



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## 2019 Application Open-Enrollment Public Charter School

**Deadline for Receipt of Submission: Thursday, April 25, 2019, 4:00 p.m.**

**Applications will not be accepted after this time.**



**Name of Proposed Charter School:**

Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas

Any application that is substantially incomplete will not be forwarded to the authorizer for consideration. An application will be considered substantially incomplete if it does not provide enough information to enable staff at the Arkansas Department of Education to provide a meaningful review.

**Arkansas Department of Education  
Charter School Office  
Four Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR 72201  
501.683.5313**

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
2019 APPLICATION  
OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL**

**A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Name of Proposed Charter School: Hope Academy  
 Grade Level(s) for the School: K-6 Student Enrollment Cap: 70

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Grades to be Offered at the Charter	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-6	K-6
Enrollment Cap at the Charter	40	50	60	70	70

Name of Sponsoring Entity: Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter

Other Charter Schools Sponsored by this Entity

School Name	Location	Year Established	Current Accreditation Status	Web Address for State Assessment Results
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The applicant is an "eligible entity" under the following category (check one):

- a public institution of higher education;
- a private nonsectarian institution of higher education;
- a governmental entity; or
- an organization that is nonsectarian in its programs and operations, and is, or will be, exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. (A copy of the entity's letter from the IRS reflecting tax exempt status or a copy of the entity's application for 501(c)(3) status must be included with the application. Articles of incorporation or a letter acknowledging non-profit status from the Secretary of State will not suffice.) To be eligible, an entity must hold or have applied for 501(c)(3) status at the time this charter application is filed. The entity must receive formal tax exempt status under §501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 prior to the first day of its operation with students.

**Non-profit entities without the required Internal Revenue Service documentation are not eligible to be awarded charters; therefore, any applications submitted without documentation showing that 501(c)(3) status has been applied for or received will not be reviewed.**

Name of Primary Point of Contact: Jake Gibbs  
 Address: 14100 Vaughn Rd. City: Bentonville  
 State: AR ZIP: 72713 Daytime Phone Number: ( 479 ) 795-2417  
 Email: jgibbs@nwacs.org

Charter Site Address: 14100 Vaughn Rd.

City: Bentonville State: AR ZIP: 72713

Date of Proposed Opening: 8/17/2020

Chief Operating Officer of Proposed Charter (if known): Maury Peterson

Title: Executive Director Address: 14100 Vaughn Rd.

City: Bentonville State: AR ZIP: 72713

Daytime Phone Number: ( 479 ) 795-2417

The proposed charter will be located in the Bentonville School District.

List the current K-12 student enrollment of the district where the proposed public charter school would be located. 17,121 (Total District Enrollment)

List the school districts from which the charter school expects to draw students.

<u>Bentonville School District</u>	<u>Gravette School District</u>	<u>Gentry School District</u>
<u>Decatur School District</u>	<u>Pea Ridge School District</u>	<u>Rogers School District</u>

Describe the geographical area to be served by the charter.

Applicant Response:

The greater Northwest Arkansas area is home to over 500,000 residents. According to the latest census reports, 31 people per day are moving to Northwest Arkansas. Bentonville is the ninth largest city in Arkansas with a population of 49,298. The city is located in the northwest corner of the state and is considered a part of the Northwest Arkansas metropolitan area. Historically, the region has relied upon agriculture and poultry production as primary economic resources. More recently, the economy has seen increased diversification with the continued success of three Fortune 500 companies in Walmart, Tyson, and J.B. Hunt. During times of recession, the economy in Northwest Arkansas fares better than the national economy. Bentonville is also home to a burgeoning startup and entrepreneurial scene. The arts and entertainment industries continue to grow as well. Northwest Arkansas Community College is located in Bentonville and provides undergraduate courses, vocational, career, and technical services. Socioeconomically, income inequality has widened in Northwest Arkansas. The number of children in the foster care system is also on the rise in Northwest Arkansas. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families found that the number grew more than 20% from 2012 to 2017. In the most recent Kids Count conducted by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Arkansas ranked 41 out of 50 for overall well-being of children based on health, socioeconomic status, and education.

Provide a comprehensive list of all individuals, including but not limited to entity board members and charter school board members, involved in the organization and design of the proposed school as well as the proposed application process. Please note that Ark.Code Ann. §6-24-105 prohibits charter school board members from contracting with or being employed by the charter school except in certain limited circumstances.

Name:	<u>Emily Reynolds</u>	Position:	<u>Board President</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Chris Lamson</u>	Position:	<u>Board Vice President</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Van Bakke</u>	Position:	<u>Board Secretary</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Dustin Colebank</u>	Position:	<u>Board Treasurer</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Steve Bratspies</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Brent Campbell</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Lori Collins</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Dr. Curt Hedberg</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>State Senator Bart Hester</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Amy Merryman</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Tony Rogers</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Jeff Spillyards</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Rick Webb</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Mary Zettle</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Erica Zubriski</u>	Position:	<u>Board Member</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Maury Peterson</u>	Position:	<u>Executive Director, Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Rick Brazile</u>	Position:	<u>Senior Director of Finance and Administration, Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Jake Gibbs</u>	Position:	<u>Education Director, Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Liz Anderson</u>	Position:	<u>Senior Director of Development and Marketing, Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Kate Lunsford</u>	Position:	<u>Marketing and Development</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Mary Perry</u>	Position:	<u>Consultant</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Samantha Bryant</u>	Position:	<u>Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter Teacher</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>
Name:	<u>Melissa Church</u>	Position:	<u>Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter Volunteer</u>	State of Residence:	<u>AR</u>

ADE EVALUATION      PRE-APPLICATION MATERIALS

*Evaluation Criteria:*

- A Letter of Intent filed with Arkansas Department of Education on time and including all the necessary information

CIRC Determination: **Fully Responsive**

ADE EVALUATION      PART A:    GENERAL INFORMATION

*Evaluation Criteria:*

- General information fields are completed, as applicable;
- The specific geographical area that would be served by the charter school; and
- Information on the school districts likely to be affected by the charter school

CIRC Determination: **Fully Responsive**

**B.    EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Provide the mission statement of the proposed school.

Applicant Response:

The mission of the Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas is to provide students with a safe, positive, trauma-informed academic environment that will nurture their love for learning and confidence in life.

Explain how the mission statement was developed.

Applicant Response:

The Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas mission statement was developed by the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter leadership team and other staff members. The group researched various school mission statements and examined the core values of the organization. that we developed of the past 25 years. The group held a brainstorming session to identify words and concepts that we felt described our values, mission and services. In addition, Mitchell Communications held three separate focus groups consisting of staff, board members, volunteers, donors, community partners and key stakeholders to help inform the name of the school. The Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter leadership team reviewed the ideas, concepts, and key words that were generated in the name exercise to inform the mission statement.

Briefly describe the key programmatic features that the school will implement in order to accomplish the mission.

Applicant Response:

To achieve the charter's mission, the key programmatic features of Hope Academy are evidence-based practices selected because they have been proven successful for students coping with trauma.

#### 1. Social and Emotional Development

Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) is an evidence-based, attachment-based, trauma-informed intervention that is designed to meet the complex needs of vulnerable children. The program was developed from a decade of research at the Institute of Child Development at Texas Christian University. It is a therapeutic model that has been used in schools, orphanages, courts, residential treatment facilities, group homes, and foster homes across the nation.

#### 2. Family Services

Each family will be assigned a case manager to assist with needs and act as a liaison with the school. Select meals and snack will also be provided by the school to assist with nutrition needs at home. Families will have the opportunity to receive clothing and other basic supplies through vouchers for The Shelter Shop, a thrift store owned and operated by the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter.

#### 3. Academics

The school model will focus on small class sizes in order to ensure highly individualized instruction. Students will have unique opportunities to demonstrate mastery of standards through project-based learning activities. All units will be designed using principles of the Understanding by Design instructional model.

Describe how the parents or guardians of the enrolled students and other members of the community will be involved with the school to positively impact the charter school's educational programs.

Applicant Response:

Our goal is to bring hope to students and their families. We believe the involvement and input of parents and guardians are central to the success of our students. By providing hope not only to students but to families as well, it is our goal to improve the holistic well-being of each family at our school through partnerships based on mutual trust.

To achieve this goal, Hope Academy will begin by holding in-home visits prior to the first day of school. During these visits we will communicate that we are here to work in partnership with families. The message will be that we are educators but we are also advocates for families. As relationships are established, we will conduct needs assessments for each family to determine what wraparound services are most needed. Our primary focus at the beginning of the year will be on overcoming physiological deficits based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. During this initial visit, each family will receive our parent and family engagement policy that details the guidelines for a productive partnership between the family, school, and community. In sharing this information, we seek to follow the guideline of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Our goal is both to inform parents/guardians and identify any barriers to greater participation. We seek to engage parents and guardians from the outset and make them aware that they are not alone in the holistic development of their child. A protocol will be developed for this initial process in order to ensure equity for parents of students who may enroll later in the school year. Each family that we serve will receive the same consideration for basic needs upon orientation. The parental/guardian involvement plan will be reviewed, updated, and posted to the school website by October 1.

The second component of parent and family engagement addresses the need to seek meaningful consultation from parents/guardians regarding the development of family programs and activities. To facilitate parent/guardian involvement in the development of school programming, the school will host a parent/guardian night in the weeks leading up to the first day of classes. For those parents/guardians unable to attend due to work or

other unavoidable obligations, we will host a series of webinars that will allow parents/guardians to choose a time that is convenient for them. If a family requires access to free technology for the purpose of engaging the school, we will steer them toward the necessary resources. As needed, the school will provide the services of an interpreter for parents/guardians whose first language is not English. These informational sessions will focus on communicating our need for parent/guardian involvement in the use of potential Title I funds, offering assistance in understanding how state standards drive instruction, and reinforcing our commitment to ongoing training and assistance. To ensure that parents/guardians are represented and that school transparency is being carried out with efficacy, a parental/guardian advisory committee will be created from willing participants. This committee will be tasked with working alongside school staff to integrate suggestions from parents/guardians with academic best practices to ensure student growth in academic and behavioral goals.

The third component of our parent/guardian and family engagement involves ongoing training for parents/guardians. Our school staff will partner with parents/guardians to provide consistent behavioral structure for students whether at school or at home. The focus for the ongoing trainings will be to provide guidance in child behavior management techniques. Parent/Guardian nights held once per quarter will include an opportunity for families to learn about best practices including initiatives from the My Child/My Student public awareness campaign. The Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter currently holds trainings for foster parents in cooperation with community partners like Gracepoint Church and Central United Methodist Church. Both of these churches have agreed to continue to provide meeting space for us and Central United Methodist has also offered to provide food. These trainings will be coordinated by training staff and case managers of the sponsoring entity and counselor and teachers of Hope Academy.

Community volunteers will also be actively involved in our school. Many of our current volunteers are retired teachers with proven capabilities in building relationships and assisting with academic development. We also work with corporate volunteer groups on a regular basis. These groups often come from the vendor community and can provide a large enough number of volunteers to facilitate whole school activities. We look forward to embracing our loyal community partners in order to serve the educational needs of our student population.

## ADE EVALUATION      PART B:    EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

- A succinct mission statement that indicates what the school intends to do, for whom, and to what degree;
- An explanation of how the mission statement was developed;
- The key programmatic features of the proposed charter school;
- A plan for involving parents and guardians in the school's education programs; and
- A proposal that involves the parents of students, employees and the broader community in carrying out the terms of the charter
- A clear alignment to the Arkansas Department of Education strategic goals

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

## **C. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL**

The applicant for the proposed charter school, if approved by the authorizer, agrees to operate the educational program described below in accordance with the provisions described within this document, Arkansas Code Annotated §6-23-101 et seq., the State Board of Education Rules Governing Public Charter Schools, and the attached assurances.

Provide a narrative description of the various components of the proposed charter school by responding to the following prompts:

1. Describe the results of the public hearing, which was held for the purpose of assessing support for the establishment of this public charter school. Provide copies of supporting evidence.

Applicant Response:

The public hearing was held on Wednesday, April 10th from 5:30-7:30 PM at the Bentonville Community Center. This location was chosen based on its reputation as an all-inclusive gathering place. There was seating available for 150 and additional room to add chairs if needed. There we 60 people in attendance and a light dinner was provided. The entire event was live streamed on Facebook.

Opening remarks and an introduction of the board were conducted by NWACS board president, Emily Reynolds. Executive Director of NWACS, Maury Peterson, informed the audience that NWACS is in the process of applying for an open-enrollment charter school and discussed how family inclusion will be an important aspect of our model. Following opening remarks, NWACS Education Director, Jake Gibbs presented the model for the charter school. The audience was informed of what an open-enrollment charter school is and why NWACS is interested in starting one. Traumatic and adverse childhood experiences were specified in order to delineate the type of child that may benefit from a trauma-informed school.

An overview of the academic model was presented as well. This information included what the academic goals for students will be and how they will be met. A description of the building, campus, and food services was also provided. A question and answer session was held at the end of the hearing. The information was presented using a PowerPoint presentation and handout of the presentation were available for all attendees. The charter school concept was well received by the audience and we received a lot of positive feedback from those who attended. A reporter from the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette attended and wrote a positive article and the hearing received news coverage on KNWA.



Attach documentation to demonstrate that each of the following requirements of Arkansas Code Annotated §6-23-302 was met:

- A. The notice of the public hearing was published on a weekly basis for at least three (3) consecutive weeks prior to the date of the hearing in a newspaper having general circulation in the school district in which the school will likely be located.
- B. The notice of the public hearing was not published in the classified or legal notice section of the newspaper.
- C. *The last publication date of the notice was no less than seven days prior to the public meeting.***
- D. Within seven calendar days following the first publication of the notice of the public hearing, emails announcing the public hearing were sent to the superintendent of each of the school districts from which the open- enrollment public charter school is likely to draw students for the purpose of enrollment and the superintendent of any district that is contiguous to the district in which the open-enrollment public charter school will be located.

## ADE EVALUATION PART C-1: PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS

### *Evaluation Criteria*

- A thorough description of the results of the public hearing;
- Evidence of public support exhibited at the hearing;
- Documentation of required notices published to garner public attention to the hearing; and
- Documentation of required notices of the public hearing to superintendents of districts from which the proposed school is likely to draw students and to superintendents of districts that are contiguous to the district in which the charter school would be located

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

### Concerns and Additional Questions:

- **Please explain / provide the results of the public hearing.**

### Applicant Response:

The public hearing was held on Wednesday April 10th from 5:30-7:30 PM at the Bentonville Community Center. This location was chosen based on its reputation as an all inclusive gathering place. There was seating available for 150 and additional room to add chairs if needed. There were 60 people in attendance and a light dinner was provided. The entire event was live streamed on Facebook.

Opening remarks and an introduction of the board were conducted by NWACS board chair, Emily Reynolds. Executive Director of NWACS, Maury Peterson, informed the audience that NWACS is in the process of applying for an open-enrollment charter school and discussed how family inclusion will be an important aspect of our model. Following opening remarks NWACS Education Director, Jake Gibbs, presented the model

for the charter school. The audience was informed of what an open-enrollment is and why NWACS is interested in starting one. Traumatic and adverse childhood experiences were specified in order to delineate the type of child that may benefit from a trauma-informed school.

An overview of the academic model was presented including what the academic goals for students will be and how they will be met. A description of the building, campus, and food services was also provided. A question and answer session was held at the end of the hearing. The majority of the audience provided written support for the charter school.

2. Describe the governing structure of the open-enrollment charter school, including board composition, selection process, and responsibilities. Also describe the role of the administrators, faculty, parents, students, and community members in the leadership and decision-making of the school. As part of your response, answer the following specific questions:
  - A. Identify what individual, job position(s), or entity(s) will have final decision-making authority for the school in the areas of (1) finance and purchasing; (2) student discipline; (3) hiring and firing of staff; and (4) hiring and firing of the school director or superintendent.
  - B. Specify how the final decision-maker(s) identified in response to (A) will be selected or elected, including (1) length of term, (2) method of selection or election, and (3) who will participate in the selection or election process.
  - C. Explain how and to what extent the school's leadership will be accountable to parents.
  - D. Describe the plan for providing school board members with continuous professional development.

Applicant Response:

The open-enrollment charter school will be administered by the principal who will report directly to the organization's executive director. The executive director reports to the organization's board of directors, whose members are responsible for ensuring the successful execution of the organization's mission. The number of board directors shall not be less than five or more than 19. An education advisory committee, a subcommittee of the NWACS board, will be appointed to guide the operation of the charter school. The education advisory committee will be composed of NWACS board members and other individuals with experience, knowledge, and passion for education to guide the policies of the school. The board members are volunteers from the community serving a term for a period of three years, with no term limits. The executive officers include a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer and officers are elected in accordance with the by-laws.

The school principal will serve as the primary administrator of the school, overseeing the day-to-day functions and leading the faculty in the education of its students. Parents/guardians will serve an integral role in the success of their child by proactively partnering with teachers and administrators and supporting overall efforts through a parent association. The school's wraparound services will include opportunities for parents/guardians to attend continuing education courses and training in order to better lead at home and in their local communities. Currently, the organization's volunteer program includes nearly 130 active community volunteers who support the organization. Volunteers will continue to assist the education team by providing enrichment activities for students such as STEM activities, yoga instruction, physical education and the arts.

A waiver has been requested for student discipline policies. The school will utilize evidence-based positive

behavior interventions. The principal of the school will consider each discipline incident on a case-by-case basis and make determinations based on school-developed policy. The student discipline policies will provide full due process for students including hearings in front of the board of directors as needed. The hiring of employees will be conducted by the principal, the human resources director, and select education staff. We are seeking waivers of the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act and the Public Employees Fair Hearing Act. The staff members of the charter school will be designated as at-will employees and may be dismissed for any reason other than those established by law. Teachers will be evaluated and provided with feedback using the protocol defined by the Teacher Excellence and Support System. Waivers have been requested in the area of personnel in order to maintain integrity with regard to the mission of the school. The recruitment, hiring, retention, and termination of the principal will be the responsibility of the executive director and the board of directors of the sponsoring entity.

The school will act in accordance with guidelines in the Every Student Succeeds Act to ensure accountability to parents. Parents/guardians will receive written notice of all policies. All notices will be uniform and provided in the language spoken in the home. An annual meeting shall be held to inform parents/guardians of the school's participation in family engagement policy as well as parental/guardian rights under the policy. The school will also demonstrate accountability for student academic success. The school will describe to parents/guardians how it is responsible for high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive learning environment. The school will also inform parents/guardians of ways they can partner with the school for the academic success of their child. School accountability will also be ensured through parent-teacher conferences to be scheduled twice per year. In addition, the school will maintain weekly contact with parents/guardian to provide frequent reports on their child's progress.

The school will be responsible for providing assistance in understanding the educational process as it relates to professional practice and student achievement. Professional accountability to parents/guardians will be addressed through professional development focused on parental/guardian involvement.

Our entire organization is committed to high-quality education for children. As such, we will require professional development for the board of directors of the sponsoring entity. These trainings will reflect the professional development plan for school board members as required under Ark. Code Ann. §6-13-629. The trainings will be conducted by the Arkansas Public School Resource Center.

## ADE EVALUATION      PART C-2:    GOVERNING STRUCTURE

### *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, member selection, and plan for continuous professional development;
- A clear, sensible delineation of roles and responsibilities in relation to governance and school management; and
- A reasonable plan for involving parents, staff, students and community in the decision-making of the school

CIRC Determination:

Partially Responsive

### Concerns and Additional Questions:

- **Please describe board member responsibilities.**

- **Please clarify who has ultimate decision making authority for the charter. Is it the NWACS board of the advisory subcommittee?**

Applicant Response:

The Principal of Hope Academy will report to the Executive Director. A team comprised of the Executive Director, the Principal, and the Senior Director of Finance and Administration will provide support to the Charter School Advisory Board. The Advisory Board will consist of 5 members. The members will include a Chair who will be recruited based on a history of educational leadership, 3 members from the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter Board and 1 parent. The Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter Board of Directors has final authority over all school decisions.

Remaining Concerns:

- **Please clarify which single governing board ADE will hold accountable.**

3. Describe the educational need for the school by responding to the following prompts.

Explain the educational need for the charter in the geographical area to be served by the charter. Be certain to include quantitative data related to academic achievement and the source(s) for information presented.

Applicant Response:

Arkansas educational leaders recognize the need for differentiated learning settings for at-risk student populations, and have paved the way for Hope Academy's existence. Already, Arkansas understands the value of this investment, having allocated additional resources for alternative school students, including Northwest Arkansas schools. Bentonville School district operates the Gateway Alternative School, Springdale SD operates the Archer Academy, and Rogers SD has Crossroads Learning Center and REAP, the consortium of Bentonville, Rogers, and Pea Ridge assisting students "who have not met success at their home campus due to discipline-related issues or serious violation of school policies." Fayetteville's alternative option has transitioned from a vocational focus to one that supports students who meet the criteria including disruptive behavior, and a history of poor performance on standardized tests among others that affect academic success. What all these schools have in common, however, is that they serve an older student demographic (grades 6-12), while students in younger grades (K-5) are underserved.

Within the student population of the three largest school districts reasonably within the potential Hope Academy area of service (Bentonville, Rogers, and Springdale), there are approximately 60,000 students identified as Economically Disadvantaged, Foster, Homeless, and TAGG (Targeted Achievement Gap Group). The Economically Disadvantaged and those identified as TAGG produce the bulk of behavioral disruptions in the schools. While the number of disciplinary actions within the foster care population is small, the percentage is important to note: 8% as compared to 5%. Within these numbers, reported data reflects that from the three districts there were 79 expulsions from the focused groups. Graduation rates for the same groups also fall slightly behind the total population.

The data above represent the total student population and does not reflect K-4 independently. For that, we look at ACT Aspire results for the same groups as reported at grades 3 and 4, which shows those groups falling as much as 20% behind the combined population in literacy, and 25% in science at grade 3. The gap widens in grade 4 for literacy and remains fairly constant in math and science gaps.

It seems reasonable to conclude from this data collectively that students who begin to fall behind at early grades, often later (and even at these young ages) have a higher likelihood of disciplinary problem for schools.

While Northwest Arkansas poverty rates are lower than in most of the state, they remain, as a percentage, higher in Washington and Benton counties than in any other county in the Arkansas Delta region. According to the September 2018 report by Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families on Child Poverty in Northwest Arkansas, poverty “hurts [a child’s] ability to grow up healthy and successful. When kids are hungry, they can’t learn and are more likely to have behavioral problems...” (Willford, A. 2018) They further report that “Young children are more likely... to experience harsher consequences of poverty. And as decades of research shows, the first eight years of life are the most important for healthy brain development and success in school.” In Arkansas, one way of addressing the need for early intervention has been affordable access to early childhood education, but many go unserved due to long waiting lists, and enter elementary grades unprepared academically, socially, and behaviorally.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) only add to disadvantages of poverty. The North Carolina Medical Journal reports, “Being poor is associated with so many childhood adversities that it may be considered an ACE in itself, more pervasive and persistent than all others.” (Hughes, M. 2018)

The link between poverty, ACEs, and behavioral issues in the classroom is strong, and the answer seems to be early intervention. A SAMSHA report cited, “Research has demonstrated a strong relationship between ACEs, substance use disorders, and behavioral problems. When children are exposed to chronic stressful events, their neurodevelopment can be disrupted. As a result, the child’s cognitive functioning or ability to cope with negative or disruptive emotions may be impaired.” (2018)

The North Carolina Medical Journal follows its research recommending, “Early education serves as a critical protective factor against the adverse effects of poverty during the first years of a child’s life. The vast majority of brain development occurs before age 5, and quality early care experiences have been found to restructure neural pathways in young children with lasting positive effects on their cognitive function, educational attainment, and socioemotional development.” (Hughes, M. 2018)

Bentonville School District responded to the need in 2017 by opening two “intervention rich elementary ‘behavior classrooms’ to help children overcome chronic disruptive behavior.” These two classrooms, called CLUB (cultivating learning using best practices), costing \$110,524, support a maximum of 12 students. (Perozek, D. 2017) (Froelich, J. 2017). Springdale Schools partners with Ozark Guidance Counseling to help train elementary teachers and administrators in trauma-informed Conscious Discipline. Rogers’ Westside Elementary provides an alternative learning environment to K-2 students struggling with emotional and social behavioral difficulties. But to date, few other similar learning environments exist in Northwest Arkansas for the elementary student with behavior issues. Hope Academy would like to help fill the gap. We see our existence as an opportunity to partner with the local school districts in their efforts to reach students at an intervention point, reversing statistical outcomes with the result of higher academic performance and real-life change.

Hope Academy will operate on its own campus, where children would avoid the stigma associated with localized classrooms or schools identified as alternative. Bentonville Schools employs the moniker CLUB for their two alternative elementary classrooms, because, according to teacher Stefanie Siedsma, “behavior rooms may have a stigma attached.” (Perozek, D. 2017) According to the International Journal of Behavioral Consultation and Therapy, students identified as emotionally or behaviorally disturbed are often disliked by other students. (Froelich, J. 2017). Hope Academy offers students the opportunity to learn in a setting free from those experiences. Private transportation, free hot breakfast, one-on-one on-site counseling, and highly-individualized instruction will all be the norm, not the exception. Bentonville Schools currently has two elementary classrooms and Rogers is serving only grade K-2. By year five of the charter, we would have seven classrooms of 10 students each for grades K-6, each with one certified teacher and two paraprofessionals. The small class size would afford every student the individualized attention needed to develop coping skills, anger management, and healthy emotional responses to adverse circumstances, in an environment that stimulates healthy brain development overall, preparing them to move into middle and high school with all the same academic and social advantages as those students without significant ACEs. Bentonville Superintendent Dr. Jones, speaking of the two CLUB classrooms at R.E. Baker and Sugar Creek Elementary schools, says most parents are “looking for any answer to keep their kids in school. They’re usually seeking this alternate placement.” (Perozek, D. 2017)

It's hard to quantify the impact of concentrated early intervention because the understanding and implementation of trauma-informed education is new and the data pool small. However, at the Archer Learning Center in Springdale, Principal Shawna Lyons says of her high school population, "Incidents of misbehavior referred by school staff for discipline dropped from 285 in 2014-15, to 38 in 2015-16 and 35 last school year." (Vogell, H. 2017) Even national data is limited, but according to the Education Law Center, one [alternative] high school saw suspensions drop 83% and expulsions by 40%. (McInerney, M. 2014)

The need exists for Hope Academy to be accepted as a partner with local school districts to bring positive intervention to children most at risk of educational deficiency, further poverty, substance abuse, and even early death.

Describe the innovations that will distinguish the charter from other schools in the geographical area to be served by the charter. Consider noting if the innovations described are considered research-based best practices and/or if these innovations have been successful in other educational programs. The applicant may list as few or as many innovations as they deem appropriate for their proposed charter.

Applicant Response:

Trauma in the life of a young child can manifest itself in a number of ways. At Hope Academy, our definition of trauma will include the following:

- Physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse
- Physical, emotional, or educational neglect
- Abandonment
- Time in foster care
- Witness to domestic violence
- Experience living in a chronically chaotic environment in which housing and/or financial resources are not consistently available
- Experience living with household dysfunction (mental illness, substance abuse, incarcerated relatives, absent parent)

The movement to address early childhood trauma in schools is still in its infancy. Every day, public schools across the nation face the challenge of educating students with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Despite the challenges, researchers are starting to understand how trauma affects the brain. These findings can be used by educators to positively impact children with developmental deficits. It has been determined through research that trauma significantly impacts language and interpersonal relationships. The volume of the corpus callosum (the part of the brain responsible for coordination and complex problem solving) in children who are maltreated is lower than that of their peers (D'Andrea, Ford, Stolbach, Spinazzola & van der Kolk; Teicher, Dumont, Ito, Vaituzis, Giedd & Andersen, 2004). When this area of the brain is not properly developed, children have difficulty reading body language and facial cues, negative intent is attributed to benign feedback of others and spontaneous speech is difficult. This leads to barriers in communicating subjective experiences to others (Craig, 2016).

Innovations in behavior development:

Research has shown that students with ACEs do not process the environment around them in the same way that typically developing children do. ACEs may lead to a smaller hippocampus which affects attention, learning, and memory. The prefrontal cortex may be underdeveloped which leads to a heightened survival response even in the absence of danger. Children from trauma also may struggle with emotional extremes and the ability to regulate their emotions. Physiologically this is due to changes in the amygdala function. In order to effectively address these issues through innovation, the school will maintain small class sizes, no larger than ten students, to provide teachers the opportunity to build relationships and trust. The initial priorities of the staff will center around determining and addressing the physiological needs of students. By demonstrating that our first priority is building trust and providing safety, we are communicating that we are there for all needs, not solely academic

needs.

All Hope Academy staff will be trained and certified in Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI). TBRI is an evidenced-based practice developed over the past decade that meets the needs of the whole child. It is an approach to caregiving that is developmentally respectful, responsive to trauma, and attachment based. According to Van der Kolk (2005) there are three main pillars that should be included in any program designed to treat complex trauma: (a) development of safety, (b) promotion of healing relationships, and (c) teaching of self-management and coping skills. These elements parallel the three evidence-based principles of TBRI which include:

Empowerment: attention to physical needs

Connection: attention to attachment needs

Correction: attention to behavioral needs

Innovations in the academic setting:

The booming population in Northwest Arkansas has placed unrelenting pressure on area school districts to find space for an ever-increasing student enrollment. At the same time, behavior management in the classroom continues to be a complex and challenging issue. Children with a history of institutionalism and trauma can have sensory processing skills that negatively impact behavior, social skills, and academic performance (Cermak, 2009; Cermak & Groza, 1998). With small classroom sizes and teachers trained in recognizing sensory needs, our daily class schedule can be made flexible to provide opportunities for proprioceptive (gross motor functions) and somatosensory input (bodily sensations). Sensory activities have been shown to help children and adolescents organize their mental and emotional states (Dorman et al., 2009; Kranowitz, 2006; Miller & Fuller, 2007). A 2014 study was completed in Texas at a secondary charter school that also houses a residential facility to determine the effectiveness of TBRI in relation to decreases in behavior. The study analyzed trends in referral data and the finding showed a 68% decrease in referrals for physical aggression after the second year, an 88% decrease in referrals for verbal aggression, and a 95% decrease in in referrals for disruptive behavior. In the first year of the study, there were 902 of these types of referrals, combined. In the second year there were 59 referrals resulting in a 93.5% decrease after the first two years of TBRI implementation. A decrease in inappropriate classroom behaviors will provide more class time devoted to learning.

Innovations in instructional practices:

A core tenet of the programming at Hope Academy is that students understand they can be a contributing part of a larger community. Service learning can provide many benefits including enhanced academic achievement, increased school attendance, improved student motivation, decreased risky behaviors, increased interpersonal development and student ability to relate to culturally diverse groups, and improved school image and public perception (Billig, 2000a, 2000b). In order to teach this concept, each academic unit will incorporate a project based learning component. Based on the essential standards for each unit, the students will work toward completion of a class project that has a positive impact on their community. Throughout this process, students will be instructed on how to think critically and creatively, improve communication skills, and be flexible as they work toward creating an authentic product.

ADE EVALUATION PART C-3: EDUCATIONAL NEED

*Evaluation Criteria:*

- Valid, reliable, and verifiable quantitative data substantiate an educational need for the charter; and
- Innovations that would distinguish the charter from other schools in the geographical area to be served by the charter

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions:

- Please provide an explanation of REAP and SAMSHA

Applicant Response:

REAP is an acronym for Regional Educational Alternative Program and is a consortium between Bentonville, Rogers, and Pea Ridge Public Schools as an alternative setting for students with discipline related issues.

"SAMSHA" within the response is a typo and should read "SAMHSA." This is an acronym for The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. A division on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, SAMHSA leads public health efforts to advance the behavior health of the nation.

4. On the following table, list the specific measurable goals in reading, English, writing, mathematics, and science, based on the state mandated assessments, and any other assessment tools if used, for improving student academic achievement for each year of the public charter school's initial five-year period. For each goal, include the following:

- The tool to be used to measure the academic performance;
- The level of performance that will demonstrate success; and
- The timeframe for the achievement of the goal.

GOAL	Assessment Instrument for Measuring Performance	Performance Level that Demonstrates Achievement	When Attainment of the Goal Will Be Assessed
To increase student performance in foundational literacy skills in grades K-4	(DIBELS)	20% of students will meet growth goals	Goals will be assessed annually
To increase student performance in the area of math in grades K-4	Northwest Evaluation Association Measurement of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP)	20% of students in K-6 will meet growth goals	Goals will be assessed annually



To increase student performance in the area of language usage in grades K-4	Northwest Evaluation Association Measurement of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP)	20% of students in K-6 will meet growth goals	Goals will be assessed annually
To increase student performance in the area of reading in grades K-6	Northwest Evaluation Association Measurement of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP)	20% of students in K-6 will meet growth goals	Goals will be assessed annually
To improve student outcomes in mathematics	ACT Aspire	20% increase in number of 3-6 students meeting recommended benchmarks	Goals will be assessed annually
To improve student outcomes in reading and writing	ACT Aspire	20% increase in number of 3-6 students meeting recommended benchmarks	Goals will be assessed annually
To improve student outcomes in science	ACT Aspire	20% increase in number of 3-6 students meeting recommended benchmarks	Goals will be assessed annually
To improve student outcomes in English	ACT Aspire	20% increase in number of 3-6 students meeting recommended benchmarks	Goals will be assessed annually
Decrease frequency of targeted behaviors for individual students	Assessment tools based on Applied Behavioral Analysis methodology	Individualized based on student needs	Goals will be assessed annually

Explain how the attainment of the goals will demonstrate that the charter is meeting the identified educational need for the school and fulfilling its mission.

Applicant Response:

Central to the mission of Hope Academy is the belief that educational needs cannot be met until physiological and safety needs are met first. Research shows that meeting these needs increases student academic performance. It has been observed that six to eleven-year-old children from food insufficient families had significantly lower arithmetic scores and were more likely to have repeated a grade (Alaimo, et al, 2001). In conjunction with meeting physiological needs, we seek to move up Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs by providing safety. We anticipate that many of our students will have experienced trauma and neglect. To address this, our school will focus on providing consistency, routine, and Tier 2 and 3 research-based behavior interventions. Each child will have individual behavior goals developed from observation and data collection. Through systematic behavioral intervention and data collection, the school will fulfill its mission to decrease maladaptive behaviors and increase academic success.

### Academics

Hope Academy will utilize individualized instruction and assessment to monitor student improvement and deficits. Through standards-based instruction and ongoing formative assessment, teachers will leverage small class sizes to provide targeted interventions that address essential standards in each grade level. Students that require further, more intensive interventions will be provided with 1:1 or small group instruction in decoding and comprehension utilizing the evidence-based Corrective Reading remedial reading series. When students achieve individual goals in English language arts and mathematics on formative and standards-based assessments, the school will have fulfilled its mission of creating a path of academic success for each student. Teachers will also assist students in setting individual goals for reading and mathematics. It is anticipated that a significant portion of our population will enter school at an academic deficit. Teachers will track student progress toward goals via data collection and analysis. The school will demonstrate fulfilling the needs of our population by analyzing progress toward math and language arts goals. Ongoing assessment of our methods of instruction and behavior development will provide each student with a framework of support for continuous academic improvement.

### Parental/Guardian Involvement

A key component to the development of the whole child is parental or guardian involvement. In order to foster a sense of safety for the child, the school will provide outreach programs to address behavior management in the home. Providing ongoing support to families and a means for parents/guardian to provide feedback will achieve the mission of fostering hope and safety for our students.

## ADE EVALUATION      PART C-4:    ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

- Specific goals in reading, English, writing, mathematics, and science that are clear, measurable, and attainable;
- Valid and reliable assessment tools to be used to measure the goals; and
- Attainment of the goals demonstrate that the charter is meeting the identified educational need for the school and fulfilling its mission

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

### Concerns and Additional Questions:

- **Please provide explanation on how often DIBELS will be used to assess throughout the year.**
- **Provide a rationale for the growth goals percentages.**
- **Please provide a description of what growth will look like over time. Please explain where the target is and how it will be measured.**

### Applicant Response:

DIBELS will be used three times a year to assess growth.

The growth goals will change to 70%. The original number of 20% was based on advice from consultation. 70% for growth is a reasonable number given our expected student population.

The target is grade level proficiency and will be measured with formative and summative assessments. When academic baselines are set for each student, instruction will focus on moving toward grade level proficiency. Goals will be monitored through monthly progression meetings.

5. For elementary charter schools, provide a proposed daily schedule for all grade levels indicating the classes that will be provided for a one week time period. For secondary schools, provide required and elective courses for every grade level. If the school plans to phase in grade levels, include expansion grade levels by year with courses to be offered.

Please note that depending on how the school is structured, middle grades could be considered part of an elementary school, a middle school, or a high school.

### ELEMENTARY DAILY SCHEDULE

GRADE(S):           K-4          

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
7:20-7:50	Arrival/Breakfast	Arrival/Breakfast	Arrival/Breakfast	Arrival/Breakfast	Arrival/Breakfast
7:50-9:50	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
9:50-11:00	Math Block Part A	Math Block Part A	Math Block Part A	Math Block Part A	Math Block Part A
11:00-11:30	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
11:30-12:10	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
12:10-12:30	Math Block Part B	Math Block Part B	Math Block Part B	Math Block Part B	Math Block Part B
12:30-1:00	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies	Science/Social Studies
1:00-2:10	SELF	SELF	SELF	SELF	SELF
2:10-2:50	Specials (Art, Music, PE, Library)	Specials (Art, Music, PE, Library)	Specials (Art, Music, PE, Library)	Specials (Art, Music, PE, Library)	Specials (Art, Music, PE, Library)

### MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES

GRADE(S):           5           YEAR OFFERED:           2022-2023

## REQUIRED COURSES

● English Language Arts

● Mathematics

● Social Studies

● Science

● Physical Education/Health/Safety

● Career and Technical Education

## ELECTIVE COURSES

● Art

● Music

● Physical education

● Library media

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GRADE(S): 6 YEAR OFFERED: 2023-2024

## REQUIRED COURSES

● English Language Arts

● Mathematics

● Social Studies

● Science

● Health/Safety/Physical Education

● Career and Technical Education

● Arkansas History

## ELECTIVE COURSES

● Art

● Music

● Education

● Library Media

## ADE EVALUATION PART C-5: SCHEDULE OF COURSES OFFERED

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

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

CIRC Determination: **Partially Responsive**

### Concerns and Additional Questions:

- **Provide Career & Tech course names.**
- **Provide explanation of SELF.**
- **Please confirm understanding that in K-5, AR History can be embedded in social studies and Computer Science can be embedded in other subjects.**
- **Please provide a plan for Health & Safety in K-4.**
- **Please provide plan for required Art, Music, and PE in grade 5. Confirm understanding these are not elective courses.**
- **Please verify a minimum of 40 minutes of physical activity, Art, and Music each week will be scheduled for grades 5 & 6.**
- **Please provide plan for required Art and Music grade 6. Confirm understanding these are not elective courses.**
- **Please confirm understanding that in grade 6, Computer Science can be embedded in other subjects.**
- **Please provide the plan for teaching Arkansas History at the 4th and 5th grade levels.**

### Applicant Response:

Career & Tech courses will include Input Technologies (355910), Technologies Communication (366910), and Keyboarding (399230).

SELF is an acronym for Social Emotional Learning Focus. The acronym throughout the application functions as a place holder while we researched and identified the appropriate social/emotional learning curriculum. The program we intend to use is called "Positive Action." The program is systematic educational plan that promotes intrinsic interest in learning and encourages cooperation among students. Positive Action emphasizes student roles in the family, school climate, and community.

Arkansas history will be embedded across in the K-5 curriculum in English Language Arts, Social Studies, and Computer Science will be embedded across the curriculum.

It is understood that Art, Music, and PE are not electives for 5th and 6th grades. Both grade levels will receive weekly time in each area to meet the 40 required minutes per week as designated by the state.

Computer science will be embedded across the curriculum in grade 6. Each student will have access to a Chromebook for structured learning activities that focus on identified computer science skills.

In 4th and 5th grade, Arkansas History will be taught in conjunction with social studies blocks and will also be included in the community component of our Positive Action social/emotional learning curriculum.

## Remaining Concerns:

- **Please provide a plan for K-4 Health and Safety.**

6. Provide a description of curriculum, programs, and instructional methods used to support core classes. Please ensure that curriculum is aligned with the Arkansas Department of Education strategic goals. ***Include all associated costs in the proposed budget.***

### Applicant Response:

Education is ever evolving and the needs of the student continue to change based on shifting societal norms and patterns in human interaction. This new reality can be an overwhelming one for teachers as we attempt to stay abreast of the latest trends, research, and technology. While current educational frameworks provide challenging and rewarding opportunities, the profusion of information can also seem overwhelming and nebulous. How are we to set our filters to ensure student learning is relevant and meaningful?

In order to find clarity, we need look no further than the strengths and tenets that currently make our program successful. The on-site school at the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter (NWACS) is committed above all to two things: providing hope by building trust-based relationships and providing highly-individualized instruction to promote academic success. The model for our program is heavily influenced by the works of educational philosophers John Dewey and Johann Pestalozzi. The former was influenced by the latter and both place an emphasis on experiential learning, a social and interactive learning process, and learning how to be a caring member of society or as Pestalozzi puts it, "an education of the head, the heart and the hands, but which is led by the heart."

For too long in education, we have talked about understanding the needs of children from hard places without taking real action to address it. The number one priority of Hope Academy is the mental and physical well-being of our students. When a school commits to fostering the growth of the whole child, it commits to helping develop a thriving member of society. A school that is not only completely competent to nurture children with traumatic backgrounds, but entirely dedicated to transforming the child's life, is practically unheard of today. From the start of each day and for years to come, Hope Academy will be that school. Our school and surrounding 80 acres are a place where we encourage students to learn and grow. Our high staff-to-student ratio allows us to actively engage with all students. Many of our students have not had positive interpersonal experiences at home or with peers in the general education setting. We believe in giving students the opportunity to practice these skills through experiential learning and purposeful group activities. Through these coordinated experiences we have the opportunity to coach children in positive interactions and allow them the safety to make mistakes and learn from them in a meaningful way. Further, the school day is designed to develop a sense of safety and responsibility. This is achieved by providing structure so that our students can be certain of what each day holds. We also maintain a consistent schedule so that students can begin to develop a sense of accountability.

While we know children who have experienced trauma are more likely to struggle in school academically, behaviorally, and socially (Merritt & Klein, 2014); evidence-based practice supports paying particular attention to the therapeutic relationship when working with survivors of childhood trauma (Foltz, 2008; Gill, 2010; Gurwitch, Messer, Masse, Olafson, Boat, & Putnam, 2016; Knight, 2015; Scales & Scales, 2016; Zulueta, 2006). Forming this relationship can be especially challenging because children with histories of trauma can have difficulty forming trusting relationships as well as difficulty/inability regulating their emotions. They risk being re-traumatized by well-meaning, but uninformed practitioners (de Zulueta, 2006; Van der Kolk, 2014).

Students entering Hope Academy will immediately begin forming trusting relationships with the teachers and staff. His/her most crucial needs will first be met ensuring he/she feels well fed, well clothed, safe, and cared about. When a student's most basic needs are met, then learning can begin. The same applies for the student's family. Hope Academy will work to form long-lasting relationships with each student's family providing them with

the basic resources they need. Again, when basic needs are met, families can then shift their focus to academic growth of their child.

Hope Academy is committed to providing rigorous lessons, projects, and real-world applications based on the Arkansas State Standards that will promote lifelong learning. Beginning with highly-trained, experienced staff and teachers, Hope Academy will plan academic units using the principles of the Understanding by Design framework. This instructional design framework was very carefully chosen for its focus on developing instruction based on desired outcomes. The focal point of Understanding by Design is to pay attention to all learners and their learning preferences by minimizing learning that happens incidentally or by inborn capacity. This process ensures that the instructional priorities are determined and the instruction is conducted by making a good design first. These aims can be used as a tool for both increasing students' academic achievement and sustaining teachers' development throughout all their professional lives (Brown, 2004; Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Each unit will have standards mastery as the goal. It will incorporate a variety of learning strategies and techniques to appeal to each type of learner. Furthermore, weekly and daily lessons will be highly individualized due to the small class sizes. Classes will be organized by grade level and teacher planning will reflect mastery of standards for each grade. Because teachers and staff have taken the time to form relationships with the students and their families, academic units can be tailored to fit each child's interests and needs, creating the opportunity for children to invest first-hand in their learning. Progress monitoring will be conducted by analyzing data from NWEA MAP testing and results of DIBELS. Work samples, rubric based permanent products, and formative assessment designed to assess incremental progress toward mastery of standards will be utilized as data to track student progress as well. Programs to support core academics will include Wilson Foundations Tiers 1-3, Wilson Geodes, and Wit & Wisdom for reading development, Engage New York for reading and math and EurekaMath. Staff will receive initial training in each program and then will receive ongoing support throughout the year. Ongoing training will be provided on the principles of Understanding by Design through a professional learning community book study. Our students will understand that every adult around them is working toward helping them grow and learn, thus instilling a positive mindset based on a trusting relationship toward achieving academic goals.

At Hope Academy, project-based learning will be a pivotal aspect in academic growth and development. Project-based learning hails from a tradition of pedagogy which asserts that students learn best by experiencing and solving real-world problems (Barron & Darling-Hammond, 2008; Thomas, 2000). Teachers and students will develop projects based on community needs and student interests. These projects will reinforce standards previously mastered and challenge students to master others. Studies comparing learning outcomes for students taught via project-based learning versus traditional instruction show that when implemented well, project based learning increases long-term retention of content, helps students perform as well as or better than traditional learners in high-stakes tests, improves problem-solving and collaboration skills, and improves students' attitudes towards learning (Strobel & van Barneveld, 2009; Walker & Leary, 2009) specifically, improving students' attitudes and mindsets around learning. Developing a true, deep, lifelong love for learning is highly prioritized by Hope Academy.

In addition to Understanding by Design, and project-based learning, student choice will take a front seat in the day-to-day operations at Hope Academy. A 2008 meta-analysis of 41 studies found a strong link between giving students choices and their intrinsic motivation for doing a task, their overall performance on the task, and their willingness to accept challenging tasks (Patall, Cooper, & Robinson, 2008). Student choices will range from allowing students to pick which colors to use on an art project to student-driven research and presentation topics. In order to ensure that teachers are designing learning and executing teaching at the highest level, professional development will be provided based upon the principles of both Understanding by Design and project-based learning. Teachers from the school will attend training for the Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (RISE). Bentonville Public Schools will provide the training and we will seek ongoing professional development for RISE from that district. Ongoing professional development in Understanding by Design will be carried out in a professional learning community centered around the Understanding by Design workbook. The school will also receive ongoing professional development from the Arkansas Public School Resource Center. Topics for professional development will include ongoing assessment, teaching literacy, and data collection and analysis.

Staff and administration of the school will begin developing content for units of study in mathematics, language arts, science and social studies during the summer of 2019. Starting with essential standards, the team will

begin building assessments that show mastery. Lessons and activities will then be created that will support the students in acquiring skills needed for understanding key concepts and gaining mastery.

Another part of the curriculum is the social emotional component that will be implemented daily. Children who have experienced trauma are more likely to be stressed or upset due to emotional dysregulation. Due to their brain chemistry, when someone who has experienced trauma becomes stressed or upset, they are unable to deescalate at a typical rate, which then causes more problems (Van der Kolk, 2014). Learning and the school environment can be stressful regardless of the precautions that have been put into place. Our expectation is that many of our students will come to us having experienced very little success in a traditional school setting. Behavior in students traumatized by life experiences can include “fight or flight” and inability to effectively communicate needs and triggers for anxiety. Students from trauma may also display outsized reactions to seemingly minor failures. For example, verbal and physical aggression may occur as a response if a student is unable to comprehend a mathematical concept. A typically functioning student would be conditioned to ask for help or to find some other solution to the problem. The students from the population we seek to serve may have grown up receiving harsh and erratic punishments for minor mistakes. This conditioning carries over to school where mistakes can be perceived as a true threat to their wellbeing. Incorporating social emotional curriculum will help students learn to regulate their emotions, deal with conflict, and begin to heal from the trauma they have experienced. The social emotional curriculum can be linked to reading, writing, and social studies standards across all grade levels. It will play a crucial part in student-centered project-based learning.

A typical day at Hope Academy will look different for every child. From social emotional curriculum to cross curricular academic units to project-based learning, each child will receive what he or she needs to succeed all while mastering the state standards.

## ADE EVALUATION      PART C-6:    EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

### *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

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

### Concerns and Additional Questions:

- **Please provide an explanation of how the school plans to pay for resources and materials.**

### Applicant Response:

The principal of the school will submit a list of resources and materials required for school operations. The Senior Director of Finance and Administration will be responsible for reviewing and approving all requests to be included in the annual budget. The money will come from money allocated for running the charter school.



7. Describe the process that will be used to ensure all curriculum materials used in the educational program are aligned with the Arkansas Academic Standards as adopted, and periodically revised, by the State Board of Education.

Applicant Response:

All resources and curriculum materials used at Hope Academy will meet the Arkansas Academic Standards. Beginning with standards-first planning through the Understanding by Design Framework, each unit and lesson will provide the depth and rigor needed for students to not only achieve their academic goals, but begin setting a path for lifelong learning. In fact, the focus of instruction is to lay a sound foundation for the development of learning skills with the help of the content that is presented to the students. Furthermore, the integration of different methods and techniques addressing individual differences helps to establish an enjoyable learning atmosphere for students and makes important contributions to the active learning process (Wiggins & McTighe, 2007).

Over the course of the school year, there will be multiple units to cover each standard across all subjects in individual grade levels. Units will be cross curricular and provide enriching opportunities for students to grow academically and socially. At the end of each unit, students will complete a student-driven project that is directly tied to the standards they have mastered with emphasis on impacting the local community. With the goal of standards mastery being our main focus, standards-aligned project-based learning will provide students with the opportunity to be completely engaged in the subject matter. Because of small class sizes, these projects will be a collaborative effort where every child is actively involved. Compared to traditional instructional methods, students engaged in small-group learning achieve higher grades, retain information longer, and have reduced dropout rates, improved communication and collaboration skills, and a better understanding of professional environments (Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2000; Springer, Stanne, & Donovan, 1997; Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Parente, & Bjorklund, 2001; cited in Oakley, Felder, Brent, & Elhadj, 2004). Collaborative learning promotes time on task as well as friendships across diverse groups, such as race, ethnicity, gender, or school cliques (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Collaborative learning benefits students across grade levels, academic subjects, gender, ethnicity, and achievement level (Slavin, 1996).

A partnership with local school districts will provide teachers at Hope Academy with opportunities to attend trainings on Arkansas' reading initiative, RISE. RISE will be implemented from the beginning of Hope Academy, and serve as a foundation for creating lifelong readers. One of the initiatives of RISE is to educate parents/guardians about the importance of reading, and increase access to books in the home. Because Hope Academy will serve not only the student, but the entire family, this initiative will be easily met.

Finally, Hope Academy is committed to honoring the Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA). Through mastery of the Arkansas State Standards, our students will be provided the rigor, individualized instruction, and collaborative experiences through project-based learning. This combination will absolutely prepare students for success in college and careers.

Working through the principles of Understanding by Design, project-based learning, and adhering to state and national initiatives, Hope Academy will undoubtedly provide the curriculum materials needed to meet the Arkansas Academic Standards.

Hope Academy recognizes that there will be periodic updates to the Arkansas State Standards as well as changes in legislation. We have taken the proactive measure of partnering with the Arkansas Public School Resource Center (APSRC) in order to stay abreast of relevant information. School leadership will maintain communication with legal and curriculum personnel through monthly, scheduled phone calls. Hope Academy administration will closely monitor memos from the Arkansas Department of Education received via e-mail. All

revisions to state standards will be communicated to teachers and staff to ensure appropriate changes are made to lesson design.

## ADE EVALUATION PART C-7: CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

### *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 Academic Standards

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

8. Describe the manner in which the school will make provisions for the following student services, even in each area for which a waiver is requested:

#### A) Guidance program;

Applicant Response:

The Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter currently has a contract with Ozark Guidance to provide services to our residents. Ozark Guidance has a proven track record of serving students with traumatic and adverse childhood experiences who have been placed at the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter. It is the intention of Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas to continue this relationship and utilize the services of Ozark Guidance for the students at the charter school.

#### B) Health services;

Applicant Response:

Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas is requesting a waiver from having a full-time nurse. NWACS currently partners with an outside medical staff which includes a pediatrician and nursing staff. This arrangement has a proven track record of serving the medical needs of our residents. Services already covered include passing of medications, medical diagnoses, referrals, and basic medical care as required. The medical team visit NWACS twice weekly to see residents in the shelter. The charter school can engage the medical team to be on-site on certain days/hours (to be determined) to serve the school children. Additional services will include hearing and vision screenings and maintenance of immunization records.

#### C) Media center;

Applicant Response:

A media center waiver will be requested. The school will utilize available technology to enhance learning. Each student will have access to Chromebooks and iPads that will be utilized to complement curriculum. Teachers will collaborate to ensure that each students have appropriate opportunity to develop 21st century technology skills. The school will also house a library with works of fiction and non-fiction to support the student mastery of state standards.

#### D) Special education, including appropriate state assessments for special education students;

Applicant Response:

All students at Hope Academy will be served in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) in accordance with the

Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). The school will be responsible for developing a written plan to identify, locate, and evaluate all children in need of special education services. Teachers will systematically and continuously screen each child through data analysis of performance on assessments, curriculum-based measures, and other classroom observations. A child who has been identified as at-risk will receive evidence-based interventions that meet the needs of the child.

If an independent educational evaluation is requested, Hope Academy will provide a qualified examiner at no cost to the parent or guardian. All decisions made regarding the special education designation of a student will be determined by the IEP team. The IEP team will include parents or legal guardians. Evaluations will be with criteria set forth in §6.00 of the Arkansas Special Education Eligibility Criteria and Program Guidelines. If a child is eligible for services under IDEA, an IEP will be developed by the IEP team that will include the parent or legal guardian of the child. An annual review and three-year reevaluation shall be conducted for each child as required by law. The school will conduct a reevaluation before the three-year deadline if circumstances require or it is requested by a parent or teacher. Hope Academy will adhere to all standards established by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Students served under IDEA will be assessed in accordance with state requirements. Determination of assessment type will be determined by the IEP committee after reviewing the data. If it is determined that a student is able to take the ACT Aspire state assessment, that student will receive testing accommodations designated in their IEP. The Dynamic Learning Maps will be administered to all students in grade 3 to students for whom the ACT Aspire assessment is not appropriate.

#### E) Dyslexia Services;

Applicant Response:

A teacher will be employed who possesses a certification in dyslexia services in order to identify students who may be in need of such services. To achieve this, Hope Academy will perform the required screenings with fidelity for all students except those designated exempt from dyslexia screening. If a student screener indicates markers for characteristics of dyslexia, the teacher certified in dyslexia will collaborate with appropriate staff to develop a Response to Intervention plan that is reflective of the student's needs. In the event that dyslexia intervention services are required based on Level II screener results, parents/guardians will be provided with appropriate information and be notified that they may request an independent, comprehensive dyslexia evaluation. The school will use results of an independent assessment to guide instructional approaches mandated in §7.00 of the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing How to Meet the Needs of Children With Dyslexia. All information regarding dyslexia programming, the number of students who received dyslexia intervention during the previous year, and the total number of students identified with dyslexia during the previous year will be reported on the school website by July 15.

#### F) Transportation;

Applicant Response:

Hope Academy is committed to supporting our families in as many ways as possible. In keeping with that commitment, we will provide transportation for students to and from school each day.

#### G) Alternative education, including Alternative Learning Environments;

Applicant Response:

A waiver will be requested for an alternative learning environment. It is anticipated that a significant portion of

our student population will require highly individualized behavioral support. The individual behavior needs of all students at Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas will be met. There is no need for a designated program that fits the definition of an alternative learning environment.

#### H) English Language Learner (ELL) instruction, including appropriate state assessments for English Language Proficiency; and

##### Applicant Response:

During the enrollment phase for students at Hope Academy, a home language survey will be provided to determine a student's language background and identify if primary home language is something other than English. In the event a student's family indicates a language other than English is used at home, a certified ELL teacher will administer a valid and reliable test that assesses English language proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students identified as ELL will be provided access to a highly-qualified teacher and appropriate instructional materials. Meaningful access to all programs will be available to ELL students and they will not be segregated based on national origin or ELL status.

Supplemental training will be provided to school staff to ensure they are trained in best practices. ELL students with a disability will have access to all rights under IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. ELL students will be monitored by the school to ensure language proficiency and acquisition of content knowledge. This will be achieved by annual administration of the English Language Proficiency Assessment. Students will remain in ELL programs until they demonstrate proficiency in English in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The school will ensure that follow-up monitoring occurs for two years after the student has exited the program. Student academic progress will be supported by an ELL team made up of ELL teacher, school administrator, and general education teacher. This team will collaborate monthly with the student to determine areas of strength and need, develop goals, and solicit feedback for continued improvement of instructional practices. The ELL team will also ensure that parents/guardians stay informed by having all materials that are sent home translated into the native language spoken in the home. The school will provide a translator for all meetings and activities that require verbal communications.

#### I) Gifted and Talented Program.

##### Applicant Response:

Students identified with high potential in the areas of intelligence, task commitment, and creativity will receive services through Hope Academy. A low student-to-staff ratio allows for a thorough understanding of each child's strengths and areas for improvement. Through the principles of the Understanding by Design framework, we will provide individualized and extended learning opportunities based on individual needs. In some cases, these needs will involve accelerated learning. Unit plans designed by teachers will include concessions and appropriate activities for students identified as Gifted and Talented. Students will gain mastery of objectives through enriching, hands-on activities that challenge them to think about big ideas and the application of new knowledge. In every lesson, students will consider essential questions that provoke thought and foster inquiry. Using the principles of Growth, Understanding, Interaction, Decisions, and Empathy (G.U.I.D.E. for Life), our academic units will challenge students to examine themselves and consider their larger place in the community. All students will receive equal opportunity to extend learning through the practices of meta-cognition and shared learning experiences. The base curriculum will provide robust learning opportunities that make pull-outs unnecessary.

## ADE EVALUATION PART C-8: STUDENT SERVICES

### *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 students with disabilities that reflect the full range of programs and services required to provide such students with a high quality education;
- A dyslexia service program that will assess all students and serve those identified as needing dyslexia services;
- 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

CIRC Determination:

Partially Responsive

### Concerns and Additional Questions:

- **Please provide a rationale for not having a staff in the Guidance Counselor position given the charter's mission. Also, explain is a waiver is requested for Guidance Counselor position and ratio requirements.**
- **Please explain how medical services will be provided on days medical staff are not present.**
- **Please clarify who will guide students in library media services. Also clarify what library resources will be available to students.**
- **Please confirm that the charter will comply with all state and federal education laws. Please explain how occupational, physical, and speech therapy will be provided. Please confirm understanding that the DOM assessment is to be administered to the most significantly cognitively delayed students.**
- **Please explain the lack of fund allocation in the budget for ELL services.**
- **Please explain why the Guide for Life is used for GT students and not all students.**
- **Please provide a plan for each teacher to receive professional awareness on the characteristics of dyslexia and evidence-based interventions and accommodations for dyslexia.**

### Applicant Response:

We will have an individual with a Master's Degree in counseling who will serve as a family a case manager and counselor for the students.

Medical services will be available to students by staff who have been trained to pass medications and use Epi Pens. All serious medical and emergent needs will be referred to emergency and medical personnel.

Students will be provided with library media services by teachers who will utilize portable technology devices to instruction in research. The facility also houses a library where students can learn to find books using a library reference system. The library includes fiction and non-fiction sections.

The charter school will comply with all federal and state education laws. Occupational, physical, and speech therapy will be provided through a contract with a provider that we will vet and hire. The DLM will be utilized to assess all students who qualify.

ELL services will be provided as mandated by a teacher currently on staff who has an ELL endorsement on her Arkansas license. All identified students will be provided with the necessary resources through ELL funding and Title III funding.

The Guide for Life will be utilized with all students and the original assertion on the application was a misunderstanding of the program on the part of the author of the application.

Dyslexia training can be provided by Bentonville Public Schools.

#### Remaining Concerns:

- **Please verify whether a waiver for Guidance Counseling will be requested and verify the student ratio waiver is required.**

9. Describe the plan for the school officials to provide an annual report to parents, the community, and the authorizer that demonstrates the progress made by the charter school during any previous academic year in meeting its academic performance objectives. (*See ADE Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts.*)

#### Applicant Response:

Statistics and data regarding school performance on state mandated testing will be shared with parents, guardians and community stakeholders at an annual meeting to be held at the school. This meeting will be held in conjunction with a family night including dinner and activities. The meeting will be held no later than October 15th each year. For year 1 of the charter, parents/guardians will be advised of assessment tools used by the state and how they can help their children prepare for academic success. All performance metrics regarding progress that have been shared to the public will also be posted on the school website no later than 10 days after the annual meeting. All requirements for reporting information to the Arkansas Department of Education will be observed.

The school acknowledges the inherent responsibility of cultivating student success on state level testing. Building foundational academic skills is an important aspect of our model, as well. In order to demonstrate growth in the area of mastery toward state standards, data from ongoing assessment will be shared with key stakeholders. The assessments will include Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Northwest Evaluation of Association Measurement of Academic Progress (NWEA MAPS).

Ancillary to the academic goals of the school are the social and emotional development of the child. The school will share out aggregate data of incidents related to school-wide target behaviors. The school will additionally share effectiveness of evidence-based interventions.

A time will be allotted at the end of the annual meeting for parents, guardians and stakeholders to ask questions

and make suggestions in accordance with the laws and rules of the State of Arkansas.

ADE EVALUATION PART C-9: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

*Evaluation Criteria:*

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

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

10. Describe the enrollment criteria and recruitment processes that will provide an equal opportunity for all parents and students to learn about and apply for admission to the proposed public charter school. Please note any specific steps that will be taken to recruit students from educationally disadvantaged subpopulations (i.e. students who qualify for free or reduced lunch prices, students with disabilities, and English language learners).

Applicant Response:

Hope Academy will develop and execute a comprehensive marketing and advertising campaign in conjunction with Mitchell Communications in Northwest Arkansas. As an open-enrollment school, we will provide non-discriminatory access to all families interested in our model. The school will hold multiple informational sessions in Washington and Benton counties to inform families of our mission and specific services. These sessions will encourage families to consider what we have to offer and determine if we are the correct setting for their child. We will never seek to discourage any demographic from exploring our school as an option. Advertising for these sessions will be done via a variety of modalities. To reach in excess of 13,000 followers across our social media platforms we will post information in English and other representative languages to indicate times and locations for each event. We will also distribute fliers in English and other representative languages that provide information about our charter school model to shoppers at The Shelter Shop thrift store.

The recruitment process will involve community partnerships with organizations that represent a variety of demographics. Hope Academy will maintain regular communication with The Call-NWA to reach out to foster families who may be fostering children from traumatic experiences including abandonment, neglect, extreme poverty, and abuse. Hope Academy will partner with local churches to reach out to families who may be in need of our wraparound services and highly-individualized instructional model. Local school districts will also be advised that our principles lie in partnering with them, not competing against them. We will inform school districts that we are available for students and families who may have needs relevant to the services we will provide. Specifically, we will reach out to school counselors and district social workers to determine if we can assist them in filling the educational and social/emotional needs of families within their district. We will also reach out and partner with other agencies who serve low-income, non-English speaking families, or families who have been affected by child abuse and neglect, such as The Children's Advocacy Center of Benton County, The Children's Safety Center, Court Appointed Special Advocates and RootED.

Check which of the following enrollment preferences, as permissible in Arkansas Code Annotated §6-23-306(14)(C), would be allowed at the charter school.

- 1. Children of founding members of the charter
- 2. Siblings of enrolled students
- 3. No enrollment preferences (No other boxes may be checked in order to select this option.)

If box 1 and/or 2 are checked, explain the policy.

Applicant Response:

Siblings of students who are already enrolled in the school will receive an enrollment preference.

If it is believed that the use of a weighted lottery is required by federal court or administrative order, explain and furnish a copy of the order.

Applicant Response:

The use of a weighted lottery is not required by either federal court or administrative order.

It is affirmed that a random, anonymous student selection method will be utilized in the event that more students apply for admission to the open-enrollment public charter school than can be accommodated under the terms of the charter, except as allowed for in Arkansas Code Annotated §6-23-306(14)(C).

- Yes
- No



Describe procedures for conducting the annual single lottery enrollment process, including the timeline for enrolling, the date of the lottery, and the way in which students will be placed on waiting lists, and the process for notifying parents about each child's selection or order on the waiting list. Explain how the charter will ensure that the lottery process is transparent to the public.

Applicant Response:

Hope Academy will be open to all students as space is available and will not discriminate in its admission policy on the basis of gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, or academic or athletic eligibility. Applications for the school will be made available on the school's website. In addition, a paper version of the application will be available at the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter as well as The Shelter Shop thrift store. All versions of the application will be made available in both English and Spanish. The only personal information that will be solicited on the application will be student name, current grade level, and parent/guardian contact information. Announcements regarding enrollment dates and deadlines will be posted on the website. Fliers will be made available to community partners including churches, The Boys and Girls Club and other family outreach organizations.

In accordance with regulations, Hope Academy will hold an annual lottery to fill enrollment openings in an equitable manner. The lottery will be held in the event that there are more applicants per grade than spaces available. The lottery will occur in April and will be conducted by an independent third party. The date and processes for the lottery will be posted to the school website and will remain there in perpetuity. The lottery will be done on a grade-level basis according to the size of the application pool for each grade and lottery picks will be done individually for each grade. Following the lottery, all families who have been drawn for enrollment will be notified by mail and e-mail that their child will be attending Hope Academy. After all available seats have been filled, the randomized drawing will continue and a wait list will be developed from those names. The order in which the names have been drawn will determine the order of the waiting list.

Families who are not drawn in the lottery will be notified of their status and advised that they will be placed on a waiting list. As openings come available, families on the waiting list will be contacted when their opportunity to enroll becomes available.

Explain how students leaving the charter during the school year will impact students on the waiting list. Please note that student enrollment must be continuous.

Applicant Response:

Families that express interest in the school will always be notified that enrollment is continuous and that they may be eligible for enrollment at any time if they choose to be placed on the waiting list. Enrollment openings that occur during the school year will be filled from the waiting list of families not chosen in the lottery. When a family on the waiting list becomes eligible for enrollment, they will be notified of their status and invited to enroll immediately.

ADE EVALUATION PART C-10: ENROLLMENT CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES

*Evaluation Criteria:*

- A student recruitment plan that will provide equal opportunity for all parents and 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 will be notified of each child'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

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

11. Name any founders or board members of the proposed charter's sponsoring entity, management company staff, and/or leaders of the proposed charter who have any prior involvement in the operation of one or more other charter schools and complete a Prior Charter Involvement **template** for each individual listed.

Applicant Response:

Currently none of the founders or board members of this charter school have had any prior involvement in the operation of a charter school.

ADE EVALUATION PART C-11: PRIOR CHARTER INVOLVEMENT

*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

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

12. Explain how the school will conduct its business office. Tell about business office personnel and describe the plan for managing procurement activities. Be sure to specify the types of financial decisions and/or actions to be made at the local level, the board level, and, if applicable, the charter management organization level.

Applicant Response:

#### Financial Management and Internal Controls

The Board of Directors of the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter will bear responsibility for the financial oversight of the school. The organization has successfully operated for more than 25 years, including operating a school on our campus, in partnership with the Bentonville Public Schools, since 1998.

The Board of Directors has elected a Board Treasurer, a Board Member who has professional experience in finance. The Board Treasurer convenes a standing Finance Committee, comprised of other members of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, the Senior Director of Administration and Finance, and community volunteers who have an interest in the mission of the organization and financial management. The Treasurer and the Finance Committee will ensure that the Board monitors the school's finances.

All services and programs operated by the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter are accounted for with a fund accounting system that maintains each program separately. The charter school will be maintained within its own program. We will maintain our school financial records by utilizing the accounting system prescribed by the state.

The Senior Director of Finance and Administration along with the Executive Director and Principal will create a charter school budget proposal to present to the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors. The operating budget provides a detailed overview of forecasted revenue and expenses for the new fiscal year beginning July and ending June 30. After evaluating and approving the information, the Finance Committee shares the proposed budget with the Board of Directors and recommends a motion for approval. A quorum is required in order to initiate a motion. The Finance Committee will work with the Executive Director, Senior Director for Finance and Administration and the Principal to ensure there is regular financial reports with analyses of actual spending versus budgeted amounts are submitted to the Board, as well as work with the Principal to ensure an annual audit is completed.

While the Board will be responsible for financial oversight, the Principal will be responsible for day-to-day financial management of the school. The Principal will work with the Senior Director of Finance and Administration to ensure procurement of supplies, equipment, and services. All back office support will be provided by the existing team at the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter. The Senior Director of Finance and Administration will analyze, reconcile and adjust account balances and ensure that records are maintained in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). The existing team at the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter will also support the charter school with training, payroll, benefit processing, health care, tax and compliance, and accounting.

Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter is committed to ensure the public's confidence and integrity of the charter school activities. The Board of Directors of the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter has ensured there are written policies and procedures that are used to ensure there are clear internal financial controls to provide the operations and school with a proper foundation to safeguard its assets. The organization has cleared procedures for banking and cash management, procurement, expenses and accounts payable, payroll, fixed assets, grants, donations and in-kind services, debt, investments, and security of financial data.

#### Procurement Process

All procurement needs are first vetted through our director of education (Principal). If he approves of the expenditure, he discusses the need for procurement with the NWACS Senior Director of Finance and Administration. No expenditures are made without first going through this review or discussion. We are a small organization and this is the only way to access funds for any payment. No payments are made without this review. The budget is reviewed and the expenditure is either approved, tabled for later, or rejected. If it is approved, payment of the expenditure is made only upon receipt of an invoice in the accounting office. The invoice is compared to the request for the expenditure by accounting and then the check is processed. The check with the invoice is presented to the NWACS Executive Director for approval and signature. If the Executive Director does not approve, the funds are not released as she is the authorized signatory on the account. Then the check is mailed by the accounting office. This same process is currently in place and will be used for the new charter school.

The education team has no access to cash or cash accounts. Every dollar that leaves the organization or education purposes are first reviewed by the Principal, then reviewed by the NWACS Senior Director of Finance and Administration and then the Executive Director of the Shelter.

#### Facility Expenses

The facilities and associated fixtures and equipment are the property of the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter. All expenditures related to the building, facilities, attached equipment, etc. will be funded by the Children's Shelter and not the new charter school. Donors, grants and endowments have been established for those costs and it will not be necessary to use the school funds for any of those items. The Finance Committee of the Board approves the budget for maintenance and capital. They authorize and approve the use of maintenance and facility funds for these expenditures. Estimates (bids) are obtained before we present them to the committee for their approval. If the charter school were to request improvements or capital needs of any kind or amount, this request would first be reviewed with the Principal and the NWACS Senior Director of Finance and Administration. If approved, cost estimates would be obtained and, if necessary, bids. He would then present the request to the Executive Director and the Finance Committee of the Children's Shelter. Upon approval, the facilities team would complete the work, review invoices and present back to accounting for their review and payment.

#### Financial Contingencies

The Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter (NWACS) has existed for 25 years. Consequently, the campus has been built, back office supports are in place and well established, and utilities, insurance and all other infrastructure exists. All of these areas are already funded and will continue to be funded in connection with the operation of programs and services for our residential programs. In fact, one of the services we already provide is an on-site school, which has its own infrastructure which will also be leveraged with the charter school. The only incremental costs for the charter school will be those related to the number of students.

A traditional school model is leveraged by a higher student to teacher ratio, resulting in higher foundation funding. Because our model is not traditional, we intend to maintain a ratio of 10 students to 1 teacher (necessitated by the type of students we expect to enroll), we will be unable to leverage the foundation funding. So, the fewer students we have, the less support required from third parties (eg, grants and foundations). Our risk would be if the number of students enrolled goes up dramatically more than planned. That risk is very much within our control.

Our risk is mitigated greatly by the fact that much of the cost associated with opening a new school and its infrastructure already exists and is currently funded. In addition, in 2011, endowments were established to assist us with unforeseen financial difficulties. One endowment is specifically for facilities and maintenance and has a balance of over \$3.3 million. We have a second endowment that is over \$4.2 million. It is available at the board's discretion.

Describe the process by which the school governance will adopt an annual budget.

#### Applicant Response:

The Senior Director of Finance and Administration along with the Executive Director and Principal create a budget proposal to present to the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors. The Finance Committee is made up of organization administration, board members and community partners. The operating budget provides a detailed overview of forecasted revenue and expenses for the new fiscal year beginning July and ending June 30. After evaluating and approving the information, the Finance Committee shares the proposed budget with the Board of Directors and recommends a motion for approval. A quorum is required in order to initiate a motion.

Complete the budget template showing a balanced budget with realistic expectations of revenue and expenditures. Please note that all revenue must be formally committed.

Provide the minimum number of students who must attend the charter in order for the school to be financially viable. Describe the method used to calculate this number. Tell who made the calculations and describe the financial expertise of the individuals who assisted in this assessment.

Describe the contingency plan if fewer students than necessary for financial viability enroll before the first day of school. Provide a detailed explanation of the ways in which the charter leaders will provide the education program outlined in the application to fewer students than determined necessary for financial viability, or a date certain by which charter leaders will notify the parents, leaders of surrounding districts and open-enrollment charters, and staff at the Arkansas Department of Education that the school will not open as anticipated.

Explain how charter leaders will provide the education program outlined in the application if enough students for financial viability enroll and are admitted but fail to arrive when school begins.

Describe preparations to pay for any unexpected, but necessary and possibly urgent expenses.

Explain how the amounts of federal funds included in the budget were calculated.

Applicant Response:

A minimum number of students is not required for the viability of the school. All facilities, back office support, insurance, and maintenance are funded by the sponsoring entity. Rick Brazile manages the finances for the sponsoring entity. Rick was an accountant for 13 years with Arthur Young and was Senior Vice-President of Finance and Planning at Wal-Mart for 25 years.

If fewer students than expected enroll, we will provide instruction as originally planned to those that do and continue to market our school to a diverse population of families who may need our services. If fewer students enroll than expected, we will provide instruction as originally planned and reassign teacher duties as necessary to focus on family and individual student support.

In order to address urgent and unexpected expenses, we have been granted permission from the Board of Directors to use endowment moneys as a secure safety net as required.

*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;
- An understanding of the minimum number of students required for financial viability and a contingency plan to provide the education program outlined in the program if fewer students than necessary for viability enroll and/or attend;
- Plans to pay for unexpected but necessary expenses; and
- An explanation of the calculations used to project the amounts of federal funding included in the budget

CIRC Determination: **Fully Responsive**

Concerns and Additional Questions:

- **Please provide the financial approval thresholds for staff and board.**
- **Please provide an annual date when the budget will be approved by the board.**
- **Please clarify if there will be a continued relationship with Bentonville School District that might impact enrollment.**
- **Please clarify that charter will seek facilities funding.**
- **Please explain who provides the Group Home Program Fund and if it is an allowable revenue for the charter school.**

Applicant Response:

Our fiscal year ends on June 30. Prior to that date, the Finance Committee of the board of directors reviews the budget for the upcoming year. This committee reviews and approves every line of the capital and operating budget. Once they are satisfied with the budget, they recommend it's approval by the board of directors. The approval is for the capital budget as well as the operating budget.

Once the budget is in place, it is the guide for approving all expenditures. Staff members do not approve any expenditures. Rather, they request the funding for an expenditure. That request is reviewed with the principal. If the principal approves the request, it is then reviewed with the Senior Director of Finance to make sure the expenditure was provided for and within the constraints of the approved budget. If so, the expenditure is approved. The staff and principal have no access to cash or the ability to make a payment for goods or services. Once an approved expenditure is incurred, the payment is processed by accounting. Supporting documentation and the check are presented to, and approved by, the Executive Director of NWACS. Any questions that might arise are answered before the check is signed. Once signed, the check and supporting documentation are scanned for filing, and the check is mailed by accounting. The staff making the request do not receive or mail the checks after they are processed.

If a request is made for an operating expense that results in exceeding the budget amount for that line, the Finance Committee is notified and they must approve overage. Any changes to capital spending or headcount must be approved by the Finance Committee. Going forward, we would expect that the budget for the charter school would be approved and reviewed by the charter school committee. The Charter School Committee would then recommend it to the Finance Committee for approval and recommendation to the board of directors. Any budget overages related to the charter school would be reviewed and approved by the Charter School Committee and recommended to the Finance Committee.

The budget will be approved by the board before our fiscal year ends on June 30.

The Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter will continue to operate a separate school as we always have for the residents of the shelter. These students will be enrolled in the Bentonville Public School District as they have been since our shelter school started. Our residents and the school will be separated physically and financially from the charter school. The residents are at the shelter for a short time (currently between 45 and 90 days). Our license requires confidentiality of students in the Children's Shelter school and we will maintain that regulation as we move forward with a separate charter school. The relationship will not impact our current relationship or enrollment process with Bentonville Public Schools.

We do plan to seek facilities funding and it will be reflected in our budget.

The Group Home Program Fund was provided by a family in our community. That family has granted us express approval to use it for our charter school. The fund has existed since our current facility was opened and has never been used. The funds are in our possession and are available for use at our board's discretion.

13. Summarize the job descriptions of the school director and other key personnel by completing the information fields below for each position. Specify the salary range, qualifications, and job duties to be met by professional employees (administrators, teachers, and support staff) of the program. Please describe the plan for providing teachers with continuous professional development.

Applicant Response:

### **ADMINISTRATORS**

**Administrator Position:** Principal

**Reports to:** Board of Directors

**Salary Range:** 65,000-70,000

#### **Minimum Qualifications Required**

**Education Required:**

Master's Degree in Education Administration or equivalent

**Experience Required:**

5-10 years of classroom experience, 1-3 years building leadership preferred, 1-3 years providing trauma-informed education or special education services

**Certification Required:**

Arkansas administrator certification preferred

**Job Duties: List up to 5 key duties this individual will perform.**

- Create an educational atmosphere which exemplifies our values of compassion, excellence, and integrity
  - Engage staff in a shared vision of effective teaching and learning by implementing trauma informed based curricula that are relevant to student needs and interests and incorporates evidence-based best practices
  - Lead a school culture and environment that successfully develops a full range of students' learning capabilities
  - Create, develop and sustain relationships that result in active student engagement in the learning process
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**TEACHERS**

**Teacher Position:** Elementary Teacher

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**Reports to:** Principal

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**Salary Range:** 40,000-45,000

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**Professional Development:**

Professional development will be provided in special education identification and services, parental involvement, Trust Based Relational Intervention, Conscious Discipline, and Managing Aggressive Behaviors. Ongoing training will be provided in all literacy and math instructional programs purchased by the school. Training will be provided by the Arkansas Public School Resource Center, Internet Delivered Education for Arkansas Schools, and appropriate national and state training conferences. Mandated Reporter and Sex Trafficking training will be provided as well.

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**Minimum Qualifications Required**

**Education Required:**

Bachelor's degree in education

**Experience Required:**

Demonstrated experience providing trauma-informed education or special education services

Demonstrated knowledge of pedagogical best practices in grade level or subject taught

Experience in Special Education

**Certification Required:**

Valid Arkansas Teacher Certification preferred



**Job Duties: List up to 5 key duties this individual will perform.**

- Provide individualized high-quality classroom instruction and oversight of the children
- Develop and utilize appropriate lesson plans and other activities which stimulate and encourage the educational and social development of each child
- Monitor and document daily progress of all children in the classroom and take appropriate actions to increase each child's progress
- Directly provide day-to-day education instruction and classroom management and work with others who provide care for children

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**Teacher Position:** **Special Education Teacher**

**Reports to:** Principal

**Salary Range:** 45,000-50,000

**Professional Development:**

Professional development will be provided in special education identification and services, parental involvement, Trust Based Relational Intervention, Conscious Discipline, and Managing Aggressive Behaviors. Ongoing training will be provided in all literacy and math instructional programs purchased by the school. Training will be provided by the Arkansas Public School Resource Center, Internet Delivered Education for Arkansas Schools, and appropriate national and state training conferences. Mandated Reporter and Sex Trafficking training will be provided as well.

**Minimum Qualifications Required**

**Education Required:**

Bachelor's Degree in Education

**Experience Required:**

Demonstrate knowledge of pedagogical best practices in grade level or subject taught

1-3 years experience in Special Education Services

**Certification Required:**

Maintain a valid Arkansas Teacher's Certification; maintain special education certification

**Job Duties: List up to 5 key duties this individual will perform.**

- Instruct student in academic subjects using a variety of evidence-based techniques and knowledge of student needs and interests
- Plan and conduct activities for a balanced program of instruction, demonstration, and independent work time that provide students with opportunities to observe, question, and investigate
- Meet with parents/guardians to discuss progress and determine priorities for their children

## **SUPPORT STAFF**

**Support Staff Position:** Paraprofessional

**Reports to:** Principal

**Salary Range:** 20,000

### **Minimum Qualifications Required**

**Education Required:**  
60+ hours of college credits

**Experience Required:**  
1-3 years experience

**Certification Required:**

**Job Duties: List up to 5 key duties this individual will perform.**

- Assists teacher with classroom management needs
- Assists in supervision of students during periods of transition and travel during the school day
- Assists with behavior management programs and techniques
- Understands and assists in meeting the special needs of children

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**Support Staff Position:** Educational Specialist

**Reports to:** Principal

**Salary Range:** 38,000-42,000

### **Minimum Qualifications Required**

**Education Required:**  
Bachelor's degree

**Experience Required:**  
1-3 years related administrative experience and/or training or equivalent combination of education and experience

Familiarity with education due process and legislation as it relates to assurances of public schools

**Certification Required:**  
Arkansas Teacher's Certification preferred

**Job Duties: List up to 5 key duties this individual will perform.**

- Assist in creating an educational atmosphere which exemplifies our values of compassion, excellence, and integrity
- Assist in leading a school culture and environment that successfully develops a full range of students' learning capabilities

**Job Duties: List up to 5 key duties this individual will perform.**

- Assist in implementing instructional strategies, including supporting the needs of diverse learners, delivery methods, assessment, and staff development techniques for improvement of instruction

ADE EVALUATION      PART C-13:      STAFFING PLAN

*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

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

14. Describe the manner in which an annual audit of the financial and programmatic operations of the school will be conducted. If the school wishes to request that the authorizer allow a licensed accountant or licensed certified public accountant, rather than the Legislative Auditor, to perform the first-year audit, identify the accountant by name, firm, address, and phone number. The named accountant must meet the requirements of ADE Rules Governing Publicly Funded Educational Institution Audit Requirements, including the prohibition on auditors providing non-audit services (such as accounting or consulting services) to auditees. A school's preference as stated in this application may not be changed without prior approval of the authorizer.

Applicant Response:

Audits will be performed by the Legislative Auditor. If preference is changed, the school will seek approval of the authorizer first.

The sponsoring entity is audited annually by:

Przybysz and Associates  
Certified Public Accountants  
2594 E. Joyce Blvd, Ste 1  
Fayetteville, AR 72703  
479-444-8200

ADE EVALUATION PART C-14: FINANCIAL AND PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT PLAN

*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.

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

15. It is affirmed that the Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Financial Management System, provided by the Department of Education, shall be the original and official accounting system of record for the public charter school as required by state law and the rules and regulations of the Department of Education for all financial transaction records and reporting (including, but not limited to, payroll processing and wage and tax reporting to IRS, ATRS, DFA, etc., accounts payable, fixed assets, personnel budgeting, and budgeting). APSCN shall be used to record all private, as well as, local, state, and federal revenues and expenditures.

Yes

No

It is affirmed that the Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Student Management System, provided by the Department of Education, shall be the original and official student management system for the public charter school as required by state law and the rules and regulations of the Department of Education for all student management areas (including, but not limited to, systems administration, demographics, attendance, scheduling, report cards, discipline, medical, Cognos reporting, and Statewide Information System reporting).

Yes

No

ADE EVALUATION      PART C-15:      ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOL COMPUTER NETWORK ASSURANCES

*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, utilizing the APSCN system as the original and official data reporting system.

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions:

- **Please clarify if charter will solely use eFinance or if you'll use other software then transfer the information over.**

Applicant Response:

The charter school will use eFinance in accordance with Arkansas Department of Education Requirements.

16. Describe in general terms the area within the boundaries of the school district where the applicant intends to obtain a facility to be used for the open-enrollment public charter school.

If the facility to be used for the school has been identified and is a facility of a school district, describe the terms established by the local school board of the district stipulating the relationship between the proposed public charter school and the district pertaining to the use of the facility. Attach a copy of the agreement, signed by the president of the local school board, the chair or president of the governing body of the proposed open-enrollment public charter school, and the chief operating officer of the proposed charter. If the facility has been identified and is not operated by a school district, attach a copy of the Facilities Utilization Agreement, signed by the entity owning or operating the facility and the chief operating officer of the proposed charter. A proposed lease may also be submitted. Please note that any lease or other debt must be approved by the Commissioner of Education.

Applicant Response:

The facility for the charter school will be housed on the campus of the Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter. The shelter has designated 26,300 square feet of building space solely for the charter school. The full square footage of the main building is 65,500, plus there is a separate rec building the school can use containing a gymnasium and library. The building sits on 80 acres of land situated in Highfill, Arkansas just outside of Bentonville, in Benton County.

If the facility to be used has been identified, list the owner(s) of the proposed facility and describe their relationship, if any, with:

- (1) Members of the local board of the public school district where the proposed open-enrollment public charter school will be located,
- (2) Employees of the public school district where the proposed open-enrollment public charter school will be located,
- (3) The eligible entity sponsoring the open-enrollment public charter school, or
- (4) Employees/directors/administrators of the sponsoring entity or proposed open-enrollment public charter school.

Applicant Response:

The Northwest Arkansas Children's Center Inc. owns the facility.

1) no relationship exists between any member of the local board of the public school and the owners of the facility

2) no relationship exists between any public school district employees and where the charter school will be located

3) the eligible entity sponsoring the open-enrollment charter school owns the facility where the charter school will be located

4) the business manager, the executive director, the maintenance director, the kitchen staff, the principal of the charter school, and the school case manager are all paid salary by the sponsoring entity

The facility to be used will be in compliance with all requirements for accessibility in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and all other state and federal laws and local zoning ordinances.

Yes

No

If the facility to be used has been identified and does not currently meet these requirements, provide a list of items that will need to be addressed to bring the facility into compliance. Also include a statement of permissible uses for the facility from the local zoning authority, and whether there are any alcohol sales within 1,000 feet of the facility.

Applicant Response:

The facility is in compliance with the requirements as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. There are no alcohol sales within 1,000 feet of the building where the school will be housed.

## ADE EVALUATION PART C-16: FACILITIES

### *Evaluation Criteria:*

- If the facility to be used has not been identified:
  - A general description of the area within the boundaries of the school district where the applicant intends to obtain a facility to be used for the open-enrollment public charter school
- If the facility to be used has been identified:
  - 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

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

17. Describe the manner in which the proposed charter school will make provisions for feeding the students. State whether the proposed charter school will apply to participate in the federal National School Lunch program or other federal nutrition programs. Does the school intend to offer a self-operated food service program, vended or unitized meals, or contract with a caterer or food service management company?

If the proposed charter plans to participate in the National School Lunch, School Breakfast or Afterschool Snack program(s), describe how the school will ensure the following:

- families have access to the application for free and reduced price school meal benefits
- school meal applications (or other means of eligibility determinations) are approved accurately and within 10 days of receipt
- student's meal eligibility status is maintained as confidential information
- each time a meal is served a meal count is taken at the point of service by eligibility category without identifying a student's eligibility status (cannot be a tray count)
- menus planned meet the meal pattern requirements for the grades applicable, are acceptable to students, and meet all food safety standards
  - o menus meet the requirements and are certified to receive the performance based reimbursement (extra 6 cents) within 2 months of the beginning of school the first year of operation and other federal requirements

Applicant Response:

We have our own nutritional program which is provided by the Children's Shelter. We will expand the nutrition program to cater to the students at the charter school. We will not be using the National School Lunch Program. We will be using private donations and funds from the Children's Shelter to manage the kitchen operations, so it will be self-operated. There will be no added costs to the students or their families for these meals. The current kitchen operation has obtained all health and safety licensing to operate as a school lunch program. Menus are planned to fulfill all dietary requirements by the Food Service Director and input is given by a registered dietician. All meals have an emphasis on plant-based food and, when possible, locally sourced and seasonal produce is given preference. The facility encourages farm-to-table meal preparation, and we teach and involve the children. The kitchen has its own raised garden beds and uses home-grown herbs and vegetables to create fresh and nutritious meals. We have a policy of sustainability where we recycle and compost any food scraps, which are then used as compost in our garden. Fresh-cut fruits and a salad bar is offered twice a day. The nutritional program has a contract with Tankersley Foods, as well. Produce and milk purchased compose 80% of that contract. Through an expanded partnership with the Northwest Arkansas Food Bank, the shelter has been able to cut our nutrition budget by 50% over the last year. In addition, we have community partners that provide in-kind food donations. Sample partners include Walmart, Sam's Club, Tyson, Kraft-Heinz, Hormel, General Mills, PepsiCo, and Happy Egg. Hope Academy will also benefit from these partnerships.



ADE EVALUATION PART C-17: FOOD SERVICES

*Evaluation Criteria:*

- A food service plan that will serve all eligible students; and
- A management plan that reflects a clear understanding of federal law and requirements if the charter school plans to participate in the National School Lunch program

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions:

- **Please confirm that the school does not wish to participate in the National School Lunch Program, and would therefore miss an opportunity for federal reimbursement.**

Applicant Response:

The school will not participate in the National School Lunch Program and will not be relying on federal reimbursement in that area.

18. For each and every individual specifically identified by name in Section A of the application (the contact person, chief operating officer, board members, and other individuals), identify any family or financial relationship which may exist between that individual and:

- (A) Any other individual specifically identified by name in Section A of the application;
- (B) Any individual or entity with whom the sponsoring entity or charter school has contracted, or intends to contract, to provide any services or products for the proposed charter school; and/or
- (C) The owner(s) of the facilities to be used.

For the purpose of this prompt, an individual has a financial relationship with another individual or entity if he or she:

- (1) Receives compensation or benefits directly or indirectly from the entity or individual;
- (2) Is an officer, director, partner, employee, or owner of more than 5% of the shares of an entity that is a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, or LLC; and/or
- (3) Has a family member (spouse, sibling, parent or child, or the spouse employee, or owner of more than 5% of the shares of an entity that is a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, or LLC.

Applicant Response:

The following individuals receive benefits and compensation in the form of a yearly salary from the sponsoring entity: Maury Peterson, Rick Brazile, Jake Gibbs, Liz Anderson, Kate Lunsford, and Samantha Bryant

The following individual receives compensation through a consulting contract that shall end at a time determined by the sponsoring entity: Mary Perry

The following entity and its employees receive compensation from NWACS in the form of a yearly membership fee in return for consultation and training services: Arkansas Public School Resource Center

Explain the procedures to be followed if a conflict of interest is identified. The procedures must ensure that all actions are in the best interest of the school and the students at the school.

Applicant Response:

All employees, volunteers, and board members are expected to understand and sign the Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas Potential Conflict of Interest Statement. Should an employee or volunteer have the possibility of a potential conflict of interest, it is his/her responsibility to report it to the principal of Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas. A determination about the ramifications of a report of a known or potential conflict of interest and how it may impact our student population will be determined by the Hope Academy of Northwest Arkansas Principal and the Executive Director and Human Resources Director of the sponsoring entity. The Board of Directors will be informed of any reported conflict of interest to ensure organizational transparency.

ADE EVALUATION      PART C-18:      CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

*Evaluation Criteria:*

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

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

19. Explain how the success of the charter school will be ensured if changes in leadership and board composition occur.

Applicant Response:

According to the NWACS bylaws, when a vacancy occurs in one of the executive offices by death, resignation, or otherwise, it shall be filled by vote of the board of directors. The officer so elected shall hold office until the next annual meeting. A board director may resign at any time by filing his/her written resignation with the Secretary. A board director may be removed at any time, with or without cause, by written ballot at a meeting of the board of directors.

If there is a vacancy at the school, new candidates will be thoroughly vetted to insure their qualifications and experience are an appropriate match for the mission and model of the school. Employees who intend to resign will be asked to provide a two-week notification so the school may have time to find, at minimum, a temporary replacement that fits the mission and model of the school. If the Principal is removed or leaves, the Executive Director will provide administrative guidance until such time a replacement is hired.

*Evaluation Criteria:*

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

CIRC Determination:

Fully Responsive

20. Describe the potential impact of the proposed public charter school on the efforts of affected public school district(s) to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

Applicant Response:

Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter (NWACS) is submitting an application for an open-enrollment public charter school to the State's charter authorizer. The charter school, Hope Academy, will be located in Highfill, within the boundaries of the Bentonville School District and, as an open-enrollment public charter school unconfined by district boundaries, expects to continue to obtain most of its students from within the boundaries of the Bentonville (BSD), Rogers (RSD), Decatur (DSD), Gravette (GSD) and Gentry (GESD) School Districts. This analysis is provided to inform the decision making of the charter authorizer regarding the effect, if any, that the granting of a charter to NWACS to operate an open-enrollment charter school within the boundaries of the BSD would have on the efforts of the BSD, RSD, DSD, GSD and the GESD to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

NWACS, in this analysis, has carefully reviewed the potential impact that the operation of an open-enrollment public charter school within the boundaries of the BSD would have upon the efforts of the affected school districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools. In conducting its review, NWACS has found that none of the school districts listed above (BSD, RSD, DSD, GSD and GESD) are under any court orders concerning their desegregation obligations, and are therefore unitary in all respects of their school operations. Therefore, the granting of a charter to operate an open-enrollment charter school cannot be said to have a negative impact on the BSD, RSD, DSD, GSD and the GESD's ability to comply with the districts' statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

According to the 2018-2019 school year enrollment figures (October 1, 2018 student count) as maintained by the ADE Data Center, the BSD had a student population of 17,225 students; the RSD had a student population of 15,604 students; the DSD had a student population of 553 students; the GSD had a student population of 1,877, and the GESD had a student population of 1,442 students. Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 requires that NWACS be race-neutral and non-discriminatory in its student selection and admission processes, so it is not possible to accurately project future racial composition. BSD's student population was comprised of approximately 73.1% Caucasian students, 11.59% Hispanic students and 6.3% Asian students. RSD's student population was comprised of approximately 46.3% Hispanic students and 45.4% Caucasian students. DSD's student population was comprised of approximately 52.1% Caucasian students and 36.2% Hispanic students. GSD's student population was comprised of approximately 84.8% Caucasian students and 7% Hispanic students. GESD's student population was comprised of approximately 64.8% Caucasian students, 14.7% Hispanic students and 8.3% Asian students. Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 also requires that NWACS's operation of its charter school will not serve to hamper, delay or in any manner negatively affect the desegregation efforts of a public school district or districts within the state. NWACS' careful review of the relevant statutes affecting the BSD, RSD, DSD, GSD and GESD, and the student populations of such districts, shows that such negative effect is not present here.

In conclusion, NWACS submits that upon the basis of its review, no statutory or other impediments concerning the creation and operation of desegregated public schools, prohibit the State's charter school authorizer from

granting it a charter to operate an open-enrollment public charter school within the boundaries of the Bentonville School District.

ADE EVALUATION      PART C-20:      DESEGREGATION ASSURANCES

*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

CIRC Determination:

See Legal Comments

21. Complete the following table showing all sections of Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated (Education Code) and State Board of Education rules, including the *Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts*, from which the public charter school seeks to be exempted in order to meet the goals of the school. Identify the specific statute, rule, or standard requested to be waived by title and number if applicable. **Provide a rationale for each waiver requested that explains how the waiver will assist the charter in achieving the previously stated goals (see prompt #4), and explain how those goals will be achieved if the waiver is not granted.**

Applicant Response:

**Waiver Topic:** School Board

**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● Ark. Code Ann. §6.13.601 et seq. (with the exception of §6-13-612;622 and 629	School Board of Directors Generally
● §6-14-101 et seq.	District Board of Directors
● §6-13-619	School Board of Directors

**Rationale for Waiver**

The school seeks a waiver in these areas in order to maintain the integrity of our current board and with understanding that board member attendance may be inconsistent given the nature of work schedules. The school will require professional development for board members .

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**Waiver Topic: Planning Period**

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**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● §6-17-111	Duty-free Lunch Period
● §6-17-114	Daily Planning Period

**Rationale for Waiver**

It is our intent to provide teachers with at least 200 minutes of planning time per week but we desire the ability to provide that in differing increments, daily. Due to small staff, teachers may be required to work during usual lunch breaks.

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**Waiver Topic: Personnel Policies**

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**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● §6-17-201 et. seq.	Certified Personnel Policies
● §6-17-203	Committees on Personnel Policies-Members
● §6-17-2301 et seq	Classified School Employee Personnel Policy Law

**Rationale for Waiver**

The school requests a waiver of these laws and rules in order to draft personnel policies which reflect the unique needs and practices of the school. The policies will cover all necessary areas such as compensation; terms and conditions of employment; salary schedules; work days and holidays; leave, etc.

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**Waiver Topic: Teacher Fair Dismissal Act and Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act**

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**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● §6-17-1501 et. seq.	Teacher Fair Dismissal Act
● §6-17-1701 et. seq.	Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act

**Rationale for Waiver**

This waiver is being requested to enable us to establish an "at-will" employment system for all of our staff members (both instructional and non-instructional). This waiver will allow us to make prompt personnel decisions, as and if necessary, to address performance issues which negatively impact the operation of the school.

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**Waiver Topic: School Nurses and Counselors**

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**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● §6-18-706	School Nurses
● §6-18-1001 et. seq.	School Nurses
●	School Counselor

**Rationale for Waiver**

The school is seeking a waiver from employing a full-time nurse and a waiver from employing a counselor who is also a certified educator. The school will utilize nursing services from a certified organization, already under contract with the sponsoring entity. The medical organization will provide nursing services to our students on site multiple times per week. The medical organization will also provide hearing and vision screenings for all students at the beginning of the year and maintain immunization records. Trained staff from Northwest Arkansas Children's Shelter will pass medications to students as needed. Emergency situations will be addressed by trained staff and the proper professionals will be contacted immediately for appropriate medical care. The school will employ a full-time time counselor dedicated solely to the needs of the students at the charter. The charter plans to use counseling and medical services with a proven, positive track record working with children in another program overseen by the sponsoring entity. These service providers are able to provide expanded services for the charter.

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**Waiver Topic: Superintendent**

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**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● §6-13-109	School Superintendent
● §6-17-427	Superintendent license-Superintendent mentoring program required
● §6-17-918	Issuing and countersigning warrants

**ADE Rules**

Section Number (if applicable)	Rule Title
● 4-B.1	ADE Standards Rules
● 4-B.2	ADE Standards Rules

**Rationale for Waiver**

The school will employ a principal to manage day-to-day charter operations. With a maximum enrollment of 70 students in year 5, one administrator will be able to manage the responsibilities of a superintendent and a principal. It is fiscally responsible to retain only one school leader.

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**Waiver Topic: Gifted and Talented**

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**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● §6-20-101 et seq.	Gifted and Talented Children
● §6-42-2208(c)(6)	Gifted and Talented Children

**Standards for Accreditation**

Section Number	Section Title
● 2-G.1	Gifted and Talented Services

**Rationale for Waiver**

The school seeks exemption from these areas. Our model dictates that each student shall receive highly individualized instruction in the classroom based on the strengths and needs of the student. Our educational model is flexible and robust enough to encompass the needs of students who might ordinarily be classified as in need of Gifted and Talented instruction. Students will be encouraged to extend and apply thinking through lesson-planning focused higher-order thinking such as analysis and evaluation.

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**Waiver Topic: Library Media Services**

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**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● §6-25-103	Library Media Services program-Definition
● §6-25-104	Library Media Specialist

**Standards for Accreditation**

Section Number	Section Title
● 4-F.1	Library Media Specialists
● 4-F.2	Library Media Specialists

**Rationale for Waiver**

The school seeks a waiver in this area. The technology that will be utilized is highly mobile and can be transported anywhere learning is happening in the school. Reference materials from EBSCO will be utilized by the students for reference needs and our facility currently maintains an extensive library of fiction and non-fiction works. Online access to a variety of materials will be available to students and classroom teachers will provide appropriate guidance in accordance with lesson plans.

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**Waiver Topic: Student Policies**

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**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● §6-18-501 et seq.	Student Discipline Policies

**ADE Rules**

Section Number (if applicable)	Rule Title
●	ADE Guidelines for the Development, Review, and Revision of School District Discipline and School Safety Policies

**Rationale for Waiver**

The school seeks a waiver in the area of discipline policies. Our policies will provide the student with full due process protections, including appeals to the Board of Directors as necessary. The school will utilize relational interventions to provide a safe space for students who have not learned appropriate communication and coping strategies. The school will partner with parents/guardians to collaborate on appropriate behavior modification strategies based on the needs of the individual student. Students will be educated on how to recognize and report bullying and an environment of cooperation and encouragement will be fostered through social and emotional development curriculum. There will be a zero tolerance policy for all weapons that are brought to school

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**Waiver Topic: Alternative Learning Environment**

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**Statute/Standard/Rule to be Waived**

**Arkansas Code Annotated**

Code Number	Code Title
● §6-15-1005(b)(5)	Safe, equitable, and accountable public schools
● §6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(i)	Written student discipline policies required
● §6-42-109	Progress reports
● §6-48-101 et seq.	Alternative learning environment-Definitions

**Standards for Accreditation**

Section Number	Section Title
● 2-I.1	Alternative Education Services

**ADE Rules**

Section Number (if applicable)	Rule Title
● 4.00	ADE Rules Governing the Distribution of Student Special Needs Funding

**Rationale for Waiver**

Given the size of our school and our model for providing an environment for students who have shown difficulty adapting to a general education setting, we are asking of a waiver from providing an alternative learning environment in this already unique setting. All needs of each student will be addressed through

high staff to student ratio and a focus on the individual behavioral and academic needs of each child. Our educational model is flexible and robust enough to encompass the needs of students who might ordinarily assigned to an alternative school environment.

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## ADE EVALUATION      PART C-21:      WAIVERS

### *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

CIRC Determination:

See Legal Comments