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|   | <b>Charter School Application<br/>Cover Page</b> | FOR SDE USE<br><br>Initials of Receiver<br>_____<br><br>Date Received _____ |
| <b>Name of Proposed Charter School:</b>  | <b>Greer Academy</b>                             |   |
| <b>School Address (if known):</b>  | <b>4520 Locust Hill Road</b>                     |   |
|  | <b>Taylors, SC 29687</b>                         |   |
| <b>Board Chairman Information</b>  |  |   |
| <b>Name</b>  | <b>Donna Smith</b>                               |   |
| <b>Address</b>   | <b>138 W. McElhaney Road</b>                     |   |
|  | <b>Taylors, SC 29651</b>                         |   |
| <b>Daytime Phone</b>   |  |   |
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| <b>Other Phone (cellular)</b>  |  |   |
| <b>E-mail Address</b>  | <b>dosmith@greermiddlecollege.org</b>            |   |
| <b>Grade Levels of Charter School (or Age Groupings if the school will not use grades to distinguish students):</b><br><br><b>Grades 3-8</b> |  |   |
| <b>Sponsor (local school district board):</b><br><b>South Carolina Public Charter School District</b>  |  |   |

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*“Greer Academy” (name to be determined at a later date by Board of Directors).  
“Greer Academy” will be referenced as “the school” moving forward.*

## **“Greer Academy” Mission Statement**

The mission of the school is to produce well-rounded students using a proven Classical Instructional Model and curriculum, Core Knowledge, through collaborative, engaging, and character building learning opportunities.

Over the next several pages, we will address the questions raised in providing opportunities for student learning at the school.

- To encourage individuals to be lifelong, passionate pursuers of knowledge;
  - How do I approach learning more about the things and ideas in which I am interested?
  - How do I effectively use the strategies and skills necessary for success in academic and non-academic areas?
  - How do I acquire and integrate the critical information necessary for success in academic and non-academic areas?
- To inspire responsible, self-directed learning;
  - How do I take responsibility for my own learning?
  - How do I establish clear goals and manage progress toward achieving them?
  - How do I take on challenges and persevere?
- To challenge and expand the comfortable limits of thought and tolerance;
  - How do my thoughts and actions affect the world in which I live?
  - How do I demonstrate respect and tolerance for others?
- To engage in complex thinking, problem solving, and effective communications;
  - How do I effectively communicate orally, visually, and in writing for a variety of purposes?
  - How do I demonstrate complex reasoning and problem solving strategies?
  - How do I solve problems through reasoning and experimenting and how do I apply what I have learned?
- To enable individuals to be skilled processors of information and technology;
  - How do I effectively select and use a variety of information gathering tools and techniques?
  - How do I assess the accuracy and value of information?
  - Do I practice proper documentation?
- To prepare individuals for life and learning in a truly global environment where collaboration is essential;
  - How do I work effectively with others to achieve a goal?
- To teach that service to the community is integral to the development of the “whole” individual;
  - What have I done to make my community a better place?

In accordance with the Charter School Act, this school will continue to increase learning opportunities by providing a choice for all students. The school will utilize best practices that have developed around the Classical Model concept to meet the needs of students and parents who want a foundational experience as they get ready to transition to high school. Unique features include: location of their own campus to afford students the opportunity to function in small learning environment and develop a sense of responsibility for their own learning; a head start on developing the knowledge base and critical thinking skills through the Classical Model of instruction preparing them for the transition to high school.

The educational program will reflect instructional strategies observed in site visits to schools throughout the southeast during the planning process as well as research regarding successful schools, both locally and

nationally. Faculty and students will use the data in a small learning community partnership environment to create together a highly energized and challenging educational climate. The purpose of this school is to provide Core Knowledge curriculum, modeled after the original practitioners from the University of Virginia and to provide each student with a strong academic foundation.

The school has a projected student enrollment of 25 students per classroom for 6th and 7th grade in a traditional grade level structure during the opening 25-26 school year. The school plans to have at least 4 classes of 6th grade and 2 classes of 7th grade for a total of around 150 students. Construction of the school will start in October of 2024. With the new building being completed in January of 2026, the 6th and 7th grade students will transition from a temporary setting to a permanent home. The remaining grade levels will enter the new building during the 26-27 school year with up to 750 students. The school has received more than 400 indications of interest in the past year.

The school will utilize the Core Knowledge© (Core Knowledge) curriculum developed and made available by the Core Knowledge Foundation. Core Knowledge is a highly regarded, proven curriculum used by some of the highest achieving Charter schools in the nation. For example, Liberty Common Charter School in Fort Collins, Colorado utilizes the Core Knowledge curriculum and is ranked as the top high school in Colorado and one of the top 50 high schools in the nation by U.S. News and World Report. It has consistently achieved top test scores and produced exceptionally well-prepared graduates, with 100% Advanced Placement program participation.

The Core Knowledge curriculum's linear historical progression and early emphasis on events and people will assist the school's core programmatic feature by allowing students to see how advancements in science, math, and technology throughout history are cumulative, with subsequent generations studying, applying, and building on the advancements of previous generations.

With the prospective location in the northern half of Greenville County, the school intends to replicate the demographics of local Greenville County public school student enrollment. The school may also draw students from Spartanburg County which have schools located nearby. Target geographical service areas for the school will include the Northern portion of Greenville County including the cities of Greer, Taylors, Travelers Rest, and Greenville. Additionally, the school will seek to serve the southern edge of Spartanburg County. The school will offer these communities a unique choice of curriculum and focused methodology that is currently unavailable within easy commuting distance from a public school. The school offers parents who would prefer to expand their children's current educational options a proven, advanced curriculum alternative with the added advantage of a focus on entrepreneurial skills.

Core Knowledge is a well-designed and researched curriculum that provides a wide range of materials to address individual student needs. The use of Core Knowledge has produced student academic success in students at all levels of academic ability and performance. Beyond using the proven Core Knowledge curriculum, the school will establish a well-defined partnership with parents to ensure there is frequent communication as to the continual monitoring and individualized instruction at the school. Each student at the school will establish an academic goal known to parents and teachers and receive the support to make or exceed that goal. This plan has worked to close achievement gaps in numerous Core Knowledge schools across the country.

## **Educational Plan and Capacity**

### 1. Evidence of Need and Community Support

- a. Over the course of several months of contact efforts, the school obtained over 400 indications of interest by Feb. 1, 2024. Many others expressed interest in the school and requested to be kept informed, but cited a reluctance to have their name included on a list, and declined to be counted.
- b. The same plan as outlined below (in Section 3) will be repeated upon receiving a charter to ensure sufficient numbers of students enroll at the school. Should the school need to address any discrepancies between its enrollment numbers and state or federal law, the school will take every avenue legally available to it to comply with such requirements. Such efforts may include door-to-door canvassing, social media advertising, mail drops, etc. in communities likely to result in compliance with state and federal law.
- c. The Board of Director's intent is to ensure that the enrollment of the school reflects the neighboring population of Greenville County and we look forward to welcoming children without regard for their background or experience.
- d. Support for the formation of a school like the school has been very strong. The school has support from parents, community and business leaders, and elected officials including: William Timmons, Member of Congress; Thomas Corbin, SC Senate, District 5; Rick Danner, Mayor, City of Greer; Ryan Abdelnabi, Director of Operations, National Security Council, Executive Office of the President, The White House; Brian Martin, Attorney; Anthony Kouskolekas, President, Pelham Medical Center; Chris Crist, Owner, Owens Insurance Agency; Brandy Amidon, Mayor, Travelers Rest; Brad Smith, Founder and President, Sonar Software, Inc.; Justin Miller, Recreation Supervisor, City of Greer Parks, Recreation and Tourism; Chris Bailey, CEO, Greater Greenville Association of Realtors; Kimberly Hall, RN, BSN, CCRN.
- e. As stated previously above,, the school intends to continue its outreach efforts to assess and build parent and community demand for the school by identifying possible households that may be interested in our educational programs. Upon receiving a charter, the school will execute the same level of outreach effort to ensure it reaches and properly informs the surrounding communities. Letters of support indicating extensive community support are included in the appendices.

*See Appendix C.*

- f. The school will require intense parental involvement in its operations. In addition to mandatory parental service hours, the school intends to utilize email and other software tools to keep parents completely aware of the school's operations, their student's daily study requirements and academic progress (as needed), and upcoming opportunities for the school community to join together for social or charitable purposes. The school also intends that the sports component of the school have parents heavily involved in both skill development as well as competition.
- g. Including charter, private, homeschool, and the local district, Greenville County has well over 100,000 students in grades k-12. According to the Greenville County Chamber

of Commerce, The Upstate of SC has a population of a little over 1.5 million people. Greenville County has over 550,000 people with a growth rate of 1.5% per year. Of the 550,000 people, 33,900 of those are below the age of 5. As the focus narrows to the Greer area by 2026, the population of Greer is expected to be around 35,500 compared to a 2021 population of around 33,000. In addition to the expected Greenville County growth, the student population is expected to grow in the schools area.

- h. Greenville County Schools conducted a long range comprehensive facilities plan during fiscal year 2023. Part of the facilities plan illustrated the number of subdivisions with greater than 50 or more lots remaining to be developed. Within the school's zoned area, there are 10 subdivisions with 50 or more lots remaining to be built. Within just a few miles out of our zoned area, there are additional 6 subdivisions with 50 or more lots remaining to be built. In addition to the subdivisions, multi-family developments were analyzed. Within just a few miles of the proposed new school, there are 12 multi-family developments planned with 75-300 units proposed per site. With the projected residential growth and by 2040, Greenville County Schools expects to have a need of around 9500 seats for students in grades k-12. When reviewing the needed seats in grades k-8, the number is 5600 by 2040.

## 2. Curriculum and Instructional Model

### a. Instructional Model

- i. The school's uniqueness comes not only from the use of Core Knowledge Curriculum which is designed to provide only about 90% of the school's curriculum. Although Core Knowledge is a proven curriculum that is adaptable to a number of instructional methodologies, the Board of Directors proposes to integrate the use of Core Knowledge with a strong emphasis on character building skills. Core Knowledge provides a strong grade-by-grade knowledge base that builds students' confidence and increases their understanding of great literature and historical documents. The requirement of a yearly Core Knowledge project also fits in well with the product and project underpinnings of nearby Greer Middle College Charter High School. A more fully developed discussion of the benefits of the Core Knowledge curriculum is included below.
- ii. Research findings reveal that many students lack the necessary proficiencies across educational disciplines. The 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) results revealed that only roughly one-third of South Carolina's 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students score proficient or better in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In addition, unfortunately, there are significant gaps in achievement between Caucasian and minority students, and high poverty and wealthier students. The school selected the Core Knowledge curriculum because of its consistent focus, regardless of grade level, on a cumulative, content-based, knowledge-specific approach, as well as the substantial student achievement results regardless of demographic factors, reported from educational settings utilizing Core Knowledge.

The Core Knowledge curriculum is based on the idea that knowledge builds on knowledge. It provides a central, detailed course of instruction that ensures students establish strong foundations of knowledge, grade by grade, in English/language arts, history, geography, mathematics, science, and the fine arts. The course of instruction emphasizes written communication.

Core Knowledge focuses on cultural literacy, defined as a shared knowledge base that facilitates expression through reference. Obviously, such references can be useful in verbal communication as well, but Core Knowledge primarily focuses on the use of such shared knowledge base through the written word, as reading assignments are layered upon writing assignments, which in turn serve as demonstrations of reading comprehension. With Core Knowledge, each layer builds upon those previously studied, with each piece of literary excellence expected to inform the students' next assignment. An incomplete mastery of the skills of written comprehension cannot be kept hidden in such an environment.

Since its development by University of Virginia professor, E.D. Hirsh, Jr., Core Knowledge has been studied in a variety of circumstances and locations. One of the most recent studies was conducted in New York in 2011. The study looked at the impact of the Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) through a pilot program conducted at ten (10) demographically matched, low-income schools in grades K-2, during a three-year period starting in the 2008-2009 school year. The schools were a range of urban, rural, and suburban schools, and covered 172 classrooms, 200 teachers, and 4,466 students. From school to school, the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch ranged from 30% to 99%.

The study found that CKLA students had significantly greater gains in the third year of the program than students in the comparison schools in nearly every measure. The study found that the spring test scores for 2<sup>nd</sup> grade CKLA students were greater than that of comparison students on all tests. In addition, the study found that 1) those students with the lowest incoming scores saw the greatest impact; 2) the students who had been in the program the longest scored the highest; and, 3) classes which implemented the CKLA program showed statistically significant higher scores than comparison classes within one school year.

The New York research confirmed earlier research done by Johns Hopkins University. An early Johns Hopkins study in 2000 looked at the effects of Core Knowledge implementation in five Maryland schools. Core Knowledge schools were matched with non-Core Knowledge schools with similar numbers of students and similar percentages of students eligible for free or reduced lunch. Researchers also visited each Core Knowledge school and gave teachers questionnaires to assess the degree to which the school was most closely implementing the Core Knowledge curriculum.

The researchers then tracked scores on two tests over a five-year period. The school with the most consistent and impressive gains in reading comprehension was the school with the greatest level of observed Core Knowledge implementation. A school that had abandoned Core Knowledge midway through the study posted the most disappointing final numbers.

One of the principal authors of the study, Sam Stringfield, stated in press reports that, "one inner-city school in San Antonio was jaw-dropping. I thought, "This is what education is supposed to be about."

The Maryland study was followed by another Johns Hopkins study that looked

at several schools across the nation. The researchers commented, “The correlation between level implementation and effect size indicates that when schools implemented the Core Knowledge Sequence with greater reliability and consistency, students achieved improved scores on all tests. Considering only those schools in which the research staff observed Core Knowledge curriculum and instruction in more than 50% of classrooms, one sees marked increases in the effect size favoring Core Knowledge.”

No curriculum is a guarantee of educational success. It is only one tool among others -- though admittedly an important one -- that parents, teachers, and students must use to achieve the goal of every school: children learning to the best of their ability.

An example of foundational success is seen in elementary schools such as Lyles- Crouch Traditional Academy (Lyles-Crouch) in Alexandria, Virginia. According to Virginia’s State Report Card, Lyles-Crouch scored ahead of the district in which it is located, and ahead of the state as well. On the 2015-2016 Virginia Standards of Learning (“VSOL”), 95% of Lyles-Crouch students scored “proficient” or “advanced” on the VSOL Reading section. District wide, only 73% of students scored the same. Statewide, only 80% attained those same levels. In the VSOL Mathematics section, 92% of Lyles-Crouch students scored “proficient” or “advanced”, compared to 68% in the district and 80% statewide.<sup>11</sup> Lyles-Crouch students also scored double-digit advantages over the district and statewide scores in the History and Science sections.

The success seen at Lyles-Crouch is also seen at Woods Charter School (“Woods”) in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Woods utilizes the Core Knowledge Curriculum in its K-8 grades. Woods ranks as the best elementary school in Raleigh-Durham and the surrounding areas. Woods ranks as the fifth best elementary school in North Carolina. North Carolina uses End of Grade (“EOG”) Tests for elementary learning assessment. Over half, 55%, of Woods students scored “Superior” on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math EOG. An additional 36% scored a “Solid” understanding of the grade level mathematics subjects, for a total of 91% between the two scores. Woods students also scored a combined “Superior” and “Solid” of 88% in the Reading EOG for 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade. These excellent scores continue through the later grades as well, with Woods 8<sup>th</sup> graders scoring “Superior” and “Solid” in the Math EOG at 80%, and 96% in the Reading EOG.

Again, no curriculum is perfect. And there are certainly other schools than those above that utilize Core Knowledge that do not show similar results. Indeed, some of the exceptional results with the curriculum may be the result of other factors for which the demography of the school will not provide. However, the research and practical evidence are clear, Core Knowledge is a proven curriculum with demonstrated success. Throughout the United States, Core Knowledge has a proven track record of excellent student achievement results. In the region, schools in Georgia and North Carolina, along with a handful in South Carolina, are using the curriculum with good results. The school intends to strive for the results seen around the region and in schools like Liberty Common.

*Refer to Appendix G for Sample Core Knowledge curriculum grade level outlines.*

- iii. The Board of Directors has received the most recent changes to the state academic Standards adopted by the S.C. Department of Education for grades 3-8. Core Knowledge meets the South Carolina standards. The Board of Directors is confident Core Knowledge meets the current standards. The principal of the school will be responsible, prior to the initial day of school, and thereafter annually, for overseeing a review process whereby the school administration and teachers review the then-current standards and any additional guidance, promulgated pursuant to S.C. State Board of Education regulations, to ensure the school is providing the appropriate foundational content instruction to all students in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, music, and health and fitness. Along with any additional components required by additional guidance regarding any applicable state standards, Core Knowledge curriculum will be implemented in all grades. Based on the success observed at other charter schools implementing the Core Knowledge curriculum, the Board of Directors is confident the school will meet or exceed the state standards.

*Refer to Appendix G for Sample Core Knowledge curriculum grade level outlines.*

- iv. The school will comply with all updates to federal and state assessments. Evidence of increased student academic achievement for all groups of students described in Section 1111(b)(2)(C)(v) of the ESEA will be provided through summative assessments. The school understands that increases in student achievement for all students as described in ESEA is the most important factor in determining renewal or revocation of a charter. Ongoing formative assessments and benchmarks will provide student progress markers toward summative goals.

Once a student's academic progress has been determined, the school will use a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) form of school-wide structure to meet the developmental requirements of all students and meet or exceed S.C. State Board of Education (SCBOE) requirements. All school students will receive daily, high quality, research-based instruction, using the Core Knowledge curriculum. The school faculty will build the educational day around the curriculum supported by an appropriate behavioral standard. The school will focus on student integrity both on campus and off. The school faculty will monitor students' progress throughout the school year to ensure that remedial or advanced instruction is provided whenever required.

Such assessments will supplement the instructors' weekly decisions regarding student learning and retention. The school will use the instructors' weekly decisions to, in consultation with parents, address any need by individual students for advanced or remedial subject work on a continuous basis, up to and including grade advancement on a subject by subject basis. The school will work with parents to support their children's education and assist with instructional and behavior strategies. Students needing either supplemental instruction or additional challenges will be provided with such, both during the school day as well as before and after school.

*See Appendix F for the School Calendar and Schedule.*

In the MTSS model of instructional support, Tier I quality instruction

reaches approximately 80-90 % of students and provides foundational, quality instruction to all students. Progress monitoring examines all variables, including, but not limited to, attendance, class size, behavior observations, instructional delivery and fidelity, staff development issues, curriculum choices, and student progress monitoring data. Weekly data team meetings will focus on Tier I evaluations and modifications to determine ways to strengthen Tier I instruction.

Tier II instruction will provide additional support to approximately 15% of students who can make accelerated progress through interventions. Modifications will be a focus for weekly data team meetings and will include before, during, and after school interventions; performance cross-grade grouping; small group; and one-on-one instruction.

Tier III will benefit the 2-5% of students who need intensive intervention, and even more frequent progress monitoring. While Tier III students may not be special education students, disabilities may surface, and referrals may need to be issued to determine student eligibility under IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Faculty and support staff will develop an individualized academic plan (IAP) for each student. The IAP will be updated each 4 ½ weeks to correspond with progress monitoring for Tier I students, with updates for Tier II and Tier III students occurring as needed. Teachers and support staff will develop a dashboard with critical factors for monitoring and meeting ESEA requirements.

- v. In addition to the above detailed efforts to assist students at risk of not meeting grade level requirements, the school's grouping of its daily schedules by grades will allow students needing remedial instruction to achieve grade level performance to transfer to the grade level appropriate for his or her skill level. In addition, the school will have a team of community volunteers including partnering with Greer Middle College Charter High School, led by the school's Director of Development, to help tutor students needing remedial or advanced instruction at the school at no cost to the students or their families. The Director of Development will manage the volunteer program that will offer classroom volunteers, mentors, tutors, and assistance in various projects around the school. Further, should any students need any additional instruction past the normal school day or year, the school will make arrangements for students to receive supplemental instruction outside the normal school day or during the summer break to ensure the students are prepared for the following year.

b. Educational Structure

- i. The average school day at the school will begin with a 7:00 am drop off for students for parents who need it. A staff member will be paid to open and monitor a designated classroom for early drop offs. Regular drop off will be at 7:15 am with a designated covered area for inclement weather. At that time, supplemental instruction, club activities, project work, or additional activities may be conducted. Supplemental Instruction periods will be a key component of the school structure throughout the day to address remedial needs as well as allow for advanced instruction. Such periods are also very different from area schools.

School will begin at 7:45 am and school will be dismissed varying by grade level, but a low cost (cost based on similar programs in the private and public sector

in the surrounding area) afterschool program will be offered to assist parents with carpooling and sibling care. Students will have classes each day in Core Knowledge instruction. Math and English Language Arts will be taught each day. Starting in grade 3, students will also have a character-building skills component built into the curriculum.

In addition, students will have a varied schedule of Core Knowledge material weekly in science, history, geography, visual arts and music. Class time for students will be varied but most of the instructional blocks will be an hour or a 45-minute period. Teachers will have great flexibility in teaming activities and other special grouping strategies to move students forward academically. Reading is key to students' doing well in Core Knowledge and large blocks of instructional time will be dedicated to reading instruction at the early grade levels.

- ii. Beginning with the initial year's six classes of 25 students in Grade 6 and 7 progressing each year as the school adds grades 3-8, with up to 750 students at full capacity (28 classes of 25 students at each grade), the school will ensure that faculty have ample resources available for the implementation of the Core Knowledge curriculum as well as any supplemental materials.
- iii. As stated immediately above, the school anticipates up to 750 students at capacity, with at least 6 classes per grade and 22-25 students per class.
- iv. Again, as stated above, the basic learning environment will be the classroom, with the normal facilities and personnel thereof.
- v. School will begin at 7:45 am and school will be dismissed varying by grade level. Supplemental Instruction periods will be a key component of the school structure throughout the day to address remedial needs as well as allow for advanced instruction. Such periods are also very different from area schools. Students will have classes each day in Core Knowledge instruction. Math and English Language Arts will be taught each day. Starting in grade 3, students will also have a character-building skills component built into the curriculum each day.
- vi. The small class sizes, none any larger than 25 per grade level, the use of a curriculum program that has proven to be successful in many settings with many ability levels, the incorporation of intellectual activities integrated into the instructional program will enable each student to progress academically at his or her maximum level. In addition, a well-planned and supported Special Needs Program that adheres to and goes beyond federal and state regulations in terms of interventions, identification, services, parental/guardian communications, monitoring, and reporting will enhance the chances of all the school students making substantial academic and health progress. The Board of Directors has reviewed the purposes of charter school listed in Section 59- 40-20 of South Carolina Charter School law and feels the school will improve student learning through Core Knowledge and its Character-Building Program; will improve learning opportunities through the uniqueness of the program in the Greenville County area; increase learning opportunities through multi-age opportunities as well the use of a well- documented and well researched curriculum; will encourage the use of a

variety of teacher methods with the combined strategy outlined in the Executive Summary; will involve faculty in the development of these unique programs and provide faculty exposure to more professional development than most traditional public schools offer (faculty will help develop these professional development programs); and will certainly prove to be a model of academic excellence through setting and achieving high academic goals.

- vii. The school will use a Multi-Tiered System of Support form of school-wide structure to meet the developmental requirements of all students and meet or exceed S.C. State Board of Education (SCBOE) requirements. All the school students will receive daily, high quality, research-based instruction, using the Core Knowledge curriculum. The school faculty will build the educational day around the curriculum supported by an appropriate behavioral standard. The school will focus on student integrity both on campus and off. The school faculty and administrator team will monitor students' progress throughout the school year to ensure that remedial or advanced instruction is provided whenever required. The school will use the instructors' weekly decisions to, in consultation with parents, address any need by individual students for advanced or remedial subject work on a continuous basis, up to and including grade advancement on a subject by subject basis. The school will work with parents to support their children's education and assist with instructional and behavior strategies. Students needing either supplemental instruction or additional challenges will be provided with such, both during the school day as well as before and after school.
- viii. Faculty will primarily plan with and use Core Knowledge materials in classroom instruction. Core Knowledge classroom kits will be provided by the school to each faculty member. The kits will be focused on how to create unit and lesson plans that will result in a carefully sequenced, coherent, cumulative, content-rich curriculum for all subjects and across grade levels. Kits will also include detailed training manuals with PowerPoint presentations, as well as participant workbooks.

*See Appendix F for the School Calendar and Schedule.*

c. Professional Development

- i. The principal of the school will have primary responsibility for overseeing the professional development of the faculty at the school. The principal will be charged with ensuring a professional development program is in place. The principal will ensure the planning, implementation, and follow-up of professional development takes place. In addition, the school, if afforded a charter, will utilize the anticipated professional development opportunities offered by the SC Public Charter School District.
- ii. Core Knowledge is not a teaching methodology but a systematic leveled curriculum that offers each student in the program a base of knowledge that "levels the playing field". Accordingly, faculty using Core Knowledge at the school will go through an extensive training program outlining the materials with suggested teaching.

The Board of Directors has a strong belief in preparing faculty to be successful and have budgeted funds to cover the intensive training for the academic cornerstones of the school. Combining a robust schedule

of professional development days - both before and during the academic year - with the multiple supplemental instruction periods and coordinated subject instruction will allow the school faculty and staff a significant amount of flexibility and time to collaborate to address both individual and corporate professional development needs. Moreover, the school's goal of a minimum of one experienced faculty per three new faculty members will allow for substantial and continuing mentoring on a day to day basis.

- iii. Each faculty member at the school will have 5 days (a day being considered 7 hours of instruction, plus one hour of concomitant activities) of initiation training and an additional hour of training each month. In addition, faculty members will be teamed at each grade level to share ideas and teaching methods when using the material. Each day of professional development will have a survey taken at the end of the day to evaluate the effectiveness of the training.
- iv. Each faculty member will also have a class time of planning and/or team meetings each day. All faculty will have at least 15 days of professional development the first year of the school and at least 15 days each year after that. New faculty will be required to have at least 15 days of initial training in subsequent years.
- v. How the above detailed professional development aligns with the vision and core academic priorities of the school are obvious. The school will ensure that each faculty member is well versed in the Core Knowledge curriculum. The Core Knowledge curriculum closely aligns with the focus of the school. The effectiveness of the professional development will be demonstrated by several inter-related considerations. First, the faculty themselves will provide feedback as detailed previously. Second, the student understanding of the school's character-building focus will be analyzed during interactions with the school faculty and staff. And lastly, the assessment tests administered will reveal whether the faculty are properly prepared and are therefore properly preparing their students. The final proof is in the results.
- vi. As specified above, the school calendar and budget provide for a number of days prior to school opening for professional development. Likewise, the calendar for the school months sets out multiple professional development days for instruction and interaction. Moreover, the school will supplement its onsite staff by retaining an outside curriculum trainer so as to obtain both expertise and lighten the responsibilities of the principal. These factors should be more than sufficient to provide the school's faculty with the necessary tools to educate the school's students.

However, in any plan, room for improvement exists. Accordingly, the school will constantly monitor the faculty's satisfaction with an understanding of its chosen methods and curriculum and will make changes as they become necessary.

- vii. GMC and the new school's academic leadership will meet in July to review summative scores and "game plan" for the upcoming school year. Although each school will develop a plan,, the schools will have PD opportunities together as many times as possible to include vertical alignment as students matriculate from middle level to high school.

*See Appendix F for the School Calendar and Schedule, Appendix G for*

*Supporting Documents for the Described Educational Program, and Appendix H for List of Teaching Positions. Appendix I is not applicable.*

- d. Virtual Offerings - not applicable

3. Serving Students with Special Needs

- a. All core content teachers at the school will use Core Knowledge as the basis for building a strong academic base for the school's students. This curriculum has been proven to work with a wide range of student abilities. The baseline data will include reading, writing, mathematics, and science. Each student in the school will also have an academic baseline developed during the school's first year using an assortment of school and state assessments. The school will use multiple screeners. The school will also use Core Knowledge faculty made assessments that will be standardized at grade levels to serve as an additional academic growth model. Each student will develop an academic goal that will be shared with all teachers and with parents.

The school will use a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). The principal will identify an assistant principal or administrative assistant (certified) MTSS Coordinator and provide that individual with the time to establish the program. The MTSS Coordinator will be trained in MTSS type methodologies and represent the school at local and state meetings relevant to MTSS. The major components of the identified MTSS model are identifying potential learning gaps through multiple assessments, analyzing the problem, using a multi-tiered approach to establishing a goal(s) for the student, developing a monitoring plan to gauge progress, and continuously collecting data to make decisions about adjustments if necessary. The three-tiered approach provides classroom screening and group academic analysis. The use of Core Knowledge as a unified base-level curriculum will fit perfectly at this level. Students showing little or no progress will receive Tier II interventions. These may include interventions such as tutoring, curriculum adjustments such as re-teaching a literature section to an individual or group, pull-out sessions, student pairings for teamwork, parental assistance at home, mentoring and/or extra help in an afterschool program. Students who still are not making adequate progress are referred for Tier III interventions for a comprehensive evaluation and consideration for being eligible for special education services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). MTSS will be part of the school's beginning of the year professional development program for all faculty and staff.

As a free public charter school, the school will be open to all students who apply regardless of disability status, label, or services needed. Students with special needs who attend the school will be served in the same manner, and will receive the special education and related services and support, defined in their IEP. The purpose of special education and related services is to provide students with special needs a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The school will do this by following eligible students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

The school will comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which include appropriately certified personnel, documentation, assessments, adaptations and modifications. The school will abide by the provision of a FAPE, under the requirements of IDEA and Section 504. The school will comply with all federal and state laws, per IDEA 613(e) (1) (B), regarding accommodations for students with special needs and will not discriminate against individuals who are believed to have disabling

conditions. The School will adhere to the criteria for eligibility, reporting, and official records for accommodations under Section 504 and the IDEA.

The IEP will be the guiding document that defines all services and accommodations deemed necessary by the team. The implementation of the IEP will be monitored and reported to the student, parents, and related staff on a regular basis.

b. Child Find and Initial Evaluation

- i. The school will also comply with all processes stipulated by the SC Public Charter School District in the Child Find procedures for school-aged charter school students, from referral through eligibility and reevaluation, to exiting the child from special education through either reevaluation or revocation of parental consent. The school will publicly post information regarding the Child Find process in its school and on its website. All parents will receive procedural safeguards at the onset of the evaluation process to ensure the parents are not only aware of the process of special education, but also of their rights at any point during the process. The school will comply with all state and federal statutes, laws, regulations, and sponsor specific policies/procedures when it comes to serving students with special needs.

c. Identifying Students with Special Needs

- i. The school faculty and staff will receive professional development related to laws including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regarding the privacy of educational records, and health records that are defined through the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Training will also be provided on services for students with special needs on an ongoing basis so that students who may qualify are identified in a timely manner, and so that instructional delivery and interpersonal relations are conducted appropriately and effectively. Identifying children through MTSS and referrals from faculty members, parents and administrators will all be part of the training to staff and faculty for identifying children to be evaluated for a disability. A parent of a child may initiate a request for an initial evaluation. Additionally, when there is reason to suspect the child may have a disability, an employee of the school is obligated to initiate a request for an initial evaluation. Faculty and staff members will be trained in both the identification and reporting of students with special needs. Within the required amount of time from the receipt of a request for an evaluation, the school will obtain parental consent for an initial evaluation through an evaluation-planning meeting, or provide the parent written notice on why there is not going to be an evaluation. The written notice will provide a plan of appeal for the parent/guardian if an evaluation is not deemed necessary. The requirements for initial evaluation timelines are found in 34 CFR §300.301(c) and (d). The requirements for determining eligibility are found in 34 CFR §300.306. Under 34 CFR §300.301(c)(1), an initial evaluation must be conducted within 60 days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation or, if the State establishes a timeframe within which the evaluation must be conducted, within that timeframe. The IDEA 60-day timeline applies only to the initial evaluation. The evaluation is complete when all observations, rating scales, assessments, interviews, forms, and outside evaluations, have been gathered, scored, and interpreted. This all must be completed within 60 calendar days of receiving the signed parent consent. The team then has 15 business days to determine eligibility.

The school will obtain parental consent before conducting an evaluation. The evaluation team consists of the members similar to those of Individualized

Education Plan (IEP) team and other qualified professionals. The requirements for parental consent for initial evaluations are found in 34 CFR §300.300(a). The requirements for parental consent for the initial provision of special education and related services are found in 34 CFR §300.300(b)(1)-(2). All initial referrals and all reevaluations have a team meeting to review existing information and a team meeting to determine eligibility/continued eligibility. As part of the initial evaluation and any reevaluation, the evaluation team will develop an evaluation plan that will provide for the following and be summarized in an evaluation team report consisting of: A review of existing evaluation data on the child, including: prior evaluations and information provided by the parents or guardians of the child; current classroom-based, local or state assessments and classroom-based observations; observations by teachers and related services providers; data about the child's progress in the general curriculum, or, for the preschool-age child, data pertaining to the child's growth and development; and data from previous interventions or MTSS. A decision on the basis of that review and input from the child's parents, which identifies what additional data, if any, are needed to determine: whether the child is a child with a disability, as defined in South Carolina Board of Education Regulation 43-243.1, and the educational needs of the child; in the case of a reevaluation of a child, whether the child continues to have such a disability and the educational needs of the child; the present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs of the child; whether the child, as a result of the disability, needs special education and related services; or In the case of a reevaluation of a child, whether the child continues to need special education and related services; and whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed to enable the child to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the IEP of the child and to participate, as appropriate, in the general education curriculum.

Based on the information from a variety of courses that have been documented and carefully considered, the team has determined:

- i. Does the student demonstrate characteristics consistent with \_\_\_\_\_?
- ii. Does the disability have an adverse effect on the students educational performance?
  1. If yes, you must describe HOW the disability adversely affects education and/or functional performance.
- iii. Does the student require specially designed instruction due to the disability?
  1. If yes, you must describe the evidence that supports the need for specially designed instruction.

Additional considerations - the team must also conclude:

- a. The determination is not the result of a lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction. The term "essential components of reading instruction" means explicit and systematic instruction in: phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency (including oral reading skills), and reading comprehension strategies - yes/no
- b. The determination is not the result of lack of appropriate instruction in math - yes/no

c. The determination is not the result of limited English proficiency of the student- yes/no

All three must be yes, in order for the student to be eligible for special education and related services. The school will administer assessments for evaluations, or contract with the appropriately certified and credentialed professionals to complete and interpret the necessary assessments, and other evaluation measures may be needed to produce the data identified above. The school will provide prior written notice to the parents of a child with a disability that describes any evaluation procedures the school proposes to conduct and obtain written consent therefore.

In conducting the evaluation, the school will use a variety of appropriate assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining: whether the child is a child with a disability as defined in South Carolina Board of Education Regulation 43-243.1; and the content of the child's IEP, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum (or for a preschool child to participate in appropriate activities); not use any single measure or assessment as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child; and use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors.

The school will ensure that assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child: are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis; are provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information about what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer; are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable; are administered by trained and appropriately credentialed personnel; and are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments. Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient. Assessments are selected and administered so as best to ensure that if an assessment is administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the assessment results accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure); A school age child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities; Assessments of children with disabilities who transfer from one school district to another school district in the same school year are coordinated with the children's prior and subsequent schools, as necessary and as expeditiously as possible, consistent with South Carolina Board of Education Regulations 43-243, to ensure prompt completion of the full evaluations.

In evaluating each child with a disability, the evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related service

needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified. Assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the child are provided. The parents will receive formal written report of evaluation results including: assessment results and educational implications; Procedural Safeguards, otherwise known as Parental/Guardian Rights, that is provided by SC Public Charter School District; and a statement of any other factors relevant to the proposed action.

d. Individualized Education Plans

- i. Developing the Individualized Education Plan (IEP): if a determination is made that a child has a disability and needs special education and related services, after seeking the consent for the initial provision of services, the school will develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the child within 15 calendar days of the date eligibility is determined as required by South Carolina Board of Education Regulations 43-243. The school will use the South Carolina Enrich (current) system to develop and monitor IEPs. The special education faculty member will progress monitor the student receiving special education services in order to have accurate, up to date information on the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance to determine if the IEP goals are appropriate and achievable.

The school will form an IEP team that includes: the child's parents, at least one general education teacher of the child, at least one special education teacher of the child, a LEA Representative from the SC Public Charter School District, someone who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation results, who may be one of the team members noted previously, the child, based on age and best practice. Parents and/or guardians will receive written notification by two separate means within a reasonable time frame in order to determine if they are able to attend.

The IEP will include all of the following:

- a. The "present levels" statement is intended to comprehensively describe a child's abilities, performance, strengths, and needs. It is based on, and arises out of, all the information and data previously collected and known about the child, most especially the full and individual evaluation of the child that must be conducted in accordance with IDEA's evaluation/eligibility provisions of §§300.301 through 300.311. Present levels will describe: the child's strengths and weaknesses, what helps the child learn, what limits or interferes with the child's learning, objective data from current evaluations of the child, and how the child's disability affects his or her ability to be involved and progress in the general curriculum.
- b. A statement that discusses the child's future and documents planning information.
- c. A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals if needed.
- d. A description of the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals described in the IEP will be measured and reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals will be provided.

- e. A statement of the special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child.
  - f. An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular classroom and in activities.
  - g. A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state and district-wide assessments.
  - h. If the IEP team determines that the child must take an alternate assessment instead of a particular regular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement, a statement of why.
  - i. The projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications described in the IEP and the anticipated frequency, location and duration of those services and modifications.
  - j. For children age 13 or over, appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills and the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.
- e. Section 504
- i. Developing a Section 504 Plan:
    - 1. If a determination is made that a child has a disability that meets the wider definition of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the student typically receives accommodations in the general education classroom, but may require out of class accommodations that do not rise to the level of special education services. Accommodations under 504 are required to “level the playing field” for students who qualify. Students under 504 are also afforded procedural safeguards, and while similar to IDEA, are not the same.
- f. Ongoing Services
- i. Transfer IEPs:
    - 1. The school will provide comparable services to all children who enter the school with an IEP in place. Within 30 days, the school will gather data and have an IEP team meeting to determine if the IEP is appropriate for the school’s environment and can be accepted as is, or amended according to the data gathered in order to provide access to the School’s general education.
- g. Service Delivery and Placement Options
- i. In accordance with IDEA, “children will be treated as individuals with unique abilities and disabilities that need to be addressed by providing unique support services, which are explicitly articulated in the IEP”. The school will ensure that students with special needs receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and will utilize a variety of strategies to address student needs. The school will

create a system to ensure that a continuum of alternative placements, including inclusive classrooms, is available to meet the needs of students with special needs for special education and related services and that least restrictive environment (LRE) issues are considered in placement decisions. Least restrictive environment considerations will be based on meaningful evaluation data, based on appropriate placement options, and determined at least annually. The considerations will be determined by the child's IEP team and will consider any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that he or she needs, including the medium through which the instruction is delivered.

h. **Reevaluations**

- i. During three-year reevaluation the IEP team will determine if the student does or does not continue to meet the criteria to be a student with a disability under IDEA. At that time, if the student does not meet the criteria for disability, the IEP team will determine if the student meets the wider definition of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which does not require the full level of special education services. If at the reevaluation a student is determined to no longer qualify for or no longer require services, the student will be exited from special education.

i. **Staff and Support Services**

- i. To fulfill its obligation, the school will have at least two full-time special education faculty members in place by year two of operation whose job is to provide services for students already identified and to assist in the identification of students not yet identified but who meet the state and/or federal criteria of a student with a disability. The faculty members will attend all school and SC Public Charter School District meetings for special education coordinators/teachers and all trainings provided by the SC Public Charter School District to provide better services to the school, students, and parents. The faculty members will serve as the contact person between the school and the SC Public Charter School District and/or agencies on special education matters, including state and federal reporting. Further the school will have under contract an appropriately credentialed Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) to serve students with speech language services in their IEP by year two. The school will contract as the need arises with an appropriately credentialed School Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, or other providers to service students.
- ii. The student's IEP will specify any special circumstances (equipment, supervision, etc.) that needs to be provided to meet the student's needs. The school will work with local districts' Special Education Services to contract for any special services needed to fulfill any child's IEP that cannot be provided by the school. If services are unavailable through the district, the School will contract with the appropriate related service providers, including but not limited to occupational and physical therapy, orientation and mobility, speech therapy, and psychologist for testing in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in school activities.
- iii. Student needs and services are determined by the IEP team, but the school must be prepared before the beginning of school to serve students with more significant disabilities in the event of the enrollment of such students. The school will not wait to see what services are required before establishing a contract with Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists and related services providers, so that services can begin immediately if determined by the IEP team or need as comparable services.

- iv. The Board of Directors will hold the principal of the school directly responsible for ensuring that all evaluative, instructional, reevaluations, and reporting timelines and procedures for the special needs program are strictly adhered to. The school will also have a plan in place to provide services to students who enroll in the school who already have an IEP in place. The school will have 5 days to hold comparable services meetings for a transfer student and then the school will have 30 days to hold another meeting to accept the IEP, amend the IEP, or hold an annual review meeting.
- v. The school anticipates enrolling students who will be identified as English Language Learners (ELL) and will appoint a staff member as an ELL contact. The entire staff will receive professional development before school begins the first year in ELL identification and support. The initial enrollment packet will include a Home Language Survey, which has become the most common means to determine who might need further evaluation for services. Parent, student, and staff referrals for ELL services might also indicate further assessment. ELL assessments will be used to identify ELL students, their academic needs, and their proficiency level. All identified ELL students will have an interview/conference to gather relevant background information. Parent interviews will also be arranged when possible.

*Appendix J is not applicable.*

- vi. The school will also provide English as a Second Language services for students who are determined eligible via the SC Public Charter School District or State approved screening assessments. This service will be contracted out on an as-needed basis or, if enough students require services, a part- or full-time person will be employed.
- j. Gifted and Talented (GT) Students
  - i. The school will identify intellectually gifted students through on-going assessments and classroom observations. The faculty will work closely with the school's GT program coordinator and parents to identify and develop individualized plans to meet the needs of academically and intellectually gifted students.

In particular: Faculty members will work with identified gifted students to go beyond state and national standards and with accelerated activities. Faculty members will strive to teach gifted students from where they are academically, not from where the curriculum states they should begin. GT students will not be pulled from the classrooms, but will have accelerated plans developed for them by faculty members. It is the Board of Director's belief that general education and GT education should be connected. However, the desire with gifted students is to allow these students to move academically as fast as their academic skills will allow. Faculty members will work to keep up-to-date on teaching gifted children by frequently reviewing instructional methods that target the gifted and by completing post-secondary gifted and talented training. The school faculty will be encouraged to work with other faculty through social media and site visits that have been successful in teaching and motivating gifted students. The school also plans to provide and guide GT students to utilize web-based artificially intelligent assessment and learning programs. Those programs provide the advantages of self-paced one-on-one instruction, 24/7, beyond levels of classroom differentiation.

- ii. The school will comply with South Carolina state regulations regarding identification and serving of gifted and talented students. In addition, national data

for working with gifted students will be part of the professional dialogue as faculty members meet and share best practice ideas. Students will be identified, monitored, and evaluated as gifted children through on-going formative and summative assessments, classroom observations, student performance, parental input at the initial enrollment conference and future conferences and as needed, talking to past teachers, grades, sample work (portfolio), comparing to typical characteristics of gifted children, test scores, and other criteria. Faculty members will use the gathered information to assure that gifted students are working to meet their full potential. Faculty will meet regularly with gifted students' other faculty members to receive feedback on the progress of these students. The school is aware of parents as their children's first teachers and will include them as a part of their children's educational plan. Effective communications between faculty members and parents will be an important part of plans for supporting, monitoring, and evaluating the progress and success of intellectually gifted and talented students.

#### 4. Goals, Objectives, and Assessment Plan

- a. The school's goals are premised on building into students a solid foundation of knowledge, with objectives that are specific and measurable; and strategies that are research-based and driven by student performance. Assessment results will be used annually (at a minimum) for student progress, curriculum evaluation, and a comprehensive analysis will be conducted to determine any areas which may be improved. Internal evaluation will occur at 4.5 week periods, as well as throughout the year and will spur collaborative effort of the administration, faculty, staff, parents, students, and board members to achieve the academic progress desired. The schools educational efforts will be consistently aimed at significant student achievement by developing and implementing a continuous improvement plan. The board will be aggressive in monitoring and insuring that the schools improvement plan is implemented in order to sustain a high level of student performance. The schools mission is to produce well-rounded students using a proven Classical Instructional Model and curriculum, Core Knowledge, through collaborative, engaging, and character building learning opportunities. The schools goals will be constantly monitored and measured. The Planning Committee believes the goals are attainable with a reasonable amount of effort, reflect the schools mission, and are ethically and academically responsible. All goals will be measured by the applicable federal and state accountability guidelines. The school has developed two student achievement goals, one finance goal, and one governance goal. The goals are based on student need and are aligned with the characteristics of high quality charter schools.
  1. Achievement Goal 1: By the 26-27 school year, 95% of the faculty in Grades 3-8 will be trained in the Core Knowledge Curriculum.
  2. Achievement Goal 2:
    - a. Part 1 - By the 27-28 school year, students in grades 3-5 will score 5 percentage points higher in the "Met" or "Exceeds" levels compared to the local school district in the SC READY Math and ELA Assessments.
    - b. Part 2 - By the 27-28 school year, students in grades 6-8 will score 10 percentage points higher in the "Met" or "Exceeds" levels compared to the local school district in SC READY Math and ELA Assessments.
  3. Finance Goal: By fiscal year 2028, the School will generate net income of at least \$200,000.
  4. Governance Goal: After a regular Board of Directors election and by the end of the

next fiscal year, the newly elected Board of Directors will be trained by a state entity.

- b. The school's goals are student-focused; objectives are specific and measurable; and strategies are research-based and driven by student performance. Formative assessments will be used during daily instruction to monitor student progress, guide instruction, and provide direction for corrective action. Internal benchmark assessments will be administered at nine week intervals throughout the school year. Evaluations (summative) will be used annually (at a minimum) for program evaluation and as a measure of overall students' academic improvement. Faculty will use monthly meeting to monitor student uptake of instructional efforts, and specifically utilize data to amend or modify student instruction.
- c. The school's assessment plan relies on the use of internal assessments designed to measure student progress toward goals. Since the school's student population will likely be made up of local geographic area students, academic baseline measures were determined for each goal using the most current local district's summary results. Faculty will use faculty made assessments, curriculum assessments, and other assessments to measure individual student progress. Each month, faculty and support staff will meet to discuss student progress and plans for accelerating student learning. Internal assessments will be integrated into the regular instructional day and will be administered according to the schedule determined in monthly data team meetings. Benchmark assessments, faculty-generated and/or commercial, will be administered, and will include fall, winter, and spring of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments.
- d. The South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessments (SC READY) or the required state assessment program will be administered to all the school students in grades 3 - 8 in May for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics. All accountability measures detailed above will be administered by the school in compliance with federal and state requirements, including any amendments to or evolutions of the formal assessments detailed above. SC READY was chosen as the benchmark assessment so as to provide a ready comparison with area schools and to avoid additional testing days taking away from instructional days.
- e. The school's principal, faculty, and staff will communicate directly with the board, parents and/or legal guardians regarding the academic and social progress of the school and individual students (as appropriate). The principal of the school will communicate overall school academic achievement to the Executive Director and board at each monthly board meeting, with specific reports regarding all formal achievement testing. The school calendar was developed with ample opportunities for student/parent/teacher conferences, and will be used accordingly. Faculty will maintain a log documenting parental contacts. Monthly data team meetings set the stage for measuring and monitoring student progress, with a specific focus on any students who need supplemental assistance, though any faculty member will be able to designate a student for additional help at any time. The School will communicate with the community through written and electronic means. The PowerSchool portal will be used on a regular basis for two-way communication. The school will develop a website, and each faculty members will establish and maintain a current webpage. Local media outlets, including newspapers and radio, will be utilized so that parents and community members are kept abreast of important school events, dates, and times.
- f. The school's goals are clear and direct. Each year's SC READY testing will provide immediate material for analyzing and interpreting the school students' achievement. Should the School fail to make reasonable progress toward its goals each year, supplemental

materials and instruction will be considered by the board based on a proposal developed by the principal and faculty.

## **Organizational Plan**

### 1. Governing Board

- a. The school Board of Directors (BOD) is a diverse group of parents, educators, and professionals. Together, The BOD represents decades of experience in education and business. The School Board of Directors profiles include:

#### **Ms. Donna Smith, Chairman**

Donna currently serves as chair of GMC and has served for the last 8-plus years. She has been a Realtor for 39 years, serving as a managing broker for the last 25 years in multiple offices. Her background includes in-depth involvement in her profession on the local, state, and national levels. She has been recognized as Realtor of the Year twice on the local level and Realtor of the Year on the state level. One of her greatest contributions is testifying before Congress and the Financial Services Committee on NFIP.

Donna is very engaged in her local community, is the past chair of the Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce and currently serves as VP of Political Affairs. Donna serves on the Greenville Health Authority Board which is an appointment by the Governor of South Carolina. In 2021 Donna was honored with the highest award granted to a citizen by the Governor of South Carolina, The Order of the Palmetto.

Donna and her husband, Keith, have been married for 59 years and have 3 daughters, 5 grandchildren, and 2 great-grands. They reside on the site they met in junior high school, downtown Greer where Keith bought and built their home.

#### **Mr. John Short, Vice Chairman**

John Short currently serves as the Vice Chairman of the GMC board of directors. It has been a true pleasure to serve on the Greer Middle College board for eight years. John is the President of Broad Steps Academy and Partner/Owner of Shortfields Restaurants.

John and his wife Kristen Short have three children who graduated from Greer Middle College Charter High School. Greer Middle College has given our children the opportunity to achieve great success. Kristin and John chaired the Raise the Blaze Committee which assisted the school in raising funds for the Academic Building and Kristen chaired and served on the Parent in Partnership Committee for 6+ years.

#### **Mr. Elliot Figueroa, Treasurer**

Elliot Figueroa has been a member of the Blazer community since 2012. He is the current Treasurer of the GMC board of directors and is serving his fourth year on the board. Elliot had three children who have attended GMC. Two of them have graduated from Liberty University and one is a Junior attending Bob Jones University. His wife, Jennifer Figueroa, has been heavily involved at the school. She has served in several capacities including Chair of the PIP Committee.

Elliot is a CPA and worked for an Engineering/Construction company involved in large capital projects. He has been in the recruiting industry since 1994 focusing on Manufacturing, Finance and Supply Chain. He is currently a partner with ProFound International. Elliot says, "We love GMC and one of the reasons we were drawn to the school is the value the school puts on serving others. We have been firsthand witnesses of the care and dedication the teachers have for all the kids. My family has been involved in community service using sports and faith-based initiatives to serve others. Over the years I have spoken at different high schools regarding career choices, resume preparation and

interview techniques. I have a passion for helping young people find what they are passionate about so they can find a fulfilling career.”

**Ms. Pauline Nichol, Secretary**

Pauline is the current Secretary for the GMC board of directors and has served on the board for the last 5 years. During that time she has served on the executive, facilities, and academic board subcommittees.

She is a Physician Assistant who graduated from Wake Forest University School of Medicine in 1992. She is currently employed as the Director of Clinical Operations for Elios Therapeutics, a cancer research company.

Pauline and her husband Joe have 4 children. Two have graduated from GMC and one is a current Junior. Pauline says: “All of our children have been active in multiple team sports and have thrived academically because of the opportunities GMC provides for a student’s success.”

**Ms. Pamela Adams**

Pamela is a member of the GMC board of directors and is serving in her first term. She is a parent of two GMC students. She has a BS Degree in Interior Design/Interior Architecture and owns an interior design and renovations company in the upstate. She is a 28-year Navy Veteran and continues to support the military community presently. When her daughters were attending A.J. Whittenberg Elementary School she served four years on the school Improvement Council (SIC) and 2 of those years as the parent chair. She currently serves on the Hughes Academy SIC as a community member 2nd year. She is a Planning Commissioner with the City of Greenville and serves as a volunteer with the Upstate Urban League, Greenville Homeless Alliance, Upstate Circle of Friends (Urban Farm partner), YMCA Family Food Program, and the Greenville County Museum of Art.

**Ms. Jennifer Jones**

Jennifer is a member of the GMC board of directors and has served for the past few years. A Greer native, Mrs. Jones joined CBL State Savings Bank in 2000 as a Loan Officer and Administrative Assistant after graduating from Presbyterian College in Clinton, SC. In January 2017, after earning positions of increasing responsibility, she was selected to be the first woman and only the ninth President and CEO of the 117-year-old organization.

Mrs. Jones has continued to enhance her banking skills by completing the South Carolina Banking School, the Graduate School of Banking at Colorado in Boulder, CO, and the Truist Leadership Institute. In addition, she is an active member of the South Carolina Bankers Association (SCBA). She has served as the Chairman of SCBA’s Young Bankers Division and is currently serving as the Chair-Elect of its Board of Directors and as a member of the State Legislative Committee. In addition to her professional duties on the state level, she also serves on the national level as she currently is Chair-Elect of the American Bankers Association’s Community Banker Council and is a member of the Government Relations Council.

Mrs. Jones also has served or is currently serving in various leadership and volunteer roles within her community, such as serving on the Board of Directors for the Greer Community Ministries, Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce, Greer Development Corporation, and Greer Middle College Charter High School.

Mrs. Jones resides in Greer with her husband, Walden, and her two children, Carter (19) and Eliza (16). Carter is a 2023 graduate of GMC and Eliza is currently a junior at GMC.

**Mr. Anthony T. Kouskolekas (“Tony”)**

Tony is a member of the GMC board of directors and has served for the past 10 years. Mr. Kouskolekas serves as President of Pelham Medical Center (PMC), a facility of Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System (SRHS). He joined the organization in September of 2012.

Mr. Kouskolekas is heavily involved in the greater community, serving the following organizations: Greenville Chamber of Commerce, Greer Education Foundation Board of Directors, Greer Development Corporation Board of Directors, Greer Middle College Charter High School Board of Directors (since 2013), Greer Lions Club, and Leukemia and Lymphoma Society – GA/SC Chapter Board of Directors. His past services include Greater Greer Chamber of Commerce, Senior Action Board of Directors (current Board Chair), South Carolina Business Coalition on Health Board of Directors, LiveWell Greenville Advisory Board, Greater Greenville Forum, Furman Diversity Leaders Initiative, American Heart Association (Heart Walk Executive Leadership Team and Heart Ball Executive Leadership Team), selected to “12 That Make a Difference” by The Greer Citizen, 2017, and selected to “50 Most Influential” by Greenville Business Magazine, 2016.

**Ms. Lori Larsen**

I strongly support the mission of Greer Middle College of preparing our students to enter a competitive 21st century workforce. My desire for all GMC students is to receive a high quality education that prepares them for the future.

I have a Bachelor’s Degree in Education from Marshall University and a Masters degree in Education from Furman University. My professional career spans more than 20 years in the education space and includes work in the public, private, and homeschool environments. I have been a classroom teacher, a professional development specialist, and an administrator at the district level.

I am currently employed as an Educational Consultant for Public Consulting Group where I have the opportunity to work with state departments of education and school districts across the country, designing online professional learning for teachers and administrators.

**Mr. Darin Scheidly**

My direct involvement with GMC has been as a parent, graduating my three children from GMC, with the last son in the class of 2020. As a GMC Board Member for over eight years, I have served on many committees and currently chair the Policy and Governance Committee. Employed with for past eight years with United Community Bank, Greenville, SC currently as SVP/Mortgage Planning Manager at the Greenville Operation Center, with responsibilities of Project Management for the mortgage division. My experience as a parent drove me to become involved and as the school morphed from a starter school in portables to being on the development to GMC’s current state. GMC is not a volunteer effort, it is a focused directive to achieve excellence from those who instruct, to lead students beyond standard academic acceptance and develop a success driven pathway for future heights.

**Mr. Zach Salvato**

Mr. Salvato serves as the Vice President and Chief Information Officer of the Greenville-Spartanburg Airport District. He is a valued member of the organization whom they can rely on, regardless of the difficulty of the task to hand or the novelty of the challenge. His combination of intelligence, commitment, perseverance, creativity, and compassionate character make him a valuable member of the airport.

Mr. Salvato has more than twenty-five years of experience in Information Technology with strong credentials in the areas of IT infrastructure and services, information security systems and compliance, administrative systems, and client support services.

Mr. Salvato was a recipient of the 2019 SC CIO award recognizing outstanding South Carolina-based information technology executives. Mr. Salvato received a bachelor's in Management Information Systems from the University of South Carolina Upstate. He also holds several industry recognized certifications (MCSE, CCNP, CCNA Security, CEH, VCP-DCV, C.M.)

*See Appendix K: Board of Directors.*

b. Governance and Operation

i. Non-Profit Corporation

1. The sister school, Greer Middle College Charter High School, is organized as a South Carolina non-profit corporation.

ii. The Governing Board

1. The governing board will consist of 6 elected members and 5 members appointed by the governing board. A board election will be held on an announced date which allows ample time for parents and employees to receive information about the nominees and to meet the nominees and talk with them prior to the election.

All employees of the Charter School and all parents or guardians of students enrolled in the Charter School will be eligible to participate in the election. Parents or guardians of a student will have one vote for each student enrolled in the Charter School. Each school employee will have one vote. The voting process will take place electronically.

The newly elected members will be publicized through the school's newsletter and website or an official letter from the school to parents/guardians and employees. The newly elected Board will hold an organizational meeting no later than November of the elected year and at that meeting will elect officers in accordance with the by-laws.

2. Greer Middle College Charter High School Board of Directors will govern in a manner to be established in conjunction with and approved by the State Board of Education and the South Carolina Public Charter School District, consistent with the provisions of the South Carolina Charter School Act, Sections 59-40-40(2-c) and 59-40-50(B)(8). Board responsibilities will include:
  - a. Hiring and firing the principal/executive director. If positions are split, Executive Director only.
  - b. Contracting for services such as, financial management, program evaluation, legal services.
  - c. Developing school policies with the input of the professional staff and, where appropriate, students.
  - d. Developing personnel policies, including pay scales, benefits, performance management.

- e. Ensuring that all certified personnel and non-certified teachers undergo background checks and other investigations and verifications before they are employed in the school.
  - f. Adopting a budget.
  - g. Approving the school's educational program.
  - h. Approving the school's accountability plan.
  - i. Establishing a method of engaging parents, business persons and other community members in planning, implementing, evaluating, and improving the school.
  - j. Ensuring that the school adheres to the same health, safety and civil rights and disability rights requirements as are applied to all public schools operating in the state of South Carolina.
  - k. Developing a lottery system that adheres to the guidelines as established in the state statute for charter schools.
- 3. The Board will meet monthly in a public meeting on Greenville Technical College's Benson campus or the NEW School Location. A notice of the meeting and an agenda will be posted on the school's website and on campus.
  - 4. The Board will be accountable for ensuring that the school implements the approved charter in accordance with the charter school statute. The Board will delegate the responsibility to the Executive Director to administer approved Board policies.
- c. The School Board of Directors Code of Ethics
    - i. Consistent with our duties as members of the Board of Directors of the organization, we acknowledge that responsibility for the governance of this school requires of us the same high standards of personal integrity and conduct that we seek to instill in the children of this school. Accordingly, this Code of Ethics is adopted for members of the Board of Directors in the conduct of their official duties as guardians of this trust. Members of the Board of Directors of the Greer Middle College Charter High School and the school, while in the conduct of their official duties as Board members, shall:
      - 1. Conduct themselves according to the highest standards of personal honesty and integrity.
      - 2. Conduct themselves in a manner that will provide the students of the School with good examples of personal integrity, public service, good will, and citizenship.
      - 3. Become well versed in parliamentary procedure.
      - 4. Work for the strength and effectiveness of the School as a whole and guard against individuals or groups who seek special advantage for themselves to the detriment of the common good of the school, while giving appropriate attention to the particular needs of each Board member's constituency, including the need to educate that constituency concerning the issues that are important to the school as a whole.
      - 5. Comply with all applicable laws, statutes, ordinances, and governmental rules and

regulations.

6. Insofar as possible, attend all meetings of the Board, for the entire meeting, and prepare for these meetings by becoming informed concerning the issues to be considered.
7. Refrain from allowing partisan politics or personal interests to influence deliberations, decisions, or actions of Board members with regard to official business of the Board and avoid the appearance of such influence.
8. Respect the role of the Principal/Executive Director as the chief administrator of the school.
9. Work with the Board to establish effective Board policies by which the Principal/Executive Director can administer the school.
10. Support and protect the civil and human rights of all members of the school community.
11. Establish fair and equitable terms and conditions of employment and evaluation for all school employees.
12. Recognize that authority rests only with the Board through official meetings and decisions, and that members cannot act for the Board unless expressly authorized to do so by proper Board action.
13. Refrain from making final decisions or commitments regarding matters of Board business until all available, pertinent information has been fully considered.
14. Respect and maintain the confidentiality of information that is privileged under law.
15. Refrain from any action or conduct that is likely to compromise the integrity of the Board or the administration, including any action or conduct that violates or appears to violate any contract entered into by the Board.
16. Recuse themselves from any decision that poses a financial, employment, or disciplinary conflict of interest for that board member or members of their family.
17. Report to the Principal/Executive Director and to the other Board member all complaints or concerns regarding the School that come to the attention of any Board member.
18. Refrain from attacks on the personalities or motives of other Board members so as to ensure that the business of the Board is always the subject of debate and discussion at Board meetings.
19. Refrain from attacking or impugning, whether by name, title, or job function the performance, reputation, competence, motive, or integrity of any school employee.
20. Refrain from breaching the confidences discussed in an executive discussion.
21. Act as an advocate for the School and for children.
22. Keep the Board's primary focus on the best interests of students.

- ii. Greer Middle College Charter High School and the School will comply fully with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Title 30, and Chapter Four. Meetings will be conducted by the Greer Middle College Charter High School and the School Board of Directors in accordance with all provisions of the current law and any amendments as they may be enacted. Only those matters as prescribed in the FOIA will be discussed in executive session. Provisions related to student records, personnel issues, and administrative records will comply with the FOIA, the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, and standard practices of the South Carolina Public Charter School District.
- iii. Greer Middle College Charter High School holds Articles of Incorporation as a South Carolina non-profit corporation and has established Bylaws for governance and operation. As stated above, the school board will primarily interact with the school school community through discussion and direction to the principal and/or executive director. The board will evaluate the executive director at least annually on whether the school is making reasonable progress toward meeting its academic goals outlined above and whether the school community is maintaining a school environment conducive to such progress.

In accordance with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50 *et seq.*, the Governing Board shall consist of no fewer than seven members and no more than twelve as specified in the school's Bylaws. Members may initially serve a term of two years, and may serve additional terms upon re-election. A choice of the membership of the board must take place every two years. A majority of the members of the board must be individuals who have a background in K-12 education, business, and law, as specified in the school's Bylaws. Board membership is elected and appointed. The employees and the parents or guardians of enrolled students must elect four members of the board. Parents or guardians shall have one vote for each student enrolled in the charter school. All members must be residents of the State of South Carolina. A person who has been convicted of a felony shall not be elected to the Board of Directors. Board positions may be added by board action as necessary and in accordance with the Bylaws.

- iv. Board member training will be conducted on an as needed basis. Each board training shall be mandatory and include detailed information on at least three of the board's responsibilities detailed below.
- v. As stated above, the School board will primarily interact with the School school community through discussion and direction to the principal and/or Executive Director. The School Board shall meet on the fourth Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. Meeting notices and agendas shall be posted and sent home to parents/guardians at least 24 hours prior to the meeting. Except for the executive session, all meetings are open to the public. The Board shall comply fully with the S.C. Freedom of Information Act, Title 30, Chapter Four. The Board of Directors is the governing body for the nonprofit corporation and is legally responsible for all matters regarding the School. The Board's focus is strategic, and as such, the Board will set policy, oversee long-range planning, ensure fiscal solvency, and supervise operational matters, including budgeting, curriculum, operating procedures, and community relations. The Board will select, by majority vote, a qualified, experienced executive director to lead the school. The principal, upon employment, is granted the authority to manage and execute the day- to-day school activities, including management of personnel and instructional leadership. The school's principal will serve as the liaison between the Board and the school.

Within the above context, the Board's responsibilities shall include but not be limited to: ensuring that all certified personnel, teachers, and noncertified teachers undergo background checks and other investigations before they are employed in the school; contracting for other services including, but not limited to, transportation, instructional equipment, food services, accounting, and legal services; approving pay scales, performance criteria, and discharging policies for its employees, including the executive director; deciding all other matters related to the school's operation, including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures; ensuring that the school will adhere to the same health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements applicable to all public schools operating in the same school district; dismissal of executive director (if position is separated); actively participating in School Board training sessions; adopting the budget; establishing a method of engaging the parents, business persons and other community members in planning, implementing, evaluating and improving the school; and developing policy that addresses accountability for student records, board meeting, and the school records.

The school will comply fully with Title 30, Chapter 4 of the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Meetings of the Board of Directors will be held a minimum of six (6) times per year and conducted by the Board of Directors in accordance to all provisions of the current law and any enacted amendments. Further, the school will adhere to the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act as it pertains to student records and administrative records by respecting the purpose of privacy regulations that include: assuring consumer control over student information; setting boundaries on the use and disclosure of student records; and establishing appropriate safeguards to protect privacy of student information.

- vi. All student records and administrative records will be secured on the premises of the school or at a site approved for their storage by the Board. All meetings will be conducted in public according to the stipulations of the FOIA except for matters prescribed in Section 3-40-70 which include the following:
  - a. Discussion of employment, appointment, compensation, promotion, demotion, discipline, or release of an employee, a student, or a person regulated by a public body or the appointment of a person to a public body; however, if an adversary hearing involving the employee or client is held, the employee or client has the right to demand that the hearing be conducted publicly. Nothing contained in this item shall prevent the public body, in its discretion, from deleting the names of the other employees or clients whose records are submitted for use at the hearing.
  - b. Discussion of negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and proposed sale or purchase of property, the receipt of legal advice where the legal advice relates to a pending, threatened, or potential claim or other matters covered by the attorney-client privilege, settlement of legal claims, or the position of the public agency in other adversary situations involving the assertion against the agency of a claim.
  - c. Discussion regarding the development of security personnel or devices.
  - d. Investigative proceedings regarding allegations of criminal misconduct.
  - e. Discussion of matters relating to the proposed location, expansion, or the provision of services encouraging location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the

area served by the public body.

Before entering executive session, the Board shall vote in public on the question and when the vote is favorable, the presiding officer shall announce the specific purpose of the executive session. As used in this subsection, "specific purpose" means a description of the matter to be discussed as identified in items (1) through (5) of subsection (a) of this section. However, when the executive session is held pursuant to Sections 30-4-70(a)(1) or 30-4-70(a)(5), the identity of the individual or entity being discussed is not required to be disclosed to satisfy the requirement that the specific purpose of the executive session be stated. No action may be taken in executive session except to (a) adjourn or (b) return to public session. The members of a public body may not commit the public body to a course of action by a polling of members in the executive session.

The Board assumes liability for the activities of the school and agrees to hold harmless the SC Public Charter School District, its servants, agents, and employees from any and all liability, damage, expense, cause of action, suits, claims, or judgments arising from injury to persons or property or otherwise that arises out of act, failure to act, or negligence of the school, its agents and employees, in connection with or arising out of the activity of the school.

*See Appendix K for Committee Resumes. See Appendix L for Bylaws. See Appendix M for Articles of Incorporation. See Appendix N for the Organizational Chart for the School.*

vii. The school does not anticipate the need for any advisory bodies or councils at this time.

2. Education/Charter Management Contacts - not applicable.

*Appendix O is not applicable.*

3. Administrative Structure/Building Leadership

- a. The executive director of Greer Middle College Charter High and the school will act as the "educational superintendent" of both charter schools. The principal will comprise the initial administrative staff. As student enrollment increases, all grade levels 3-8 will accept student applications and an assistant principal will be added. The school will make every effort to have SC certified faculty employed. Qualifications and experience of all faculty of the school will be open to public review and considered as an important part of the information shared with prospective and enrolled students and their parents or legal guardians. Updates on changes with regard to staffing and qualifications will be communicated in writing, and in a timely manner. The school will employ at least one full time special education teacher, as well as contracted services as deemed necessary in order to provide a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to all eligible special education students in accordance with state and federal regulations as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004.
- b. The principal and/or assistant principal of the school of the administrative staff will hold a current South Carolina administrator's certification and/or have a minimum of three years of experience in administration. Job descriptions and qualifications are included in the appendices. The need for a principal will be advertised and posted on the School website, with a description of the required experience and education.

The Executive Director will delegate to the principal, upon employment, the authority for the management and execution of day-to-day school activities, including management of personnel and instructional leadership. The school's principal will serve as the liaison between the Executive Director and Board and the school.

In accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the Every Student Succeeds Act, and any amending laws, all employment with The School will meet the State Charter Schools Act guidelines. Faculty of core academic areas (English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, music, and art) will hold area certification or a baccalaureate or graduate degree in the subject(s) taught and meet Highly Qualified ESEA requirements. Any non-certified staff member performing instructional duties at The School will be appropriately qualified for the subject(s) taught, will have completed a minimum of one year at an accredited college or university, and will meet the qualifications outlined in SC Code Ann. § 59-25-115. The school will comply with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

- c. The Executive Director will hire the principal of the school.
- d. Again, as discussed above, the school has developed a substantial professional development program for its faculty and leadership. In addition to its internal program, the school leadership and faculty will be participating in the professional development programs offered by the SC Public Charter School District.
- e. The Executive Director of both schools will design and implement a professional evaluation of the principal annually during the month of January. The evaluation will be focused on the ability of the principal to: demonstrate strategic leadership for advancing the school's core programmatic features and academic excellence; provide instructional leadership; foster the school's culture, specifically the equal regard of each student for the others; adequately provide for the hiring, professional development, and mentoring of school faculty and staff; and demonstrate efficient budget and resource management.

*See Appendix P for Sample Job Descriptions and Appendix Q for the School Start-up Plan.*

#### 4. Employees

- a. The school will employ administrators, faculty, and staff at-will, in compliance with the South Carolina Charter Schools Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and any other applicable state or federal laws. The provisions of Article 5, Chapter 25, Title 59 of the South Carolina Code will not apply to the employment and dismissal of teachers at the charter school.

*See Appendix R for At-Will Documentation.*

- b. The school will advertise all vacancies through media outlets to include electronic venues until such time as vacancies are filled. Candidates will complete an employment application. The principal, along with designated personnel, will review applications to determine a viable candidate pool. Candidates will undergo an oral interview and/or a writing assessment (as deemed appropriate for the position). Pending a criminal background check, the principal will make final recommendations of employment to the Executive Director. The Executive Director, with input from the principal, will make the final hiring decision of faculty. Board policies will be posted electronically and in written form in order to provide access. Policies will be reviewed with employees annually and on an as-needed basis. Employees will be provided a handbook outlining procedures, policies, expectations, and requirements. All faculty and assistants working with students will undergo training concerning Core Knowledge curriculum and South Carolina State Standards Implementation. Staff development will be based on use of student data to determine student need and the most efficacious ways to meet those needs, advanced Core Knowledge training, and faculty and staff needs as determined through employee surveys.

Staff development will be funded by the school. Extensive background reviews, including criminal background checks, will be done to verify past experiences to ensure the safety of children. All employees and others serving in an official capacity must be fingerprinted. The school reserves the right to mandate random testing of employees if deemed necessary to protect the students. All school faculty must provide copies of their teaching certificates or subject matter degrees. In addition, as part of the background check performed on all new employees, the school will confirm that the certification is valid within the state of South Carolina. The school will not employ an individual to provide instructional services if the individual's certificate or licensure as an educator is or has been suspended or revoked by South Carolina or any other state. The principal will formally evaluate all teachers using the ADEPT 4.0 Rubric and Evaluation model to determine whether the quality of performance is sufficient to continue as the school employees. All employee files will be maintained by the school in the central office. The appeals process to be used to resolve school employee and stakeholder complaints or grievances will be based on the chain of command established at the school. The individual will meet with the principal to address the concern; if necessary, the principal will inform the Executive Director. The policies and procedures for resolving complaints will be presented at orientation meetings, PTA/PTO, PIP, and open house meetings. All complaints and grievances will be addressed in a timely fashion. The school will comply with the provisions of Title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1903.2 (a)(1) and will place all requisite Occupational Safety and Health Administration posters and related information in conspicuous areas.

c. Evaluation Process

- i. The school will fully comply with ADEPT under South Carolina's system for assisting, developing, and evaluating professional teaching. Based on state expectations (i.e., the ADEPT Performance Standards) that are aligned with nationally recognized professional standards, the ADEPT system forms a seamless continuum for educators throughout the entirety of their careers. The principal and educational support staff will conduct frequent informal faculty observations to identify strengths and professional growth targets. Additionally, the principal and designee(s) will formally observe faculty in the classroom at least two (2) times annually. Informal collegial dialogue about systemic improvement of student work will be ongoing throughout the year. The principal will be responsible for directing performance improvement or taking disciplinary action for school employees. The Executive Director will design and implement a professional evaluation of the principal annually by the month of January. The timeline, process, and necessary forms will be shared with faculty and staff at the beginning of the school year. Faculty members will maintain plans that will be monitored by the administration and reviewed during faculty conferences. All faculty will develop (SLOs) that will become part of the evaluation process.

d. Employment, Dismissal Procedures, and Communication Plan

- i. Employees are at-will and shall have the right to appeal termination to the Executive Director. The final appeal will be made to the Board of Directors. The school will maintain a high standard of excellence and a formidable code of ethics to ensure the safety and well-being of the students. The Board expressly reserves the right to discharge employees after exhausting an internal due process hearing. Violation of any of the following will result in immediate disciplinary action ranging from verbal warning to termination: absenteeism and tardiness; poor performance; insubordination; violation and/or lack of enforcement of school rules; breach of confidentiality; theft; harassment; misuse of property; weaponry on school grounds (other than those personnel acting as security in as-necessary circumstances); acts of moral turpitude, including, but not limited to, fraud, dishonesty and/or false statements in any circumstance; threats and weapons in

the workplace; and/or substance abuse. Other circumstances and/or actions that are inappropriate or unlawful can lead to disciplinary action, including immediate termination. The school's Executive Director and Board of Directors retains discretion at all times to immediately terminate an employee for unlawful conduct. The principal is responsible for informing the Executive Director of disciplinary action taken against an employee. In dealing with infractions that persist, the principal or his/her designee will issue a verbal warning; a written warning; a final warning and/or probation; and notify the employee of recommended termination. In the interest of effective personnel management, the administration and Board recognize the need for a personnel grievance procedure to provide prompt and effective means of resolving any differences that may arise among our personnel, be it between employees or between employees and administrators. Grievance procedures will be available to all employees, including faculty, paraprofessional staff, and non-teaching staff to ensure that differences are resolved as efficiently and fairly as possible. The procedure is designed to settle personnel grievances and complaints as quickly as possible, and at a level as close as is reasonable to the point of origin; therefore, there will be no extension of the prescribed time for moving through the grievance procedure except upon a compelling show of good cause as determined by the Executive Director and/or Board in its sole discretion. Proceedings will be informal and confidential whenever possible.

*Appendix P contains Sample Job Descriptions. See Appendix R for the at-will determination.*

e. Enrollment

- i. The school will be a public charter school authorized by the South Carolina Charter School Act and The SC Public Charter School District. The school will be supported through state and local funding and will be free. Admission to the school is open to all students who reside in South Carolina. Due to the geographic location of the school, it is probable that students residing in Greenville County will comprise the majority of, if not total, school enrollment. Prior to admission, students and parents may contact the school and request a tour of the facility (when completed) and meet with school administrators and faculty. A Director of Enrollment, appointed by the Executive Director, is responsible for receiving and processing the applications, inclusive of notifying individuals by e-mail of receipt of application.
- ii. Enrollment Procedures
  1. Eligibility
    - a. Students eligible to attend the school are those who:
      - i. Reside in South Carolina.
      - ii. Complete the School Application.
  2. The admission policies and procedures of the school provide that, subject to space limitations, the charter school will admit all children who are eligible regardless of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services. If the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the program, class, grade level, or building, students will be accepted by lottery, as specified in state or federal guidelines. Even though the policies and procedures do not limit or deny admission or show preference to any individual group, priority may be given to:
    - a. A sibling of a pupil already enrolled at Greer Middle College Charter High School or the School.

- b. Children of charter school employees at Greer Middle College Charter High School or the School provided enrollment does not exceed twenty percent of the enrollment of the charter school.
  - 3. The application process will begin in November of each year and end in December of each year. During the YEAR ONE process, the application process will end in March/April of 2025. If a lottery is needed, the lottery will take place in November and during YEAR ONE will take place in March/April of 2025. The range of each grade level will be between 110 and 150 students. The school will operate at a range of 600-750 students moving forward.
- iii. Application and Acceptance Process
  - 1. Information about the school will be disseminated in the following ways:
    - a. All eligible grade 3-8 students and their parents will be contacted through print and social media concerning the school. Informational meetings will be held at community informational meetings, civic organizations' meetings, churches, community centers, GMC, and at the school.
    - b. Seek home school students through our student recruitment to include the Home School Associations and local private and religious schools.
    - c. Tours will be conducted for students and parents interested in the school program.
    - d. Internet links connecting parents to additional information regarding the school initiative will be found on the school website.
    - e. Promotional media campaigns will be conducted through social media, radio, and other media platforms. Civic organizations and churches will also be involved in the dissemination of information.
    - f. Print media will include brochures, application packets, newsletters, church bulletins, informational letters, posters/flyers, bookmarks, etc.
    - g. Other methods will include: direct phone contact, school student organizations, PowerPoint type presentations, and testimonials from current students/parents.
  - 2. The dissemination of information will be a continuous process to ensure stable enrollment. The Director of Enrollment and Development will be designated to communicate school activities to the community and promote the school.
  - 3. The admission process will include:
    - a. Recruitment and application
    - b. Acceptance
    - c. Lottery and waiting list, if oversubscribed

4. New students/parents must submit a completed application.
5. If the school is not oversubscribed by December or in YEAR ONE March/April, all eligible students who complete the application process will receive electronic notification of acceptance at the end of the acceptance period.
6. If oversubscribed, a public lottery will be conducted in accordance with the Charter School statute (see Lottery Process below).
7. After the lottery process is completed, students will receive electronic notification of acceptance for the upcoming school term. Students will also be notified if they are placed on a waiting list and of their position on the waiting list after the lottery is completed.
8. Students must affirmatively respond in writing to the offer of acceptance within the designated time of notification. Students on the waiting list will be accepted in the order resulting from the lottery if space becomes available.
9. If the Charter School denies admission to a student for reasons other than the results of a lottery, the student may appeal the denial to the Executive Director and Board of Directors.

iv. Lottery Process

1. As a charter school, all students will be accepted regardless of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services. If the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the program during any enrollment period, students will be accepted by a lottery process for student selection that is described below.
2. All enrollment priorities of the school shall be published prior to conducting the Lottery. Enrollment preference is given to students enrolled in the school in the Lottery year. This enrollment preference for returning students excludes them from entering into the Lottery.
3. All applicants entitled to receive enrollment priority shall be identified prior to the Lottery.
4. Enrollment priority entitles an applicant to be offered an available seat ahead of applicants without enrollment priority.
5. Enrollment priorities shall be provided:
  - a. First to an applicant sibling of a student who is currently enrolled and attending GMC or the school at the time of the Lottery; or who, within the last three years attended the school.
  - b. Then to children of GMC or the school employees.
6. Multiple applicant siblings entering the Lottery for the first time shall enter the Lottery as a common entrant. If the common entrant is selected for school enrollment by the Lottery process, then all the siblings shall be enrolled.

7. The Lottery will be held in open meeting, may rely on computer numbering, and will be easily understood and followed by all observers.
8. Only applications received prior to the established deadline will be eligible for Lottery participation.
9. All offers of acceptance and registration will be made in the order of the lottery results and established waitlist. No offer will be made to any student not properly entitled to the next available seat.
10. All applicants offered acceptance will be required to respond affirmatively in writing within the designated number of days. Those not responding (excluding declines) will be placed on the waitlist. All students will be provided in electronic format their status for acceptance and waitlist.

v. Equal Education Access

1. No student shall be denied equal opportunity for admission on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, handicap, marital status or national origin. The school will be open to students in grades 6 and 7, beginning with the 2025-26 school year. The school will add all grade levels 3-8 the subsequent year. A completed basic electronic application form, signed by the student's parent or legal guardian is required for all potential students.

5. Student Conduct, Rights & Responsibilities

- a. Self-discipline is an important part of a student's education and a critical life skill. Parents are encouraged to teach their children the positive character traits of honesty, respect for others, self-reliance, independence, integrity, and kindness and charity. While participating in school-sponsored events, all students of the school must conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates these qualities. The school faculty and staff will reinforce these expectations at all school-sponsored activities. The school's staff seeks the best educational opportunities possible for all students. In order to have an environment that facilitates a safe and sound education for all students, a high standard of behavior is expected from all students. To be successful, the school students must: believe in themselves; promptly seek assistance from any faculty, staff, or administrator when necessary; prepare for classes and bring all necessary materials to class; ask for help. Each student is a member of a team that is working for success; Get involved in the school extra- curricular activities and/or clubs. As a student at the school, the student pledges his/her best efforts to respect other people, his/her school, and his/her self. The student further pledges to work to his/her potential, to be responsible for his/her own behavior, and to act in caring, compassionate ways both in and beyond the school. The school expects students to: cooperate with all faculty, staff members, and peers; conduct themselves as good citizens; work hard and study in all classes.
- b. Each student and his/her parents will sign the code of conduct and agree to abide by its provisions. When this standard of behavior is not met, the nature, seriousness, and frequency of the inappropriate behavior will determine the action taken. Students will also be expected to sign a student contract outlining the consequences for failing to follow the school behavioral guidelines and the Code of Conduct. Students will be held accountable for their behavior in accordance with Board policy as outlined in the student discipline code. When disciplined, the student will be given: oral or written notification of the charges; if disputed, will be given an explanation of the evidence; will be given an opportunity to present his/her version. Enforcement will be firm, but with an understanding of the age of the school's students. The goal is inculcating understanding of the benefits of the Code of Conduct and voluntary compliance based on that understanding.

The discipline procedure for the School applies while students are on school grounds; while going to or coming from a school-sponsored activity; and when attending any activity sponsored by the school.

- c. While it is unlikely that the below will be problems in the early years of the school, unfortunately, as the later grades are added, it is likely that at least some of the below will occur, and are therefore addressed in the student discipline code.

**d. DISCIPLINE REFERRAL MATRIX**

- i. Faculty are expected to apply sanctions in the classroom for minor misbehavior and/or disruptions prior to submitting a discipline referral. The listed behaviors and subsequent consequences below will be used as the major guide by the administration for processing discipline referrals that are submitted by faculty.

Discipline Referral Matrix Key

- TNP: Teacher Notify Parent
- ASD: After School Detention
- SD: Saturday Detention
- OSS: Out of School Suspension (Student is not allowed on campus or at any school function during any part of the suspension timeframe.)
- NLE: Notify Law Enforcement
- RAP: Recommended for Alternative Placement
- CON: Item(s) confiscated; Parents may pick up at the END of the school year.

|  | <b>1st Offense</b>  | <b>2nd Offense</b>  | <b>3rd Offense</b>   | <b>4th Offense</b>  |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <b>Academic Dishonesty/Cheating/Plagiarism</b><br><b>*Possible consequences for inappropriate behavior online during e-Learning.</b> | TNP; 60 min ASD; resubmit assignment for 70% credit (teacher MAY adjust assessment and/or rubric as needed)   | TNP; Saturday Detention; resubmit assignment for 50% credit (teacher MAY adjust assessment and/or rubric as needed) | TNP; Saturday Detention; student receives a score of Zero for assignment   | Admin Discretion  |
| <b>Inappropriate Use/Misuse/Abuse of Technology (hardware and/or software) at school, including personal electronic devices.</b>     | 30 min ASD; 1 Day loss of access to technology, including personal electronic devices, during the school day. | 60 min ASD; 3 Day loss of access to technology, including personal electronic devices, during the school day.       | 2 hour Saturday Detention; 5 Day loss of access to technology, including personal electronic devices, during the school day. | 4 hour Saturday Detention; 10 Day loss of access to technology, including personal electronic devices, during the school day. |
| <b>Vandalism (School Property or otherwise)/Minor Pranks</b>   | 60 min ASD and restitution  | 2 hour Sat. Detention ASD's and restitution   | 4 hour Sat. Detention ASD's and restitution  | 1 Day OSS and restitution   |
| <b>Public Display of Affection</b>   | 30 min ASD  | 60 min ASD  | 2 hour Sat. Detention  | 4 hour Saturday Detention   |
| <b>Disrupting Class/School Function</b>  | 30 min ASD  | 60 min ASD  | 2 hour Sat. Detention  | 4 hour Saturday Detention   |

|  |   |                       |                           |                           |
|--|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Failure to Follow Instructions of Faculty</b>   | 30 min ASD  | 60 min ASD            | 2 hour Sat. Detention     | 4 hour Saturday Detention |
| <b>Forgery/Lying</b>   | 30 min ASD  | 60 min ASD            | 2 hour Sat. Detention     | 4 hour Saturday Detention |
| <b>Use of Profanity or profane gesture</b>   | 30 min ASD  | 60 min ASD            | 2 hour Sat. Detention     | 4 hour Saturday Detention |
| <b>Disrespect</b>  | 30 min ASD  | 60 min ASD            | 2 hour Sat. Detention     | 4 hour Saturday Detention |
| <b>Being in Off-Limits Areas;<br/>More than 1 individual in a restroom stall</b>   | 30 min ASD  | 60 min ASD            | 2 hour Sat. Detention     | 4 hour Saturday Detention |
| <b>Gambling</b>  | 30 min ASD  | 60 min ASD            | 2 hour Sat. Detention     | 4 hour Saturday Detention |
| <b>Racial/Gender/Sexual Orientation Slur</b>   | 60 min ASD  | 2 hour Sat. Detention | 4 hour Sat. Detention     | OSS                       |
| <b>Cutting Class</b>   | 60 min ASD  | 2 hour Sat. Detention | 4 hour Saturday Detention | OSS                       |
| <b>Leaving Campus without permission/Exiting either building via the breezeway or gym doors during the school day (8 am – 2:50 pm)</b> | 60 min ASD  | 2 hour Sat. Detention | 4 hour Saturday Detention | OSS                       |
| <b>Reckless Driving/Parking Lot Violations/Horseplay</b>   | 60 min ASD  | 2 hour Sat. Detention | 4 hour Saturday Detention | OSS                       |
| <b>Theft (value less than \$50)</b>  | 60 min ASD  | 2 hour Sat. Detention | 4 hour Saturday Detention | OSS                       |
| <b>Theft (value \$50 or more)</b>  | 4 hour Saturday Detention                                       | 1 Day OSS             | 3 Days OSS                | 5 Days OSS                |
| <b>Possession/Use of Tobacco and/or Vaping Products and/or Paraphernalia</b>   | 1 day OSS; CON; NLE   | 2 days OSS; CON; NLE  | 3 days OSS; CON; NLE      | 5+ days OSS; CON; NLE     |
| <b>Failure to serve detention</b>  | The next detention, progressing/increasing in length each time. |                       |                           |                           |
| <b>Interfering with an Investigation</b>   | 1 Day OSS   | 3 Days OSS            | 5 Days OSS                | 10 Days OSS               |
| <b>Inappropriate (Aggressive) Physical Contact/Unwanted Touching</b>   | 1-3 Days OSS; NLE   | 3-5 Days OSS; NLE     | 5-10 Days OSS; RAP; NLE   |                           |

|  |                                   |                                       |  |                                     |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Fighting</b>  | 3-5 Days OSS; NLE                 | 5-10 Days OSS; RAP; NLE               |  |                                     |
| <b>Minor Harassing/Pranking other Students (Including online/social media)</b>   | 60 min ASD                        | 2 hour Sat. Detention                 | 4 hour Saturday Detention (Possible shift to Bullying Consequence) | OSS (refer to Bullying consequence) |
| <b>Major Harassment/Threatening/Intimidation of another student (Including online/social media)</b>                            | 1 Day OSS                         | 2-3 Days OSS                          | 3-5 Days OSS (refer to Bullying Consequences)                      |                                     |
| <b>Bullying (Including online/social media); Verbal Sexual Harassment (Including online/social media)</b>                      | 1-3 Days OSS; NLE                 | 3-5 Days OSS; NLE                     | 5-10 Days OSS; RAP; NLE  |                                     |
| <b>Unauthorized Possession and/or use of laser pointers, fireworks, smoke bombs, mace/pepper spray, and/or similar devices</b> | 1-3 Days OSS; CON                 | 3-5 Days OSS; CON                     | 5-10 Days OSS; RAP; NLE; CON                                       |                                     |
| <b>Threat of Violence (major bodily harm or potentially fatal)</b>   | 3-5 Days OSS                      | 5-10 Days OSS; RAP                    |  |                                     |
| <b>Major Pranks/Malicious Damage to Real Property</b>  | 3-5 Days OSS and restitution; NLE | 10 Days OSS and restitution; RAP; NLE |  |                                     |
| <b>Sexual Act (including electronic)</b>   | 5-10 Days OSS; RAP; NLE           |                                       |  |                                     |
| <b>Harassing/Using Profanity toward/Threatening a faculty member and/or their property</b>                                     | 5-10 Days OSS; RAP; NLE           |                                       |  |                                     |
| <b>Possession and/or Use of alcohol, drugs, drug paraphernalia, controlled substances, and/or medications</b>                  | 5-10 Days OSS; RAP; NLE; CON      |                                       |  |                                     |
| <b>Possession and/or use of weapons or objects that might be interpreted as</b>  | 5-10 Days OSS; RAP; NLE; CON      |                                       |  |                                     |

|  |   |  |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>weapons (SC 16-23-430)</b>  |   |  |  |  |
| <b>Any other behavior deemed inappropriate by GMC Administration</b> | TBD by GMC Administration based on the behavior |  |  |  |

\*The School Administration reserves the right to final interpretation of the discipline policy, code, and matrix - including dress code, tardies, and computer/technology misuse. Neither this handbook nor any part of it should be construed as a contract itself. This handbook is not intended to be comprehensive and none of its provisions should be interpreted as superseding the code of conduct set forth by the School Charter. It is to serve as a guide for the students, parents, and faculty of the School. The school reserves the right to make changes or exceptions to statements in this handbook. Out of school suspension and/or expulsion are the **ONLY** appealable consequences.

- e. The school will issue a student handbook explaining a school student's rights and responsibilities upon a student's registration. The principal of the school will develop a proposed school Student Handbook prior to the initial opening day for adoption by the Board of Directors. The school will comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232). Parents may appeal a suspension or alternative placement/expulsion to the Executive Director. If parents are not satisfied with the solution, the final appeal will be to the Board of Directors. All decisions of the Governing Board must be finalized, in writing, within fifteen (15) days from the date of the appeal. In compliance with IDEA, the School will ensure the continued provision of a free and appropriate education for any student with a documented disability who is expelled from the school. All school discipline decisions regarding students will contemplate the impact of any special circumstances upon an individual student's abilities to comprehend and conform to the school culture and code of conduct to ensure that any individual student is not unfairly treated or that disciplinary actions disproportionately fall on students facing additional challenges to their academic progress.

*See Appendix T for Student Discipline Policy.*

## 6. Transportation

- a. The school does not intend to provide transportation. In order to ensure that students are transported to and from school on a daily basis, if any student has difficulty obtaining transportation to or from school, the school will assist parent or other organizations in assisting students with transportation needs. In addition, the school will offer an early morning drop off (7:30 am). The school will work with parents and/or legal guardians on a case-by-case basis to ensure transport of any student who is unable to attend school because of lack of transportation. In sum, the school is desirous that any child who wishes to attend the School have the chance to do so, regardless of transportation requirements, and will budget funds to assist in this effort. As the school matures, the Executive Director and Board will revisit this decision. The school assumes no liability for transport.

*Appendix U is not applicable.*

## Business Plan

### 1. Budget and Finance

- a. The school will have a Director of Finance that is a CPA and will share costs with GMC.
- b. The school proposed five-year budget reflects the school's mission by effectively and appropriately funding instruction. The school's budgetary philosophy is to fund teaching and student learning in the classroom. All budget items are measured to determine their worth in providing for and improving educational experiences for students. The five-year budget demonstrates the school's best effort to invest funds from the fiscal year 2026 budget directly into the classroom.
- c. The budget of the school prepared for the purposes of this application was developed using actual expenditure data compared to weighted units of GMC. The basis for the projection is the minimum funds anticipated per student. No grant funds were included in the budget. The funds anticipated also reflect an assumption of 150 students in the initial year of school operations. This assumption is a valid assumption given that over 400 indications of interest have now been received by the school. The staffing levels included in the budget reflect the minimum staffing required to meet the initial grade level classroom faculty needs.

In accordance with statutory requirements, the school will undergo an annual audit and will comply with all aspects of this mandate. The Single Audit Guide has been reviewed in detail including current Highlights, Technical Notes, Audit Requirements, and appropriate information in the Compliance Supplement. The School's Director of Finance is knowledgeable of the compliance requirements and suggested audit procedures.

- d. Although we have applied for the Charter School Program (CSP) Grant, those funds were not calculated as part of our 5-year budget.
- e. It is not currently anticipated that the school will obtain any negotiated services from the sponsor.
- f. The school will remain fiscally solvent; adhere to general accepted accounting practices; have no material breaches; address financial concerns; and follow the South Carolina pupil accounting system by designing, developing, and implementing a comprehensive Internal Fiscal Control System including:
  - i. Establishing financial policies and corresponding financial procedures to properly account for all revenue and expenses as directed in the *Financial Accounting Handbook* and the *Funding Manual*;
  - ii. Establishing policies to adhere to the reporting policies, procedures, and regulations of the *South Carolina Pupil Accounting Manual* and the *South Carolina Student Accountability Manual*;
  - iii. Ensuring that all accounting, reporting, and auditing procedures and requirements comply with the published specifications of the Office of District Auditing and Field Services contained in the (a) *Single Audit Guide*, (b) *Financial Accounting Handbook*, and (c) *Funding Manual*.;
  - iv. Defining and adhering to Generally Accepted Standards of Fiscal Management;
  - v. Developing and approving an annual operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year no later than June 30<sup>th</sup> of the preceding fiscal year;

- vii. Maintaining appropriate records on a by-transaction basis thereby establishing our financial management system as “audit ready” at the conclusion of any given transaction;
  - vii. Making required reports (on-call, monthly, quarterly, annually) to the BOD and external appropriate agents and agencies. Reports will be maintained and filed according to district, state, and federal requirements; and
  - viii. Identifying, reporting, and dealing with material breaches and financial concerns through corrective and preventative action protocols developed by the School’s Director of Finance.
- g. The school will have a bookkeeper to administer the books of the school pursuant to generally acceptable accounting principles. All expenditures will be tracked by the Director of Finance.
  - h. The Executive Director and Director of Finance will engage an auditor no later than 120 days prior to the close of the fiscal year by engaging an independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) firm. The annual audit will encompass the school’s financial and administrative operations and will be conducted in compliance with law. The audit report will meet the state requirements and the BOD will receive and review the Annual Audit prior to required submission to the SC Public Charter School District and required state agencies. Additionally, the school will adhere to accounting, reporting, and auditing procedures and requirements of the SC Public Charter School District, as well as those for all public schools operating in South Carolina.
  - i. The school will offer SC Retirement System Benefits and PEBA.
  - j. At this time, the school does not have any liens, litigation history, or any sanctions from any local, state, or federal regulatory agencies. The school possesses considerable financial resources, and pending approval of this charter application, the School does not have any financial concerns at this time.
  - k. The Executive Director and Director of Finance, with professional accounting experience, will lead the annual budget process, and the Chair of the Board Finance Committee with financial experience, will also participate. The budget will be developed based on current year allocations and an analysis of whether the current allocations are achieving the results dictated by the School board. The budget will be compared to the academic goals of the School. Any deficiencies in student achievement will be the first priority for the next year’s budget, with additional faculty or instructional time in the classroom being the preferred solution, whether for accelerated or remedial academic assistance. In the event a current year allocation is deemed ineffective or deficient, the principal or other staff or agent may bring that information to the Executive Director for the appropriate action.
  - l. In the event year one projections are not met, the parent organization, Greer Middle College Charter High School, would advance revenue to the school.

*See Appendix V for the Student Enrollment Projection Form. See Appendix W for the SCDE Per Pupil Estimate Review. See Appendix X for the Five-Year Detailed Budget. See Appendix Y for the Ten-Year Budget. Appendix Z, Memorandums of Agreement for Negotiated Services is not applicable. See Appendix AA for documentation of “soft funds”.*

## 2. Facilities

- a. During the first six months of the school, the school will need a facility for six classrooms. Currently and tentatively, we plan to use vacant classrooms at Greer Middle College Charter

- High School to house 4-6<sup>th</sup> grade and 2-7<sup>th</sup> grade students. In addition, we need space for SPED, physical education, art, one administrator, and other support. Some personnel from Greer Middle College Charter High School will “crossover” in support for the school.
- b. The school’s future site will be located at 4520 Locust Hill Road near Taylors and Greer, SC. After design and completion of an academic building and gym, the school will have approximately 50,000 square feet of space for instruction and activities on a 52 acre site. The school plans to open with grade levels Grade 6 through Grade 7 with four (4) classes of twenty-five (25) students for Grade 6 and two (2) classes of twenty-five (25) Grade 7. During the 26-27 school year, the school will add all grade levels to reach full capacity of approximately 700-750 students. Students on a waiting list will be added as spaces open up through attrition if capacity is reached each year.
  - c. The Office of School Facilities and the Department of Transportation have reviewed the property. As stated above, the school has already contacted the SCDE’s Office of School Facilities (OSF) and the South Carolina Department of Transportation to conduct an assessment and inspection. The school will comply with requirements for building codes, and safety requirements, and request a certificate of occupancy, and will apply for an implementation grant, conduct fundraisers, and request donations from community members and businesses as part of a capital campaign. Instructional equipment will be obtained by priority of need. Equipment will be directly purchased, leased, or donated. Items will be properly coded and accounted for according to state and federal law.

*See Appendix BB for the Floor Plan of Identified Facility.*

### 3. Insurance Coverage

- a. Workers Compensation
  - i. South Carolina Workers' Compensation Law is designed to provide medical and monetary benefits for an employee who sustains an accidental injury arising out of and in the course of his/her employment. The law provides medical care to bring about the earliest possible recovery from the injury, a percentage of wages and salary lost during the injured employee's disability, and, in case of death, compensation for the deceased employee's dependents. The school will have worker’s compensation insurance.
- b. Liability Insurance
  - i. A cost for liability insurance has been provided by Furman Insurance, a licensed insurance broker in the State of South Carolina. These policies are designed to match or exceed the minimum limits required by the South Carolina Tort Claims Act S.C. Code Ann. § 15-78-120 (Supp. 2011).
- c. Property Insurance
  - i. An estimated annual premium for property insurance from Furman Insurance, a South Carolina licensed insurance company has been provided.
- d. Auto Insurance
  - i. The Director of Finance has obtained automobile insurance from Furman Insurance; a South Carolina licensed insurance company.

## **Greer Middle College Charter High School Bylaws**

### ARTICLE I – NAME, ADDRESS

Section 1. Name of Corporation. The name of the Corporation shall be as specified in its Articles of Incorporation, as amended, to wit: Greer Middle College Charter High School Charter High School (hereinafter referred to as the (“Corporation”).

Section 2. Fictitious Name. The Corporation may conduct business under the name:  
GREER MIDDLE COLLEGE CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

Section 3. Address of Corporation. The location and address of the registered office of the Corporation shall be. 138 W. McElhaney Rd, Taylors, SC 29687.

### ARTICLE II – NATURE OF CORPORATION

Section 1. Non-Profit. The Corporation does not contemplate pecuniary gain or profit, incidental or otherwise, to its members.

Section 2. Purposes. The purposes for which the Corporation is to be formed and as set forth in the Articles of Incorporation.

Section 3. Non-Discrimination. The Corporation shall be non-religious and shall accept students and hire staff without discrimination as to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, educational affiliation, handicap status, or age, and shall comply with all applicable laws and regulations relating thereto.

Section 4. Enrollment. Subject to total enrollment limitations, enrollment in the school shall be open to any child in accordance with the South Carolina Charter School Law of 1996.

### ARTICLE III – MEMBERS

Section 1. No Members: The Corporation shall have no members. Any action which would otherwise, by law, require approval by a majority of all members or approval by the members shall require only approval of the Board. All rights which would otherwise, by law, vest in the members shall vest in the Board. Nothing in this Article III shall be construed to limit the Corporation’s right to refer to persons associated with it as “members,” even though such persons are not members. The Board may also, but without establishing membership, create an advisory council or honorary board or such other auxiliary groups as it deems appropriate to advise and support the Corporation.

Section 2. Annual Meeting. The Charter School Governing Board shall meet for its annual meeting in May on a date selected by the membership.

Section 3. Place and Time of Meetings. All meetings of the Board shall be held at such places within Greenville County for purposes of conducting business of the Charter School, and at such times as shall be specified in the respective notices of such meetings or waivers thereof.

### ARTICLE IV – BOARD OF DIRECTORS, CHARTER GOVERNING BOARD

Section 1. Management. The Charter Governing Board means the governing body of the Charter School and also shall be the Board of Directors of the Corporation. The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by the Board of Directors (hereinafter sometimes referred to as the "Board.") The members shall act only as a Board.

Section 2. Responsibilities. The Board shall sign a Charter School Contract, ensure compliance with all of the requirements for a charter school provided by the South Carolina Charter School Law, employ and contract with teachers and non-teaching employees, contract for other services, develop pay scales, performance criteria, and discharge policies for the Charter School employees.

Section 3. Number and Election. The Board shall consist of eleven (11) members. Eight (8) of the members shall be elected to a two (2) year term by the parents and guardians of students enrolled and employees of Greer Middle College Charter High School by vote at its annual election and three (3) of the members shall be appointed by the elected board members for a two (2) year term at the annual meeting of the board. The appointed board members are subject to the same governance as the elected members. Each annual election will be for those board positions whose term will expire that year. Parents or guardians of a student shall have one vote for each student enrolled in the Charter School. Each employee will have one vote per person. Members shall be elected by a plurality of the votes cast. An announcement for the Annual Board Election and a call for Board Nominations will be posted on the school website and on campus on the Second Monday of March, and will have been announced in the Blazer News circulated the previous Friday. All nomination forms will be due by 12:00 PM (noon) on the Second Monday in April. A sample ballot will be published on the school website by 3:00 PM of the same day. A Candidate Meet and Greet will be held prior to the April Board meeting from 5:30 to 6:00 PM. Online voting will open on the First Monday in May at 8:00 AM and remain open for 24 hours. Online voting will close at 8:00 AM on Tuesday. Election results will be published on the school website and on campus by 12:00 PM (noon) on Tuesday and will be announced in the Friday edition of Blazer News. The election results will be ratified at the annual meeting in May. The swearing in ceremony for all new members will take place at the June Board meeting with all terms beginning July 1. The Board may call a special election as required by changes to the board bylaws or South Carolina Charter School Law.

Section 4. Annual and Regular Meetings. The annual meeting of the Board shall be held in May. The Board shall also meet regularly at least (11) times each year. Meetings of the Board shall be general meetings and open for the transaction of any business within the powers of the Board without special notice of such business except in any case where special notice is required by law or by the Bylaws.

Section 5. Special Meetings. Special meetings of the Board shall be called at any time by the Secretary upon the written request of either the President or three members of the Board.

Section 6. Place and Time of Meetings. All meetings of the Board for conducting Charter School business shall be held at such places within Greenville County and at such times as shall be specified in the respective notices of such meetings or waivers hereof.

Section 7. Notice of Meetings. Every meeting of the Board shall be served personally or by mail on each member not less than 3 nor more than 15 days before the meeting. Such notice shall state the time, when, and the place where the meeting is to be held, and for special meetings, in addition, the purpose or purposes for which the meeting is called. If mailed, such notice shall be directed to each member entitled to notice at his/her address as it appears on the books or records of the Corporation. Notices of meetings of the Board shall also be posted in the school and given to the public in accordance with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. Public notice shall, however, not be required in the case of emergency meetings or a conference as defined in the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 8. Open Meetings. All official actions and all deliberations by a quorum of the Board shall take place at a meeting open to the public, as provided in the Freedom of Information Act, except in cases where executive sessions are authorized pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act.

Section 9. Quorum. At all meetings of the Board, the presence of a majority of the members shall be necessary and sufficient to constitute a quorum and, except as otherwise provided by law or by the Bylaws, the act of a majority of the members present shall be the act of the Board. In the absence of a quorum, no business shall be transacted except to take measures to obtain a quorum, fix a time to adjourn, or to take a recess

Section 10. Resignation of Members. Any member may resign at any time during the elected year of service. Members shall be expected to attend at least fifty percent (50%) of all board meetings and of all meetings of the committee or committees on which he or she has agreed to serve.

Section 11. Vacancies. In the event any vacancy occurs in the Board of Directors, by the death or resignation of any member, the vacancy will be filled within 30 days by election in accordance with Article IV, Section 3 of the Charter School Bylaws, which conforms with the state charter law. Membership will be maintained at eleven members at all times. If the vacancy is an elected member then a special election will be held. If the vacancy is an appointed member then the elected members of the board will appoint a new member. The term of the member filling the vacancy will be equal to the remainder of the term of the board member they replace.

Section 12. Compensation and Expenses. Members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred when acting at the request of and on behalf of the Board.

Section 13. Qualifications of Members. Members shall qualify under all requirements of the South Carolina Charter School Law.

Section 14. Bylaws Amendments. Amendments to the Bylaws will occur at a regularly scheduled Board meeting after written prior notice and discussion at a minimum of one meeting where a quorum is present. Bylaws will be reviewed at least once every three years and shall be documented as to the date of review. New Bylaws may be adopted, amended or repealed by a majority vote of the Board.

Section 15. Removal of Appointed Directors. A Director may be removed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors, at any regularly scheduled or special meeting of the Board of Directors, whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Corporation would be served thereby.

## ARTICLE V – OFFICERS

Section 1. Number of Officers. The officers of the Corporation shall be a President, one or more Vice Presidents, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The aforementioned officers must be members. The officers shall perform such duties as usually pertain to the offices which they hold or as may be assigned to them by the Board. The President shall be the Chairperson of the Board.

Section 2. Election of Officers. The officers shall be elected by the Board annually at the July meeting of the Board by a plurality of the votes cast and may succeed themselves in office. Each person elected an officer shall continue in office until his/her term ends or until his/her successor shall have been duly elected and qualified, or until his/her earlier death or resignation in accordance with the Bylaws. Vacancies of officers caused by death, resignation, or decrease in the number of officers may be filled by a majority vote of the Board at a special meeting called for that purpose or at any regular meeting.

Section 3. Additional Officers. The Board, at any meeting, may by resolution appoint such additional officers and such agents and employees and determine their term of office and compensation, if any, as it may deem advisable. The Board may delegate to any officer or committee the power to appoint such subordinate officers, agents, or employees and to determine their terms of office and compensation, if any.

## ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEES

Committees. The Board may from time to time, by resolution, constitute such committees of members, officers, employees, members, or non-members, with such functions, powers and duties as the Board deems necessary or appropriate. Unless the Board shall provide otherwise, each such committee shall enact rules and regulations for its governance.

## ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Section 1. Fiscal Year and Audit. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall end on June 30 each year. The Treasurer of the Corporation shall be required periodically and no less than once a year to employ a certified public accountant to audit the accounts of the Corporation.

Section 2. Execution of Contracts. The Board may authorize any officer, employee or agent, in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized by these Bylaws or by the Board, no officer, employee, or agent shall have any power to bind the Corporation by any contract or engagement or to pledge its credit or to render it liable pecuniary for any purpose or in any amount.

Section 3. Commercial Paper. All checks and other orders for the payment of money out of the funds of the Corporation, and all notes or evidences of indebtedness of the Corporation, shall be executed on behalf of the Corporation by such officer or officers or employee or employees, as the Board may, by resolution, from time to time determine.

Section 4. Deposits. All funds of the Corporation not otherwise employed shall be deposited, from time to time, to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as the Board may, from time to time, select or as may be selected by any officer or employee of the Corporation to whom such power may, from time to time, be delegated by the Board; and for the purpose of such deposit, any officer, or any employee to whom such power may be delegated by the Board, may endorse, assign and deliver checks, drafts, and other orders for the payment of money which are payable to the order of the Corporation.

Section 5. Notices. Except as may otherwise be required by law, any notice required to be given under these Bylaws shall be in writing and signed by the President or the Secretary; and any notice so required shall be deemed to be sufficient if given by depositing the same in a post office box in a sealed postpaid wrapper, addressed to the person entitled thereto at his last post office address appearing on the records of the Corporation, and such notice shall be deemed to have been given on the day of such mailing. Any notices required to be given under these Bylaws may be waived, by the person entitled thereto in writing (including telegraph, cable, radio or wireless), whether before or after the meeting or other matter in respect of which such notice is to be given, and in such an event such notice need not be given to such person.

## ARTICLE VIII – INDEMNIFICATION

Section 1. General. The Corporation shall indemnify each officer, member, employee and representative (“Indemnitee”) from the expenses and risks as set forth in Sections 2 and 3 below if such Indemnitee has acted in good faith or in a manner which he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Corporation and with respect to criminal action proceeding had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2. Expenses. Indemnities shall be indemnified against all expenses (including attorney’s fees), judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by the Indemnitee in connection with any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative (other than an action by or in the right of the Corporation by reason of the fact

that the Indemnitee is or was a representative, officer or director of the Corporation, or is or was serving at the request of the Corporation as a representative of another corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise.

Section 3. Advances. The Corporation may advance to all Indemnitees all expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding in advance of final disposition of such action provided the Board determines that it is more likely than not that the Indemnitee will be entitled to indemnification pursuant to Section 1 of this Article VII, and such Indemnitee agrees to repay such amount if it is ultimately determined by the Board that the Indemnitee is not permitted to receive indemnification under Subchapter D or the Non-Profit Corporation Law of 1988.

#### ARTICLE IX – LIMITATION OF PERSONAL LIABILITY

Section 1. Personal Liability. A member of the Corporation shall not be personally liable for monetary damages for any action taken or any failure to take any action, unless (a) such member has breached or failed to perform his/her duties as a member, including his/her duties as a member of any committee of the Board upon which he/she may serve, pursuant to the standard of care set forth in Section 2 of this Article IX, and (b) such breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct, or recklessness.

Section 2. Standard of Care. (a) Each member of the Corporation shall stand in a fiduciary relation to the Corporation and shall perform his/her duties as a member, including his or her duties as a member of any committee of the Board upon which he or she may serve, in good faith, including reasonable inquiry, skill and diligence, as a person of ordinary prudence would use under similar circumstances. In performing his or her duties, a member shall be entitled to rely in good faith on information, opinions, reports or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, in each case prepared or presented by any of the following:

1. One or more officers or employees of the Corporation whom the members reasonably believe to be reliable and competent in the matters presented.
2. Counsel, public accountants, or other persons as to matters which the member reasonably believes to be within the professional or expert competence of such person.
3. A committee of the Board, upon which he/she does not serve, duly designated in accordance with the law, as to matters within its designated authority, which committee the member reasonably believes to merit confidence.
  - (a) A member shall not be considered to be acting in good faith if he/she has knowledge concerning the matter in question that would cause his/her reliance to be unwarranted.
  - (b) Absent breach of fiduciary duty, lack of good faith or self-damaging, actions taken as a member or any failure to take any action shall be presumed to be in the best interests of the Corporate.

### Appendix Items

- A. Signature Certification Page
- B. Evidence of Notification (to both the local school board of trustees and local delegation)
- C. Evidence of Support
- D. Conversion School Support (not applicable)
- E. Private School Documentation (not applicable)
- F. School Calendar and Daily Schedule for the Academic Year
- G. Supporting Documents for the Described Educational Program
- H. List of Teaching Positions
- I. Virtual School List of courses (not applicable)
- J. Agreement with Sponsoring District for Special Education Services (not applicable)
- K. Charter Committee
- L. Bylaws
- M. Articles of Incorporation
- N. Organizational Chart
- O. EMO/CMO Documentation (not applicable)
- P. Sample Job Descriptions
- Q. School Start-Up Plan
- R. Letter of Agreement from Sponsor Regarding Compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-410 *et seq.* (2004)
- S. Letter(s) from Sponsoring District Regarding Desegregation Plan or Order
- T. Draft Discipline Policy
- U. Transportation Services Contract (not applicable)
- V. Student Enrollment Projection Form
- W. SCDE Per Pupil Estimate Review
- X. Five-Year Budget (Excel spreadsheet)
- Y. Ten-Year Budget Plan (Excel spreadsheet)
- Z. Memorandums of Agreement for Negotiated Services (not applicable)
- AA. Documentation of Any “Soft Funds”
- BB. Floor Plan of Identified Facility
- CC. Proposed Lease or Rental Agreement
- DD. Documentation from the SCDE’s Office of School Facilities (not applicable)
- EE. Documentation from the SCDOT School Traffic Engineering (not applicable)
- FF. Applicable Insurance Documentation



