

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
EDUCATION**

**2024**

**CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION**

**(for schools scheduled to open the 25-26 school year)**

**APPLICANT PROFILE INFORMATION**

1. Name of Proposed Charter School: Newman Virtual Academy Arkansas (NVAA)
2. Name of the eligible entity under which the charter will be organized: Newman-George International Education Organization (NIEO)
3. Name of contact person: Dr. Natalie Blasingame

Title/Relationship to Charter: Academic Advisor to NIEO  
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**Names and roles of all persons in the applicant group, i.e., anyone with a role in drafting the substantive content of this application and is expected to have a significant role with the school, including any consultants or employees of an education service provider or management organization. Add lines as needed.**

Full name	Current Role with Proposed School	Future Role with Proposed School
Dr. Sheba George	President, Newman-George International Education Organization (CMO)	President, Newman-George International Education Organization (CMO) Superintendent (CMO)
Dr. Natalie Blasingame	Academic Advisor to NIEO	Principal/Academic Advisor(CMO)
Lazarus George	CMO/IT Advisor	CMO/IT Advisor
Dr. Jay Srinivasan	Managing Director, Red Comet	Managing Director
Sridhar Narayan	Associate - Business Development (Red Comet)	Director of Operations

4. Projected Date of School Opening (Month/Year): Aug 1, 2025

5. Type of Charter

<input type="checkbox"/> Open Enrollment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open Enrollment -CMO	<input type="checkbox"/> Conversion Charter
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6. Educational Model

<input type="checkbox"/> Classical	<input type="checkbox"/> Traditional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Virtual	<input type="checkbox"/> College Prep	<input type="checkbox"/> Career/CTE
<input type="checkbox"/> Hybrid Learning	<input type="checkbox"/> Performing Arts	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Populations		

### Section 1: Executive Summary

#### A. Vision and Mission

- 1) State the charter school’s mission and vision for the proposed school. Provide a clear, focused, and compelling purpose for the school that is measurable and focused on educational outcomes. The mission and vision narrative should address how the school will help to provide high-quality education to Arkansas students.

#### Our Mission:

Newman Virtual Academy Arkansas (NVAA) has been created to provide a **new opportunity for K-12 student education to Arkansas families** that seek a high-quality, values-aligned, virtual school education focused on successful academic outcomes. NVAA will offer a well-rounded education that includes high-quality core curriculum from Red Comet which offers students opportunities to enroll in numerous electives and career pathway classes.

The parent company of NVAA, Newman-George International Education Organization (Charter Holder) upholds its **mission to give students opportunities to become whole individuals ready to serve the world by helping them reach their highest potential, and to provide in partnership with parents and community a well-rounded education within the context of the noble American heritage.** Newman-George International Education Organization (NIEO) is partnering with Red Comet which is committed to graduating students with a curriculum that is rigorous and fully aligned to the requirements of the state of Arkansas, and empowering students with the essential skills and knowledge required to excel in the ever-evolving workforce landscape.

NVAA, in partnership with Red Comet, will provide students with an individualized curriculum and instruction, enabling them to develop their unique skills, talents, and interests to achieve their maximum potential in an ever-evolving world. Through its comprehensive curriculum and career pathways, the curriculum aligns with its mission to help students identify and navigate a tailored learning experience that will ultimately allow them to be competitive and successful in contemporary society. **Thus, NVAA will not just graduate students but will prepare them for future careers in high-demand fields!** Very importantly, the mission and its curriculum and instructional methods will ensure that no student is left behind. The Red Comet curriculum and platform, that is virtual reality based, promotes learners’ active discovery and expression of their needs and interests. Learners are immersed in an environment that promotes and respects student voice and responsibility for his/her learning.

Red Comet curriculum development and launch teams pride themselves on integrating as many digital resources as possible to advance students’ engagement with the content and to stimulate students’ curiosity. The team seamlessly and deliberately integrates digital resources that add value to the learning process and encourage learners’ active engagement in the learning process. The digital resources consistently support learners’ pursuit of interests and deepen or extend curriculum topics to stimulate learners’ curiosity.

NVAA, in partnership with Red Comet, will help students overcome socio-economic, demographic and language barriers to achieve America's most important first key milestone - a high school diploma. Red Comet’s Enhanced Digital Curriculum **enables students from urban, rural, public, and private schools to succeed irrespective of their demographics, sex, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic factors.**

**Our Vision:**

At Newman Virtual Academy Arkansas, we envision a future where every graduate emerges as a confident, capable, and compassionate leader, ready to make meaningful contributions in their careers and chosen fields. We pride ourselves in keeping the student's learning at the heart of the company's guiding principles. By instilling a lifelong love of learning and a spirit of innovation, we empower our students to shape their destinies and positively impact the world around them.

- 2) Arkansas intends to be a national leader in education. To that end, provide an overview of the proposed school's education program, including major instructional methods. Explain why this school model will impact student outcomes for the targeted population.

NIEO is affiliated to Newman International Academy (NIA), a Cognia™ accredited school, that offers parents and the community a new, high-quality educational choice organized around each child, each day. The experienced founders and leaders of NIA are also leaders of NIEO that fills a unique niche for parents seeking a charter program focused on intentionally building students into Warriors of Wisdom, Stature, and Favor. Newman International Academy (NIA), a Pre-K-to-12th grade Charter School System in Texas, was approved by the Texas Education Agency in 2010 after its charter application earned 298 out of a possible 300 points from reviewers. The Academy opened in 2011 with 320 students on one campus. Thirteen years later, Newman International Academy (NIA) is a school system with over 3,000 students enrolled across seven locations in five cities (Arlington, Cedar Hill, Mansfield, Fort Worth, and Watauga) serving 63 school districts in the DFW Metroplex. All of Newman campuses are Title I and provide a niche for homeschoolers transitioning into the public realm and other diverse student groups who desire the nurture and care of a home-like environment. Newman Academy students are from all strata of society - many from low socio-economic backgrounds. NIEO is in the process of starting charters in communities of several states in the United States (Florida, Montana, Pennsylvania, California, and Maryland) that have requested Newman Academies. These communities have recognized NIEO as a national leader in education. To bolster and further its educational excellence, NIEO is partnering with Red Comet.

Red Comet is one of the oldest virtual schools operating since 1999. A pioneer in digital learning, Red Comet has served schools and students across the United States. Red Comet, a Cognia™ accredited program, offers a comprehensive offering of 300+ credit-bearing courses from kindergarten to grade 12. In addition to a complete set of K-12 core courses, Red Comet also offers over 125 courses focused on career and skill training.

Since the beginning, over 26,500 students have enrolled in the Red Comet program. Students have completed over 50,000 K-12 courses on the Red Comet platform - and ALL secondary courses were credit-bearing. Red Comet has been issuing credits for high school courses (9-12) since inception. To date, students have completed 29,000+ credit-bearing high school courses.

Red Comet's rigorous high school core curriculum is approved by the **NCAA** and the **University of California (UC certification)**.

**Red Comet's comprehensive CTE solution, which begins in middle school, ensures students graduate high school on time by equipping them with practical skills that help with certifications highly sought by employers.**

**Thus, NIEO's offering stands out by blending traditional high school education with innovative Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, utilizing cutting-edge technology such as augmented and virtual reality to enhance learning experiences. Our collaboration with Skillsoft ensures access to a vast array of courses leading to industry-recognized certifications, further equipping students with tangible qualifications that help them stand out amongst their peers.**

#### **Our Commitments:**

1. **Holistic Skill Development:** We believe in nurturing well-rounded individuals. Alongside academic excellence, we prioritize the development of critical soft skills such as communication, C.S. Lewis and classical education, teamwork, and problem-solving through chess classes.
2. **Real-world Relevance:** Our curriculum is designed in collaboration with industry experts to ensure alignment with Arkansas state standards and current market demands. Students engage in hands-on learning experiences and real-world projects that simulate professional environments.

3. Technological Integration: We embrace the power of technology and integrate augmented and virtual reality into various aspects of our curriculum, providing immersive learning opportunities that enhance understanding and retention. Our overarching solution addresses both the curriculum and practicum aspects of learning.
4. Career Readiness: Our ultimate goal is to prepare students for successful entry into the workforce. The numerous industry-specific courses and hands-on practical experience in augmented reality offer deep industry insights and position students as valuable assets to prospective employers.
5. Individualized Pathways: Recognizing that each student has unique interests and strengths, NIEO will go the extra mile to offer personalized pathways tailored to their career aspirations. Whether pursuing a trade, entering a skilled profession, or advancing to higher education, we provide a wealth of support and resources necessary for every student to thrive.

## **B. Evidence of Need, Support, and Involvement**

- 1) Describe the anticipated student population the school intends to serve. Provide a rationale for seeking to serve this population.

Newman Virtual Academy Arkansas (NVAA) plans to serve students in grades K-12th across Arkansas that come from urban, suburban, and rural areas. The Academy will draw students from all strata of society and from diverse backgrounds reflective of the state. NVAA will not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, or any other factor in the admission of students and will implement a robust enrollment and marketing plan in order to reach each student and family looking for a new, high-quality remote or at-home learning opportunity. **It will specifically focus on students from rural areas with a goal of providing educational opportunities that brick-and-mortar schools may not bring to the rural areas.** It is likely that homeschooled and private school families will be drawn to the vast array of curriculum options available, and rural families will seek out the vast variety of electives, STEM, and CTE coursework available beyond a smaller school system. The anticipated student population will benefit immensely from Red Comet's student-focused curriculum that is immersive, engaging, and relevant to real-world scenarios.

- 2) Describe the current educational options available to your target population. Include the overall academic performance of schools located near the proposed school and geographic area.

Currently, the student population that we are targeting does not have access to an engaging and immersive STEM curriculum, wide range of electives, and career and college readiness curriculum. The overall academic performance of these students is suffering due to the lack of these opportunities and they are getting shut out of high salaried jobs and opportunities to enter high demand careers.

Students and families across Arkansas, currently in homeschool or private schools settings due to their concern about the quality of education, will find a safe haven in NVAA that meets their needs, alleviating the stress, isolation, and limitations of homeschooling or the high tuition of a private school.

- 3) Based on your outreach, research, and understanding of the community and the students you seek to serve, what are the main challenges to the student's success in the community you seek to serve? What does your proposed school intend to do to address these challenges?

The main challenge of the student population we are addressing is the lack of access to quality education and CTE career pathways leading to trades or well-paying jobs. Without a clear path, students end up in low-paying jobs or worse - end up being unemployed for long periods of time. Without planning in the high school years, many will get stuck in trades without any upward mobility.

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NVAA uses Red Comet's courses that are engaging and easy to navigate and understand. Content is written for the specific grade level and is interactive. Students from all demographics with various barriers to learning have found success with Red Comet's curriculum in the past two decades. Supplementing learning with augmented and virtual reality makes it easier to retain concepts.

Additionally, the following features in the Red Comet curriculum build essential 21st century workforce skills in students:

- Most assignments (especially high school) are geared towards higher-level thinking that requires independent research, **critical thinking** and **problem solving**.
- Most assignments (especially high school) also require students to conduct research and craft a response based on their personal experiences or opinion. This requires students to think creatively and out of the box.
- **Information literacy** - Assignments require students to find, evaluate, organize, use, and communicate information in various formats (audio, video, infographics etc.), in addition to decision making, problem solving, and the selective acquisition of knowledge through research.
- **Media literacy** - Assessments also require students to access, critically evaluate, and create or manipulate media including audio, video, podcasts, infographics, etc.
- **Digital literacy** - Students not only study, evaluate and find digital content but also they create digital content as part of their submissions.
- **Life Skills** - Red Comet program is self-paced; students:
  - monitor their own progress,
  - set their own goals,
  - ensure set goals are realistic,
  - pace their work to keep up with the deadlines,
  - manage personal time and schedule, etc.

As students progress through the grades, they see a marked improvement in their self-discipline as well as their ability to focus on success.

When they enroll in NVAA, students will be exposed to over 45 career pathways leading to over 250 well-paying jobs that are in demand in the State of Arkansas. ALL students in 7th grade and beyond will be required to choose a pathway that they want to pursue. They will have the option of changing pathways, but they must always be enrolled in one course at any given time. Red Comet offers credit-bearing courses that students must complete in order to successfully progress in the pathway. Students will also practice essential skills for their career in augmented reality and complete courses with Skillsoft to help students prepare for industry certification. Skillsoft courses help students prepare for Industry-Recognized certifications, which in turn, help students find jobs in high-demand industries and fields like IT, STEM, and Business.

Although NVAA is submitting a waiver for a library media services program, it will be providing instruction and learning experiences in information literacy, digital literacy and media literacy through an "advisory" type program that is woven into coursework for all students by design. Various professionals will provide these resources that runs parallel with other developmental, educational, social-emotional, career prep, and capstone developmental efforts by grade level that help build well-rounded individuals. Professionals will maintain library media materials for students and assist students in obtaining and using them.

- 4) Explain the process for setting, monitoring, and revising performance expectations. In your response, include how the school will use data and how you would define success for the students and school.

NVAA will review both formative and summative student performance data throughout and at the end of every school year and make research and data-based recommendations/adjustments to teacher instruction and student learning. Performance data reviewed will be thorough and will include information on how much the students were engaged in their learning (frequency of logging in, amount of time spent during each login session, interactions and communication with teachers, quality of assignments submitted, timeliness of assignments, overall course score, etc.) Courses that have a low level of engagement or low success rate will be revised and relaunched. Students who are not engaged in their learning will be offered additional learning opportunities via other edTech tools and apps. Ultimately, the success of the student is at the heart of NVAA's philosophy, and we achieve such success by not compromising educational standards or curriculum rigor.





## Section 2: Academic Plan

### A. Academic focus

- 1) Describe and outline the proposed school's academic focus. Include specific academic benchmarks, educational philosophy, instructional methods, and innovations.

For curriculum and related services, NVAA has partnered with Red Comet.

Red Comet is an online education company that is fully accredited and approved in several states in the US. Red Comet offers various solutions for virtual/remote learning, blended learning, alternate learning, and addressing learning loss. Red Comet has been providing online courses for students since 1999. It is one of the oldest online course providers. Since its inception, Red Comet has served students across the United States.

Red Comet is fully accredited to provide services to students throughout the US as well as globally. It also has approval from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for high school courses and approval from the College Board for Advanced Placement classes. The curriculum is also approved by the University of California.

Although Red Comet is not considered to be “High-Quality Curriculum Material” as denoted in AR EdReports, and it is not in the “Recommended Curriculum List”, Red Comet will partner with approved HQ approved high-quality curriculum providers such as American Reading Company Core in ELAR, iReady for mathematics, and Amplify Science to align with Arkansas’ high-quality curriculum material requirements.

Red Comet offers self-paced online courses from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Along with the core subjects required for each grade, Red Comet offers 100+ elective courses, including a wide selection of AP courses and NCAA-approved courses for student-athletes. Students who take Red Comet courses earn credits for all completed courses and receive official transcripts.

NVAA will only use certified/trained AP teachers. Red Comet has enhanced AP offerings and now all of its teachers are certified and meet training requirements beyond licensure from Grading and Course Credit Rules. Furthermore, at least one AP course is offered in each of the four core content areas, in accordance with Rules Governing Grading and Course Credit and A.C.A. 6-16- 1204 (c).

Red Comet offers over 45 career & skills pathways by integrating over 75 credit-bearing vocational and skills-based courses that fulfill high school graduation requirements for electives, with practicum based on augmented reality technology. By incorporating cutting-edge technology into the practicum, students will have a hands-on and immersive learning experience that enhances their understanding of real-world vocational applications. Red Comet has created pathways, mapping credit-bearing courses with technology-based practicum for over 100 careers. In addition, by offering access to a vast library of 7,000+ cloud-based mini-courses and 29,000+ videos, Red Comet ensures that students have a comprehensive and well-rounded education, emphasizing academic and practical skills as well as soft skills that prepare them for success in the workforce.

- 2) Describe the school-wide, evidence-based plan that will drive academic improvement for all students and help close achievement gaps. Please provide any relevant research and evidence you used in developing the plan.

High Expectations: All students at NVAA are required to complete a plan of study. Red Comet curriculum is aligned to Arkansas' higher education state standards as well as those of AdvanceED Cognia™, the internationally recognized Accrediting Institution through which Red Comet is Accredited Globally. In their recent re-engagement review with AdvanceED Cognia™, both Newman and Red Comet scored an *Exemplary score* because of their exceptional processes, practices, and results.

Over the years, Red Comet has helped thousands of students, including those who had given up learning and dropped out of school, to achieve their high school diploma. Red Comet's mission is to create a social and economic impact on society through education. NIEO strives to help students overcome social, economic, family and health barriers to achieve one of the most important milestones necessary to succeed in America and has partnered with Red Comet to enhance student success.

Schools that used the Red Comet program for dropout prevention have successfully stalled and reverted the dropout curve. The online program offers several options for high school students all the way from credit recovery to advanced placement. Also, during these uncertain times, students in elementary and middle school have the option to use our fully virtual option. Students can study from anywhere and at any time as long as they have a computer/laptop and a reliable internet connection.

In addition, the program supports diverse student populations and allows for individualized skill-building through a personalized online curriculum. Our students come from all demographics: elite neighborhoods, inner-city, urban areas, rural farmlands, home school and homeless environments.

**Red Comet's solution is proven to work for students no matter their geographical location or socioeconomic status.**

Current student enrollments are spread across 11 states, including approximately 1,200 young Arkansans taking advantage of Red Comet courses. Of the 4,500+ enrollments in the U.S. in 2021-2022, 80% are in core classes and 20% in electives/supplemental coursework. Enrollments are from all grade levels, with 84% at the high school, 10% at the middle school, and 6% at the elementary levels coming from public schools (48%), private schools (39%), public charters (8%), not attending school (4%) and home school (1%) backgrounds. Course completion was at 71%, a grade distribution across all grade levels being 38% A's, 29% B's, 19% C's, and 14% D's with the average grade in each high school core subject of Math, English, Social Studies, and Science in the 80% range. All of this data stands to improve by creating a charter school that harnesses the potential of Red Comet's coursework success into a complete schooling solution for students across Arkansas.

The distribution of enrollments across Red Comet courses in high school for the 2021-22 school year were Social Studies 22%, English 19%, Math 17%, Science 13%, World Language 11%, Health & Fitness 6%, PE 5%, Fine Arts 4%, and College & Career Readiness 2%.

Across Career and Skill Development classes, the highest percentages of enrollments are in Business & Industry (29%), Life Skills (14%), Science Electives (13%), Engineering & Tech (10%), Social Electives (9%), World Language ASL (8%), English Electives (7%), Fine Arts Electives (5%), and Health & Fitness Electives (4%).

By wrapping all the potential of the excellent course offerings with the excellence of a proven charter system Arkansas will create a complete and excellent educational solution to reach more Arkansans across every corner and region of the state.

**B. Describe the school's curriculum and discuss how it will prepare students to meet or exceed Arkansas standards.**

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- 1) If the curriculum is fully developed, summarize curricular choices, and explain the rationale for selection. If the curriculum still needs to be fully developed, describe any curriculum decisions made to date, share any proposed curricular decisions that are pending, and explain the process for completion.

Red Comet's curriculum is fully developed and ready to be used. Red Comet has developed and owns all core courses for high school (grades 9 to 12) and partners with other accredited/approved vendors for all other curriculum (elementary, middle school, health, physical education, career electives.) The core curriculum is aligned to NGSS and Arkansas State standards.

Learners are immersed in an environment that fosters lifelong skills including creativity, curiosity, risk taking, collaboration, and design thinking. Students are encouraged to develop independent thinking to arrive at conclusions or to make inferences on a range of current issues.

Course content is highly interactive and is designed to move students towards higher-level thinking. Assessments are varied in nature and require students to be creative in their responses. Many assessments require students to conduct research outside of the classroom and independently come up with a response. Students are encouraged to express their opinion on social and emotional issues based on the results of their research.

Several assessments require students to research various topics and offer informed opinions. This life skill will serve them well into adulthood, helping them make better decisions. NVAA encourages student to take risks. Learners engage in ongoing experiences that develop the non-academic skills essential for their next learning steps and future success.

Virtual health and fitness classes encourage students to lead a healthy lifestyle by pursuing physical activities, taking care of their mental and emotional health, and by avoiding negative behaviors like substance abuse, smoking, etc.

Furthermore, Red Comet's comprehensive Career and Technical Education solution prepares students for college and in-demand, high-salaried careers. **Red Comet has mapped nearly 250 jobs to over 40 career pathways that address the skills gap in the economy and are aligned with high-demand fields.**

- a) Provide evidence or documentation that the literacy curriculum chosen is based on the science of reading. Describe your strategy for students reading at or above grade level or higher and your strategy for students reading below grade level.

Red Comet's curriculum provides explicit, systematic instruction that moves students from foundational skills to reading fluency. All English Language Arts courses incorporate grade-level reading to help develop successful, proficient, and confident readers. For students who are not at grade level reading proficiency, NVAA teachers will extend student's learning time to help them master concepts. There is no restriction on how many times a student can revisit a concept. To increase their confidence, students can pick and choose lessons that they feel most comfortable with (except in subjects like math where it is difficult to study out of order.) Those who are at a higher reading level, can accelerate and finish the course much earlier and enroll in higher level courses (like Advanced Placement.) The Red Comet curriculum provides numerous opportunities for students to revisit concepts using multiple modalities -- auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. The curriculum also includes numerous podcasts/audio/video explanations to help students with varying learning styles to learn key concepts. The platform also allows students to have the content 'read aloud,' complete their assignments using audio & video formats, and use authorized external resources to enhance their understanding.

The approved foundational reading curriculum that will be used in the K-5/6 space will be Lexia Core 5 Reading, with MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach as the Intervention Program. The curriculum will be offered through synchronous instruction as an option for at-home Learning Coaches and become required should RtI/MTSS demonstrate a student is falling behind in foundational literacy.

Waivers for curriculum and instruction areas are not submitted. All waivers and their rationale can be found on an attachment to this application.

- 2) Describe the professional learning opportunities and support provided to educators to implement the described academic plan.

NVAA will offer its educators a suite of professional development programs geared towards achieving high proficiency within its teaching staff. All of NVAA teachers are certificated and hold AR State certification in their assigned subject area. They are also part of a school system where they have met professional development requirements. NVAA Head of Teachers and the Arkansas Lead Teacher will constantly evaluate the need to recruit and train new teachers. One of their responsibilities will be to ensure good teacher recruitment as needed based on student growth and needs.

With permission from other ISD Superintendents, NVAA will recruit teachers from other districts for part-time work. This practice has worked effectively in other educational operations. These teachers will usually work after-hours or during weekends to complete their grading tasks. This practice keeps the teaching community from leaving their profession and moving on to other more lucrative jobs. One important criterion for recruitment is for the teachers to have current state certification in specific subject areas and proven success with students.

When teachers are newly hired by NVAA, they go through a series of online training sessions by the Head of Teachers and the Arkansas Lead Teacher. These trainings and workshops will be developed and held based on teachers' needs and the ongoing evaluation of their performance and student growth. Orientation sessions address dealing with students in a virtual environment. New teachers will receive training on how to grade, how to use the platform, and how to communicate with students on the platform amongst gaining other professional skills such as student management issues and working with Learning Coaches.

All teachers will have access to the Red Comet curriculum in their subject area and they can choose to familiarize themselves with concepts at any time. All courses have a clearly identified scope and sequence and a clearly defined syllabus that teachers can use. Teachers will have access to grading rubrics and answer keys. Teachers will have access to teacher resources which include several professional training videos.

Only after they complete the initial training, will they be assigned grading work. The Head of Teachers and the Arkansas Lead Teacher will constantly monitor new teachers' work and performance and offer timely feedback. Additionally, the Head of Teachers and the Arkansas Lead Teacher will also consistently and randomly check the quality of work and timeliness of all teachers. If any teacher is found to be lacking, they will hold a session to understand what the issues are. If additional training is deemed necessary, the teacher will go through another round of training. The Head of Teachers and the Arkansas Lead Teacher will conduct formative and summative evaluations of all NVAA teachers. Professional development will be based on these evaluations.

Teachers also have access to over 1,000 professional development modules/mini-courses that cover a wide range of useful topics including improving communication skills, personal development, personal accountability, diversity training, working effectively in a virtual environment, etc. They can study these courses at their own time. They also receive badges that they can post on their LinkedIn accounts. Teacher development and new teacher orientation occurs throughout the calendar year including the summer months.

- 3) Explain the proposed master schedule. Describe why this schedule will be optimal for student learning. Summarize how the school will plan time for teacher development, tiered interventions, enrichment, tutoring, acceleration, and other academic activities. Provide a copy of the proposed annual academic calendar and proposed master schedule with this application.

When students enroll in Red Comet courses through NVAA, **students will have access to their courses through the platform 24/7.** Students can work on their courses at their own time and at their own pace, essentially **ANYTIME and from ANYPLACE.**

Some thrive in the mornings while many achieve their best in the afternoon or evenings. Students also have weekends to catch up on their academic work. This helps students who learn at a slower pace or are facing language barriers. This schedule also helps those who are economically challenged and need to work to supplement the family income. These students can work on Red Comet around their work schedule.

Also, students can enroll anytime during the school year (August to end of May.) They will have access to the course for 150 days. Students can accelerate and complete the courses before the 150-day period. For those who are lagging in progress, courses can be extended upon the discretion of the teacher who will evaluate the needs of the student along with the student's commitment to learning.

Below are calendar black-out days for Red Comet administration, customer service, and teaching staff:

1. Labor Day weekend
2. Thanksgiving holidays
3. Christmas holidays using starting around Dec 20th to the end of the year
4. New Year's holiday
5. Memorial Day

During the black-out dates, administrators, customer service, and teachers will not be available to respond to student questions and grade submissions. Besides the black-out days, Red Comet staff will be available to assist students throughout the school year.

Newman creates a schedule for each student in each course, even when the courses are asynchronous and students can complete them at their own pace. Newman provides a pacing guide in which there is a calculation of how much time a student needs to spend on each class each week, based on their start and end date for each class, in order to complete the class on time. Any student can complete courses as fast as desired in the self-paced curriculum. Students can complete two classes in half the time, or one in half the time, and in fact go as fast as they want and complete one class at a time, or be in 5 courses simultaneously, and students can move into new courses any time of the year.

Every student will be evaluated for progress based on the school's guidelines and will receive a monthly progress report. If the student's progress is Unsatisfactory, then the teacher will implement Intervention Procedures as per the school's policy. Intervention Policies will be implemented within 5 days after receiving an Unsatisfactory Progress Report. If a student continues to make unsatisfactory progress, the teacher on record will hold an online meeting with the parent/guardian to discuss the student's progress. In this meeting, the teacher will discuss any accommodations that need to be made based on the student's personal circumstances or intellectual capabilities.

Teacher development and new teacher orientation occurs throughout the calendar year, including the summer months.

### **C. Academic Performance**

- 1) Explain the process for setting, monitoring, and revising academic performance goals. Include in your response how the proposed school will use data to improve instruction, inform professional development,

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and evaluate curriculum.

The NVAA and the Red Comet leadership team has an open-door policy when it comes to engaging with stakeholders, including students, teachers, and other school staff like counselors, administrative staff, paraprofessionals, etc. The leadership team will consistently reach out to stakeholders for support and active participation.

NVAA staff will routinely engage with their department heads to exchange new ideas or to discuss issues. The Red Comet staff community, which is vibrant and close-knit will reach out and communicate without barriers. Students can contact Red Comet teachers at any time via email. Students and parents may contact the customer service teams anytime during the school week during business hours. Red Comet teachers will check in with their students at least once weekly.

Every summer (June-Aug.), our leadership team will analyze the school district's mission and vision statements. It will check if our offering continues to align with these statements. The leadership team will review the ongoing emphasis on learning anyplace & anytime and evaluate if the program continues to remove the social & economic barriers to K-12 education.

The NVAA leadership team evaluates the curriculum development programs on a monthly basis. The results of the discussion are captured and tracked routinely in a shared document. During the summer months (June-Aug) of each year, the leadership team will get together with departmental heads to evaluate the structure of programs offered throughout the organization and decide if any changes need to be made. The current program structure will be evaluated against current state rules & regulations. At the beginning of each semester, the team will check all national and state standards to see if there are any changes. If there are changes, the curriculum is updated as soon as possible to reflect the changes.

All Red Comet courses will have a survey module that students must complete at the end of the course. This feedback will be aggregated and analyzed to help improve the course content or features.

Any other feedback provided external to the courses will be captured in an internal database to help drive positive changes in various aspects of the company. The curriculum development program at Red Comet will continue to be adjusted and modified based on the feedback received from the public and private school staff in the past few years. The Red Comet Course Launch team has a revised and elaborate set of guidelines to track the quality of the developed curriculum content. The course launch team has been evaluating the delivered curriculum content against this extensive and exhaustive list of criteria. For any new courses developed, the course launch team will keep sending content back for revision several times until it achieves the desired quality level.

Teachers and customer service staff continue to work on improving the successful course completion rate, which is currently at around 77%. The target is to improve this metric by 3% each year by continuing to engage the parents and students by

- Sending out monthly progress reports to students and parents
- Sending out warnings to students who are at risk of not completing the course by the end date
- Giving students an extension after the course end date.

2) Describe the promotion/retention policies for instructional staff.

NIEO partners with Red Comet that has one of the best retention in the industry and most staff members have been

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with Red Comet for a long time. Every staff member has a clear path to promotion and managers consistently set goals for their employees' progress. They also have access to professional development from the world's leader in skills training.

NIEO and Red Comet's leadership team will consistently recognize and actively encourage leadership potential among professional staff members. Teachers will be shown a path for professional development and taking on more responsibilities before being promoted. NIEO's leadership team will constantly create conditions to ensure formal and informal leadership opportunities and provide support for team members to improve their leadership skills. Those professional staff members who show initiative and eagerness to take on individual or shared responsibilities will have plenty of opportunities to rise up the ranks at Newman Virtual Academy Arkansas.

NVAA and Red Comet's HR function works closely with the professional staff to identify, recruit, and train new employees. Red Comet is proud of the fact that it has not laid off any staff members since 2010, and almost no staff members have quit unless they were retiring. Red Comet fosters a very strong company culture that promotes close-knit relationships.

The Red Comet leadership and professional staff members routinely evaluate the allocation and management of human (teachers, curriculum development & review, customer support,) and fiscal resources to ensure equity for learning for all students. Adjustments to resource allocation are consistently based on current data at any point in time.

Should this prompt refer to the promotion/retention policies of students between grade levels, and the training of instructional staff with regards to following the ADE statutes and rules with regards to providing interventions for students and all considerations student retention.

### Section 3: Student Services and Special Populations

- 1) Explain the proposed charter school's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) or similar intervention service models. Please include a description of the model, data, and components that will help ensure students receive high-quality instruction.

NVAA will use a structured and formalized MTSS and progress-monitoring model that has been tested by Red Comet in other states. This model is proven to be very effective. Intervention at NVAA will be proactive and continuous. The system and its teachers will not wait to see student failure before administering remediation strategies. MTSS is continuous and ongoing, At the same time, any detection of lax, lack of work, lack of growth in understanding of concepts, and poor proficiency levels will be dealt with strategically and methodically through monitoring of attendance, progress reports, and tiered, modified learning strategy plans.

#### Attendance and Progress Reports:

##### Weekly (Attendance):

Attendance emails will be sent to students and parents on Sunday to Monday for those who missed checking in with their NVAA Teacher and those who never logged in to their course for the previous week.

School Staff will receive a report via the shared google drive folder on Mondays and Tuesdays. The report will list the students who missed checking in with their Teacher and those who never logged in to their course for the previous week.

On Thursday of every week, the system is checked to make sure that the students are consistent in checking in with their Red Comet Teachers. Students who missed attendance (checking in with their Teacher) for the previous week are reminded to submit attendance if they have not already done so for the current week.

(These emails have been proven to be highly effective at improving student attendance on the courses. For example, on average, 70% of students showed improved attendance.)

During synchronous instruction and other times when appropriate, attendance is excused only for medical or family emergency reasons, and religious or cultural purpose. The student is considered to have ample time to complete their Weekly Check-in if the student is only absent for a partial week.

##### Monthly (Progress Reports):

Evaluation emails will be sent to the students and parents who are at risk of receiving unsatisfactory progress reports, encouraging them to meet the satisfactory criteria. This mail will be sent about a week before the Monthly progress reports are due.

(These emails have been proven to be highly effective at improving student performance on the courses. For example, during the month of December "22", 55% of students showed improvement and received satisfactory progress on the course.)

NIEO management will receive an Evaluation Report on all the students enrolled within this program.

##### Definitions: Satisfactory Progress:



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High School courses (9-12): A score of at least 60% or better and at least 3% increase of gradable activities completed since the previous generated Monthly Progress Report.

Middle and Elementary School courses (K-8): At least 3% increase of gradable activities completed since the previous generated Monthly Progress Reports.

Progress Reports are usually sent out to Students and Parents during the third week of the Month.

A report of the students who will need interventions will be sent to the Red Comet Teachers so the teachers can prepare a personalized intervention plan for each of the students.

Students who receive unsatisfactory progress reports for that month, will receive a personalized Intervention Plan in the name of the student (9th – 12th grade) and the parent's name (K – 8th grade) from the Red Comet Teachers within 5 days of the progress report with students and parents copied.

Parents/students must accept the Intervention Plans before the end of the month. If students/parents have questions about the intervention plan, they can reach out to the RC Teachers through email or phone.

If School Staff for the students do not accept the intervention plan before the end of the month, the student's enrollment will be deactivated until they accept the intervention.

(Interventions have shown roughly 5% improvement in student performance (consequent satisfactory progress) for the first intervention and about 22% improvement in student performance (consequent satisfactory progress) for the second intervention.)

If after the second intervention, the students are still struggling to show satisfactory progress, students are moved to modified learning plans which will change the criteria for satisfactory progress.

### 1st Modified Learning plan satisfactory criteria:

High School courses (9-12): At least 2% increase of gradable activities completed since the previous generated Monthly Progress Reports.

Middle and Elementary School courses (K-8): At least 2% increase of gradable activities completed since the previous generated Monthly Progress Reports.

(This plan has shown about 72% improvement in student performance (consequent satisfactory progress).

If after two interventions on this plan, the student still shows unsatisfactory progress, the student will be moved to another modified learning plan (2nd Modified Learning Plan.)

### 2nd Modified Learning plan satisfactory criteria:

High School courses (9-12): At least 1% increase of gradable activities completed since the previous generated Monthly Progress Reports.

Middle and Elementary School courses (K-8): At least 1% increase of gradable activities completed since the previous generated Monthly Progress Reports.

(If after two interventions on this plan, the student still shows unsatisfactory progress, the student will be moved to another modified learning plan (3rd Modified Learning Plan.))

3rd Modified Learning plan satisfactory criteria:

High School courses (9-12): At least 0.5% increase of gradable activities completed since the previous generated Monthly Progress Reports.

Middle and Elementary School courses (K-8): At least 0.5% increase of gradable activities completed since the previous generated Monthly Progress Reports.

Red Comet courses contain numerous assessments throughout to test student learning after key milestones. Students demonstrate learning and mastery of concepts by completing these assessments. Students also receive badges in several courses. NVAA teachers check these milestones to ensure students are mastering all the key concepts. In addition, NVAA/Red Comet staff, administrators and teachers can routinely pull reports from the system to monitor the progress of students.

NVAA teachers can extend their students' learning time, if necessary, in order to help the student to master a particular concept or standard. Red Comet will use all seven days in the week to determine time-on-task and attendance. Students will be able to finish classes early if they so desire, allowing them to move on to higher level courses. Middle school students will be able to advance via the Red Comet early high school program, and high school students will be able to advance via the Red Comet college-and-career readiness program. High-achieving students can also opt to enroll in college-level Advanced Placement courses.

A unique MTSS tool offered by Red Comet to NVAA is use of VR headsets that sync with the platform to provide a quick visual snapshot of a group of students as well as detailed data on individual student performance and progress. Teachers can login to the platform to view the scores of individual students. Teachers also have access to analytics that visually show them how long it took for the individual students to master different concepts and their individual scores in each of the different assessments. The reports and analytics features allow quick visualization of how students are progressing, and easy identification of gaps in learning.

Teachers will continue to work with students to help them achieve satisfactory progress on the course until the end of the enrollment period. NVAA will identify, evaluate, and appropriately place exceptional students with disabilities in the most appropriate educational setting.

- 2) Describe school-wide, research-based instructional strategies that specifically benefit students with disabilities, emergent bilingual/English learners, and students performing above and below grade level in the same classroom environment.

At NVAA all course content, including instructional content and explanations is at appropriate readability levels for the grade level of the student. In math courses, mathematical language is written at the appropriate level for the intended audience. Content writers repeatedly check readability scores during the entire development process. Further, Red Comet courses undergo reviews by multiple teams (teachers, instructional designers, student representatives) and are again checked to ensure that they are grade-level appropriate.

Several courses offer screen reader capability, large fonts, optional graphic-free text version, asynchronous teaching videos for math courses, and appropriate use of color (for emphasis.) Many courses have the 'read-aloud' version allowing emergent bilingual/English learners, and students performing below grade level can listen to the audio version of the text.

Content offers rigor with assignments and assessments but also includes a lot of curricular scaffolding to help students understand difficult concepts. Lower-grade courses offer a lot of scaffolding for students who are struggling readers. All lesson materials are available on the LMS platform and can be accessed in one place with one login. Platform allows struggling students to study the material in a non-linear fashion, attacking concepts and lessons they feel more confident with. Students are not restricted from re-visiting prior lessons or from re-visiting concepts multiple times until they feel confident about taking the final tests. Pre-tests allow students to assess their readiness in taking the final test. All these steps and methods help struggling students who are performing below grade level.

- 3) Describe how the charter school intends to identify, evaluate, and appropriately place exceptional students with disabilities in the most appropriate educational setting.

In order to address all needs outlined in a student's IEP, Newman will ensure that all teachers have reviewed a student's IEP and 504 and have those accommodations and modifications in place. All teachers will be trained to address the needs of students with special needs. The Principal and Special Education Director will oversee proper implementation of the program including identification, evaluation, placement, and designing the appropriate educational setting through accommodations and modifications for exceptional students.

Students with disabilities and who have a certified plan will receive accommodations on the platform. This could include adjusting the time for taking tests or even completely removing any timers on tests. NVAA's Arkansas Lead Teacher will inform the teachers of the student's disability so that the teachers may grade the submissions accordingly. A team of specialists will meet with the student (either virtually or in person) to evaluate the needs of the student in the virtual learning environment.

Newman will follow the IEP protocols provided in ADE documents. Newman accommodations are commonly categorized in four ways: (1) Presentation, (2) Response, (3) Timing/Scheduling, (4) Setting  
**PRESENTATION ACCOMMODATIONS**—Allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access include visual, auditory and a combination of visual and auditory.  
**RESPONSE ACCOMMODATIONS**—Allow students to complete assignments, tests and activities in different ways or to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device.  
**TIMING/SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATIONS**—Change the allowable length of a test or assignment and may also change the way the time is structured due to the individual/physical needs of some students.  
**SETTING ACCOMMODATIONS**—Change the location in which a test or assignment is given or the conditions of the assessment setting.

The Red Comet curriculum is designed to present information in a variety of ways to help students with learning disabilities and **with disabilities in other categories** needing accommodations:

*Red Comet courses include the following features:*

- Interactive quizzes that provide students with multiple opportunities to test understanding of concepts.
- Interactions and Interactive dialogue simulation present concepts in a format that is suitable for auditory and visual learning.
- Asynchronous teaching videos
- Historical documentaries, Oral history
- Media Catalogs
- Audio Read-Aloud

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- Virtual laboratories
- Optional reading material
- Additional references for those who seek extended learning opportunities
- Podcasts that students can download and watch on their personal devices

Newman will provide video recordings of content for those with reading or language deficits, enlarged font for visually impaired, speech-to-text capabilities for those with gross-motor deficits, etc. We will work with Learning Coaches to find the right strategies and tools to accommodate growth and mastery of IEP goals and standards.

In addition, students can use Virtual Reality (VR) to supplement or as a replacement for their science classes (physics, chemistry, biology, health). All content is aligned to state and national standards and is grade-appropriate. Within the VR content, there are formative assessments for Red Comet teachers to use.

### **Safe Learning Environment for Exceptional Students:**

Students with specific disabilities like ADD, ADHD, Anxiety Disorder, etc. thrive in the virtual reality environment. Virtual Reality or VR is a uniquely personal experience that is proven to positively influence student engagement, retention, and desire to learn. The VR modules enrich education by increasing learner involvement, focus, and overall academic performance.

Learning takes place in a safe environment where students learn at their own pace. Students are not under pressure to keep up with the rest of the class and are not in an environment where they are judged. Students have multiple opportunities to master concepts and may attempt tests & assessments numerous times until they master the content.

### **Analytics for Teachers**

The VR learning management platform of Red Comet offers unique profiles for students, teachers, and administrators. With actionable analytics, teachers stay engaged with the learning, without needing to hover. The platform was developed to allow teachers a simple way of setting up classes, while also providing data on success and gaps in understanding.

The teacher dashboard helps teachers monitor the performance of a class (a global class report) and individual students (personalized student profiles). Teachers can also access module reports, helping them plan their lessons more effectively and with greater insight.

The VR headsets sync with the platform to provide a quick visual snapshot of a group of students as well as detailed data on individual student performance and progress. Teachers can login to the platform to view the scores of individual students. Teachers also have access to analytics that visually show them how long it took for the individual students to master different concepts and their individual scores in each of the different assessments. The reports and analytics features allow quick visualization of how students are progressing, and easy identification of gaps in learning.

- 4) Describe how the school will meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELL). Include the procedures that will be utilized for identifying students, ensuring that they have equitable access to the school's programming, and engaging with their families.

### **Equity of Learning (applies to Questions 4, 5, and 6):**

All students have equitable opportunities to realize their learning potential. Students, irrespective of sex or physical

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demographics, have fared equally well in the Red Comet program. Final scores do not vary significantly across populations from different demographics (rural vs. urban, affluent vs. economically-distressed, etc..) Evidence of learning indicates no significant achievement gaps among subpopulations of learners.

All curriculum is self-paced and allows students to learn anywhere and anytime, giving them control over how, where, and when they learn. Learners have equitable opportunities to realize their learning potential. Red Comet implements the same policy for all students enrolled in its various programs. All students will be subject to the same rules and conditions unless they need accommodations for disability. These relate to the time allotted for taking tests, the number of retests available, rubrics associated with grading students' written submissions, etc.

### **English Language Learners:**

All Newman students who may be English Learners will be assessed, placed, and parents/guardians notified of the placement within the first 30 calendar days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year (or within two calendar weeks of enrollment thereafter.)

NVAA will follow the Arkansas mandated English Language Proficiency Screening protocol as outlined in the Entrance and Exit Procedures Manual updated July 2024.

NVAA will administer the Home Language Usage Survey/HLUS-VF via digital format during enrollment. If the form indicates a language other than English, Newman will utilize the statewide adopted ELPA21 English Language Proficiency Screener via virtual administration by an English Support Coach. Once scored, Newman will follow the criteria for "Initial Placement of Screened Students", consider supporting evidence and other factors, hold an LPAC meeting, and provide parent/guardian notification.

Newman will follow procedures to find former EL students to verify program status, determine whether exit and monitoring criteria are met, and make appropriate placement according to the required procedures.

Newman may contract ESL Screening and testing services available or provide this through staff positions depending in the EL caseload requiring support. The superintendent and principal will oversee and monitor all aspects of EL programming and services to ensure student growth and success.

Each student identified as an EL through the screening process, shepherded by the family's English Support Liaison, will continue with the services of their English Support Liaison. This person will be a liaison between the Learning Coach (parent/guardian), the student, and their teachers. The LPAC will identify appropriate accommodations at tier 1, 2, 3 based on student needs, which will be formally communicated to teachers and all related supports. These will be explained to Learning Coaches and students as part of the notification process. Student progress is monitored through universal RtI/MTSS, and if a student starts to fall behind in literacy, grades, attendance, or community involvement there will be a process of refining accommodations and interventions until each EL student is successful. Students will be reminded constantly of their access to accommodations and teachers will enforce use to ensure student success and engage the English Support Liaison if their efforts are not resulting in accelerated language and academic growth.

During the enrollment process, all information about the academic program is available to families in multiple languages for them to best understand the services and supports available to their child. Community Liaisons that interface with families every day speak various languages to best support families, for example Spanish and Martiali in Arkansas to match enrolled demographics of native language.

Newman will provide certified ESOL teachers. All students will also have a certified English Support Liaison to monitor, provide direct instructional support/RtI, and to serve as a liaison with the teachers and Learning Coaches in all subjects and classes as a function of intentional linking of LPAC and RtI/MTSS processes, with a focus on language and literacy development.

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English Language Learners can request to receive accommodations on the platform. This could include adjusting the time for taking tests or even completely removing any timers on tests based on the proficiency level. The NVAA Arkansas Lead Teacher will inform all graders of the student's language barrier so that the submissions may be graded accordingly.

English Language Learners could utilize the many features of the Red Comet curriculum on the platform including the Read-Aloud feature, interactive quizzes, interactions, teaching videos, historical documentaries, media catalogs, virtual laboratories, and optional material to understand the various concepts.

In addition, students can use VR to supplement or as a replacement for their science classes (physics, chemistry, biology, health). All content (including VR) is aligned to state and national standards and is grade-appropriate. Within the VR content, there are formative assessments for NVAA teachers to use. These assessments will provide insight into the student's placement for rigor.

### **VR is a Safe Learning Environment for Students with Language Barriers:**

Students with language barriers thrive in the virtual reality environment because Red Comet's VR system offers a complete curriculum in Spanish (as a default option.) The system also supports up to 25 languages other than English and Spanish. Virtual Reality or VR is a uniquely personal experience that is proven to positively influence student engagement, retention, and desire to learn. The VR modules enrich education by increasing learner involvement, focus, and overall academic performance.

Learning takes place in a safe environment where students learn at their own pace. Students are not under pressure to keep up with the rest of the class and are not in an environment where they are judged. Students have multiple opportunities to master concepts and may attempt tests & assessments numerous times until they master the content.

### **Analytics for Teachers**

The VR learning management platform offers unique profiles for students, teachers, and administrators. With actionable analytics, teachers stay engaged with the learning, without needing to hover. The platform was developed to allow teachers a simple way of setting up classes, while also providing data on success and gaps in understanding.

The teacher dashboard helps teachers monitor the performance of a class (a global class report) and individual students (personalized student profiles). Teachers can also access module reports, helping them plan their lessons more effectively and with greater insight.

The VR headsets sync with the platform to provide a quick visual snapshot of a group of students as well as detailed data on individual student performance and progress. Teachers can login to the platform to view the scores of individual students. Teachers also have access to analytics that visually show them how long it took for the individual students to master different concepts and their individual scores in each of the different assessments. The reports and analytics features allow quick visualization of how students are progressing, and easy identification of gaps in learning.

### **English Language Learning in a VR Environment:**

This is probably the closest immersive experience an ELL student can get with technology. These VR modules help English language learners to improve their speaking and communication skills. The focus is on conversational English only (and not reading or writing.) Students receive immediate feedback from the device when practicing their English language speaking skills.

### **AR is a Proven Learning Environment for Students with Language Barriers:**

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Students with language barriers thrive in the augmented reality environment because they use not only auditory cues but also visual and kinesthetic cues. In this environment, they learn by doing. Much of the practicum for career pathway courses will be completed in the AR environment.

The Red Comet curriculum and platform aims to eliminate barriers to learning using cutting-edge technology that is integrated into day-to-day learning.

- 5) Describe how the school will meet the needs of gifted and talented students. Include the procedures that will be utilized for identifying students, ensuring that they have equitable access to the school's programming, and engaging with their families.

The Red Comet program encourages students to take responsibility for their learning. Conditions across all aspects of NVAA promote learners' active discovery and expression of their needs and interests. Learners are immersed in an environment that promotes and respects student voice and responsibility for his/her learning.

Students have the option of pursuing several electives in each subject area. High school students have at their disposal over a hundred electives and career-pathway courses that they can use to explore future career interests. The platform allows learners to consistently identify their learning targets and monitor their progress.

- 6) Describe how the school will meet the needs of students at risk of academic failure. Include the procedures that will be utilized for identifying students, ensuring that they have equitable access to the school's programming, and engaging with their families.

Newman will follow guidance for initial testing protocols for Arkansas. NVAA does testing through an evaluation professional and licensed special education teacher. Before testing, the team reviews teachers' records of how students responded to interventions (different tiers of scaffolded supports) and evaluates how this information was shared with parents/Learning Coaches to differentiate between a student who "isn't trying" vs "really struggling and why". NVAA will hold team meetings with teachers, special education support providers, and administrators along with **parents** and students to discuss their academic strengths and needs. This process will be followed once the student receives a grade below a D, or after a number of days without doing work or attendance, and then 6 weeks after supports have been put in place until the student can raise his/her grade, etc.

NVAA will focus its efforts on recruitment of students who are looking for an alternative to their current education situation. NVAA and Red Comet will view all students as being at risk for not achieving their potential. Therefore, the school will provide students with a comprehensive curriculum and instructional approach that will enable them to achieve their potential regardless of their particular interests, aptitude, motivations, talents, exceptionalities, or future goals.

The Red Comet curriculum used by NVAA is a highly focused competency-based curriculum and allows students to earn their High School Diploma while gaining workforce readiness experience and preparing for industry certification. Red Comet curriculum development and launch teams pride themselves in integrating as many digital resources as possible to advance students' engagement with the content and to stimulate students' curiosity. The team seamlessly and deliberately integrates digital resources that add value to the learning process and encourage learners' active engagement in the learning process. The digital resources consistently support learners' pursuit of interests and deepen or extend curriculum topics to stimulate learners' curiosity.

Red Comet teachers have high expectations for students and expect all submissions to meet the highest

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academic quality. They check all student submissions against the same rubrics to ensure grading consistency. They also run routine plagiarism checks to ensure academic integrity.

All Red Comet program offerings are learner-centered and focus on individual student's learning experiences. All curriculum is designed for all learners to reach their potential. Learners enroll in courses based on individual needs and interests.

- 7) As required by Ark. Code Ann. §6-41-603, all charter schools are required to screen every student in kindergarten through grade 3 (K-3) and those in grades 3-12 who experience difficulty with fluency using a high-quality, evidence-based screener approved by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. Screeners should use the Arkansas Literacy screening assessment in their evaluation. In addition to the screening requirements, describe how the school will provide literacy intervention and dyslexia services for identified students.

Students with dyslexia continue to struggle in traditional school environments despite continued efforts by the education community. Thus, many parents are looking for an alternative method for educating their children, and online schools are becoming a more viable option since the internet and other computer technologies can deliver online content using audio, live interactive video, and prerecorded video formats supportive of students with Dyslexia.

If a student shows early indicators of Dyslexia, and all students in kindergarten through grade two (K-2), transfers, and older students experiencing difficulty will have an initial screening that includes 1. Phonological and phonemic awareness; 2. Sound symbol recognition; 3. Alphabet knowledge; 4. Decoding skills; 5. Rapid naming; and 6. Encoding skills with approved tools by ADE (likely NWEA Skills Checklist, Ultimate Phonics Reading Test, Arkansas Rapid Naming Screener (AR-RAN), etc.).

If this screening process indicates that a student has characteristics of dyslexia, the Response to Intervention (RTI) process will ensure each student receives effective, evidence-based instruction to meet their learning needs. The ongoing assessment will identify a student's instructional needs and appropriate learning supports.

For a student with an IEP, dyslexia intervention may be delivered in the general education setting, the special education setting, or in a combination of the two. Regardless of the setting, the person delivering the dyslexia intervention will be a trained dyslexia interventionist (dyslexia therapist, dyslexia specialist, reading interventionist, certified teacher, tutor or paraprofessional under the supervision of a licensed teacher) delivering the selected program with fidelity.

NVAA will use the latest information and data on student instruction for those struggling with Dyslexia and/or Dysgraphia. NVAA will specialize in using a tiered approach that allows us to give our students options that work best for subject comprehension and course work completion, along with unique tools for the virtual setting:

- PALs (Parent Assisted Learning Skills)- PAL's is an outline of tools and resources to help teachers and parents provide assistance to students with Dyslexia and Dysgraphia.
- Software tools (Such as MindPlay) that assesses, instructs, and tracks progress in phonemic, phonetic, language, comprehension, and other appropriate development will also be used.

Beyond Dyslexia services, NVAA will enhance students' learning while minimizing instructional barriers that inhibit academic performance. For example, in the online classroom students can receive one-to-one attention in an environment where classroom distractions are eliminated and content delivery is optimized with engaging tasks plus a learning coach is present and partnerships with the family are collaborative, transparent, and mutually supportive. Within both special and general education, the relationship starts early as teachers and



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families begin the process of developing an individual learning plan (ILP), discussing the needs of the student as well as the needs of the family, and acquainting the family with the online tools and processes. The LC, student, general education, and special education teachers become the educational team. The establishment of the team is based on the mutual goal of creating a successful environment for the student to learn and achieve and the belief that all the members of the team have a shared responsibility for student success. This team collaboration makes it much harder for a child to fall behind because there is constant communication between student, LC, and instructor. This instant feedback allows for adjustments to be made as needed to make the educational experience truly individual. NVAA will work diligently to address the challenges of online education for students with dyslexia.

In partnership with the Dyslexia School of Houston, Code Academy, International Dyslexia Association, MindPlay, and other strategic partners, we will design a premier program as a choice for Dyslexic students to excel academically despite their challenges, and also explore diverse career content and electives that allow them to use and celebrate their strengths in areas such as entrepreneurship, architectural design, and spatial reasoning.



## Section 4: School Climate

- 1) Describe the intended school climate/environment. Explain how that climate will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development.
  - a) Include in your explanation how the climate for students, teachers, administrators, and parents will be established.

NVAA, in partnership with Red Comet, will establish a safe and nurturing virtual climate for students and an open environment for teachers, administrators, and parents. The structured and well-thought-out layout for the curriculum will enable a stress-free learning environment and a climate that encourages independent thinking, exploration, and responsibility. Students are free to contact their teachers at any time. Parents can use their login to check on a student's progress on an ad-hoc basis.

Upon enrollment, students will receive an orientation email with detailed instructions on how to login to the platform. Once students log into the platform and click on the course card, they will receive video and text instructions on how to navigate the platform, how to reach teachers, study tips, what to keep in mind when taking tests and completing assignments, etc. Red Comet has had less than 0.1% of students call customer service because they don't know what to do once they log in. Red Comet has taken great efforts to create a learning environment for the student that is intuitive and meaningful.

- b) Include in your explanation how the school climate will be supportive of students with a variety of needs, including students receiving special education services, English language learners, gifted and talented students, and students who are at risk of academic failure.

The climate at NVAA will be caring, nurturing, and supportive of students' various needs.

NVAA, through Red Comet, offers all programs in a formal structure where students move through registration, enrollment, course completion, and issuing of transcripts. This design and structure are planned and consistently implemented to promote a culture and climate in which learners receive support from NVAA teachers and customer service staff of Red Comet.

When working on the platform, students will have utmost privacy. What they are studying and when they are studying will not be known to their peers or other students on the system. With Red Comet's setup, cyberbullying between students is entirely not possible. Students interact on the Discussion Board, but these posts are monitored by teachers. If teachers notice any harmful or offensive posts, the teacher has the capability to delete these posts.

In a bully-free, virtual environment, students will study at their own pace without undue pressure from peers. The environment is devoid of unnecessary external distractions where students can immerse themselves into learning. Students will be able to revisit lessons and concepts as many times as they need without any repercussions or undue pressure to keep up with the class. Students receiving special education services and English language learners will find this environment especially nurturing. They can learn at their own pace without any pressure from their peers or teachers. Throughout the curriculum, concepts are explained in multiple formats -- audio reels, podcasts, videos, teaching videos, infographics, etc. For younger students (K-8,) there are a lot of supports on the platform (read-out aloud, dictionary, visual cues, etc.) The curriculum offers something for all types of learners, be they audio, visual, or kinesthetic.

Red Comet curriculum offerings are robust, adaptable, and comprehensive and address a variety of needs,

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including students receiving special education services, English language learners, gifted and talented students, and students who are at risk of academic failure. NVAA, through Red Comet, will offer more than 300 core and elective courses, advanced placement (AP) courses, and career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) courses for middle and high school students and will help them to earn industry-recognized certifications. In addition, Red Comet will offer a Drop in Zone. The Drop in Zone is a place to play, to create, to mentor and to invent, a place for learning and innovation. Drop in Zones provide access to the environment, skills, materials, and advanced technology needed to allow anyone anywhere to create almost anything in any field, including science, industrial arts, robotics, and technology.

Newman will have a Special Education Director, certified and experienced in Special Education, who oversees strict adherence to all federal and state special education laws and rules. IEP Support Teachers will be case managers monitoring and supporting with IEP implementation, overseeing annual IEP meetings, and involving teachers in training.

At Newman virtual school, a student's home can be the least restrictive environment (LRE) when all students are participating in distance learning. The LRE is about finding what works best for students, and it's not limited to a specific place or classroom. The general education environment is usually considered the least restrictive setting because it allows students to interact with other students and have more opportunities to communicate. However, if a student's disability is too severe, or if supplementary services can't help, then they may need to be placed in a different setting. When determining the LRE, a student's IEP team considers factors like:

- Whether the student's goals meet their academic, social, emotional, and other needs.
- Whether the student needs to interact with non-disabled peers

NVAA will provide students with special needs accommodations and modifications to support their learning. It will also provide related services such as Speech-Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy. NVAA will find these support providers locally, while offering speech therapy virtually (unless swallow therapy is needed). All other services like PT and OT are provided in-person. Medicaid will not be the sole funding for these related services as NVAA will match funds to meet student services.

- 2) Describe the school's approach to discipline, behavior intervention, and classroom management. Highlight key policies, systems, and related structures and address how they will support the climate described in question 1 and will comply with Arkansas laws.

NVAA's engagement principle is "Be Engaged; Be Successful." Each week, the Red Comet platform that NVAA uses will make a list of students who did not log in and failed to establish contact with their teacher (for every course they are enrolled in.) For every student who failed to establish contact, the teacher on record for each individual course will reach out via email. If a student fails to establish contact with the teacher for a subsequent week, Red Comet teachers will once again send a reminder to the student and follow-up with an email to the parent/guardian. This high standard will establish a culture of engagement among teachers, students, and parents. The school will track student and teacher interactions through a dashboard, which provides a "high-tech/high touch" data analytics approach that features customized, flexible, and supportive data logs. The dashboard will report the date, time, and duration of interactions, both automatic and manual records of conversations, student retention, grades, completion percentages, academic achievement, student risk factors, etc. Teachers will be responsible for creating and adhering to a student's Written Student Learning Plan (WSLP,) and monitoring the student's educational progress daily using the dashboard, providing real-time analytic data. Adaptability is the cornerstone of NVAA and the Red Comet platform that is uses.

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NVAA Head of Teachers and the Lead Arkansas Teacher will have 24/7 access to the Red Comet dashboard. This will create accountability regarding the frequency with which our academic teachers and mentor teachers engage our students. The dashboard also provides student enrollment information, student academic performance, and test scores.

Further, NVAA will establish a safe and supportive environment for our students and teachers through the following policies:

1. Red Comet's Acceptable Use Policy <https://redcomet.org/red-comet-acceptable-use-policy/>
2. Red Comet's Privacy Policy <https://redcomet.org/privacy-policy/>
3. Red Comet's Non-Sectarian and Anti-Discrimination Policies <https://redcomet.org/red-comet-non-sectarian-and-anti-discrimination-policies/>
4. Red Comet's Code of Conduct Policy that is published within every Red Comet course. This encompasses anti-plagiarism policy and the prohibition of AI tools for assignments. All students must review and accept this policy before starting the course.
5. All teachers are required to check for plagiarism, including the use of AI tools for writing assignments.

NVAA's policies and procedures will be established when a student enrolls, will reinforce a health learning environment. Unhealthy behaviors will be monitored and prohibited.

### **Prohibited Behaviors include:**

- Non-compliance to NVAA regulations and policies
  - Blackmail, Extortion, Coercion
  - Bomb Threat/Hoax, Terrorist Threat/ Hoax, Deadly Conduct
  - Bullying/ Harassment/ Threats/ Retaliation against fellow students or Red Comet teachers
  - Cheating, Forgery, Plagiarism
  - Defamation of Character (Student/ Teacher/ Staff/ School)
  - Disrespectful behavior towards a student or Red Comet staff member
  - Inappropriate Photographs, Pictures, Videos, and other materials uploaded to the learning management system as course submission
- Lying to Red Comet teachers or staff
- Profanity, use of foul words, sexting, cursing, profane gestures, or inappropriate language toward other students, Red Comet teachers or staff
  - Racial Slurs
  - Stealing
  - Technology Abuse, Illegal Access or use of School Technology (on or off campus,) willingly try to upload a virus or malicious files to the platform

Unruliness and non-compliance to the above policies will not be tolerated. For a safe, healthy, learning environment, it is important that the above policies be upheld. Consequences for not upholding these may include suspension from the courses, and even expulsions.

- 3) Briefly explain the general plan to engage parents in school life and communicate with them regularly about school matters.

All parents have access to their student's portal and they can login and check on their student's progress. In addition, all students will receive monthly progress reports that will be emailed to the student, parent, and anyone else the parent designates. Once a quarter, parents will receive a newsletter. Mentor teachers and teachers will connect with students and Learning Coaches/parents regarding ESL, MTSS, Special Needs/GT program as needed

- 4) Will the school offer any extra and co-curricular activities? If so, please describe. **Not applicable**

NVAA prides itself on offering co-curricular activities in our brick-and-mortar schools, and will continue that with virtual club and activity offerings that supplement a student's school experience in order to build well-rounded warriors of wisdom, stature, and favor. We will offer virtual clubs in chess, coding, robotics, career exploration, fitness, book club (classical literature, C.S. Lewis, non-fiction topics, etc.) and other interests that students express. These activities will be sponsored by teachers, and volunteers will lend their expertise and support.

- 5) Briefly explain and describe the school's policy concerning how the school will address grievances and complaints. Include what role the governing board may have in complaints. Attach a copy of the current handbook (if possible) describing those policies and procedures.

There will be a tiered approach to how grievances will be handled at NVAA. Any customer service issue will be handled by the Red Comet's Customer Service department. They will decide to route the issue to the correct department within Red Comet. If it is an academic issue, it will be sent to the Arkansas Lead Teacher who will seek the Head of Teachers' support if needed. If the customer service department deems the problem as being content-related, it will send it to the Curriculum Integration team. If it's related to technology, then the EdTech team will fix it. If the complaint is about any of the policies, then the customer service department will forward the complaint to the executive team. Complaints and grievances will be forwarded to the Principal and if necessary to the Superintendent, and maybe escalated to the NIEO board of directors.

The NIEO Board will regularly review the district policies and routinely review decisions to ensure an uncompromised commitment to students' priorities. NIEO will consistently and intentionally collaborate with Red Comet's professional staff to further the school district's improvement.

## Section 5: Organizational Plan

### A. Governance and Leadership

- 1) Please review the Statement of Assurances (see Appendix A) and acknowledge with your signature that they will be addressed through policies adopted by the charter school or sponsoring entity.
  
- 2) Board of Directors – Provide a list of proposed board members, if identified. Please include the actual or preferred roles of each member, a brief description of major responsibilities, their expertise area (i.e., academics, finances, legal, management, and operations, parents, community leaders, educator, operations, or community relations), and explain the selection process.

The Newman-George International Organization (NIEO) Board will be comprised of five-to-seven individuals whose experiences include establishing and operating a successful charter school district, serving as community leaders, working with children and youth, starting and operating educational institutions locally and globally, raising leaders in school, college and military arenas, serving in legal and financial leadership positions of organizations, industries or schools, and teaching in school and collegiate levels with a focus on curriculum and instruction. This Board is committed to the cause of education and children, and is equipped to operate a high-quality, model school that will excel in academic, financial and governance aspects of a school operation. This Board will identify and appoint a Superintendent who is qualified, committed and dedicated to the cause of education of the students of the community and upholds the vision of Newman Virtual Academy Arkansas (NVAA).

The following individuals are board members of the Newman-George International Education Organization (NIEO) that will operate h Newman Virtual Academy Arkansas (NVAA).

Member Name	Role
Dr. Sheba George	President  Also Secretary of NIA Board  Will be superintendent for no salary; 35 years’ experience as an educator/collegiate education; 17 years’ experience in charter school start-up, leadership, and operations; has expertise in academics, finance, management, operations and community work
Dr. Gary Royer	Vice President  Also Vice President of NIA Board; has 40 years’ experience as an educational leader/collegiate teaching; Charter school board experience in finance, operations and management
Augustine David	Board Member

	Community leader; has more than 30 years' experience in the area of finance, legal, management and operations
Lt. Col. Moses George (Space Force)	Board Member  Community leader, has exceptional skills in the area of finances, legal, management, operations, and CCMR; community leader
Others TBD	

NIEO, the charter holder, consists of very experienced leaders who have operated successful charters. NIEO has a board governance structure that stimulates system improvement in a transparent, systematic, data-based environment. As a matter of example, the snapshot of the webpage for the NIA board is captured below. Final membership on the board of NIEO will be refined and can be presented during internal review and capacity interviews.

## NEWMAN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Raising Warriors of Wisdom, Stature & Favor

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### ABOUT OUR BOARD

About

- Letter From The Superintendent
- Vision, Mission and Motto
- Dr Newman & Our Founders
- Faculty & Staff
- Teacher Incentive Allotment
- About Our Board
- Board Outcomes & Goals

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- **Board Meeting Agenda**

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**NIA Board Members:**

Dr. Iva Laverne Raine	President
Dr. Gary Royer	Vice President
Dr. Sheba K. George	Secretary
John Paulson	Member
Sam Sukumar	Member

- 3) Identify the processes and structures that the proposed board will have in place to ensure:
  - a) Effective and efficient operation of school governance
  - b) Establishment and monitoring of school improvement goals
  - c) Procedural oversight and monitoring of personnel decisions
  - d) Fiscal responsibility and sustainability of the school
  - e) Compliance with all applicable laws and rules concerning ethics
  - f) Community Engagement

The NIEO Governing Board is the ultimate policy-making body with the responsibility of operation and oversight of NVAA including but not limited to academic direction, curriculum, and budgetary functions. The NVAA Superintendent, hired by the board, will be responsible for all aspects of school operations within the scope of operating policies and procedures and budgetary functions as adopted and approved by the Governing Board. The Superintendent will appoint the Principal and other administrative staff as needed following board approval. NVAA's faculty and staff will be monitored by the Principal while they report to the Managing Director of the Virtual Curriculum and Platform. The Superintendent will supervise the whole operation.

The governing board will have the responsibility for the activities and affairs of the corporation, including management of NVAA and for providing continuing oversight of school operations. All corporate powers and functions shall be exercised by the Governing Board. The Governing Board is committed to the mission of NVAA and is cognizant of its responsibility to effectively and properly manage public funds.

NVAA's school-based administration (Superintendent, principal, assistant principal and/or lead teacher) will ensure that the operations of NVAA (resources, courses, policies) are in accordance with the mission and vision of NVAA as adopted and approved by the Governing Board. The administrative staff, as instructional leaders, will make all school-based decisions, establishing and implementing procedures for the day-to-day operations of NVAA. The faculty and secretarial staff will be responsible for carrying out these procedures in their daily activities and interactions with students, parents and the community.

The policies and procedures by which the board will operate, including specific board member powers are specifically detailed in the Bylaws. A brief overview of those policies and procedures is as follows:



## Board Member Powers

Subject to the limitations of Arkansas law, the corporation's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, the activities and affairs of the corporation shall be conducted and all corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Board. The Board shall have the following powers in addition to any other powers enumerated in the Bylaws and permitted by law:

- Select and remove all of the officers, agents and employees of the corporation and prescribe powers and duties for them which are not inconsistent with the law
- To conduct, manage and control the affairs and activities of the corporation
- To adopt, make and use a corporate seal
- To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose of the corporation
- To act as trustee under any trust incidental to the principal object of the corporation, and receive, hold, administer, exchange and expend funds and property subject to such trust
- To acquire by purchase, exchange, lease, gift, devise, bequest or otherwise, and to hold, improve, lease, sublease, mortgage, transfer in trust, encumber, convey or otherwise dispose of real and personal property
- To assume any obligations, and enter into any contracts or other instruments
- To form and be a member or shareholder of a not-for-profit entity organized under the law of any state
- To carry out such duties as described in the Articles of Incorporation and Charter Contract

## Board Member Duties:

The Governing Board will perform the following duties, as well as any and all other duties specified in Arkansas Statutes regarding Governing Boards of Charter Schools and any other duties specified in the Bylaws:

- Oversee operational policies: academic accountability, and financial accountability.
- Annually adopt and maintain an operating budget.
- Exercise continuing oversight over charter school operations.
- Report its progress annually to the state as required by law
- Ensure that the charter school has retained the services of a certified public accountant for the annual financial audit who shall submit the report to the governing body.
- Review and approve the audit report, including audit findings and recommendations
- Monitor a financial recovery plan in order to ensure compliance (if applicable).
- Report progress annually to its sponsor

## B. School Administration

- 1) Superintendent Position – If a superintendent has been appointed, please indicate the selection criteria and a rationale for the choice, including leadership qualities and capacity that uniquely qualify the selected individual to lead this charter. If a superintendent has not been selected, please include a job description and indicate the leadership qualities and capacity desired for this position. How will this leader be supported and developed?

A

The superintendent of schools, in accordance with Arkansas statute, will at minimum oversee the day-to-day operations of the school district and be evaluated annually or no less often than before any extension of his or her employment contract.

The superintendent will meet Department of Education standards with a district level administrator license (with reciprocity) and have relevant teaching and central office leadership experience. The NIEO Board of Directors has selected Dr. Sheba George, with no salary, to promote and fulfill the district NVAA's Mission and Vision. She has a proven track record. The superintendent will report to the board in special board meetings held as needed. The Board will ensure that all administrators and employees will demonstrate a passion for and commitment to the mission, vision and goals of NVAA, and

- Always act with integrity and empathy
- Hold each other and ourselves accountable for excellence in everything we do
- Build mutually beneficial partnerships with parents and community stakeholders
- Honor achievement and promote pride in ourselves, in our school and in our community
- Create and sustain an environment in which each student is known, valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encouraged to be an active and responsible member of the school and district community
- Develop workplace conditions for educators and staff that promote effective professional growth and student learning
- Lead changes accompanying LEARNS, embracing the new regulations with a positive attitude and collaborating to ensure full compliance in all areas
- Provide educational leadership and executive direction to the Board of Education, schools, community, personnel, programs, activities, and operations of the district
- Assure compliance with established goals, objectives, and legal requirements concerning district administration and instruction
- Prepare the educational and financial budgets for approval of the Board of Education and Arkansas Department of Education.

2) Principal Position – If a principal has been appointed, please indicate the selection criteria and a rationale for the choice, including leadership qualities and capacity that uniquely qualify the selected individual to lead this charter. If a principal has not been selected, please include a job description and indicate the leadership qualities and capacity desired for this position. How will this leader be supported and developed?

The superintendent and the Board will appoint a principal to serve NVAA that meets the qualifications laid out in this application.

The Principal Qualifications will include the following:

- Minimum of 5 years of experience in education with a track record of successful leadership and management
- Strong communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills
- Experience with curriculum development and instructional design
- Strong knowledge of state and national educational standards and regulations

Responsibilities include:

- Providing instructional leadership and support to teachers and staff to ensure academic excellence and student achievement
- Developing and implementing school policies and procedures in alignment with district and state requirements

### Job description

#### Overview:

The Principal will provide strategic leadership and management for the school, focusing on academic excellence, student well-being, and community engagement. The successful candidate will be a collaborative and innovative leader who is passionate about creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

#### Responsibilities:

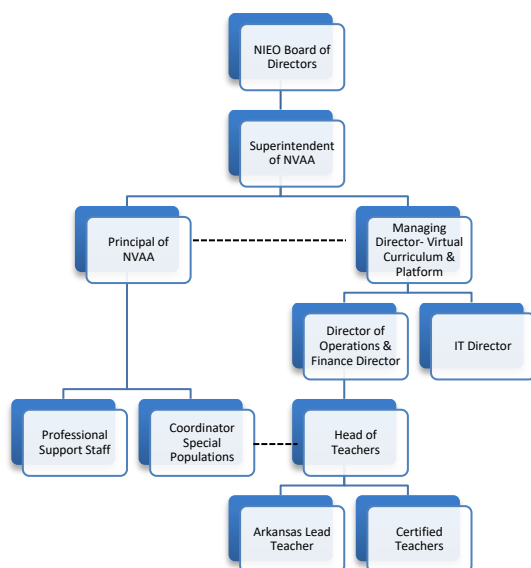
- Provide instructional leadership and support to teachers and staff to ensure academic excellence and student achievement
- Develop and implement school policies and procedures in alignment with district and state requirements
- Foster a positive and inclusive school culture, promoting student well-being and social-emotional learning
- Manage and allocate school resources, including budget and personnel
- Build and maintain relationships with parents, community members, and local stakeholders
- Stay up-to-date with educational trends and best practices, applying this knowledge to inform school improvement initiatives

#### Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Education or related field; Master's degree or higher preferred
- Minimum of 5 years of experience in education, with a track record of successful leadership and management
- Strong communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills
- Experience with curriculum development and instructional design
- Strong knowledge of state and national educational standards and regulations

### C. Faculty and Staff

- 1) Describe the school’s proposed leadership structure. Include a copy of the school’s proposed organizational chart.



The NIEO Governing Board is the ultimate policy-making body with the responsibility of operation and oversight of NVAA including but not limited to academic direction, curriculum, and budgetary functions. The NVAA Superintendent, hired by the board, will be responsible for all aspects of school operations within the scope of operating policies and procedures and budgetary functions as adopted and approved by the Governing Board. The Superintendent will appoint the principal and other administrative staff as needed following board approval. NVAA's faculty and staff will be monitored by the principal while they report to the Managing Director of the Virtual Curriculum and Platform. The Superintendent will supervise the whole operation.

- 2) Describe the strategy, plans, and timeline for recruiting and hiring faculty and staff. Explain the school's proposed strategy for retaining high-performing faculty and staff.

Red Comet, that NVAA partners with, already has a curriculum that is fully aligned to NGSS and Arkansas State Standards. All Red Comet teachers are certified by state educational agencies and many are even nationally certified. Many are HQTs (High Qualified Teachers) with several years of experience in their subject areas. The company has a pool of Arkansas-certified teachers (with active certification) who are endorsed to teach specific subjects. Red Comet already has a readily-available pool of teachers that it can recruit to serve any additional students.

The Red Comet, headed by its Managing Director and Director of Operations, leadership team routinely engages with the professional staff in developing, communicating, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting the various company processes (registration & enrollment, customer service, teaching administration, instruction, curriculum development, etc.) The continuous improvement process is based on analyzed trends and current data about students' academic and non-academic needs (obtained mainly through feedback from schools/parents/students,) the institution's organizational effectiveness (based on feedback from various professional staff members,) student performance data, and course survey feedback. Red Comet teams consistently implement ongoing practices, processes, and decision making that improve learning and help students and schools.

- 3) Describe the policies and procedures for evaluating staff and providing performance feedback. Describe how the school intends to handle unsatisfactory leadership or teacher performance, including termination, as well as leadership/teacher changes. Please provide a copy of the policy and procedures listed in your handbook (If available).

NIEO partners with Red Comet whose professional staff includes department heads, customer service staff, and teachers who form a vibrant and close-knit community. The community engages in routine discussions (ad-hoc and planned) throughout the business days. Staff members intentionally and consistently work together in self-formed or assigned groups to review information, identify common problems, and implement solutions on behalf of learners. Often, inter-departmental teams jointly resolve issues within a day or so. Staff members consistently and routinely interact with respect and cooperation, learn from one another, and consider one another's ideas.

The Head of Teachers evaluates teacher performance at the end of each school year. Teachers are evaluated based on timeliness and the quality of their feedback to students. Teachers who are lacking in skills are required to re-train on the orientation modules. They may also be given access to specific professional development courses on SkillSoft to improve their communication skills and other competencies. Teachers who routinely miss Red Comet's standards will be terminated and their position will be replaced with a new or existing teacher.

The Principal of NVAA will monitor teacher evaluations done throughout the year and at the end of year by Red Comet leadership. All Red Comet employees are subject to annual performance reviews where not only is past

performance discussed but also plans are put in place for future growth and development. All raises and bonuses are contingent upon good performance. Those with leadership potential are encouraged to train in assistant roles prior to getting promoted. Employees also have access to a very large library of career & skills training materials. Managers identify professional development for all employees on an annual basis. Employees must complete the recommended training prior to the next annual review. If they want to undergo more professional development, they can always talk to their managers. Employees can obtain additional training on SkillSoft to achieve additional career development.

#### **D. Transportation**

- 1) Will the school provide transportation services? If so, describe the transportation services plan that the school will provide. **No.**

#### **E. Food Service**

- 1) Describe how the school will provide meal services. **Not applicable.**
- 2) Describe the food service space at the facility. **Not applicable.**

#### **F. Safety**

- 1) Describe how the school safety and security plan for students, staff, facility, and property will be developed and updated in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Waivers have been submitted for various aspects of school safety and security for students, staff, facilities, and property that are not applicable in a virtual school setting. Please see the waiver requests that identify areas of compliance with applicable laws and regulations needing modification.

Very applicable to the virtual setting is data safety risks which will be highlighted in this application.

#### **How Data Security and Privacy Risks will be Mitigated:**

NIEO's IT Director will oversee and monitor security and privacy risks along with facilitating and providing effective technology operations for student and teachers. NVAA partners with Red Comet that provides its virtual platform and curriculum that comes with a proven record of data security and privacy management.

Regular security updates: Every week we update Buzz with our latest enhancements, bug fixes, and security improvements. To avoid disrupting customers, all updates from external services are tested by software and humans before rolling out.

Secure data access: The Red Comet API provides secure access to Buzz data over TLS (1.2 or greater).

Physical security: Buzz LMS uses Amazon Web Services (AWS). AWS protects a global infrastructure of hardware, software, networking, and facilities, and is designed and managed around a variety of best practices and global security standards. AWS participates in various assurance programs, including FERPA, and is regularly independently audited (see <https://aws.amazon.com/compliance> for full details).

Protocol and session security: We use HTTPS for all communication and encrypts all inbound and outbound traffic

Backup and recovery: LMS data is backed up every day. In the case of a disaster, data can be recovered from these backups. Backups are regularly tested.

All personnel (Employees and Contractors) of Red Comet who will have access to student records will mandatorily need to go through internal PII (Personally Identifiable Information) training every 6 months.

## **G. Facilities**

- 1) Provide a description of the school facility if it has been obtained. If not, describe the process for identifying and securing a facility. Briefly describe the contingency plan should you not be able to acquire the desired facility.

NVAA that partners with Red Comet will provide drop-in centers where students can come study or complete their work using virtual reality headsets or augmented reality learning stations.

## **H. Additional Operations**

- 1) Describe the school's technology plan for meeting the academic and operational needs of classrooms, labs, library/media standards, district website, and other relevant areas of the school.

NIEO, the charter holder board, will operate the virtual charter school, NVAA in partnership with Red Comet. Red Comet will incorporate technology into every aspect of the learning environment - all the way from registering and enrollment to successfully completing a credit-bearing course and receiving transcripts. In addition to the digital core curriculum needed for Kindergarten to Grade 12 (English, Science, Math, Social Studies, Physical Education, World Languages, Art, several subject electives,) Red Comet offers nearly 100 career and skill focused digital courses.

**Through Red Comet, NVAA will provide cutting edge technology for Education.**

Our immersive technology enriches education by promoting higher-order thinking skills, and increased student engagement, focused concentration on difficult concepts, and overall better academic outcomes.

**There are great Benefits for Using Technology in Education. Some of these benefits that will be brought to our NVAA students through Red Comet are listed below:**

Active Learning – Interacting with concepts promotes active learning. Students are no longer learning passively with information thrust upon them.

Differentiated Learning – Teachers can assign modules based on the student's capabilities or where the student is in the learning plan.

Retention– Visualization strengthens the connection between concepts and understanding. Research has proven that this heightens students' retention of complex ideas.

Learning Using Multiple Modalities – Research has proven that using multiple modalities (visual, kinesthetic) reinforces concepts, leading to better retention.

Engagement– Being in an immersive environment increases student engagement and improves learning outcomes.

When students are more engaged in education, they take greater ownership of their learning.

Aligned to National and State Curriculum Standards – All curriculum (be it on the Learning Management System, Augmented Reality, or Virtual reality) is aligned to specific national and state standards.

Easy to Use – Red Comets platform is easy to use for teachers and students

Below, you will find a description of the technology proposed in the project:

### Learning Platform

All learning will take place on the Agilix Buzz™ Learning Management System accompanied by Virtual Reality headsets and Augmented Reality Learning Stations. On the laptops or Learning Stations, students login to the platform through a unique login link. They can use any web browser to login to the platform.

### Virtual Reality (VR) Headsets

The viewer (headset) comes preloaded with VR (virtual reality) content library for the Interactive curriculum. The VR solution only focuses on academic goals (and does not include any entertainment content.)

By default, the VR solution supports BOTH English and Spanish languages.

### Augmented Reality (AR) Learning Stations

The Learning Stations provide access to the world’s most extensive library of AR modules designed for education. The selected AR modules were never intended for entertainment. Instead, they were built to focus on academics right from the start.

- 2) Describe the school’s school health and nursing services plan. **Not applicable- waivers submitted.**
- 3) Describe the school counseling services that the school will provide to enrolled students, including how the school will staff these services in a way that meets the academic, career, and other needs of all students.

Newman aligns it’s counseling program with Arkansas’ commitment to students exhibiting evidence of moving toward competency in multiple disciplines through being actively literate, critical thinkers, who are engaged in the community. School counselors will provide students an opportunity to explore and plan for the future to help them understand the relationship between academics, personal competencies, and future aspirations.

Newman counselors will deliver a comprehensive school counseling program to students in coordination with homeroom teachers, Learning Coaches (parents/guardians), and outside providers where necessary.

Counselors will provide Direct Student Services (90% Direct & Indirect) for all students using a multi-tiered systems approach. These services include core curriculum classroom lessons in coordination with homeroom teachers,, individual and group counseling, as well as responsive services offered virtually.

Counselors will also offer Indirect Student Services (90% Indirect & Direct) provided on behalf of a student, which will typically be consultative, referral-based, or in the role of contributing member of an EL, RTI, parental involvement, or GT team or committee.

Like teachers in traditional schools, Newman counselors will perform Administrative Activities (No More Than 10%) that include non-counseling responsibilities and are not directly related to the comprehensive school counseling program. Chairing committees and meetings (504, ESOL, PBIS, RTI, parental involvement and GT etc.), data input, developing master schedules, and coordinating assessment administration are all administrative activities.

Newman's school counseling program positions counselors as K-12 as change agents with a school-wide expectation to serve the needs of every student. Newman counselors are uniquely positioned to assess the school for systemic barriers to academic success by monitoring critical data about student placement, student academic performance, and student coursework. Systemic change occurs with the sustained involvement of all critical players in the school setting, including and often led by our school counselors.

Newman provides readily accessible online, in person, and by phone counselors offering individual attention and expertise to our students and families. Our dedicated team of full-time, licensed school counselors help students thrive during their time with us as well as plan for bright futures ahead. Parents and teachers may refer a student for counseling services, and students can self-refer with a parent's or guardian's permission. Counselors are available on consistent schedule.

NVAA will offer counseling to students with regards to course selection and career pathways. Students can opt to participate in an aptitude test to determine their strengths and weaknesses. Based on their future plans - college, career, or military - NVAA will suggest courses and enroll students in a specific pathway. Students can use the counseling services at the beginning of each school year or even at the beginning of a semester to ensure they are progressing in the pathway of their choice.

## **I. Recruitment and Marketing**

- 1) Describe the Year 0 plan to recruit students. Include strategies, activities, events, responsible parties, and a timeline.

NIEO and Red Comet will initially market the program to private and charter schools throughout the State of Arkansas. These schools are serving a small number of students (50 or less) and/or located in rural areas or in low economic development zones. The important thing about these students is that they already have a formal structure that they are exposed to. Students will enroll in Red Comet courses:

- for which there is no teacher available to teach the course at the private or charter school
- that are electives and not offered by the school
- that are career and technical education courses on a clear career pathway

Red Comet will also implement STEM and CTE labs in these schools and enroll students in science, technology, and career-focused courses. This targeted approach will ensure NVAA's success as it builds its network of students and families in the State of Arkansas.

- a) Describe the key elements of the school's marketing plan aimed at recruiting and retaining students in subsequent years



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NVAA will use a combination of caution and prudence when recruiting the first set of students in the State of Arkansas. The main goal is to ensure the students' success and make the students' educational experience an enriching one. That is the reason Red Comet will start off by partnering with local private and charter schools to serve students in need of Red Comet's solution.

- b) In accordance with Arkansas law 6-23-306, the school must prohibit discrimination in its admission policy based on gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or academic or athletic eligibility. If the school has more applicants than available seats, then it shall conduct a random, anonymous lottery to fill the seats. Describe how the school's enrollment lottery process will comply with these requirements.

All curriculum offered by Red Comet is secular, neutral, and non-ideological. All instruction is free of sectarian or religious influence or control. Red Comet prohibits discrimination in its admission policy or hiring policy based on gender, sexual orientation, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or academic or athletic eligibility. Red Comet's policy can be found at <https://redcomet.org/red-comet-non-sectarian-and-anti-discrimination-policies/>.

Technologically speaking, Red Comet does not have a limit on how many students it can serve. The number of students will only be limited by the teaching and administrative staff capabilities. If there are more applicants, Red Comet will expand its teaching and administrative staff and train them to serve the additional students.

- c) Ark. Code Ann 6-23- 306(14)(B)(ii)(a) and (b) allows for certain enrollment preferences. Will the charter school utilize any of the permitted enrollment preferences? If so, please briefly describe the school's policy. No.

## Section 6: Financial Plan and Fiscal Sustainability

The table below indicates the number of students the charter school intends to serve for each year of the initial charter term. What data and factors were used to determine the demand for the school and the projected enrollment shown in Table 1?

**Table 1: Annual Enrollment Projections (Years 1-5)**

School Year	Grade Levels offered	Total projected Student Enrollment for all grades	Faculty projections based on anticipated enrollment	Non-faculty projections based on anticipated enrollment
Year one	6-12	200	8	3
Year two	K-12	400	16	4
Year three	K-12	500	20	5
Year four	K-12	600	24	5
Year five	K-12	700	28	6

The projected student enrollment in Table 1 was based on more than ten years of experience that the Charter Holder NIEO and its partner Red Comet have running Brick-and-Mortar and Virtual schools in TX and WA. A recent, unpublished study conducted by the Department of Education in WA showed that student enrollment in Virtual Schools is growing at the rate of 17% year-over-year since the pandemic. Red Comet’s virtual school program in WA doubled its enrollment in the 2022-23 school year, grew by 40% in the 2023-24 school year, and is expected to grow by at least 30% in the 2024-25 school year. Based on this experience, we estimate NIA Virtual School of AR will double its enrollment in the 2026-27 school year due to the addition of grades K-5, and then gradually taper down the growth from 25% for the school year 2027-28 to approximately 15% for 2029-30.

1. Provide a startup budget and a three-year budget forecast beginning July 1 of year 1, necessary to sustain the successful startup of the school. Include revenue projections, expenses, and anticipated fund balances. A copy of the startup and three-year projected budget should be included with the application.
 

Please see the attachment including delineation of federal funds percentage of revenue at approximately 20% given that the characteristics of the student population funding drivers are not yet known.

  - a. Include in your budget analysis the line-item revenue and expenditure assumptions on which the operating and start-up budgets are based. This description should include the basis for revenue projections, staffing levels, and expenses. Provide sufficient information to guide a full understanding of how budgetary figures were determined.
 

The Virtual School's funding comes from State and Federal per-pupil funding. The model is built to be self-sufficient with these funds. We are not anticipating any external grants, donations, or fundraising. NVAA will apply for a Quality Charter Schools Program (CSP) start-up grants if available for the 2025-2026 school year. Newman has over 14 years of experience budgeting state and federal Titles I, II, III, IV funds and has earned an A+ Financial Rating from the State of Texas.

- b. Describe any anticipated state and federal funding sources the school expects to receive in addition to per-pupil foundation funding. In addition to these alternative income sources, clearly explain the degree to which the school budget will rely on variable income (grants, donations, fundraising).

The Virtual School's funding comes from State and Federal per-pupil funding. The model is built to be self-sufficient with these funds. We are not anticipating any external grants, donations, or fundraising.

- 2. If the budget is contingent upon funding sources beyond those typically provided by the state and federal government, provide evidence of such funding.

Not applicable.

- 3. Explain how the school will remain fiscally sustainable and describe the school's emergency plan for cash flow challenges, a budget shortfall, lower-than-expected enrollment, or other financial challenges in the early years of operation.

NIEO that parents with Red Comet will invest 50% of the first-year budget as seed funding to start the operation. The financial model is built to generate at least 5% net income from operations, which will be held in reserves. The goal is always to have a surplus P&L and 5% of the total annual revenue in reserve

- 4. Describe how the annual operating budget will be developed and refined each year in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-306 (10). Please include how resource allocation decisions are aligned with organizational improvement priorities, student achievement data, and mission-driven priorities.

The performance for the school year will be reviewed within 30 days of the end of the academic year. Based on the outcome, the budget for the following school year will be adjusted and presented to the Board two weeks before the start of the new school year. Additional resources will be allocated to areas where the charter failed to meet the desired outcome, and targets are set to achieve or beat the goals.

**Appendix A**  
**ARKANSAS STATEMENT OF ASSURANCES**  
**FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS**

As an authorized representative of the applicant group, I hereby certify that under the penalties of perjury, the information submitted in this application for Newman Virtual Academy Arkansas (NVAA) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief. Further, I understand that if awarded a charter, the school and its governing board will address the assurances listed below through policies adopted by the sponsoring entity and charter school. In addition, if the application is approved, the sponsoring entity, governing body, administration, and staff of the charter organization shall comply with all relevant state and federal laws in addition to the assurances listed below.

1. The charter school shall be open to all students on a space-available basis and shall not discriminate in its admission policy on the basis of gender, national origin, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or academic or athletic eligibility, except as follows: the charter school may adopt admissions policies that are consistent with state and federal law, regulations, or guidelines applicable to charter schools. The charter may provide for the exclusion of a student who has been expelled from another public school district.
2. If applications exceed the approved enrollment cap, the open-enrollment charter school shall hold an annual random and anonymous public lottery, followed by notifying parents of the enrollment status of all applicants. The waiting list generated by the lottery is valid until the next time the open-enrollment public charter school is required to conduct a random, anonymous student selection in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-306 (14)(B)(b)(2).
3. The charter school shall comply with all applicable laws concerning the recruitment, hiring, promotion, retention, or termination of its employees.
4. The charter school shall operate in accordance with federal laws and rules governing public schools, applicable provisions of the Arkansas Constitution, and state laws and regulations governing public schools not waived by the approved charter.
5. The charter school shall not use the money that it receives from the state for any unlawful sectarian program, obligations, or activity or as collateral for debt except as allowed by law.
6. Charter schools may enter public-private partnerships where they enter into a lease-purchase agreement for the acquisition or construction of a school building or related facilities built or acquired by private entities exempt from federal taxes under 26 U.S.C. 142(a)(13) as allowed by Ark. Code Ann. 6-20-402(a)(1)(B).
7. The charter school shall not impose taxes or charge students' tuition or fees that are not allowable by law
8. The charter school shall not be religious in its operations or programmatic offerings in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-401(a)(7) or as otherwise allowed by law.
9. The charter school shall ensure that any of its employees who qualify for membership in the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System or the Arkansas State and Public-School Employee Insurance Program are covered under those systems to the same extent required by law.

10. Under applicable state laws, the employees and volunteers of the charter school is immune from liability to the same extent as other public school district employees and volunteers.

11. The charter school shall carefully review the potential impact of its application on the efforts of a public school district or public-school districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 (a).

12. The charter school shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety laws, rules, and regulations regarding the facilities and school property.

13. The applicant confirms the understanding that certain provisions of state law shall not be waived. The charter school is subject to any prohibition, restriction, or requirement imposed by Title 6 of the Arkansas Code and any rule and regulation approved by the State Board of Education under this title relating to (a) Monitoring compliance with Ark. Code Ann. § 6-23-101 et seq., as determined by the Commissioner of the Department of Education; (b) Conducting criminal background checks for employees; (c) High school graduation requirements as established by the State Board of Education; (d) Special education programs as provided by this title; (e) Public school accountability under this title; (g) Health and safety codes as established by the State Board of Education and state and local governmental entities, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-401(b).

14. No indebtedness of any kind incurred or created by the charter school shall constitute an indebtedness of the state or its political subdivisions. No debts of the charter school shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit, or taxing power of the state or its political subdivisions, pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. 6-23-503. Upon dissolution of the charter school or nonrenewal or revocation of the charter, all net assets of the charter school, including any interest in real property purchased with public funds, shall be deemed the property of the state unless otherwise specified in the charter of the charter school. If the charter school used state or federal funds to purchase or finance personal property, real property, or fixtures for use by the charter school, the authorizer may require that the property be sold. The state has a perfected priority security interest in the net proceeds from the sale or liquidation of the property to the extent of the public funds used in the purchase.

15. The school's curriculum will be aligned with the Arkansas Academic Standards

16. The school will operate within the statewide assessment system

17. The Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Financial Management System, provided by the Division of Elementary and Secondary 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 Division of Elementary and Secondary Education for all financial transaction records and reporting (including, but not limited to, payroll processing and wage and tax reporting to the 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.

18. The charter school shall comply with Ark. Code Ann. §6-24-105-107 concerning contracting with board members, administrators, and employees.

19. 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

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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).

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

21. 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.

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To the best of my knowledge, I certify that the information and data contained in the application are true and correct. The applicant's governing body has duly authorized this application and documentation, and the applicant will comply with the Arkansas Statement of Assurances for Charter Schools and all State and Federal laws guiding Charter Schools in Arkansas unless granted a waiver. The sponsoring entity presiding over this application and any subsequent charter operations affirm and acknowledge the information and affirmations presented in this application (sign and date):

Authorized Representative Printed Name:	Dr. Sheba K. George
Authorized Representative Signature:	Sheba K. George
Date:	6/14/2024

## Addendum – Experienced Operator or CMO

- 1) Describe the enrollment practices, processes, and policies of the proposed school. If these differ from your existing school(s), please describe how and why they differ.

**There is no change to the practices, processes, and policies of the proposed school.** The proposed school will use time-tested enrollment practices, processes, and policies that NIEO, the charter holder and Red Comet's leaders have used for the past 17 years. Specially regarding the virtual program, students/parents first register on the Red Comet website and submit an application. They will be enrolled into the courses of their choice. If they need counseling services, NVAA will offer it and help parents/students decide what courses they need to enroll in. Once enrollment is successful, students will receive their login and password and can start accessing the course. Every course has an orientation module that tells the student how to navigate the platform, how to submit assignments, how to contact teachers, etc. If they are having technical issues, they can always call Red Comet's customer service department.

- 2) Explain how the community for the proposed school is similar and/or different from the community that schools in your portfolio currently serve.

**Community Engagement:** We pride ourselves on fostering a culture of collaboration and community involvement. By actively engaging with parents, alumni, local businesses, and organizations, we create a network of support that enriches the educational experience and opens doors to future opportunities. We believe that our partnerships are integral to our success, and we value each and every one of them.

**Family Connections Coordinators (FCC):** NIEO has successfully implemented the Family Connections Coordinator role for several years and has found immense success in engaging parents and the community as a whole. This is a role that serves as a single point of contact between the family and NVAA to provide support to families and students for non-teaching tasks. The primary focus is on building a lasting relationship with the families we serve, guiding them through processes and holding regular check-ins from the time a family expresses interest in the school through to the student's graduation.

- 3) Provide a portfolio summary of existing schools operated by CMO or charter organizations. List all charter schools that have operated within the last five years. Please indicate if any of those schools have had their charter revoked or not renewed.

NIEO, the charter holder and CMO, are affiliated to Newman International Academy (NIA), a Pre-K-to-12th grade Charter School System in Texas, has over 3,000 students enrolled across seven locations in five cities (Arlington, Cedar Hill, Mansfield, Fort Worth, and Watauga) serving 63 school districts in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. All of Newman campuses are Title I and the system has a less than 1% drop out rate, 97% attendance rate, 98% graduation rate, a "B" rating, and strong student academic growth outcomes based on state assessment data. The charter management has never had a campus revoked or non-renewed. NIEO has also started school overseas. NVAA will be NIEO's first charter school expansion within the United States Note that NIEO's founders and leaders also started Newman International Academy of Arlington (NIA). Newman Academy campuses and details are furnished below.

For each school listed, provide name, location, years opened, grades served. In addition, please provide five years of data (or a maximum number of years of data available, if less than five) for the following categories:

This section will highlight summary aspects of the existing schools operated by NIA. Please note that all state



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performance reports for the past 5+ years can be found at the following links:

TEA TAPR Reports:

<https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/accountability/academic-accountability/performance-reporting/texas-academic-performance-reports>

State of Texas School Report Cards

<https://txschools.gov/?view=district&id=220817&tab=overview&lng=en>

a) Total enrollment:

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Enrollment	3133	3059	3032	2875	2900
% of Peak		97.64%	96.78%	91.77%	92.56%
% Decrease		2.36%	3.22%	8.23%	7.44%

- b) Statewide designations and letter grades, if applicable.
- c) Student Achievement
- d) Student Growth

Newman International Academy (NIA) earned State or Texas Distinctions in the following areas during the 2018-2019 school year, and has continued the trend over the years through the pandemic to current:

- Academic Achievement in English Language Arts/Reading
- Top 25%: Comparative Academic Growth
- Top 25%: Comparative Closing the Gaps

These Distinctions are earned based on the Texas Education Agency (TEA)’s comparison of NIA versus 40 other campuses from anywhere in Texas that are most similar in grade levels served, size, percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged, mobility rate, percentage of English learners, percentage of students receiving special education services, and percentage of students enrolled in an Early College High School program. Newman is proud of our campuses who earned these Distinctions starting in 2018-2019.

In addition, Accountability ratings general trend data from 2018-2024 are as follows (each year can be found in the links):

- Newman International Academy (District) - B rating
- Newman International Academy at Arlington (NVAA) - B rating
- Newman International Academy at Cedar Hill (NICH) - B rating
- Newman International Academy at Grace (NIAG) - B rating
- Newman International Academy at Fort Worth (NIAFW) - D rating
- Newman International Academy at Mansfield (NIAM) - C rating
- Newman International Academy at Pioneer (NIAP) - B rating
- Two new campuses opened 2023-2024 are not yet rated

Newman also underwent Cognia Accreditation Review during the 2023-2024 school year, yielding an exceptional 330 overall rating, placing Newman in the top 4% of educational systems worldwide. The entire report is available upon request. The level of analysis was extensive, beyond state processes. An excerpt from the data analysis

completed during the accreditation process is provided below, to highlight data trends for the system and lowest performing campus in growth and achievement.

**Student Performance Analysis- Newman International Academy 2023-2024**

Areas of Noteworthy Achievement

- Which area(s) are above the expected levels of performance?
  - In AP English, NIA performed well above national averages
  - Biology EOC as a 97% pass rate for all students in 2023
  - Domain 2a: Academic Growth For 2 campuses
    - § Mansfield Scale Score: 93 – A

School Progress: Academic Growth RLA and Math			
	Points Earned		Calculated
Annual Growth Points Earned	145.0	x1	145.00
Accelerated Learning Points Earned	31	x0.25	7.75
Sum of Annual Growth plus Accelerated Learning Points			152.75
Total Tests Evaluated			174
<b>Academic Growth Score</b>			<b>88</b>

§ Gibbins Scale Score: 82 – B

School Progress: Academic Growth RLA and Math			
	Points Earned		Calculated
Annual Growth Points Earned	387.0	x1	387.00
Accelerated Learning Points Earned	69	x0.25	17.25
Sum of Annual Growth plus Accelerated Learning Points			404.25
Total Tests Evaluated			523
<b>Academic Growth Score</b>			<b>77</b>

- Describe the area(s) that show a positive trend in performance.
  - Closing that Gaps Academic Achievement: the following groups showed improvement at the Meets Grade level in both Reading and Math
    - All students
    - High Focus Group
    - 2 Lowest Performing from 2022
      - § Hispanic
      - § African American
  - Closing the Gaps Academic Growth Elementary & Middle School **Math**: the following groups showed improvement:

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- All students
- High Focus Group
- 2 Lowest Performing from 2022
  - § Hispanic
  - § African American

○ ELP Status improved from 44% to 50%

· Which subgroup(s) show a trend toward increasing performance?

- Hispanic students increased 29% at approaches level in English I EOC
- Economically Disadvantaged Students increased 13% at the Approaches level on English I EOC
- EB/EL students increased 34% at the Approaches level on English I EOC
- African American students increased 11% at the approaches level on 5th Math
- White students increased 24% at the approaches level on 6th Math
- Asian students increased 33% at the approaches level on 7th math
- SPED students increased 20% at the Approaches level on 7th Math

· Which area(s) indicate the overall lowest performance?

○ Domain 2a – Academic Growth Score – Cedar Hill Campus: 62 – D

School Progress: Academic Growth RLA and Math			
	Points Earned		Calculated
Annual Growth Points Earned	517.0	x1	517.00
Accelerated Learning Points Earned	106	x0.25	26.50
Sum of Annual Growth plus Accelerated Learning Points			543.50
Total Tests Evaluated			841
<b>Academic Growth Score</b>			<b>65</b>

e) Graduation rate, if applicable.

Texas Education Agency  
**2022-23 Attendance, Graduation, and Dropout Rates (TAPR)**  
 NEWMAN INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY OF ARLINGTON (220817) - TARRANT COUNTY

	State	Region 11	District	African American	Hispanic	White	American Indian	Asian	Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	Special Ed	Econ Disadv	EB/EL
<b>Class of 2020</b>													
Graduated	92.2%	93.1%	<b>99.1%</b>	100.0%	100.0%	97.3%	*	100.0%	-	*	87.5%	100.0%	100.0%
Received TxCHSE	0.5%	0.6%	<b>0.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	*	0.0%	-	*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Continued HS	1.1%	1.3%	<b>0.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	*	0.0%	-	*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dropped Out	6.2%	5.0%	<b>0.9%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	*	0.0%	-	*	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Graduates and TxCHSE	92.7%	93.7%	<b>99.1%</b>	100.0%	100.0%	97.3%	*	100.0%	-	*	87.5%	100.0%	100.0%
Graduates, TxCHSE, and Continuers	93.8%	95.0%	<b>99.1%</b>	100.0%	100.0%	97.3%	*	100.0%	-	*	87.5%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>6-Year Extended Longitudinal Rate (Gr 9-12)</b>													
<b>Class of 2020</b>													
Graduated	92.7%	93.8%	<b>99.1%</b>	100.0%	100.0%	97.3%	*	100.0%	-	*	87.5%	100.0%	100.0%
Received TxCHSE	0.5%	0.6%	<b>0.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	*	0.0%	-	*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Continued HS	0.5%	0.6%	<b>0.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	*	0.0%	-	*	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Dropped Out	6.2%	5.0%	<b>0.9%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%	*	0.0%	-	*	12.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Graduates and TxCHSE	93.2%	94.4%	<b>99.1%</b>	100.0%	100.0%	97.3%	*	100.0%	-	*	87.5%	100.0%	100.0%
Graduates, TxCHSE, and Continuers	93.8%	95.0%	<b>99.1%</b>	100.0%	100.0%	97.3%	*	100.0%	-	*	87.5%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Class of 2019</b>													
Graduated	92.6%	93.8%	<b>93.3%</b>	100.0%	83.3%	100.0%	*	*	*	*	66.7%	87.5%	*
Received TxCHSE	0.6%	0.7%	<b>1.0%</b>	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	*	*	*	*	0.0%	0.0%	*
Continued HS	0.6%	0.6%	<b>0.0%</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	*	*	*	*	0.0%	0.0%	*
Dropped Out	6.2%	4.9%	<b>5.7%</b>	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	*	*	*	*	33.3%	12.5%	*
Graduates and TxCHSE	93.2%	94.4%	<b>94.3%</b>	100.0%	85.7%	100.0%	*	*	*	*	66.7%	87.5%	*
Graduates, TxCHSE, and Continuers	93.8%	95.1%	<b>94.3%</b>	100.0%	85.7%	100.0%	*	*	*	*	66.7%	87.5%	*

- f) Demographic and socioeconomic breakdown.
  - i) % African American, Asian, Hispanic, White, Other race/ethnicity
  - ii) % Free and Reduced lunch
  - iii) % Special Education
  - iv) % English Language Learners/Emergent Bilingual
  - v) % Gifted and Talented

The student demographic summary according to the 2022-2023 Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR) for Newman International Academy:

**Demographic and Socioeconomic Breakdown 2023-2024**

<b>Ethnic Distribution:</b>		
African American	1,293	42.3%
Hispanic	928	30.3%
White	571	18.7%
American Indian	7	0.2%
Asian	139	4.5%
Pacific Islander	6	0.2%
Two or More Races	114	3.7%
<b>Student Information</b>		
	Count	Percent
Students w/ Dyslexia	95	3.1%
Foster Care	9	0.3%
Homeless	0	0.0%
Immigrant	2	0.1%
Migrant	0	0.0%
Title I	3,058	100.0%
Military Connected	16	0.5%
At-Risk	983	32.1%
<b>Students by Instructional Program:</b>		
Bilingual/ESL Education	387	12.7%
Gifted and Talented Education	173	5.7%
Special Education	197	6.4%
Economically Disadvantaged	1,554	50.8%
Non-Educationally Disadvantaged	1,504	49.2%
Section 504 Students	175	5.7%
EB Students/EL	438	14.3%
Students w/ Disciplinary Placements (2019-20)	0	0.0%

vi)

- 4) Select one of the network’s lower-performing schools and describe its performance. What specific strategies have you implemented to improve performance?

Newman absorbed students from a low-performing charter school in our Fort Worth campus, and we have been making steady strides to increase student achievement and growth. The following analysis shows concerns for growth in the 2019-2020 data. Using this data we have implemented strategies to improve performance, and internal assessments such as MAP show state data from 2023-2024 should exhibit strong growth.

o **Domain 2a - Academic Growth Score – Fort Worth Campus: 61 - D**

<b>School Progress: Academic Growth RLA and Math</b>			
	<b>Points Earned</b>		<b>Calculated</b>
Annual Growth Points Earned	67.0	x1	67.00
Accelerated Learning Points Earned	23	x0.25	5.75
Sum of Annual Growth plus Accelerated Learning Points			72.75
Total Tests Evaluated			120
Academic Growth Score			61

Some of the strategies being used to improve growth and achievement include data analysis, instructional strategies, robust interventions, and student and family connections. Newman uses a variety of data sources to make decisions for learners’ and staff members’ growth and well-being. Our district testing calendar lists all

assessment types and the testing windows for the year. STAAR Tests annually, MAP testing three times each year, formative assessments each 9-weeks, STAAR Interim in January, Pre-test/Post-tests, Fitness Gram, Student Learning Objectives (SLO), Student Portfolios, and SAT/ACT are all included. These are used to drive small-group and whole-group instruction and identify student growth.

All elementary and Secondary classes at Newman campuses have an emphasis on curricular and co-curricular subjects. Teacher instruction includes multiple response strategies and “Teach Like a Champion” techniques to assist with student engagement. Whole-group and small-group instruction are part of each day’s instruction. Multi-Tiered Student Support time, where they meet for small-group, focused instruction based on individual student needs. "Specials" include music, technology, art, and physical education. Students participate in Co-Curricular Classes where they engage in Chess, Coding, Speech and Classical Literature. Foreign language emphasis is important to Newman to keep students engaged and growing. We work to ensure all students grow in wisdom, stature, and favor along with improving test scores.

- 5) Describe the scope of specific resources, services, or set of services that the Charter Management Organization (CMO) will provide for the school to support operation or management.

Following is the scope of specific services that NIEO (CMO) will offer in partnership with Red Comet:

1. Reconcile count and invoice the ADE on a quarterly basis for the numbers served.
  2. Initial assessment of language fluency using ELDA and determine services and interventions required.
  3. Initial evaluation of students for any special needs accommodations and determine services and interventions required
  4. Support for students with dyslexia
  5. Administer ATLAS tests for students
- 6) Please describe and explain any monetary obligations designated for services or fees associated with partnering with the CMO (if applicable). **Not applicable.**

## **Addendum – Virtual or Blended Operator**

**Explain each of the statements listed below:**

- 1) The rationale for opening and authorizing the online school  
At Newman Virtual Academy Arkansas, we envision a future where every graduate emerges as a confident, capable, and compassionate leader, ready to make meaningful contributions in their careers. By instilling a lifelong love of learning and a spirit of innovation, we empower our students to shape their destinies and positively impact the world around them. **We do not just graduate students. We prepare them for the future!**

All students are required to be in a specific pathway beginning 7th grade. Examples of pathways include: Health Science pathway, IT pathway, Animal & Plant Science pathway, etc. **Red Comet's comprehensive CTE solution, which begins in middle school, ensures students graduate high school on time by equipping them with practical skills highly sought by employers.**

**We stand out by blending traditional high school education with innovative Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, utilizing cutting-edge technology such as augmented and virtual reality to enhance learning experiences.** Student's have access to the world's largest library of industry-certification training courses. Students not only achieve a high school diploma but they also graduate with 21st century skills.

2) How will authorizing the online school benefit the current student population of Arkansas?

Students all over the state will have access to quality STEM education and the opportunity to enter high-wage fields like IT, Health Science, Business, etc. A unique program like ours does not currently exist anywhere in Arkansas.

3) Describe the role of the teachers within the online learning environment.

NVAA, that partners with Red Comet, will provide teachers have a combined experience of over 500 years of teaching. They are all certified and endorsed to teach in their subject areas. Teachers are the first people students go to for any issues. If the issue is related to technical or administration, teachers will direct students to Red Comet's customer service department. If the issue is related to an error on the platform or curriculum, the teachers will contact the technology/curriculum integration departments. If the issue is academic in nature, the teachers will try to resolve it for the student. If a student is still struggling, the teacher will arrange for an online meeting to clarify concepts.

4) Verify by your signature below that the proposed school will abide by the following high-quality standards for online instruction:

*1. The Online School involves representatives of the Online School's community, as well as staff, in a collaborative process to develop and communicate the Online School's vision, mission, goals and results in a manner appropriate to the online model for that program. The Online School provides leadership, governance, and structure to support this vision, and these supports are used by all staff to guide the decision-making.*

*2. The Online School has a plan and timeline to accomplish the technological infrastructure capable of meeting the needs of students and staff and supporting teaching and learning. The Online School uses a variety of technological tools and has a user-friendly interface. The Online School meets industry-accepted accessibility standards for interoperability and appropriate access for learners with special needs. Technological support structures and programs are in place to reduce barriers to learning for all students.*

*3. The Online School has and implements a technology plan that includes (but is not limited to) documentation that all students and Parents know and understand the acceptable use of the Internet in accordance with all federal and state statutes. When providing direct services (for example, ISP, computer equipment or "at location") to students, the Online School will use filtering software to prevent access to inappropriate materials.*

*4. Online Schools must comply with all statutory requirements, including the existing budgetary reporting procedures under state law, as well as being consistent with the format required by the authorizing entity. Budgets and accounting records must be transparent, open to the public, and demonstrate support for student academic achievement.*

*5. Online School demonstrates levels of attainment of statewide performance indicators that Meet expectations established by the Department's annual performance review.*

*6. The Online School's Teachers use ongoing, research-based formative and summative*

*assessments to measure student academic performance. Students have varied opportunities to demonstrate mastery of skills, show academic progress, and receive meaningful feedback on their learning.*

*7. The Online School has a policy regarding course completion.*

*8. The Online School follows policies for tracking attendance, participation, and truancy. The policy includes documentation of Teacher/student interaction.*

*9. The Online School has a policy and the infrastructure to store, retrieve, analyze, and report required student, teacher, financial, and other required data collections.*

*10. The Online School has a policy of providing guidance counseling services as appropriate to grade level and student needs.*

*11. The Online School has a policy guiding school/home communication about student and program progress, school governance, and school accountability that is relevant, regular, and available in the native language where reasonable.*

*12. Instructional strategies, practices, and content address various learning needs and styles of students. The Online School uses a body of evidence to identify advanced, underperforming, economically disadvantaged, or other special needs students. The Online School will work to ensure that support structures and programs, including but not limited to Title I, ESL, Special Ed. and Gifted and Talented are integrated into the school's instructional program to promote and support student learning.*

*13. The Online School evaluates the degree to which it achieves the goals and objectives for student learning. There is a systematic process for collecting, disaggregating, managing, and analyzing data that enables the Online School's leadership, teachers, parents, students, community members, and other stakeholders to determine areas of strength and challenge. The data collected are analyzed using a systems approach, and the analysis includes the use of the school performance reports.*

*14. The Online School shall ensure that background checks in accordance with law are performed on all volunteers and paid staff, including but not limited to mentors, teachers, administrators or any other persons in unsupervised contact with the student, except parents supervising their children's educational program.*

*15. The Online School has an established policy to conduct virtual home visits to enhance school-family engagement.*



Signature of the authorized representative

*Sheba Pinto Thomas*

6/14/2024

Date



<b>NEWMAN VIRTUAL ACADEMY ARKANSAS - BUDGET</b>		<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>		
<b>FORECAST ANNUAL PROFORMA</b>								
<b>8/15/2024</b>								
<b>INCOME STATEMENT</b>								
<b>Revenue</b>								
ADM Revenue		\$1,523,600	\$3,047,200	\$3,809,000	\$4,570,800	\$5,332,600		80.04%
Federal Revenue		\$380,000	\$760,000	\$950,000	\$1,140,000	\$1,330,000		19.96%
<b>Total Yearly Revenue</b>		<b>\$1,903,600</b>	<b>\$3,807,200</b>	<b>\$4,759,000</b>	<b>\$5,710,800</b>	<b>\$6,662,600</b>		100.00%
<b>Costs of Goods Sold</b>								
Teaching material, equipment, and licensing		\$380,720	\$761,440	\$951,800	\$1,142,160	\$1,332,520		20.00%
Technical Support		\$95,180	\$190,360	\$237,950	\$285,540	\$333,130		5.00%
Teaching Faculty		\$560,000	\$1,120,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,680,000	\$1,960,000		29.42%
<b>Total COGS</b>		<b>\$1,035,900</b>	<b>\$2,071,800</b>	<b>\$2,589,750</b>	<b>\$3,107,700</b>	<b>\$3,625,650</b>		54.42%
<b>Gross Margin</b>		<b>\$867,700</b>	<b>\$1,735,400</b>	<b>\$2,169,250</b>	<b>\$2,603,100</b>	<b>\$3,036,950</b>		45.58%
<b>OPEX</b>								
Personnel Expenses		\$240,000	\$480,000	\$600,000	\$720,000	\$840,000		12.61%
Marketing Expenses		\$95,180	\$190,360	\$237,950	\$285,540	\$333,130		5.00%
Facilities Expenses		\$68,000	\$136,000	\$170,000	\$204,000	\$238,000		3.57%
Bank Service Charges		\$19,036	\$38,072	\$47,590	\$57,108	\$66,626		1.00%
Administrative Expense		\$152,288	\$304,576	\$380,720	\$456,864	\$533,008		8.00%
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>		<b>\$574,504</b>	<b>\$1,149,008</b>	<b>\$1,436,260</b>	<b>\$1,723,512</b>	<b>\$2,010,764</b>		30.18%
<b>EBITDA</b>		<b>\$293,196</b>	<b>\$586,392</b>	<b>\$732,990</b>	<b>\$879,588</b>	<b>\$1,026,186</b>		15.40%
Interest Expense		\$47,590	\$95,180	\$118,975	\$142,770	\$166,565		2.50%
Depreciation		\$40,000	\$80,000	\$100,000	\$120,000	\$140,000		2.10%
Amortization		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		0.00%
<b>Net Income Before Tax</b>		<b>\$205,606</b>	<b>\$411,212</b>	<b>\$514,015</b>	<b>\$616,818</b>	<b>\$719,621</b>		10.80%
Taxes		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0		0.00%
<b>Net Income After Tax</b>		<b>\$205,606</b>	<b>\$411,212</b>	<b>\$514,015</b>	<b>\$616,818</b>	<b>\$719,621</b>		10.80%
<b>BALANCE SHEET</b>								
<small>BALANCE SHEET</small>								

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
P. O. BOX 2508  
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: JUN 05 2\* 0

NEWMAN-GEORGE INTERNATIONAL  
EDUCATION ORGANIZATION  
4603 ENCHANTED BAY BLVD  
ARLINGTON, TX 76016

Employer Identification Number:  
84-3551957  
DLN:  
**29053029326000**  
Contact Person:  
SHERRY Q WAN I Dfi 31052  
Contact Telephone Number:  
(877) 829-5500  
Accounting Period Ending:  
August 31  
Public Charity Status:  
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)  
Form 990/990-dZ/990-N Required:  
Yes  
Effective Date of Exemption:  
**October 22, 2019**  
Contribution Deductibility:  
Yes  
Addendum Applies:

Dear Applicant:

We're pleased to tell you we determined you're exempt from federal income tax under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3). Donors can deduct contributions they make to you under IRC Section 170. You're also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under Section 2055, 2106, or 2522. This letter could help resolve questions on your exempt status. Please keep it for your records.

Organizations exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3) are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined you're a public charity under the IRC Section listed at the top of this letter.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that you're required to file Form 990/990-EZ/990-N, our records show you're required to file an annual information return (Form 990 or Form 990-EZ) or electronic notice (Form 990-N, the e-Postcard). If you don't file a required return or notice for three consecutive years, your exempt status will be automatically revoked.

If we indicated at the top of this letter that an addendum applies, the enclosed addendum is an integral part of this letter.

For important information about your responsibilities as a tax-exempt organization, go to [www.irs.gov/charities](http://www.irs.gov/charities). Enter "4221-PC" in the search bar to view Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, which describes your recordkeeping, reporting, and disclosure requirements.

Letter 947

NEWMAN-GEORGE INTERNATIONAL

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen Newman".

Director, Exempt Organizations  
Rulings and Agreements