

**Arkansas Department of Education**  
**Adult Education Public Charter School**  
**2016 Application**

**SCORING RUBRIC**

**PART A      GENERAL INFORMATION**

Name of Proposed Charter School: The Excel Center

Eligible Entity Status:

- ☐ Public institution of higher education
- ☐ Private nonsectarian institution of higher education governmental entity
- ☐ Nonsectarian organization exempt from taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code
- ☐ **Nonsectarian organization that has applied for exemption from taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code**
- ☐ No evidence of eligibility

**IF EVIDENCE OF ELIGIBILITY TO APPLY IS NOT INCLUDED, NO FURTHER REVIEW OF THE APPLICATION WILL OCCUR.**

**Please see attached copy of the IRS 501 (c) (3) determination letter for Goodwill Arkansas Education Initiatives, Inc.**

**PART B      EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Arkansas Department of Education requires all applicants to include an executive summary.

*Evaluation Criteria:*

- A mission statement (with content to be evaluated for Prompt #3 of Part C); and
- The key programmatic features of the proposed charter school

**Fully Responsive**

## **PART C    NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED CHARTER**

### **C1: PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS**

All proposed school design teams must conduct a public hearing before applying for an adult education charter school, to assess support for the school's establishment. Applicants are asked both to document the logistics of the hearing and to include a narrative of the hearing results.

#### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- A thorough description of the results of the public hearing;
- Evidence of public support exhibited at the hearing; and
- Documentation of required notices published to garner public attention to the hearing

**Fully Responsive**

### **C2: GOVERNING STRUCTURE**

The Governing Structure section should explain how the school will be governed. It should present a clear picture of the school's governance processes and composition, what responsibilities various groups and people will have and the relationships among the groups.

#### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- Documentation of proper legal structure of the governing board and sponsoring entity;
- A comprehensive description of the planned relationship between the governing board of the school and governing board of the sponsoring entity;
- A clear description of the governing board's roles and responsibilities;
- Adequate policies and procedures for board operation, including board composition, member term length, and member selection;
- A clear, sensible delineation of roles and responsibilities in relation to governance and school management; and
- A reasonable plan for involving parents/friends, staff, students, community, and business leaders in the decision- making of the school

**Fully Responsive**

### **C3: MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission Statement should be meaningful and indicate what the school intends to do, for whom, and to what degree.

#### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- A mission statement that is clear and succinct

**Fully Responsive**

### **C4: EDUCATIONAL NEED**

The Educational Need section should explain the need for a charter school in the proposed location and the innovative educational option offered by the charter school.

#### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- Valid, reliable, and verifiable data substantiate an educational need for the charter;
- Partnerships with a state-sponsored two year institution of higher education, if anticipated; and
- Innovations that would distinguish the charter from other schools

**Fully Responsive**

**Concerns and Additional Questions:** Provide the MOU between Goodwill and Pulaski Technical College.

**Applicant Response:** The MOU is provided as an attachment.

## C5: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

The Academic Achievement Goals section should define the performance expectations for students and the school as whole and support the charter's mission.

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

- Specific goals in reading and mathematics that are clear, measurable, and attainable;
- Valid and reliable assessment tools to be used to measure the goals;
- Attainment of the goals demonstrate that the charter is meeting the identified educational need for the school and fulfilling its mission;
- Comprehensive plan, including performance criteria and measurement, of how the school will meet the industry needs for a sufficiently trained workforce in the state; and
- Clear strategy for engaging the community, including business leaders, in carrying out the goals and objectives of the school

### **Fully Responsive**

## C6: SCHEDULE OF COURSES OFFERED

The Schedule of Courses Offered section should describe the schedules for a week at the elementary level and courses offered at each grade at the secondary level.

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

- Evidence that the charter school meets minimum state requirements of courses offered at appropriate grade levels

### **Partially Responsive**

### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Confirm and list the required 38 courses to be offered on an annual basis.
- Confirm that the charter, if approved, will work with the ADE and ACE to receive course approval for any unapproved and/or blended courses or replace those courses with approved courses.

**Applicant Response:** The Excel Center recognizes and understands the 38 courses to be offered on an annual basis. These courses are provided in the following table.

	Course	Number of Units
English:		
	English 9	1
	English 10	1

	English 11	1
	English 12	1
<b>Mathematics:</b>		
	Algebra I (or Algebra A & B)	1
	Geometry	1
	Algebra II	1
	Choice of at least 1 of the following: Transitions to College Math, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Trigonometry, Statistics, Computer Math, Algebra III, or Advanced Placement Math	Total of 1
<b>Natural Science:</b>		
	Choice of at least 3 of the following (including lab experience): Physical Science, Biology or Applied Biology/Chemistry, Chemistry, Physics or Principals of Technology I & II or PIC Physics	Total of 3
<b>Social Studies:</b>		
	Civics or Civics/American Government	1
	World History	1
	American History	1
<b>Other:</b>		
	Oral Communications	.5
	Physical Education  <i>Note: The Excel Center has requested to waive the PE requirement</i>	.5
	Health and Safety	.5
	Fine Arts	.5
<b>Career Focus:</b>		
	The Excel Center will offer dual credit and industry certification courses (including computer science) in partnership with Pulaski Technical College. These courses will conform to The Excel Center policies and reflect state frameworks through course sequencing and career course concentrations where appropriate.	Total of 6

In addition to the courses outlined, above, The Excel Center will provide remedial English and math courses to students whose diagnostic assessment scores (at enrollment) indicate they are not working at a high school level. In such instances, students will be placed in remedial courses which will not result in high school credits. Students will not begin earning high school credit until they have reached at least a 9<sup>th</sup> grade level in English or Algebra I in mathematics.

Furthermore, The Excel Center's curriculum integrates material across disciplines so that one course combines academic standards, allowing students to earn credit in multiple areas while attending one class. For example, The Excel Center features a World Studies A course, which combines English 9

with World History. The Excel Center will work with the ADE and ACE to receive course approval for any unapproved and/or blended courses or replace those courses with approved courses.

**Remaining Concerns:**

- The course offerings for Science, Social Studies, and Fine Arts are lacking one full credit.
- Given that only a half credit of drama is to be offered, a half credit of journalism also needs to be offered.

## **C7: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

The Educational Program section should describe the educational foundation of the school and the teaching and learning strategies that will be employed.

***Evaluation Criteria:***

- A clear description of the proposed educational program, including but not limited to the foundational educational philosophy and curricular and instructional strategies to be employed;
- An educational program with ample resources to ensure that students achieve academic goals and excel;
- Revenue to pay for all curriculum expenses as outlined in the budget; and
- A description of the grade levels and maximum enrollment, by year, if the charter plans to grow over time

### **Fully Responsive**

**Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Clarify how much instruction will be face-to-face direct instruction and how much instruction will be provided via technology.

**Applicant Response:** The Excel Center is designed to maximize the amount of face-to-face instruction (to the extent possible) provided to each student. The amount of instruction provided via technology is determined on a student-by-student basis, based on the student's ability and courses needed to earn a high school diploma according to his/her transcript.

New students to The Excel Center will take a battery of assessments upon enrolling; the results of which (combined with a review of previous high school transcripts) determine course placements. Students performing below a high school level and in need of remediation, are enrolled in remedial course which provide instruction in a blended environment where some of the instruction is provided via technology. Placement assessments in humanities include the Reading Inventory (RI) -- which generates a Lexile score for reading -- and the Phonics Inventory (PI) for students whose Lexile measure is below 600.

Students whose Lexile score is below 600 and whose SPI score indicates that the root cause of reading difficulty is an inability to decode will be placed into Developmental Reading 1, The Excel Center's foundational reading course that utilizes the Scholastic System 44 program. While working to increase students' ability to read increasingly complex text, System 44 is aligned to critical

components of CCSS, including incorporating classic and contemporary literature, informational and primary source texts, and rigorous text-based questioning.

Students whose Lexile score is between 400 and 1000 or whose PI score indicates that the root cause of reading difficulty is not an inability to decode will be placed into Developmental Reading 2, a reading course designed for students reading two or more years below grade level. Developmental Reading 2 utilizes Scholastic READ 180, a program proven by scientifically-based research to raise reading achievement for struggling readers. The goal of Developmental Reading 2 is to accelerate the acquisition of literacy skills so that students can access grade-level standards. READ 180 incorporates the goals of the CCSS: that students are able to read, question, comprehend, and respond to increasingly complex texts. Students taking Developmental Reading II will earn one elective credit for the course per 8-week term.

The Excel Center uses a similar approach in its mathematics sequence and offerings. Upon enrollment, students will take a locally development standards-aligned that determines their placement into The Excel Center mathematics course progression. The placement test is standards-aligned and consists of two parts: part one assesses students on grades 2-5 Common Core mathematics standards, and part two assesses students in grades 6- 8 Common Core mathematics standards. The placement assessment is built into the Blackboard Learn learning management system, and because each item is aligned to particular standards, the Blackboard Learn program provides disaggregated data regarding student mastery of standards and their individual strengths and areas of need.

Students who do not demonstrate mastery of the content and skill necessary for success in Algebra I place into Math Lab A (grades 2-5 equivalency) or Math Lab B (grades 6-8 equivalency). These courses focus on deep understanding and mastery of the essential skills and concepts necessary to unlock algebra and advanced mathematics. They are built around a focused and coherent curriculum that enables students to progress swiftly and successful toward the high school level curriculum.

Additionally, upon review of a student's transcript, credit recovery courses may be provided to students when it is determined that students have earned a partial credit in a course, and the student needs time to complete the course, but it may not be the best use of a student's time to dedicate an entire 8-weeks to a course.

In instances where students are enrolled in these remedial or credit recovery courses, it should be noted that these courses are staffed with a staff member to provided assistance to students and answer questions.

With the exception of limited credit recovery courses, all high school credit bearing classes are provided to students via face-to-face instruction.

## C8: CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

The Curriculum Alignment section should define the process by which the charter will ensure that the curriculum aligns with Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and state standards.

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

- Evidence that the applicant has a process to ensure all curriculum materials , used in the educational program, align with the Arkansas Department of Education’s curriculum frameworks and the state standards

### **Fully Responsive**

### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Confirm how often the “regular revisions to ensure rigor and alignment to CCSS and Arkansas standards” will occur.

**Applicant Response:** A formal review of curriculum is done on at least an annual basis and revisions are planned, as needed, based on the review. Additionally student performance data is reviewed on a term-by-term basis which may bring awareness to curricular issues. In any such event, curriculum may be revised on an ad hoc basis in order to be immediately responsive to student needs.

## C9: STUDENT SERVICES

The Student Services section should describe how the school will address specific services for its student body.

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

A description of the ways in which the following services will be provided to students **even in each area for which a waiver is requested:**

- A guidance program that will serve all students;
- A health services program that will serve all students;
- A plan for a media center for use by all students;
- Sound plans for educating special education students that reflect the full range of programs and services required to provide such students with a high quality education;
- A transportation plan that will serve all **eligible** students;
- An alternative education plan for eligible students, including those determined to be at-risk and to offer access to one or more approved Alternative Learning Environments;
- A plan to serve students who are English language learners; and
- Plans for a gifted and talented program for eligible students

### **Fully Responsive**



### Concerns and Additional Questions:

- On part D, please provide the beginning of the sentence.
- Verify that a licensed special education teacher will be the “dedicated teacher of record” for students with disabilities.
- In regards to the bus pass, explain what is meant by “when needed” or what determines who is in need.
- Provide the minimum qualifications for the ELL Coordinator.
- Provide any formalized agreements between The Excel Center (or Goodwill) and community resources, like Harmony Health and Esperanza Clinic.

**Applicant Response:** The first sentence of Part D (Special Education) should read: “Students arrive at The Excel Center at a variety of levels, and The Excel Center’s structure is designed to provide the appropriate instructional method to meet their unique needs.”

The “dedicated teacher of record” described in Part D will be a licensed special education teacher.

Bus passes are provided to any student whose household would qualify for Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch. Although The Excel Center does not participate in the federal lunch program, it uses Free or Reduced Lunch status as the means of determining whether an individual’s income qualifies the student to automatically receive a bus pass. Additionally, in instances where a student’s life coach determines that transportation may be a barrier to the student attending school, a bus pass may be issued to the student on a case-by-case basis.

Minimum qualifications for the ELL Coordinator: The ELL Coordinator has all the same qualifications as any other instructor in the school, and also has an English as a Second Language Licensure Endorsement.

Goodwill does not have a formalized agreement with Harmony Health or with Esperanza Clinic, but has been making referrals to those organizations for many years. Our clients have always received prompt and excellent care.

### C10: GEOGRAPHICAL SERVICE AREA

The Geographical Service Area section must outline the impact of a new school opening within the current public education system.

#### *Evaluation Criteria:*

- The specific geographical area that would be served by the charter school

**Fully Responsive**

## C11: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS

The Annual Progress Reports section should define how the academic progress of individual students and the school as a whole will be measured, analyzed, and reported.

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

- A timeline for data compilation and completion of an annual report to parents and/or students, the community, business leaders, and the authorizer that outlines the school's progress; and
- A plan for dissemination of the annual report to appropriate stakeholders

**Fully Responsive**

## C12: ENROLLMENT CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

The Enrollment Criteria and Procedures section should describe how the school will attract and enroll its student body, including any criteria for admission and enrollment. Applicants must also describe the random, anonymous lottery selection process.

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

- A student recruitment plan that will provide equal opportunity for all parents and/or students to learn about and apply to the school;
- An enrollment and admissions process that is open, fair, and in accordance with applicable law;
- A clear and transparent to the public process for, and a guarantee of, an annual random, anonymous lottery process should there be more student applications than can be accommodated under the terms of the charter;
- The method by which parents and/or students will be notified of each student's selection for the school or placement on the waiting list; and
- The effect students leaving the charter throughout the school year will have on the students on the waiting list

**Fully Responsive**

### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Explain if the lottery draw will be conducted manually or electronically.
- Clarify that it is the intention of The Excel Center to conduct a one-time lottery and then begin accepting students on a first-come-first-serve basis.

**Applicant Response:** A one-time enrollment lottery will be held on June 7, 2016. To maintain transparency with the public, the lottery will be held at a public location and will be open to the public. All individuals who submitted an enrollment application will be invited to attend. It will be monitored by a non-biased third party and a representative of the Arkansas Department of Education

will also be invited to attend. The lottery will be conducted manually and include all eligible individuals who submitted a timely enrollment application. These individuals will be assigned a number, and then numbers will be drawn at random to identify who will be enrolled in the school. Once all available spaces have been filled, numbers will continue to be drawn to determine the order in which individuals are placed on a waitlist. Individuals who attended the lottery will receive immediate notification of their admittance into the school or order on the waiting list. All individuals included in the lottery, including those who attended, in-person, will be notified by June 14, 2017 both in writing and with a phone call of their admittance into The Excel Center or their order on the waiting list.

After the lottery is complete, interested individuals may continue to apply but will continue to be placed on the waitlist in the order that their completed enrollment information is received. Once a student is enrolled in the school, the student will be afforded the opportunity to attend the school in successive years without having to re-apply or partake in the school's lottery process.

During The Excel Center's academic year, some students will leave the school (either by graduating or by withdrawing from the school). When this happens, the student's vacated space in the school is back-filled by students on the waiting list. The waiting list is maintained year-round and students will be enrolled in the school on an ongoing basis at the beginning of each 8-week term, based on their order on the waiting list and as seats become available.

Due to the ongoing nature of enrollment at The Excel Center as well as the school's extended-year calendar, The Excel Center will not conduct an annual lottery. Instead, The Excel Center proposes to conduct a one-time lottery during the first year of operation and continue to enroll students based on their order on the waiting list and a first-come-first serve basis in subsequent years.

**Remaining Concerns:** The lottery method described for enrollment places a preference on those who are able to apply for the school in the first year.

## **C13: PRIOR CHARTER INVOLVEMENT**

The Prior Charter Involvement section should identify all prior charter involvement, if any, for each individual connected with the proposed charter.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- A complete Prior Charter Involvement Template for each individual connected with the proposed charter; and
- Accurate data in each Prior Charter Involvement Template, including active links to assessment data

**Fully Responsive**

## **C14: STAFFING PLAN**

The Staffing Plan section should describe the job duties of the school director and other key personnel. This section should also describe the professional qualifications which will be required of employees.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- A job description for the school director and other key personnel, including but not limited to an operations director, board members, teachers, etc.;
- An outline of the professional qualifications required for administrators, teachers, counselors, etc.;
- A staffing plan that clearly outlines both the types and numbers of positions to be filled at the school and salary scales for such positions; and
- The staffing plan presented in this section matches the staff members noted in the budget

**Fully Responsive**

## **C15: BUSINESS AND BUDGETING PLAN**

The Business and Budgeting Plan section should describe how the charter school will organize its business office and manage its fiscal responsibilities.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- An appropriate plan for managing procurement activities;
- A description of the personnel who will perform business duties, including the requisite qualifications of any proposed personnel;
- A realistic timeline and process by which the governance structure will review and adopt an annual budget;
- A balanced two-year budget estimate that accurately reflects the revenue currently available to the school and expenditures for program implementation and does not rely on one-time grants or other funds that are not presently guaranteed;
- A budget that includes costs for all personnel, programs, and expenses described in other sections of the application;
- Plans to pay for unexpected but necessary expenses;
- An explanation of the calculations used to project the amounts of federal funding included in the budget; and
- A pledge of at least one-million dollars (\$1,000,000) , with no more than 25% allowed to be in-kind, to the school

**Fully Responsive**

### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Account for the following positions found in the staffing plan in the budget:
  - Director of Childcare
  - Childcare Assistant
  - SPED Paraprofessional

- Office Manager
- Explain if there will be any cost incurred to the applicant from potential students utilizing the services provided by Harmony Health and/or Esperanza Clinic. If there are costs involved, account for those potential costs in the budget.
- Address the following discrepancy: the budget only accounts for two life coaches and the enrollment cap request is for 125 students.

**Applicant Response:** The Director of Childcare is referred to in budget as Drop In Center Director. The Childcare Assistant corresponds to Drop In Center Staff. The SPED Paraprofessional was omitted in error and should be added to the budget for \$28,000 in 2017-18 and for \$29,120 in 2018-19. The Office Manager corresponds to Line 2 (Deans, Directors and Coordinators).

There will not be costs incurred by students utilizing the clinics, as they provide services at no charge.

The budget accounts for two life coaches because Excel Centers have operated successfully by staffing one life coach for every 50-80 students. The centers have found that this is a realistic caseload for counselors for a couple of reasons. First, as students enter the term or two before they graduate, they transition from their life coach to the CCR specialist, who is helping the student navigate college applications, financial aid, and scholarships, or job applications, interviewing, industry certification exams, etc. Also, they have found that although some students on the life coach's caseload will need to be in very regular communication and assistance, other students will have already developed self-efficacy and really only need a touch point once in a while.

**Remaining concerns:** A caseload of 50-80 students seems to be excessive for one person providing the level of support described in throughout the application.

## **C16: FINANCIAL AND PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT PLAN**

The Financial and Programmatic Audit Plan section should provide the procedure and timeline by which an annual audit will be conducted. This section should also include an outline for the information that will need to be reported to Arkansas Department of Education and the community.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- A sound plan for annually auditing school's financial and programmatic operations;
- If the application names an accountant other than the Division of Legislative Audit to perform the first-year audit, the named accountant meets the requirements of Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Publicly Funded Educational Institution Audit Requirements and is not listed on any ineligibility list maintained by Arkansas Department of Education or the Division of Legislative Audit.

**Fully Responsive**

## **C17: ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOL COMPUTER NETWORK ASSURANCES**

The Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Assurances section should provide documentation of the applicant's understanding of and participation in the required state finance and educational data reporting system.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- Assurance that the charter school will participate in APSCN and will comply with all state statutory requirements regarding the APSCN finance and educational data reporting system

**Fully Responsive**

**Not Responsive**

### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

**See legal comments.**

## **C18: FACILITIES**

The Facilities section should identify and describe the facilities to be used by the school, any changes to be made to the facilities, and the owners of the facilities.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- An identified facility appropriate to meet the needs of the school over the term of its charter;
- A realistic plan for remodeling or adapting a facility, if necessary, to ensure that it is appropriate and adequate for the school's program, the school's targeted population, and the public;
- Evidence that the school understands the costs of securing and improving a facility and has access to the necessary resources to fund the facility plan; and
- A sound plan for continued operation, maintenance, and repair of the facility

For schools that will be using district-owned facilities, a response that meets the standard will present:

- Documentation that the school district and charter school officials are in agreement over the use of the facility and its equipment

For schools that will NOT be using district-owned facilities, a response that meets the standard will present:

- Documentation that the property owner and school are in agreement over the use of the facility and its equipment;
- A statement of the facilities' compliance with applicable codes; and
- A detailed outline of any relationships between the property owner and:
  - Members of the local board of the public school district where the charter school will be

located;

- The employees of the public school district where the charter school will be located;
- The sponsor of the charter school; and
- Employees, directors and/or administrators of the charter school

**Fully Responsive**

**Partially Responsive**

**Not Responsive**

**Concerns and Additional Questions:**

**See legal comments.**

## **C19: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Conflicts of Interest section should identify any potential conflicts of interest among the individuals involved with the proposed charter school and explain how conflicts will be addressed.

***Evaluation Criteria:***

- Full disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest and an explanation of the ways in which conflicts, if any, will be addressed

**Fully Responsive**

## **C20: FOOD SERVICES**

This section should describe how the school will address food services for its student body.

***Evaluation Criteria:***

- A food service plan that will serve all eligible students; and
- An explanation of the criteria to be used to determine eligibility

**Fully Responsive**

## **C21: COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

The Community Support section should describe how the family and friends of enrolled students, the school employees, business leaders, and other members of the community will make a positive impact on the school and its educational program.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- A plan for involving family and friends in the school's education programs; and
- A proposal that involves the family and friends of students, employees, business leaders, and the broader community in carrying out the terms of the charter

**Fully Responsive**

## **C22: SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAM**

The Sustainability section should describe the applicant's plan to ensure continued success of the charter school over time.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- The plan to ensure the sustainability of the charter in the future

**Fully Responsive**

## **C23: DESEGREGATION ASSURANCES**

The Desegregation Assurances section should describe the applicant's understanding of applicable statutory and regulatory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- Assurance that the charter school will comply with all applicable federal and state statutory and regulatory requirements regarding the creation and maintenance of desegregated public schools; and
- An outline of the potential impact of the proposed charter school on those desegregation efforts already in place in affected public school districts

**Fully Responsive**

**Partially Responsive**

**Not Responsive**

### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

**See legal comments.**



## **C24: WAIVERS**

The Waivers section should discuss all waivers requested from local or state law.

### ***Evaluation Criteria:***

- Each law, rule, and standard by title, number, and description for which a waiver is requested;
- A rationale for each waiver requested; and
- An explanation of the way that each waiver would assist in implementing the educational program of the charter and/or fulfilling the charter's mission

**Fully Responsive**

**Partially Responsive**

**Not Responsive**

### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

**See legal comments.**