehurst. Or, put succinctly by a noted teacher developer, "I believe the biggest upside that remains unexploited in No Excuses charters is the curriculum. We, too, have much that is watered down." http://www.matcheducation.org/puzzled/2012/09/25/students-evaluating-teachers

[36] This section draws extensively upon Daniel Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School?,* especially chapter 2, page 35. Willingham, also a regular columnist for the AFT's "American Educator" journal, explains that we think by combining new information from the environment with what we already have in long-term memory. But this "working memory" space is very constrained – you can only have a few things in your consciousness at once. To optimize our capacity for thought and thus new learning, we must maximize space in working memory by internalizing the key background knowledge and procedures we need at our fingertips. In one of many studies cited in his book, children with generally poor "reading skills" but who knew a lot about baseball demonstrated higher comprehension of a passage describing a baseball game than students with better general skills but little knowledge of the game. (Recht and Leslie, 1988.) Also in support of the idea that reading skill does not necessarily transfer between domains, the Core Knowledge Foundation cites research that there is a 0.5 correlation ("mild to strong") between background knowledge and reading comprehension: http://www.coreknowledge.org/leadership-readings (overview presentation, accessed 3/14). They also reference that 90% of word learning is implicit – not through formal study – to illustrate the necessity of broad background knowledge to enable inferential learning. For a short, audio-visual depiction of this general concept, see Willingham's YouTube video, "Teaching Content is Teaching Reading." See also works by Professor E.D. Hirsch, such as *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them; The Knowledge Deficit;* or his essay, "Content is Skill, Skill is Content." Angeline Lillard makes the same point in a Montessori context, noting that improved sensory discrimination speeds environmental processing and thus frees cognitive resources (321).

[37] The necessity of knowledge for the practice of skill holds true for other disciplines. For instance, fluency with mathematical facts is important to procedural and conceptual math knowledge. "Is It True that Some People Just Can't Do Math?", American Educator, Winter 2009-10. http://www.aft.org/pdfs/americaneducator/winter2009/willingham.pdf. Likewise, soloing in music is difficult without muscle-memory from practicing the scales; foreign language conversation cannot meaningfully proceed without a store of vocabulary; students cannot learn to "think like scientists" without knowing something about biology or astronomy or physics, nor can they "reason historically" until they know something about the past.

[38] Hart and Risley famously documented that children from households with lower educational backgrounds often hear literally millions of fewer words during their developmental years. http://www.unitedwayracine.org/sites/default/files/imce/files/SOH%20The%20Early%20Catastrophe%20-%20The%2030%20Million%20Word%20Gap%20by%20Age%203%20-%20Risley%20and%20Hart%20-%20summary.pdf

keep children reading to learn rather than falling behind.[39] Therefore, we will make no assumptions about what students have learned before. Across the content areas – sciences, history and geography, literature and languages, the arts, mathematics – our unit plans and lessons will frequently provide for pre-testing and activating background knowledge. By being far more intentional about the substance and sequence of what students learn – and prioritizing time for content knowledge acquisition, incorporated with skills – our school will give students the background an educated person needs to make sense of the world around them. [40]

In addition to the general case for content-rich learning, there is also substantial evidence for the value of our specific curriculum (Core Knowledge ("CK") which along with Montessori we explain in detail in the Curriculum section) for closing the achievement gap – indeed, this was precisely Hirsch's motivation in developing it. CK has been successfully implemented for over a decade by PS 124, a large New York City public school in Queens with a diverse, high-need student body; this school had among the highest scores in the state on the Regents exam. And CKLA has recently been the subject of a promising and well-documented pilot by 10 high-need schools in New York City, where all but one of the schools performed at statistically-significantly higher levels than the comparison schools.[41] CK and CKLA are the curriculum at Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy in rural North Carolina, a school that showed 70% proficiency on its state's most recent test (and its first Common Core aligned test) in contrast to just 42% proficiency countywide.[42] Core Knowledge was an integral part of the successful turnaround of P.S. 67, the Mohegan School, in the Bronx.[43] And it is the core curriculum for the Icahn Charter Schools network in that same impoverished borough; Icahn was among the highest-performing schools in the state on a recent state test.[44] The CK pioneer who led Mohegan and founded Icahn summarized the transformative power of CK this way (emphasis added):

> "The children had no knowledge of anything outside their immediate community. My kids could not understand the concept that they lived in a borough, which was part of a city, and part of a state, and part of a nation, on a continent. This was all foreign to them. They couldn't name the

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[39] Delpit, *Multiplication is for White People,* 36. Delpit argues that if students' "... earlier school years have not focused on developing knowledge about the world outside of their environs or deep thinking about real issues, they are destined to fall behind… [E]ffective teachers of low-income students of color take every opportunity to introduce children to complex material. While children are learning to 'decode,' teachers read to the children complex, thought-provoking material, well above the students' current reading level, and engage in discussions about the information and the advanced vocabulary they encounter... Students are engaged in thematic units that are ongoing and repeat important domain knowledge and develop vocabulary through repeated oral use..." We might count as exemplars Marva Collins and Rafe Esquith, urban teachers and authors who have famously used Shakespeare with their urban elementary school children, for example.

[40] Indeed, evidence suggests that crowding out content learning for exclusively skills-based reading strategies may be simply inefficient. According to one study cited by Core Knowledge, students who received *just 6 lessons* on "reading strategies" (e.g. finding main idea, supporting details, etc.) received the same effect as those who received *26 lessons*. Rosenshine and Meister, 1994, "Reciprocal Teaching," 479-530 in *Review of Education Research*, 64, 4. Our strategy for reading comprehension will thus be to incorporate modest reading strategy instruction with coherent content – or in the words of the CK foundation, focusing not just on "what good readers *do*," but what they *know*.

[41] "Evaluating the NYC Core Knowledge Early Literacy Pilot: Year 3 Report," NYC Dept. of Education Research and Policy Support Group, March 2012, 7-24: www.bit.ly/MfAb5F. Sourced from Dubin, "More than Words," *American Educator*, Fall 2012, 37: http://www.aft.org/pdfs/americaneducator/fall2012/Dubin.pdf, accessed 3/14. See also Sol Stern's discussion of the NYC CK pilot in *City Journal*, summer 2012: http://www.city-journal.org/2012/22_3_curriculum-reform.html. Also, personal communication from principal Valarie Lewis of PS 124, November, 2013.

[42] Personal communication from principal, November 2013, based on scores not yet publicly released.

[43] See Kay Hymowitz in the Autumn '93 *City Journal*. http://www.city-journal.org/article01.php?aid=1451

[44] At Icahn's founding campus, virtually 100% of the students are black or Latino and three-fourths qualify for free/reduced-price meals. Student achievement averages about three-fourths in ELA and 90% in math, and is roughly 20% higher in most subjects and grade levels than the *statewide* average. Source: 2011 state test data, as per the Education Trust, accessed 10/29/13: http://www.edtrust.org/sites/edtrust.org/files/Jeffrey%20Litt%20webinar.pptx

five boroughs. *I saw Core Knowledge … as the great equalizer*. My kids did not have exposure to the arts. My kids did not have much in the way of travel. My kids didn't go to museums or theaters, and they didn't necessarily come from literature-rich homes…. Core Knowledge provided this background knowledge for them." [45]

D. Personalizing learning, building habits of inquiry and ownership

"What use is it to pile task on task and prolong the days of labor, if at the close the chief object is left unattained? … [Teachers] are doing for their pupils the work which the pupils themselves ought to do. For *the sole true end of education is simply this: to teach men how to learn for themselves*; and whatever instruction fails to do this is effort spent in vain."
--Dorothy Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning* (emphasis added)

The accomplishments of education reform enable us to address an enduring concern: how to foster our students as self-directed learners. So many teachers struggle to meet the needs of the wide array of students who are generally taught in groups on the basis of proximate birthdate, regardless of whether they are ready to move on or need more time. We suspect this industrial-era artifact – and the frustration and academic and behavioral challenges that can result from it – is related to the tragedy that children's self-reported motivation to learn, as well as their capacity for "divergent thinking," declines with every year of conventional schooling.[46] Moreover, recent work from authors like Paul Tough and Angela Duckworth strongly suggests that non-cognitive traits, such as persistence, curiosity, "executive function" and self-regulation, play as much if not a larger role in success in college and life.[47]

Because we seek to build a school where our students will flourish PreK-12 and beyond, we must strengthen their internal resources like motivation, self-governance and persistence. Perversely, ample social science research demonstrates that controlling children through extrinsic consequences -- grades, money, even verbal praise -- displaces students' intrinsic motivation to learn, incenting them to choose the easier path so as to avoid risking failure, and narrows their focus to only those aspects of the work that generate the reward.[48] This phenomenon is closely related to Carol Dweck's findings about "fixed" and "growth" mindsets; Dweck demonstrates that people are most successful when they perceive failure as an opportunity to learn and improve rather than as a judgment about their innate ability.[49] Fostering intrinsic motivation for learning is a particular concern for schools combating academic "dis-identification" among predominantly black and poor student populations.

Truly "personalizing" learning would address both the cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions of education: Ensuring each student is focused at any given time on the academic work they must do to learn – making learning more "granular" – while also fostering inquiry and ownership.

At Libertas, we will intentionally seek to develop our students' intrinsic motivation for learning by use of the century-old Montessori method. Its principles, developed by a physician based on her observations of children at work, have since been demonstrated in multiple fields of scientific research.[50] Its academic approach aligns with the Common Core State Standards.[51] Montessori is

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[45] Jeffrey Litt, quoted on the Core Knowledge Blog, accessed 11/13: http://blog.coreknowledge.org/tag/jeffrey-litt/
[46] Multiple studies on children's drive to learn diminishing in school are cited on pages 4 and 154 of Angeline Lillard, *Montessori: The Science Behind the Genius* (referred to hereafter and throughout as Lillard).
[47] See Paul Tough, *How Children Succeed.*
[48] See Lillard chapter 5, especially pages 153 and 157. See also Alfie Kohn, *Punished by Rewards*.
[49] See Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*
[50] Lillard, Angeline Stoll. *Montessori: The Science behind the Genius*. New York: Oxford UP, 2005.
[51] See for example the alignment of Montessori with Common Core by the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector: http://www.public-montessori.org/resources/common-core-state-standards, accessed 8/23/13.

distinguished by its emphasis on producing curious, responsible and self-directed learners. The Montessori method has been effectively utilized with children of different ages in varied learning contexts for over a century. While Montessori schools today are prevalent in more affluent communities, her first schools established their merit by serving low-income and special needs children. We present many details of Montessori learning in the Curriculum section, the specifics of which are important to our case; for the sake of space, however, here we provide a brief overview of Montessori learning concepts as they should contribute to transformational change.

Montessori's method could be summarized as freedom-within-limits; children are *free from* diversion, and *free to* pursue the work of their development.[52] Montessori noted that, starting from a young age, students are capable of intense concentration and repeated practice - what Montessori calls "normalization" - when their work is responsive to their planes of development.[53] Yet adults too often impatiently intervene in children's work – doing the real work for them – thereby denying students the opportunity to exercise responsibility for their learning. (Montessori's observations of planes of development were contemporary with, or slightly antecedent to, Vygotsky's work on zone of proximal development. And her analysis of "normalization" prefigured the work of Csiksentmihlyi on 'flow' – a state of immersed concentration and focus in which learning is its own reward.) Her method is explicitly designed to maximize students' chances of entering a state of 'flow.' Montessori teachers guide students through the curriculum by meticulously preparing an orderly and engaging environment, and presenting lessons and materials mostly to individuals or small groups based on readiness. Teachers observe student work, make needed adjustments for each individual's plan, but take care to avoid interference in "the moment of self-development": those times of concentration when children are doing the mental work they must do to learn. It is also why Montessori designed self-correcting materials, which make mistakes self-evident, thereby allowing for student to practice independently and struggle with problems while also getting immediate feedback to prevent habituation of error.[54] Through freedom and structure – and a teacher who can make thoughtful judgments based on observation – Montessori environments increase the efficiency of student learning and cultivate the child's innate curiosity to master his environment. And if the liberal arts are about preparing people to use their freedom thoughtfully, the Montessori method gives students an opportunity to practice responsible freedom starting in developmentally appropriate ways from the youngest ages.

There is a growing body of evidence that supports the use of Montessori learning, especially for high-need students. We have cited Professor Angeline Lillard's book, which compiles dozens of studies that demonstrate the educational benefits of Montessori techniques like movement for cognition, peer learning, concrete means to abstract ideas, and so on. Lillard also includes a couple of studies of Montessori as a whole. One found heightened executive functioning among Montessori students. The most commonly cited study of academic performance among public Montessori schools looks at children achieving proficient or advanced in grades 3, 4 and 5 in Milwaukee. The study found that the

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[52] In Dr. Montessori's words: "When we speak of the freedom of a small child, we do not mean to countenance the external disorderly actions which children left to themselves engage in as a relief from their aimless activity, but we understand by this the freeing of his life from the obstacles which can impeded normal development... This goal leads to the creation of a suitable environment where a child can pursue a series of interesting objectives and thus channel his random energies into orderly and well-executed actions." *The Discovery of the Child*, 62, cited in Lillard, 98.

[53] For a popularization, see Dan Pink, *Drive*: "Many of the key tenets of Montessori education resonate with the principles [about motivation]… under the right conditions, children are… inclined to experience periods of intense focus, concentration, and flow that adults should do their best not to interrupt." Citation provided by Gina Sardi of NYC Montessori Charter School.

[54] Examples of self-correcting materials include objects that must fit together (e.g. graduated cylinders, puzzle maps, binomial cube), match visually (e.g. color coded parts of speech; matching small physical objects to represent text (i.e. "the bucket is in the wagon") or bead chains to number sentences), aurally (e.g. peers quizzing each other), or by reading (e.g. reference cards that students turn over to check their work). Lillard discusses how self-correction as well as adult responsiveness contribute to student persistence: 95-97 and 259.

Montessori students performed at least as well in virtually all grade levels and subjects on the standardized test, and as much as 15-20 percentage points higher in some grades levels in both English and Math. Another study in a Montessori research publication found that a public Montessori school's students scored well both on standardized tests but also above average on skills such as listening, questioning, adaptation, and similar.[55] A 2006 study of comparable student populations found that Montessori students performed better in both reading and math scores but also indicators of executive function.[56] More recent data from public Montessori schools in Milwaukee that serve a majority-minority and low-income population show that these student subgroups, as well as students with disabilities, out-performed their counterparts in district schools in proficiency by between 10 and 18%.[57]

The growing research base may be contributing to the growth of public Montessori schools. Scores of public Montessori schools have existed for decades, but more recently several urban Montessori charter schools have been emerging under the leadership of experienced urban educators. These include the Montessori School of Englewood (in the impoverished south side of Chicago), NYC Montessori Charter School in the Bronx (located in the poorest census tract in the nation, according to the school), and Magnolia Montessori in Austin, TX. Like Libertas, each of these schools supplements Montessori learning in various ways with judicious use of additional curriculum, assessment, and other structures.

E. Incorporating the critical period of early childhood education

If education research makes anything clear, it is the critical importance of the first 3-5 years of a child's development: Eighty percent of a child's brain is formed by this timeframe and, by some accounts, three-quarters of the challenges of the achievement gap seen in high school are attributable to factors children bring with them to kindergarten.[58] The need in Memphis is especially severe on both a national scale and even relative to the state of Tennessee.[59] And in Frayser, 9% of the entire population is under the age of 5 – making quality early learning "vital." [60] No one can solve this challenge alone; schools, day care centers / early learning programs, and wraparound social service providers must work together in support of families - our children's first and most lasting teachers - to foster a village of support from birth. The value of collaborative investment in early learning has been quantified as follows by Nobel prize winning economist Professor James Heckman:

> "Investing in quality early childhood development for disadvantaged children from birth through age 5 will help prevent achievement deficits and produce better education, health, social and economic outcomes. Such investments will reduce the need for costly remediation and social spending while increasing the... productivity and earning potential of individuals. In fact, *every*

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[55] Both of these studies are mentioned by Sardi in their application. The first is also discussed in Lillard. For the second study, see Duax, T, "Preliminary report on the educational effectiveness of a Montessori school in the public sector." The NAMTA Journal, 14(2), as cited by Sardi, 10.

[56] http://www.montessori-science.org/montessori_sciencejournal.htm, courtesy of Magnolia Montessori in Austin, TX.

[57] See http://www.slideshare.net/amiusa/phil-dosmann-2716629, accessed December, 2013. Provided by Phil Dossman, past principal of multiple Montessori public schools in Milwaukee. As the source shows, nearly two-thirds of the students in these schools are black or Hispanic; over half are low-income; and nearly 17% have disabilities. The schools still have work to do to close the achievement gap and achieve overall proficiency goals, but virtually all subgroups demonstrate higher performance.

[58] Dr. Doug Imig, Urban Child Institute, personal communication, October, 2013. Key research on the effectiveness of early education can be found at the US Dept. of Education, http://www.ed.gov/early-learning/research, and local data can be found from the Urban Child Institute, http://www.urbanchildinstitute.org/key-initiatives/data-book/2013/education.

[59] See http://www.nccp.org/profiles/pdf/profile_early_childhood_TN.pdf, accessed October, 2013.

[60] Community Lift, "Frayser Data Book," accessed 1/23/14:
http://www.communitylift.org/sites/default/files/datafiles/Frayser%20Data%20Book.pdf

dollar invested in quality early childhood development for disadvantaged children produces a 7 percent to 10 percent return, per child, per year" (emphasis added).[61]

This is why Libertas aims to open with an integrated 4-year old early childhood education program (and eventually add 3-year olds), which will also operate with our Core Knowledge curriculum and Montessori method. Please also see the Parent and Community Engagement section for our proposed partnership with area day cares to support quality care along the full 0-5 spectrum.

In summary, we believe that aligned and evocative content, personalized learning, and early childhood education – all carefully structured and monitored with data, and done in close cooperation with families – will help students ascend from the priority school list into the upper tier in the state. The liberal arts provide a framework for this process, and help guide students to make meaning of and know what to do with their education.

3. PLANNING FOR EXCELLENCE

The Achievement School District (ASD) provides School Practice Reviews for the charter schools it authorizes. The School Practice Review (SPR) is a process that educators can use to understand and explain how effectively schools are educating students. The SPR places a team of experienced educators and, in some cases, team members from the ASD in a school to collect and analyze qualitative data about school performance. The SPR is based on a transparent, research-based set of standards that serves as the framework to understand the effectiveness of school practices. Please respond to the questions below, which are aligned to the ASD's School Practice Review domains.

Instructional Planning and Students' Opportunities to Learn

(1) How will classroom interactions and organization ensure a supportive, highly structured learning climate?

(2) How are you planning for instruction that is intentional, engaging, and challenging for all students?

(3) How will you create a school with a performance-driven culture, where the school leaders, teachers, and staff effectively use data to make decisions about instruction and the organization of students?

(4) How will the school's culture reflect high levels of both academic expectation and support?

Intentional, engaging, challenging and performance-driven, supportive, structured, for all: As an Innovation applicant, one of our key focuses is organizing classroom environments with high degrees of "micro structure," together ensuring that students are engaged in rigorous, independent work at their optimal academic level. We summarize the features of our innovative learning environment immediately below, the underlying case for which is explained in the Transformational Change section. This environment is illustrated in the Day in the Life section, and sample weekly schedule in the family handbook. Our approach is at least as intentional about teaching as predominantly direct instruction environments; order just takes subtler form. (It may be worth noting that one can see similar trends in schools that epitomize structure – such as pivoting toward more "wait time" while judiciously dialing

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[61] See http://heckmanequation.org/content/getting-our-heads-around-head-start, accessed October, 2013. See also http://www.heckmanequation.org/content/resource/case-investing-disadvantaged-young-children. Heckman also states that every $1 spent on early childhood programming saves the public nearly $17 in costs for remediation, welfare and prison.

back whole group "call and response," among many other "2.0" revisions to Doug Lemov's "Teach Like a Champion" Taxonomy of effective teaching practices.) Please also see the Curriculum & Instruction section for backward planning and the individual work plans that will engage students in reflecting on their learning. The Professional Development section explains our robust plans for using data to inform instruction, such as in weekly division team meetings and quarterly school-wide data days, as well general performance practices such as frequent instructional observations. And the sections discussing Intervention and Special Populations make clear how these will include all students. In all, we hope to create a culture where teaching is a craft, learning is a passion, and teachers and students take personal responsibility to those ends.

Developmentally responsive grouping: Our classrooms will be generally composed of multiple ages, grouped within common planes / zones of development. These planes consist of clusters of development differences[62]: sensitive development period (e.g. spatial relationships during ages 3-5); output expectations (e.g. more writing as children age); capacity for sustained work; and readiness for peer learning (e.g. side-by-side individual work at primary level versus cooperative, small-group work, peer quizzing, etc, in lower elementary, with younger students often learning by watching older students). [63] Our age divisions will include:

- Primary / early childhood: Ages 3-6 / grades PK3-Kinder.
- Lower elementary: Ages 6-9 / grades 1-3.
- Upper elementary: Ages 9-12 / grades 4-6.

Within these classrooms, students will work mostly individually and in small groups. Classrooms will consist of roughly 25 students (18-23 in year 1), with two faculty members (lead teacher and apprentice or aide) through lower elementary. Concomitant with multi-age grouping is "looping" – children remaining with the same teacher for 3 years – which supports the teacher's knowledge of a given child and deepens connections with families. The three-year cycle and downplaying of grade level also allows children more time for continuous development, rather than pushing high-stakes annual promotion vs. retention conversations.

Time on task: To facilitate the "normalization" discussed earlier, students will be provided with long periods (two to three hours) of uninterrupted work time, during which students move between different subjects as per their work plans. These consolidated periods also efficiently reduce transitions.

Student freedom and movement: Within the structure set by the teacher (e.g. receiving a lesson before working with materials; orchestrated work partners if needed), students move flexibly between tasks from their work plan when ready, rather than hurrying or waiting as in a whole-group setting. The work plan makes clear that students, as the agents of their development, must attend to their learning; monitoring growth is not exclusively their teacher's job. Research suggests that this kind of agency and control for students correlates with "willing persistence in work" and helping others.[64]

Environment: Order in the mind emerges in large part from order in the environment. Hence Montessori's focus on a peaceful, distraction-free classroom[65], well-made materials set at child's height,

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[62] For a more detailed description of the sensitive periods, please see A. S. Lillard (p. 125-6).

[63] Delpit supports multi-age cohorts and peer learning, noting "the culturally embedded and rewarded notion of caring for others--nurturing younger siblings and other children," 155. Lillard has nearly a chapter documenting the motivational benefits of multi-age grouping. Sardi also cites Grant "Questions and Answers About Multiage Programs," 17-19, in Sumner (ed.) *Multiage Classrooms*, about the value of this approach for at-risk students who often are especially helped by classmates. For another view of the importance of individual interest and peer encouragement in education, including for poor children, see Sugata Mitra's "Ted Talk" on the "Child Driven Education."

[64] See Lillard's chapter on this principle; also Deci & Ryan, "Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior."

[65] Children's mental health expert Lesley Koplow recommends a formula of "external order, internal freedom" for constructing therapeutic learning environments, and describes specific daily routines and classroom structures to support child development, including meeting needs for nurture and ownership. See Koplow, "Saving Kindergarten." *Creating Schools That Heal: Real-life Solutions*. New York: Teachers College, 2002. 33-46, 78.

artwork and plant life. Students contribute to caring for the shared environment with classroom jobs and practical life curriculum as described below.

Digital learning will be used to a limited degree within school, primarily for individualized, supplementary practice (Compass Learning, Lexia, ST Math and Memrise), assessment (NWEA MAP and relevant state tests) and quick feedback to teachers in periodic whole-group lessons (student response system). Teachers will have document cameras and computers for presenting materials to groups. We may also provide e-readers for students' independent / take-home reading.

Home: With time in school focused on the unique opportunity to learn with peers and teachers, we will encourage time to be used at home for independent reading (with comprehension questions provided to parents), and a judicious amount (around 20+ minutes per night for elementary students – also simple enough for staff to manage) of personalized, leveled skill worksheet practice.

Leadership Planning and Educators' Opportunities to Learn

(1) How will leader(s) guide instructional staff in the processes of improving teaching and learning?

(2) Describe the operator's plans for ongoing **professional development** of staff and the evaluation of its effectiveness.

(3) Outline the process for **interpreting data** for classroom teachers. (A) How will the school design professional development and collaborative supports to sustain a focus on instructional improvement? (B) Who will be responsible for leading or coordinating professional development to improve student achievement? (C) How will you set both academic and nonacademic goals for your students? How will you track progress towards these goals?

(4) How will the school's culture indicate high levels of collective responsibility, trust, and efficacy?

Trust, data, development, and continuously improving teaching as craft:

Continuously improving teaching is a hallmark of the spirit of craftsmanship that we are seeking. At the same time, we recognize that our teachers – those from urban public school backgrounds (including ones in our preferred neighborhood) as well as Montessori schools – will bring unique and indispensable attributes and relationships that we must interweave to be successful. This mindset is reflected in our draft teaching model, which will by the reference point to ensure that our teachers' existing assets, personal priorities, and overall shared vision are all considered in the collaborative process of setting and working on goals. These will be the foundation for the annual school-wide and individual goal setting and growth plans that we discuss in detail in the Professional Development section. These inform summer training, weekly division meetings, and quarterly PD days, which will also serve as scheduled opportunities to review both student outcomes and the feedback of teachers as indicators of the quality of our professional development, and other areas of practice. Our performance-driven approach is also reflected in the distributed leadership model, whereby many different teachers will have the chance to lead division teams and participate in school-wide leadership. All of these structures are the responsibility of school leaders to bring to life. Our collaboration especially with Team Challenge Foundation Academies, Tennessee Charter School Center, and other ASD schools, along with the other urban Montessori schools we know, should also help us refine our approach.

Please see the subsection on Data under Curriculum & Instruction for details about how this spirit will be reflected in support of classroom teachers. Please also see the Students' Opportunities to

Learn subsection immediately above for how individual student work plans will be used as a mechanism for planning, tracking and communicating students' progress on academic and nonacademic goals.

Each of these elements should reflect the culture of trust, responsibility, and efficacy we all seek – just with a different agent at times. For instance, student, family, and teacher voices will be quantified through our respective surveys, as well as through our many venues for family and teacher meetings. At the same time, these separate voices should unite around common commitments, because many of our goals will be shared across the faculty; likewise, with two teachers in so many classrooms, individuals' success will be hard to separate from the team's. Another indication is that our teaching model includes components around independence of student work. Finally, we hope that a myriad of culture practices – from home visits to family Saturday schools to intergenerational meals and neighborhood service – will bring about the kind of associations that "bridge" between different ages and colors and help knit together the fabric of a society.[66]

4. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

The framework proposed for instructional design must both reflect the needs of the anticipated population and ensure all students will meet or exceed the expectations of the Tennessee Curriculum Standards aligned with the Common Core State Standards (available HERE).

(1) Describe the instructional strategies that you will implement to support the education plan and why they are well-suited for the anticipated student population. Outline the data, methods, and systems teachers will use to provide differentiated instruction to all students. Include what professional development they will receive to ensure high levels of implementation.

(2) Explain specifically how you will identify the needs of all students. Specify the research-based programs, strategies and supports you will provide.

(3) Specify instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services; ensure students' access to the general education curriculum; and ensure academic success for special needs students, along with meet the needs of all students, in the least restrictive environment.

With permission from the ASD, we are addressing most of the discrete questions of this section within a more coherent narrative. This section also spirals with several other parts of the application. Rationale for our methods of meeting all students' needs are presented mostly above in the Transformational Change section. While our general education program could be construed as highly differentiated already, we lay out our full plan for inclusion, prevention, diagnosis, intervention and remediation under Driving for Results and Special Populations.

PLANNING

Long-term plans: We will use backward planning to operationalize our vision of personalized, liberal arts education to ensure that all students meet or exceed required standards. Each summer, our Head Teacher will lead a team of experienced faculty members in a backward-planning process. Though our chosen curricula are already substantially aligned to CCSS (as described below), we will analyze and

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[66] The notion of types of associations that "bridge" between different groups in comparison to those kinds that tend to "bond" people of common backgrounds is discussed among other sources in Harvard professor Theda Skocpol's *Diminished Democracy*, 2003. Once again, also see Putnam, *Bowling Alone*.

refine our curriculum to ensure that learning experiences prepare students with knowledge and skills needed to meet Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and TN standards. This curriculum team will take into account the relevant sample assessment materials that specify the level of rigor required for success[67], and general CCSS "shifts." Some CCSS "shifts" include *close reading* and *textual/evidentiary discussion & writing* in literacy, and, for mathematics, *focus*, *coherence*, *application* of the right strategy, and *"dual intensity"* of *fluency* and *depth of understanding.* If we may say this without too much cheek, these hardly constitute "shifts" at all for liberal arts, Socratic, and Montessori learning; these methods have always provided repeated exposure to variations of problems and engagement with evidence.

Our units will be appropriately framed with relevant essential questions, enduring understandings and/or engaging problems, and build toward authentic assessment. They will also identify background knowledge requirements. School-wide unit plans will be specific enough that teachers know what to teach with some flexibility as to when, for personalized pacing: a range of time within the unit gives some room for teacher discretion while ensuring that by x time of year, all of our students have learned about y (for accountability, measuring progress, and so units can build cumulatively). Units will also, to the extent possible, include samples of rubrics and exemplary student responses. Lastly, we will translate standards into student/family-friendly expectations (e.g. "I can" statements) of what they must know and be able to do at milestones along their learning. These will be organized into a long-term plan to guide teaching, student self-evaluation and assessment.

Lesson plans: Our school-wide curricula and criteria for success provide a framework and foundation of high-impact, detailed unit and lesson materials. Teachers are thus freed from the need to invent materials, and will instead focus on building student family relationships (including communication of progress), providing learning experiences, checking for understanding through ongoing formative assessment, and re-teaching to ensure that all of our students access our universal, standards-based, rigorous curriculum.[68] With this in mind, teachers will work in collaborative planning teams each week. They will ensure lesson plans align to long-term plans (accounting for predecessor knowledge). As a general instructional point, teachers will maximize time for student work, talk and thought, with frequent opportunities for problem solving, student work sharing, evidentiary discussion, and self-evaluation. (It is clear to us that readiness for PARCC means that *exclusive* use of conventional I-do / We-do / You-do lessons is *too* scaffolded; students need at least some lessons that start with opportunities to struggle with problems.) Teachers will also anticipate student strategies and errors, and suggest "stretch" questions to guide their checks for understanding. And they will identify accommodations / modifications for students with disabilities. Division chairmen and/or Head Teacher will regularly review plans as part of observations.

Student work plans: A truly distinguishing feature of Libertas' instructional design for "transformational change" is adapting the proven practices of backward design and data-informed

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[67] CCSS sample performance tasks and PARCC task prototypes, as well as CCSS text exemplars. The backward-planning approach here is obviously drawn from Wiggins and McTighe *Understanding By Design*, as well as Insight Education's "Strategic Design for the Common Core," and Bambrick's *Driven by Data*.

[68] Our approach to teacher priorities matches almost exactly the best practice described recently by noted education researcher Mike Schmoker: the "near-exclusive focus" for classroom teaching should be (1) "guaranteed, content-rich curriculum," (2) maximizing time reading, writing and discussing analytically, and (3) "lessons with clear, curriculum-based objectives and assessment, followed by multiple cycles of instruction, guided practice, multiple checks for understanding (the soul of a good lesson), and ongoing adjustments." The context for this quote was a discussion of the right interpretation of the idea of "differentiated instruction." Schmoker was contrasting these high-impact general strategies for accelerating achievement in contrast to an exhaustive focus on designing different materials for students based on learning style. "When Pedagogic Fads Trump Priorities." Education Week, Sept. 20, 2010. http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2010/09/29/05schmoker.h30.html?tkn=MSSFUVSFAXuWKCUbn4fYTqY24EPBZTbW5Ogb&print=1 This advice is also seemingly confirmed by Willingham, cited above, who presents research that teaching style should vary more based on lesson content (i.e. capturing student interest by presenting knowledge as the answer to an interesting question) than individual preference.

instruction common in direct-instruction schools to our student-paced structure. As discussed above, teachers will develop, or support students in developing, individual work plans. These allow students to manage and monitor their own work progress. Teachers also mark work plans as they check student work. As students age, teachers will help students to set goals, check their own work against provided rubrics and work samples, and cyclically adjust goals (i.e. do I know / can I do our learning expectation? How could I use my time to address my areas of need?). By "flipping" the dynamic of who drives the learning, we hope to encourage student ownership of their development.

Since we know that the best design is only as good as its implementation, we will allocate time for and align faculty professional development, team collaboration, observation, coaching and evaluation around this approach, as detailed in the section on faculty professional development.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Our program uses individual pacing through rigorous, backward-planned curricula to deepen learning for all students. Our curriculum has two main strands: the comprehensive sequence of content and skills of Core Knowledge, and the pedagogy and lessons of the Montessori method. Core Knowledge (CK) and Montessori are highly compatible. According to the Core Knowledge Foundation, the *Sequence* "specifies content, not pedagogy," and takes somewhat over half of instructional time, allowing schools to "really... [develop] their own shared curriculum... The *Sequence* ensures that all essential background knowledge is included, allowing educators to focus on adding content of local interest and importance." One principal says teachers "have a perfect opportunity to be innovative, creative, use their imaginations, share with their colleagues, use [interactive modes]..." [69] Montessori is both a mode of organizing learning (please see the details of the learning environment in the Students' Opportunities to Learn section) and a substantial source of content – either in areas that CK does not cover (e.g. practical life), or where they are complementary (e.g. the Dwyer approach to literacy within Montessori aligns closely with CK Language Arts, as do Montessori's mathematics with Singapore, and CK Pre-K with Montessori sensorial). Both are aligned with CCSS and provide rich resources for student growth. While we believe our program will be innovative for Memphis, several other schools around the country have already found synergies between Montessori and Core Knowledge.[70]

It may be worth briefly clarifying that Montessori is decisively different from what might generically be called "discovery learning" or "constructivist pedagogy." Montessori is not about allowing children to reach their own conclusions through open-ended, project-based work. Such methods are known to be less effective than direct instruction, because students may spend their time [making] "discoveries that aren't true."[71] The unique synthesis in Montessori is pairing certain kinds of freedom for engagement with structure at the "micro-routine" level to ensure learning. [72]

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[69] http://blog.coreknowledge.org/tag/jeffrey-litt/ Hirsch acknowledged the value of varied instructional methods as long as they do not displace attention to content. Interestingly, Hirsch notes in his discussion of pedagogical history that Montessori was criticized by her more radically progressive contemporaries for being too rigid - insufficiently open and democratic - in her requirements for student learning objectives and use of materials. See *The Schools We Need,* 250, 245, 274. The inversion of Montessori's reputation from rigidity to fluidity is one of the ironies of educational history.

[70] cf. Cornerstone Montessori in Indiana; Bridges Montessori in Florida; Children's House of Hershey, Pennsylvania. Similarly, Maren Schmidt, one author aligned with the American Montessori Society wrote in *Understanding Montessori* about the value of Core Knowledge materials in the Montessori classroom.

[71] Hirsch, *The Schools We Need*, 250; see also 245, 274. Hirsch elucidates the meaning of the "construction" of knowledge: The brain must indeed convert stimuli to memory, but it can draw from a variety of sources, from hands-on to lectures or reading. Our plan is not predicated on defining "natural" learning, but rather upon discerning what kind of teaching encourages self-regulated work. See also http://www.danielwillingham.com/1/post/2013/06/what-type-of-learning-is-most-natural.html

[72] Lillard, 298.

A. Montessori

Montessori facilitates guided and self-paced learning through focused and repeated practice with concrete materials that are carefully designed to build explicit understandings, thematically integrated, increase in complexity, and scaffold children's comprehension of abstractions. More than merely assigning individual computerized work through an algorithm, this pedagogy is truly personalized because, at its heart, it is about the relationship of student and teacher, and incorporates to a full array of modes of learning.

Montessori subjects and sequences respond to students' sensitive periods and predilection for real work: academic subjects (languages, mathematics, sciences, geography/history), cultural / artistic (music and visual arts), "sensorial" works that refine the senses (for primary age), and "practical life" / daily-living exercises associated with care of self and the environment (for all ages). The materials follow a spiral plane of integrated studies, rather than a conventional compartmentalization into separate subjects and times. Lessons are introduced simply and concretely in the early years, and are revisited several times during subsequent years in increasing abstraction and complexity. Complementing Core Knowledge, the Montessori course of study is a unified and thematic approach ("Great Lessons") that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together into studies of the physical universe, the world of nature, and the human experience. The thorough integration of subject matter and application is aligned with principles of learning laid out in CCSS, which "stress not only procedural skill but also conceptual understanding, to make sure students are learning and absorbing the critical information they need to succeed at higher levels - rather than the current practices by which many students learn enough to get by on the next test, but forget it shortly thereafter." [73]

Older students in Montessori programs increasingly deepen and apply their learning outside the classroom, through self-directed research, "Going Out" expeditions (educational field trips planned jointly), and open-ended problem-solving. As students grow in our program, engagement with the real world through meaningful learning opportunities will facilitate one of the essential recommendations of the Common Core State Standards' mission statement, promoting learning that "relevant to the real world… reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for college and careers." [74]

B. Core Knowledge

To be delivered largely through the Montessori method, Core Knowledge provides a complementary, comprehensive sequence of content and skills that students need to have a solid, shared foundation for cultural literacy. As explained above, Core Knowledge is based on research that knowledge is cumulative, building on prior knowledge through systematic exposure; the more you know, the more you can understand and learn. Therefore the CK *Sequence* specifies thematic units that build coherently within grades and across grades and study areas to ensure that all children have a solid and shared foundation of knowledge. It is content-specific: explicitly naming what is to be taught in language arts, history, geography, math, sciences, and fine arts.[75] We will use the Core Knowledge sequence as a guideline in our long-term planning to ensure that our students are learning content that develops knowledge both horizontally, through the year, and vertically, across grades.

In addition to the CK *Sequence* and Pre-K, we will use CK Language Arts, which is aligned to CCSS and based on the best available research about literacy development. (Please see below for details.) CKLA includes a "Skills" strand, which explicitly teaches phonics and literacy skills in a tightly sequenced fashion, featuring among other resources 100% decodable readers. And because children acquire the content knowledge they need for comprehension more readily through listening in early elementary

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[73] "Key Points In Mathematics." *Common Core State Standards Initiative*. N.p., n.d. Web. 8/16/13.
http://www.corestandards.org/resources/key-points-in-mathematics
[74] http://www.corestandards.org/
[75] http://www.coreknowledge.org/about-the-curriculum

grades (indeed children are capable of learning above-grade level vocabulary this way), CKLA also has a "Listening and Learning" strand, where students learn about scientific, historical and other topics through engaging read-aloud.[76]

C. Additional curriculum highlights

Mathematics: With the guidelines of the CK Sequence, we will introduce all students to mathematics via Montessori materials and follow many of its lessons, complementing and extending that foundation with individual and small group lessons from the Singapore Math curriculum.[77] Montessori math lessons use concrete materials to teach abstract concepts ("from the hand to the mind").[78] For example, Montessori introduces place value to kindergarteners with the "golden beads" material and reaches an even higher level (counting up to 1,000 by units) than required by Common Core, and helps older children begin to grasp the ideas of square and cubic exponents through the binomial and trinomial cubes that instantiate geometric concepts. The math sequence increases in complexity over time, and integrates process (problem solving, reasoning and proof, communication, connections, and representation) with content (number sense and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, and statistics and probability).[79] Singapore, which is also used in numerous CK schools, aligns with Montessori in several respects: Both prioritize depth over breadth, are highly linguistic (including translation between numbers and words as well as justification), embed algebra from early on, and emphasize physical and graphical modeling of concepts.[80] Other benefits include that Singapore's unit tests are cumulative, enabling teachers to catch skills mastery issues and inform reteach/remediation, and Singapore's home instruction guide. In addition to number quantities, symbols, sense, place value and decimal fundamentals, basic computation, and geometry, children also apply their skills to real-life problems, such as measuring the growth of a plant and determining rate of change or calculating money needed for a purchase.

Literacy: We are aware of the challenges most ASD schools have encountered attaining gains in literacy. We explained as part of Transformational Change how coherent content knowledge will improve reading comprehension at older grade levels. We also have a research-based approach to phonics and early literacy to help students get the best possible start. Our approach is based on the work of University of South Florida Professor and longtime reading clinic practitioner Diane McGuinness.[81] Based on the logic that written language is based on sounds, Professor McGuinness counsels a heavy pre-reading focus on auditory awareness of each of the phonemes of our language. Without this foundation, young readers risk falling back on invisible whole-language strategies like memorizing a small number of word-pictures. But these hamstring readers in the long run as they are exposed to more complex words. Therefore children should first learn to aurally distinguish the 43 sounds of English, and then how they probabilistically correspond with our 26 letters (better understood as "sound pictures") – initially in the most likely "basic code" and subsequently through the "advanced code," with its code-overlap and spelling alternatives, in decreasing order of likelihood.

Our early literacy curriculum is based in McGuinness' insights. Her approach has for decades essentially been applied in Muriel Dwyer's elaboration of the Montessori method, and is one of the

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[76] According to Sticht, 1984, as cited in the Core Knowledge "overview" *op. cit.*, students' reading comprehension only catches up to their listening comprehension on average by age 13; at age 9, the former is only about half that of the latter. In line with this research, the CCSS, 27, recommends that read-aloud be used along with independent reading for students through at least 5th grade.

[77] Marshall Cavendish Singapore Math Standards Edition

[78] See Michael Duffy, *Math Works: Montessori and the Developing Brain*, 2008.

[79] This helpful summary was written by Gina Sardi at NYC Montessori Charter School.

[80] Geometry was considered so indispensable that those without it could not enter Plato's original academy.

[81] As reflected in Why Our Children Can't Read, And What To Do About It.

primary influences on the Core Knowledge Language Arts program [82] -- the two primary curricula we will use for early literacy. Aligned with CCSS, these curricula reflect an integrated model of literacy that includes listening and speaking, writing, reading, and language development. Students will build a foundation in phonemic awareness and then decoding through Montessori materials and exercises, supplemented with CKLA skills lessons. Montessori sensorial works prepare children indirectly for print concepts and fine motor skills. Then, remembering the key role of motion and concrete materials for young children, students practice "encoding" – the corollary of decoding – by actively translating sound-to-letter relations through works like the sandpaper letters and movable alphabet. For the same developmental reasons, children may advance first in rudimentary writing, later supported with handwriting practice. And in the same range of formats used across our program – individualized works, small-group and whole-class instruction – our teachers will provide learning opportunities and lessons in oral language development, phonics, fluency, spelling and grammar, and reading comprehension. Students begin reading decodable texts that contain those spelling patterns and true sight words to which they are gradually introduced, based on frequency of use in the language. Throughout, we will build the foundation for comprehension through domain vocabulary-rich CK listening and learning of nonfiction and sayings and phrases and nomenclature activities. We will also provide language-rich read-aloud from literature that builds our students' "mental database" of language use. Those examples will also be useful as students advance in length and complexity of writing, through the CKLA Skills strand three-step process – plan, draft, and edit – and modeled writing, where students practice composing together in emulation of excellent examples.

Refining thinking and communication, expanding cultural horizons: In line with our liberal arts theme – and in close alignment with the CCSS "Portrait of a College and Career Ready Student" [83] – we aim to help students read, think, write and speak thoughtfully about the most important questions in life. This starts with engaging students with what the portrait calls "engaging with works of quality and substance" – "great classic and contemporary works of literature representative of a variety of periods, cultures and worldviews." Core Knowledge Sequence includes such diverse elements. Through read-aloud, poetry memorization, and independent reading from our well-curated library, we will cultivate our students "database" of knowledge and language use. And through shared inquiry, modeled reading and writing, and Socratic discussion (with appropriate scaffolding and answer stems), we will teach students to be "discerning readers and listeners" who "work diligently to understand precisely what an author or speaker is saying" – asking relevant questions and probing textual premises for "soundness of reasoning" – in short, comprehending before critiquing, and then constructing effective arguments of their own. Also, upper elementary students will receive some rudimentary instruction in logic, and school discussions of virtue will introduce students to key concepts in ethics. All of this work will help to prepare students for meaningfully engaging the humane letters in secondary grades.

Geography: Recognizing that children are naturally curious about their place in the greater world, our curriculum delivers and extends the TN social studies standards by presenting: geography concepts (such as distinguishing between land and water); physical geography: mapping, world continents and oceans, and the United States; state and local symbols and figures; cultures of the world: flags, festivals and celebrations; and economics: needs and wants, trading, and goods and services.

History: Cicero said, "Not to know what happened before you were born, that is to be forever a child." Our liberal arts education program will introduce students to the facts and debates of local, national, and world history. Students in the Primary program encounter history through read-alouds,

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[82] An excellent and concise introduction to the CKLA program is available here:
http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/general-overview-skills-k-2.pdf
[83] http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/introduction/students-who-are-college-and-career-ready-in-reading-writing-speaking-listening-language. Accessed October, 2013. Several of the traits of good readers and thinkers mentioned in this paragraph are paraphrased from the "Portrait."

the Core Knowledge history sequence and Language Arts Listening and Learning strand, class discussions, and student-directed research. Students will learn concepts of time, early civilizations, exploration and settlement, and important dates and figures (e.g. Independence Day, U.S. presidents). A distinct feature will be studying our shared home in Memphis: From the Chickasaws, to early pioneers, to the various West African peoples brought here under compulsion, to the northward migration of sharecroppers, to the Southern Europeans immigrating to work on the river, to the yellow fever epidemic and floods that rearranged the city, to the civil rights movement and changing workforce, all of which should help our students to situate themselves in history.

Civics: We will build civic knowledge and character by following local affairs (the most tangible), researching and writing on the public good (i.e., letters to newspapers), observing public hearings, visiting with elected representatives to ask probing questions, canvassing to register voters, and so on. We are in conversation with Citizenship First about a civics curriculum. Finally, we note that at this stage, we must focus on developing students' imaginative understanding and capacity for logical thought, rather than narrow their frame of mind with a premature focus on taking sides. Altogether, our students will be prepared to act as heirs of their community's legacy.

Sciences: Capitalizing on children's innate interest in nature and the observable world, our Primary program uses Core Knowledge Sequence science content combined with Tennessee science standards[84] to address: time and space; earth science: plants and plant growth, animals and their needs; introduction to magnetism; seasons and weather; taking care of the earth; the human body; and science biographies. Montessori lessons in botany, classification of forms of life, and life cycles complement the sequence, as do the Great Lessons, discussed next.

Cross-curricular integration: As students progress into elementary grades, we deepen the integration of history and literature, as well as the sciences and related subjects, by combining the Core Knowledge Sequence learning goals with the Montessori Great Lessons. The latter are narratives that give students a question-inspiring big picture of cosmology, astronomy, earth science, geography, chemistry, physics, biology, history, anthropology, cultural and social studies, language, math, music, and art. The Great Lessons, presented in whole-group instruction, are the starting points for child's own activity; meaningful learning happens when children are inspired by a lesson and begin to explore and research the subject and work on their own. We continue to build coherence content knowledge for comprehension through ongoing Listening & Learning lessons. By upper elementary, when students' reading comprehension should reach their listening comprehension, the Skills and L&L strands merge.

Fine arts: To hone their imaginative understanding of beauty and the human condition, all of our students will have music and art appreciation and basic performance. Students will be introduced to harmony, melody, rhythm, phrasing; elements of art such as color, line, and texture, and drawing and sculpture. We will also model and practice looking at and discussing works of art from the Core Knowledge sequence. Student work will be presented at an exposition in the school. We will phase-in teachers in both subjects for dedicated enrichment courses, possibly through partnership with other arts organizations currently serving nearby schools.

Second language: Students will strengthen their native language grammar, enrich their mental reserves of language use, and acquire more currency for accessing their world as they learn a second language. Starting by the end of lower elementary, Libertas students will all learn Latin – at first conversationally, likely with Cambridge's *Minimis* program, and then formal grammar study by "5th grade" with the Memoria Press "First Form Latin" program. As the source of nearly 53% of the words in the English language (and nearly 80% of words with 3 or more syllables!), Latin gives students access to classic literature, etymology of many English words in general as well as fields like the sciences and the

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[84] http://www.tennessee.gov/education/ci/sci/doc/SCI_Grade_K.pdf

law, and improves capacity with English grammar.[85] We are also considering a modern language option (Spanish and potentially French) in later years, perhaps partnering with outside providers.

Core Knowledge Pre-K: Informed by a shared awareness of developmentally appropriate best practices in early learning, the Core Knowledge Pre-K and Montessori Primary programs complement and reinforce each other in several ways. Both CK PK and Montessori will provide the instructional methods and materials for our 4-year-olds and are closely aligned in methods and aims. Direct correlations and broadly shared aims of the two curricula include:

- Movement, coordination, autonomy, and social skills
- Productive work habits (with an emphasis on modeling and instruction in CK, whereas Montessori focuses upon indirect development via "normalization" through work)
- Language and literacy, with multidimensional supports for fostering
  - o Oral language through nursery rhymes, poems, finger plays and songs;
  - o Phonemic awareness via sandpaper paper letters and movable alphabet;
  - o Awareness of written print and its uses through story time and modeled writing;
  - o Indirect preparation of fine motor skills with works that utilize left to right sweep and return, pincer grip, and circular articulation.
- Mathematical reasoning through sorting and classifying, quantifying and comparing, working with shapes and patterns, and universal use of concrete materials to represent abstract concepts
- Awareness of cultural and scientific content, with shared focuses on geographical concepts like time and space, observation of living world; creation and observation of music and art.

In addition, both CK Pre-K and Montessori are flexible in formatting, making use of multiple settings for presenting lessons: large- and small-group activities, 1:1 teacher-child or peer teaching, and child-initiated activities. Both programs utilize multiple forms of assessment, including observation and work artifacts, emphasize process and product, and guide instruction with assessment. Finally, both programs promote the development of shared daily routines – so important in nurturing Pre-K environments – from the macro (morning circle, shared meal-time, storytime) to the micro (completing and replacing works, cleaning up, taking care of self and environment). By selecting compatible and equally developmentally attuned early learning curricula, we will ensure that the instructional materials, methods, and ethos of our program set up our youngest learners for success from the very beginning.

Practical Life: Montessori observed that children crave order, and therefore involves them in maintaining work areas, caring for classroom plants, and so on. Children are taught to carefully follow a series of small, scripted steps, from retrieving the materials, to the proper filling of buckets of water, to washing and rinsing, to returning things to their rightful place, etc. Montessori teachers note that children will happily repeat these exercises, in the process practicing their motor skills, concentration and conception of completion, and grace and courtesy – not to mention the good habit of leaving a place better than you found it! And by providing opportunities for taking responsibility for themselves and their space, practical life is the beginning of character education.

Sensorial: Montessori developed works explicitly for the education and refinement of the senses. In this strand, children work with concrete materials that engage through multiple modalities, including the visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, chromic, and thermic.

Manual crafts, nature study and agriculture: These extra-curricular areas are important to our long-term priority of fostering stewardship, though will have a smaller presence in the school in year 1. Our faculty will develop these programs in subsequent years in collaboration with community partners

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[85] Wren Jones Grinstead, "On the Source of English Vocabulary." For more on the academic benefits of Latin instruction, please see DeVane, Alice K. "The Efficacy of Latin Studies in the Information Age" (1997), and Sparks, Ganschow, Fluharty and Little. "An Exploratory Study on the Effects of Latin on the Native Language Skills and Foreign Language Aptitude of Students with and without Learning Disabilities," (1995).

such as the Shelby County Extension Service and local farmers and artisans. We note that these projects will complement Montessori's classroom programs in botany, zoology, and practical life.

Visual curriculum / strands overview

	Primary (PK-K)	Lower elem (Gr 1-3)	Upper elem (Gr 4-6)
Mathematics	Montessori math		
	Singapore Math (Core math scope and sequence)		
	ST Math (Tier 2)		
English / Language Arts	Dwyer Montessori phonics and grammar		
	TBD handwriting and composition		
		Junior Great Books / Touchstones Great Books (Readaloud and Indep Rdg)	
	CKLA Skills; and CKLA Remediation/Supplemental (Tier 2)		CK Language Arts / CK Sequence (Literacy integrated with content study)
History and geography	CKLA Listening & Learning / Sequence & Montessori "Cultural" subjects materials		
Sciences			
Second language		Cambridge "Minimis"	Memoria "First Form"
Fine Arts & Manual Crafts	CK art & music; studio art		
	Montessori music	Choral and instrumental music	
	Small-scale agriculture & manual crafts		
Physical Education	Structured play		Athletic partnerships
	Outdoor activity		
Other	Montessori practical life & sensorial; CK Pre-K		Beginning civics and logic
Cultivating virtue	Classroom management: structure and nurture, intrinsic rewards, Love and logic; Conduct exemplars: read aloud biographies, role plays, adults and older children as models; Montessori Grace and Courtesy lessons		
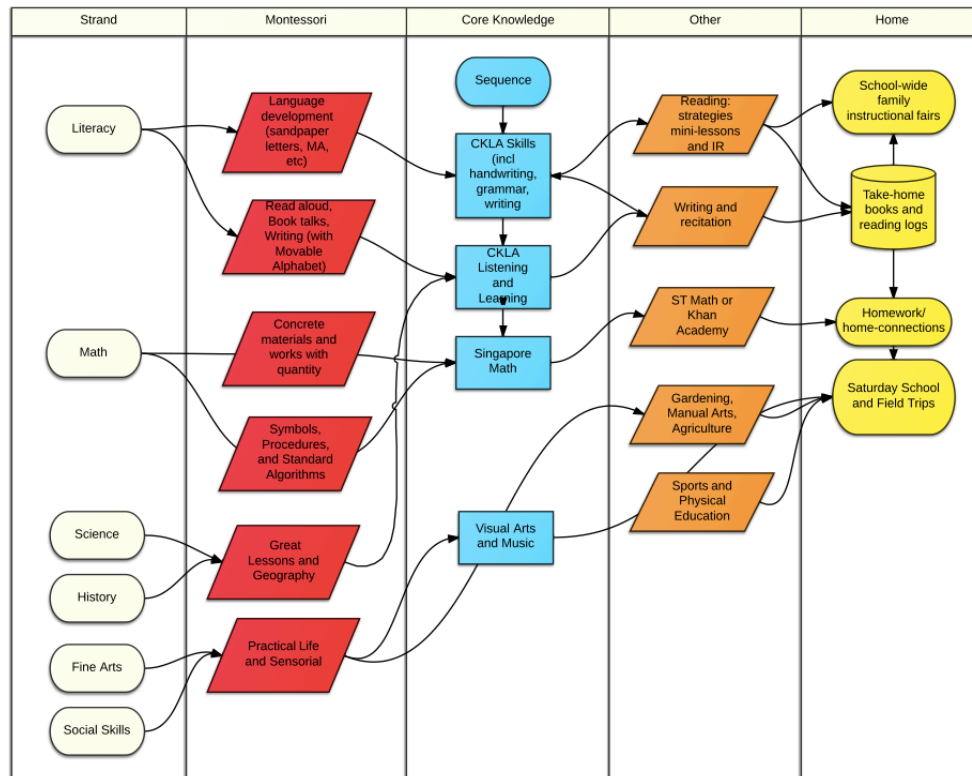
Alignment to Standards

As is illustrated in the numerous citations above regarding alignment to standards, central to our mission and design are many of the features that distinguish success according to the CCSS. Like the

CCSS, our key design considerations include an integrated model of literacy; research skills blended into standards as a whole (real practice with real things); shared responsibility for students' literacy development (every teacher is a reading teacher); focus and coherence on what to teach; and (especially mathematical) concept development.[86] The CCSS instructional shifts in literacy and math are aligned with our philosophy and instructional program.

In literacy, the CCSS shifts that are explicitly addressed by our program are: building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction and informational texts, reading and writing grounded in evidence from text, and regular practice with complex text and its academic vocabulary.[87] The CK Language Arts program for skills and reading comprehension in grades P-3 is explicitly and directly aligned with CCSS.[88]

In mathematics, the CCSS emphases that are essential to our instructional planning are: depth over breadth, so that students can gain strong foundational conceptual understanding, a high degree of procedural skill and fluency, and the ability to apply the math they know to solve problems inside and outside the math classroom; coherence, as we think across grades and link to major topics within grades; and rigor, by which we require conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application with intensity. In a similar vein, Montessori – which has also been aligned to CCSS [89] – prioritizes depth, process, the progression from concrete to abstract for a solid foundation of understanding, and a spiral approach to topics in which concepts are revisited in increasingly greater depth. We later discuss the extensive internal and external professional development plan to master the required Montessori and complementary instructional methods.

> (6) Explain how students will matriculate through the school (i.e., promotion/retention policies) and how stakeholders will be informed of these standards.

As mentioned in relation to the learning environment, students work until at least "6th grade," which is the end of the upper elementary division, in multi-age classrooms consisting of three years. These diminish the pressure of annual promotion vs. retention conversations – and the stigma associated with the latter – allowing children more time for continuous development.

Even so, students are evaluated based on standards, and there will be times when someone is approaching the end of a division or approaching "normal" graduation timeline and not be on track to complete the benchmarks necessary. In these cases, the division chairman will ensure that families are provided with, where possible, up to 6 months' written notification of the possibility of retaining a student in a division or, in the case of courses offered at fixed times at the secondary level, repeat a course. This overall approach is included in our handbook and will be explained during home visits and family orientations.

> (4) Describe the school's approach to help remediate students' academic underperformance. Detail the identification strategy, interventions and remediation to be implemented. Cite the research/rationale for the chosen methods.
>
> (5) Explain how the school will identify and differentiate to meet the needs of intellectually gifted students in a way that extends their learning and offers them unique, tailored opportunities (TN law makes intellectually gifted students eligible for special education services).

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[86] http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/introduction/key-design-consideration
[87] http://www.achievethecore.org/content/upload/Shifts%202%20pager_091313.pdf
[88] http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_uploads/documents/734/CCSS_CKLA_K_1_2_Alignment.pdf
[89] Examples of Montessori-CCSS alignment: http://montessoricompass.com/common-core-language-arts and http://setonmontessori.org/institute/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/2012-03-12Correlation_Kindergarten1.pdf

Please see the Driving for Results section, as well as the subsection on Intervention with Special Populations, for a detailed discussion of how we identify and intervene/remediate student academic underperformance.

Based on the performance data of the schools and neighborhoods we hope to serve, we expect most students to come to us below grade-level, including students not even fully Kindergarten ready. At the same time, we certainly expect to have intellectually gifted students – whose abilities mean that some schools' general curriculum alone may be inadequate, and who are eligible for exceptional children services in TN. We have designed our entire program with this diverse range of learner needs in mind. Our detailed assessment program, flexible benchmarks and Response to Intervention approach (both described below) will deliberately monitor and adapt to everyone's progress. Our multi-age setting and individualized program constitute a kind of "least restrictive environment"; the capacity for extra support or acceleration within the classroom will minimize the need for the kind of constant pull-out of a standardized setting.

In addition to the general, RTI-related monitoring and special education identification discussed elsewhere, we will ensure that there is a comprehensive, multi-modal approach to assessment for possible gifted services. We will take into account the 3 component areas of cognition, educational performance, and creativity / characteristics of giftedness. Through our Child Find process, assessment results, individual screening / observation notes, comments from parents and referring teacher(s), and related sources will be studied for how a child's capacity impacts their educational performance in the environment and for possible referral. An appropriate team will conduct this study, including a licensed special educator, psychologist, teacher qualified to work with the appropriate age group (including Pre K), ESL collaboration if needed, and (if not already included) someone with appropriate training for gifted students. In terms of services, we know that gifted students will often require fewer repetitions to master content; this means they will be given opportunities such as writing assignments in more depth; defining and conducting independent research, and reporting back to others; participating in reading groups with higher-level texts and discussions; and doing early preparation for college-entrance and -placement tests. At the same time, to avoid isolating students based on brain function, we will ensure chances for socializing among other gifted students. Additional programming will be determined in more detail with the support of appropriately trained faculty.

5. HS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS & POSTSECONDARY READINESS

(1) Explain how the school will meet state requirements. Describe how students will earn credit hours, how grade-point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, and what elective courses will be offered. If graduation requirements for the school will exceed those required by the State of Tennessee, explain the additional requirements.

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

(3) Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk for dropping out and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements, including plans to address students who are overage for grade, those needing to access credit recovery options, and those performing significantly below grade level.

(4) In the table below, provide the school's exit standards for students. These should clearly set forth what students in the last grade served will know and be able to do.

High school topics do not apply to Libertas at this time because we are applying to serve through 6th grade, for which we have included draft exit standards.[90]

Exit Standards: Grade 6	Instructional standards and resources	Assessment/End Products
Reading Libertas students will read stories, literature, and nonfiction in a range of forms and levels of complexity to build content knowledge and joy of reading.	CCSS ELA Reading 6th Grade Standards Core Knowledge Sequence Objectives for English, 6th Grade Montessori Language Lessons for Upper Elementary	MAP Reading RIT score meets or exceeds growth goal Independent reading F&P text levels V-Z Participation in class and independent reading comprehension discussions and analyses, written and oral
Writing Libertas students will demonstrate sophistication in all aspects of written language use: vocabulary and syntax, development and organization of ideas, addressing demanding content and sources. Libertas students will write arguments, informative/explanatory texts, narratives, and research papers on designated topics over a range of time.	CCSS ELA Writing 6th Grade Standards Core Knowledge Sequence Objectives for English, 6th Grade Montessori Language Lessons for Upper Elementary	Writing in specified genres in response to prompts and on self-generated topics Written reports of varying lengths to reflect on and evaluate student's own learning
Speaking, Listening, and Language Libertas students will engage effectively in a range of collaborative and comprehension conversations with diverse partners on grade 6 texts, topics, and issues. Libertas students will present claims and findings, sequence ideas logically, and use relevant arguments and facts to make and understand a case or position. Libertas students will use appropriate eye contact, volume level, pronunciation, diction, and grammar,	CCSS ELA Speaking and Listening, Language 6th Grade Standards Core Knowledge Sequence Objectives for English (Speaking, Grammar, Sayings and Phrases), 6th Grade Montessori Language Lessons	Participation in class debate and discussion Make at least once-quarterly oral presentations of work

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[90] We have a vision for a personalized, liberal arts secondary education, which could be achieved in partnership with other schools or a potential future expansion of the grade span on our single site. However, this obviously depends on our performance in the initial years and other developments in the neighborhood. And the page limit of this application precludes fully presenting a plan for all levels. Therefore we may explore the ASD's expansion application process in future years.

adapting speech to a variety of social and academic contexts [91]	for Upper Elementary	
Content Knowledge: History and Science Libertas students will demonstrate deep and specific knowledge of facts and ideas to support enduring understandings and connection building in content-rich subjects	CCSS ELA: Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects for 6th Grade Core Knowledge Sequence Objectives for History and Geography and Science, 6th Grade Montessori Cultural and Science lessons for UE	Proficiency on CK Domain Assessments Earn full credits for content-related works on internal benchmark system
Mathematics Libertas students will demonstrate proficiency in grade-level math, specifically: (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking[92]	CCSS Mathematics Objectives for 6th Grade Core Knowledge Sequence Objectives for Mathematics, 6th Grade Montessori Mathematics lessons for UE	MAP Math RIT score meets or exceeds growth goal Proficiency on Singapore Math assessments
Arts and Music Libertas students will demonstrate knowledge of art and music history by making content connections across subjects and grades. Libertas students will identify features of and create their own visual art and musical compositions. Libertas students will apply knowledge of music elements and vocabulary to discuss, study and appreciate selected	Core Knowledge Sequence Objectives for Visual Arts and Music, 6th Grade Montessori Mathematics lessons for UE	Visual arts and music composition portfolio At least once-quarterly written statements of arts appreciation and evaluation

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[91] Summarizing Common Core standards for 6th grade in Speaking and Listening, Language. http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/SL/6/
[92] These are the introductory descriptors for 6th graders' math knowledge according to the Common Core, http://www.corestandards.org/Math/Content/6/introduction/

musical works		
Physical Education, Health and Wellness Libertas students will engage in physical activities that facilitate functional strength and agility and develop gross motor competence Libertas students will apply knowledge of health and wellness to make lifestyle, physical activity and eating choices	TN Health, PE and Wellness Standards[93]	Participation in physical education activities with whole class Oral or written presentation at least once a year about wellness choices
Foreign Language Libertas students will read, understand, and interpret beginning texts in Latin and use and pronounce it orally as part of the language learning process	TN Classical Languages Standards, Beginning[94]	Proficiency on Foreign Language content and skill assessments Earn full credits for foreign-language works on internal benchmark system
Character Development Libertas students will demonstrate prosocial behaviors and virtue by making conscious contributions to our learning community	Montessori works in Grace and Courtesy Biography studies of exemplary figures	Nominating peers in writing with evidence (and potentially receiving) Libertas Citizen of the Month
Whole Child: Manual Arts Libertas students will select and participate in an elective course in the manual arts (ie gardening, beekeeping, woodwork, sewing, cooking...)	Montessori works in Nature Education and Cosmic Curriculum	Participation in manual arts course Oral or written presentation at least once a year about manual arts OR description of real work products (ie, completed garden plot)

6. DRIVING FOR RESULTS

The ASD will evaluate the performance of every charter school annually and for renewal purposes according to a set of academic, financial, and organizational performance standards that will be incorporated into the charter agreement. The academic performance standards will consider status, growth, and comparative performance based on federal, state, and school-specific measures, as well as outcomes on the ASD School Performance Framework (available HERE). The financial performance standards will be based on standard accounting and industry standards for sound financial operation. The organizational performance standards will be based primarily on compliance with legal obligations, including fulfillment of the governing board's fiduciary obligations related to sound governance.

Applicants may propose to supplement, but not replace, the ASD's performance standards with school-

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[93] http://www.tennessee.gov/education/ci/health_pe/index.shtml
[94] http://www.tennessee.gov/education/ci/foreign_lang/doc/FL_Classic_1st_Yr.pdf

specific academic or organizational goals.

(1) Describe any mission-specific academic goals and targets that the school will have. State goals clearly in terms of the measures or assessments you plan to use and describe the process by which you will determine and set targets.

(2) In the table below, outline the clearly measurable annual performance and growth goals that the school will set in order to meet or exceed District expectations for the School Performance Framework indicators and to meet state expectations for student academic growth. Describe your presumed baseline and explain how it was set. Furthermore, articulate how the organization will measure and evaluate academic progress – of individual students, student cohorts, sub-groups, and the entire school – throughout the school year, at the end of the academic year, and for the first three years of operation. You may add or delete rows as needed.

(3) In addition to the mandatory TCAP, End of Course (EOC) and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments, identify the interim assessments the school will use to assess student-learning needs and ensure progress towards ASD and state proficiency targets and describe how they will be used.
- a. Explain how you will know that your proposed interim assessments are valid and reliable indicators of progress. Explain how these interim assessments align with the school's curriculum, performance goals, and state standards.
- c. Articulate how interim assessments will be used to inform instruction. How will teachers and school leaders be trained in their use?
- d. Regardless of grade levels served, new charter schools will not receive an SPF rating until after the completion of their first full year. Therefore, in the table below, identify specific interim performance goals and assessments that you will use to confirm that the school is on-track to meet ambitious academic goals throughout the school's first year with students. You may add or delete rows as needed.

(4) Describe the process for collecting and storing data, including the information system(s) used.

This section describes our goals around growth and proficiency to ensure that students meet the state's and ASD's ambitious expectations, as well as our mission-specific goals; baseline performance assumptions; our strategy for assessment for ensuring we are on track toward both during the initial year and across the first several years; validity of those tools, and alignment to standards and curriculum; training plan for implementation; corrective action plan for falling short at student, classroom or school level; information management; and serving gifted students.

We will set and hold ourselves accountable to goals that protect priorities that matter most. In the furnace of pressure that many schools experience, some of the most endangered priorities include *providing a deep and engaging curriculum to foster love of learning, keeping the kids who need us most*, and *helping each child grow the best they are able*. Sometimes when schools try to take shortcuts to boost school wide proficiency averages, they do things like focus on "bubble kids" (but who wants their child to be on the losing end?), reduce curricular depth for coverage and skills practice (neglecting the necessity of knowledge-for-skills and exacerbating long-term discipline and disengagement issues), use rigid assessment schedules (assuming linear growth when we know kids grow in spurts), and not persisting with the kids struggling most (witness the phenomenon of some private, district magnet, and charter schools that achieve impressive proficiency, but marred by unacceptably high attrition). *One of the core ideas for this school is precisely to personalize the pace of learning toward a common, rich, high standard, thereby maximizing engagement for all students* -- including those that are often left out of

statistics elsewhere. We intend to avoid these errors and achieve substantially improved proficiency as a logical but indirect result of our proposed program.

  Goal setting and evaluation process: Upon approval, finalizing our board membership, and hiring key founding faculty members, we will review and revise our goals, which will provide the foundation for the annual faculty performance management process, and be subject to review at the end of each year. All academic indicators will be monitored and responded to through the analysis and action-planning stages of our data-driven instruction cycle, discussed elsewhere in the application.

Preliminary academic goals summary: annual, interim, long-term[95]							
GOAL	**ASSESSMENT**	**EST. BASELINE**	**Year 1**	**Year 2**	**Year 3**	**Year 4**	**Year 5**
Growth [96]							
Avg. 1.5+ years RIT growth	NWEA MAP	RIT 169-174 fall to 169-189 spring	1.5+ years (RIT per subject varies by grade level)				
Growth rate exceed state average	State test / TVAAS	~18th %ile Rdg, 64th %ile Math Level 1-3 Rdg, 3-4 Math (NDD)	50th+ effect percentile Level 5				
Achievement [97]							
Top quartile "success rate" (proficiency composite) in 5 years	State test	<5th %ile school Success rate: 11 (14% Prof/Adv RLA, 21% P/A Math)	10th %ile 28.1% P/A	25th %ile 41.9% P/A	40th %ile 50.1% P/A	50th %ile 54.5% P/A	75th %ile 64.7% P/A
3rd Gr. Rdg: 75% Prof/Adv	State test	12%	N/A (no 3rd graders)	49%	62%	75%	
Gap closure [98]							
>6.3% per subgroup	State test	5% Rdg / 8% Math gap for econ. disadv. students	6.3%				

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[95] Please see respective sections for additional goals related to culture/discipline, board governance/finance, enrollment, and year 0 / incubation, as well as attendance goals in the calendar section.

[96] MAP and TCAP/TVAAS growth rates / effect percentile data are shown *only for 3rd grade students – the closest age group for our school – after the first year at the first cohort ASD elementary schools in the Frayser area*. (MAP data also show a fall figure from that year.) The data come from an ASD presentation entitled "TVAAS Analysis […] V2," dated 8/5/13.

[97] Achievement success rate baselines are for *all tested grades* at the aforementioned elementary schools, and come from http://www.asdperformanceandpractice.com/school-success-measure---asd-school-performance.html. The annual proficiency composite targets (e.g. 64.7% to reach the top 25%) are based on 12/13 data and thus subject to change with fluctuations in statewide performance, as well as for new "cut scores" when new state tests go into effect. The baseline proficiency composite of 11 for our two sample schools is validated by being within a few points of the several other nearby priority elementary schools, which fall between 9-21% (https://tableau.schoolzilla.org/t/TNASD. All sources last checked as of 3/14/14.

[98] Approximated based on 12/13 school report cards: http://www.tn.gov/education/reportcard/2013.shtml.

GOAL	ASSESSMENT	NOTES
Internal & "interim" assessments		
Each term, 85% of students complete 25%< of available curriculum benchmark credits across subjects.	Internal, flexibly scheduled benchmark	Explained below, including why these are not shown as specific figures per quarter. Minimum distribution requirement TBD.
By end of 3-year cycle, 85% of students complete 100% of available benchmark credits		
Reading: 85% earn 80%+ on applicable unit test by age-specific benchmark.	CKLA	One specific indicator included in the overall flexible benchmark plan. Includes recognition of # of true sight words.
Internal benchmark proficiency meets state test average.	Internal	For validation.
Self-directed learning: 85%+ of students proficient based on observation protocol	Libertas teaching model	
Early childhood development: 90% of students develop normally on sensorial, social-emotional and executive function indicators.	Internal (based on early childhood best practices)	Another specific indicator to be included in the flexible benchmark plan.

Additional notes about assumptions for academic goals

State testing (TCAP/TVAAS heretofore): For the first two years, we will only serve grades not yet subject to formal state tests. Nevertheless, we have shown the closest available comparison group that has available data (please see footnotes on baseline scores above). Similar schools started in the bottom quintile statewide, made modest gains in math, and lost some ground in reading.[99] The goals reflect the trajectory that ASD anticipates schools would need to follow to achieve top quartile proficiency averages when starting in the teens (and therefore in the bottom 5% for school wide success rate). Growth rates may be lower in the first year, where year 1 realities require foundations to be put in place for more robust growth thereafter. (Of course most people agree that two-thirds proficiency, even if it does quality for around the 75% percentile in the state, falls short of our true aspirations for children.) Forecasting TVAAS scores is challenging in early years. To address standard error, TVAAS assigns an index closer to zero for smaller populations, which has a "central tendency" effect, pulling levels closer to 3. We may be at heightened risk of this effect given the very small number of students (e.g. one section) we may have in that oldest section, which will be our first to take the test in year 3.

NWEA MAP: [100] The bottom line is that our imperfect comparison group of recently transformed elementary schools in Frayser started and ended the year in the bottom quintile of the nation. Between one-third and one-half of students made "average growth" in reading and three-quarters in math; but because this is not the same as catching up, it amounted to a growth percentile in just the low single

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[99] As noted above, this subset of the data are for the two likely most similar schools in our target neighborhood. These two schools averaged TCAP scores around 715 in reading and 724 in math. Between one third and half of students met "predicted growth" in reading, and nearly 70% in math. This amounted to an effect percentile of around 64% in math but only 18% in reading; TVAAS "growth measures" over that year were in the low single digits positive or negative, equating to TVAAS Levels 3 and 4 in Math, and only 1 and 3 in reading – i.e., compared to the state average, amounted to "not detectably different" or "below." Science and social students scores, also important, are omitted because similar to the reading and math trends.

[100] The aforementioned grade-level comparison group averaged 169-174 RIT score across the subjects in the fall, and 176-189 in the spring. Overall the spring numbers fell between the 5th and 24th national percentiles across subjects. We note that some other ASD grade levels and subjects saw higher growth percentiles than the 2nd %ile in reading and 29th %ile in math.

digits for reading at both schools, and between the 20s to 30s for math. The ASD's goal for high average RIT growth should help us make sure that growth is widespread and benchmarked to the nation, though for equity we may add internal metrics around percentage of students making average growth. We may also have goals for national growth percentile. However, inasmuch as goals function to focus your attention, and we believe our students will best be served by ensuring progress through our curriculum, our focus for now will be ensuring that 85% of our students progress through 25% of available flexible benchmark credits each term.

   As with TVAAS, the methodological proviso is that recent history shows the possibility of divergence between MAP and TVAAS with regard to student growth, given that they have been predicated on different standards and populations ("national" vs. TN), and timeframes (fall-to-spring versus year over year). This may be somewhat ameliorated by the change in TN's standards.

Strategic considerations for effective assessment
   Our internal assessments must help teachers align and adjust students' learning experiences throughout the year to prepare them for genuine readiness on summative measures like PARCC and later college entry exams, and the more expansive concern of lifelong learning. Libertas' assessment plan is designed to fulfill these while addressing fundamental concerns with some assessment regimes:

- *Developmentally responsive pacing toward rigorous standards*: As anyone who has ever been to a pediatric appointment knows, children do not grow at a linear or constant rate; their growth comes in bursts and periods of consolidation. When school calendars dictate that all children be tested at the same time on the same material, they can trigger cycles of intervention that would not have been needed if a child was just given a bit more time with the core curriculum. Assessments need to ensure accountability for school wide progress but account for individual development.
- *Alignment to curriculum*: Obviously test results only help you evaluate your teaching if you tested what you taught. In the earliest stages of our literacy curriculum, for example, this will require intense focus on phonemic awareness rather than distraction by letter-name recognition. And in later elementary, this means attending to the content knowledge that truly enables comprehension.
- *Alignment to "rigor"*: Sample PARCC questions we have seen are complex and require multiple skills to solve and explain one's work. Even what passes for good interim assessments today at many schools often have limited selected-response question types and require only discrete skills, and therefore may not adequately predict PARCC readiness. (Instruction planned backward from those interims assessments may be similarly misaligned.)
- *Additive layers → opportunity cost and information overload*: Between formative assessments like daily classwork, exit tickets, homework,[101] and weekly quizzes, and summative assessments like unit tests, quarterly interim assessments, thrice-annual nationally normed tests, end of year state tests, and so on, many teachers - especially those we know in the ASD's first year of operation - feel they are at a point of saturation, where additional data points are muddying rather than clarifying their understanding of student readiness. (Not to mention the workload of designing one's own interims, or the additional problems of accountability that ensure from having teachers' "finger on the

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[101] See the recent debate over homework in *The Atlantic*: http://www.theatlantic.com/special-report/homework-debate We are interested in Robert Pondiscio's 9/19/13 argument in that series that the issue is less about quantity than "what kind' and "what for," emphasizing independent reading of vocabulary-rich material to build background knowledge (cf. Willingham, *American Educator*, Spring 2006: http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/spring2006/willingham.cfm) – critical for those who start school with so much less (cf. Hart & Risley on the "30 Million Word Gap") – as well as what Willingham calls "distributed practice" – consistently revisiting material taught earlier to reinforce key knowledge and skills in memory (cf. *American Educator*, Summer 2002: http://www.aft.org/newspubs/periodicals/ae/summer2002/willingham.cfm). Generally speaking, our elementary students will have a small amount (~20 minutes) of skills practice plus independent reading -- works that are less efficient to do at school.

scale.") And if these additive layers are not truly used to drive learning, then the juice is not worth the squeeze in time and dollars.

Flexibly paced benchmark assessments

The considerations just mentioned have shaped our plan for flexibly paced benchmark assessments. Having identified a curriculum of learning experiences that align with standards for desired knowledge and skills, we will define a coherent sequence of diverse assessments for benchmarks along the way, which will be triggered by individual students' progress to ensure students are progressing the right learning experiences – and with overall milestones to ensure school-wide accountability. In other words, students will be assessed on the same "what," with a more flexible "when." We will now elaborate on the substance and format of these elements, how they will work to track student progress, and how they compare to conventional interim assessments.

One strand of benchmarks will be predefined, curriculum-based assessments – namely, quizzes and unit tests primarily from two of our main providers, CKLA and Singapore. As discussed in the instructional Planning section, these school-wide shared curricula provide an aligned, vetted set of materials, so that teachers do not have to make them without guidance, as is so often the case. And both provide domain/unit assessments that are cumulative, to monitor retention. Cumulative, curriculum-based unit assessments track how effectively our learning experiences help students master related standards. We may also add questions as needed through our design process to address rigor level or other standards. (As mentioned in the subsection on Intervention, CKLA is also our guardrail for literacy growth and targeting for reading intervention, with its remediation component one of our main tools.)

A closely related strand of benchmark assessments will be authentic student work products, designed by teachers, along with performance criteria / mastery examples, through our backward-planning, strategic design process. As detailed elsewhere, we will focus considerable time in PD throughout the year to review sample PARCC assessment questions and discuss how student work samples compare to them. We will also include time and support for students to periodically evaluate their own work.

A third and essential component of our flexible benchmark assessment plan is normed teacher observation of student work. As necessary as standardized assessments surely are, we also believe in the indispensability of well-trained teachers watching and reading and judging students' wrestling with problems. ("Montessorians" find that certain seemingly slight observations can be meaningful: for instance, when upper elementary children put their "stamp game" material - mathematics manipulative - in less neat columns, that is a sign that they are ready to do more abstract pencil-and-paper math and be less reliant on the concrete.) Observation can be understood as an application of what CCSS calls the "personal communication" form of assessment, which Insight Education Group judges to be the least-utilized form of assessment. Some of the most immediate examples in our school will around be early literacy development using Montessori works – for instance, PreK students' progression through beginning, ending, and middle sounds in verbal phonemic awareness exercises. Another example, which admittedly overlaps with the authentic product strand of assessment just mentioned, is student writing within content. All steps of writing (first draft, revision conference notes, final draft) will be reviewed together to gauge development in thinking, content knowledge, and writing skill. Other examples include student presentations of their math problem solutions or research projects to each other, and, as will emerge in the upper grades of our school, Socratic discussion. In these instances, teachers will reference our rubrics to monitor student participation. (Please see the Culture section for more on monitoring student character / non-cognitive skills, including fortitude in problem-solving.)

A final note about the substance and structure of assessment is that, really, every student work assignment, exit ticket, homework, quiz and unit test should be aligned with our ultimate expectations

in mind, with appropriate adjustment for how the objectives of a given lesson are situated in the broader unit. In fact, we suspect that the accretion of additive layers of assessment stems from neglecting or undervaluing the potential of daily work in the classroom.

All of these aforementioned backward-planned learning elements will be integrated, and updated annually by our academic planning team, into a coherent sequence of developmentally appropriate academic goals and performance indicators, which will then be learned and assessed on a flexible pace, based on individual readiness. That is to say, on a daily and weekly basis, teachers will record, via an online record-keeping program, both the lessons presented, as well as student practice and performance on the appropriate, designated indicator for each standard. (We are still researching our record-keeping system, but it is tentatively Montessori Compass, and/or a Google-based, standards-aligned electronic portfolio developed in Denver Public Schools.) Many of these assessments will be triggered when students are ready, based on completion of predecessor learning experiences – hence "flexibly paced" – though some will be tied more closely to age-specific focus goals, such as CK Listening & Learning unit presentation groups. Within a subject domain, most of the works will be sequenced,[102] though students may be further ahead in some domains than others at any given time.

Meanwhile, a "distribution requirement" of some minimum amount of credits or points in each subject would ensure that none are neglected entirely. For example, a student might need 20 points or credits in the week, which they might earn with a balanced 4 credits in each of 5 subjects, or by doing the minimum 2 in each (e.g. some daily independent reading and math facts practice would be required regardless of anything else) but 12 points for focusing on a complicated science project. Sequencing and scaling/calibrating the "credit" values proportionately among benchmarks will be one of the focuses of our aforementioned backwards-planning process.

Our overall concept for tracking progress should be familiar to most readers as similar to the collegiate method. Students' "year" in college is of little interest; instead, over the course of a college career, students must accumulate a set of credits or benchmarks, focusing more in one area or another in any short-run, with some elements in order while others overlap, and all working toward an overarching plan.

Our system provides personalization while still ensuring monitoring and accountability across groups and the whole school. Every student should progress through each of the benchmarks over time, even if what is being worked on at any given time is different for individuals. By tracking each student and each benchmark, our teachers can generalize about growth overall, or drill-down to challenges with specific benchmarks. Just as important, feedback about overall learning progress will be comprehensible for families and students, through a checklist or "progress bar" toward what a student at a given level or starting point should know and be able to do.

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[102] Some benchmarks will not be strictly sequenced. For example, when primary students are working on comparison of quantity, Montessori offers both "red rods" and "number rods" materials that can suffice for practicing toward mastery.

Draft flexible benchmark for 1ˢᵗ term of Kindergarten (core subjects only) [103]			
Assessment or Work	**Instructional Resources**	**Montessori Materials**[104]	**CCSS alignment**[105]
CKLA Skills Assmt. Unit 1: *Awareness of Noises; Prewriting movements*	CKLA Skills Strand Lessons Unit 1 10-13 days	"I Spy" game Practical life works for development of pincer grip: spooning, pouring, tweezing, dressing frames Sound boxes, bells	RF.K.1a, 2 SL.K.6 L.K.1a, 1e
CKLA Skills Assmt. Unit 2: *Blending Sounds into Words; Prewriting shapes*	CKLA Skills Strand Lessons Unit 2 10-13 days	Metal insets Painting, cutting, pasting, coloring	RF.K.1a, 2b, 2d, 2e SL.K.6 L.K.1a, 1e
CKLA Skills Assmt. Unit 3: *Sounds, Chaining, Handwriting*	CKLA Skills Strand Lessons Unit 3 14-17 days	Sandpaper letters Movable alphabet CVC words	RF.K.1b, 2d, 3a, 3b SL.K.6 L.K.1a, 1e, 2c
CKLA LL Assmt. Domain 1: *Nursery Rhymes and Fables*	CKLA LL Domain 1 Lessons *Nursery Rhymes and Fables* 12-16 days	Oral storytelling Sequencing Retelling key ideas and details from read-aloud	RL.K.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 SL.K.1a, 1b, 2, 4, 6 L.K.1b, 1f, 4a, 5c, 6
CKLA LL Assmt. Domain 2 *The Five Senses*	CKLA LL Domain 2 Lessons *The Five Senses* 8-12 days	Reading and Understanding Informational Texts: asking and answering questions about text type Creative Writing in response to reading	RI.K.1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10 W.K.2, 8 SL.K.1a, 1b, 2, 4, 5, 6 L.K.1b, 1f, 4a, 5a-d, 6
CKLA LL Assmt. Domain 3 *Stories*	CKLA LL Domain 3 Lessons *Stories* 10-14 days	Reading and Understanding Literature: asking and answering questions about text, plot, conventions of books. Creative Writing in response to reading	RL.K.1-10 W.K.1, 2 SL.K.1a, 1b, 2, 4, 5, 6 L.K.1b, 1d, 1f, 4a, 5c, 6
Singapore Earlybird K Unit 1: Match and	Singapore Earlybird K Unit 1: Match and Sort	Picture matching Practical Life sorting	K.CC.1 K.MD.3

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[103] Scaling of benchmark credits still TBD for Montessori works, and partial value for attempted but not mastered.
[104] Concurrently with and independent of related CKLA assessments.
[105] CKLA Skills and LL alignments:
http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/ckla_ccss_gk_unitbyunitalignment.pdf
[105] Singapore math alignment: http://www.singaporemath.com/v/vspfiles/assets/images/ccs-kindergarten.pdf
[105] Montessori math and ELA alignments: http://montessoricompass.com/common-core

Sort	*Textbook A and Activity Book A*	Color tablets	
Singapore Earlybird K Unit 2: Numbers to 5	Singapore Earlybird K Unit 2: Numbers to 5 *Textbook A and Activity Book A*	Number rods and cards Spindle boxes 0-5	K.CC.1, 3, 4a, 4b, 5 K.MD.3
Singapore Earlybird K Unit 3: Numbers to 10	Singapore Earlybird K Unit 3: Numbers to 10 *Textbook A and Activity Book A*	Number rods and cards Cards and counters Spindle boxes Short bead stairs	K.CC.1, 3, 4a, 4b, 5 K.MD.3

How our approach compares to conventional interim assessments: We believe that our program fulfills the intentions of the data-informed instruction movement even without the use of a fixed-time interim test. According to one of the pre-eminent sources, Bambrick's *Driven by Data*, interim assessments are necessary because classroom assessments are neither cumulative, sufficiently common across classrooms, or aligned to standards or end-goal assessments to permit transparent collaboration. Our planning process will ensure that our benchmarks appropriately spiral earlier content.[106] (Another reason conventional interim assessments are not necessary at the early childhood level is that predecessor skills are often necessarily embedded in successor skills and therefore retained and confirmed by future performance; e.g. you do not need to test for letter recognition when a child is reading.) And as our description should make clear, what is "flexible" about our benchmarks will be the timing for each student, not the content, which is common. (Though some flexibility in materials is possible; for instance, though the conceptual sequence in math of moving from quantity-symbol-association is necessary, students may not necessarily do the number rods work before the short bead stairs work as long as the right connections are being made.) And so we can still monitor during our weekly and quarterly PD time to ensure that individuals are making expected/needed progress. Indeed, our program of individualization means that teachers are constantly adjusting for our students' individual pace based on various data sources, rather than only attempting to cram that into quarterly re-teaching days. (Once again, this requires a special kind of teacher, which we discuss in the Professional Development section.) Lastly, we will validate our internal and curricular assessments both in advance, through careful comparison with sample PARCC questions during the planning stages, and after the fact, with student growth on our nationally normed test and proficiency on the state test.

Additional comments about assessment plan

NWEA MAP: We also plan to use this computer-adaptive, nationally-normed assessment, which clusters average levels of difficulty into the RIT scale, which in turn identifies likely individual growth trajectories based on starting scores, as well as provides cohort-wide data based on national comparisons.[107] MAP is not an interim assessment, strictly speaking, since it does not precisely follow our students' learning plans (indeed, it has some minor alignment differences, i.e. it includes the early reading skill of syllabification, which is de-emphasized in our model). But MAP is nevertheless a useful dipstick or "blood pressure test" for generally gauging the overall effectiveness of our curriculum at

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[106] Including, especially, earlier material that students struggled with. This is another way to achieve "distributed practice" that strengthens memory of key content and discourage ineffective "cramming."
[107] Virginia Rigga, a nationally-recognized expert in public Montessori, praised MAP's focus on individual growth at the 2013 conference of the American Montessori Society.

helping students' progress. Unlike many of our other indicators, MAP will be administered on a fixed schedule for all students. An additional benefit is that teachers can use MAP's Descartes function to help identify an individual "learning path" -- concepts or skills (broad batches rather than specific standards) to advance, develop or introduce. We will likely administer fall and spring MAP, to establish baselines and individual growth by year-end. MAP also usefully ties directly to several digital learning platforms, which we will use in very limited exposures each week for student practice on discrete skills. And to the limited extent that we may recommend student reading based on text complexity / Lexile level (i.e. mostly word length, frequency, spelling patterns, etc. - which is only part of a story that also involves student topical interests and quality of materials), we can glean these ranges from MAP.[108]

Instant student feedback: One small part of our assessment plan but still worth noting is that, when we offer whole-group lessons, many classrooms will also make use at times of a student response system to give teachers instant feedback about students' self-identified confident. This can help teachers decide, for example, whether to give individuals homework at the level of re-teaching versus extension. In other words, teachers will instantly adjust, rather than waiting for an interim assessment.

A note about student self-direction: Self-direction in learning is one of the most important things we can foster, yet one of the hardest to measure. Insofar as we think it will be a function of both rich curriculum and personalize learning, we will monitor those inputs with our classroom observation rubric: all classrooms should be implementing with fidelity our school-wide curriculum, using Montessori and Socratic learning practices as appropriate; all students should have this experience - including those struggling academically; 85%+ students should be working effectively according to observation protocol.

A note about non-cognitive development indicators: Arguably as important to our children's development as their cognitive achievement, and instrumental as foundations for the latter, are non-cognitive developments in areas such as sensorial development, motor skills, social-emotional, executive function, to name a few. Put more plainly, children must be able to make eye contact, get along with others, and so forth to succeed in school, to say the least. These elements are explicit in our curriculum – both Montessori and CK Pre-K offer specific materials and lessons for them – and we will monitor the outcomes. Some of these elements are already included in our teaching model. Others are still in development, as part of the work we are doing with the ASD's Operator Advisory Council Pre-K committee.

Ultimately, our supposition is that curricular coherence, relationships and personal adaptation will be the difference makers for our students; with these squarely in mind, the assessment program outlined above should effectively inform our work, rather than becoming the tail that, in too many schools, wags the dog.

Data-informed instruction and data management

With the unique modifications of using our flexibly administered benchmark assessments and involving students in the process, we will utilize the best practices of data-informed instruction. In fact, with our strong emphasis on observation of student work and individualized pacing, our program constitutes very frequent data-informed instruction.

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[108] It may be worth noting that our team is versed in two other prominent literacy assessments - STEP and Fountas & Pinnell - which we are choosing at this time not to employ. STEP, developed at the University of Chicago and utilized by many high-performing schools, does not match our instructional sequence: it includes letter-name recognition when students should be focused on sounds; also, it uses only fiction texts, which is a limitation for CCSS. F&P offers finer-grained distinctions in text complexity / lexile level at the earlier levels of STEP, where word complexity can be a bigger difference-maker for kids. But both systems neglect the role of contextual knowledge. (Indeed, even some F&P trainers are not sure about its usefulness above level P). Our choice of CKLA should do the job these tools are meant to do for other schools: it is closely aligned to our instructional sequence, has 100% decodable readers - and uniquely attends to knowledge.

Using their PCs or tablets, teachers will track student work and mastery either immediately upon making observations during class or within a day. Academic records will be kept in a combination of our main student information system, PowerSchool – used also by the ASD and approved for linking with the state's data systems for official reporting – as well as the aforementioned flexible benchmark tracking solution (either Montessori Compass or a customized Google doc). These systems will also be our main platforms for producing report cards, transcripts, and other internal and external data reports for exporting and manipulating data. We are also considering, and have budgeted some funds for, procuring other business intelligence / reporting software if needed.

We will have weekly team meetings during early-release Wednesdays that include up to two hours for discussion of plans, lesson and unit progress and student learning, as well as quarterly school-wide whole days dedicated almost exclusively to DATA. These sessions will be planned and led by a team that includes our Head of School, Head Teacher, Dean of Student Support, and the respective chairmen of each grade-span division. Data should be available nearly real-time using the systems just mentioned. Individual teachers will be asked to predict performance based on observation, and then conduct "item analysis," broadly construed, of student mastery of our program elements and other review of student progress data in advance based on a template provided by the school. Because of our unique focus and flexible benchmark system, teachers will use data holistically to note proficiency averages across our students, but also individuals' growth (e.g. is a student who started higher or lower than the average still making 2-3 STEPs of growth per year). The meetings (conducted with "test in hand") will focus on discussions of student work, significant outliers, etc., and culminate with planning action to address gaps in knowledge and skills. Aforementioned faculty leaders will monitor implementation of plans during ensuing lesson plan reviews and observations, and discussed at weekly meetings. So that we maximize the growth mindset that allows for productive sharing and honest use of data to deliver feedback, we will foster a culture of peer trust and respect through professional development that begins with the onboarding process and is a dominant strand in our professional ethos.

As mentioned, our students will also participate in DATA insofar as they will review their own overall work plans and progress each week, with teacher's guidance, and update their work plans accordingly, as well as reviewing specific works of theirs and others with use of provided rubrics to assess them and think through why they may not have found the right solution in a given instance. Student work plans will be shared with parents each week, and benchmark mastery will be shared in user-friendly, visual reports at least quarterly.

> (3) b. Describe the corrective actions the school will take if it falls short of student academic achievement expectations or goals at the school-wide and classroom level. What would trigger such corrective actions and who would be responsible for implementing them?

Both above in this section, and in the Intervention discussion included under Special Populations, we identify a detailed set of goals and academic indicators that our school leadership staff, team, and Board will use to monitor academic performance at all levels and trigger corrective action. Under the principle of subsidiarity, decisions must be made as close as possible to the level where the relevant information is held, impact is felt, and the work must be done. This means with the input of teachers and Head Teacher, and ultimately by the Head of School, who is the executive officer under the oversight of the Board. If, upon consideration of all relevant factors, we were close to achieving our goals, we would likely fine-tune our delivery with existing program and staff. But if our performance gap were more substantial, we would consider changing programs or personnel, either at the end of a term or year, or, in the most severe cases, during the year.

(5) For experienced operators: describe the process for collecting and reporting data across the network of schools. *If this is your first school, please put "n/a".*

Not applicable, because this is our first school.

7. AT-RISK STUDENTS AND SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Pursuant to State and federal law, ASD schools are required to serve the needs of all students in special populations. The ASD operates under the following principles with regards to special populations of students:
1. ASD schools serve all zoned or ASD-eligible students. ASD schools do not deny the enrollment of any student based on needs or disability.
2. ASD schools develop programs to support the needs of their students. ASD schools do not counsel or kick any students out because of their educational support needs.
3. ASD schools utilize best practices to expose students to the most inclusive environments appropriate.
4. If needed, an ASD school will develop more restrictive placements to meet the needs of the highest needs students. Restrictive placements are only appropriate for students qualifying for the Alt. Portfolio TCAP.
5. ASD schools have high functioning special education teams, which focus on student advocacy and high expectations. IEP teams make placement decisions at IEP meetings. Decisions are made based on evidence/data to support what is best for the student.

Given the even more profound challenges faced by students with disabilities in communities that already struggle with educational and economic inequality,[109] it is only a matter of justice that Libertas will strive to serve any child who comes to our school. In seeking to meet all students' needs, some of our principles include inclusion and service (rather than placement), and prevention (rather than reactive identification and intervention). Accordingly, we see "special education" as a consultative role throughout the school - e.g. helping to develop plans, checking-in with kids - rather than exclusively as a provider. Intervention staff members will serve on grade level teams rather than be artificially divided into a separate department. Response To Intervention, after all, is a general education process (defining who receives what supports, and monitoring and responding to progress or its lack, all in systematic ways), part of student support more broadly. If and when students are pulled, it is for services that require it, rather than because of any label. Even so, we hope to offer as many services as possible in inclusion settings, and imagine that RTI delivered via inclusion can replace a meaningful portion of what we have known as special education. This kind of focus is also especially the case in our early elementary years, before more students are classified. (Though we acknowledge that, through Tennessee's Early Intervention approach, ASD schools have encountered Pre-K age children with IEP needs, and are committed to serving these children as well through our inclusive classrooms.) We will work as a team within our school and with our families to make the necessary accommodations and modifications to make our rigorous, standards-based curriculum accessible to all of our students. We will follow the structures and procedures in place in the ASD and as required by the state to ensure a legal, effective pre-referral and referral process to determine if struggling students need additional supports, and if these struggling students should be evaluated for special education eligibility.

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[109] According to the director of the NYC Special Education Collaborative, 70% of the US schools not meeting AYP were because of their subgroup of students with disabilities, and in 2010, just ~32% of SWD nationwide graduated college ready.

At-Risk Students

(1) What are the methods for identifying at-risk students through academic and behavioral processes?

(2) Describe your RTI model, including the interventions and proportion of the student body served at each tier level.

(3) What is your plan of action for at-risk students who have social emotional needs? What will be the process for supporting students who exhibit these behaviors but have not been identified?

(4) What interventions will be offered for students exhibiting early signs of behavioral concerns? How will individual behavior plans for students be implemented and monitored?

Our rich, personalized program is designed for *prevention and inclusion*, rather than just intervention in the cycle of failure that often descends into classified disability. To ensure that all of our students achieve at their highest level, and in accordance with the prescription of the Tennessee Department of Education and the ASD, Libertas will monitor student progress through a Response to Instruction and Intervention framework. RTI[2], recently adopted by Tennessee State Board of Education and effective July, 2014, is a three-tiered support plan that provides an ongoing process of instruction and interventions to promote student success and to ensure that students are not referred to special education due to other needs that can be addressed through supports in general education classes. As explained in the Tennessee RTI[2] manual[110], the RTI[2] Framework promotes recommended practices for an integrated system connecting general and special education by the use of high-quality, scientifically research-based instruction and intervention.

Because data-based decision making is integral to the RTI framework, we will use our beginning-of-year diagnostics and benchmarks as universal screeners to determine whether students have the skills necessary to achieve grade-level standards. Libertas will use data to inform decisions at each phase of RTI. Faculty will be trained on the process during summer PD.

A Dean of Student Support (DSS) will provide general oversight and coordination for RTI, working closely with the Head Teacher and Head of School. Grade-level teams that include Intervention faculty will monitor progress on a week-to-week basis (and at data days each term). These conversations will focus on students' progress in Tier 1. When considering referrals, teachers will be asked to gather and provide data and observe trends for at least 2-3 weeks, and report back about the success of attempted interventions. We will also have a Child Study Team (RTI team) to make determinations regarding student progress toward/in Tiers 2-3; discussed further below, this team will generally meet twice per term and include school leadership (DSS, Head Teacher and/or Head of School), a general education teacher, an Interventionist, eventually counselor, and specialized support consultants as needed (e.g. psychologist, social worker, speech therapist, nurse).

Summary of year 1 intervention approach (to be refined per child need):

In year 1, when we serve exclusively an early elementary population, we will focus RTI on student progress in literacy (preliminary plan outlined below) and behavior,[111] and then further develop our model for all academic, behavioral and social-emotional concerns for Year 2 onward.

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[110] TNCore: The Common Core State Standards. RTI[2] Framework 2013. www.tn.gov/education, Accessed 10.24.13.

[111] These two components - behavior and literacy - were recommended as the starting point for first-year schools RTI plans by the director of the New York City Special Education Collaborative.

- Tier 1: Core Instruction for all students (estimated 85%* in Tier 1 ongoing), primarily through individualized and small-group lessons with rich content, and in a positive behavior environment. Instructional decisions driven by ongoing formative assessment, with high-quality professional development and support. Children who exceed grade-level expectations at this tier will receive enrichment instruction. Children who do not meet grade level expectations or make appropriate progress on our flexible benchmarks at this Tier may need escalated frequency, time and/or intensity in Tier 2 (or, if they are more than 1.5-2 years behind, Tier 3) intervention.
- Tier 2: Targeted Intervention for some (10-15%*) students. In addition to Tier 1, we will provide interventions to students who are in the lowest 1/6th of RIT band on MAP, below the 25th percentile on universal screening, and who are struggling behaviorally and/or academically. At this tier, research based interventions will be provided to students by highly trained personnel to address specific areas of need, including additional time beyond the time allotted for core instruction. Examples include small-group language instruction with Montessori materials or CKLA lessons, and/or computerized individual skill practice with Compass Learning and/or Lexia, each for 15 minutes 2-3 times per week. Teachers may impose limits on student work and movement for behavior needs. Teachers will *not* likely modify reading level, number of problems or other grade-level standards at this stage. This tier will likely take place in class during work blocks with lead teacher or interventionist as needed. Though grade-level performance is ultimately desirable, students may not be advanced in RTI if they are judged to be making adequate progress. Parents will be notified.
- Tier 3: Targeted Intervention for few (3-5%*) students. In addition to above tiers, we will provide more explicit and intensive intervention targeting specific areas of need for a small subset of students who are struggling academically and/or behaviorally despite Tier 2 supports, or if they are 1.5 grade levels or more behind. At this tier, individual students will likely receive 20+ minutes of direct instruction 2-3 times in a separate setting per week with an intervention teacher, utilizing the CKLA Assessment and Remediation Guide and Supplemental resources. A parent-teacher conference may be scheduled.

Tier	What & where	When / duration	Who	Max #	Assessment	Triggers	Regroup
1	Regular classroom environment	AM and PM work blocks	Classroom teacher	N/A	Flexible benchmarks		Weekly work plan
2	Montessori & CK language lessons in class	15 minutes, 2-3x weekly, 10 days consecutive. PM work block.	Classroom teacher or Intervention teacher	6 students	CKLA unit test	< 1-3 units behind	Weekly work plan
	Compass or Lexia online independently in class		Digital	Individual	NWEA MAP	Bottom sixth of cohort RIT scores	
3	Pull-out for CKLA Remediation/ Supplemental	25 minutes, 2-3x weekly, 10 days. PM work block.	Intervention teacher	<5 for comprehen., 1 for fluency	CKLA Assessment/ Supplement	1+ grade behind (equivalent CKLA units)	Quarterly PD / benchmark review

Regarding the estimated percent of students at each tier: It is clear to us that most students in the neighborhoods we seek to serve may not be conventionally on grade-level even at Kindergarten, and therefore arguably a higher percentage may need Tier 2+. However, our Tier 1 general education

program of individualized and small-group instruction is what for most schools would be Tier 2, meaning that we believe our Tier 1 should meet the high needs we expect to encounter. Further escalation in our pyramid is about more focused progress monitoring as well as explicit instruction for those not making progress.

 Additional notes regarding behavioral and social-emotional intervention: In the Culture subsection on discipline below, we present our Tier 1, school-wide approach to behavior through the Love and Logic model. Teachers proposing further behavior interventions for individual students will track observation data about what they have tried with those students via informal record keeping and/or notations on student work plans. For the Second Tier of students who need additional intervention for behavior, our options include small group social work support, adjustments to work plan and goals to limit choices of work or space (e.g. seatwork), system for increasing adult feedback to student, and additional data collection and review with family and Response to Intervention team. For the small Third Tier of students whose behaviors put them at risk of not achieving expected academic and behavioral benchmarks – and certainly by the time a child is at risk of a second suspension – we will create individual behavioral plans specifying 1-3 behaviors for monitoring. These potentially include the previous Tier elements of tracking and planning, as well as individualized intervention to avoid problematic contexts, instruct on functionally equivalent and performance skills, strategies for extinguishing problem behaviors, enhance contingent reward of desired behavior, and use of negative or safety consequences if needed. We can also refer to Child Study Team for Functional Behavioral Analysis. We would also distinguish behavior matters, which can be addressed initially as matters of skill,[112] from social-emotional matters, where a "trigger" is observed, reported or suspected trauma or abuse. Our interventions for the latter would accordingly involve therapy, such as a social skills group that a social worker organizes to help children develop coping mechanisms. We will also investigate screening tools to help match student needs with the right environment. Our staffing plan provides eventually for a full-time social worker, but in the earlier years sets funds aside for consultants for these needs.

Special Education

(1) **Track Record**: Please explain the extent to which one or more members of the founding school team (founding board, instructional leader, etc.) has experience working with students with disabilities.

 Libertas' founding school leaders, Bob Nardo and Michelle Boyle, have served students and communities with the highest need for their entire careers. Working and teaching at high-performing charter schools in the KIPP and Noble networks, both have been a part of schools where students with disabilities achieve academic results and social-emotional growth.

 Michelle Boyle began her career as an assistant teacher in a school for children with autism spectrum disorders and language-based learning disabilities in Washington, DC, and continued as a teacher and coach in KIPP schools, where she has led inclusion classrooms to serve students with IEPs and 504 plans. At both KIPP DC: KEY Academy (where 13% of students received special education services) and SPARK Academy (where 7% of the school and 14% of her classroom received special education services), students with disabilities achieved academic success.[113] In addition, as grade level chair, Ms. Boyle coached her teachers to support students with disabilities in inclusion classrooms and

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[112] For one of many possible citations, see *Lost in School*, which among many other things offers a screening assessment and potential environments depending on need.
[113] For more info on these schools visit http://www.kipp.org/school-content/spark-academy-a-kipp-school and http://www.kipp.org/school-content/kipp-dc-key-academy

guided her team to use data to identify students for intervention and referral to the Child Study Team as necessary.

Complementing Mrs. Boyle's instructional expertise, Bob Nardo has substantial experience ensuring equitable resources for special education as well as supporting high-performing special educators in the legal, compliance, and data dimensions of their work. As Chief Administrative Officer of the Noble Network of Charter Schools, Mr. Nardo worked closely with the principals and case managers / special education leaders of each of up to 9 campuses to develop and implement an annual process to assess the needs of incoming students with disabilities, determine appropriate staffing and scheduling arrangements, and navigate the Chicago Public Schools' resource allocation progress for the funding of teacher and clinician positions. The process Nardo spearheaded resulted in several hundred thousand additional dollars becoming available to better meet the needs of Noble students - including at one campus where over 30% of students received special education services. Similarly, Nardo played a role in forming the ASD's special education funding and shared service model. With the Special Education Coordinator, Nardo led the negotiation of a shared-services program with then-Memphis City Schools to make certain critical outside placements available at fair rates, while also creating an innovative high-need funding pool among charter schools that leveled-out some of the fluctuations in high-need special education costs and incented schools to serve their highest-need children. Nardo's experience over the years also includes helping to complete accountability reports for special education programs.

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(2) **Identification**: How will the operator collaborate with the ASD to identify any student who is enrolled in its schools who is presenting academic or behavioral problems to determine whether that child should be referred for a special education evaluation?

A. (*Elementary Schools Only*) How will you accurately identify students in the early grades (PreK, K, 1, or 2) for appropriate services?

B. (*All Schools*) How will you handle over-identification of special education needs? What will be the process to transition a student out of an IEP who has been incorrectly identified as having special education needs in the past?

Libertas is committed to working closely with district partners to ensure an effective pre-referral and referral process so that we can identify children's exceptional needs. Our Child Find process will include at least the following elements.

Self-report / prior to starting school: We will solicit information from families (both via survey form and interpersonal communication, such as at home visits, to clarify any questions) about what educational or behavioral supports their children may have received previously, as well as relevant medical records. We will also ask parents to complete requisite release forms for academic records from prior schools. Appropriate faculty or consultants will study all of these records for possible needs before school begins.

District and state collaboration / prior to starting school: We will work with the districts to access and review information about projected-student special services before school begins, including paper IEP documents as well as data available in the online system made available by the districts. (In the past two years at the ASD, this process – which our Head of School helped to negotiate – provided crucial information, even if it does not disclose all eventual student needs.) Likewise, we will engage the TN Early Intervention system, and the Head Start / day care providers from where our students are matriculating (with the appropriate parental release forms) to see if they have any information available regarding Pre-K children's needs.

Medical screening: As close as possible to the start of school, we plan to collaborate with local health agencies to ensure vision and hearing screening opportunities for children.

Diagnostic: Either during home visits or orientation at school, our faculty will also administer to students brief reading diagnostics using our CKLA tests. Students will read aloud to staff and/or complete written questions, depending on age and other factors. Students at or above grade level will receive tier 1 services, and those behind by 1-3 CKLA units will likely receive tier 2 services. Those students behind a number of units equivalent to a year or more will likely receive tier 3 services. The RTI team will consider students who do not make progress at this tier, or those who have other indicators under our Child Find process, for special education referral. Students will all also take the autumn NWEA MAP test, the results of which will also be considered for possible referral; performance below basic / anticipated RIT band will not automatically generate a special education referral, but will be grounds for close daily observation by teaching faculty.

Ongoing: When school begins, students with existing IEPs will continue to receive any stipulated services. Teachers and relevant service providers will observe students for possible referral for RTI or SpEd as appropriate. Training for identifying conditions that disable access to the general education program, and the referral process, will be included in the broader professional development program. (In addition, parents will understand the availability of this opportunity through our handbook and other methods of communication directly or through our partners.) In an early elementary setting, we anticipate encountering Developmental Delays, and will use the published standards regarding the 5 potential areas before assuming we are seeing a Specific Learning Disability. If Tier 3 interventions have been provided and data show that a student's progress is not sufficient for making adequate growth with the current interventions, then the Libertas team will complete all evaluations and establish the student's eligibility for service within the initial evaluation timeline.[114] Per Tennessee RTI[2] Framework, a referral to special education will include at a minimum: Input from parents (including relevant medical history) and teachers (including an indirect observation, work samples, documentation of differentiated instruction, etc), documentation of the problem (e.g. classroom-based performance assessments, standardized testing results, and other relevant assessment data), a detailed description of the intervention process (interventions used, attendance, frequency of implementation, duration of implementation, and fidelity monitoring), and progress monitoring (data indicating a lack of responsiveness to intervention).

We are committed to honoring children's rights while emphasizing prevention and avoiding over-identification, as mentioned above. At quarterly professional development junctures, we will compare our classification figures to the normally developing population to see if there are any concerning patterns. And IEP meetings will regularly include checking on the completion of goals to see if children may transition out.

> (6) **Monitoring**: What are your plans for monitoring and evaluating both the progress and success of special education students, and the compliance of your special education program? How will curriculum and instruction decisions be tracked and monitored by IEP teams and school personnel?

Administration is provided through our Intervention faculty, school leadership, Dean of Student Support, Grade-level teams (whose role is discussed above in the Corrective Action section), Child Study Team, and IEP case management / teams, as summarized below.

Intervention faculty: As mentioned, student support at Libertas will start as consultative services incorporated into grade-level teams. RTI and special education services, either push-in or pull-out

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[114] According to TN Rule 0520-1-9-.10, an initial evaluation must be conducted and an initial educational placement must be made within forty (40) school days of the local education agency's receipt of informed parental consent for an initial evaluation.

depending on need, may be provided by general education teachers (given that we have two staff members per most classrooms) or intervention teachers; these latter may also be assigned at times to serve as co-teachers if and when necessary to meet the needs of inclusive class groupings. As with other teaching positions, we may use an apprentice system to develop interventionists, with new, resident teachers from local institutions. We have budgeted anticipating 1-1.5 intervention positions per "division," but will adjust annually based on need.

Dean of Student Support (DSS): This position will be responsible for overseeing processes related to RTI, IEP, 504, gifted, and any ELL. The DSS will serve on the leadership team and report to the Head Teacher. We anticipate our founding Intervention teacher phasing-into this role, and therefore having some teaching responsibilities (with additional prep time) in Year 1 to facilitate coaching and implementation duties; this role will evolve to focus fully on program coordination by Year 3 at the latest. The DSS will be responsible for special education administration, including ensuring adherence to federal and state laws, such as those regarding Free and Appropriate Public Education, Least Restrictive Environment, the Child Study Team meetings, and all testing and IEP deadlines. The DSS will also provide oversight for school-wide special service providers (e.g. school social worker and any contracted providers), as well as additional coaching for our grade-based interventionists. In addition to the monitoring provided by the school-wide assessments administered by the general education teacher, Libertas' DSS will monitor assessments of students' progress (including method of mastery, how measured, disparity remaining between current performance and the IEP goal, and further supports that will be implemented when students are still struggling to meet goals) towards IEP annual goals. Interventionists and the DSS will also provide services to students with IEPs, by supporting teachers to meet the child's needs via differentiation or modification or by providing push-in or pull-out as necessary. (Students with disabilities will be equally distributed throughout the classrooms in a grade band to facilitate a real inclusion model.)

Child Study Team / RTI Team: Please also see the Corrective Action section. Libertas will establish a school-level team in accordance with Tennessee Core RTI[2] Guiding Principles.[115] Not merely a path toward classification, this team – generally meeting twice per term, but as needed – includes school leadership, general education teacher and Intervention faculty, and specialists/therapists based on need, both to monitor and manage Tiers 2-3, and consider referrals for special education evaluation. The DSS and this team will ensure that any referral forms completed by teachers or parents receive due attention, including meeting to develop intervention strategies, monitoring by classroom teachers of students' response to interventions over multiple weeks, and subsequent determination of whether concerns were adequately addressed, necessitate further intervention, or merit referral for evaluation.

IEP case management and team: Libertas will ensure proper management of IEPs via the DSS or case manager, who will be responsible for coordinating the development, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the IEP, including IEP meetings with appropriate representation.

Libertas will comply with all federal education laws including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).[116]

Libertas will meet all of the requirements mandated within a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) for any student entering with pre-existing disability requirements or classified thereafter. We are committed to serving diverse student needs in-house, even as a small school that cannot carry all service providers on our own. We will make all attempts to serve on-site special needs including categories of Autism, Specific Learning Disability, Other Health Impairment, Emotionally Disturbed, Communication

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[115] "School teams include the principal or his/her designee, classroom teachers, literacy/numeracy coaches, school psychologists, guidance counselors, ESL teachers, special education teachers, and other staff as necessary...The school level RTI[2] support team will meet once every 4.5- 5 weeks at a minimum."
[116] http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/sites/default/files/Tennessee_Primer.pdf

Impairment, and Multiply Disabled, and Mild Cognitive Impairment. If a student's needs and IEP require a program other than inclusion and/or more than our existing staff can offer, Libertas will work to meet those through collaboration and/or contracted services. First, we intend to participate in the special ed consortium currently being developed by the ASD as part of a Gates grant. We will make judicious use of the high-need outside placement services available through ASD's agreement with SCS and/or collaboration with other charter schools. (Moreover, if and when our unique approach achieves the results we hope for, we may pursue the opportunity to serve as a "host" site for students from other schools.) We also plan to pursue a shared service contract with Le Bonheur, which can leverage Tenn Care funding for many student services (indeed they can pay for themselves if over ~55% are covered); our co-founder has a relationship with this provider from his time working at the ASD. (We may also explore obtaining certain related services such as Speech and Language Services, Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT) through the University of Memphis.) We will also look to partner with other schools and agencies to provide the mental health services that are not otherwise covered.

In addition, Libertas will collect and maintain the following information on disabled students as required by IDEA: count of all school-age students with disabilities being provided special education services by age, grade, category of disability and the number of students with disabilities who are Limited English Proficient; number of students provided with test modifications and the types and the number of students exempted from state assessments; settings in which students with disabilities receive their services, specifically the portion of the school day they receive services with non-disabled peers including time out of the regular classroom; number of students with disabilities suspended "in-school" and out of school, organized by disability and length of suspensions; basis of exit of students with disabilities from Libertas (i.e. declassified, moved, promoted to middle school, etc); data around proficiency, growth, and achievement gap (between differently-abled students and their normally-abled peers).

(3) Regular Education Collaboration: How will special education and related service personnel collaborate with general education teachers (e.g., team teach, team planning, etc.) to ensure that all students are able to access a rigorous academic curriculum?

(4) Staff Development: How does the school plan to train teachers to modify the curriculum and instruction to address the unique needs of students with disabilities?

Libertas will build a school environment with an inclusive, nurturing and collaborative culture towards special needs. Believing that most children learn best in their normal environment, we look to lower artificial barriers between general and special education, redirect much conventional effort into RTI, and focus on prevention before intervention; even then, we view special education as a service, not a placement, consequently focusing on services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) / general classrooms and minimizing pullout. In addition to the ASD-wide goals around having student populations representative of our feeder pattern, we plan to have goals for special education enrollment within individual classes that reflect the general population as much as possible (e.g. ~13%, with 1% high need); furthermore, we plan to have equal or lower external placement rates than nearby schools, and by year 5 to become a placement site for other schools. On a smaller scale, even OT and speech can happen in class. Our special education program is designed to ensure that students with exceptional needs are given appropriate educational opportunities to meet their individual needs and that teachers are given the tools and strategies to achieve success in the classroom. All students with special needs will have access to the general education curriculum and receive special education supports in their LRE, in accordance with IDEA. All educators at Libertas will implement IEP accommodations (first, because we

believe most students can meet grade-level standards) and then modifications, and provide opportunities for students to learn from different strategies, techniques and methods in order to meet each individual's needs and IEP goals and benchmarks.

We will develop IEPs that specify what students must know and be able to do, including measurable, time-specific goals for exactly what work students will be able to complete, up to what standard (both foundational skills and grade-level standards for typically-developing peers); the accommodations, supports, and individualized instruction needed to get there; and how we will monitor progress.

Through professional development led by our Dean of Student Support and instructional leadership team, general education teachers will receive training in Universal Design for Learning to ensure that all teachers provide all students with multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement (though always grounded in measures authentic to the content).[117] Training in meeting the needs of special education students will take place during our summer professional development and periodically throughout the year during our Wednesday PD sessions. These trainings and the resulting unit- and lesson-planning will feature general ed. teachers and special educators working together to design the instruction they will jointly deliver. In accordance with IDEA, the Child Study Team will evaluate the need for and support classrooms in using assistive technology (tools may range from pencil grips to computers and will be integrated based on determination of need) and services so all children can access teaching, learning, and assessments.[118]

As described above, the DSS will be responsible for monitoring and tracking curriculum and instruction decisions and bringing this information back to the yearly IEP team meeting. The special educator will consult at least once per month with each teacher of every special education student; at these meetings, the special educator will assist in modifying assignments, discuss each student's progress toward their IEP goals and in class in general, and work with the general educator to provide strategies to ensure that the IEP is being met. In addition, the special educator will manage reporting to parents of children with special needs about how the school is meeting their needs and support families by sharing teaching tools and methods.

Libertas' unique instructional design for all learners reflects research-based practices for meeting special needs. Researcher Jeanne Ormrod recommends "a combination of strategies [that] can help many at risk students succeed and stay in school," including differentiated instruction, individualized attention to each child, one-on-one and small group instruction, mixed-age groups, peer tutoring, extra time on-task, repetition and re-teaching, using multiple modalities and multisensory lessons, and special concrete materials.[119] All of these are evident in our multi-aged classrooms and individualized, student-paced lessons, which provide all of our students with a variety of learning supports to allow for a community of diverse learners that promotes acceptance. Indeed, inherent in our core instructional design are features that would be considered modifications for traditional classrooms: extra time to complete assignments, graphic organizers, small group instruction, not penalizing in grading for spelling errors, preferential seating, texts on tape, complex tasks and directions broken into steps, and structured movement breaks. The use of concrete materials, an essential part of the design of Montessori instruction, follows best practices in special education and concept development in general education.[120] The Montessori orientation of our program will employ all of these strategies routinely with all students, not only with special populations and at-risk students.

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[117] For more on UDL, see CAST (2011). *Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.0.* David H. Rose and Jenna Gravel.
[118] http://www.state.tn.us/education/speced/doc/21710atsupervisor.pdf
[119] Ormrod, Jeanne. (2006). Educational Psychology Developing Learners. New Jersey: Pearson Education. Cited by Sardi, *op cit*.
[120] Berkas, Nancy and Patison, Cynthia. (2007). NCTM News Bulletin. http://www.nctm.org/news/content.aspx?id=12698.
Accessed 10.24.13.

Finally but importantly, we return again to the importance of content knowledge, especially for students with disabilities. According to the anecdotal but longtime experience of one successful, urban school principal mentioned previously (Valarie Lewis of PS 124 in NYC): while instruction that focuses exclusively on isolated, grade-level skills can leave students with disabilities feeling left out, a content-rich, Core Knowledge curriculum "gives students with disabilities and English language learners *something to talk about*" and a genuine sense of engagement.

> (5) Discipline: Explain how the school will protect the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings and exhaust all options in order to continue delivery of educational services in the home school.

At Libertas, we will protect the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions in accordance with IDEA and procedural safeguards as described by the Tennessee Department of Education, Division of Special Education.[121] Because we view discipline at Libertas as a teaching opportunity, we will use a Love and Logic-style approach to personalize and make relevant the experience of consequences for infractions regardless of a child's IEP status. (Please see the Culture section for more.) In the event that a student with a disability grossly violates our school code of behavior, we will either move the child into a temporary alternate placement as determined by the IEP team (or by temporary administrative decision if there is a risk of serious bodily injury), or suspend the child for no more than ten consecutive school days as limited by law. We are aware that students with disabilities may not be suspended for more than 10 days in a given year (even for separate incidents) without it constituting a change of placement; and that, in these instances, we must provide all services required by the IEP. However, it is our intention that, on the rare occasion when we suspend a student, it should be for a much more limited term (e.g. 1-2 days at a time), as that is a very long time to miss school. Also, it is our intention that changes of placement occur only when it is in the best interest of the student and not as a punitive response.

Should misconduct by a student with disability merit a longer suspension than ten days (consecutive or cumulative of the school year), or should cumulative suspensions for separate acts approach that number, we will first conduct a Manifestation Determination hearing to investigate and determine whether the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability. This hearing will take place within 8 days of the incident, and include the ASD, the parents/guardians of the students, and the IEP team (with appropriate notification to the district). If it is determined that the behavior was not a manifestation of the disability, then we will take disciplinary action for the child in the same manner and for the same duration as we would for children without disabilities, though we would be sure to provide all required IEP services if a student has been removed from the educational setting for more than 10 school days in the year. As necessary, we will also perform a functional behavioral assessment (FBA), and we will implement behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation to prevent recurrence. If the conduct is found to be a manifestation of the disability, or if the conduct was a direct result of our failure to implement the IEP, then we will conduct an FBA or review any existing behavioral intervention plan and modify it as necessary and would return the student to his/her placement at our school. Our DSS will notify parents/guardians of all incidents, hearings, and proceedings in writing, and remind them that they have the right to bring an attorney or advocate to the meeting.

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[121] http://www.tn.gov/education/speced/doc/51109safeguardnotice.pdf

English Language Learners
(1) Identification: What methods will you employ to identify English Language Learners? How will you work to avoid misidentification?

(2) Assessment: What staff will be responsible for administering the TELPA (the required English language screener) to new students who may be ELLs? How will the results of this assessment be communicated to parents?

(3) Placement: How will you ensure qualified staffing to meet the needs of ELL students?

(4) Curriculum and Instruction: What specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies will be employed to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for English Language Learners?

(5) Monitoring: What plans are in place for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of ELL students, including exiting students from ELL services?

Identification: Libertas will work with any enrolled English Language Learner (ELL) students in accordance with related Federal Laws and Regulations in order to support students in receiving a free and appropriate public education as defined by Tennessee education law.[122] As described by the Tennessee State Board of Education's ESL Program[123], families will indicate the native language of all students on an initial home language survey. If any of the answers on the survey are languages other than English, the child will be classified as Non-English Language Background (NELB) and assessed for English proficiency using an approved screening assessment for ESL. All NELB students who are determined to be LEP must be identified as ELL, and ESL services must be provided through an allowable service delivery model.

Language instruction and equal access: All Libertas special needs and LEP students will receive instruction in a mainstream environment. Libertas teachers will receive training in areas such as vocabulary development and guided language acquisition strategies that impact the achievement of native English speakers as well as English Language Learners. Instruction for ELLs are those suggested in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model. The goal of this model is to develop English language skills together with academic skills. Content instruction will be provided in English, and ELL students will be taught the same academic content as those who are native English speakers. The individual lessons and differentiated instruction of our Montessori design support this model since they allow students to spend the amount of time needed on each stage of learning before moving on to the next. Multi-age groups provide children with the opportunity to interact with children whose English is more advanced. Partner work, peer tutors, and lessons in small groups give students opportunities to communicate in English. Finally, the school's extended day program will allow more time to be used for additional intensive English language instruction.

Evaluation: In accordance with NCLB requirements, the English language proficiency of all students who are ELL will be measured annually as part of school and district accountability. Libertas will administer the TELPA / English Language Development Assessment (ELDA)[124] to ELL students on an annual basis to evaluate their English proficiency. Scores indicate the proficiency level the student has achieved each year, and whether the student's level of English proficiency is high enough to exit the ELL

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[122] Tennessee Rules and Regulations: Rule 0520-1-3-.056. a. 1 and 2 ii.
[123] http://www.scsk12.org/SCS/subject-areas/ESL/PDFs/ESL-policy_8-22-08_TN.pdf
[124] http://state.tn.us/sbe/Nov07/VE_ESL_CurrStds.pdf

program or support services. The lead classroom teacher of any ELL student, supported by school leadership, will be in charge of monitoring the progress and success of the student (including the possibility of successfully exiting services), both in general content and skills acquisition, and in mastery of the four areas of language proficiency (reading, writing, speaking and listening). If a student who is an ELL fails to show sufficient progress in academic areas, the instructional team will reevaluate the academic program and level of language support.

Family communications: According to Tennessee education policy 3.207, the school must notify the parents of LEP students (in writing, and in the home language) of the fact that their child has been identified as eligible for enrollment in a bilingual, ESL, or English language services education program. English language progress reports will be sent to parents of enrolled LEP students along with the school's quarterly progress reports. Both reports would be sent home in English as well as the home language (for which we would need to identify capable staff or a translation service, if we encounter conditions substantially different than what current data suggest is likely).

Staffing: In the event that we have ELL students, we will have qualified teachers who have been certified in ELL education. If no current teachers are qualified, we will either hire a qualified teacher, or provide professional development funding for an existing teacher to become certified.

8. SCHOOL STRUCTURE: CULTURE

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

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

(3) Discuss your approach to reinforcing positive student behavior and ensuring that all students remain on track to achieve the academic and social objectives set out in the mission of your school.

(4) Describe how the school plans to align staff and students around high expectations for student behavior.

Cultivating virtue: habits of excellence

Culture literally means what we love.[125] One of the chief functions of culture has always been to help young people find a healthy sense of direction – to become virtuous. While our English word "virtue" comes from the Latin term for manliness, Aristotle unlocks its latent layers of meaning: His Greek term – *aristéa* – is the superlative form of "good"; in other words, the best – the specific *excellence* – in any capacity. Crucially, he teaches that virtue is a *habit* because of the role that emotions and the will play in disposing us to act upon what we know.[126] We are far more likely to choose what we know we should do when we have habituated it, than if each act is a sheer exertion of willpower. In Aristotle's timeless formulation, "we are what we repeatedly do; excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." To be sure, when we are just starting to build a habit, it is hard work; but over time, with the

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[125] From "cult" in its broad sense – what one worships. Wendell Berry discusses our unconscious acculturation in *The Unsettling of America*, introduction.
[126] The opposite – failing to do what we know we should – is variously termed incontinence or concupiscence.

right correspondences being cultivated – e.g. good things are presented as noble – we may find that we come to like it, and that *what seems good will be good for us*.[127]

Seen in the light of virtue, we can rightly understand *discipline* as the work of *interior ordering* toward our right ends. Think of an academic "discipline" or field of study – a noble craft to which one submits oneself for development toward mastery. Hence our name, "Libertas": a Latin word evoking the self-regulation that enables us to use freedom well.

Therefore true character education speaks to all aspects of the person: *intellect* (knowing what is right and wrong), *emotions* (desiring what is right and disliking what is wrong), and *will* (actually choosing what is right and avoiding the wrong). This is the tripartite "soul" of the ancient philosophers. These three parts of us correspond with, or aspire to, the transcendent principles of truth, beauty, and goodness (*verum, pulchrum, bonum*). Our school culture – our method of "educating" or drawing out and forming the character and interior discipline – may be understood around the following pillars.

A. Beauty

The scholar and literary critic Roger Scruton says that "Beauty makes a claim on us; it is a call to renounce our narcissism and look with reverence on the world." As neighborhood residents have lamented to us, what do children internalize about their own worth, or that of their neighborhood, when their public environment is degraded with litter, noise, and neglect? One of our first tasks, then, is to create a contemplative corner that invites students to elevate their aesthetic vision and open themselves to education by finding it beautiful. The Montessori classroom is laid out to provide cozy nooks for students to concentrate, and arrayed with high-quality, natural materials that are inviting to the eye and the touch. Students will wear uniforms to minimize the distractions of dressing for peers. We will replace visual noise by decorating classrooms with fine art prints and students' best work. Disallowing the distractions of popular culture, we will provide a curriculum in fine art and music appreciation and performance. We will visit local exhibits and performances, such as with $5 youth tickets and on-site visits with the Memphis Symphony, for which students will always prepare by first studying their subjects at school. We will curate our school library with these principles in mind, remembering in the words of Harvard's Maria Tatar that the best children's literature "[set] minds in motion, renew the senses, and almost rewire brains." [128]

B. Academic engagement

Great teachers know that the best way to limit discipline problems is to engage children in learning. And young children in particular have native joy for learning about their world. Our Montessori design favors individual and small group time, diminishing the time sitting still in whole group that is fertile for misbehavior. Montessori helps children to "normalize" (concentrate) by choosing to engage in quality work that matches his or her level. (This is supported by their individual work plans that helps them self-monitor. Children may be assigned seatwork if our procedure rehearsal is not adequate to prepare them to move around the room peacefully.) When whole-group work is necessary, we will use a variety of kinetic gestures and call-and-response techniques to channel the group's physical and verbal energy productively.

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[127] This summary of the beginning of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* was paraphrased from Prof. Rev. Joseph Kotersky of Fordham University.

[128] This citation and the foregoing literary epigraph are courtesy McGurdon's discussion of the "flight from beauty" in children's literature in the publication *Imprimis*, July/August 2013, Vol. 42, #7-8.

C. Virtue[129]

Libertas will teach and model the cardinal ("hinge") moral and intellectual virtues, recognized universally since Socrates: *justice*, *prudence* (practical wisdom to discern the right path), *temperance* (moderation), *fortitude* (courage and persistence, lately rediscovered as the "non-cognitive skill" of "grit"), as well as *humility* or *gratitude*, and *love* (*caritas* – willing the good of the other). We will teach virtue explicitly, through the example of admirable historical and literary figures, scaffolded as children age.[130] These examples will be omnipresent, such as in the names of classrooms and the awards we give at community meetings (including the *princeps* or first citizen). These concrete examples work both on the emotions and the intellect: inspiring us with a clear vision of what excellence looks like.

D. Attachment village

Our Parent & Community Engagement section introduces the research behind the attachment village concept. Building strong, healthy attachments are paramount for reaching children who may arrive to school in survival mode. Our multi-age classrooms mean that children and their parents will have three years with each teacher, deepening their relationships. Having establishing and continuously cultivating these attachments, our faculty will consistently model our culture expectations with ever-present warmth. We will recruit, select and train faculty with explicit reference to our model of virtue and conduct. Among other attributes discussed herein, faculty members will model inquiry, humility (e.g. willingness to apologize), never yell in our school, and abjure power struggles with students. We will also encourage attachment techniques like "collecting our children": using physical presence, body level, eye contact, and voice tone to ensure that the adult and child are truly connected when conveying an important message, especially about behavior. Our environment should visibly remind older peers to offer, and new students to receive, positive peer pressure.

E. Stewardship

Students should see themselves as already-contributing members of the community. The simplest and best way is to give them productive, meaningful "work of serious consequence" upon which the community depends. This is a focus of the Montessori "practical life" curriculum. During the sensitive period for order, when students enjoy this kind of motor work, primary students regularly undertake jobs like washing their desks: including fetching water and rags, cleaning and drying the desk, and returning all materials without spilling (or, if they do, cleaning up). Manual work done with dignity elevates our basic human needs, giving special responsibility of the environment even to children. Students will earn other "jobs" within their classes and school wide, evolving as they age, with the attendant anticipation and sense of accomplishment. Upper elementary children will help plan and prepare for school trips.[131] Tending to the aforementioned school garden, with its regular cycle of planting, weeding, growth and harvest, is another stewardship practice.

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[129] We intentionally use the language of principle and virtue rather than "values" because of the problematic implications of the etymology of "values" language as discussed by Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind*.

[130] See Kilpatrick, *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right From Wrong*, on the importance of concrete examples in contrast to abstract. More examples of age-appropriate instances of character as students mature, such as the conflicting moral duties, are found in Seider's profile of Boston Collegiate Charter School in *Character Compass*, as well as David Isaacs' *Character Building*.

[131] This paragraph on practical life, as well as some of the examples of practicing ground rules mentioned below, draws heavily from Biff Maier's 2013 presentation at the American Montessori Society (AMS) conference.

F. Habits of order: strengthening the will through routines and procedures

Children work best when they know what to do, and their limits. Good routines are less taxing on the will, enabling one to do more easily what has been taught as right and felt as good. Sublimated structure frees children to do the work of their own development. [132]

How-to: Because vague statements about being careful or respectful have little meaning for young children, we will provide concrete ground rules and expectations – telling and showing *what comes next* in any situation. Students will choose from defined options, experiencing freedom with limits to help control their bodies and focus their minds: E.g. "When you put your work away, you may..." Newer classes will have fewer choices available at the beginning, and students will put away materials they misuse and require a re-introduction to them before trying again. Faculty and leaders will prepare detailed "minute-by-minute" plans for key schoolwide transitions* like arrival, changing classes, mealtimes, school wide meetings, and dismissal, as well as classroom procedures* like bathroom usage, distributing papers, picking up and returning work materials, moving between stations, pushing-in chairs, rolling rugs, walking in hallways, etc. Observers will hear faculty checking for student understanding by asking, "What do you do now?" We will use songs and games to make our procedures easy and fun.

Practice: Consistently following-through is equally if not more important than the plan. We will focus on consistent, positive redirection, helping children practice what they should do. Instead of "don't" or "stop," our teachers will often say "in our classroom, we…," or "this is where we…," or "let me see you put that down without making a sound." Students should be familiar enough with expectations that violating them can be met with genuine (well, perhaps somewhat dramatized) surprise: "You were running in the hallway?" Students will perceive their teachers as "warm and firm." [133] Teachers will rehearse routines during PD, and students will spend time in the initial weeks of school internalizing them. To make it easier for teachers to understand and implement the vast array of teacher moves needed to be warm and firm, we will employ the defined repertoire sourced from Saphier's *The Skillful Teacher*, "No-Nonsense Nurturing," and Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion*, including strong voice, economy of language, what to do (assuming incompetence over defiance), precise direction, providing rationale, positive narration (e.g. "I noticed that you put X away and it's ready for the next person" – important given the research-base regarding the unintended consequences of praise); do not engage / broken record, and 100%. As a school focused on principles, if we have thought it necessary to set a rule, we will follow-through *every time*. These practices will be observed by school managers intensively at the start of the year, and included in teacher evaluations throughout for accountability. Distractions mitigated, teachers will be able to focus on enticing students into learning.

Gradual release of responsibility: After starting the year with a secure foundation of order (e.g. quiet, teacher-led lines, assigned seats, choreographed rotation among workstations), it is an important objective that students become capable of working independently over time through gradual release of responsibility. Primary students will be assigned work in the first weeks of school, followed by selecting work that is given to them, followed by picking up their own work on a fixed schedule, followed ultimately by choosing their own work from their plan within their own time. These adjustments will be made for individuals or groups as needed. It is as clear to us as it was to Maria Montessori that disorderly children cannot do the work they need to do.

Students who enter the school midyear will be oriented by spending part of their first few days in a special room setup as a fully functioning Montessori classroom, where children can practice moving about, accessing materials, etc., without other children around to distract to distract each other. Once in

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[132] This really means children doing the work they can and should do for themselves, rather than adults doing for them. Montessori is emphatic about children discovering and correcting their errors through repetition.
[133] "Warm demanders" is an approach endorsed from Lisa Delpit to No-Nonsense Nurturing.

their classrooms, children may also have differentiated schedules or work plans that include more of the structure (e.g. assigned seat work) mentioned above.

Montessori offers many curricular means to redirecting students who need it. Children refine motion through practical life (e.g. food preparation, working with water or animals), practice choosing, wait for limited materials, have academic lessons re-presented or advance as needed (since work must require effort to generate concentration), have "lessons in grace and courtesy" (in both the utility and inherent dignity of treating people well) and explicit instruction in conflict resolution ("the peace table"), collaborate in work, "walk the line," the silence exercise, and many more. [134]

G. Freedom and responsibility: the Libertas approach to discipline

Children misbehave in school for many reasons. Maybe they had a bad night's sleep, a fight with a sibling, or no breakfast; maybe they feel unprepared and want to avoid the appearance of failure; maybe they feel powerless and need some measure of control. Immature persons acting-out for these reasons do not need to be criminalized, but rather welcomed, provided rest, nutrition, physical and emotional safety, and firmly supported to be their best selves.

These remarks remind us why discipline must serve two purposes: basic order and long-term moral formation. The former is necessary for learning to take place, but insufficient for the latter, which is a lifelong struggle for the kinds of persons and community we want to be. The paradox is that "behaviorist" techniques – controlling children's behavior through externally imposed rewards and punishments – can achieve short-term compliance, but, when over-relied upon, come at the cost of internal motivation. That is, children can redirect blame for their behavior to the teacher who gave the consequences, instead of confronting personal responsibility for their actions. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, immoderate use of extrinsic rewards can also undermine students' nascent intrinsic motivations, making them seek praise more than the accomplishment itself.[135]

To avoid this eventuality, we plan to only judiciously use short-term compliance techniques, and minimize the situations more likely to prompt them – such as asking very young children to be completely silent and still. Rather, we will proactively minimize misbehavior by aforementioned relationship building and instructional engagement, and channel energy into purposeful movement. We will clearly define expectations, teach and model the virtues and lessons in grace and courtesy, and train students in self-calming, de-escalation methods, problem solving, and peacemaking language to use with their neighbors. We expect students to be able to use common language to explain what our virtues look, sound, and feel like, and act in accordance with those expectations.

When students are still tempted to misbehavior, as will inevitably and often occur, we shall employ the "Love and Logic" toolkit of progressive responses for maintaining order. Love and Logic provides a coherent and finely gradated set of teacher moves for classroom and school wide situations to "break the spell" – preventing minor misbehavior from turning into major incidents. Moves escalate from nonverbal (proximity, eye contact, head shake), to verbal (information without direction / "I-message," gentle rhetorical comment / "is this the right place…", scheduled discussion), to providing a choice, to enforceable statements, to changing location (ask, or "say thanks and walk away"). When a teacher cannot easily break the spell, Love and Logic counsels applying age-appropriate consequences that flow naturally from actions, in an empathetic way (i.e. without anger or preaching) that respects young people's "self concept," always remembering that the goal is for students to attain freedom with responsibility – calmly learning from their actions and doing the right thing. For children under approximately age seven, when verbal rhetoric can be abstract, this often means redirection through

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[134] Many of these ideas were summarized by Patricia Shortridge Donohue at the 2013 AMS conference.

[135] Our approach to behavior and discipline is informed by Fay and Funk's *Love and Logic*. See also Kohn, as well as Willingham's discussion of "How to encourage moral behavior," http://www.danielwillingham.com/1/post/2013/05/may-20th-2013.html, 5/20/13, reviewing Sheik, et al, 2013, the "Paradoxical consequences of prohibitions."

the environment and persistently practicing what one needs to do and has obviously not yet internalized. But once children reach the age of reason and are more capable of abstract thought, teachers share thinking and control. For example, teachers can respond to a student behavior by asking questions like, "what might happen if you keep doing that?" or, "how good of a decision is that for you?" Teachers only ever give enforceable limits, saying only what they can do: For instance, with a smiling shake of the head, "I only accept papers that are submitted on time."

When needed, further escalated responses include time-out with written reflection, discussion appointments, administrator interventions, student letter or call home, and in-school suspension. For details about intervention for students with additional behavioral needs, please see the in Special Populations section on Intervention.

To effectively implement our Love and Logic approach to discipline, we will provide to teachers an in-depth written rationale, including ascending hierarchy of teacher moves, and practice them during professional development. PD sessions, division meetings, and leadership evaluation will also include regular review of culture and behavior indicators. Acknowledging that parents know their children best and determine their own approaches to discipline in the home, we will respectfully and clearly convey that this is how we handle behavior at school through the means mentioned in the Parent & Community Engagement section.

As Love and Logic is our alternative to extrinsic punishments, we also plan to positively reinforce students and faculty in ways that comport with intrinsic motivations. We will use lighthearted, fun ways to acknowledge merit, such as recognition and honor at school wide community meetings and events, badges, and/ a "leaderboard" to cheer on those working toward important benchmarks.

In **summary**, we hope that our culture of virtuous habits will speak to all the aspects of character necessary for our students to live well[136]: helping to *shape our students' emotions through beauty and nobility so that they love what they ought, their intellect so that they know the right choice, and their will so that they can do it*. This philosophy of school culture and virtuous habits should encourage the full breadth of human flourishing and, we hypothesize, be instrumental toward student achievement. Studies show that the growth mindset, non-cognitive skills like persistence/tenacity/resilience, and experience with failure, are critical for student success. For instance, Duckworth and Seligman argue that that self-discipline is a stronger predictor of IQ than middle school grades, time spent on homework, and similar indicators.[137] We believe that these orientations and skills nicely parallel our discussion of the struggle of the moral life, with its language about self-governance, and that all endeavors require deliberate and sustained practice.

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(5) Please describe how you will measure school culture. Include how parent and student feedback will be incorporated in measuring your school's success in creating a positive culture.

Leadership and faculty will establish and annually revise goals and indicators for culture, with board ratification. At a high level, these include the goals around inclusive, neighborhood-based enrollment mentioned above, as well as observing for self-directed student work and movement as mentioned in our teaching model / academic goals.

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[136] Contemporary social science gives us ample reason to see character as more than a series of discrete choices, and therefore not to over-emphasize the capacity of the conscious will to carry all the burden of behavior. See for example Barry Schwartz "Paradox of Choice," as well as John Tierney and Roy Baumeister's *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*. The latter discusses how willpower relies on such prosaic needs as physical energy.

[137] Seider, *Character Compass*, p. 3.

Another key element for monitoring culture will be stakeholder satisfaction on our survey (annual for families and students, twice-annual for faculty). We will aim for 80%+ of families to report that the school is safe, on track, and preparing children for virtuous lives, and for students to feel safe and cared for, by effective teachers in orderly classrooms; we hope similar rates of teachers feel engaged, supported toward professional excellence by management, agree about the high quality of peers, and plan to stay 3+ years. We will also have goals for some of these mindsets to manifest in action, including teacher retention goals discussed below, and 85% of families participating in events each term such as orientation, Saturday programs, family nights, and/or volunteering. And to the end of student character development, we plan to develop a rubric with descriptions of behaviors that manifest our virtues, and establish baseline scores in the fall of each year for new students, and look both for individual growth (e.g. 90%+ students show X growth per year when starting under Y) as well as overall averages (e.g. 3.5/4).[138]

With respect to student discipline, we intend to have a percentage of suspensions and expulsions equal to or less than the feeder pattern mean, to reduce repeated office referrals and uniform notices for any same students by 50% over any one-month period, and for 80%+ stakeholder agreement on discipline-relate survey questions.

Lastly, we will have goals for community investment and involvement, including not only 95% of students participating in service annually, but also a TBD percentage of resources staying in the neighborhood through employment of / contracting with residents or businesses in the immediate area (e.g. 38127) and a potential annual increase in that figure depending on the starting point.

9. SCHOOL STRUCTURE: STUDENT DISCIPLINE

> (1) Provide, as Attachment 2, the school student/parent handbook which includes: Vision/Mission; School Calendar; Operation Hours; Daily Schedule; Activity Schedule; Uniform Policy; Discipline Policy; Practices the school will use to promote good discipline, including both penalties for infractions and incentives for positive behavior; Suspension/Expulsion Policy; Procedures for due process when a student is suspended or expelled as a result of a code of conduct violation, including a description of the appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion; Student Agreement (academics/behavior); Parent Agreement (academics/behavior); Teacher Agreement (academics/behavior)

Please see attached draft family handbook.

> (3) Outline your quarterly goals around student behavior.

In place of the quarterly table, we provide discipline-related goals in the Culture section above.

> (2) Who will be responsible for implementing the school's discipline policy? Who will ensure that accurate disciplinary records are maintained? Who will report discipline data to the school and district? How will you use this data to make needed changes for school culture?
> (4) How do you plan to reward and acknowledge those students/staff members who meet these goals?

The leadership team will oversee discipline, analyze trends during our scheduled data review sessions, and discuss potential adjustments. Individual teachers and family members will be welcome to

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[138] Though one of the applicants has been engaged in discussions of such a model for years with colleagues in the KIPP network, we credit the Harambee Schools with "growth and proficiency" indicators for it.

provide input during the division team and family meetings. On a daily basis, the Head of School, Head Teacher, and social worker will share responsibility for supporting teachers in implementing discipline, including analysis, and dealing with students who need to leave class. We are also considering hiring one or more paraprofessionals to help in this area. Given our dual teacher approach, lead teachers in each classroom will have primary responsibility for family communication about discipline. Whichever faculty member deals with a given disciplinary matter will log relevant information into our student information system. Our office manager will assist with data entry and basic reporting.

We discuss positive reinforcement for meeting discipline-related goals in the Culture section above, in accord with the prompts therein.

10. SCHOOL STRUCTURE: CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE

(1) Discuss the **annual academic schedule** for the school (included in the student/parent handbook). Explain how the calendar reflects the needs of the educational program.

Our calendar and schedule will efficiently maximize student focus each day and establish a healthy rhythm over the year.

- 180 standard calendar days: Students will attend school most of the standard Shelby County Schools calendar. Our faculty PD days will generally coincide with SCS in-service days off for students, for our families' convenience. However, we will likely add 3-4 total PD days during the year, and reserve the right to modify our PD days when publishing the annual calendar (to give parents appropriate notice for child care arrangements) to ensure we have mid-term opportunities for reflection and course-correction.
- 5-10 days extended school year: In addition, students will participate in 1-2 weeks of extended school year; one week required for all, and the second week by invitation or requirements depending on academic standing. (These dates will initially be appended to the end of the year, but could be added to the beginning on years when the first day of the standard calendar is "late.") This permits us to use the first week of the school year as a kind of orientation period for building relationships, the independent work habits of a Montessori environment, diagnosing new student academic readiness (particular literacy levels and any special needs), and some service activities. The first ~week of school will also consist of half-days, and student attendance will be phased-in by new versus returning status as well as age, so that we may isolate our focus on unique needs of those subgroups for the first few days.
- 6 Saturday school days: We will also have a family Saturday school enrichment program, with half-day sessions, roughly once every six weeks in August-November and January-April. Options will be organized by faculty members and/or parents identified by the school. Sample activities will include visits to college campuses, the zoo, botanical gardens, state parks, etc. There may also be some academic sessions focused on helping parents to understand their children's work.
- Total days for students: 185-190 (core academic) / 191-196 (including Saturday enrichment).
- Faculty will participate in an additional one to two weeks (depending on experience level and external summer training opportunities) of professional development prior to the start of the year, as well as the aforementioned <4 PD days during the year, for a total of 205 to 210 days (excluding other duties faculty may pursue).

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

number of hours/minutes per day and week that the school will devote to academic instruction in each grade.

General weekly school schedule (2,385 minutes at school per week).
- Every day students will arrive at school by 7:45 for 15 minutes of physical activity (outdoors during good weather and indoors when not feasible), followed by 30 minutes of breakfast in the classroom and AM circle (the latter of which has both social and academic elements).
- Students will be in school until 3:45 MTThF, releasing early at 2:15 on Wednesday for PD.
- *This totals 2,385 minutes at school per week*.

Instructional time and rationale (1,500 minutes weekly core; 1,680 including enrichment)
- *Core teaching and learning time*: As described in detail in the Transformational Change section, most teaching and learning takes place through differentiated individual and small groups lessons and practice, during long, multi-disciplinary Montessori work sessions. (As is made clear above, careful scaffolding is provided to students in the form of individual work plans and goals, as well as schedules of teacher lesson presentation, ensuring that for instance our Kindergarten students are spending adequate time daily on phonemic awareness, early writing and reading, vocabulary development to lay groundwork for comprehension, and so on.) The school features a daily 3-hour block in the morning (2.5 hours on Friday to accommodate school wide community meeting), as well as on Wednesday afternoons. As discussed above, the long work periods are based on observations of children's uninterrupted work cycles - namely the tendency to work their way up through more familiar practice to a period of intense concentration, and then reflect while the learning settles. Practically speaking, each session takes place shortly after children have had a small amount of physical activity to clear their minds (especially of any issues they may have brought to school with them from home), something to eat, and a "circle" time to help refocus.
- We also wish to draw attention to the fact that the Montessori style of work periods is a very efficient way to use time, because it minimizes transitions. If we save just 10 minutes per day by limiting lesson/space transitions, we will save nearly an hour per week and between four and five days by year-end!
- *Readaloud & CKLA*: Also as described above, every day, all students up through 3rd grade - when children's emerging reading skills still mean that they access content more readily through spoken word - will have a <45-minute Readaloud / CKLA "Listening and Learning" group lesson. These sessions are generally scheduled as part of afternoon blocks, after lunch and outdoor activity time help students re-settle. Furthermore, on every day other than Wednesday, students will have CKLA skills lessons.
- *Independent reading and blended learning*: Each day will feature a block of up to 45 minutes of independent reading time - including for teachers as models - some of which may also be used for computer-based practice time for some students.
- *Enrichment*: Each day except Wednesday will have a 45-minute enrichment period, the content of which is described in Curriculum. In year 1 these will all occur in the afternoons; in later years, primary students - whose periods of concentration are shorter - may have enrichment in the late morning, before or after (but not interrupting) slightly truncated work periods; early elementary students will have uninterrupted work periods. Intervention will often take place during enrichment, as well as the afternoon work period, delivered by lead teachers, interventionists or aides depending on enrichment schedule. We will avoid interrupting morning work periods for any reason to the greatest extent possible, both to allow concentration, and because interrupting academic time for academic interventions will not add to students' net time on task.
- *Rest*: Pre-K children will have a nap/rest period during the rotating enrichment blocks.

- *Subtotal instructional time*: The two core instructional blocks amount to 1,500 minutes per week, and with enrichment included, all K+ students will have 1,680 minutes of academic time per week.

Additional time and rationale: the remainder of students' time in school (about 690 minutes, excluding afterschool programming) will be comprised of the following:
- About forty-five minutes combined daily (AM and midday) of preferably outdoor physical activity (monitored primarily by aides, support staff and volunteers, with some lead teacher participation).
- Thirty minutes for lunch, which is served family-style at tables with faculty, staff, family visitors, and multi-age groups of students to serve as examples. (Because each day several faculty members will participate in lunch, lead teachers will have brief bathroom breaks during AM work periods with coverage from aides, and planning time during afternoon enrichment periods as per schedule.)
- Thirty minutes daily for breakfast in the classroom and a "circle" time to commence the day, as well as fifteen minutes for classroom snack. Universal free breakfast and snack in the classroom ensure that every child has the nutrition needed to focus without hunger, enables frequent "practical life" practice of caring for the environment, efficiently minimizes transition times, and provides a quiet and relaxed setting that reduces the distractions and stress students may experience in a cafeteria environment early in the morning when they need to prepare to concentrate.
- Thirty minutes per week for school-wide community meeting allows us to share student work, celebrate virtue, discuss challenges and obstacles to virtue that have come up in the school, and in the long-term to depict future rites of passage for our students to anticipate.

After school care: We are considering the possibility of offering after-school care with our aides and/or enrichment teachers, funded by TN Family First child care certificates and/or parent fees. Interest and feasibility will be further studied during the planning year / school matching process.

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(3) Describe your goal for student attendance and explain how you will ensure high rates of student attendance. Who will be responsible for collecting and monitoring attendance data? What will you do in the event that you do not reach your attendance targets?

We hope to average 95%+ daily attendance, which will be tracked by our office manager and teachers entering attendance each morning, and reviewed regularly by school and division leadership teams as one of the key indicators for our data days. To help reach these goals, the office manager will be responsible for calling (either personally or through robo-call) each child with an unexcused absence. We will follow the district's policies for truancy, and lead teachers will conduct appropriate meetings with families that have chronic attendance issues.

11. SCHOOL STRUCTURE: DAY IN THE LIFE

During our instructional work time, which is three hours in the mornings and up to 90 minutes in the afternoon, children receive individualized lessons and engage in self-paced practice using materials from the prepared environment. The Montessori classroom is ordered into 4 main subsections, with child-accessible shelves containing lessons and works in each. As described in previous sections, these areas are: Academics (language, reading, writing, math, geography, science), Sensorial, Practical Life (care of self and environment), and Cultural and Artistic materials. The teacher invites a child to receive a short, introductory lesson using these materials, and then the child is welcomed to choose this work on his own whenever he likes. The child may receive one or several lessons in any of the areas during a work cycle; it is the task of the teacher to determine a child's readiness for each lesson through observation. Once a child has received a lesson in how to use a work, she may choose to return to that

work to repeat and explore extensions with it as long as it holds interest for her. In a given work period, the majority of a child's time is spent engaged with materials of his choosing, interspersed with guidance and lessons from the teacher. Through this self-paced practice, children develop deep knowledge of the materials and achieve a flow-like state of concentration that sustains focus during the extended work cycles. The following is a rough depiction of what typical work cycles may look like.

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(1) Describe a typical school day from the perspective of a student in a grade who will be served in your first year of operation.

A. Primary division

Welcomed back to school by a handshake or hug from a faculty member as he gets off the bus, 5-year old Luther joins his peers outdoors (weather permitting) for 15 minutes of free exercise and activity. A morning chime signals the transition into the classroom for family-style breakfast, where Luther sits with classmates and teacher to begin the day with a nutritious breakfast, which may contain foods from our school garden. Luther, as an elder leader in his multi-age classroom, does his special job of laying out the napkins for the class before the students take their seats. After waiting patiently to wash his hands, he takes a plate, a cup, and utensils, and takes a seat to eat. During breakfast, the students enjoy listening to a selection from the Composer of the Month, Mendelssohn, and some hum along to the concerto they have begun to internalize after hearing it daily.

After breakfast, the bell chimes for morning circle. Children sit around the rug and welcome their classmates with song. The teacher delivers a short lesson on a seasonal topic, and invites the children to consider their first choice of work. When she sees Luther raising his hand silently to indicate that he has internally planned his first work, she nods at him, and he eagerly rises to get to work.

The morning work cycle has begun. With purpose and energy, Luther spends fifteen minutes working on a Practical Life exercise such as bow-tying or chair washing. He then spends twice as long with a Math work modeling and solving addition problems up to the thousands using concrete manipulatives, and moves from there to work with the smelling jars from the Sensorial area for a shorter period of ten minutes. Becoming hungry, he prepares a snack for himself in the Practical Life area. Then, he receives an introductory lesson from the teacher in word composition. In previous months Luther has learned the "basic code" of English sounds and has had extensive practice identifying phonemes in words; now his teacher sees that he is ready to begin encoding these sounds using large, cardboard letters called the Moveable Alphabet. As he proceeds to identify the phonemes for selected objects (e.g. web, pig, jet), he carefully chooses and places the sound symbols (letters) that help build each word, and then practices his handwriting by transcribing the words he has encoded. This takes him thirty minutes, which he chooses to extend by spelling the names of more objects from the tray his teacher has prepared. At this point, approximately two hours into the work cycle, Luther decides to do some physical activity, and chooses the Practical Life work called Walking the Line to practice balance and concentration. From here, he goes to Geography and selects a puzzle map of African countries, which engages him for thirty minutes as he takes apart and then reconstructs the puzzle, practicing the names of each country from a control chart. His teacher notices his concentration and guides him to a book in the library that has pictures of African flags and places. Luther looks at this for several minutes and decides to check it out from the class library. He then moves to the Sciences area, where he draws today's observation of the class ant farm and posts it in his science research notebook. When the bell chimes for transition, Luther replaces his notebook and walks to the circle to prepare for lunch.

After outdoor time and lunch, students gather for an engaging classroom read-aloud and then sort into small groups for skills teaching. Luther loves this time of the day because he gets to work closely with peers in composing words using sound pictures, and his teacher always tells such entertaining stories. Afterward, Luther enjoys another Montessori work cycle, and then joins the

gardening club in the afternoon for a productive session of tilling the soil in the community plot. As Luther lines up to dismiss with his classmates for the bus, he warmly bids his teacher farewell and tells her that he can't wait for tomorrow.

B. Lower elementary division

Kayla joins her elementary classmates in their spacious classroom for morning breakfast and circle. Kayla is new to Libertas, but as a 6-year-old in the first-year elementary program, she shares a classroom with 17 other first-grade age children and Mrs. A, who warmly greets her children as they set up the meal. After morning circle, Kayla walks confidently to get her work plan from her cubby and reviews the proud check marks next to works she has completed so far this week. Written in her bold hand are two math works and a geography work she still wants to do, and knowing that she needs a lesson for one of them, she goes to her teacher and places a gentle hand on her shoulder. Mrs. A gently places her hand atop Kayla's to acknowledge her and motions for her to come to a table by a bright window. Where Luther's focus is on developing himself through concentration and independence, Kayla and her peers are working socially and through more abstract inquiry. Knowing this, Mrs. A invites Kayla and another little boy, a frequent working partner, and presents a lesson to them on geography using a puzzle map. Like students in the Primary program, Kayla uses concrete materials to represent space and quantity, but here her work is finer and more detailed, as she learns how to place tiny, labeled flags to show the names of the countries of Africa. She and her partner talk excitedly about whether they would want to live in a desert or jungle as they share the work, each child sticking pins into the blank country outlines and proudly naming each label.

Kayla and her partner decide to take a break from their work and go to the practical life area to prepare a snack. Kayla washes and peels an apple while her partner spreads butter and jam on a piece of bread. As Kayla cores and cuts the apple, her partner divides the bread into quarters and they share their snack. "You can have two pieces and I can have two pieces. That's fair," he says. Kayla nods, and distributes one piece of apple to herself and her partner at a time so it is evenly shared. "Bon appetit! Now we may eat!" They giggle and eat.

Back at their work, Kayla is almost finished placing labels in West Africa. "Nigeria," Kayla informs her partner, "is bigger than Cameroon or Benin." This work leads to questions about how many people live in each country, and after an excited visit to Mrs. A and a guided trip to the classroom library, Kayla and her partner spread a large atlas on a rug next to their map and start making labels to show population rank on their map. They work close to other children and occasionally carry on a conversation with them narrating what they are doing, but maintain focus in their work. The hum in the room resembles that in a busy library, with a low, energetic buzz as students talk intently with their partners and move with purpose about the room. Books and works are spread out on desks and carpets, and as Mrs. A quietly moves about the room observing and giving lessons, she smiles at the volume and industry of her students' work.

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(2) Describe a typical day for a teacher in a grade that will be served in your first year of operation.

Mrs. M. begins her day the way she always does: looking at her classroom and seeing that everything is ready, the shelves still clean and organized from yesterday's preparations, and as she settles into this prepared space, she takes a few moments to review her daily lesson plans. This is perhaps the fifth time she has thought about this day, as the long-term, backwards-planning process ensures ample lead time: she knows what the whole group lessons will be and has already made plans for which lessons to present to each child. So the morning is a peaceful time of envisioning the day. When her co-teacher joins her in the room, they greet each other warmly and discuss the day ahead.

At 7:30, Mrs. M. joins the staff in the morning huddle, where her school leaders welcome the team and share logistical updates and perhaps a brief motivational quote. When the children come, Mrs. M. joins the Dean of Student Services and Office Manager at their posts welcoming children by name as they come off the bus. Mrs. M. greets each child with a handshake and eye contact or a hug, and children happily walk in a line to their outside play activity before breakfast.

When the chime is signaled for breakfast and the transition begins, Mrs. M has to do very little direct management of her students because the routines and student jobs have been clearly set up since the first days of school, so children know what to do and how to do it. These routines – from hanging up coats to changing shoes or washing hands – are calming and provide structure so that each child knows what to expect daily. She and her co-teacher hum along to the Mendelssohn concerto playing softly in the background. Mrs. M bends to join some conversations at each table, acknowledging her children individually as she moves about the room. Her questions and use of descriptive vocabulary keep the conversations rigorous and maintain an atmosphere of anticipation about exciting learning to come.

At the regular time, Mrs. M. rings the chime for clean up and transition to circle. As soon as the chime rings, the class begins singing a song that they know means transition and by the end of which all will be seated. At the closing strain, Mrs. M. smiles and looks around, pausing briefly to communicate silent power as she sees children seated and ready. She begins. Drawing from her daily lesson objectives that deliver content from our Core Knowledge Language Arts curriculum, Mrs. M. sings the morning greeting as the class chorally welcomes each child by name, and then teaches a short read-aloud or lesson that is topical and deliberately delivers content (for example, after measuring the temperature and comparing to yesterday's, she asks children whether there has been an increase or decrease and why, with constant questioning keeping the class thinking). "How wonderful that we'll be able to keep learning about this as our class meteorologist keeps measuring our temperature!" she smiles. "Now, I am looking for students who are thinking about a work they are ready to choose. Raise your hand when you know your work." And Mrs. M. now whispers names to invite students to choose their work.

During the work time, Mrs. M. and her co-teacher alternate between observing children and presenting lessons according to the work goals they know for each child's individualized learning plans. They share record-keeping on a tablet that they keep in use, also communicating verbally and non-verbally as they move about the room amongst the children about who has received a work, who needs redirection, and which children are ready to be invited to new works.

When the morning work cycle comes to a close, Mrs. M. and her co-teacher manage the transition to outdoors before lunch as they did earlier transitions in the day, and lead the children to the play area together. Some children feed the chickens or join in weeding of the garden while others use the playground equipment. Then the class and teachers (on a rotating basis) gather for lunch at multi-age tables of students, along with some scheduled family visitors, for meals served family-style.

Back together in circle, Mrs. M. presents a story from the CKLA Listening and Learning strand, and leads a comprehension conversation in which all students participate in turn-and-talks and directly elicited answers. When the interactive read aloud is finished, students sort into groups. The four-year-olds are taken to the napping area for afternoon rest, and the 5-year-olds are working with Mrs. M. and her co-teacher in different parts of the room on strategically planned decoding and encoding skills essential for reading. There are separate cohorts in flexible small groups doing CKLA Skills lessons at pre-K or K-level instruction and others doing independent reading or computer-assisted skills practice.

After the small groups complete their lessons, Mrs. M. transitions the children back to whole group again for the afternoon enrichment period – music or gardening in our first year. This is when Mrs. M. and her co-teacher observe another classroom and reflect on how their observation applies to student progress in their own room. When the children return from special, Mrs. M. leads the class in a closing circle to share compliments and grows from the day. The class completes their classroom jobs

and routines and each child enjoys a snack before going home. At dismissal, Mrs. M. takes her post for end of day procedures, and hugs the children goodbye before they board the bus.

Mrs. M. and her co-teacher return to the room, cleaned and organized by the children previously, and review the students' work plans and progress in the 15-minute end-of-day wrap-up meeting they always share. They discuss tomorrow's lessons and talk about the week ahead, and then each prepares by reviewing lesson plans and curating the classroom materials. After a half-hour or so of productive work, they mutually wrap up and go home to their families in time for a restful evening.

IV. OPERATIONS PLAN

1. LEADERSHIP TEAM

(1) Describe the proposed organizational model; include the following information: (a) Organizational chart for year one and at the school's full capacity; (b) Job descriptions for each leadership role (provide as Attachment 3); (c) Resumes of all current leadership (provide as Attachment 4). NOTE: School leaders/principals must be identified for any application with 0-1 schools at the time of applying.; (d) Previous student achievement data for the individual primarily responsible for academic programming (provide as part of Attachment 4)

(2) Explain who is responsible for school leader coaching and training and what those processes look like in action. Please include any existing school leader competencies used for school leader selection and evaluation, if available (provide as Attachment 5).

(3) Explain your school leader's role in the successful recruitment, hiring, development and retention of a highly effective staff.

(4) Explain your school leader's role in providing instructional guidance and school culture guidance. How will the leadership team work in support of the school leader's guidance?

(5) What systems are in place in your leadership team to ensure redundancies in knowledge and skill?

Please see attached (3A) our proposed year-1 and full-scale organizational charts, (3B) job description highlights for key leadership roles, (4) resumes and education achievements of our two founding leaders. Draft competencies for our school leadership are incorporated into the leadership and management sections of the Libertas educator model (5/6).

Leadership roles in staffing, instruction, culture: As outlined in the organizational charts and job descriptions, Libertas' founding executive staff leadership team is comprised of two persons with complementary skillsets in the overall organizational management and instructional leadership of high-performing urban schools. Our Head of School / Executive Director, Mr. Nardo, will report to the board, and provide direction and oversight to the organization as a whole, including our Head Teacher, Mrs. Boyle. (Given his expertise and the small scale of the school in the initial years, Mr. Nardo will directly supervise the business operations work of the school, including office staff and outsourced vendors, while over time hiring and developing a dedicated staff person for that work.) Mrs. Boyle will supervise the academic division leaders and dean of student support in curriculum development and instructional coaching among our division chairmen, with Mr. Nardo's support. Particularly in the early years, Mr. Nardo and Mrs. Boyle will work together to set the overall agenda for the school. Mr. Nardo will coordinate staff recruitment, hiring, and related processes in general, aligned closely with Mrs. Boyle's subject expertise. The leaders will together provide support to teachers on culture matters and in dealing with parents.

We encourage redundancy of skillsets among the faculty in various ways, including distributed leadership, such as having division chairmen who conduct observations.

Leadership coaching and development: Both leaders are closely connected to networks of high-performing school leaders through the Tennessee Charter School Center's Education Entrepreneurs Fellowship, KIPP, Noble, Team CFA, Core Knowledge Foundation, and the American Montessori Society (AMS); in addition to the informal advice that great school leaders always know to solicit, we plan to

utilize consulting dollars to bring in school reviewers and leadership coaches from these organizations regularly, including annual reviews by Team CFA and Core Knowledge, and eventually from AMS as well. In addition, a veteran MCS principal who now works as an instructional leadership coach at Insight Education has agreed to serve on our advisory board, to provide general guidance and potentially engage as a consultant to help our leaders.

LEADERSHIP FOR EXPANSION (*EXPERIENCED OPERATORS ONLY)*
(1) Describe the team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the school design successfully, including capacity in areas such as: (a) School leadership, administration, and governance; (b) Curriculum, instruction, and assessment; (c) Performance management; and (d) Parent and community engagement.

(2) Describe the operator's current or planned process for sourcing and training potential school leaders for schools opening in subsequent years. Explain how you have developed or plan to establish a pipeline of potential leaders for the network as a whole. If known, identify candidates already in the pipeline for future positions.

(3) Identify the proposed regional director candidate, if identified, and explain why this individual is well qualified to lead the expansion of the organization (provide a resume as Attachment 6). Summarize the proposed leader's academic and organizational leadership record. Provide specific evidence that demonstrates capacity to design, launch, and manage a high-performing charter school network.
If a regional director candidate has not yet been identified, provide the job description (as Attachment 6) or qualifications and discuss the timeline, criteria, and recruiting and selection process for hiring the regional director. Note: In order for applicants to proceed to the third phase of the application process, the regional leader *(Regional Director, Executive Director, etc.)* MUST be identified by the time of the interview for any operator proposing to open in the fall of 2015.

These prompts are not applicable because we are a new operator.

2. STAFFING

(1) Complete the following table indicating projected staffing needs for the proposed school. Experienced operators should complete the second table outlining projected staffing needs for the entire network over the next five years. Include full-time staff and contract support that serve the network 50% or more. Change or add functions and titles as needed to reflect organizational plans.

Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Head of School	1	1	1	1	1
Head Teacher	1	1	1	1	1
Dean of student support			.5	1	1
Business manager			1	1	1
Lead teachers	5	8	10	11	15
Apprentice teachers	2.5	4	5	5.5	5.5
Teacher assistants	2.5	4	5	5.5	5.5
Specials teachers	1	1	1.75	2	2.5
Social worker	.25	.5	.5	.75	1
Intervention	1	1	1.5	1.5	2
Utility teacher				.5	.5

Data support				.5	.5
Maintenance	.25	.5	.5	.5	1
Outreach / consultant	.25	.25	.25	.25	.25
Office staff	1	1	1	1.5	2
Total FTEs at School	**15.75**	**22.25**	**29**	**34.5**	**39.75**

Network *(Experienced Operators Only)*
The table below been left blank because, as a new operator, it is inapplicable to us, but emails from ASD staff indicated that the prompts of the RFP template should be included regardless.

Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of elementary schools					
Number of middle schools					
Number of high schools					
Total schools					
Student enrollment					
Management Organization Positions					
[Specify]					
[Specify]					
[Specify]					
[Specify]					
[Specify]					
[Specify]					
[Specify]					
[Specify]					
Total back-office FTEs					
Elementary School Staff					
Principals					
Assistant Principals					
Add'l School Leadership Position 1 [Specify]					
Add'l School Leadership Position 2 [Specify]					
Add'l School Leadership Position 3					
Classroom Teachers (Core Subjects)					
Classroom Teachers (Specials)					
Student Support Position 1 [e.g., Social Worker]					
Student Support Position 2 [specify]					
Specialized School Staff 1 [specify]					
Specialized School Staff 2 [specify]					
Teacher Aides and Assistants					
School Operations Support Staff					

Total FTEs at elementary schools					
Middle School Staff					
Principals					
Assistant Principals					
Add'l School Leadership Position 1 [Specify]					
Add'l School Leadership Position 2 [Specify]					
Add'l School Leadership Position 3 [Specify]					
Classroom Teachers (Core Subjects)					
Classroom Teachers (Specials)					
Student Support Position 1 [e.g., Social Worker]					
Student Support Position 2 [specify]					
Specialized School Staff 1 [specify]					
Specialized School Staff 2 [specify]					
Teacher Aides and Assistants					
School Operations Support Staff					
Total FTEs at elementary schools					
High School Staff					
Principals					
Assistant Principals					
Deans					
Add'l School Leadership Position 1					
Add'l School Leadership Position 2					
Add'l School Leadership Position 3					
Classroom Teachers (Core Subjects)					
Classroom Teachers (Specials)					
Student Support Position 1 [e.g., Social Worker]					
Student Support Position 2 [specify]					
Specialized School Staff 1 [specify]					
Specialized School Staff 2 [specify]					
Teacher Aides and Assistants					
School Operations Support Staff					
Total FTEs at high schools					
Total network FTEs					

3. HUMAN RESOURCES

Libertas will be the home of teachers who are passionate about knowledge and about children, and who embrace the collaboration and refinement it takes to master the craft of teaching.

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(1) Describe your strategy, plans, and timeline for recruiting and hiring teachers. Explain key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to your school design.

(3) Explain how the relationship between the school's senior administrative team and the rest of the staff will be managed. Note the teacher-student ratio, as well as the ratio of total adults to students for a "typical" school.

(5) Explain how teachers will be supported, and developed. Describe the school's performance management system and process for teacher evaluation. Provide your teacher evaluation tool(s) as Attachment 7, as well as any supporting protocols or documentation.

Introduction to performance management, evaluation and selection processes

In the spirit of craftsmanship, the faculty should experience their management relationship and performance management systems as oriented toward coaching and growth. And they will feel part of a team – not just a team of 2 for their ~25 students, but ultimately a team of 50 for 530 students (in year 7). Faculty members will have individual and team performance goals tied to assessment and instructional data and classroom observations, all anchored in our teaching framework (described below). These systems will help ensure that at every level of our school, teachers know what to teach and why to teach it, are empowered with behavior management and teaching tools to let them do it, and can communicate clearly within our team and with our students and families to share student progress and mastery as a result of clearly identified learning aims.

Libertas has drafted a teacher and leader observation, feedback and evaluation model that draws heavily from the ASD's state-approved model and other best practice sources.[139] A working draft is included as Attachment 5/7; we would submit a refined version within a quarter after approval of our charter to allow ample time for review prior to school launch.

Our Head Teacher will maintain a dashboard summarizing key trends across observations tied to this monitoring tool, which the leadership team will use to prioritize training needs during periodic PD days and the summer. For example, the teacher model includes attributes around "support structures for independent student work," such as the individual work plans we have discussed. If our observations reflected a trend of students clearly ready to advance but not making adequate progress, we may focus PD time around exemplifying a teacher who does an especially good job helping students investing in their work plans.

In thinking about our faculty, we operate with the belief that you can't give what you don't have. And so we will look for, and reinforce among our teachers, attributes such as dedication and passion for urban education; intellectual curiosity, a life of the mind, and passion for truth (including specific content / Core Knowledge); models of striving for virtue; professional commitment to teaching as a craft – objective standards that allow for collaborative planning, but space for style and flexibility for the unknown, or in other words, "unity in essentials" and "structures that free" rather than radical and

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[139] In addition to ASD's model, ours incorporates elements from the KIPP Framework for Excellent Teaching, TN's general educator rubric, and components from Montessori schools that elucidate the teacher actions suited to our unique environment. We are also reviewing the National Teacher Leader Model Standards, which is factored into the TN Administrator Evaluation rubric.

isolating autonomy; orientation and skills in observation / "data collection" / "following the child" -- judging what children need based on what they say and do, which is more than the application of formulaic practices; etc. Please see the teacher model for more details. In addition to these general characteristics, we aim to achieve the right mix of skills and knowledge by recruiting about half of our teachers from urban education backgrounds, most of the remainder from Montessori backgrounds (ideally the candidates have both!), and finally a selected number of new teachers who wish to grow into this field. Other considerations in candidate screening, though not determinative, could include college degrees in content areas, scores on the short version MAP test that our students must take, and written responses to prompts such as our mission statement.[140] We must also be clear in selection and PD about old habits that teachers may need to un-learn, or at least use differently.

Along with this key teacher model, as mentioned in our goals, performance reflection and professional development includes feedback from our periodic surveys: these include for *faculty* (based on the Gallup Q12 model), *families* (an in-house compilation from best practices across several school organizations, including tied to the ASD's parent survey), and likely for our older *students* (based in Ferguson's work with the Gates foundation, which indicated that in successful classrooms, students report that students and teacher respect each other, people behave, focus on learning, and are comfortable correcting mistakes).

Annual cycle of teacher selection, development, and related processes

The Libertas teaching framework, along with our annual goals, will be utilized at all junctures of our hiring, performance management and professional development process:

A. *Recruitment*: We will advertise for teachers in a way that highlights the unique knowledge and skills desired, and the development opportunities we offer. Please see the Incubation Year plan for an outline of the annual teacher recruitment/selection timeline.

B. *Selection*: All candidates will submit a resume, cover letter, and complete a questionnaire. After review by the Head of School and/or Head Teacher, candidates will advance to a phone screen, then in-person interview and sample lesson (both of these may be done live or via video, and both would also include the potential division chairman), and finally reference checks. All of our selection materials (questionnaire, interview templates, reference checks questions), will emphasize mindset first, including questions about dedication to urban education; orientation toward collaboration; passion for goodness, truth and beauty; commitment to modeling virtue; content / Core Knowledge familiarity; interest and knowledge in developmentally-responsive / Montessori learning; and related attributes. To gauge skills and knowledge, we may also provide a sample unit plan and ask what kind of lesson a teacher might plan for it. We will look for key behaviors in teacher sample lessons and/or review of lesson videos. And of course all hires are subject to TBI background checks.

C. *External content and Core Knowledge training*: Libertas teachers will participate in numerous Core Knowledge training options, including everyone in the "Getting Started" video training series, all elementary teachers in CKLA "turnkey kit" and related trainings [141], selectively in CK leadership conferences, and more. Furthermore, through our proposed affiliation with the Team Challenge Foundation Academies national network of Core Knowledge schools serving diverse student populations, we will also have access to ongoing online collaboration, a national committee of

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[140] Data from the National Center for Education Statistics reveal, frighteningly, that only 31% of people with Bachelor's degrees are fully proficient in reading! Hence MAP and written responses as filters for communication ability. Also, though exceptions of course exist, people with content degrees (e.g. English, Mathematics, Arts, Sciences) generally have higher aptitude scores than those with teaching degrees.

[141] Many CKLA training materials are already available for free online: http://www.engageny.org/resource/professional-development-turnkey-kit-ela-p-2-overview

experts for consultation, and their national conference. Libertas will participate in the annual CK site visit for feedback from national experts, and work toward becoming a nationally recognized Core Knowledge school.

D. *External Montessori training:* Because teaching in our personalized learning environment will be so unique, it is important that all of our teachers have appropriate development. All primary and elementary level lead teachers* will have completed (or, in cases like multi-year programs, begun) accredited American Montessori Society training, covering philosophy, child development science, student observation, and instructional materials. Programs typically range from 6 weeks for primary to two summers for elementary; both types also include observation and feedback throughout the year by Montessori experts. Libertas is in talks with nationally recognized teacher training center – Montessori Education Institute of North America – located in Jackson, TN, which also is approved by the TN Higher Education Commission. In exchange for a 3-year commitment, we intend and have budgeted to sponsor this training for our new teachers (a $10,000 value). Furthermore, we are also investigating the possibility of working with this center to become an alternate-route teacher-licensing provider under TN's revised certification standards. External training will be scheduled so as not to conflict with critical in-house planning and rehearsals. (*Apprentices and aides will be encouraged to receive the external training for advancement, and will at minimum receive on-site training from their lead teachers and our Head Teacher. New apprentices in Teach for America training until mid-July would participate in subsequent summers, or, if identified a year in advance as per our ongoing discussions with TFA, during the summer before their graduation.)

E. *Other skills trainings and school visits*: Libertas' founders are veterans of quality trainings from organizations like KIPP, Teach Like a Champion, Research for Better Teaching, and many more. We have also benefited immensely from visiting dozens of the highest-performing urban schools around the country. We will constantly be on the lookout for possible quality training and school visit opportunities for our teachers. Our budget includes an annual allocation for such.

F. *Summer in-house PD*: For the 1-2 weeks prior to school starting (more time for new teachers, less for returners), our faculty work together on curricular plans, culture and routines, and foster a spirit of inquiry for the year. Please see more on in-house PD strands below.

G. *Goal setting*: Every faculty member will pre-assess him or herself on our framework and work with their supervisor to set both outcome goals (cascaded from our schoolwide performance goals) and areas of practice to develop.

H. *Ongoing observation* (self, peer and supervisory): Teacher practice in general and tied to specific individual priorities will be monitored for reflection and fine-tuning through periodic video and self-review, peer observations (to be scheduled during work periods with the help of rotating our junior teachers / fellows / substitutes), and supervisor observations (alternating mix of Head Teacher, Head of School, and division chairmen). We will mix frequent, short, informal observations (every classroom will have some leadership presence once per 1-2 weeks for ~5 minutes) with periodic longer observations (45+ minutes, 1-2 times per term), prioritizing teachers that are new to the school / division.

I. *Weekly planning and review*: As discussed above, teachers will have a couple of hours per week for team meetings, generally during simultaneous enrichment classes, to plan and review. Lesson plans (including individual student work plans at the elementary level, such as reading group times, math facts, etc) will be created for each class together by lead and supporting teachers. Lesson plans for Monday through Friday will be posted on our intranet by those teams one week in advance for review by division chairmen or Head Teacher, who will provide any comments by the intervening Wednesday so that teachers can use time that afternoon to make final revisions.

J. *Regular supervisor one-on-one check-ins*: Every faculty member will meet at least bi-weekly with their immediate supervisor (e.g. co-teacher with lead teacher, though these individuals will be in

constant conversation; lead teacher with division/department chairman or Head Teacher; etc.) to discuss any issues encountered, set and monitor goals, and so on. In addition, every faculty member will have a monthly scheduled opportunity for a formal one-on-one conversation with the headmaster. However, we hope this is merely a fallback in a school that will encourage an atmosphere of open dialog and candor regardless of rank.

K. *Quarterly data days*: Please see the subsection on Data-Driven Instruction for details.
L. *Midyear review*: All staff will participate in a midyear performance review to formally check on progress toward goals and make second half adjustments. The process includes narrative reviews with reference to our framework by self and supervisor.
M. *End of year review*: All staff will have an end-of year review in late spring that contributes to the decision to offer return or not. In addition to the self-reflection and supervisor evaluation, there will likely be a 360 component (which will be for developmental purposes only) done on a rotating schedule with all staff members getting feedback at least once in a 3-year cycle.

PD Strands

Culture: We will review the foundations of our school culture, and spend significant time developing and practicing minute-by-minute procedures for key transitions, as discussed above, as well as scenarios of helping students through problems. We believe in the importance of procedures becoming "muscle memory" for our teachers if it is to become so for our students. School leaders will participate equally in this process as models of learning.

Life of the mind / Content & Core Knowledge: Because you can't give what you don't have, we will make time especially during summer PD but also throughout the year to highlight opportunities for teachers of all divisions and content areas to share quality content with each other to encourage a spirit of wonder and passion for learning, whether that be reading poetry, a nature study walk, or similar. We will also conduct faculty book studies on works of enduring value.

Curriculum and assessment planning: Our aforementioned curricular leadership team will spend time throughout the summer creating the overall pacing plan and model units. During the all-staff PD, these units and assessments will be reviewed with other teachers (potentially using CCSS sample performance tasks, guidelines from *Understanding By Design,* or protocols from the National School Reform Faculty), who will then have time and support to work on their own lessons. As mentioned, this will also involve CK training strands.

Norming lessons, observation, and student work: In line with our spirit of craftsmanship and emphasis on authentic student assessment, PD time will include viewing and norming around student work, teacher lesson videos, and lesson plan enhancement and role-playing.

Dual teacher approach

All primary and lower elementary classrooms will have a lead teacher and an associate. Associates will be split between apprentices and aides. (Grade-level chairs will have apprentices and/or other course relief so that they may conduct their observations.) Apprentices are new teachers on the path to becoming lead teachers within a couple of years. Apprentices will receive all the PD teachers discussed above (included external training), as well as individual coaching from our Head Teacher, lead teachers and division leaders. All co-teaching pairs will participate in PD sessions about effective collaboration, covering elements like planning, discipline, grading, environment, and teaching modes - e.g. how associates can monitor the classroom and check on individual needs while the lead teacher delivers lessons. We will also cover conflict resolution.

Our dual-teacher model is one key part of our plan for long-term retention. Our experience is that many high-performing urban charter schools have high turnover rates for teachers, from 15-20% annually at one good school to as much as 40% at another. This is based on a number of factors; based

on our personal review of large quantities of proprietary teacher survey data at KIPP and another large school network, and on anecdotal testimony from the head of one of Memphis' pre-eminent teacher pipeline organizations, given the relatively competitive teacher pay market in Memphis, the two key factors seem to be (1) job stress and concern over sustainability as teachers have families, and (2) support to grow as a professional. Though we understand and respect that teachers' lives and goals change and jobs may need to change along with them, we want to be a school where great educators can work and grow long-term, especially including life cycles of having their own children.

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(8) Does your organization have a proactive succession plan? Please provide a detailed description.

(9) Explain how the school and organization intend to identify the need to address unsatisfactory leadership or teacher performance, as well as leadership/teacher changes and turnover.

Retaining high-performers; management; succession

To address concerns about professional growth opportunities, we offer: The rich array of PD described above, including financial support for external training (for a service commitment); Apprentice teacher opportunities to grow into lead teachers, and then leads to division chairman (as a phase-in school with a 13-year expansion plan, we will have expansion positions on an annual basis for some time to come); Division/department chairmen will serve on the leadership team; Lead and even in some circumstances apprentice teachers will participate on an ad-hoc basis in the leadership team, as well as earn privileges (and stipends) like running extracurricular programs.

A few other elements will attempt to address the question of life-cycle sustainability: Because of our chosen curriculum, teachers will not need to spend tons of time, as they do in many schools, creating lots of materials or plans; instead we will guide their energies toward relationships and guiding children with observation and feedback through our coherent curriculum. Apprentice teachers become high-quality backups for lead teachers who need family leave. We also plan to have within the first few years (funds permitting) at least one part-time "bench" position that would allow veteran teachers to work a limited schedule, and in turn provide high-quality coverage for regular teachers who need extended maternity leave or other breaks for their families. We also hope to obtain support for our teachers through eager utilization of interns from University of Memphis (which requires all students to intern), Rhodes, Lemoyne Owen and others. A big opportunity will be for teachers to enroll their Pre-K age children in part of our program either for free if eligible or at a reasonable fee (space permitting and subject to eligibility). Our maternity and paternity leave policies (time off with partial pay) will match or exceed the best provided by public schools in the area. For transparency, we acknowledge that affording these last three benefits in particular requires a tradeoff in average salaries. We believe our teachers will embrace this tradeoff.

In all, we hope to achieve overall retention of 75%, 85% of those invited back, and, for continuity for our multi-grade classes, that a majority of teachers stay with their class for at least 3 years (or similar goal).

Succession: Succession in our lead teacher positions is provided for through the apprentice position. Likewise, division chairmen should generally come from among lead teachers. For senior leadership positions, our co-founders both intend to serve in the school for the long-term. But their close work should provide a degree of cross training that will enable them to fill-in for each other when needed. If we phase-in additional grades, we will look to identify a candidate from among division chairmen to groom for the Head Teacher position that will be required.

Unsatisfactory performance: Based on years of experience in personnel management, our Head of School will ensure that our faculty handbook includes, and we follow, best practices for hiring as well

as managing performance issues or other potential reasons for termination. As an at-will employer, we will provide offer letters that outline terms (subject to change with appropriate notice) rather than contracts. Employees (including leaders) will have regular evaluations and feedback as detailed above, meaning that no one should be surprised about their status. Generally, employees will have opportunities to rectify performance through written improvement plan goals and timelines. Separation letters will be utilized as needed, as will legal counsel. Terminations will include exit procedures to ensure security through handover of keys, changing of passwords to electronic systems containing private information, and so on.

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(2) Outline the proposed school's salary ranges and employment benefits for all employees, as well as any incentives or reward structures that may be part of the compensation system. Explain the school's strategy for retaining high-performing teachers.

Our *compensation structure* will include (1) a base rate for overall experience level*; (2) a retention premium for years of experience at Libertas; (3) stipends / premiums for additional responsibilities (e.g. division chairman, model teacher), for which teachers will generally apply, awarded based on both quantitative and qualitative factors (e.g. student outcomes, student surveys, 360 feedback); (4) annual awards based on peer recognition; (5) attendance bonus. Full details of our compensation model will be included in the faculty handbook, but we include here a few notes about this structure. *The base rate is meant to provide a degree of lifecycle predictability for teachers who are performing at a sufficiently adequate level to stay, if not advance. But merely base pay for overall experience in our model would be slightly below market; teachers would need some combination of the other performance-linked elements to meet or exceed market average.

Our average pay rates are benchmarked to SCS and ASD.[142] We expect lead teachers to average a competitive $50,000; we anticipate a mix of some teachers with 20 or more years of experience, or younger teachers with higher stipends and/or awards, in the low $60's, offset by some lead teachers just a few years into their career, or even emerging from our apprentice program. New apprentices will make around $40,000, slightly below market average to reflect the lower planning responsibilities. Our rates are also roughly equivalent to some other charter schools, and generally exceed those of the private schools that currently offer programs most like ours.[143]

Benefits: Please see a more detailed discussion in our budget narrative. In brief, we have budgeted among the more generous employee benefits levels, including equal rates of coverage for any family type, and a high employer contribution rate (equal to the ASD and exceeding SCS). And in addition to the required pension contributions, we will provide a match up to 5% for non-pension employees' 401k.

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(4) Outline the procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel, including conducting criminal background checks.

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[142] cf. http://www.scsk12.org/SCS/pdf_files/Salary-Schedule.pdf and http://www.teateachers.org/memphis-city-salary-schedule, as well as the ASD's teacher compensation model from 2013. SCS teachers start around 42,000, reach the low 50's by year 10, and low 60's by year 20. ASD teachers start in the low 40's, but the midpoint – tied more to performance than just time – is closer to the 60s, and peaks in the low 80's. Though our model differs in some ways, such as peak pay levels not being as high, we acknowledge the ASD for its sophisticated work on teacher compensation.

[143] Based on personal communications with other charter and private school leaders. In fact our teacher pay would be more than $15,000 more than that at one private school in Memphis with a Montessori program.

(7) Explain how staffing plans for non-classroom staff will ensure high-quality teacher support, family and student support, smooth school operations, and compliance with all applicable Tennessee and Achievement School District policies and procedures.

(10) Does your organization utilize a Human Resources Information System (HRIS)? If so, what is the name of the system you are / will be using?

(11) Will your organization require additional support (from third parties or consultants) for core Human Resources functions (payroll, benefits administration, employee relations, etc.)? If yes, please detail the areas that will require additional support and the costs and criteria for selecting such services. If not, how will these functions be managed?

As mentioned in the Leadership section, the Head of School will oversee all non-teaching staff and functions. This includes an office manager (and eventually additional clerk) to handle record keeping and transactional communication with families; a part-time outreach coordinator to assist with recruiting our hard-to-reach population; a part-time data staffer to support analysis efforts; maintenance staff to ensure a clean, safe space during the day; and a business manager who will deal with financial, operations and compliance matters (and oversee some of the subsidiary support staff). Please see the Services section, as well as Operations and Budget Narrative attachments, for more information about our plans to outsource several functions in the years prior to hiring our business manager, including payroll and benefits administration. We will select a provider based on cost (a tentative budget has been specified), performance history, familiarity with similar organizations, references, and opportunity for neighborhood investment; this last factor explains our preference for collaborating with the ASD's emerging Frayser-based CMO.

(6) Explain how the school leader will be supported, developed, and evaluated each school year. Provide, as Attachment 8, your leadership evaluation tool(s), we well as any supporting protocols or documentation.

Please see the Leadership section above for discussion of leadership support, and the Governance section below for leader evaluation, and the attached teacher and leader guidance tool.
As a new operator, none of the following items apply to us.

SCALE STRATEGY *(EXPERIENCED OPERATORS ONLY)*
(1) Describe the steps that you will take to scale your model to new sites, including the people involved and the resources contributed both by the parent organization and the new schools.

(2) If your organization operates schools in other states, compare your efforts to scale operations to Tennessee to past scale efforts in other states.

(3) Describe your plan for embedding the fundamental features of the model that you described in the transformational change section in the new schools that you plan to open.

(4) Explain any shared or centralized support services the network organization will provide to schools in Tennessee.

(5) Describe the structure, specific services to be provided, the cost of those services, how costs will be allocated among schools, and specific service goals. Please also include how the organization will measure successful delivery of these services. In the case of a governing board proposing to contract with a management organization, service goals should be outlined in the term sheet and draft contract provided later in Attachment 14. Note that Tennessee law does not allow charter schools to contract for the management or operation of the school with a for-profit entity.

(6) Using the table below, summarize school- and organization-level decision-making responsibilities as they relate to key functions, including curriculum, professional development, culture, staffing, etc.

Function	Network/Management Organization Decision-Making	School Decision-Making
Performance Goals		
Curriculum		
Professional Development		
Data Management and Interim Assessments		
Promotion Criteria		
Culture		
Budgeting, Finance, and Accounting		
Student Recruitment		
School Staff Recruitment and Hiring		
H/R Services (payroll, benefits, etc.)		
Development/ Fundraising		
Community Relations		
IT		
Facilities Management		
Vendor Management / Procurement		
Student Support Services		
Other operational services, if applicable		

(7) Provide, as Attachment 9, the following organization charts: Year 1 network as a whole (including both network management and schools within the network); Year 3 network as a whole; Year 5 network as a whole

The organization charts should clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of – and lines of authority and reporting among – the governing board, staff, any related bodies (such as advisory bodies or parent/teacher councils), and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the schools. If the school intends to contract with a charter management organization or other non-profit education management provider, clearly show the provider's role in the organizational structure of the school, explaining how the relationship between the governing board and school administration will be managed.

4. STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND ENROLLMENT

ASD charter schools may only enroll students geographically zoned to attend an ASD-eligible school (on the Priority List, as designated by the Tennessee Department of Education, found [HERE](#)). Like all public schools, public charter schools must be open to any such child, regardless of that child's race, gender, citizenship, or need for accommodations or special education services. Thus, recruitment and enrollment practices should demonstrate a commitment to providing all students equal opportunity to attend the school, and help schools avoid even the appearance of creating barriers to entry for eligible students.

(4) Complete the table below for the proposed school to open in 2015-16. Remove any rows for grades the school will not serve as needed in each table. Experienced Operators applying for multiple schools must complete one enrollment summary table for each school opening in fall 2015.

(5) Describe the rationale for the number of students and grade levels served in year one and the basis for the growth plan indicated.

Grade	Yr 1:15/16	Yr 2: 16/17	Yr 3: 17/18	Yr 4: 18/19	Year 5: 19/20	Scale [144]: 21/22
PK3	0	0	0	0	0	26
PK4	30	32	32	32	32	60
K	65	65	65	65	65	65
1	32	65	65	65	65	65
2		32	65	65	65	65
3			32	65	65	65
4				32	65	65
5					32	65
6						65

Enrollment, attendance, inclusion goals
Enrollment of students with disabilities and those eligible for free/reduced-price lunch averages equal to or greater than the mean across the feeder pattern.
Student persistence / re-enrollment >= 3-year rolling average of the feeder pattern.
Please see Special Populations section for additional goals about special education enrollment

We hope to work closely with the ASD during the post-authorization phase to explore an optimal structure. We could phase-in to a neighborhood elementary school, or offer a fresh start PK-6

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[144] As alluded to earlier in the application, assuming good performance and continued interest and need in our unique program, we would plan to seek an expansion on our same site for a small secondary program, reaching full scale by 2027 with approximately 45-65 per grade between 7th and 12th for a total of about 340 additional students.

elementary school if the district can help identify a comprehensive plan (including possible consolidation) in which we serve a neighborhood with a high concentration of priority schools, available public facility (including possible co-location), and the total seats offered through our and other schools are proportional to the need.

Regardless, we plan to phase-in annually, starting with PreK-4, Kindergarten and 1st grade, because of our unique learning environment. Learning from peers in multi-age settings requires by definition the presence of older students who have both a depth of knowledge and skills as well as well-established independent learning habits. And just as with any school, parents should have the opportunity to become familiar with the program and affirm participation. Our phase-in should make our program universally accessible, as the gradually established culture should help new children to acclimate. (Depending on the progress of this acculturation, we may consider enrolling additional numbers of students beyond any zone-required backfilling and/or more than one grade level.) Because we will be without the advantage of experienced older students for our founding class, we will provide even smaller class sizes and teacher:student ratios for those initial groups – between 18 to 22 students – until older students establish leadership in classrooms, which can then more consistently be in the low-to-mid-20s per classroom (still with two adults till upper elementary). We do have a vision for birth-to-three preparation that we hope to make available through partnership with other nearby early childhood care providers in the area, as discussed below; if successful, this would create a pipeline of neighborhood children who have experienced quality, aligned birth-to-three care. The enrollment model above shows the "conservative" scenario, in which we do not enroll 3 year-olds in early years, and instead have a larger Kindergarten class; if we receive the grant we have in mind, we would likely switch to a ratio of roughly 25%/35%/40% children in grades PK3, PK4 and Kinder, respectively.

Overall, the numbers in the enrollment table represent what we believe is a reasonable middle scenario based on rough analysis of our proposed neighborhood, including existing school sizes and the rate at which families are opting-out of those zones. In fact, our ideal scenario would be about somewhat larger, with 40 children in PreK4 and 80 in each "elementary grade" (excluding the founding 1st grade class) over the first 5 years; once we reached capacity, we would add 35 in PK3 and pull back to 70 in all older grades. Our goal table above reflects retention equal to or better than the neighborhood. The Head of School is primarily responsible for managing all enrollment related matters.

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(1) For New Start Model Schools: Explain the plan for student recruitment and marketing that will provide equal access to interested ASD students and families. Specifically, describe the plan for outreach to: families in poverty; academically low-achieving students; students with disabilities; and other youth at risk of academic failure. Please indicate if you plan to focus your student recruitment efforts in specific communities or selected Priority School attendance areas. *If you plan to apply as a Phase-In or Full Transformation model school, please put "n/a."* (A) What enrollment targets will you set and who will be responsible for monitoring progress towards these targets? What is your target re-enrollment rate for each year? How did you come to this determination? Outline specific targets in the table below. *If you do not plan to apply as New Start model school, please put n/a*

(2) For Phase-In or Full Transformation Model Schools: Explain the plan for student and parent engagement in the school turnaround, especially how the school plans to ensure parents and students do not opt out of the new school. Describe how this plan will successfully transition and retain students who currently attend or are zoned to attend the school(s) being replaced. Provide a detailed description of the plan to gain parent and community support. *If you plan to apply as a New Start model school, please put "n/a."* (A) What systems will you put in place to ensure that staff members are knowledgeable about all legal enrollment requirements pertaining to special populations and the servicing of a zoned population of students?

> (3) Describe the student recruitment plan once your school has opened. In what ways will it be different than your pre-opening year, in terms of the strategies, activities, events, persons responsible, and milestones?

Marketing and recruitment

Because application space constraints preclude repetition of material, please see many related details in our Parent and Community Involvement section.

Our close relationships with other school providers and neighborhood leaders in Frayser – which needs more high-quality seats in general, and a greater range of school types – means that we are positioned to help develop a sphere of quality, neighborhood-based choices for families. We hope this can ultimately transcend the dichotomy of zoned versus lottery-based schools, turning Frayser from an area whose schools currently lose ~20% of their students to opting-out into one that draws families.

School-based outreach: We intend to retain currently zoned school students by working as closely as possible with our matched school after the announcement. We will send informational materials home with families, have a noninvasive presence at the school during dropoff/pickup times or other school events, and invite families to meetings and discussions featuring including food and childcare. We will ask families to complete enrollment forms throughout this period so we can track progress and adjust our outreach. As mentioned, we have already initiated conversations with leaders of 5+ other schools in the area about creating an open enrollment process and shared transportation network across Frayser schools; this will ensure that families have not only a great school in their zone but also the opportunity to easily find and access the best fit choice across the neighborhood.

Community-based outreach: Because of the high opt-out rate, we cannot expect to reach all relevant families through existing schools alone. We plan to work with the ASD and SCS comprehensive planning staff to get the zone maps and contact information that will allow us to organize door-to-door outreach, phone banking, mailings and other broad-based outreach. None of these alone will reach everyone, but all of them together should help reach families. We also plan to reach out through local media like 1600 AM radio, posters in the dozens of local businesses with which we are familiar, through our community-wide event that we will advertise, and announcements via existing neighborhood institutions such as churches and clubs. We have spoken on numerous occasions with the pastors and leaders of these entities and many are enthusiastic about helping us. Lastly, in addition to our overall program's appeal, we believe that our expanded Pre-K program will be an appealing option for many families. In addition to being a priority for our Head of School, this outreach work will be shared by the part-time community outreach personnel we will have (ideally through a partnership with Americorps VISTA), as well as the office manager we will hire in the spring.

Certain obvious changes would apply to our recruitment in all later years, including students entering through sibling preference and zoned students matriculating from PreK. We would continue to also recruit students from other neighborhood PreK programs, expanding our engagement to other centers. Additionally we plan to expand the role of our outreach staff member over time.

Based on our Head of School's former service at the ASD, we are uniquely knowledgeable about the ASD's enrollment priorities and functions. We will participate in ASD's ongoing trainings and train all relevant school staff who participate in enrollment activities to ensure practice is in accord.

5. BOARD GOVERNANCE

> (1) Explain the governance philosophy that will guide the board, including the nature and extent of involvement of key stakeholder groups.

> (2) Describe the governance structure of the proposed school when the board is fully composed, including the primary roles of the governing board and how it will interact with the principal/head of school and any advisory bodies. 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.

Libertas School of Memphis is a Tennessee nonprofit corporation, and will operate as a tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) organization (application pending), with the requisite communications and access for open public meetings laws, Board of Trustees, and so on. The Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the school remains focused on its mission while fulfilling all provisions of the charter, including sound governance and compliance with all applicable laws, fiscally-responsible business operation, and exemplary academic performance. The primary roles of the Board are to ratify organizational direction – especially key policies, clear goals and performance expectations, and the budget; delegate the implementation and management of the program to the Head of School and faculty; and regularly review performance to provide accountability.

Details about the Board – e.g. number of members, duration of terms, duties of officers, quorums, committee procedures, ethics requirements and conflict of interest disclosure, etc. – can be found in the appended bylaws and other documents. Developed with the assistance of the TN Charter School Center, as well as a national charter school consulting firm (Ed Tec) and another charter school organization (Team CFA), all governance plans are in accord with the best practice of nonprofit charter schools in Tennessee and nationwide. "Govern as stewards rather than as stakeholders; Establish organizational purpose; Exercise fiduciary responsibility; Delegate authority and ensure accountability; Speak and act as one; Spend the Board's time only on things that matter; Commit resources and time to developing good governance." [145] In brief, our board will have between 4 and 11 members (current membership is 6), all of who serve 2-year terms, except two of the founding members who will serve 3-year terms to ensure continuity. The board will only act with a quorum, and their gatherings and communications shall comport with open meetings laws as explained below.

Though still in development, our board at full capacity will likely have the following committees: Finance, for detailed review of school budgets and financial policies, regular financial statements and audits; Governance, for vetting new board members, addressing issues of conduct or ethics for current board members, and committee matters; Grievance, to address employee and family issues as discussed below; and School/leader performance review, for detailed analysis of the performance of the organization and its executive to our annual goals.

Under the oversight of the Board and its officers and committees, and within the guidelines and rules provided by federal, state and district authorities, Libertas School shall have the power to develop a budget; contract for services and goods; select personnel and set compensation levels and evaluation practices; procure insurance; obtain property, furniture, fixtures, equipment and supplies for school purposes; accept and expend donations, gifts, or grants of any kind in accord with conditions prescribed by the donor (as long as they are not contrary to any law or charter provision). Libertas shall always comply with applicable policies, and can provide copies of its official documents as needed. In addition, we will ensure our school's long-term financial viability through healthy financial practices such as adopting a financial policies & procedures / controls manual, a budgeting process, annual independent

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[145] *"The Seven Absolutely Universal, Non-Negotiable, Unchanging Principles of Good Charter School Governance."* Brian L. Carpenter. National Charter Schools Institute. www.NationalCharterSchools.org. Accessed 1/14. This citation and some other elements in the governance section are courtesy Frayser Community Schools.

audit, appropriate segregation of duties, and clear roles for school staff and Board. The treasurer / finance committee will review detailed budget plans and monthly financial statements (e.g. budget to actual, income statement, balance sheet, cash flow statement), to be ratified by the full board.

In addition to these financial review procedures, the Board focuses on working with the Head of School to set and monitor annual school performance goals, as well as rigorously evaluate the Head of School's performance. These are among the primary responsibilities and instruments of the Board, since the Head of School supervises other personnel who interact with parents and students each day. At each meeting of the Board, the Head of School will provide a report or dashboard that includes regular updates on the organization's goals, such as achievement, enrollment, attendance, and stakeholder satisfaction. In addition, the Head of School will complete and submit a detailed annual self-evaluation, the review of which will be led by the board chairman. Before each new year begins, the board will ratify goals for the organization and the Head of School. Overall performance across academic, business and governance aspects will be reviewed comprehensively through a board self-evaluation and scorecard.

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(7) Describe the board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest. Provide as Attachment 12 the board's proposed Bylaws, Code of Ethics, and Conflict of Interest policy.

(8) Identify any existing relationships that could pose actual or perceived conflicts if the application is approved; discuss specific steps that the board will take to avoid any actual conflicts and to mitigate perceived conflicts.

The Board will comport itself with high ethical standards, including all members annually acknowledging their ethical requirement to act for the good of the school, and disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest. No conflicts of interest are apparent at this time. Please see Attachment 12, which includes bylaws, ethics, and conflict of interest language, including steps to address them.

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(3) Please provide board member information in the provided Board Member Template (provide as Attachment 10); at least 50% of the board for SY 2015-2016 must be identified by the interview (June 2014).

(4) Provide, as Attachment 11, a completed and signed Board Member Information Sheet for each proposed Board member as well as the board member's resume.

Please see attachments 10 and 11 for detailed information about our Board of Trustees. The Board is composed of an array of qualified persons with appropriate knowledge, skills and stakeholder relationships to ensure the robust supervision of a charter public school, aligned with our mission. Current Board Trustees include mostly lifelong or long-time residents of Memphis, business owners and leaders, financial experts, experience in fundraising and financing, an educational expert, and a community-based nonprofit leader, among other attributes.

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(10) Describe the kinds of orientation or training new board members will receive, and what kinds of ongoing development will existing board members receive. The plan for training and development should include a timetable, specific topics to be addressed, and requirements for participation.

The Board is participating in preliminary training in the spring of 2014 as we prepare our charter application, with the support of experts associated with the TN Charter School Center and their

consultants at Ed Tec and High Bar. Topics include governance versus management responsibilities, school mission, financial procedures, governance best practices, board policies (as they become established), organization goals, and more. With these resources, orientation of new members will be the special responsibility of the board Chairman, governance committee once established, and Head of School. Board members new and old will be encouraged to participate in school events as well. Refresher or additional training will be provided to these and new members through this or other avenues on an annual basis, likely associated with our annual meeting each spring.

> (5) If the current applicant team does not include the full founding board, explain how and when the additional board members will be identified.
>
> (9) Describe plans for increasing the capacity of the governing board. How will the board expand and develop over time?

Both in terms of quantity and in skillsets represented, our Board presently has adequate capacity, aside from the parent representative, who will be added in accord with TCA §49-13-104 (3). Still, our Head of School and Board members continue to evaluate possible additional candidates for possible future membership and committee service. Our board vetting process includes interviews with multiple people on our team to inventory skills and alignment, and informal background reference checks. Beyond formal membership, the board will be interested in stakeholder perspectives, solicited through comment, and through scrutiny of our regular surveys.

> (12) Explain the process that the school will follow should a parent or student have an objection to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school.

Grievance procedures are discussed in the Family and Faculty handbooks. Parents, students, or faculty members should speak with the teacher or faculty member with whom they have a concern, and anything that cannot be addressed should be escalated to the head of the division and/or ultimately the Head of School – all of whom should respond to families within days. Grievances that cannot be resolved with good faith, or those pertaining to the Head of School or with school policies not faithfully implemented, can be considered by submitting a formal written statement to the Board, which will address it within a month, or during public comment at board meetings, as appropriate. The district authorizer also has grievance policies for certain issues, as addressed in the family handbook.

> (11) Describe any advisory bodies or councils to be formed, including the roles and duties of those bodies. Describe the planned composition; the strategy for achieving that composition; the role of parents, students, and teachers (if applicable); and the reporting structure as it relates to the school's governing body and leadership.

Aside from formal governance activities, Libertas School seeks the insights and collaboration of related professionals and other community members whose schedules or duties may not permit membership in the full Board (either because their available capacity can not meet its requirements or to avoid disclosed, perceived (though not deemed real) conflicts of interest). While some persons may be asked to serve on committees of the Board of Trustees, others may be asked to serve on an Advisory Board – an honorific, informal body that meets irregularly or perhaps only in small groups to discuss practical matters of school operation, with no imputation for governance. At present, the Advisory Board membership would include a former MCS principal who is a current leadership trainer; an expert

in the finance and compliance of Pre-K programs; and a person with public policy, historical research, publishing and curriculum design experience that is the spouse of our proposed Head of School. Lastly, the Head of School will also regularly hold open-door sessions for parents and school community members to have coffee and conversation about topics of the day; these would be publicized to parents in advance.

A key relationship that is relevant to governance is our proposed affiliation with Team Challenge Foundation Academies ("Team CFA"), the aforementioned network of Core Knowledge schools. The relationship is purely philanthropic, with Team CFA providing resources and collaboration opportunities to member schools in exchange for a commitment to certain academic, business and government practices, which are reviewed annually by Team CFA. Team CFA is not a CMO and does not take funds from member schools. A copy of the proposed affiliate agreement is appended to this application.[146]

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(6) If this application is being submitted by an existing non-profit organization respond to the following (put "n/a" if not applicable): Will the existing non-profit board govern the new school, or has the school formed a new non-profit corporation governed by a separate board? If the non-profit's current board will govern the charter school, what steps have been taken to transform its board membership, mission, and bylaws to assume its new duties? Describe the plan and timeline for completing the transition and orienting the board to its new duties. If a new board has been formed, describe what, if anything, its ongoing relationship to the existing non-profit's board will be.

These questions are not applicable because Libertas School is a new non-profit organization.

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(13) What goals will be established for the board and how will board members be held accountable? Outline the key expectations for board members. What actions would trigger removal from the board and under what process?

Our Board of Trustees will monitor performance toward all of the goals mentioned in this application, including the academic, culture, and enrollment indicators listed above. The Board will also have the following provisional goals for organizational governance.

Goal	Purpose	Outcome measure
Board governance		
Satisfactory annual board self-evaluation	Overall board accountability	Passing score (scale TBD, weighted score covering finance, governance, oversight)
Head of School goals set by year end	Clear management plan	Completed goals by 5/30
Financial health & compliance		
Clean audit	Independent verification of financial health	Audit "without qualification" or material findings
Audit resolution rate	Internal controls	Any findings resolved by next year's report
Positive operating income annually	Overall financial health	Positive operating income 6/30
Meet budgeted enrollment goals	Leading revenue indicator	Enrollment 100% of budget by first reporting period

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[146] Team CFA does offer certain below-market facility financing options to member schools, which would entail a kind of payment, but at this time that is not an option Libertas intends to pursue.

Maintain industry-standard, sustainable financial position for cash and debt	Overall financial health	Current ratio / working capital and debt service coverage ratio: 1.1+
Always have one month of cash available	Cash flow monitoring	30+ days unrestricted cash on hand each month
Meet authorizer overall performance requirements	Compliance	Overall score 15+ of 19 on ASD performance framework

With these and other goals in mind, the Board will hold itself and the overall organization accountable through a regular process of review performance to goals. Many indicators will be tracked at each meeting and/or quarterly, but comprehensive and formal evaluation will occur each year, coinciding with the Head of School evaluation discussed earlier. Individual Trustees are expected to conduct themselves in accord with the specific responsibilities outlined in the bylaws as well as the general expectations reflected in the aforementioned training. Procedures for board member removal will be handled in accord with the bylaws and overseen by the chairman or other officer as needed.

6. INCUBATION YEAR DEVELOPMENT

(1) Provide a detailed start-up plan as well as specific organizational goals for the planning year (SY 2014-2015) to ensure that the school is ready for a successful launch in fall 2015. Using the template provided, outline key activities, responsible parties, and milestones and submit as Attachment 13.

(2) Please describe the plans for leadership training and development of selected leader during the incubation year prior to school opening and how these plans support your year 0 goals. If partnering with an organization, please briefly describe the main components of the training program.

As per the RFP, please see attachment 13 for school startup goals and plans.

Leadership training and development: In addition to their professional backgrounds detailed above, our founding co-leaders are both currently in training programs to prepare them to effectively lead Libertas. Bob Nardo is an Education Entrepreneurs Fellow (EEF) with the TN Charter School Center. The EEF is an individually customized, yearlong school leadership fellowship for a small cohort of accomplished and experienced leaders. The program features in-depth seminars from national experts on topics tied to school leadership competencies,[147] observations and residencies in high-performing schools, individual goal-setting and coaching, and board development support. Our school observations and residencies include both high-performing "no-excuses" charter schools, but also schools implementing similar programs in urban environments: Montessori charter schools include a second-year school in the south side of Chicago, a third-year in the Bronx, NY; a fourth+ year school in Baltimore, a startup charter school led by a former KIPP teacher in Austin, TX, a longtime public Montessori school in Jackson, TN, and numerous private Montessori schools nationwide. Core Knowledge visits include both longtime and recent pilot district public schools and charter schools in New York City (some of which are among the highest-performing schools in the state), a longtime charter school in rural North Carolina that is among the highest-performing in the state, and recently opened charter schools in urban Indianapolis. A final and valuable element of the EEF has been the

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[147] Seminars include Instructional Leadership and Design for the Common Core by Insight Education Group; School Vision, as well as Data-Driven Instruction, with a Postdoctoral Fellow at Vanderbilt's Peabody School of Education; Special Education and Response to Intervention by the NYC Special Education Collaborative; Engaging Academics with Doug Lemov / Uncommon Schools Taxonomy program; School Culture by the founding leader of a high-performing TN-based urban charter school; and a yearlong series on Financial Management with a nationally-recognized school financial consulting firm.

opportunity to build community relationships, which means that we will have many existing contacts to activate when it comes time to inform families.

Michelle Boyle is in a year of training and practicum/internship in primary / "early childhood" (ages 3-6) with American Montessori Society-credentialed Princeton Center for Teacher Education. This program began with an intensive, full-time six+ week course in child development, observation, Montessori philosophy and curriculum. Mrs. Boyle learned hands-on about Montessori in mathematics, language, the sciences, cultural and artistic subjects, and the sensorial and practical life activities that form the foundation of self-control and focus for children in Montessori environments. Mrs. Boyle is now spending three full days per week as a co-teacher in an AMS-certified, primary-level Montessori classroom with a diverse student population in New Jersey.

Both Mr. Nardo and Mrs. Boyle are also receiving support in curriculum, assessment, and other topics from educational leaders at Team CFA and its network of schools, several of which are national exemplars for implementing Core Knowledge and CKLA.

The training and development opportunities described are crucial to achieving our year 0 goals insofar as they are customized for our unique curriculum and community outreach efforts.

> (3) Explain who will work on a full-time or nearly full-time basis immediately following assignment of a location to lead development of the school(s) and the plan to compensate these individuals.

During the year following approval of our charter, Mr. Nardo will work full-time on the goals outlined in our startup plan, transitioning from the financial supporting of the TN Charter School Center to the startup funds we have begun to secure (please see Budget Narrative). Mrs. Boyle will work part-time, as well to be determined personnel in community outreach and office management. As explained in the narrative, our modest personnel compensation should be covered by anticipated revenues.

7. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS

The following questions are not applicable as we will manage our own affairs.

> *If the applicant does not intend to contract with a non-profit education service provider (ESP) or management organization, mark "Not Applicable" and skip to next section.*
> (1) How and why was the ESP selected?
>
> (2) Describe the relationship between the school governing board and the service provider, specifying how the governing board will monitor and evaluate the performance of the service provider, the internal controls that will guide the relationship, and how the governing board will ensure fulfillment of performance expectations.
>
> (3) Provide an explanation of any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the school governing board and proposed service provider or any affiliated business entities.
>
> (4) Please provide the following in Attachment 14: A term sheet setting forth the proposed duration of the contract; roles and responsibilities of the school governing board, the school staff, and the service provider; scope of services and resources to be provided by the ESP; performance evaluation measures and mechanisms; detailed explanation of compensation to be paid to the provider; financial controls and oversight; methods of contract oversight and enforcement; investment disclosure; and conditions for renewal and termination of the contract; A draft of the proposed management contract;

Documentation of the service provider's non-profit status and evidence that it is authorized to do business in Tennessee.

8. SERVICES

Provide, as Attachment 15, a description of how the school leadership team will support operational execution. Please provide narrative or evidence that illustrates the staffing model, performance metrics, and the school's plan for supporting all operational needs of the school, including but not limited to: (a) Technology (e-rate vendor plans, managing devices); (b) ; Transportation (required for Phase-In and Full Transformation schools); (c) Food service; (d) Data management; (e) Facilities maintenance (including janitorial); (f) School health and nursing services; (g) Purchasing processes

As specified in the RFP, please see attachment 15 for our reply to this prompt.

9. FACILITIES

The ASD's chartering authority derives from its statutory authority to assume the operation of chronically underperforming schools (as defined by the Tennessee Department of Education Priority List). This RFP is designed to identify qualified operators who can then be matched with appropriate facilities as schools come under ASD's authority. This section solicits information that will help the ASD match operators with appropriate facilities.

An applicant may also seek to operate in independent facilities. Regardless of the site, however, an ASD charter school must serve exclusively children who are currently attending or are zoned to attend a school that is on the Priority List.

If you are seeking to turnaround an existing public school facility as a Phase-In or Full Transformation model (to be identified by ASD), complete Part A. If you intend to identify and operate in an independent facility as a New Start school (not managed by the ASD), complete Part B.

Part A - Neighborhood School Facilities (Full Transformation, Phase-In)
(1) Describe the basic facilities requirements for accommodating your plan, including number of classrooms, square footage per classroom, classroom types, common areas, overall square footage, and amenities.

(2) List your ideal specialty classroom options (science labs, art room, computer labs, library/media center, auditorium, athletic rooms, etc.).

(3) List your ideal administrative/support space (main offices, satellite office, work room/copy room, etc.).

(4) Identify any other significant facilities needs not already specified (playground, football field, etc.).

(5) Discuss contingency plans in the event you do not receive your desired facility requests. Please list all essential elements with regards to space needs.

Our year 1 model includes at least 127 children in grades PK4 to 1st in 5-6 sections. As a rough guideline, 90 square feet per child school wide would imply about 13,000 square feet of space; an 85% classroom utilization rate would imply a minimum of 6-7 classrooms total. By year 7, when we would have reached "full scale" PK3 to 6th, our model would serve 537 students (85 in PK3-4, 390 in K-5, and 62 in "6th grade") in 20 sections.[148] Using the same guidelines, this would imply a minimum of 48,000 square feet and 24 classrooms, though we would prefer a few additional rooms for dedicated specials spaces including at least music, art, and science lab. A few of the remaining priority list schools in Frayser/Trezevant approach the capacity discussed here.

Our primary classrooms have the most specific needs: Size should be at least 660-750 square feet, and preferably over 800;[149] sinks and bathrooms would ideally be situated in the rooms or adjacent. We may be able to add these if needed, either through renovating plumbing or adding portable systems.

Because of our heavy use of both books and hands-on materials, ample storage space will be desirable, either in classrooms or in a shared materials area in the school. Other ideal special spaces would be library, music room (soundproofed and/or isolated), art room, and science lab, all of which we would setup in large classrooms if needed. We will have school community meetings regularly, and while an auditorium would be ideal, we could use any large, open space, such as a gym or commons with a portable stage setup. In terms of our cafeteria, we prefer to serve meals "family style" at round tables that accommodate students, staff and visitors. However, a conventional setup could be used.

Outdoor space is a particular interest, both for un/structured play for our students, nature study, and gardening. Multiple priority list sites in our target area have or are adjacent to multiple-acre outdoor areas, including open areas and play structures. Because our schedule includes ample time for physical activity, appropriate indoor space is also desirable, such as a gym. However, because we do not plan to have major competitive sports programs, formal spaces are not essential.

Our administrative space need will start small and grow with the school, such as when we add the dean of student support. In addition to main office space for welcoming visitors, we are open or even inclined to having one larger shared office space (possibly a converted classrooms) for administrators, with a couple of small, shared offices for meetings, IEP meetings, clinician / social work small group meeting spaces, private phone calls, etc. We could partition an open space if need be. (Experience teaches that this may help if there is a colocation, as it smoothes tensions to avoid displacing people from private offices.) We also hope to have a small classroom or similar space for parent resource room, which would have books, computer access and small group meeting space.

Part B - Independent Facilities (New Start)
(1) If you intend to operate a new-start school in an independent facility (not managed by ASD), describe the process for identifying and securing a facility, including any brokers or consultants you are employing to navigate the real estate market, plans for renovations, timelines, financing, etc.

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[148] We reach 6th grade by the 6th and prior year, but that is with the first and smaller cohort, and before we add PK3. Therefore it is the second year with 6th grade that this model reaches "scale," excluding potential future growth. Given our long-term interest in possibly offering a secondary program on-site, it may be worth noting that we might someday reach 860-970 total students in grades PK3 to 12th (with the same breakdown as above, plus 190-220 in grades 9-12) in 34-38 total sections. Using the guidelines above, this would imply about 75,000 to 85,000 square feet and 41-45 total classrooms. A couple of the remaining priority schools in Frayser/Trezevant approach this size as well. If our long-term plan encroached came up against building capacity, we could consider slightly adjusting plans to suit building constraints, modifying or adjusting building spaces (e.g. room renovations; adding modular classrooms), siting secondary students at another nearby location with surplus space (e.g. either a fully dedicated space or one associated with dual-enrollment at another institution).

[149] Meeting AMS guideline of 30 SF per student https://amshq.org/~/media/4617BFE07B70450D8AAF1CF0B81118F3.ashx

(2) If a facility is not yet identified, please describe the organization's approach to finding a suitable facility. Please include the organization's plans to finance the facility, including: (a) Total project cost; (b) Financing and financing assumptions; (c) Total facility costs that the financial model can handle – debt service + lease + maintenance + utilities + etc.

(3) If you currently hold a facility or have an MOU or other proof of intent to provide a facility, please provide the proof of commitment as Attachment 16. Briefly describe the facility, including location, size, and amenities. You may provide, included with Attachment 16, up to 10 pages of supporting documents providing details about the facility. Charter school facilities must comply with health and safety requirements (per T.C.A. § 49-13-111). In addition, charter school applicants must be prepared to follow applicable city planning review procedures.

(4) Describe the organization's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management, including managing build-out and/or renovations, as applicable.

(5) Explain the organization's plan to maintain the independent facility.

We seek to occupy a public facility, and believe that should be possible in our target area given the capacity. However, should an independent facility be necessary, we have the personal capacity, institutional relationships, and a preliminary list of potential sites.

We are highly capable in the area of school facility acquisition, renovation, and management, and have already begun contingency planning. Our Head of School played various significant roles in 9 major school facility projects at his former CMO employers, including scoping and searching for space, negotiating lease/purchase terms, developing long-term facility occupancy and operating budgets, supporting organizational efforts on sophisticated financing instruments, planning and coordinating renovation and construction projects with architects and contractors, and managing multi-million dollar annual capital repairs and improvements processes. He also oversaw the planning and execution of the ASD's facility strategy for its first two annual cycles, working closely with district and ASD school officials on the siting of over a dozen schools, including colocations.

In addition to these personal capacities, we also have an agreement through the TN Charter School Center to receive support in site identification from the local real estate firm Universal Commercial, which has helped numerous Memphis charter schools in recent years. In addition, our proposed philanthropic affiliate, Team CFA (discussed earlier), has a properties arm that has assisted several member schools around the country with affordably financing facility projects.

We have already begun the process of identifying potential private facility options. Please see attachment 16 for a summary of several potential sites, as well as financial scenario planning. We hope that, if authorized, the district would agree to help us reach a final determination about possible public facility match no later than December or January of the planning year. Even so, since the ASD's school matching process would not conclude until midway through the planning year, we intend to continue the preliminary site search that we have already begun, so that we have one or more alternative options ready should they be needed. If a private facility seems more necessary at a later point this year, we would work with our partners to develop a financing plan, including revising our operating budget to cover whatever rent and/or debt service we could afford and would be needed. Attachment 16 provides some analysis. Between the ASD's matching process and our own private search, we expect to know our location by January or February. While schools have certainly opened with less time than that, experience from the ASD (and in other facility projects in years prior) suggests that this is close to the minimum time necessary to inform families and build relationships through all the methods outlined in our application before the new year begins – let alone the minimum 3+ months needed for planning,

approval, bidding, and conducting any meaningful facility improvement projects. We would plan to synchronize our private space research options with this timeline in case they were necessary.

Our plan to manage and maintain whichever facility we obtain is summarized in the Operations section and Budget Narrative attachment.

10. ONGOING OPERATIONS

(1) ASD schools coordinate emergency management with the surrounding school district. Explain your process to create and maintain the school's Emergency Management Plan required by the State of Tennessee. Include the types of security personnel, technology, equipment, and policies that the school will employ. Who will be primarily responsible for this plan? Resources can be found HERE.

(2) Provide, as Attachment 17, a list of the types of insurance coverage the school will secure, including a description of the levels of coverage. Types of insurance should include workers' compensation, liability insurance for staff and students, indemnity, directors and officers, automobile, and other.

For information related to this section, please see the attached Operations plan (15), Financial Plan Workbook (20), Budget Narrative (18), and Insurance documentation (17).

Safety and security: We will do what it takes to have a safe and welcoming environment for students, families, and faculty, free of violence and drugs. Based on our experience, most aspects of safety and security plans are highly dependent on the particularities of the physical space – e.g. shared or sole occupancy; number and location of exits and ground-floor windows; proximity to major streets; status of lighting and alarm systems; etc. Our Head of School has led or assisted with emergency planning policies and systems for numerous schools over the years. Therefore we would intend to fully develop, and later train our faculty upon, written plans once our location and status are finalized. Our plans will likely include defining courses of action and persons responsible for decisions, communication with stakeholders (e.g. families, district, emergency officials), and management of students for dangerous weather conditions / natural disasters, fires, infectious disease risk, intruders, traffic matters, bomb threat, environmental risks, and other kinds of emergencies. Our plans will provide for appropriate proactive measures like fire and other drills, first aid provisions, student immunizations, faculty TB testing and background checks, faculty training in mandated report requirements, harassment of various kinds, etc. Through our electronic information system we will attempt to have updated family and faculty directory contact information available for use. Within the school, we will use a handheld walkie-talkie or possibly intercom system. We will ensure that school entrances and secure spaces are keyed separately. Keys and alarm codes will be assigned to faculty members as needed and with training, tracked for security, and return upon termination of employment.

With regard to property, the school will use the practices of asset management required by the federal grant programs in which we participate, including tagging assets for tracking, as well as locking / latching computers in laptop carts or to desks in consultation with the contracted technology service provider staff, and similar procedures.

Safety and security planning will be initially the responsibility of the Head of School and eventually the business manager. Our Head of School is already acquainted with Lt. Curry of the Memphis Police Department, who is active with schools in the neighborhood, and would continue coordinating with his team about preventative measures and opportunities for cooperation. Whether or for what hours the school has a security officer depends on the potential colocation and would be assessed after school matching as part of colocation discussions. The Head of School will report Intruders, vandalism and such to the board within one day of incidents, and act upon such as is seen fit.

V. FINANCIAL PLAN

(1) Describe the systems and processes by which the school will manage accounting, purchasing, payroll, and audits. Specify any administrative services expected to be contracted for the school, and describe the criteria and procedures for the selection of contractors.

(2) As Attachment 18, present a budget narrative including 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 (e.g., grants, donations, fundraising). There is no page limit for budget narrative in Attachment 18. Include the following: (a) Per-Pupil Revenue: Use the figures below in developing your budget assumptions*. (b) Anticipated Funding Sources: Indicate the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Note which are secured and which are anticipated, and include evidence of commitment for any funds on which the school's core operation depends. (c) Discuss the school's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated. (d) Year 1 cash flow contingency in the event that revenue projections are not met in advance of opening.

(3) Describe the annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the school. Discuss the planned financial controls and their implementation plans. Include evidence that the school will adhere to the accounting, auditing, and reporting procedures and requirements that apply to public schools operating in Tennessee.

(4) For experienced operators: Provide, as Attachment 19, historical financial documents for the charter network, preferably audited financial records. This may be provided in the format of your choosing.

(5) Submit the Financial Plan Workbook (template provided) as Attachment 20. Be sure to complete all sheets in the Workbook.

As detailed in attachment 4, our Head of School is substantially experienced in the design and management of high-performing charter school business functions. He will oversee financial and related services for our schools, to be provided (as discussed in the Budget Narrative) by a combination of outsourced provider and, eventually, in part by an on-staff business manager. We have had initial conversations with the Frayser Achievement Schools' incipient CMO about providing certain contracted services for Libertas, including financial services. This relationship would provide us with access to accounting / payables and payroll systems that align with state reporting requirements, and the staff to facilitate the transactions with the input of Libertas staff. Another option would be to use a back-office outsourcing firm, and we are in touch with at least two potential options. Our selection criteria will include ability to meet our specified service levels (e.g. turnaround within a couple of weeks for monthly stakeholder reports; accounts payable requests addressed within a week; etc.), pricing, user satisfaction history, and opportunity for keeping resources in the neighborhood / contributing to nearby schools.

All financial activities at Libertas will comply with our Financial Policies & Procedures manual. Our draft is based on the model developed by the ASD to meet state requirements, generally accepted accounting principles, TN Internal School Uniform Accounting Policy, and national best practices. We can provide that document if requested, which will be further updated upon approval. Generally, potential expenditures (including staff hires) must be in the budget approved by the Board, and receive advance

approval from the Head of School before a purchase order is placed. Bids and competitive pricing processes will be conducted by Head of School or business manager. Purchase orders and invoice will be our preferred method of procurement, with procurement (i.e. credit) card, check, and reimbursement as other options in declining order. As the Head of School serves as the primary approver for most transactions, purchases will mostly be placed by the office manager and later the business manager, to segregate duties. Aforementioned school staff will provide approved invoices and payroll information to the service provider to process according to our payment cycles. Our service provider will generate A/P and payroll checks / payments, make entries into the accounting system (including logging and coding electronic revenues and bank deposits made by school staff), conduct regular reconciliations, provide quarterly reporting to the IRS and state of TN (e.g. pension system and health benefits), and produce budget-to-actual and similar reports for regular review by our staff and Board (check register, cash flow statement, income statement, balance sheet, net assets). Procurement/credit card statements will be additionally reviewed by school staff, receipts / documentation maintained, and expenses tracked in our accounting system. The Head of School will sign checks with appropriate approval of the Board (either in advance or via monthly review, depending on expense type, amount and budget status, all as per policies). School and financial provider will likely maintain and share files electronically. Office manager and / or business manager will maintain employee and vendor files, including gathering W9 and other forms needed for vendor setup in the accounting system. We will report to our Board regularly on performance toward all listed financial goals via a financial dashboard.

Libertas will participate in an annual audit of our financial processes/reporting and other required compliance matters. The finance committee will solicit bids from auditors, selected based on their experience with charter schools, as well as cost. Head of School, business manager, office manager and contracted support staff will cooperate to provide access to all employee and vendor files as well as other needed records. The Board will review the audit and management letter, which will also be shared with relevant TN public authorities; any material weaknesses or other findings would prompt a formal action plan by the Head of School and Board.

Our Budget Narrative is included in the attachments, and our Financial Plan Workbook will be submitted simultaneous to this application, as per ASD directions.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

1. Letters of Support and Partnership [including proposed partnership agreement]
2. Family Handbook
3. Leadership Team Role Descriptions and Structure
4. School Leader Achievements in Education and Resumes
5,7,8: Teacher and Leader Evaluation and Selection Tool
6,9,14,19: ESP and Network/CMO Documentation – not applicable
10,11: Board Summary, Information Sheets, and Resumes
12: Board Bylaws, Ethics, and Policy Documentation
13: Incubation Year Plan
15: Operations Plan
16: Independent Facilities Information
17: Insurance Documentation
18: Budget Narrative
20: Financial Plan Workbook
[Not numbered] Cover Sheet
[Not numbered] Statement of Assurances

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is entered into by and between the Shelby County Board of Education, operating as Shelby County Schools ("SCS"), and the Tennessee Achievement School District ("ASD") (collectively, the Parties) pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-614 and other applicable statutes, to govern the operation of and delivery of educational services at schools under the jurisdiction of the ASD, that are within the geographic boundaries of SCS. This MOU applies to ASD schools operating in buildings owned by SCS and in which SCS may or may not currently operate a school program. This MOU's primary objective is to facilitate the ASD's operation of schools within the Memphis City Schools' geographic boundaries.

Unless otherwise noted, the covenants in this MOU apply regardless of whether the ASD school or grade configuration is directly run by the ASD, run by the governing body of a charter school authorized by the ASD, or run by an individual, governmental entity or non-profit corporation under a contract with the ASD.

Definitions

The following are definitions of terms used in this MOU as defined in State law.

Achievement School District (ASD) – "An organizational unit of the department of education, established by the commissioner for the purpose of providing oversight for the operation of the total program for individual schools or LEAs, pursuant to § 49-1-602." T.C.A.§49-1-614. The ASD may authorize charter schools, or contract directly with individuals or non-profit corporations to manage schools, to serve students zoned to attend ASD schools (an "ASD School Operator" or "Operator"). The ASD will enter into separate agreements with the Operators regarding the operation of the ASD schools pursuant to this MOU. Schools placed in the ASD are identified in **Exhibit A**, which Exhibit shall be updated on an annual basis. For annual budget planning purposes, the ASD will use its best efforts to notify SCS by December 1 of each year of its intention to place additional schools or grade configurations in the ASD in the following school year.

Local Education Agency (LEA) – Any county, city or special school district, unified school district, school district of any metropolitan form of government or any other Tennessee school system in which schools under the jurisdiction of the ASD are located.

Priority School – A Tennessee school in the bottom 5 percent of overall performance across tested grades and subjects, which, upon identification, faces one of four interventions: (1) placement in the Achievement School District, (2) turnaround under the governance of an LEA innovation zone, (3) turnaround through one of the federal School Improvement Grant plans, subject to approval by the state; or (4) LEA-led school improvement planning processes, subject to direct ASD intervention in the absence of improved results. T.C.A. § 49-1-602. For purposes of this MOU, priority school status remains constant for three complete school years from the date of identification, regardless of any zoning changes made by the LEA in which the priority school is physically located.

The Parties hereby covenant as follows:

1.   General Terms

1.1   Term. The ASD has, pursuant to State law, jurisdiction over schools identified as priority schools for at least five (5) years. The initial term of this MOU shall commence on July 1, 2014 and shall end June 30, 2015. The MOU shall automatically renew for successive one-year terms, unless either party notifies the other, at least thirty (30) days prior to the end of the then current term, of the notifying party's election not to renew this MOU. Following such notification, the MOU shall terminate on the last day of the then current term.

1.2   Commencement. SCS will allow the ASD to begin entering new schools placed in the ASD, accompanied by SCS personnel, for walk-throughs and informal planning as of the last day of the then-current school year. Occupancy will commence on the first week in June following the last day of then-current school year (the "Turnover Date").

1.3   Responsibilities of the Parties.

(a)   The ASD hereby directly assumes responsibility for all the obligations under this MOU, regardless of the entity operating the ASD school or grade configuration. SCS shall notify the ASD within ten (10) calendar days of any act of nonperformance by the ASD or an ASD Operator. The ASD agrees to pay invoices from SCS within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the invoice. The ASD agrees to cure the nonperformance on its own or by action of the Operator. Notwithstanding the curing of any other act of nonperformance, nonpayment of the Use Fee or costs for other invoiced services from SCS for a period exceeding forty-five (45) calendar days will result in the termination of the services giving rise to the notice of nonpayment. Any amounts remaining due after sixty (60) calendar days shall, in addition to any other rights or remedies, bear interest at the rate of 1.5% per month until the amount outstanding is paid.

(b)   SCS shall be responsible for the performance of its obligations under this MOU. The ASD shall notify SCS within ten (10) calendar days of any act of nonperformance by SCS and SCS must then cure the nonperformance within a reasonable period of time. An adjustment in the Use Fee due to such nonperformance shall be equitably made. Nonperformance by SCS of its obligations hereunder may be grounds for termination of the requested services.

(c)   Where services are requested by the ASD and provided to the ASD by SCS contractors, SCS shall have no liability to the ASD for the nonperformance of such contractors. Wherever feasible, SCS will arrange for the direct provision of the services by SCS contractors to the ASD. Where direct provision is not feasible, SCS agrees to amend any agreement with its contractors to designate the ASD as a third party beneficiary under the contract for services to be supplied to the ASD under this MOU. The ASD's sole recourse for nonperformance in such instances shall be against the contractor. SCS will assist the ASD in the filing of any claims against the contractor.

(d)   Any contract by the ASD for services shall be based on estimated costs and shall not be a cap on the maximum services the ASD may request, or the maximum costs that may be incurred by the ASD.

1.4 Resource Allocation.

(a) At the commencement of ASD operation or oversight of a school within SCS-owned facilities, the Parties will conduct a joint inventory of the facility and its furniture and fixtures, and document such inventory in writing. The inventory list must be updated on an annual basis and provided to SCS by no later than June 30 of each year.

(b) SCS will provide, in connection with this MOU, and at no charge to the ASD, the furnishings and equipment assigned to or purchased by the facility in which the ASD will operate, unless properly disposed of under SCS' asset disposition policy. Furnishings and equipment include desks, chairs, white boards, overhead projectors, computers and the like.

(c) SCS shall use its best efforts to ensure that personnel transitioning from SCS facilities or portions thereof adhere to these terms.

1.5 School Co-Location. The principals of the SCS school and ASD schools sharing space in an SCS school building shall cooperate in the use of the facility. The principals shall, prior to June 15 of each year (or as soon as practically possible), execute or renew a Shared Campus Plan (sample attached as **Exhibit B**) for the subsequent school year, regarding the use of shared space, staff, and/or resources. If the principals fail to reach agreement, designated representatives from SCS and the ASD may mediate. The Shared Campus Plan may be revised during the term of this MOU upon mutual agreement of the principals operating in the school facility.

1.6 School Calendars. To the fullest extent possible, SCS and the ASD shall coordinate school calendars. The ASD understands and agrees that, if its schools are open on days that SCS schools are closed per the Board-approved school calendar, some services to be provided by SCS will not be available. Services that are required by the ASD on such days may be provided to the ASD, at SCS' sole discretion, and the costs associated therewith shall be charged to the ASD. Notwithstanding, SCS agrees to use its best efforts to provide the required services requested by the ASD on such days.

1.7 Unscheduled School Closures. The ASD understands that SCS schools may be closed for unscheduled emergencies (utility outages, storm damage, weather emergencies). SCS will notify the ASD as soon as information regarding such closures is available, and will provide the same services to the ASD schools as to the SCS schools in the event of such emergency closures (e.g., early or delayed bus transportation, box lunches, etc.).

2. Facilities

2.1 Facility Use. Pursuant to T.C.A. 49-1-614(f), SCS shall provide to the ASD the use of any school building placed in the ASD, including all facilities and property otherwise part of the school and recognized as part of the facilities or assets of the school or were typically available to the school, its students, faculty and staff prior to its placement in the ASD. SCS shall turn the facilities over to the ASD in broom-clean condition.

2.2 Rent and Use Fee.

(a) Consistent with T.C.A. § 49-1-614(f), SCS shall not charge a rental or leasing fee for the ASD's use of the facilities during the term of the MOU. However, the ASD agrees to pay

to SCS an itemized use fee, as set forth in **Exhibit C**, Use Fee Schedule, incorporating SCS's actual facility operating costs. Each year, SCS and the ASD shall prepare and agree upon a new Use Fee Schedule, which schedule shall be incorporated into a made a part of this Agreement by reference.

(b)   Costs for any services provided by SCS during co-location shall be prorated on a square footage basis. Costs for services selected by the ASD and provided at a facility occupied solely by the ASD shall be paid entirely by the ASD. This principle shall not apply in any instances where more direct means of cost allocation are available and agreed upon by the Parties.

(c)   Rates for the Use Fee Schedule shall be based on square footage utilization and cost projections as of June 1 of each year. Square footage calculations used in the Schedule shall be adjusted periodically based on changes in utilization. In January and June of each year, SCS and the ASD shall review SCS's costs and the ASD's enrollment to determine if the Schedule accurately reflects SCS's actual costs and the associated Use Fee, and will adjust the Schedule accordingly. Any deficiency in payment shall be paid by the ASD to SCS promptly upon receipt of an invoice therefor. Any overpayment by the ASD shall be credited against the next ensuing installments of the Use Fee payable by the ASD.

(d)   In consideration of the services provided to the ASD by SCS in the administration of this Agreement, the ASD will also pay an indirect cost fee to SCS based on an agreed upon rate applied against the appropriate costs of services supplied to the ASD by SCS.

(e)   The Use Fee shall be invoiced on a monthly basis, and the ASD shall pay the Use Fee within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of SCS's invoice.

2.3   Capital Repairs.
(a)   Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-1-614(f), extensive repairs to buildings or facilities considered capital expenses shall be the responsibility of the LEA and not the ASD. Upon occupancy of the facility, the ASD may conduct, at its expense, an assessment of needed capital repairs and the costs for making such repairs. However, recognizing that most SCS facilities have existing capital needs, SCS shall only be required to make capital expenditures to ASD facilities, except for emergency repairs for critical systems which shall take precedence, in accordance with SCS' approved five year capital plan.

(b)   The five year capital plan takes into account the severity of the need for capital repairs at a school, the facility condition index of the building, and the length of time the repairs have been deferred, and requires approval by the Shelby County Board of Education and Shelby County Government. Any amendments to the capital plan must be approved by the Shelby County Board of Education and the Shelby County Government Board of Commissioners. SCS agrees to meet with the ASD to discuss any specific requests it has to a new or amended capital plan, and SCS will incorporate such requests into the plan in accordance with the LEA's philosophy and priorities for expenditures for capital repairs.

2.4   Modifications. The ASD may make reasonable modifications to a facility to meet program needs (at ASD cost). The ASD shall inform SCS of all proposed modifications, and obtain SCS's consent, which consent shall not be unreasonably withheld, denied or delayed. SCS shall have five (5) business days to review the proposed modifications and provide feedback to the ASD, including whether, at the end of its occupancy, the ASD will be required to restore the facility to its original condition.

2.5 Ongoing Maintenance.

(a) ASD operated facility requests will be fulfilled based on SCS staff availability. ASD understands that as of June 30, 2015 SCS will no longer maintain a personnel level sufficient to perform maintenance for any buildings other than those under the authority of SCS.

(b) Beginning July 1, 2015, if the ASD chooses to request maintenance services from SCS, ASD must pay for the cost of additional personnel dedicated to the ASD to perform the services. SCS shall provide the ASD the cost to hire personnel If approved, SCS shall hire and assign staff within a reasonable period of time. SCS provided staff operating in an ASD school shall remain employees of SCS.

(c) SCS agrees that personnel paid for and assigned to the ASD will offer the same service level response standards for ASD schools as maintenance personnel perform for schools operated by SCS. Detailed service level responses, if required by the ASD, will be separately negotiated and agreed to in writing by the parties.

(d) SCS Facility Maintenance & Operations supervisory staff shall, in the delivery of operations and maintenance services, no less than quarterly, directly engage the ASD's leadership team to assess service quality at the school. ASD leaders utilizing SCS facilities shall be asked to complete an annual survey on the quality of services being provided by the SCS operations and maintenance team. Survey results shall be shared with the ASD, as well as proposed improvements in the delivery of SCS operations and maintenance services.

2.6 Utilities

(a) In co-location situations, utility costs shall be prorated between SCS and the ASD. Other sites will be direct-billed by the utility provider for utility costs. The ASD shall be responsible for arranging for direct billing. The cut-over date for direct billing shall be June 15 of each year. SCS shall invoice the ASD its prorated cost of utilities billed to SCS at such facilities from the Turnover Date through the date direct billing commences.

(b) All existing utilities and other systems such as telephone, intercom, data and security systems will be made available to the ASD in their as is, where is condition. If the ASD determines that additional systems and wiring are necessary, the ASD shall update and expand the existing systems within the space used by the ASD, at the ASD's expense, subject to the provisions of Section 3.2 hereof.

2.7 Return of Facilities.

The facility shall be returned to SCS at the end of the ASD operation in the same condition as when the ASD commenced use of the facility, ordinary wear and tear excepted. The facility shall be returned with the same furnishings and equipment fixtures, unless disposed of with the prior consent of SCS, and any additional furniture and fixtures purchased by ASD with the per pupil funding received by ASD for operation of its schools or grade configurations within a school.

3. Safety and Security

(a) SCS shall provide and maintain building access and security systems for all facilities in which the ASD operates, at the ASD's proportionate cost. ASD schools may at their discretion provide their own building access and security systems in sole occupancy buildings, or co-located sites where the ASD school has an exclusive point of access. Where requested by the ASD, SCS will provide alarm and monitoring services to the facilities, and the ASD will pay its proportionate share of the costs as part of the Use Fee.

(b) In middle and high school facilities shared by SCS and ASD schools, SCS shall also provide the School Resource Officers necessary for the safe operations of schools in the facility. The ASD will pay its proportionate costs of the School Resource Officer(s) assigned to the facility. If the ASD requests additional School Resource Officers, the ASD shall pay the full cost thereof.

(c) Pursuant to the Tennessee SAVE Act, the ASD agrees to comply with all procedures in SCS's Emergency Response Plan (ERP) specifically applicable to facilities in which the ASD operates. SCS agrees to provide the same training and support to staff at ASD operated facilities as it does to staff of SCS operated facilities. Costs for the training and support provided to staff at ASD operated facilities, which are not covered by SAVE Act or other specific grant funding, shall be paid by the ASD. The principals in co-location situations will include appropriate procedures in the Shared Campus Plan to facilitate responses to situations covered by the ERP.

4. Technology

4.1 Computer Equipment.

(a) Prior to the turnover of all or any part of an SCS facility to the ASD, and if requested by the ASD, SCS agrees, at ASD's cost, to return computer equipment to a default state and to erase any data existing on top of existing operating systems and software licensed to the CPU. The ASD is responsible for reimaging, installing and updating security programs on those devices. SCS shall provide the ASD with software CDs or other media and documentation of licenses for programs licensed to a CPU and installed on such computer equipment. Software programs that are not CPU-licensed, but licensed to the LEA, shall be removed from the CPUs at the schools or in the classrooms in which the ASD will operate.

(b) In co-location situations, the ASD and SCS will use the Information Technology (IT) Service Guidelines, attached as **Exhibit D**, to ensure the integrity of the IT infrastructure and protect against the disruption of telecom and network services.

4.2 E-Rate and Network Filtering.

(a) In any year in which it chooses, the ASD will provide SCS a letter of agency allowing SCS to apply for and provide E-Rate services for ASD schools. The unsubsidized portion of costs for such E-Rate services in ASD schools shall be invoiced to ASD on a direct bill basis from the vendor supplying the services where possible, and otherwise based on estimates contained in the Use Fee schedule. If e-Rate funding is not approved for any provided services, the ASD will be responsible for the full unsubsidized cost of such services. In a shared facility, SCS and ASD acknowledge that the separation of some E-Rate services may not be

possible. In such instance, ASD may be required to utilize the E-Rate services available in the facility and pay to vendor or SCS its proportionate share of the unsubsidized costs.

    (b)   If the ASD uses the same internet service provider (ISP) as SCS, the ASD networks may access the same internet filtering consortium as SCS. The ASD may take advantage of the same filtering overrides as SCS.

4.3   Information Technology Service Level Requirements and Accountability.

    (a)   SCS shall provide to ASD the same service level response standards for ASD schools as it does for SCS schools.

    (b)   The ASD is responsible for desktop support.

    (c)   SCS shall support E-Rate funded network equipment and services at ASD schools with the same service levels provided at other SCS schools.

5.   Food Service

5.1   SCS Provision

    (a)   Where SCS operates the food service programs, SCS will provide all labor, personnel, equipment, and supplies to provide meals eligible for reimbursement under the USDA School Nutrition Program, according to the terms in Exhibit E, Nutrition Services. SCS will provide to the ASD any or all currently existing programs at the facility, including but not limited to breakfast, lunch, snack and supper/weekend programs. SCS shall be entitled to receive the full reimbursement rate per meal for each meal served to an ASD student. SCS assumes all liability related to financial management of the program at the facility and remains responsible for state and federal mandated compliance, including determining application eligibility, production records, temperature monitoring, etc. The ASD will provide student information required by SCS to provide the services pursuant to an inter-district agreement to share protected student information.

    (b)   SCS will provide meals to all students of the ASD upon request. ASD and SCS shall work together to ensure collection of appropriate fees from students eligible for reduced-price or paid meals. SCS shall provide the ASD monthly financial statements.

    (c)   The ASD may request reasonable modifications to menus and SCS will use its best efforts to accommodate such requests.

    (d)   If requested, SCS shall provide point of sale (POS) tracking systems for a separate proportional licensing or equipment charge. Any other expenses incurred by SCS to provide food services to the ASD shall be included in the per pupil fee.

    (e)   If other food services related fees are collected at the school level from students, the ASD school staff will collect and remit those funds to SCS.

    5.2   **ASD or Contract Provision.** If the ASD or Operator offers food services on its own or through a contract, the ASD or the Operator may apply directly to the state department of education, and if approved, operate as a school food authority qualified for reimbursement from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), under supervision by the state department of education. If the ASD chooses in a co-located facility not to participate in the food service program provided by SCS, the Operator must consult with the ASD and SCS to determine the feasibility of having an alternative food services provider.

6.   Transportation

6.1   SCS Provision.

(a)   Upon request of the ASD, SCS will provide transportation to the ASD through SCS's contract with transportation providers, and provide routing services on an equal per pupil basis as SCS pays for such services. SCS may charge the actual cost from its contract with providers for busing, special education bus monitors, and routing or tracking information.

(b)   To facilitate the provision of the services, the ASD is responsible for providing SCS with student information in a format compatible with SCS's student information system. The ASD will provide the required information on a timely basis. Prior to school registration periods, SCS will provide proposed routes, and, where applicable, bus passes to individual students.

(c)   In a shared use facility, an ASD school may require a bus schedule different than the SCS-operated school. The ASD agrees to pay the costs incurred by SCS's contract transportation provider to accommodate the different schedule.

(d)   If, during the term of this MOU, SCS's contract transportation provider fails to meet its contractual obligations to an ASD school, SCS agrees to assist the ASD in pursuing any remedies provided for in the contract with its transportation provider, and, if applicable, credit the ASD's account with the pro-rata share of any financial penalty the contractor was required to pay as a result of such failure.

(e)   Each ASD school must inform SCS on a timely basis during the spring of each year of its intentions for bus use during the summer term and the following school year.

(f)   ASD schools may use SCS's student bus eligibility requirements (distance, age, etc.), but may opt to expand eligibility, at the ASD's sole cost and expense.

6.2   Student Conduct on Buses.
ASD students on SCS buses will abide by the rules and expectations regarding student conduct on school buses. Students who jeopardize the safety and well-being of other passengers and staff may have their riding privileges suspended indefinitely.

6.3   Charter Bus Services.
SCS will provide ASD access to SCS charter bus operators for ASD field trips, at the same costs available to SCS. ASD must directly contract with the charter bus operators for such services.

7.   Student Transfers

(a)   ASD and SCS agree to allow voluntary student transfers between SCS and ASD schools. Individual schools will make transfer decisions subject to normal district enrollment processes, grade-level capacity, placement availability, and student eligibility rules (i.e. priority zone residence for ASD).

(b)   ASD and SCS agree to honor one another's exit/withdrawal procedures. Both LEAs agree to not enroll a mid-year transfer student without a completed withdrawal form from the student's previous school.

(c)   Unless the LEA does not offer a placement identified in a student's IEP, the mid-year transfer process will occur without regard to a student's special needs.

8.   Special Education
(a)   Following placement decisions by Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, per-pupil Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding will flow to that student's home LEA, as will financial responsibility for necessary services.

      i.   If an eligible student is zoned to an SCS operated school, and the IEP team decides to place the student at an ASD operated school, SCS is responsible to pay for applicable services.

      ii.   If a student is zoned to an ASD operated school, and the IEP team decides to place the student at an SCS operated school, the ASD is responsible to pay for applicable services.

(b)   If an eligible student is zoned to an SCS operated school, and decides on his or her own (and not based on inadequacy of service) to enroll in an ASD operated school (subject to the transfer provisions outlined above), the ASD is the LEA for all purposes, including IDEA (and any associated services or costs), as applicable. Likewise, if a student is zoned to an ASD operated school and decides to enroll (not based on inadequacy of service) in an SCS operated school, SCS is the LEA for all purposes, including IDEA, as applicable.

(c)   The ASD may ask SCS to provide required services (including, but not limited to clinical services such as speech therapy, nursing as a related service, school psychologist), for students enrolled in ASD operated schools, at ASD's cost.

9.   Provision of ESEA Services to Private School Students

(a)   ASD will receive directly from the state the Title I and other allocations for at-risk students. Upon ASD's request, for Title I eligible students residing in ASD attendance zones and attending participating private schools served by SCS, SCS will:

-   provide instructional services in math, reading, and language arts;
-   provide parental involvement services on an equitable basis in accordance with Title I requirements and, if applicable;
-   provide equitable professional development activities for teachers of Title I students in participating private schools.

(b)   The ASD will pay to SCS an amount to be based upon the number of students who generate Title I funds and are zoned for ASD Title I participating schools but attend private schools. This per pupil amount to be expended for instructional services to Title I eligible private school students will be equitable to the amount of funds generated in accordance with the formula required by the ESEA Title I statute. In accordance with the Title I statute, the ASD will pay to SCS the required portion of Title I funds set aside by the ASD for parental involvement. If applicable, the ASD will pay to SCS a portion of the Title I funds set aside by the ASD for professional development for teachers.   As required by the Title I statute, this amount will be calculated in accordance with the equitable services worksheet.

(c) For Title III eligible students (English Language Learners), SCS will provide Title III services to students who are zoned for ASD schools but who attend participating private schools. SCS will serve as the fiscal agent for a Title III Consortium consisting of the ASD and SCS.

(d) In addition to the amount for the provision of services for Titles I and III, the ASD will pay to SCS an amount equal to 10% of the cost of the services for administrative costs.

10. Suspended Students

The ASD remains responsible for all students assigned to it, including students that may be suspended for disciplinary reasons. In the event that ASD wishes to pursue alternative school placement for any of its students, SCS may, but is not required to, provide a placement in one of its alternative schools, at a per daily cost basis to the ASD.

11. Student Activity Accounts

Existing school level student activity accounts, with any existing balances, will transfer to the control of the ASD at the time the ASD assumes operation or oversight of a whole school. Where SCS and the ASD share facilities, the student activity accounts will remain with SCS; provided, however, that the schools will collaborate on the potential use of such funds for activities of benefit to all students in the school.

12. Insurance

(a) The ASD is responsible for liability insurance for ASD staff working in an SCS facility SCS maintains. For ASD direct run schools, the applicable State insurance plan is acceptable. ASD School Operators shall maintain the insurance as provided in Exhibit E, and provide to SCS, prior to occupancy, a copy of its certificate of insurance, naming SCS as an additional insured.

(b) SCS will maintain responsibility for property insurance covering the building, and bill the ASD for the pro-rated cost of such insurance in Exhibit C, Use Fee Schedule. SCS will list the ASD as an additional insured to the extent of its interest in the property.

(c) SCS' insurance does not cover thefts from or vandalism to the building or its contents. The ASD must self-insure or obtain its own policies of insurance to cover these losses.

13. Hold Harmless

(a) The ASD shall require any ASD Operator in its contract with the Operator to indemnify and hold harmless SCS from any loss, damage or expense, including without limitation, reasonable attorney's fees arising out of the action or inaction of the Operator while using the SCS owned facility. The contract shall specifically provide that SCS is an intended third party beneficiary of the indemnity obligation thereunder. The ASD shall provide to SCS, within thirty (30) days of execution, copies of any agreements between the ASD and the ASD Operator.

(b)   SCS shall require any contractor or sub-contractor to indemnify and hold harmless the ASD from any loss, damage or expense, including without limitation, reasonable attorney's fees arising out of the action or inaction of the contractor or sub-contractor while providing services to ASD schools. SCS shall provide to the ASD, within thirty (30) days of execution, copies of any agreements between SCS and contractors or sub-contractors providing services to ASD schools.

14.   Modification and Severability

(a)   This MOU may not be altered, changed, or amended, except by an instrument in writing signed by both parties hereto.

(b)   In the event that any provision or part of a provision of this MOU is held invalid, the other provisions and parts of provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

15.   Background and Criminal Record Checks

The ASD hereby agrees that it is aware of the provision of Tennessee Code Annotated §49-5-413 requiring the background check of any employee or subcontractor that works on school grounds at any time when students are present, and prohibiting any person with a history of the criminal offenses cited in the statute from working on a school campus during such times. The ASD hereby certifies that is has, and will, at all times during the term of this MOU, comply with the provisions of this statute and will provide to SCS, upon request, proof of its compliance with this provision. A default by the ASD of the provisions of this Section shall automatically be deemed a default of the terms herein.

16.   Notices

Notice. Whenever any notice, statement or other communication is required under this Agreement, it shall be sent to the following addresses, unless otherwise specifically advised:

Notice to SCS shall be sent to the following:

SCS:
Dorsey E. Hopson, II, Superintendent
Shelby County Schools
160 S. Hollywood Street
Memphis, TN 38112

Copy to:

Office of Contracts Management
Shelby County Schools
160 S. Hollywood Street, Coe 114
Memphis, TN 38112

Notice to ASD shall be sent to the following:

Chris Barbic, Superintendent
Achievement School District
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243

18. Student Data

SCS and ASD acknowledge that there are legitimate reasons for the limited exchange of student enrollment and related data. Whenever such data is required, the requesting party shall make such request for the data in writing, including the reason for such data. SCS and ASD will enter into a Data Protection Agreement necessary for the inter-district exchange of confidential student data.

19. Entire Agreement

This MOU and its exhibits, and any external agreements regarding operational procedures agreed to in writing by representatives of each party, constitute the entire agreement between the parties hereto relative to the matters contained herein, and no promises, agreements, prior leases, conditions or stipulations not contained herein shall be binding upon either party hereto.
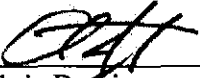
20. Venue
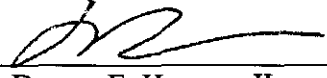
Each and every term, condition, or covenant herein is subject to and shall be construed in accordance with the provisions of Tennessee law and venue of any action arising hereunder shall be in the district courts of the City and County of Memphis, Tennessee.

In Witness Whereof, the parties have entered into this MOU on the day and year provided below.

ACHIEVEMENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

SHELBY COUNTY BOARD
OF EDUCATION

By: _____

Chris Barbic
Superintendent

By: _____

Dorsey E. Hopson, II
Superintendent

Date: <u>January 15, 2015</u>

Date: <u>Feb 24, 2015</u>

Exhibit A

Achievement School District locations covered under this MOU for school year 14/15

SCS location	ASD occupancy type	ASD operator	ASD grades served
Hanley Elementary	Sole	Aspire Public Schools	PK-6
Lester Elementary	Co-location	Capstone Education Group	PK-5
Corning Elementary	Sole	ASD	PK-5
Frayser Elementary	Sole	ASD	PK-5
Westside Middle	Sole	ASD	6-8
Georgian Hills Elementary	Sole	ASD	PK-5
Whitney Elementary	Sole	ASD	PK-5
Humes Middle	Co-location (with SCS alternative program)	Gestalt Community Schools	6-8
Klondike Elementary	Sole	Gestalt Community Schools	K-5
Corry Middle	Co-location	KIPP Memphis Collegiate Schools	5-6
Shannon Elementary	Co-location	KIPP Memphis Collegiate Schools	K-1
South Side Middle	Co-location	Project Grad	9-10 (new start)
Coleman Elementary	Sole	Aspire Public Schools	K-5
Lester Middle	Co-location	Capstone Education Group	6
Frayser High	Sole	Frayser Community Schools	9-12
Westwood Elementary	Co-location	Freedom Prep	K-1
Fairley High	Sole	Green Dot Public Schools	9-12
Whitehaven Middle	Sole	KIPP Memphis Collegiate Schools	6
Spring Hill Elementary	Co-location	Promise Academy	PK-1

Exhibit B

Annual Shared Campus Plan

Between {insert SCS school name} and {insert ASD school name}

PART ONE: PHYSICAL SPACE

CLASSROOMS
   A. {insert school name]will be housed in the following classrooms:
      • *<insert room designations>*
      •
   B. {insert school name} will be housed in the following classrooms:
      • *<insert room designations>*
      •
   C. {insert school name} will be housed in the following classrooms:
      • *<insert room designations>*
      •

COMMON AREAS AND SHARED SPACES
   A. The Parties will share the following Common Areas AND SHARED SPACES (as noted in C. below):
      • *<insert designated rooms and other areas>*
      •
   B. The Parties will adjust the schedule for the specific use of these Common Areas and Shared Spaces during regular meetings, and as needed, by agreed upon procedures as noted below.
   C. A central schedule detailing the specific use of the Common Areas and Spaces for each month will be agreed to, posted publicly and distributed to each school office before the first school day of the month.

      1. Foyer:
      2. Hallways:
      3. Gymnasium & Locker rooms:
      4. Cafeteria (not including kitchen):
      5. Library:
      6. Auditorium:
      7. Playground(s):
      8. Parking Lot(s):
      9. Other:

ENTRANCES, EXITS, AND PICK-UP/DROP OFF LOCATIONS
   A. {insert school name} students will be dropped off by car at:
      • *<insert designated location>*
      •
   B. {insert school name} students will be dropped off by car at:
      • *<insert designated location>*
      •
   C. {insert school name} students will be dropped off by bus at:
      • *<insert designated location>*
      •
   D. {insert school name} students will be dropped off by bus at:
      • *<insert designated location>*
      •
   E. {insert school name} students will enter and exit from:
      • *<insert designated entrances/exits>*
      •
   F. {insert school name} students will enter and exit from:
      • *<insert designated entrances/exits>*
      •

OFFICE SPACE
   A. {Insert school name} will use *<designate room here>* as their office space.
   B. {Insert school name} will use *<designate room here>* as their office space.

TEACHERS' WORK AREA
   A. {Insert school name} will use *<designate room here>* as a teachers' work area.
   B. {Insert school name} will use *<designate room here>* as a teachers' work area.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS
   A. Storage Closets:
      • *<Specify location and use here>*
      •
   C. Other:
      • *<Specify location and use here>*
      •

PART TWO: OPERATIONAL ISSUES

START/END TIMES
   A. {Insert school name} will start school at: *<insert start time here>* and end school at: *<insert end time here>*

B. {Insert school name} will start school at: *<insert start time here>* and end school at: *<insert time here>*

PHYSICAL PLANT
    A. SCS will open the building each weekday morning at:
        • *<insert time here>*
    B. SCS will close the building each weekday evening at:
        • *<insert time here>*
    C. SCS will be in charge of turning on and off the lights.
    D. SCS will be in charge of the HVAC system.
    E. Other:

ENGINEER & STAFF
    A. Building Engineer for {insert school name} will be *<insert name and whether provided by SCS or ASD>*
    B. Building Engineer for {insert school name} will be *<insert name and whether provided by SCS or ASD>*
    C. Building Engineer will monitor and communicate with the Facilities Maintenance staff on behalf of each school in the building.
    D. Custodial staff for {insert school name} will be *<insert name and whether provided by SCS or ASD>* and will clean the designated areas identified
    E. Custodial staff for {insert school name} will be *<insert name and whether provided by SCS or ASD>* and will clean the designated areas identified
    F. Custodial staff to clean the shared/common areas identified will be *<insert name and whether provided by SCS or ASD>*
    G. Other:

FACILITIES MANAGER and STAFF
    A. SCS will supervise the Facilities Manager and staff employed by SCS.
    B. Concerns regarding facilities services will be directed to: SCS Facilities Management.
    C. Other:

SECURITY
    A. Facilities Manager and designee(s) for each school will have the security codes to the electronic security system and will disengage the system each morning and set the system each night, as well as other times access to the building is needed.
    B. SCS Security staff will provide intrusion alarm monitoring.
    C. Security staff, as determined, will be hired and supervised by SCS.

PUPIL SUPPORT STAFF
    A. The following agreements shall be made regarding pupil support staff:
    <insert description here>

ABSENCE
   A. If any of the above individuals provided by SCS are absent or not available on a particular day, SCS will be responsible for that function.

OTHER:
   A.   *<add as needed>*

PART THREE: SHARED CAMPUS CULTURE BUILDING

SHARED BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS
   A. Expectations:

   B. Communication methods of expectations:

SHARED STAFF EXPECTATIONS

JOINT STAFF AND STUDENT EVENTS
   A. Scheduled joint staff event (highly recommended)

   B. Scheduled joint student event (optional)

OTHER:
   A.   *<add as needed>*

BLUEPRINT/MAP OF SCHOOL
   Please attach a labeled blueprint or map of the Campus which details the space to be utilized by each individual school.

Signatures:

Signed By:

_____
Chief of Business Operations (or designee)
Shelby County Schools

_____
Chief Operating Officer (or designee)
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER,
Achievement School District

_____

PRINCIPAL
{insert school name}

_____

PRINCIPAL

{insert school name}

EXHIBIT C

Estimated usage fees
See Excel Spreadsheet

EXHIBIT D
Information Technology Services Guidelines and Regulations

In co-location situations, SCS and the ASD shall follow these guidelines to ensure the integrity of the IT infrastructure and protect against the disruption of Telecom and Network services. IT is committed to fostering partnerships with the ASD to assist in providing equitable technology to all students within a SCS owned building.

Telecommunication Closets (MDF/IDF): Telecommunication Closets are reserved for network voice and data switching equipment only. All ASD servers, SAN/NAS devices, computers, etc., are to be located within the ASD's footprint due to limited access to the closets, heat dissipation, and electrical limitations. The ASD's IT staff and their representatives must coordinate the installation of all voice and data services/equipment in the closets with IT staff. SCS will work with the ASD to ensure that all voice and data equipment is installed correctly in the closets. IT staff will determine if there is adequate rack space for the equipment, and if not the ASD will be responsible for any costs associated with providing additional rack space. IT staff will facilitate all fiber and copper connections between closets (MDF to IDF and IDF to IDF) over the existing infrastructure where available.

If the E-Rate agreement requires installation of additional voice and/or data services and equipment, the ASD will pay a prorated share of the cost. The installation cost of any additional services and equipment not required by the E-Rate agreement will be entirely covered by the ASD. The ASD must provide all equipment specifications to IT for review prior to installation. Upon receipt of these specifications, IT staff will determine if there are adequate electrical circuits available for the ASD's equipment. SCS funds will cover, within reason, the costs associated with adding any necessary electrical circuits. IT staff will determine if the BTU output of the ASD's equipment could surpass the manufacturer recommended heat load of the equipment located in the closets. SCS funds will cover, within reason, the costs associated with environmental upgrades (e.g., air conditioning units in the closets). The ASD must coordinate all access to the closets with SCS staff prior to entering. All requests for support must be submitted to the SCS Help Desk by calling 901-416-1245 or emailing burgessl@SCSk12.org.

Voice and Data Networks: Maintenance of SCS's voice and data networks are included within its E-Rate services. SCS will provide the ASD access to SCS's voice and data networks and the ASD shall pay, via direct billing, its proportionate share of the unsubsidized portion of the E-Rate services to SCS's vendor. The ASD may also have access to SCS's Internet Service Provider (ISP), WAN connections (including firewall and filtering), LAN connections (including routers, switches, wireless access points and wireless controllers), voice services (including external carrier lines, phone system and telephone handsets), and other needed systems (including computers, printers, servers, software licenses, televisions, and cables).

Structured Wiring: SCS has developed strict standards and specifications to ensure the high quality of the structured wiring infrastructure. SCS's wiring specifications maintain a 25-year manufacturer warranty on all structured wiring inside SCS facilities. A copy of this specification

documentation will be made available to the ASD on request. This warranty requires that only certified technicians make modifications and repairs to the wiring infrastructure. SCS requires ASDs contact the SCS help desk and create a ticket for any repairs and/or modifications to the structured wiring. IT staff will review the ASD's modifications plan and coordinate the approved plan with SCS approved, manufacture certified contractors. IT staff will facilitate all repairs and/or modifications to the structured wiring infrastructure. IT staff will maintain and troubleshoot the wiring infrastructure from the patch panel in the closet to the jack in the ASDs designated area. The ASD will be responsible for any troubleshooting of the ASD's voice equipment, data equipment, and networks. The structured wiring infrastructure includes racks, wiring, raceway, jacks, overhead paging speakers, etc. The ASD will make no modifications to the infrastructure. The ASDs' IT staff must use green patch cords for all voice and data services in the closets for the purpose of maintaining a visual separation between the SCS's and Charters Schools' network. ASD staff must adhere to the strict SCS standards of patch cord pathway and routing within the closets as detailed in the SCS specification document. A copy of the SCS's structured wiring specifications will be provided on request. Structured wiring also includes coax connections used for Comcast cable TV. The ASD may use the services as needed. The ASD is responsible for supplying the TV's and acquiring Comcast digital set top boxes for this service.

911 compliancy: All telephones that reside within SCS facilities must adhere to all applicable local, State, and Federal E911 regulations. All ASDs in SCS facilities must submit their E911 plan to SCS for review. The E911 plan should include information on the design, configuration, equipment, and the documented process for use. All phones must have the ability to dial 911 directly.

Support from IT: All requests for support must be submitted to SCS's Help Desk by calling 901-416-____ or emailing Hotline@SCSk12.org. SCS shall support E-Rate funded network equipment and services at ASD schools with the same service levels provided at other SCS schools.

Exhibit E

Insurance for Charter or Contract Operators

Charter or contract operators of ASD schools shall maintain insurance as follows. The charter or contract operator shall name SCS, its Board of Education and employees as an additional insured by endorsement to the liability policies.

i. Insurance covering the school's personal property, trade fixtures, apparatus and contents in the Premises against damage or injury caused by fire or other hazard in amounts reasonably requested by the ASD.

ii. General comprehensive public liability insurance under which SCS and the operator are named as insured in amounts satisfactory to SCS, which presently is to be with minimum combined single limits of $5,000,000.00 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage, and containing a contractual endorsement covering the operator's obligations under this Agreement.

iii. Worker's compensation insurance in the amount required by the State of Tennessee.

iv. School Board and Professional Liability Insurance for combined single-limit coverage of not less than $5,000,000.00 per occurrence.

v. Such other insurance on the Premises in such amounts and against such other insurable hazards which at the time are commonly obtained in the case of property similar to the Premises.

In addition to the foregoing insurance, charter or contract operators shall maintain a fidelity or surety bond to cover all of the operator's employees that handle, process, or otherwise have responsibility for school funds, supplies, equipment, or other assets in amounts of not less than $50,000.00 per occurrences.

EXHIIBIT F

Nutrition Services

SCOPE and RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The food service shall be managed to promote maximum participation in the **National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program.**

2. SCS shall provide the food service to the ASD for approximately <u>180</u> serving days.

3. SCS shall serve, on such days and at such times as requested by the ASD:

   a) Breakfasts, priced as a unit, which meet USDA requirements.

   b) Lunches, priced as a unit, which meet USDA requirements.

   c) After School Snacks, or Supper, priced as a unit, which meet USDA requirements.

4. SCS shall be responsible for documenting that a reimbursable meal was served to each student for each meal.

5. If requested and paid for by the ASD, SCS shall serve meals to all students attending the ASD without regard to eligibility status.

6. SCS reserves the exclusive right to maintain food and beverage vending machines on its Premises.

7. SCS shall conduct the food service to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations of the Tennessee Department of Education and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program.

8. SCS shall be legally and financially responsible for the conduct of the food service and shall supervise the food service to ensure compliance with the rules and regulations of the Tennessee Department of Education and the United States Department of Agriculture regarding Child Nutrition Programs.

9. SCS shall ensure the food service is in conformance with the *Policy Statement for Free Meals, Free Milk, and Reduced-Price Meals.*

10. SCS shall retain control of the quality, extent, and general nature of its food service and the prices to be charged for meals, milk, a la carte items, and adult meals.

11. The ASD may monitor the food service through periodic on-site reviews to include the inspection of meals, food preparation, storage and service areas, sanitation practices, and procedures for accurately counting and claiming meals.

12. SCS shall retain signatory authority on the Tennessee Department of Education *Annual School Application for Participation in Child Nutrition Free Breakfast and Lunch, and Food Distribution Programs*; the *Policy Statement for Free Meals, Free Milk, and Reduced-Price Meals*; and the *Child Nutrition Program Monthly Claim for Reimbursement.*

13. SCS shall maintain and visibly post applicable health certification and assure all state and local regulations are met by personnel preparing or serving meals at the ASD facilities.

14. The ASD shall distribute and collect the letter and household applications for free and reduced-price meals or milk, and provide the applications to SCS. SCS shall verify applications and determine eligibility of students for meal benefits, and provide the eligibility letter for each student to the ASD for distribution to the student's parent or guardian.

15. SCS shall conduct any appeals or hearings for eligibility determinations.

16. SCS shall be responsible for resolution of program review and audit findings.

17. SCS shall implement the *Traditional Menu Planning Approach provision* at the food service site.

18. SCS shall adhere to a 21-day cycle menu. Meals must meet the nutrient standards for National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs for each age/grade group as appropriate.

19. SCS is responsible for providing meals and menus appropriate for the age of the students served and acceptable to students evidenced by a minimum plate waste and participation levels in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

20. SCS shall use its on-site and central kitchen facilities for preparation of food to be served. SCS shall provide all equipment to hold and serve the meals.

21. SCS must obtain and maintain all licenses, permits, and health certifications required by federal, state and local laws. SCS must obtain state or local health certification for any facility where meals are prepared or packaged. SCS shall maintain this health certification for the duration of this Agreement.

22. SCS must follow all HACCP procedures specified in its HACCP plan to include but not be limited to: maintenance of all preparation, holding and cooling temperature logs, following all SOPs, maintaining a food service facility checklist on a scheduled basis.

23. SCS is required to substitute food components of the meal pattern for students with disabilities in accordance with 7 C.F.R. § 15b when the disability restricts their diet and is permitted to make substitutions for students without disabilities when they are unable to eat regular meals because of a medical or special dietary need. Substitutions are made on a case-by-case basis and must be supported by a statement of the need for substitutes that includes the recommended alternate foods, unless otherwise exempted by the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA. In the case of a student with disabilities, the statement must be signed by a medical doctor. For students without disabilities, the statement must be signed by a recognized medical authority.

24. SCS shall keep full and accurate menu production records to substantiate that USDA menu planning requirements are met. These records include the specific menu items and condiments, the portion sizes, quantity of food or standardized recipes used to prepare the menu items, the number of portions of food sent to the School. In addition, nutrition facts must be provided to Tennessee Department of Education School Nutrition Program staff for

the nutrient analysis that is conducted as part of the administrative evaluation of the school nutrition program.

25. SCS will strictly comply with federal, state, and local building and safety codes. Equipment must meet all federal and state safety regulations for grounding of electrical equipment and for lockout/tag-out processes.

26. SCS shall provide all equipment required to maintain the safe transportation of the food while in SCS's vehicles. Food storage containers in SCS's vehicles shall maintain a temperature of 140 degrees Fahrenheit or more for hot food and 41 degrees Fahrenheit or less for cold food. Temperatures of meals shall be checked daily and recorded before leaving the SCS's kitchen. Temperature records shall be kept for three (3) years from the date they are made plus the present operating year.

27. SCS shall post menus at the Premises on a monthly basis, and shall keep such menus on file for a period of three (3) years from the date of use plus the present operating year. Food and meals provided by SCS shall meet USDA meal pattern requirements as to component and portion sizes.

28. SCS will comply with all Federal, state and local laws and regulations governing the preparation, handling, and serving of foods, sanitation, and to procure and keep in effect all necessary licenses, permits, and food handler's cards required by law, and to post such permits within the service areas in a prominent place as required by law.

29. SCS agrees to maintain conditions of sanitation and cleanliness. SCS further agrees that SCS's premises and services, as well as the food prepared by SCS, shall at all times be subject to inspection by an authorized, capable person or persons designated by the ASD.

30. SCS shall retain title of all purchased food and nonfood items.

31. When an emergency prevents the SCS from delivering meals, the SCS shall notify the ASD authorized representative or his/her designee immediately by phone indicating the reasons for the need for substitution.

14-15 Accountabil	Due Month	Requestor	Requestor	Item Name	Description	Resources (References and Templates)					
x	July	Compliance Manager	Chantavia Burton	Civil Rights and Bullying Survey	Tennessee (T.C.A. §49-6-4501) requirement to report civil rights and bullying statistics to the TDOE on an annual basis	template					
x	July	Compliance Manager	Chantavia Burton	School-level Handbook	Must include discipline, grievance, truancy policies	district version; exemplar					
	July	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	School Improvement Plan	School plans are to be developed in consultation with the district, parents, community members and staff carrying out the plan. These plans are to be available for review by department.	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	July	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Family Engagement Plan	School shows development of document between parents/community	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	July	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	School Compact	School shows development and agreement of document between parents/community/principal/student	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	July	Student Information Manager	Zach Trout	Final School Calendar Uploaded and Accurate in EIS		Instructional Walkthroughs					
	July	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Federal Reimbursement Request	Schools must create and submit a reimbursement request packet and required supporting documentation to meet allowability requirements	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
x	July	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Q4 Federal Reimbursement Request	Schools must create and submit a reimbursement request packet and required supporting documentation to meet allowability requirements	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	July	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Q4 Personnel Activities Report (PARS)	This form is used by any employee(s) funded full time (100%) from more than one federal grant award. The building administrator must sign the form for all schoolwide programs	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	July	Portfolio Administrator	Vivian Hall	Operator List serve Updates	Complete the ASD Operator Listserv template and email back. Feel free to change role titles and add or delete roles as appropriate. Once we receive everyone's key contact information, we'll update the ASD	Form					
x	July	Employee Services Manager	Ashlee Button	Personnel Information Reporting System Report	All licensed personnel that were employed on December 1	Template and instructional guide					
	July	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	EOC (English I, II, and III; Algebra I, II; Biology; Chemis	summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards.	Test Administration Manual, Prep Logistical Spreadsheet					
	July	Chief Financial Officer	Isabella Wilson	E-Reporting (BEP and non-ASD funding sources)		Yes					
	July	Director of New Schools	Margo Roen	Memphis School Opening Support Requests	deadline to request assistance during a specific timeframe or on a specific task	Survey					
	August	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Strategies to attract HQ Teachers	Strategies listed should include all LEA and school based initiatives to support hiring highly qualified teachers to the school. The strategies should include local and state support in the process.	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	August	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Technical Assistance Report	List of LEA support staff that assist the school with parent or school wide programs, funding, and technology.	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	August	Chief Financial Officer	Isabella Wilson	Financial Forms for BEP and Federal Fund Payments		See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	August	Student Information Manager	Zach Trout	Staff and Schedule Uploaded and Accurate in EIS		Instructional Walkthroughs					
	August	Student Services Manager	Candice Miller	Annual Dropout Report	Collect count of students in grades 7-12, who drop out annually by grade, gender and ethnicity						
x	August	Chief Financial Officer	Isabella Wilson	Quarter 4 Financial Statement (from previous year)		Available, but also accept internal financial statements					
x	August	Compliance Manager	Chantavia Burton	SAVE Act Self-Assessment Survey	The SAVE (Schools Against Violence in Education) ACT requires that all schools in the State have a variety of initiatives, programs, and training in place to address issues around violence in education. To show	Template and instructional guide					
	August	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	Baseline School Culture & Safety Survey	The School Culture & Safety (SC&S) survey must be administered to students during the baseline, midyear and end-of-year MAP administration windows to gauge students' perceptions of school culture	Template					
	August	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	NWEA MAP	Three times per year formative, norm-referenced assessment of student growth in mathematics, reading, language (grade 2+) and science (grade 2+) from the beginning of the school year to the end.	Training Session					
	August	Student Information Manager	Zach Trout	Student Demographic Information Uploaded and Accurate in EIS		Instructional Walkthroughs					
x	August	Director of Operations	Troy Williams	SAVE Emergency Operation Plan	As part of the SAVE (Schools Against Violence in Education) Act compliance requirements, every school in TN is required to have a campus Emergency Management Plan.	Template					
	August	Director of Operations	Troy Williams	Fire Drill w/i first 15 days of school	The TN SAVE Act (Schools Against Violence in Education) establishes specific requirements for ensuring a safe school environment for all students. As part of the requirements, each school is responsible for	Template					
	September	Director of Operations	Troy Williams	Concussion Training for Coaches, Parents, and Studer	Must occur before the first team practice	currently collecting resources, training, etc					
	September	Student Information Manager	Zach Trout	Student Enrollment Uploaded and Accurate in EIS		Instructional Walkthroughs					
x	September	Student Services Manager	Candice Miller	W-APT Composite Worksheet	Combined results of the WIDA assessment taken by ELL students. It is used to determine the student academic needs	Form provided					
	September	Director of New Schools	Margo Roen	Quarterly i3 Milestones	Only i3 Recepients: Submission of ASD milestones outlined in MOU	MOU; Phone calls					
	September	Chief Operating Officer	Rich Haglund	Start-up School Survey	New Schools Only: Survey to provide feedback to support team regarding school opening processes	Survey					
	September	Director of Operations	Troy Williams	Intruder Drill w/i first 30 days of school	The TN SAVE Act (Schools Against Violence in Education) establishes specific requirements for ensuring a safe school environment for all students. As part of the requirements, each school is responsible for	Template					
	September	SPED Service Access Coordinator	Sharon Neely	Speech Language Teacher Standards Report	Listing of speech language teachers employed after AND prior to June 30, 2000 who do not hold a master's degree & steps taken to achieve one						
	September	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	EASYIEP to EIS ADM Monitoring	Monthly check to ensure EASYIEP data matches EIS ADM	No					
	September	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Annual Title 1 Meeting and Documentation	An Annual Title Meeting is convened to inform parents of the school's participation in the Title I program, the requirements of Title I, and the rights of parents to be involved.	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	September	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	School Practice Review Artifacts	Produce artifacts for before Annual School Practice Review	Training Session, Checklist					
	October	Director of Human Resources	Ashlee Button	District-wide Staff Licensure Check	Monitors district compliance with state laws & State Board of Ed rules & regulations related to required professional licensure (H)						
x	October	Student Services Manager	Candice Miller	Returned Occupational Surveys	All student Occupational Survey forms indicating a positive response must be scanned and emailed to Student Services Mgr, who will send to state for compliance.	Template					
	October	Director of Operations	Troy Williams	Suicide Prevention Training	TN State law requires all teachers and principals to participate in two hours of Suicide Prevention training every year. The training can be in many forms: formal workshop, webinars, reading materials,	Training offered					
x	October	Student Information Manager	Zach Trout	EIS Enrollment Accuracy Maintained at 97%							
	October	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Non-Highly Qualified Letters Mailed to parents	All staff (teachers/parapros) must meet the Highly Qualified status requirement by the state. If this requirement has not been met, the school must send parents notice if they have been instructed full-	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	October	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Professional Development Plan	All high quality professional development expenditures should be outlined within the school TSIP and/or separate Professional Development Plan	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	October	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	Special Education User Security Cleanup	State requirement to convert all users to state standardized user types	Form					
x	October	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Q1 Federal Reimbursement Request	Schools must create and submit a reimbursement request packet and required supporting documentation to meet allowability requirements	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					
	October	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Q1 Personnel Activities Report (PARS)	This form is used by any employee(s) funded full time (100%) from more than one federal grant award. The building administrator must sign the form for all schoolwide programs	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents					

14-15 Accountabil	Due Month	Requestor	Requestor	Item Name	Description	Resources (References and Templates)
	October	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	EASYIEP to EIS ADM Monitoring	Monthly check to ensure EASYIEP data matches EIS ADM	None
	October	Office Manager	Stewart Brevard	CODE Teacher Roster Updates	Submit teacher evaluation system and required information for upload into the State's CODE database to track teacher evaluation scores	Template
x	October	Student Services Manager	Candice Miller	Homeless Needs Assessments	Identifies the needs of families who have been identified as homeless	None
	October	Chief Financial Officer	Isabella Wilson	Annual Audit (from previous year)	Submission of the annual audit. Submission of audit must include a final trial balance in the TNCOA structure.	None
	October	SPED Manager	Katie McPherson	Special Education File Review		Indicator Checklist
	October	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	SIG Milestone Report	Milestone reports are completed by schools that monitor the effective use of SIG award funds.	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	November	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	PLAN, EXPLORE	diagnostic assessment of college readiness in preparation for the ACT.	Test Administration Manual
	November	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Teacher Mentoring Plan	A plan to adequately support new or novice teachers in the school building.	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	November	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Transition Plan for Students Promoting to New Grade	The school developed programs in place for entering and exiting students. This may include but not limited to Pre-K to Kindergarten students, elementary to middle school students, middle to high school	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
x	November	Employee Services Manager	Ashlee Button	Personnel Information Reporting System Report	All licensed personnel that were employed on December 1	Template and instructional guide
x	November	Chief Financial Officer	Isabella Wilson	Quarter 1 Financial Statement		Available, but also accept internal financial statements
	November	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	EASYIEP to EIS ADM Monitoring	Monthly check to ensure EASYIEP data matches EIS ADM	None
x	November	SPED Manager	Katie McPherson	EASYIEP Compliance Accuracy	Schools must report 100% on Dec. 1 for federal reporting	Special Education Compliance Toolkit
	November	Compliance Manager	Chantavia Burton	Grades PK-12 Preliminary School Reports of Class Size	Monitors district and school compliance with state laws & State Board of Ed rules & regulations related to class size (H)	
	December	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	Mid-Year School Culture & Safety Survey	The School Culture & Safety (SC&S) survey must be administered to students during the baseline, midyear and end-of-year MAP administration windows to gauge students' perceptions of school culture	Survey Instructions; Hard copies available
	December	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	NWEA MAP	Three times per year formative, norm-referenced assessment of student growth in mathematics, reading, language (grade 2+) and science (grade 2+) from the beginning of the school year to the end.	Training Session
	December	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	EOC (English I, II, and III; Algebra I, II; Biology; Chemis	summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards.	Test Administration Manual, Prep Logistical Spreadsheet
	December	Director of New Schools	Margo Roen	Quarterly i3 Milestones	Only i3 Recepients: Submission of ASD milestones outlined in MOU	MOU; Phone calls
	December	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	EASYIEP to EIS ADM Monitoring	Monthly check to ensure EASYIEP data matches EIS ADM	None
	December	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Consolidated State Performance Report	CSPR, Part 1 submission Report for Title 1 Schools	
	January	Portfolio Analyst	Kristina Catani	Mid-year Parent Survey with Common, Portfolio-Wid	we'd like to have one common parent satisfaction question across all campuses this year. Parent satisfaction is part of the ASD's strategic performance framework, and while we don't require everyone	Template
	January	Director of New Schools	Margo Roen	TN Department of Education School Approval form fo	NEW, CLOSING, or GRADE RECONFIG SCHOOLS ONLY: Collects demographics on regions, districts, and schools including location, contact information, grades, programs, history	School Opening Checklist, Form
x	January	Employee Services Manager	Ashlee Button	Annual Statistical Report	Unlicensed personnel – including unlicensed Teachers and Principals - should be included in the headcount totals on the Annual Statistical Report	Template and instructional guide
x	January	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Q2 Federal Reimbursement Request	Schools must create and submit a reimbursement request packet and required supporting documentation to meet allowability requirements	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	January	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Q2 Personnel Activities Report (PARS)	This form is used by any employee(s) funded full time (100%) from more than one federal grant award. The building administrator must sign the form for all schoolwide programs	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	January	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Semi-Annual Certification	This form is used by any employee(s) funded full time (100%) from (100%) from a single federal grant award. In a Schoolwide program all certificated staff must be included. The building administrator must	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	January	Chief Operating Officer	Rich Haglund	Mid-year Support Team Survey	the ASD's support team is anxious to receive your feedback on our services to you and your CMO/school leadership teams in accordance with the service commitments that we've made	None
	January	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	EASYIEP to EIS ADM Monitoring	Monthly check to ensure EASYIEP data matches EIS ADM	None
	January	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Title 1 Internal Monitoring for all schools	Monitoring completed by ASD Federal Programs staff to check for compliance in Federal Programs spending and TSIP documentation	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
x	February	SPED Manager	Katie McPherson	Alternative Portfolio Binders	Schools must send in Portfolio Alt. Binders	Checklist
	February	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	ACCESS for Els	assessment of English proficiency for students who are English Language Learners (ELL).	Test Administration Manual
	February	SPED Manager	Katie McPherson	TCAP Alt. Portfolios to TDE - Leadership Assurance	The CEO or CAO of each operator is required to submit this online assurance that you understand and will meet the State's TCAP Alt Portfolio direct submission requirements	None
x	February	Chief Financial Officer	Isabella Wilson	Quarter 2 Financial Statement		Available, but also accept internal financial statements
x	February	SPED Manager	Katie McPherson	Testing Accommodations Assurance	Districts are required to ensure all students who qualify (via 504 or IEP) receive appropriate testing accommodations on all assessments, including state-wide assessments. Each Operator's Special	None
	February	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	EASYIEP to EIS ADM Monitoring	Monthly check to ensure EASYIEP data matches EIS ADM	None
	February	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	TCAP Writing	writing assessment that includes two passages; one analytic summary essay, and one opinion essay. Administered online via MIST.	Test Administration Manual, Prep Logistical Spreadsheet
x	February	Student Services Manager	Candice Miller	Summer School Plans	Plan that outlines operators' summer school planning for credit recovery	Yes, student support working group creating decision flowchart; template exists (defining credit recovery vs. enrichment)
	February	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	SIG Milestone Report	Milestone reports are completed by schools that monitor the effective use of SIG award funds.	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	March	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	ACT	national college readiness exam that measures high school achievement and is used in the college admissions process.	Test Administration Manual
	March	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	NAEP	National assessment: some ASD students may participate in this assessment if included in the sample of TN's students. Students are assessed in Reading, Math, or Science.	Test Administration Manual
	March	Student Services Manager	Candice Miller	ESL WIDA Assessment	All students indicating a language other than English on the Home Language Survey (completed by all new students at registration) must be assessed using the WIDA and by an ESL endorsed/certified	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	March	Director of New Schools	Margo Roen	Quarterly i3 Milestones	Only i3 Recepients: Submission of ASD milestones outlined in MOU	MOU; Phone call
	March	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	EASYIEP to EIS ADM Monitoring	Monthly check to ensure EASYIEP data matches EIS ADM	No
	March	Compliance Manager	Chantavia Burton	Grades PK-12 School Reports of Class Size Compliance	Monitors district and school compliance with state laws & State Board of Ed rules & regulations related to class size (H)	
x	March	SPED Manager	Katie McPherson	Extended School Year Assurance	Operators are required to design Extended School Year programing for students who meet ESYP qualifications. The CEO or CAO of each operator is required to submit this online assurance that you	No

14-15 Accountabil	Due Month	Requestor	Requestor	Item Name	Description	Resources (References and Templates)
	March	Portfolio Analyst	Kristina Catani	Student Enrollment Projections	Each school's projected student enrollment in accordance with the ASD's enrollment policy have significant service, financial, and state-mandated lottery implications for schools, operators, and the	Template
	April	Accounting Manager	Amy Sharp	Special Education Expenditure Report	The State of Tennessee requires the ASD to provide documentation of what it spends on Special Education for maintenance of effort purposes. Using the attached Excel spreadsheet, all 2012-13	
x	April	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Q3 Federal Reimbursement Request	Schools must create and submit a reimbursement request packet and required supporting documentation to meet allowability requirements	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	April	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Q3 Personnel Activities Report (PARS)	This form is used by any employee(s) funded full time (100%) from more than one federal grant award. The building administrator must sign the form for all schoolwide programs	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	April	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	EASYIEP to EIS ADM Monitoring	Monthly check to ensure EASYIEP matches EIS ADM	No
x	April	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	TCAP and EOC Testing Plans	Submission of complete, thorough plan for TCAP/EOC administration and timely adjustments to any feedback/concerns	Template; Exemplar
	April	SPED Manager	Katie McPherson	Special Education File Review		Indicator Checklist
	May	Chief Financial Officer	Isabella Wilson	Annual Budget, incl Federal Programs (for upcoming SY)		Yes
	May	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	TCAP (Reading, Math, and Science)	summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards.	Test Administration Manual, Prep Logistical Spreadsheet
	May	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	EOC (English I, II, and III; Algebra I, II; Biology; Chemis	summative assessment of student achievement on grade-level TN learning standards.	Test Administration Manual, Prep Logistical Spreadsheet
	May	Employee Services Manager	Ashlee Button	Contact Info for HR, Licensing and TCRS Reporting	Please send contact information (name, title, mailing address, phone number, e-mail) for the following functions at your organization: Human Resources, Licensing, and TCRS Reporting (if separate campuses	NONE
x	May	Chief Financial Officer	Isabella Wilson	Quarter 3 Financial Statement		Available, but also accept internal financial statements
	May	SPED Program Analyst	Jessica Davis	EASYIEP to EIS ADM Monitoring	Monthly check to ensure EASYIEP data matches EIS ADM	No
	May	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	EOY School Culture & Safety Survey	The School Culture & Safety (SC&S) survey must be administered to students during the baseline, midyear and end-of-year MAP administration windows to gauge students' perceptions of school culture	Survey Instructions; Hard copies available
	May	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	NWEA MAP	Three times per year formative, norm-referenced assessment of student growth in mathematics, reading, language (grade 2+) and science (grade 2+) from the beginning of the school year to the end.	Training Session
	May	Portfolio Analyst	Kristina Catani	EOY Parent Survey with Common, Portfolio-Wide Que	Parent satisfaction is part of the ASD's school performance framework, and while we don't require everyone to use a common parent survey, we do require Operators to include in their school surveys	Template
	May	Student Information Manager	Zach Trout	Final District Calendar Uploaded and Accurate in EIS		Instructional Walkthroughs
	May	SPED Manager	Katie McPherson	EASYIEP Compliance Accuracy	Schools must report 100% by EOY for federal reporting	Special Education Compliance Toolkit
x	May	SPED Manager	Katie McPherson	Special Education End of Year Reporting	Schools must submit End of Year reporting requirements including: Referral Data, Isolation/Reporting Data, Personnel Employed, Transportation Requests for 2015-16 school year	Yes
	May	Assessment Coordinator	Kaitlin Reynolds	Student Demographics and Teacher-Student Connect	verification of student demographic information, and matching of teacher-student relationships for state assessments	Training Session
	May	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	SIG Milestone Report	Milestone reports are completed by schools that monitor the effective use of SIG award funds.	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	June	Chief Operating Officer	Rich Haglund	EOY Support Team Survey		no templates; questions are being altered this year
x	June	Compliance Manager	Chantavia Burton	SAVE Act School Safety Log	The TN SAVE Act (Schools Against Violence in Education) establishes specific requirements for ensuring a safe school environment for all students. As part of the requirements, each school is responsible for	template
	June	Student Information Manager	Zach Trout	Student Final Grade and End of Service Uploaded and Accurate in EIS		Instructional Walkthroughs
	June	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	Semi-Annual Certification	This form is used by any employee(s) funded full time (100%) from (100%) from a single federal grant award. In a Schoolwide program all certificated staff must be included. The building administrator must	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	June	Director of New Schools	Margo Roen	Quarterly i3 Milestones	Only i3 Recepients: Submission of ASD milestones outlined in MOU	MOU; Phone call
	June	Student Information Manager	Zach Trout	Student Demographic Information Uploaded and Accurate in EIS		Instructional Walkthroughs
	June	Student Information Manager	Zach Trout	Student Enrollment Uploaded and Accurate in EIS		Instructional Walkthroughs
x	June	Federal Programs Manager	Marceia Ashe	SIG Milestone EOY Report	End of Year Report for all school's that have received School Improvement Grant	See Federal Programs Reference Guide and Sample Resource Documents
	June	Student Services Manager	Candice Miller	Annual Alternative Education Survey	Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-3402 mandates "at least one (1) alternative school shall be established and available for students in grades seven through twelve (7-12) who have been suspended or expelled."	Yes

School Performance Framework (K-8)

FINANCE

30-days Cash On Hand	Yes	No
Current Ratio of 1.1	Yes	No
Clean Financial Audit	Yes	No
Rating		

COMPLIANCE (Compliant or Non-compliant)

Access- SPED	Access- Migrant/ Homeless	Access- Alt. Ed.	Access- ESL	Student Safety	School Culture
C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC
State Reporting	Finance- District Reporting	Finance- Federal Programs	Enrollment	Grievance	Assessments
C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	Measure	2014 Result or Baseline	To Exceed (100% of pts)	To Meet (80% of pts)	To Approach (60% of pts)	Did Not Meet (40% of pts)	Ratings/Points
Mission	Reward Success Rate Max: 15 pts		Zone ≥ Yrs 15 pts	Zone = Yrs 12 pts	Zone = Yrs − 1 9 pts	Zone < Yrs − 1 6 pts	_pts
School Progress	Progress on Math SSR Max: 10 pts		+12 or Zone ≥ yrs 10 pts	+10 or Zone = yrs 8 pts	+8 or Zone = Yrs-1 6 pts	< +8 or Zone < Yrs-1 4 pts	_pts
School Progress	Progress on RLA SSR Max: 10 pts		+12 or Zone ≥ yrs 10 pts	+10 or Zone = yrs 8 pts	+8 or Zone = Yrs-1 6 pts	< +8 or Zone < Yrs-1 4 pts	_pts
School Progress	Progress on Science SSR Max: 10 pts		+12 or Zone ≥ yrs 10 pts	+10 or Zone = yrs 8 pts	+8 or Zone = Yrs-1 6 pts	< +8 or Zone < Yrs-1 4 pts	_pts
Student Progress	Student Progress toward Prof (Increasing 1 sub band) Max: 17.5 pts		≥ 60% of students 17.5 pts	50% of students 14 pts	35% of students 10.5 pts	< 35% of students 7 pts	_pts
Student Progress	TVAAS (Composite) Max: 17.5 pts		Level 5 17.5 pts	Level 4 14 pts	Level 3 10.5 pts	Level 2 or 1 7 pts	_pts
Gateway	Reading Lexiles (1.5 years of growth or on grade level) Max: 10 pts		≥ 60% of students 10 pts	50% of students 8 pts	35% of students 6 pts	< 35% of students 4 pts	_pts
Equity	Achievement Gap Closure- Math Max: 1.7 pts	SWD, FRL, ELL, BHN (n count > 30)	≥10% Gap Closure 1.7 pts	6.25% Gap Closure 1.3 pts	5% Gap Closure 1.0 pts	< 5% Gap Closure 0.7 pts	_pts
Equity	Achievement Gap Closure- RLA Max: 1.7 pts	SWD, FRL, ELL, BHN (n count > 30)	≥10% Gap Closure 1.7 pts	6.25% Gap Closure 1.3 pts	5% Gap Closure 1.0 pts	< 5% Gap Closure 0.7 pts	_pts
Equity	Proficiency of Subgroups- Math Max: 1.1 pts	SWD, FRL, ELL, BHN (n count > 30)	+12 or Zone ≥ yrs 1.1 pts	+10 or Zone = yrs 0.9 pts	+8 or Zone = Yrs-1 0.7 pts	< +8 or Zone < Yrs-1 0.4 pts	_pts
Equity	Proficiency of Subgroups- RLA Max: 1.1 pts	SWD, FRL, ELL, BHN (n count > 30)	+12 or Zone ≥ yrs 1.1 pts	+10 or Zone = yrs 0.9 pts	+8 or Zone = Yrs-1 0.7 pts	< +8 or Zone < Yrs-1 0.4 pts	_pts
Equity	Proficiency of Subgroups- Science Max: 1.1 pts	SWD, FRL, ELL, BHN (n count > 30)	+12 or Zone ≥ yrs 1.1 pts	+10 or Zone = yrs 0.9 pts	+8 or Zone = Yrs-1 0.7 pts	< +8 or Zone < Yrs-1 0.4 pts	_pts
Equity	Student Progress towards Prof- Subgroups (Increasing 1 sub band) Max: 3.3 pts	(n count > 30)	≥ 60% of students 3.3 pts	50% of students 2.6 pts	35% of students 2.0 pts	< 35% of students 1.3 pts	____ pts

Rating	
Points Earned	____ pts

Possible Final Ratings: Exceeding (89.5 pts-100 pts), Meeting (69.5 pts-89.4 pts), Approaching (49.5 pts-69.4 pts), Did Not Meet (0 pts-49.4 pts)

School Performance Framework (K-2 Phase-in)

FINANCE

30-days Cash On Hand	Yes	No
Current Ratio of 1.1	Yes	No
Clean Financial Audit	Yes	No
Rating		

COMPLIANCE (Compliant or Non-compliant)

Access- SPED	Access- Migrant/ Homeless	Access- Alt. Ed.	Access- ESL	Student Safety	School Culture
C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC
State Reporting	Finance- District Reporting	Finance- Federal Programs	Enrollment	Grievance	Assessments
C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC	C NC

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	Measure	2014 Result or Baseline	To Exceed (100% of pts)	To Meet (80% of pts)	To Approach (60% of pts)	Did Not Meet (40% of pts)	Ratings/Points
Academics	MAP School Growth Percentile Max: 25 pts		≥ 90% 25 pts	70% 20 pts	50% 15 pts	< 50% 10 pts	_pts
	MAP Target Attainment Max: 25 pts		≥ 90% 25 pts	70% 20 pts	50% 15 pts	< 50% 10 pts	_pts
Culture	Attendance Max: 10 pts		≥ 97% 10 pts	95% 8 pts	93% 6 pts	< 93% 4 pts	_pts
	Student Survey- Safety Max: 5 pts		≥ 95% 5 pts	85% 4 pts	75% 3 pts	< 75% 2 pts	_pts
	Student Survey- Positive Environment Max: 5 pts		≥ 95% 5 pts	85% 4 pts	75% 3 pts	< 75% 2 pts	_pts
	Parent Survey % parents rating school A or B Max: 10 pts		≥ 95% 10 pts	85% 8 pts	75% 6 pts	< 75% 4 pts	_pts
	Intra-year persistence Max: 10 pts		≥ 95% 10 pts	85% 8 pts	75% 6 pts	< 75% 4 pts	_pts
	Inter-year persistence Max: 10 pts		≥ 95% 10 pts	85% 8 pts	75% 6 pts	< 75% 4 pts	_pts

Rating	
Points Earned	____ pts

Possible Final Ratings: Exceeding (89.5 pts-100 pts), Meeting (69.5 pts-89.4 pts), Approaching (49.5 pts-69.4 pts), Did Not Meet (0 pts-49.4 pts)