



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Public Charter School Renewal Application for Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock

Deadline for Initial Submission: 5:00 PM on October 4, 2021



Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Charter School Office
Four Capitol Mall
Little Rock, AR 72201
501.683.5313**

EVENT/DEADLINE	Renewal Applications
Initial Applications Due by 5:00 p.m. Submitted to ade.charterschools@ade.arkansas.gov	October 4, 2021
Application Reviews with DESE	October 15-31, 2021
Application Revision Window	November 1-15, 2021
Final Applications Due by 5:00 p.m. Submitted to ade.charterschools@ade.arkansas.gov	November 15, 2021
Charter Authorizing Panel Hearings	December 14-15, 2021
State Board of Education Meeting – Review of Charter Authorizing Panel Decisions	January 13, 2022

Charter Information

Name of Charter:	Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock
LEA Number:	6055702
Authorization Date:	December 18, 2018
Expiration Date:	2022
Enrollment Cap:	540
Grades Served:	Kindergarten – 8 th grade
Superintendent:	Christina Long
Superintendent Email:	Tina.Long@exaltdeducation.org
Charter Mailing Address:	1818 N Taylor St. #353 Little Rock, AR 72207
Charter Physical Address:	6111 W 83 rd St. Little Rock AR 72209
Contact for the Application:	Dennis Tiede
Contact Email:	Dennis.Tiede@exaltdeducation.org
Contact Phone:	501-683-0085

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Number of Years Requested for Renewal (1-5):

Section 1: Charter Data

Current Accreditation Status: Accredited

Level of Support: General

Enrollment (3 Quarter ADM)

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
295	337	431	502

Graduation Rates

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
4 Year	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
5 Year	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Letter Grades

2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
D	D	N/A	N/A

ESSA School Index

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Overall Index	57.35	61.36	N/A	55.52
Weighted Achievement	32.71	36.54	N/A	24.32
Growth	79.14	83.63	N/A	80.78
SQSS	42.21	45.18	N/A	44.15

Section 2: Charter Mission Statement

Previous mission statement:

The Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock prepares students from educationally underserved areas of Southwest Little Rock for competitive colleges and advanced careers from an early age by ensuring mastery of the core subjects and developing the key behaviors required for success, citizenship and leadership in their communities and beyond.

If the mission statement for the charter will change, please provide the new mission:

Mission statement will remain the same.

What type of educational model does the school follow?

- Alternative Learning Environment
- Traditional
- Virtual Only
- College Prep
- Credit Recovery
- Other Focus Area: _____

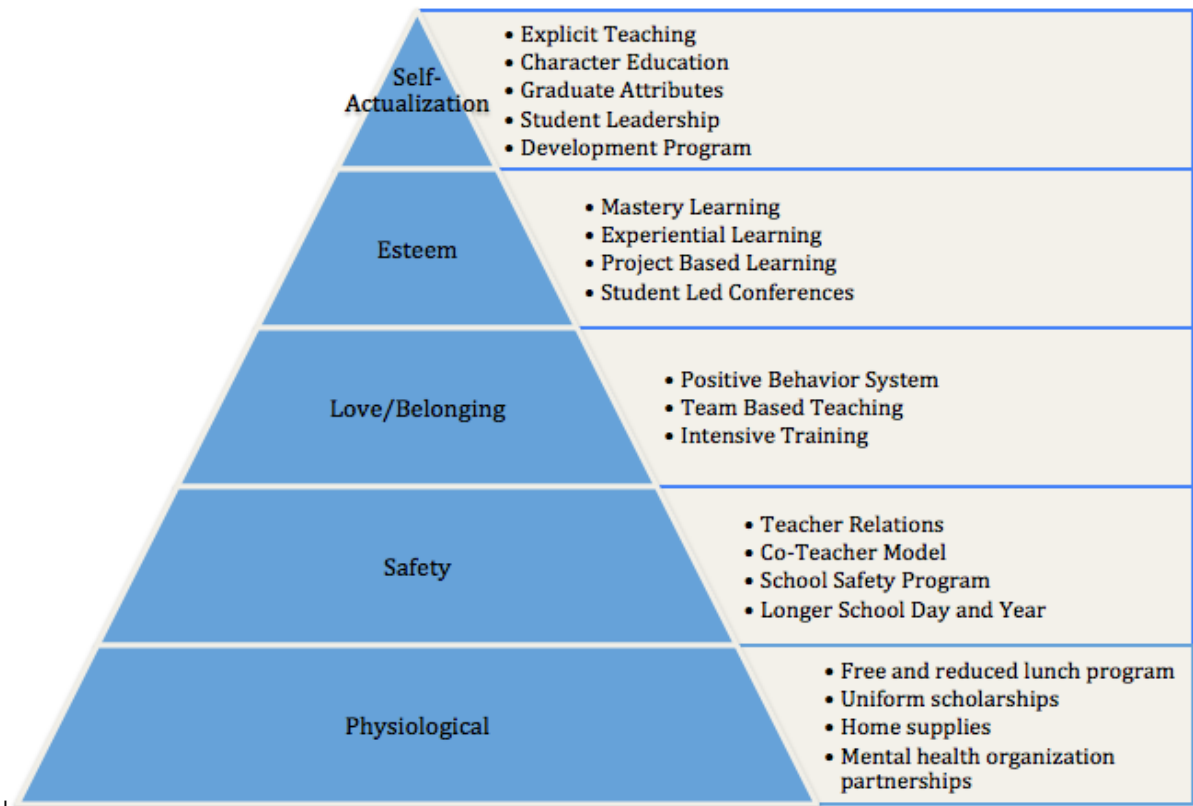
How is the selected educational model incorporated in the day-to-day operations of the school, curriculum, class offerings, etc.?

The Exalt Community: Exalt Academy's academic model is designed around the mission of serving low-income students. 96% of the Exalt Academy student population qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced lunch program and 66% of students qualify for English Language Learner services. Many students enroll several years behind grade level and/or do not speak fluent English. Often, students are trauma affected and have significant behavior issues. The Exalt team understands the urgency of the cause and that students' futures are at stake.

Exalt Teaching Model: An Exalt Academy education is so much more than teaching academics. Staff has created a Positive Behavior Plan that is built on an RTI (Response to Intervention) behavior model with Restorative Justice practices both academically and socially. Because behavior is taught the same way as academics, through a data informed approach, all behavior that takes away more than five minutes of instruction is documented. All team members are trained in lifting up and encouraging students to strive to be their best. A culture has been created where doing the right thing is rewarded and recognized; students are set up for success through clear expectations that are taught and then retaught. If students do not meet expectations, they are directed back to them and then rewarded when they meet them. This positive spirit and heart for students creates a culture that breeds success in all areas of school both academically and socially. This academic approach is built on Explicit Instruction and the framework of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Significant emphasis is placed on teaching the whole child and moving students through the pyramid in a systematic way. At each level, approaches and systems have been carefully chosen to address student needs.

Programs include mental health organization partnerships, uniform programs, extended learning time through a longer school day and year, positive behavior RTI system, mastery learning standards, cross graded homogeneous small group instruction, language immersion and character education programs are all tools utilized to educate the whole child.

Teachers and staff are trained using data to inform the successful implementation of each system to ensure students move up the triangle to self-actualization, becoming tomorrow's leaders. Below is an illustration of the Exalt Academy academic model.



Formative Assessment: Exalt Academy is a data informed school that believes in using the information generated from assessments to drive instruction. The assessment plan involves daily exit tickets, weekly formative assessment, pre and post end of unit assessments, NWEA Map assessments and all end of year state mandated assessments. Assessments and testing are only as powerful as the data mined to drive instruction. If the data is not used, the tests only measure the students' current academic level and that is insufficient. Exalt Academy has put tremendous emphasis on teachers frequently analyzing data in weekly Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings.

Data Driven Professional Learning Communities: Exalt recognizes the importance of a school that prioritizes time for teachers to collaborate together. All teachers are trained extensively in DuFour's approach to PLCs. In addition to weekly PLC meeting times, teachers have weekly common planning time with other educators to ensure data informed collaboration is happening throughout the week.

Strong Financial Management: Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock (EASW) ended the 2020-21 school year well positioned financially with a carryover balance of \$1,485,510. This is up from the 2019-20 fund balance of \$1,322,254. This carryover balance increases every year, illuminating the focus on remaining strong stewards of finances and the dedication to maintaining fiscal stability.

Yearly Ending Balances			
FY15	\$67,450	FY19	\$788,979
FY16	\$363,843	FY20	\$1,322,254
FY17	\$474,306	FY21	\$1,485,510
FY18	\$761,060		

This strong financial position allowed Exalt Academy, in May 2021, to purchase the entire property which has been leased since the school's inception. Leadership was able to secure low-rate financing that permits Exalt to save over \$150,000 annually compared to the previous lease rate and pay off the

building to own it outright in 5 years. This allows EASW to better serve the growing number of enrolled students.

Continuous Improvement and Significant Accomplishments: Exalt Academy was created to work with students who have traditionally been unsuccessful in schools. Nationally, students from low-income communities score below their more affluent peers. Unfortunately, the longer these same students are in school, the wider the performance gap grows between low-income students and their affluent counterparts. Exalt’s purpose is to provide a high-quality, well-rounded education to low-income students and reverse the performance trend taking place nationally. This is done while creating a safe, happy environment that generates a love and passion for learning in students that hopefully will last a lifetime. Over the course of the charter Exalt Academy has shown upward trends academically, financially, with stability, in enrollment and behaviorally. Listed below are Exalt Academy’s notable accomplishments:

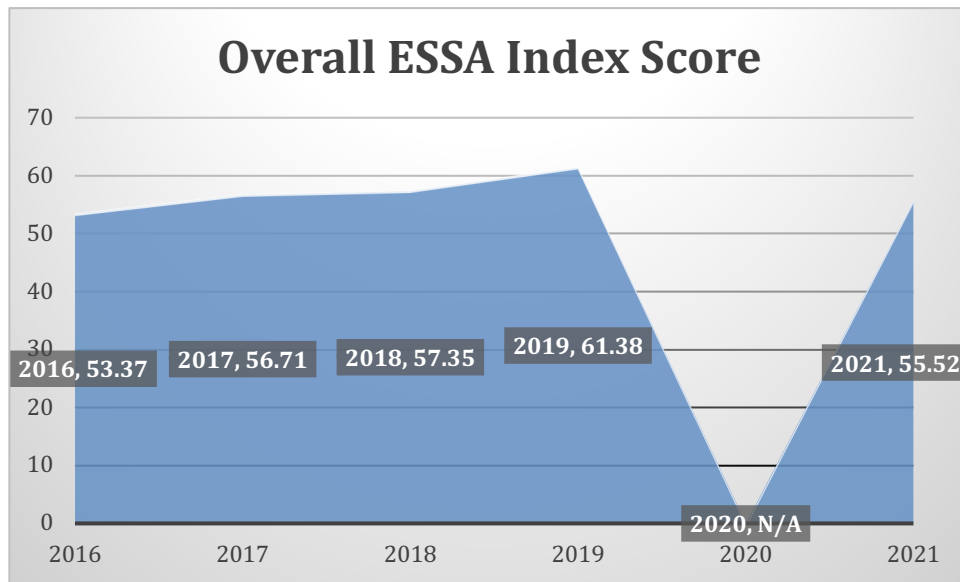
- Upward academic trends in all areas of the ESSA scores.
- Outstanding growth scores allow students to achieve their full potential.
- Purchased school campus in Southwest Little Rock
- Downward behavior trends, resulting in only 9 suspensions for the 2020-2021 School Year
- Large financial reserve
- Continuous improvement of base staff salaries
- Growing support staff team to better support special programs.
- Grown to full capacity in student enrollment with a waitlist
- Recognition of “Beating The Odds” from Office for Education Policy at the University of Arkansas Fayetteville

Section 3: Charter Goals

Please use the following space to evaluate the goals approved in the last charter application.

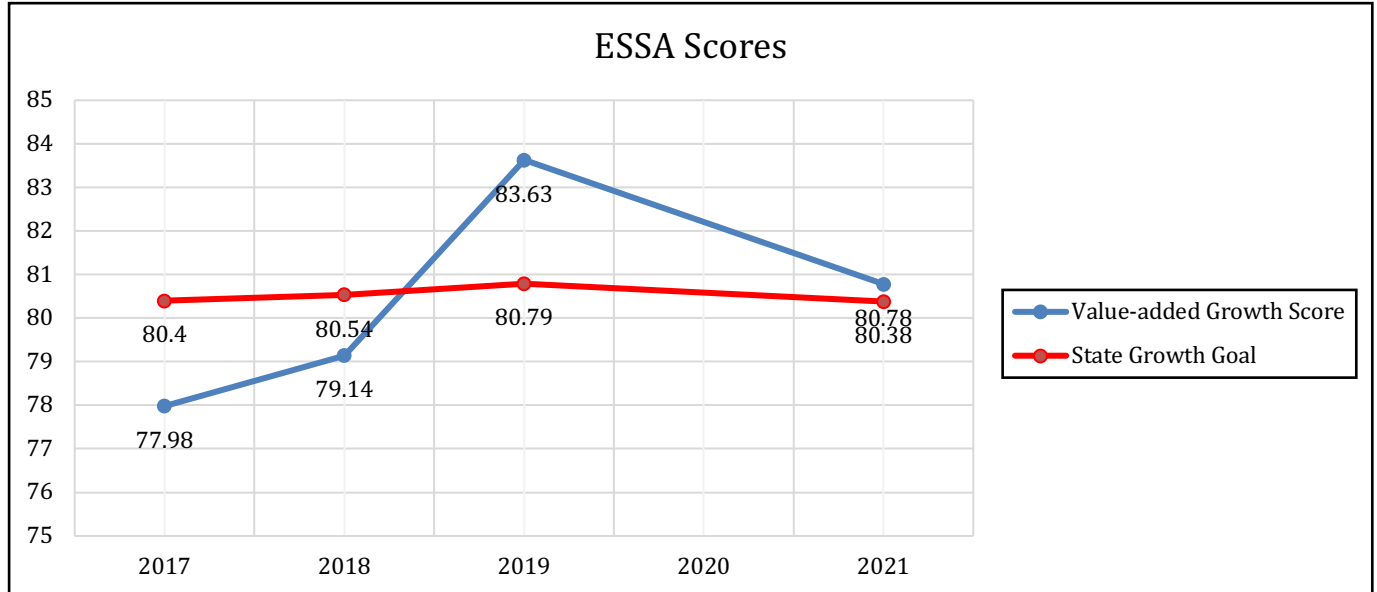
SMART Goal 1	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
The Overall ESSA Index Score will grow each year	ESSA School Index ACT Aspire	Exalt Academy has reached the goal of growing the Overall ESSA Index Score each year 4 out of the 5 possible years. The only drop that Exalt Academy experienced is a direct result of the conditions all educators are experiencing around the circumstances of the global pandemic. Although Exalt Academy did reach the growth expectation from DESE, the Overall Achievement suffered from the impacts of COVID-19. Exalt Academy anticipates continuing the upward trend in Overall achievement post pandemic.

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.



SMART Goal 2	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
The school will meet the growth expectation set by the state	ESSA with ACT Aspire	Exalt Academy met the growth goal expectations set by the state.

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.

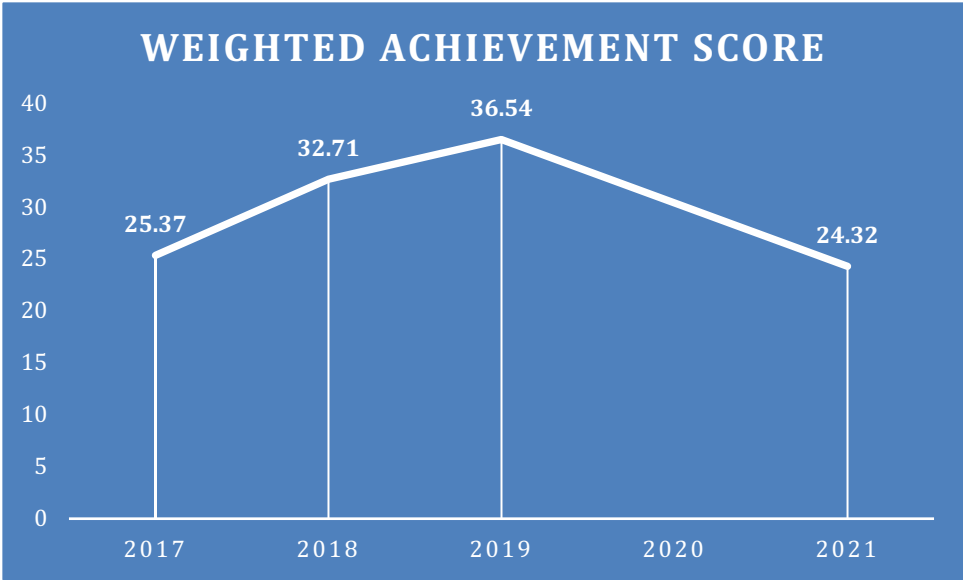


For the 2019 school year, Exalt Academy performed in the top 10% of the State of Arkansas compared to all 201 middle schools and in the top 12% of the State of Arkansas compared to all 1,041 schools on ESSA’s Value-added Growth Score. These numbers show that students who attend Exalt Academy are growing academically at a faster rate than similar schools locally.

The Office for Education Policy at the University of Arkansas Fayetteville named Exalt Academy #1 in Central Arkansas for English Language Arts growth and #3 for Math growth for the 2018-19 school year.

SMART Goal 3	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
The weighted achievement score will increase each year	ESSA with ACT Aspire	<p>Exalt Academy met this goal 3 out of 4 possible test years. Exalt did not test 1 year due to the pandemic and did not meet the goal last year.</p> <p>Student safety is leadership's number one priority. In order to minimize the spread of COVID-19, Exalt Academy's team put staunch restrictions in place to ensure the transmission of COVID-19 did not transpire on campus. The team is proud of the fact that students, teachers and families remained safe at Exalt Academy under such challenging conditions.</p> <p>Exalt has a growing student population that is traditionally behind. The majority of students who tested last year have never taken the ACT Aspire at Exalt Academy. Students come to EASW behind behaviorally and academically. Although the expectation for growth set by the state was met, students still have a long road ahead until proficiency is reached. Leadership anticipates continuing this upward trend in weighted achievement in the coming years.</p>

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.



SMART Goal 4	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
60% of students will meet their growth goals set by NWEA from Fall to Spring	NWEA MAP	Exalt Academy set expectations high on this goal and fell short of meeting them. The national average on the NWEA MAP of students meeting their goals is 50%. Leadership set the goal at 60% because it is important that EASW students grow at a faster rate than the national average. The table below shows the percentage of students who met growth goals in

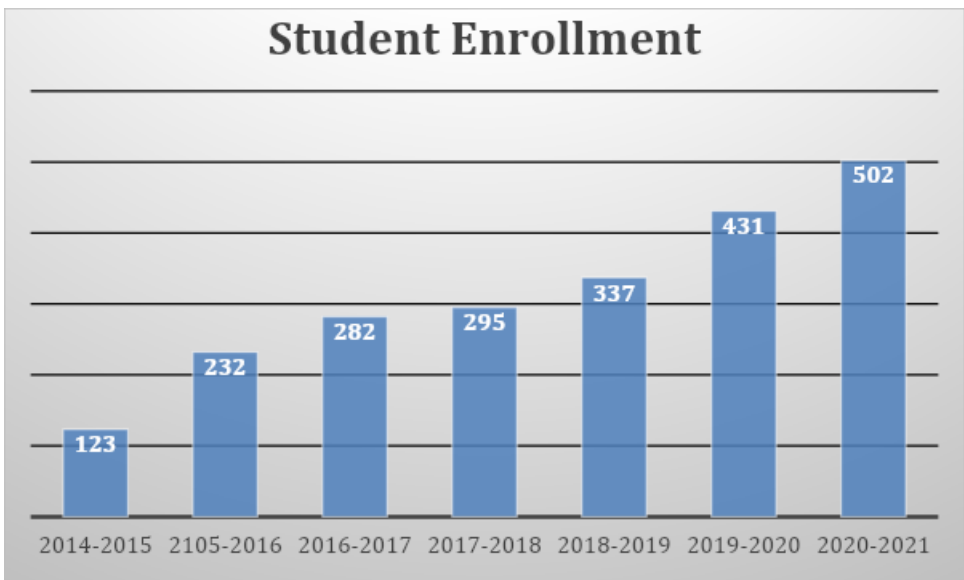
		reading and math. Even under the conditions of a global pandemic, 45% of students met their goal in reading and 44% meet their goal in math. Leadership anticipates percentages to continue to progress post pandemic.
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*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.

	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2021-2022
Reading	38%	44%	52%	N/A (COVID-19)	45%
Math	40%	30%	61%	N/A (COVID-19)	44%

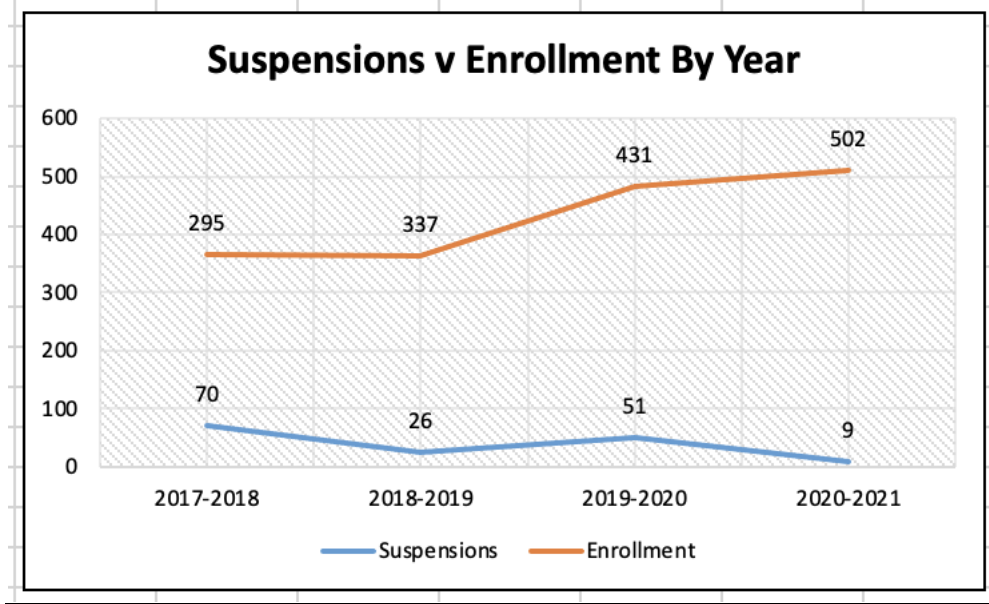
SMART Goal 5	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock will not waiver from our mission. We will continue to have a student-focused approach concentrating our efforts on reaching the student population of Southwest Little Rock. Although we are an open enrollment charter school and will not turn any student away, we will continue to provide an educational program that best meets the needs of low-income students.	Enrollment and qualification for the federal free and reduced lunch population	Since the school's inception Exalt Academy has served a high poverty population. Even as student enrollment has increased, Exalt still serves a high needs population. Currently, 96% of students qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Lunch program.

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.



SMART Goal 6	Metric	Evaluation of Goal
Exalt Academy will continue to execute against data informed Positive Behavior Plan to teach students the key behaviors required for success, citizenship and leadership in their communities and beyond.	Positive School Culture and lack of behaviors resulting in Suspensions	Exalt Academy uses utilizes a positive behavior plan to teach students the appropriate behaviors necessary to be successful in school and life. When students display these behaviors, they are rewarded for their actions. This has resulted in more students displaying appropriate behaviors and less appropriate behaviors occurring. The graph below shows that even though the school population continues to increase, the suspensions issued is on a severely downward trend. Last school year, Exalt only issued 9 suspensions for the entire school year.

*Insert graph or data table below reflecting the progress toward the goal over the last five years.



Section 4: New Goals

Select performance goals for the period of time requested for renewal that are related to the specific mission of the charter. Please include how the goals will be monitored.

SMART Goals
All of the goals previously set three years ago are with the mindset of continuous growth and improvement. They still line up in accordance with Exalt Academy’s mission and the current state accountability system. For those reasons, we choose to keep the same goals previously listed in our last charter.

Section 5: Waivers

Existing Waivers

Please list every waiver the charter school currently holds. Please check either “rescind” or “continue waiver” in the top-right box. If you plan to continue the waiver, please provide thorough answers to the questions provided.

Waiver #1 Topic	Statutes/Standards/Rules	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Teacher Licensure	Standard: 4-D.1 A.C.A §§ 6-15-1004 A.C.A §§ 6-17-301	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy creatively seeks out teachers who are experts in their field, mission driven, have a passion for serving the students of Southwest Little Rock, and are highly qualified. These professionals have at least a four-year degree from an accredited institution and are extensively background checked as required by law. Not every teacher is licensed, yet all have experience in education and making a difference in students’ lives. Exalt seeks to continue this waiver in order to best meet the needs of students.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #2 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Alternative Learning Environment	A.C.A §§ 6-15-1005(b)(5) A.C.A §§ 6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(i), A.C.A §§ 6-48-101 et seq., DESE Rule: Student Special Needs Funding Sections 4 and 4.10, Standard: 2-I.1	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
<p>Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.</p>		
<p>Exalt Academy is an open enrollment public charter school with a targeted mission of preparing students from educationally under-served areas of Southwest Little Rock for competitive colleges and advanced careers from an early age by ensuring mastery of the core subjects and developing the key behaviors required for success, citizenship and leadership in their communities and beyond. Because the applicant's mission is targeted explicit instruction to low-income students, providing additional alternative learning environments would distract from focusing on the success of the mission.</p>		
<p>If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.</p>		

Waiver #3 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Library Media	Standard: 4-F.1 & 4-F.2 A.C.A §§ 6-25-103 A.C.A §§ 6-25-104	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

Due to Exalt Academy's unique staffing model, applicant seeks to continue this waiver in order to provide staffing to students in ways that best serve their specific needs.

If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.

Waiver #4 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Gifted and Talented	Standard: 2-G.1 DESE Rule: Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards A.C.A §§ 6-20-2208(c)(6) A.C.A §§ 6-42-109	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy's academic model individualizes instruction for every student regardless of current performance level. Because of fluid homogenous groupings, some of the students at Exalt Academy are receiving instruction above their registered grade level. Exalt seeks to provide a high quality customized educational experience for all students. This is done through a multimodal learning environment that meets the needs of students who are gifted and talented.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #5 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
School Counseling	Standard: 2-C.1, 4-E.1, 4-E.2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy utilizes a variety of counseling resources and services from several providers to best serve students. This waiver allows Exalt to utilize multiple areas of expertise to meet the needs of students.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #6 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Safety of Students, Employees and Visitors	Standard: 2-E.2, 6-A.2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy prioritizes the safety of all members of the educational community and wishes to rescind this waiver.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #7 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Student Services	DESE Rule: Public School Student Services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>This rule has been repealed.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #8 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Health Services	Standard: 2-E.1 A.C.A §§ 6-18-706	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy employs a full-time registered nurse and wishes to rescind this waiver.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #9 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Salaries	A.C.A §§ 6-17-2201 et seq. A.C.A §§ 6-17-2401 et seq. A.C.A §§ 6-17-902 A.C.A §§ 6-17-919	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock set an aggressive schedule to increase teacher salaries in the coming years. Exalt requests a waiver because the listed statutes refer to licensed employees and Exalt Academy wishes to increase the compensation of all employees.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #10 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Personnel Policies	A.C.A §§ 6-17-2301 et seq. DESE Rule: School District Requirements for Personnel Policies (Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) A.C.A §§ 6-17-114, A.C.A §§ 6-17-117, A.C.A §§ 6-17-1701 et seq., A.C.A §§ 6-17-201 et seq., A.C.A §§ 6-17-1501 et seq.,	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

Exalt Academy's unique academic model requires flexibility in personnel policies to best serve students, families and educators in the school. In order to meet the needs of everyone within this model Exalt wishes to continue this waiver.

If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.

Waiver #11 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Board of Directors	A.C.A §§ 6-13-631, A.C.A §§ 6-13-630 A.C.A §§ 6-13-615, A.C.A §§ 6-14-101 et seq., A.C.A §§ 6-13-608, A.C.A §§ 6-13-619, A.C.A §§ 6-13-618, A.C.A §§ 6-13-620, A.C.A §§ 6-13-616(a), A.C.A §§ 6-13-634, A.C.A §§ 6-13-613, A.C.A §§ 6-13-611, A.C.A §§ 6-13-612(c)	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver

Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.

The Exalt Academy Board of Directors implementation of the Carver Governance Model has been pivotal in ensuring proper process at the board level. The flexibility these waivers provide has allowed the board to attract locally focused individuals to serve the school mission while utilizing an extensive internal process of checks and balances.

If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.

Waiver #12 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Class Size and Teaching Load	DESE Rule: Class Size and Teaching Load Standard: 1-A.5 A.C.A §§ 6-17-812	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>During Non-COVID times Exalt offers an instructional model with two highly qualified teachers in each classroom. Because of this co-teaching instructional model, Exalt may have large class sizes for students who are at or above grade level. This waiver allows Exalt to make instructional decisions for students to be served and remain financially prudent with resources.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #13 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Guidance Program	Standard: 2-C.2	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy utilizes a variety of resources and services from several providers to best serve students. This waiver allows Exalt to utilize multiple areas of expertise to best meet the needs of students.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #14 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
School Day	Standard: 1-A.4.2 A.C.A §§ 6-16-102	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy offers a unique school day that adjusts depending on the educational activities for the day. Keeping this waiver will allow enhanced learning opportunities through group activities, blended learning, explicit instruction, small group and research instruction for students.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #15 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
Principal & Superintendent Licensure	Standard: 4-C.2 Standard: 4-B.2 A.C.A §§ 6-13-109	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy wishes to keep this waiver in order to retain mission driven administrators who are well versed in the academic model. This waiver also allows upward mobility for educators who are master teachers in the Exalt program.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

Waiver #16 Topic	Statute/Standard/Rule	Rescind or Continue Waiver
School Calendar	A.C.A §§ 6-10-106	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescind <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continue Waiver
Explain how the above waiver has enhanced student learning opportunities, promoted innovation, or increased equitable access to effective teachers.		
<p>Exalt Academy offers an extended school year calendar with a longer academic day than most traditional schools. Continuing this waiver will allow the applicant to provide a flexible calendar with additional instructional time to better serve the Exalt community.</p>		
If the waiver is for a student service (ex: counseling, nursing, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) please explain how the services are being provided and how the needs of students are being met.		

New Waivers

Please list any waivers the charter wishes to add to its charter. For each waiver topic, please be sure to add the appropriate statute, Standard for Accreditation, and DESE Rule related to the waiver topic. For each topic the school must provide a detailed rationale explaining: (1) why the waiver is necessary to allow the charter to achieve its stated goals and mission, (2) how the waiver will be used, and (3) if related to a student service (ex: nursing, counseling, library media, gifted and talented, ALE, etc.) how the school will meet the needs of students and how the student service is being provided in an alternative way.

Waiver Topic	Statutes/Standards/Rules	Rationale
(Not Applicable)		

Section 7: Amendment Requests

List any non-waiver amendment requests and provide a rationale for each (i.e., changes to grade levels, enrollment cap, location, addition of campus).

	Topic	Rationale
1	Enrollment Cap	Exalt Academy has shown year over year enrollment increases since the beginning of operations, currently sitting at the cap of 540 students. In order to continue to broaden impact on the Southwest Little Rock community, Exalt Academy requests the enrollment cap move to 1080. This would be an incremental change adding 108 students to the cap every year for five years.
2		
3		
4		
5		

Section 8: Desegregation Analysis

*Required only if the charter intends to add a campus, add grades, increase enrollment cap, or change location.

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

Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock Desegregation Analysis

Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock (Exalt) is seeking the renewal of its open-enrollment charter from the State's charter authorizer. As a part of its renewal application, Exalt is seeking to increase its enrollment cap from five hundred forty (540) students to one thousand eighty (1,080) students. Exalt is located within the boundaries of the Little Rock School District, and as an open-enrollment public charter school unconfined by district boundaries, expects to continue to obtain most of its students from within the boundaries of the Little Rock (LRSD), North Little Rock (NLRSD), Pulaski County (PCSSD) and Jacksonville-North Pulaski (JNPSD) School Districts.

I. The Status of Pulaski County Desegregation Litigation

Exalt is providing this desegregation analysis in accordance with Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 to review the potential impact that its charter renewal application would have upon the efforts of all four (4) of the Pulaski County school districts to comply with court orders and statutory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools. In conducting its review, Exalt has substantiated that the LRSD and the NLRSD have been declared unitary in all respects of their school operations. The Pulaski County desegregation litigation was first filed in 1982. *Little Rock School District, et al v. Pulaski County Special School District, et al.*, Case No. 4:82:cv-00866-DPM. In 1989, the parties entered into a settlement agreement (the "1989 Settlement Agreement") under which the Arkansas Department of Education, the then-three (3) Pulaski County school districts, and the intervenors agreed to the terms of state funding for desegregation obligations.

LRSD successfully completed its desegregation efforts in 2007 and was declared fully unitary by the federal court in 2007. *Little Rock School District v. Pulaski County Special School District*, Case No. 4:82-cv-0866 (E.D. Ark.), Order filed February 23, 2007. In 2010, LRSD filed a motion to enforce the 1989 Settlement Agreement. The motion contended that operation of open-enrollment public charter schools within Pulaski County interfered with the "M-M Stipulation" and the "Magnet Stipulation." On January 17, 2013, Judge D.P. Marshall Jr. denied LRSD's motion, stating:

"The cumulative effect of open enrollment charter schools in Pulaski County on the stipulation magnet schools and M-to-M transfers has not, as a matter of law, substantially defeated the relevant purposes of the 1989 Settlement Agreement, the magnet stipulation, or the M-to-M stipulation."

Little Rock School District v. Pulaski County Special School District, Case No. 4:82-cv-0866 (E.D. Ark.), Order filed January 17, 2013. LRSD appealed to the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals.

One (1) year later, on January 13, 2014, Judge Marshall approved a Settlement Agreement that included a provision stipulating to the voluntary dismissal with prejudice of LRSD's pending appeal concerning the charter school issues. In light of LRSD's unitary status and the parties' 2014 Settlement Agreement, Exalt's requested charter renewal cannot interfere with the purposes of the Pulaski County desegregation litigation, which has been fully concluded as to LRSD. After the dismissal and the settlement agreement, the case was completely concluded for all purposes as to LRSD, and the federal court terminated all jurisdiction in the matter. Because of that, there is no possibility that Exalt's requested charter renewal could impact LRSD's unitary status. To be clear, Exalt's charter renewal application cannot impact LRSD's unitary status because 1) there is no case in which LRSD's unitary status could be an issue; 2) LRSD made a claim regarding operation of open-enrollment charter schools in federal court in 2010 and lost it; and 3) As a consequence of the 2014 Settlement Agreement,

the LRSD released any claims it had concerning the charter school issues. On January 30, 2014, the Court also approved a stipulation among the parties that PCSSD is unitary in the areas of Assignment of Students and Advanced Placement, Gifted and Talented and Honors Programs. Based on the stipulation, the Court released PCSSD from supervision and monitoring in these areas. Thus, as of January 30, 2014, LRSD, NLRSD and PCSSD are unitary in the area of student assignments. On April 4, 2014, the court found that PCSSD is unitary in the areas of Special Education and Scholarships. Subsequently, PCSSD was also found to be unitary in the areas of Staff and Monitoring. Pursuant to Judge Marshall's order on May 6, 2021, both PCSSD and JNPSD are unitary in all areas except School Facilities.

Upon review, Exalt believes that its request to obtain the renewal of its open-enrollment public charter shall have no negative effects on the efforts of the PCSSD and JNPSD to attain unitary status.

II. Data

According to the 2020-2021 third-quarter Average Daily Membership enrollment figures as maintained by the ADE Data Center, LRSD had a student population of 20,501 students, of which approximately 61.3% were African American; 19.5% were White, and 15.9% were Hispanic. NLRSD's student population was 7,550 students, of which approximately 60% were African American; 26.6% were White, and 10.2% were Hispanic. PCSSD's student population was 11,355 students, of which approximately 44.7% were African American; 39.4% were White, and 9.7% were Hispanic. JNPSD's student population was 3,725 students, of which approximately 53.8 % were African American; 34.3% were White, and 7.8% were Hispanic. Exalt's student population was 497 students, of which approximately 74% were Hispanic and 25% were African American.

Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-106 requires that Exalt's continued operation will not serve to hamper, delay, or in any manner negatively affect the desegregation efforts of a public school district or districts within the state. As explained in more detail above, Exalt's careful review of the relevant statutes and court orders affecting the LRSD, NLRSD, PCSSD, and JNPSD and their student populations, and its own student population, shows that such negative impact is not present here.

III. Conclusion

Exalt submits that upon the basis of its review, neither any existing federal desegregation order affecting the PCSSD, LRSD, NLRSD, and JNPSD, nor the 1989 Settlement Agreement prohibit the State's charter school authorizer from granting its renewal application to continue operating an open-enrollment public charter school within the geographic boundaries of the LRSD.