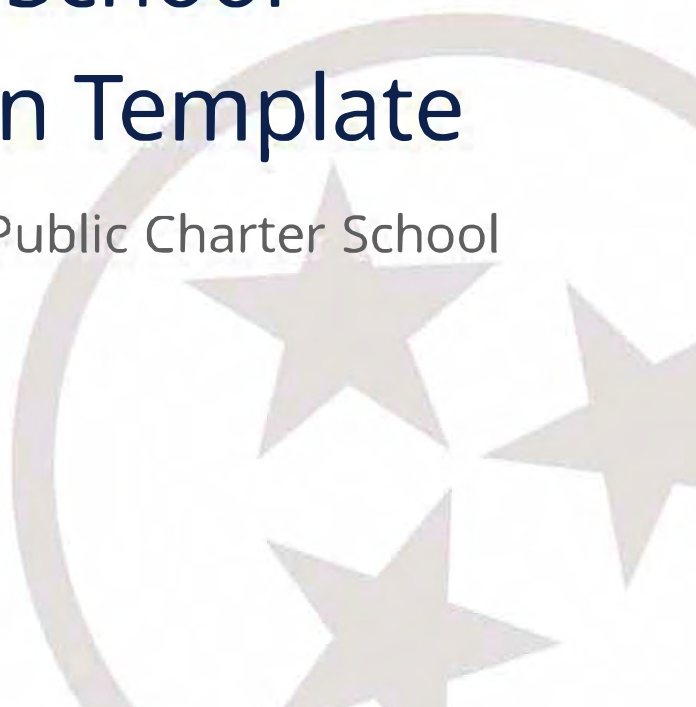




# Tennessee Charter School Creation Application Template

For Sponsors Seeking to Open a Public Charter School  
in the 2026-27 School Year

Tennessee Department of Education | October 2024



**{Insert School Logo if Available}**

## **STILL I RISE ACADEMY**

{Initial or Amended} Application to Create a Public Charter School

To Open in the 2026-27 School Year

5/30/25

Submitted To:

Memphis Shelby County Schools



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# Cover Sheet

## General Information

<b>Name of Proposed Charter School</b>	STILL I RISE ACADEMY		
<b>Sponsor / Sponsoring Entity</b>	HUMANITARIAN OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT GROUP, INC		
<b>Proposed Authorizer</b>	MEMPHIS SHELBY COUNTY SCHOOLS		
<b>Model or Focus of Proposed School</b> (i.e., STEAM, Montessori, Opportunity Charter, etc.)	OPPORTUNITY CHARTER		
<b>Grade Structure</b> (i.e., K-5, 6-8, 9-12)	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>At Capacity</b>
	6-12	6-12	1000
<b>Projected Enrollment</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>At Capacity</b>
	150	500	1000
<b>City, Neighborhood, and Community the School Intends to Serve</b>	MEMPHIS		
<b>Projected Opening School Year</b>	2026		

## Primary Point of Contact

<b>Name</b>	<b>MONIQUE WADE</b>
<b>Role</b>	<b>BOARD CHAIR</b>
<b>Mailing Address</b>	<b>1661 INTERNATIONAL DRIVE</b>
<b>Mailing Address Line 2</b>	<b>STE 400</b>
<b>City, State, Zip Code</b>	<b>MEMPHIS TN 38120</b>
<b>Primary Telephone</b>	<b>901-260-9933</b>
<b>Alternate Telephone</b>	
<b>Email Address</b>	<b>HODGDEVELOPMENTGROUP@GMAIL.COM</b>



### Application Category

Please select **ONE** box to indicate the category type for this application.

Category			Description
1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>First-time Charter Sponsor</b>	<p>This category applies to sponsors that meet <b>all</b> the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsor that seeks to open no more than one (1) public charter school or opportunity charter school during this application cycle.</li> <li>• Sponsor that has not previously operated, opened, or sponsored a charter school, charter network, or charter management organization in Tennessee or elsewhere in the United States.</li> </ul>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Multi-School or Established Sponsor</b>	This category applies to all sponsors that do not meet the criteria for Category 1.

### Sponsor & School Design Team

Provide information for the school's leader (if named) and all people who will serve on the school's design team; add lines as needed.

Full Name	Address	Current Job Title	Current Employer	Position with Proposed School
Monique Wade	5940 Bishop Dale Dr. Memphis, TN 38141	Academic Affairs Administrator	William&Johnson Career College	Board Chair
Carolyn Quinn	6947 Finch Rd Memphis, TN 38141	Office Team Leader	HR Block	Advisor
Isaac Scott	1661 International Drive, Memphis, TN 38141	Owner	Mama's Wings and Thingz Restaurant	Treasurer
Gerald Kiner	1661 International Drive Memphis, TN 38120	Executive Director	Humanitarian Outreach Development Group, Inc	Executive Director
Alysse Adams	1661 International Drive Ste 400 Memphis, TN 38120	Educator	Memphis Shelby County Schools	Officer

## Sponsor History and Intent

### Question 1

Has the sponsor or proposed charter management organization<sup>1</sup> ever operated, opened, or managed a charter school?

☐ Yes

☒ No

### Question 2

Does this sponsor have any pending charter school applications currently under consideration by any authorizer in the United States?

☐ Yes

☒ No

*If yes, complete the table below; add lines as needed.*

State	Authorizer	Proposed School Name	Application Due Date	Decision Date	Proposed Opening Year

### Question 3

Does the sponsor or proposed charter management organization currently operate a charter school?

☐ Yes

☒ No

*If yes, complete the table below; add lines as needed.*

Name of Charter School	City and State	Authorizer

### Question 4

Will the sponsor replicate<sup>2</sup> a currently authorized charter school in Tennessee?

☐ Yes

☒ No

*If yes, complete the table below; add lines as needed.*

Name of Charter School that was Replicated	City and State	Authorizer

<sup>1</sup> "Charter management organization" or "CMO" means a nonprofit entity that manages or operates two (2) or more public charter schools as defined in [T.C.A. § 49-13-104](#).

<sup>2</sup> "Replication" means the creation of one (1) or more subsequent charter schools that utilize the same academic focus of an existing charter school operated by a sponsor or governing board.

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#### Question 5

Is this sponsor submitting an application to more than one Tennessee authorizer or proposing to open more than one charter school during this application cycle?

☐ Yes

☒ No

*If yes, complete the table below; add lines as needed.*

Name of Proposed School	Submitted to Which Authorizer

#### Question 6

Will the sponsor contract or partner with a charter management organization (CMO) to manage or operate the proposed school?

☐ Yes

☐ No

*If yes, complete the table below; add lines as needed.*

Name of Charter Management Organization	City and State

#### Question 7

Is the sponsor proposing a new charter school with a change in academic focus<sup>3</sup> or grade structure from an existing Tennessee charter school they operate?

☐ Yes

☒ No

#### Question 8

Is the sponsor proposing an Opportunity Public Charter School<sup>4</sup>?

☒ Yes

☐ No

#### Question 9

<sup>3</sup> "Academic focus" means a distinctive, thematic program such as math, science, arts, general academics, or an instructional program such as Montessori or Paideia pursuant to [T.C.A. § 49-13-104 \(1\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> "Opportunity public charter school" means a public charter school serving any of the grades six through twelve (6-12) for which at least seventy-five percent (75%) of the students enrolled in the public charter school, at the time of enrollment, are at-risk students and that provides instruction to students in a traditional classroom setting; or a residential program for enrolled students and provides instruction to such students in a traditional classroom setting, as defined in [Chapter 1066 of the Public Acts of 2024](#).



If proposing an Opportunity Public Charter School, will the school provide a residential program for enrolled students pursuant to Chapter 1066 of the Public Acts of 2024?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>X No</b>
---	---

Question 10

Will the proposed school serve any combination of elementary grades of kindergarten through grade five (K-5)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>X No</b>
---	---

Question 11

Will the proposed school serve any combination of high school grades nine through twelve (9-12)?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>X Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> No
--	---

Question 12

Will the sponsor convert <sup>5</sup> a non-charter public school to a charter school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>X No</b>
--	---

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<sup>5</sup>“Conversion public charter school” means a charter school established by the conversion of an existing non-charter public school into a charter school as defined in T.C.A. § 49-13-104

## Assurances

As the authorized representative of the sponsor applying to open a charter school in Tennessee, I hereby certify that the information submitted in this application is true to the best of my knowledge and belief, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocation after award; and if awarded a charter, the school must comply with all assurances within this section, and all applicable state and federal laws and regulations related to public charter schools.

I affirm that the public charter school:

1. Will operate as a public, nonsectarian, non-religious public school, with control of instruction vested in the governing body of the school under the general supervision of the authorizer and in compliance with the charter agreement and the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act;
2. Will follow all federal, state, and local laws and regulations that pertain to the operation of a public school, unless waived according to T.C.A. § 49-13-111(p);
3. Will provide special education services for students as provided in T.C.A. Title 49, Chapter 10, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
4. Will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students who are limited English proficient, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, that are applicable to it;
5. Will follow all federal and state laws and constitutional provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, ancestry, or need for special education services;
6. Will utilize this application as a contract with the authorizer, if no other agreement is signed, pursuant to Tennessee Attorney General Opinion No. 10-45;
7. Will comply with all provisions of the Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act, including, but not limited to
  - a. employing individuals to teach who hold a license to teach in a public school in Tennessee;
  - b. complying with Open Meetings and Open Records laws (T.C.A. §§ 8-44-101 et seq., 10-7-503, 504) (guidance is available from the Office of Open Records Counsel);
  - c. not charging tuition, except for students transferring from another district to the school pursuant to the local board's out-of-district enrollment policy and T.C.A. § 49-6-3003;
  - d. notwithstanding subdivision 7c, not charging registration fees, enrollment fees, or tuition to the students enrolled in an Opportunity Public Charter School;
  - e. following state financial (budgeting and audit) procedures and reporting requirements according to T.C.A. §§ 49-13-111, 120, and 127;
  - f. requiring any member of the governing body, employee, officer, or other authorized person who receives funds, has access to funds, or has authority to make expenditures from funds, to give a surety bond in the form prescribed by T.C.A. § 8-19-101; and
8. Will, at all times, maintain all necessary and appropriate insurance coverage.



Signature of Authorized Representative

May 30, 2015

Date

Monique Wade

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Board Chair

Title of Authorized Representative

## Completeness Checklists

### Items Required for All Sponsors

General Information	
Cover Sheet	x
Sponsor History and Intent	x
Assurances	x

1.1 – Academic Plan and Design	
Narrative	x

1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Narrative	x

1.3 - Assessments	
Narrative	x

1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule	
Narrative	x
Attachment A	x
Attachment B	x

1.5 – Recruitment and Enrollment	
Narrative	x
Table 1	x
Table 2	x
Attachment C	x

1.6 – Parent and Community

Engagement and Support	
Narrative	x
Attachment D	x

1.7 – School Culture and Discipline	
Narrative	x
Attachment E	x
Attachment F	x

1.8 – Special Populations	
Narrative	x

2.1 – Governance	
Narrative	x
Table 4	x
Attachment G	x
Attachment H	x
Attachment I	x
Attachment J	x
Attachment K	x
Attachment L	x
Attachment M	x

2.2 – Facilities	
Narrative	x

2.3 – Start Up Plan	
Narrative	x

2.4 – Personnel / Human Capital	
Narrative	x
Attachment N	x
Attachment O	x
Attachment P	x
Table 5	x

2.5 – Professional Development	
Narrative	x

2.6 – Transportation	
Narrative	x

2.7 – Additional Operations	
Narrative	x
Attachment Q	x

3.1 – Operating Budget	
Attachment W	x



3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative	
Narrative	x
Attachment X	x

**Additional Requirements for Sponsors That Answered "Yes" to Specific Questions within the Sponsor History and Intent Section**

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 1</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.9 - Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment S	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.1 - School Portfolio Summary	
Attachment Z	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2 - Academic Performance Record	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment Z	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3 - Fiscal and Operational Performance Record	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment AA	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment BB	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment CC	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment DD	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment EE	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 3</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.9 - Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.10 - Network Governance	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.11 - Network Management and Personnel	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment T	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment U	<input type="checkbox"/>
Table 6	<input type="checkbox"/>
Table 7	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 3</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.11 - Network Management and Personnel (cont.)	
Table 8	<input type="checkbox"/>
Table 9	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3 - Network Financial Plan	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment Y	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 4</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.12 - School Replication	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment V	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 5</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.9 - Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 6</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.8 - Charter Management Organization	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attachment R	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 7</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 8</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supplementary Table 3	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 9</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.2 - Facilities	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 10</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3 - Assessments	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: <b>Question 11</b> of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Supplementary Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>

Required for Sponsors that	
----------------------------	--

answered "Yes" to: <b>Question</b>	
12 of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.9 – Conversion Charter School Planning	
Narrative	<input type="checkbox"/>



# Application Narratives

## Section 1 – Academic Plan and Design

### **Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Still I Rise Academy Charter School Application Response

#### **(a) Mission Statement**

Still I Rise Academy is committed to empowering Tennessee's most vulnerable youth by providing a supportive, student-centered learning environment that fosters academic success, personal growth, and resilience. While accepting all eligible students, our focus will be on serving those who have previously dropped out, been retained twice, are chronically absent, are pregnant or parenting, or have experienced abuse or neglect. We aim to equip them with the academic, social-emotional, and career-readiness skills necessary for lifelong success.

Measurable Objectives:

1. Increase Graduation Rates: Ensure at least 75% of students graduate within five years of initial enrollment.
2. Improve Academic Performance: Demonstrate at least a 10% annual increase in proficiency on state assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.
3. Enhance Student Attendance: Reduce chronic absenteeism by 25% within the first three years.
4. Support Student Well-being: Provide individualized counseling and wraparound services to 100% of students within the first 60 days of enrollment.
5. Post-Graduation Readiness: Ensure 80% of graduates transition into post-secondary education, vocational training, or employment.

#### **(b) Five-Year Goals & Alignment with State Priorities**

Year 1-5 Goals

1. Academic Growth & Achievement:
  - Establish a structured, data-driven curriculum designed to address learning gaps, incorporating credit recovery programs and competency-based learning.

## Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Increase student literacy and numeracy proficiency by at least 10% annually.
- 2. Student Engagement & Retention:
  - Reduce dropout rates by 30% by Year 5 through intensive academic and social-emotional support.
  - Implement a flexible, student-centered approach to accommodate students with unique learning needs and responsibilities.
- 3. Career & College Readiness:
  - Launch partnerships with local businesses, trade schools, and community colleges to offer dual enrollment, apprenticeships, and vocational certification programs.
  - Ensure 80% of students complete a work-based learning experience before graduation.
- 4. School Culture & Well-being:
  - Establish a trauma-informed school culture with restorative justice practices, counseling services, and mentorship programs.
  - Increase student and family engagement by hosting monthly workshops and resource fairs.

### Alignment with State Priorities

- T.C.A. § 49-13-102(a): Our model aligns with Tennessee's charter school law by expanding educational choices for at-risk students, fostering innovative instructional approaches, and promoting high standards of student achievement.
- State Accountability Systems: We will adhere to Tennessee's ESSA-aligned accountability measures, tracking student progress in literacy, numeracy, attendance, and graduation rates.
- Authorizer's Performance Framework: Our goals directly align with performance metrics related to academic growth, operational sustainability, and student success.

### (c) Process for Setting, Monitoring, and Revising Goals

1. Initial Goal Setting: Goals will be established annually based on student performance

## **Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

data, community needs, and state accountability measures.

2. Ongoing Monitoring:

- Monthly Data Reviews: Educators and administrators will analyze academic and behavioral trends.
- Quarterly Progress Reports: Reports will be shared with stakeholders, including families, community partners, and the authorizer.
- Student Support Teams: Individualized student success plans will be created and monitored.

3. Annual Adjustments: Goals will be revised annually based on assessment results, stakeholder feedback, and emerging best practices.

(d) Unique Features & Innovation

1. Flexible Learning Pathways:

- Self-paced courses with blended learning (in-person and virtual options).
- Personalized academic interventions for students needing additional support.

2. Wraparound Support Services:

- On-site childcare for parenting students.
- Trauma-informed counseling, social work services, and family engagement programs.

3. Alternative Graduation Pathways:

- Competency-based credit recovery programs.
- Career-technical education (CTE) and industry certifications integrated into the curriculum.

4. Community Integration & Partnerships:

- Collaborations with local organizations to provide internships, mentorship, and workforce training.
- Dual enrollment agreements with local colleges and trade schools.



## Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### 5. Comprehensive Professional Development for Staff:

- Each teacher and staff member will undergo extensive professional development focused on the five student populations Still I Rise Academy serves:

- Dropouts
- Students retained twice
- Chronically absent students
- Pregnant or parenting students

- Students who have experienced abuse or neglect

- Training will include trauma-informed teaching strategies, restorative justice practices, social-emotional learning techniques, and culturally responsive pedagogy to ensure staff are equipped to meet the diverse needs of our students.

### 6. “Focus Then Refocus” Plan:

- Focus: We begin by addressing each student’s current challenges—whether they are overcoming past trauma, catching up academically, or balancing parenthood with education. Through individualized learning plans, mentorship, and emotional support, we provide targeted interventions tailored to their immediate needs.

- Refocus: Once stability is established, we shift the focus to their future goals. Whether it’s career readiness, college preparation, or workforce entry, students receive personalized guidance and skill-building opportunities to elevate their long-term success.

- This holistic approach ensures that students feel supported in the present while developing the confidence and competencies needed for their future rise.

These innovative elements ensure that Still I Rise Academy remains a responsive, student-focused institution dedicated to the long-term success of at-risk youth.

### Amended Response to Concern #1 – Subsection 1.1: School Mission and Goals

Concern: The applicant does not provide sufficient measurements related to the proposed school’s academic, organizational, operational, nor financial performance goals.



## Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Amended Response:

Still I Rise Academy was founded on a student-centered, evidence-based model tailored to meet the needs of Opportunity Charter School-eligible students who face barriers such as homelessness, prior dropout status, chronic absenteeism, poverty, pregnancy or parenting, and trauma. Our school's ME<sup>2</sup> mission—Motivate, Educate, and Elevate—aligns with Tennessee's Opportunity Charter School framework and is grounded in Principle 3, Standard 1 of the Tennessee State Board of Education's Quality Charter Authorizing Standards, which requires that an authorizer "makes the well-being and interests of students the fundamental value informing all the authorizer's actions and decisions."

To address the concern regarding insufficient measurable outcomes, we have revised our framework to clearly identify specific, measurable, and aligned goals in the four critical performance areas: academic, organizational, operational, and financial. Each goal below aligns with state accountability systems (e.g., TVAAS, Ready Graduate metrics, chronic absenteeism, etc.) and the authorizer's performance framework.

### Academic Performance Goals

Goal 1:

At least 50% of continuously enrolled students will meet or exceed expectations on the TCAP English Language Arts and Math assessments by the end of Year 3.

- Measurement: TCAP state assessments (ELA and Math)
- Alignment: Aligned with Tennessee's state accountability framework and TVAAS growth expectations
- Monitoring: Reviewed annually with mid-year diagnostic benchmarks

Goal 2:

Students performing in the bottom 25% of each grade level will demonstrate at least one full year of academic growth annually.

- Measurement: TVAAS growth data and school-administered benchmark assessments

## **Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals**

### ***(Required for All Sponsors)***

- Alignment: Aligned with federal and state accountability for subgroup performance and Opportunity School goals
- Monitoring: Progress monitored quarterly through benchmark assessments, adjusted RTI<sup>2</sup> support plans as needed

#### **Goal 3:**

The school will achieve a 90% student attendance rate by Year 4, with at least 85% in Year 2.

- Measurement: PowerSchool attendance records
- Alignment: Aligned with state reporting and ESSA chronic absenteeism metrics
- Monitoring: Monitored weekly by the Attendance Support Team, with monthly leadership review

#### **Goal 4:**

100% of high school students will develop a Personalized Success Plan (PSP) that identifies their path to graduation, including early postsecondary opportunities or workforce credentials.

- Measurement: Individual student PSP documents; participation rates in dual enrollment, EPSO, or CTE certification programs
- Alignment: Aligned with state graduation pathways, College & Career Readiness indicators
- Monitoring: Reviewed each semester by guidance counselors and Principal

## **Organizational Performance Goals**

#### **Goal 1:**

The school will maintain a student retention rate of at least 85% beginning in Year 2.

- Measurement: Enrollment and withdrawal records

## **Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Alignment: Aligned with student stability expectations in the authorizer's performance framework
- Monitoring: Reviewed quarterly by the Executive Director and recruitment staff

### **Goal 2:**

100% of board members will complete annual training approved by the Tennessee Department of Education.

- Measurement: Board training attendance logs and certificates
- Alignment: Compliant with T.C.A. § 49-13-111(o) and authorizer requirements
- Monitoring: Verified annually by Board Secretary; submitted to the authorizer

### **Goal 3:**

At least 85% of families will report satisfaction with the school's culture, communication, and support services.

- Measurement: Annual parent satisfaction survey (using Likert scale metrics)
- Alignment: Aligned with the authorizer's evaluation of stakeholder satisfaction
- Monitoring: Survey conducted each spring; results analyzed by school leadership and presented to the board

## **Operational Performance Goals**

### **Goal 1:**

The school will maintain a teacher attendance rate of at least 95% annually, excluding documented

## **Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

leave.

- Measurement: HR attendance records
- Alignment: Aligns with operational expectations under the authorizer's oversight
- Monitoring: Reviewed monthly by Principal and HR designee

Goal 2:

100% of required state and authorizer reports will be submitted on time.

- Measurement: Compliance submission logs
- Alignment: Fully aligned with federal and state charter compliance requirements
- Monitoring: Tracked monthly by the Executive Director and Compliance Coordinator

Goal 3:

All instructional staff positions will be filled by July 15 each year to ensure instructional readiness.

- Measurement: Hiring records and staffing logs
- Alignment: Supports effective instructional delivery and student learning continuity
- Monitoring: Tracked biweekly during spring hiring season; reviewed by Executive Director

### **Financial Performance Goals**

Goal 1:

The school will operate with a balanced budget annually and receive no material findings in its annual audit.



## **Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals**

### ***(Required for All Sponsors)***

- Measurement: Annual audit report
- Alignment: Aligned with authorizer and state fiscal health standards
- Monitoring: Quarterly financial review by Finance Committee and external accounting firm

#### **Goal 2:**

The school will meet or exceed its projected enrollment targets each year, growing from 150 students in Year 1 to 500 in Year 5.

- Measurement: Final enrollment counts submitted to the state
- Alignment: Linked directly to funding stability and operational viability
- Monitoring: Reviewed monthly during recruitment season; audited annually by Executive Director and Board

#### **Goal 3:**

By Year 3, the school will maintain a cash reserve equal to at least 8% of total operating expenses to manage unexpected costs or shortfalls.

- Measurement: Budget reports and audited financial statements
- Alignment: Aligned with state expectations for financial sustainability
- Monitoring: Tracked monthly by Finance Committee; included in board reports

### **Ongoing Evaluation and Goal Revision Process**

The Principal, Executive Director, and Board of Directors will meet quarterly to review performance dashboards prepared by the Data and Compliance Coordinator. These dashboards will include academic data (benchmarks, TCAP predictors), operational compliance status, budget-to-actuals, and enrollment metrics.

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When performance deviates from established targets, the leadership team will implement immediate corrective action plans (e.g., additional RTI<sup>2</sup> supports, staffing interventions, budget adjustments). All strategies will be tracked using our internal data system and reflected in monthly Board meetings.

By providing quantifiable, state-aligned goals and a clear process for monitoring and adjustment, Still I Rise Academy is now aligned with the expectations of both the Tennessee Department of Education and our authorizer. These revisions not only meet the letter of the standard—they reflect our unwavering commitment to Principle 3: Protecting Student and Public Interests by ensuring every student served at our school receives measurable, monitored, and mission-driven educational opportunity.

### Response to Concern #2

The State of Tennessee explicitly defines the allowable target population for Opportunity Charter Schools under T.C.A. § 49-13-111. The law clearly outlines that eligible students include those who are:

- Two or more years behind grade level;
- Retained in a grade two or more times;
- Eligible for placement in juvenile detention;
- In state custody;
- Pregnant or parenting;
- Chronically absent (defined as 10% or more missed school days);
- Previously dropped out of school; or
- Subjected to repeated abuse or neglect.

## **Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals**

### ***(Required for All Sponsors)***

Given this statutory clarity, Still I Rise Academy's identification process will comply directly with these state-defined criteria.

#### **Methods for Identifying the Targeted Groups and Pathways**

Still I Rise Academy applied as an Opportunity Charter School under T.C.A. § 49-13-111, which provides specific eligibility criteria for the at-risk student populations we are authorized to serve. These include youth who have dropped out, are significantly behind academically, are chronically absent, pregnant or parenting, in state custody, or have experienced abuse or trauma. Our identification methods are aligned with these definitions and will be implemented as follows:

##### **1. Data-Driven Intake and Verification Process:**

During enrollment, the school will use a Targeted Enrollment Verification Form completed by parents/guardians and cross-referenced with prior school records, discipline records, truancy reports, and custody documentation (if applicable). This form will include clear questions aligned with the state's Opportunity School eligibility factors, including:

- Grade retention history;
- Truancy or attendance patterns (10% or more absenteeism);
- Disciplinary or juvenile justice involvement;
- Foster care or custody status (with DCS confirmation, if necessary);
- History of dropout or withdrawal;
- Pregnancy or parenting status;
- Documented abuse/neglect (optional disclosure supported by counseling staff).

##### **2. Referral Partnerships:**

We will establish referral pipelines with local juvenile courts, Department of Children's Services (DCS),

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youth shelters, alternative schools, and community organizations (e.g., The Shalom House of Memphis, No Mistakes Allowed LLC, and the Shelby County Juvenile Justice Division) to directly identify students meeting the defined eligibility criteria.

### 3. Trauma-Informed Intake Interviews:

Every prospective student will meet with a counselor or intake specialist to ensure we understand their academic and social history. These interviews will inform placement in one of our three core pathways:

- Credit Recovery Pathway for over-age, under-credited students;
- Workforce Readiness Pathway including CNA, CTE, and dual-enrollment opportunities;
- Academic Acceleration Pathway for students who demonstrate readiness to graduate on an early or traditional timeline with added support services.

### 4. Continuous Monitoring of Enrollment Eligibility:

Enrollment eligibility will be audited each quarter by the Compliance Officer and Principal to ensure continued alignment with Opportunity Charter School regulations and to report data trends to the governing board and the Tennessee Department of Education.

### Conclusion:

Still I Rise Academy's identification methods are not arbitrary or unclear—they are directly aligned with Tennessee law, community data, and the school's mission to serve the most vulnerable youth. Furthermore, each pathway within the academic plan is tailored to ensure re-engagement and success for these identified groups.

### **Response to Concern #3: Measurable Descriptions of How the School Will Achieve Its Mission**

Still I Rise Academy's mission is to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate (ME<sup>2</sup>) students who have been overlooked, underserved, or disconnected from traditional public education. As an Opportunity Charter School, we specifically target youth who have dropped out, are two or more years behind grade level, are pregnant or parenting, chronically absent, in state custody, or who have experienced significant trauma. While our mission is rooted in re-engagement and empowerment, it is equally



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anchored in measurable academic, behavioral, and postsecondary outcomes.

To ensure that our mission is fully realized and not merely aspirational, we have developed clear metrics, interventions, and systems of accountability that will guide and measure our success:

### 1. Mission-Aligned Performance Measures

Still I Rise Academy's mission—to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate (ME<sup>2</sup>)—will be realized through specific, measurable goals that are tracked and evaluated regularly. Below are the aligned outcomes, tools, and monitoring strategies for each component of our mission:

#### 1. Motivate

- Goal: Improve student daily attendance to at least 80% annually and reduce chronic absenteeism to under 20%.
- Measurement Tools: PowerSchool attendance data, monthly attendance reports, family engagement logs.
- Monitoring Frequency: Attendance data will be reviewed monthly by the school leadership and Attendance Support Team to identify at-risk students and deploy intervention plans early.

#### 2. Educate

- Goal: Ensure that at least 65% of students demonstrate 1.5 years of academic growth annually in both reading and math.
- Measurement Tools: NWEA MAP Growth assessments (Fall, Winter, Spring), TCAP and End-of-Course (EOC) exam results, teacher-generated assessments, and classroom-level progress monitoring.
- Monitoring Frequency: Formal assessments will occur three times per year (fall, winter, and spring). Results will be reviewed with teachers and academic intervention teams every 6-8 weeks.

#### 3. Elevate

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- Goal: 100% of students will have a defined postsecondary or career plan by 11th grade; 75% of students will graduate with a diploma plus either an industry-recognized credential or dual enrollment credit.
- Measurement Tools: Naviance career planning platform, transcript audits, dual enrollment records, CNA/CTE certification completion data, and counselor case management logs.
- Monitoring Frequency: Postsecondary progress will be reviewed twice per year (fall and spring) with student support teams and reviewed by the Board's Academic Excellence Committee.

These performance measures will guide school-wide decision-making, ensure accountability to our mission, and demonstrate our commitment to supporting vulnerable student populations with structure, opportunity, and measurable success.

## **2.**

### **Embedded Programmatic Strategies Aligned to Our Mission**

- Empower Hour (Daily): Embedded morning sessions focused on SEL, trauma-informed check-ins, motivation, and restorative practices—designed to rebuild trust and strengthen student engagement.
- Credit Recovery Program: Utilizes Edgenuity and faculty-led tutorials to support students who are behind in credits, with biweekly progress monitoring.
- Saturday Academy & Summer Bridge: Required for students who need extended time to meet graduation benchmarks or catch up on missed competencies.
- Postsecondary Pathways: In partnership with William & Johnson Career College, students will have access to a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification program and dual enrollment in a Business Administration degree track.

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- Mentorship & Wraparound Support: Through partnerships with From the Streets to Wall Street Foundation and The Shalom House, students will receive financial literacy, trauma-informed counseling, and peer mentorship.

### **3.**

#### **Leadership Accountability**

The Principal, Executive Director, and the Academic Excellence Committee of the Board will:

- Review monthly dashboards on attendance, growth, and behavior;
- Hold quarterly data reviews with instructional staff to realign interventions;
- Publicly report progress to stakeholders and parents through newsletters and town halls;
- Adjust the school improvement plan annually based on these measurable benchmarks.

### **4.**

#### **Alignment with Tennessee's Opportunity Charter School Requirements**

Our mission outcomes are directly aligned with the accountability metrics defined by the Opportunity Public Charter School Framework, including:

- Growth and achievement for the lowest-performing 25% of students;
- Increase in graduation and career readiness metrics;
- Reduction in chronic absenteeism;

## Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals

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- Enhanced postsecondary enrollment, dual credit, and certification attainment.

### Conclusion

Still I Rise Academy's mission is not simply visionary—it is operationalized through clearly defined goals, metrics, and accountability systems that ensure every student is supported and elevated. We are fully committed to proving that with the right structure, data use, and relationships, even the most at-risk students can achieve excellence.

### Response to Concern #4: Alignment with State and Authorizer Accountability Systems

Still I Rise Academy demonstrates a strong understanding of Tennessee's state accountability system and the authorizer's performance expectations, particularly as an Opportunity Public Charter School. Our mission-aligned goals are specifically designed to align with the Tennessee Department of Education's (TDOE) Opportunity Framework, which evaluates school performance using a letter grade system (A-F) based on key academic indicators.

To clarify and strengthen alignment:

1.

### State Accountability System Alignment

We are fully aligned with the four weighted components of Tennessee's charter school accountability system, particularly as codified for Opportunity Schools:

- Achievement (TCAP Performance):

Aligned Goal: 65% of students will score On Track or Mastered in ELA and Math by Year 5.

Measurement: TCAP and EOC performance data, reviewed annually.

- Growth (TVAAS):

Aligned Goal: Students will demonstrate 1.5 years of growth annually in reading and math, exceeding the TVAAS level 3 benchmark.

Measurement: TVAAS composite scores, reviewed annually with mid-year NWEA MAP data.



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- Growth – Lowest 25%:

Aligned Goal: The lowest quartile of students will meet or exceed annual growth expectations, as determined by TVAAS subgroup data.

Measurement: Student subgroup reports, reviewed each semester to drive Tier II and III interventions.

- College & Career Readiness (for High School Grades):

Aligned Goal: At least 75% of graduates will earn an industry credential or dual enrollment credit.

Measurement: Certification logs, dual enrollment transcripts, ACT improvement data.

These indicators directly reflect how we will track and evaluate our Academic Performance Goals, as detailed in Section 1.1.

## 2.

### Authorizer Accountability Alignment

Shelby County Schools, as the authorizer, requires charter schools to align with their Charter School Performance Framework, which includes:

- Academic: Student proficiency, growth, and subgroup performance.
- Organizational: Board governance, compliance with laws and policies, and student/family engagement.
- Financial: Budget viability, clean audits, and long-term sustainability.

Our goals under Organizational and Financial Performance (e.g., 90% board meeting attendance, annual clean audits, 10% reserve fund) are directly tied to these expectations.

We will submit annual data to both the TDOE and our authorizer, using the dashboards, portals, and site visit instruments required. Our Board's Governance & Academic Excellence Committees will

## **Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals**

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monitor progress quarterly to ensure compliance and course correction.

### **Response to Concern #5: Goal Setting, Monitoring, and Revision Plan**

Still I Rise Academy will implement a comprehensive, data-driven process to set, monitor, and revise academic, organizational, operational, and financial goals on an ongoing basis. This process is embedded in our governance model, instructional leadership structure, and annual planning cycle to ensure continuous improvement and accountability.

#### **1.**

### **Goal Setting Process**

Goals will be established annually prior to the start of each school year by the school leadership team and approved by the Board of Directors. These goals will be:

- Aligned with our mission to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate (ME<sup>2</sup>) students facing significant barriers to academic success.
- Directly mapped to performance expectations under the Tennessee State Accountability System (e.g., TVAAS, TCAP, ACT) and the authorizer's performance framework.
- Informed by prior year performance data, student subgroup outcomes, formative benchmark trends (e.g., NWEA MAP), and feedback from parents, students, and teachers.

#### **2.**

### **Monitoring Goals During the Year**

Still I Rise Academy will utilize a quarterly data cycle to monitor progress toward all performance goals:

- Academic Goals: Teachers and instructional leaders will meet weekly to review formative assessment data and NWEA MAP benchmark results (administered three times per year). The Academic Excellence Committee will present progress to the Board quarterly.
- Organizational & Operational Goals: Attendance, behavior, recruitment, and stakeholder

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engagement metrics will be tracked weekly and reviewed monthly by the administrative team. The Governance & Compliance Committee will review these indicators quarterly.

- Financial Goals: The Finance & Operations Committee will review expenditures, fundraising, and revenue against projections monthly. Adjustments will be made in collaboration with the Executive Director and Board Treasurer.

Progress toward goals will be documented in a Quarterly School Performance Dashboard, shared internally and with the authorizer.

### **3.**

#### **Revision of Goals**

If mid-year data indicates that we are significantly off-track from achieving a goal, the leadership team will initiate a structured revision process:

- Root Cause Analysis: Leadership will identify the underlying factors using data disaggregation and staff/family feedback.
- SMART Goal Adjustment: Revised goals will remain Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound.
- Board Oversight: Any substantial revisions will require board approval and documentation in board meeting minutes.

Additionally, goals may be refined annually based on updated state accountability guidance, changes in student needs, or evolving community demographics.

## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

**(Required for All Sponsors)**

Still I Rise Academy Charter School Application

### **Section 1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

#### **(a) Academic Focus**

Still I Rise Academy's academic focus is College and Career Readiness, ensuring that students, particularly those facing educational and personal challenges, are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and opportunities to pursue higher education, vocational training, or direct entry into the workforce. While we accept all eligible students, our primary focus is on re-engaging students who have dropped out, been retained twice, are chronically absent, are pregnant or parenting, or have experienced abuse or neglect.

To achieve this, we will implement a rigorous, data-driven academic program tailored to close achievement gaps, improve student growth, and provide alternative pathways to post-secondary success, aligning with the Opportunity Public Charter School Accountability Framework under PC 1066.

#### **(b) Academic Plan & Alignment to Mission and Goals**

Still I Rise Academy will utilize a trauma-informed, competency-based learning model designed to meet students where they are and accelerate their academic progress. Our curriculum will be aligned to Tennessee Academic Standards and will integrate college and career readiness measures into daily instruction.

Key Strategies in Our Academic Plan:

1. **Personalized Learning Paths** – Each student will receive a customized education plan that integrates credit recovery, dual enrollment, and career-technical education (CTE).
2. **Project-Based and Experiential Learning** – Students will engage in real-world, hands-on learning experiences to reinforce academic concepts and build critical thinking skills.
3. **College and Career Readiness Programming** – Students will have access to dual enrollment, internships, apprenticeships, industry certification programs, and workforce development partnerships.
4. **Focus Then Refocus Plan** – Our academic approach is designed to first focus on addressing each student's current challenges and then refocus on their long-term academic and career goals.

Empower Hour: Daily School Presentations to Reinforce Our Mission



## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

### ***(Required for All Sponsors)***

To create an engaging and supportive school culture, Still I Rise Academy will implement Empower Hour, a structured daily school-wide presentation designed to motivate, encourage, and support students. Empower Hour will also increase school attendance by making these sessions one of the most exciting and important parts of the day, ensuring students do not want to miss them.

- **Monday Motivation** – A school-wide assembly designed to inspire and uplift students, reinforcing resilience, self-confidence, and a growth mindset. This will feature guest speakers from diverse backgrounds, including successful entrepreneurs, community leaders, former at-risk students who have overcome challenges, and professionals from various industries. These speakers will share their journeys, offer encouragement, and provide real-world insights into overcoming obstacles.
- **Tuesday Talks** – A safe space for students to express themselves, release stress, discuss personal struggles, and receive emotional support from peers and staff.
- **Wednesday Work** – A structured time dedicated to catching up on assignments and academic progress, ensuring students stay on track and receive support where needed.
- **Thursday Together** – Small group activities focused on team building, networking, and collaborative learning, fostering a sense of belonging and peer support.
- **Friday Finish Line** – A goal-setting and review session where students complete weekly assignments, track their progress, and review IEP goals, preparing them for the next academic week.

This structured Empower Hour will create a vibrant and engaging school culture where students feel motivated to attend every day, fostering a sense of belonging, purpose, and accountability.

### **(c) Key Characteristics of the Academic Plan**

#### **1. Educational Philosophy & Instructional Methods**

Our academic model is student-centered, competency-based, and trauma-informed, prioritizing flexibility, social-emotional learning, and individualized academic supports.

- **Competency-Based Learning** – Students progress based on mastery rather than seat time.
- **Trauma-Informed Practices** – Recognizing and addressing the impact of adversity on learning through small group instruction, mentorship, and mental health supports.
- **Blended Learning Approach** – A combination of direct instruction, digital learning platforms, and hands-on experiential learning ensures engagement and accessibility.



## Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Restorative Justice & Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) – Developing students' interpersonal skills, conflict resolution abilities, and emotional resilience.

### 2. Innovation: Professional Development & “Focus Then Refocus Plan”

- All teachers and staff will undergo extensive professional development on the five key student populations served (dropouts, retained students, chronically absent students, pregnant/parenting students, and students experiencing trauma).
- The “Focus Then Refocus Plan” will guide instruction and student support:
- Focus: Addressing students' current challenges through targeted interventions and personalized learning.
- Refocus: Transitioning students toward academic achievement, career readiness, and post-secondary opportunities.

### (d) Evidence Supporting Student Performance and Closing Achievement Gaps

Still I Rise Academy's academic plan is grounded in research-based best practices proven to accelerate learning and close achievement gaps.

- Credit Recovery & Competency-Based Learning – Programs like these have been shown to help at-risk students regain lost credits and graduate on time.
- Personalized Learning & Small Group Instruction – Studies indicate that students who receive individualized instruction demonstrate significant academic gains.
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) & Trauma-Informed Approaches – Research shows SEL improves academic performance, behavior, and graduation rates among at-risk populations.
- College & Career Readiness Focus – By emphasizing dual enrollment, work-based learning, and industry certifications, we ensure students graduate with viable pathways to employment or higher education.

### (e) Class Sizes & Structure

Still I Rise Academy will maintain small class sizes to ensure individualized attention and strong student-teacher relationships:

**Grade Level**

**Class Size**

**Structure**

## Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Middle School (6-8)	18-22 students	Self-contained core classes with subject-area specialists for key subjects.
High School (9-12)	20-25 students	Block scheduling, competency-based learning, and college/career preparatory pathways.

### (f) Curriculum Overview & Alignment to Tennessee Standards

Our curriculum will be fully aligned to the Tennessee Academic Standards and designed to prepare students for post-secondary success.

- Core Subjects: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.
- College & Career Readiness Pathways:
- Dual enrollment opportunities through local colleges.
- CTE programs leading to industry-recognized certifications.
- Work-based learning experiences with local businesses and organizations.
- Credit Recovery & Intervention Programs: Tailored learning plans for students behind in credits, including summer and after-school programs.
- Personalized Literacy & Numeracy Programs: Implementing Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) aligned with Tennessee guidelines to support struggling students.

#### Addressing Curriculum Gaps

- Supplemental Instructional Resources – If gaps exist between the curriculum and Tennessee Academic Standards, additional instructional materials and interventions will be incorporated.
- Customized Learning Plans – Students will be assessed upon enrollment, and their curriculum will be adjusted accordingly.

## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **(g) Addressing Academic Underperformance: RTI<sup>2</sup> & Intervention Strategies**

Still I Rise Academy will implement a tiered intervention system aligned with Tennessee's Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) to identify and support struggling students.

Key Components of RTI<sup>2</sup> at Still I Rise Academy:

1. Tier 1 (Core Instruction) – High-quality, differentiated instruction in all classrooms.
2. Tier 2 (Targeted Interventions) – Small-group tutoring, after-school academic support, and credit recovery programs.
3. Tier 3 (Intensive Interventions) – One-on-one academic support, special education services, and individualized learning plans.

### **Conclusion: How Still I Rise Academy Meets Tennessee's Accountability Framework**

By providing personalized learning pathways, rigorous college and career preparation, structured daily motivation with guest speakers, and comprehensive social-emotional support through Empower Hour, Still I Rise Academy will increase student attendance, close achievement gaps, and empower students toward a bright and self-sufficient future.

### **Response to Concern #1 – Comprehensive Improvement Plan to Close Achievement Gaps**

Still I Rise Academy's academic model is intentionally designed to close achievement gaps for the state's most vulnerable student populations, as outlined under Tennessee's Opportunity Charter School eligibility criteria. Our students are primarily overage, under-credited, chronically absent, previously retained, and/or have experienced homelessness, trauma, or other life barriers. As such, our academic plan is built on an integrated improvement model focused on the following evidence-based strategies:

## **I. Data-Driven Instruction and Tiered Support**

We will implement a robust, data-driven instructional framework anchored in weekly formative assessments, TNReady-aligned diagnostics, and benchmark testing through MAP Growth. Teachers will receive weekly data reports to adjust instruction, form flexible student groupings, and personalize interventions.

- RTI<sup>2</sup> Model: Students identified through universal screeners and classroom data will be placed into Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions in ELA and math, with progress monitored every 2–3

## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

weeks.

- Empower Hour: This daily 60-minute block will be used for direct academic remediation, credit recovery, and intervention services tailored to students' specific academic deficits.

### **II. Mastery-Based Learning and Credit Recovery**

Understanding that many students will enter several grade levels behind, our curriculum integrates mastery-based pacing to allow students to build competency before progressing. Additionally, our credit recovery system will leverage online and teacher-facilitated instruction to close credit gaps without compromising quality.

- Flexible Pathways: Students can complete recovery courses, dual enrollment credits, and career certifications during extended day or Saturday sessions.
- Acceleration Opportunities: Students who demonstrate proficiency early will engage in EPSO, WBL, and college prep tracks.

### **III. Teacher Coaching and Continuous Improvement**

All instructional staff will participate in weekly professional learning communities (PLCs) focused on gap-closing instructional practices, trauma-informed pedagogy, and high-leverage teaching strategies for struggling learners.

- Biweekly Instructional Coaching: Every teacher will receive real-time feedback and coaching aligned with observation data and classroom outcomes.
- Quarterly Data Conferences: Teachers, leaders, and interventionists will meet quarterly to review subgroup performance and revise instructional strategies.

### **IV. Differentiated Instruction and Inclusive Practices**

To support students with IEPs, ELs, and gifted learners, our academic team will ensure all instructional materials are accessible and accommodations are embedded. Co-teaching models and small-group interventions will ensure students receive individualized instruction in the least restrictive environment.



## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

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### **V. Culture of High Expectations**

We will cultivate a culture of accountability and belief in student potential. Students will participate in goal-setting sessions, monitor their own growth through digital portfolios, and celebrate academic milestones regularly.

#### **Monitoring and Adjustment**

The leadership team will monitor achievement gaps through real-time dashboards disaggregated by subgroup (SWD, EL, economically disadvantaged, etc.). The Data & Compliance Coordinator will meet with the Principal monthly to revise the school-wide intervention plan based on performance trends.

This comprehensive model ensures that academic growth is not only measured but actively pursued for every student, with the flexibility, scaffolding, and rigor needed to reverse years of underperformance. Our plan reflects best practices from high-performing alternative schools and remains deeply aligned with our ME<sup>2</sup> mission: to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate.

#### **Response to Concern #2 – Details on Programming, Diploma Types, EPSO, WBL, and High School Design for Target Demographic**

Still I Rise Academy is designed to serve students in grades 6–12 who are disproportionately underserved, including overage, under-credited youth, students who have been retained, previously dropped out, chronically absent, pregnant/parenting, homeless, or trauma-impacted. Given this reality, we have developed a comprehensive and trauma-informed academic structure that intentionally supports this demographic in earning a high school diploma, gaining real-world work experience, and accessing early postsecondary pathways.

### **I. Diploma Pathways**

Still I Rise Academy will offer all students access to the Tennessee Diploma per State Board Policy 2.103. Students will be eligible to pursue:

- Standard High School Diploma (22 credits minimum)
- Alternate Academic Diploma (AAD) and Special Education Diploma for eligible students with disabilities (in compliance with IDEA and state requirements)



## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Academic counseling will begin as early as 8th grade. Students will have Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) that account for their age, credit status, postsecondary goals, and support needs. These ILPs will be revisited semi-annually with student, parent, counselor, and teacher participation.

### **II. High School Requirements & Credit Structure**

To address the credit deficits typical of our target population:

- Year-round calendar includes:
  - 180 school days plus 20 intersession/extended learning days
  - Saturday credit recovery sessions (bi-weekly)
  - Optional summer learning for remediation and acceleration
- Block schedule: 4 periods per semester = up to 8 credits per year
- Credit recovery courses: Offered through both online platforms (e.g., Edgenuity, Apex) and teacher-led interventions

### **III. Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSO)**

Still I Rise Academy will provide a robust EPSO program beginning in Year 2, with funding supported by Tennessee's Dual Enrollment Grant, the LEA-generated per pupil allocation, and partnerships with institutions such as William & Johnson Career College.

EPSO offerings will include:

- Dual enrollment courses in Business Administration and Health Sciences (CNA track)
- Statewide Dual Credit (SDC) and Industry Certification opportunities (e.g., Microsoft Office, OSHA 10)
- Advanced Placement (AP) course options (e.g., AP English, AP US Government) available through virtual partnerships for advanced students

## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **IV. Work-Based Learning (WBL)**

To serve students seeking immediate career pathways, Still I Rise Academy will launch a career-integrated Work-Based Learning (WBL) program by Year 2, facilitated by a dedicated WBL Coordinator.

Key features:

- Partner employers: All About You Home Healthcare (health) and No Mistakes Allowed LLC (entrepreneurship)
- Job shadowing, paid internships, and mentorships in high-demand fields
- CTE Pathways aligned with the Tennessee Department of Education, including:
  - Business Management
  - Nursing Services
  - Aviation Maintenance (with FedEx advisory support)

Students will be placed in WBL experiences through a structured process:

- WBL Interest Inventory
- Career Pathway Planning (grades 9–12)
- Pre-placement training in professionalism, time management, and digital skills

### **V. Classroom Structure and Design**

Understanding that many students have disengaged from traditional school environments, classrooms will be:

- Smaller in size (15–25 students) to support individualized instruction

## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Staffed with teachers trained in trauma-informed instruction
- Integrated with flexible learning models including:
  - Online components for credit recovery
  - Project-based learning (PBL) modules for real-world application
  - Dedicated “Empower Hour” for targeted academic support

### **VI. Physical Locations and Facilities**

- EPSO courses will be held on campus in computer labs outfitted for virtual instruction and at partner sites such as William & Johnson Career College.
- WBL training and internships will occur both on campus (preparation phase) and in the field with vetted business and healthcare partners.
- The facility layout includes:
  - A designated Career Readiness Lab
  - Dual-use space for job simulation and CTE workshops

### **VII. Funding Sources**

Funding for EPSO and WBL will be supported through:

- Per-pupil state funding
- Charter School Program (CSP) implementation grant

## Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards

(Required for All Sponsors)

- In-kind partnerships with local colleges and employers

### Response to Concern #3 – Clarifying Curriculum, Innovation, and Interventions

Still I Rise Academy is designed as an Opportunity Public Charter School with a clear focus on re-engaging students who have struggled in traditional academic environments. Our school will implement a mission-aligned, trauma-informed, and career-integrated curriculum that combines rigorous academics with real-world relevance. The curriculum is not only standards-based and aligned with Tennessee Academic Standards, but also tailored to meet the needs of students who are over-age and under-credited, previously retained, chronically absent, or facing socio-emotional and economic challenges.

### Unique and Innovative Curriculum

1. ME<sup>2</sup> Framework (Motivate, Educate, Elevate):

This is our foundational instructional approach built into every course. It connects motivation and engagement to academic content, while elevating student voices through culturally responsive teaching, project-based learning, and mentorship.

2. Empower Hour:

A daily 45-minute block embedded in the schedule to support social-emotional learning, data-informed intervention, academic tutoring, and restorative practices. This structure addresses both academic and behavioral needs in real time.

3. Dual Enrollment & Industry Certification Integration:

Through formal MOUs with William & Johnson Career College and employer partners such as All About You Home Healthcare and No Mistakes Allowed LLC, students will access embedded CNA certification, Business Administration dual enrollment, and entrepreneurship mentoring by 11th and 12th grade.

4. Career Pathways:

We will implement curriculum-aligned pathways in:

- Healthcare (leading to CNA certification and postsecondary nursing pathways)

## Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Entrepreneurship (with real-world business plan development and pitch competitions)
- Technical Trades (supported through external partnerships and internships)

### 5. Tiered RTI<sup>2</sup> Implementation:

- Tier 1: High-quality universal instruction using embedded formative assessments.
- Tier 2: Targeted small-group instruction during Empower Hour for students who need support in core areas.
- Tier 3: Intensive interventions with individualized academic plans led by intervention specialists, and progress monitoring every two weeks.

### 6. Project-Based Learning (PBL):

Students will participate in interdisciplinary projects that address real-world challenges in their communities. This includes a “Community Impact Capstone” required for graduation, allowing students to present their growth in writing, research, speaking, and leadership.

## Addressing Underperformance & Gaps

Still I Rise Academy's data-driven approach will include:

- Quarterly benchmark assessments using NWEA MAP and state-aligned tools.
- Weekly data team meetings to review subgroup performance and revise interventions.
- Real-time intervention logs tracked by the Student Support Team (SST).
- Parent access to academic dashboards and individualized learning plans.



## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **Work-Based Learning (WBL)**

Our WBL plan includes:

- Job shadowing and career mentorships as early as 9th grade.
- Internships and co-ops in grades 11–12 aligned to each student's chosen career pathway.
- WBL advisory committee to ensure quality, safety, and industry alignment.
- Utilization of state WBL standards and tracking tools for documentation and accountability.

Conclusion:

Still I Rise Academy's curriculum is innovative not just in content, but in structure and delivery. By embedding work-based learning, trauma-informed practices, and rigorous intervention systems directly into the daily schedule, our school model is purpose-built for students who need an alternative to traditional schools. This comprehensive academic model meets both state standards and the needs of our unique student population.

### **Response to Concern #4 – Literacy Remediation Instruction Plan**

As a proposed Opportunity Public Charter School, Still I Rise Academy recognizes that many of our incoming students will arrive performing significantly below grade level in reading and language arts due to chronic absenteeism, prior disengagement, or lack of appropriate interventions in previous settings. Addressing literacy gaps is therefore central to our mission to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate our at-risk student population.

### **Tiered Literacy Remediation Framework**

Still I Rise Academy will implement a tiered literacy remediation plan, fully aligned with Tennessee's RTI<sup>2</sup> framework and grounded in evidence-based practices.

#### **Tier 1 – High-Quality Core Literacy Instruction**

- All students will receive daily instruction using a research-based, standards-aligned ELA

## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

curriculum (e.g., Savvas myPerspectives or HMH Into Literature).

- Instruction will incorporate scaffolded support, culturally responsive texts, and embedded vocabulary strategies to ensure accessibility.
- Teachers will utilize formative assessment strategies during instruction to continuously monitor progress and adjust support.

### **Tier 2 – Targeted Literacy Interventions**

- Students identified as reading below grade level via universal screener data (e.g., NWEA MAP Reading, EasyCBM, or aimswebPlus) will be placed into small-group Tier 2 literacy remediation sessions during the daily Empower Hour.
- Interventions will include phonics, fluency, comprehension, and writing supports using state-approved materials (e.g., Achieve3000, Read 180, or Sonday System).

### **Tier 3 – Intensive Individualized Literacy Support**

- Students reading more than two grade levels below will receive Tier 3 interventions delivered by certified interventionists or special education staff in pull-out or push-in formats.
- These students will receive individualized reading plans, and their progress will be monitored every 2 weeks through curriculum-embedded and progress-monitoring assessments.
- For students with IEPs, reading remediation services will align with goals specified in their plans and tracked accordingly.

### **Literacy-Focused Empower Hour**

- Our daily Empower Hour includes structured reading remediation blocks, writing labs, and drop-in tutoring led by interventionists and ELA teachers.
- Students will also engage in peer reading circles, vocabulary development games, and literacy-focused advisory sessions.

## **Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **Ongoing Professional Development**

- All teachers will receive monthly professional development in literacy differentiation, explicit reading strategies, and culturally responsive literacy instruction.
- The school's Literacy Lead Teacher will facilitate biweekly data meetings to analyze reading scores, update intervention groups, and adjust instructional strategies based on subgroup data.

### **Monitoring and Accountability**

- The school will track:
  - Growth on universal screeners (fall, winter, spring)
  - Quarterly benchmark exams
  - Daily lesson-based formative checks
  - State ELA TCAP scores
- Data will be disaggregated by subgroup (e.g., EL, SWD, economically disadvantaged) and reported to the Board's Academic Excellence Committee each quarter.

#### **Conclusion:**

Still I Rise Academy's literacy remediation plan is comprehensive, targeted, and embedded within our daily structure and intervention philosophy. It directly addresses the needs of Opportunity School students and reflects best practices for closing literacy gaps and accelerating reading growth for historically underserved learners.

## ***Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Stondards***

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

### (Required for All Sponsors)

#### Section 1.3 - Assessments

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-111, Still I Rise Academy will administer all state-mandated assessments in compliance with Tennessee's accountability framework. In addition to these required assessments, we will implement a comprehensive internal assessment system designed to track student progress, identify learning gaps, and provide targeted interventions to ensure academic growth for all students, particularly those who have historically faced educational challenges.

#### (a) Formative and Summative Assessments

To effectively determine the academic needs of individual students and student sub-groups, Still I Rise Academy will utilize a combination of formative and summative assessments that align with our competency-based, trauma-informed academic model and Tennessee Academic Standards.

#### Assessment Tools and Alignment to Academic Plan

Assessment Type	Purpose	Frequency	Administered By
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TNReady (State-Mandated)	Measures proficiency in Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies.		
Annually	School Testing Coordinator & Licensed Teachers		

Benchmark Assessments (MAP Growth - NWEA)	Tracks student progress in reading and math, measuring growth and readiness for grade-level standards.	3 times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring)	Instructional Coaches & Classroom Teachers
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i-Ready Diagnostic	Identifies learning gaps in reading and math, providing individualized learning pathways.	3 times per year	RTI <sup>2</sup> Interventionists & Classroom Teachers
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STAR Assessments	Measures progress in literacy and numeracy for targeted intervention students.	Monthly	Special Education Teachers & RTI <sup>2</sup> Coordinators
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Classroom-Based Formative Assessments	Ongoing quizzes, discussions, and exit tickets to monitor daily learning.	Weekly	Classroom Teachers
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Common Summative Assessments	End-of-unit exams to assess mastery of key concepts.	Every 6-9 weeks	Department Heads & Teachers
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ACT/WorkKeys	Measures college and career readiness skills for high school students.	Once per year	School Counselors & Testing Coordinator
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Career & Technical Education (CTE) Certification Exams	Industry-aligned assessments for students in CTE pathways.	As scheduled per certification	CTE Instructors
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## Section 1.3 – Assessments

### *(Required for All Sponsors)*

Each of these assessments is strategically integrated into our instructional framework to drive data-informed decisions, personalize instruction, and close achievement gaps.

#### (b) Plan for Collecting and Analyzing Academic Data

To ensure that every student makes measurable academic progress, Still I Rise Academy will implement a Data-Driven Instructional Cycle (DDIC) that continuously collects, analyzes, and applies assessment data to improve student outcomes.

Steps in the Data Collection & Analysis Process:

1. Baseline Assessment: Students will take diagnostic assessments (i-Ready, MAP Growth) at the beginning of the year to establish individual learning levels.
2. Progress Monitoring: Teachers and interventionists will track student growth using formative assessments, monthly STAR testing, and quarterly benchmark assessments.
3. Data Meetings & Analysis:
  - Weekly PLC (Professional Learning Community) Meetings – Teachers analyze classroom-based data to adjust lesson plans.
  - Monthly RTI<sup>2</sup> Meetings – Review intervention data and adjust supports for struggling students.
  - Quarterly Data Reviews – School-wide leadership meetings to evaluate benchmark results and adjust instructional strategies.
4. Individualized Student Plans: Based on assessment data, personalized learning plans will be developed and updated for students requiring additional academic support.
5. Family Engagement: Regular parent-teacher conferences will be held to discuss student progress, assessment results, and intervention strategies.

#### How Data Drives Professional Development

Instructional Adjustments: Teachers will use real-time assessment data to modify lesson plans, differentiate instruction, and implement targeted interventions.

Professional Development Focus Areas:

Using data dashboards to track student progress.

Strategies for closing achievement gaps in reading and math.

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Training on Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).

Implementing trauma-informed instructional strategies based on student data trends.

Leveraging assessment results to guide curriculum pacing and differentiation strategies.

### (c) Training and Support for Data Interpretation & Instructional Improvement

To ensure school leadership and teachers can effectively analyze, interpret, and apply student performance data, Still I Rise Academy will provide ongoing training and coaching on data utilization.

Professional Development & Support for Staff:

1. Pre-Service Data Training: Before the school year begins, all staff will receive intensive training on:

Understanding state and local assessment systems.

Using assessment tools such as i-Ready, NWEA MAP, and STAR Assessments.

Implementing data-driven instruction and interventions.

2. Weekly Data PLCs (Professional Learning Communities): Teachers will participate in collaborative data reviews to analyze student performance, share best practices, and adjust instructional strategies.

3. Quarterly Data Summits: Teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators will engage in school-wide data analysis sessions to identify trends, evaluate program effectiveness, and adjust curriculum pacing as needed.

4. Coaching & Mentorship Model:

Instructional Coaches will work one-on-one with teachers to help them use student data to improve lesson delivery and differentiation.

RTI<sup>2</sup> Coordinators will provide targeted support in using data to implement interventions and monitor struggling students.

5. Technology-Driven Data Monitoring:

Staff will use data dashboards that visually display student growth and achievement trends in real-time.

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

### (Required for All Sponsors)

Teachers will be trained in using adaptive learning platforms (i-Ready, MAP Growth) to deliver personalized instruction based on assessment results.

#### 6. Empower Hour Data Reflection:

As part of Friday Finish Line, students will review their weekly progress, set academic goals, and reflect on their learning achievements.

This process will foster student ownership of learning while providing teachers with real-time insights into areas needing additional support.

#### Conclusion: Ensuring Student Growth & Achievement

By implementing a comprehensive assessment framework, frequent data-driven instructional reviews, and ongoing professional development for educators, Still I Rise Academy will ensure that every student receives the support they need to succeed academically.

#### Key Outcomes of Our Assessment Plan:

- ✓ Identify and close learning gaps through real-time data analysis.
- ✓ Drive instructional excellence through ongoing teacher training.
- ✓ Ensure students graduate college and career-ready by aligning assessments with post-secondary pathways.
- ✓ Use Empower Hour as a tool to engage students in their own learning progress and build a culture of academic ownership.

Through this structured, data-driven approach, Still I Rise Academy will foster a culture of continuous improvement, academic achievement, and student success.

#### Response to Concern #1: Academic Assessments – Types, Frequency, and Subgroup Analysis

Still I Rise Academy has strengthened its assessment framework to ensure a robust, multi-tiered, and data-driven strategy that supports academic achievement for all students—particularly students from historically underserved subgroups, including English Learners, students with disabilities, and at-risk youth.

#### Types of Assessments:

##### 1. Formative Assessments (Classroom-based, Weekly/Biweekly):

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Exit Tickets, Quizzes, Performance Tasks, Writing Samples
- Aligned with weekly objectives and Tennessee Academic Standards
- Administered by teachers in core content areas and elective courses
- Used to inform daily instruction and student grouping

### 2. Interim Benchmark Assessments (Quarterly):

- NWEA MAP Growth (Reading & Math)
  - Nationally normed, diagnostic, and aligned with TNReady
  - Allows for subgroup data disaggregation
  - Supports goal-setting for individual students and intervention placement
- Curriculum-Embedded Benchmarks (e.g., Eureka Math, CKLA Assessments)
  - Tracks mastery of unit standards and learning targets
  - Drives RTI<sup>2</sup> intervention grouping

### 3. Summative State Assessments:

- TNReady (Grades 6–8)
- EOC Exams (Grades 9–12)
- WIDA ACCESS 2.0 for English Learners
- TCAP-Alt (for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities)

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### Frequency and Cadence of Assessments

Still I Rise Academy will utilize a comprehensive assessment system to monitor student learning at multiple intervals. The timing and administration of each assessment type are as follows:

#### 1. Formative Assessments (Weekly to Biweekly):

- Administered by: Teachers
- Frequency: At least once per week per core subject
- Purpose: To check for understanding, adjust instruction in real-time, and provide immediate feedback to students
- Examples: Exit tickets, short quizzes, writing prompts, in-class tasks, and peer assessments

#### 2. Curriculum-Based Unit Assessments (End of Unit):

- Administered by: Teachers
- Frequency: Following completion of each instructional unit in core subject areas
- Purpose: To assess mastery of standards taught during the unit and guide re-teaching and enrichment
- Examples: Module exams from Eureka Math, knowledge checks from CKLA, science/lab assessments

#### 3. Benchmark Assessments – NWEA MAP Growth (Three Times Per Year):

- Administered by: RTI<sup>2</sup> Coordinator in coordination with Teachers
- Frequency: Fall (September), Winter (January), Spring (April/May)



## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Purpose: Diagnostic tool to measure student growth and academic trajectory in reading and math
- Use: To place students into appropriate RTI<sup>2</sup> tiers, differentiate instruction, and monitor subgroup trends

### 4. Progress Monitoring Assessments (Biweekly):

- Administered by: RTI<sup>2</sup> Interventionists and Special Education Teachers
- Frequency: Every two weeks for Tier II and Tier III students
- Purpose: To determine whether interventions are effective and if adjustments are needed
- Tools: EasyCBM, Aimsweb Plus, or similar

### 5. Summative State Assessments – TNReady / End-of-Course (Annual):

- Administered by: Testing Coordinator
- Frequency: Once per year (Spring testing window)
- Subjects: Math, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies
- Use: State accountability, school improvement planning, and teacher effectiveness

### 6. ACCESS for ELs – WIDA Assessment (Annual):

- Administered by: ESL Specialist
- Frequency: Once per year (Winter testing window)

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Purpose: To measure English proficiency levels and determine placement, accommodations, and supports for English Learners

### 7. PSAT/ACT Readiness Exams (Grades 9–12):

- Administered by: School Counselor or Testing Coordinator
- Frequency: Annually
- Purpose: To monitor postsecondary readiness, inform ACT prep programs, and guide EPSO opportunities

### Cadence of Data Review:

- Weekly: Teachers will analyze formative assessment data in PLCs
- Biweekly: RTI<sup>2</sup> teams will review progress monitoring results and update intervention plans
- Monthly: Data Days will be held for school-wide data reflection, subgroup analysis, and instructional planning
- Quarterly: School leadership team will review benchmark and attendance data to adjust pacing, staffing, and resource allocation

### Disaggregation and Subgroup Data Analysis:

All data will be disaggregated by key subgroups, including:

- English Learners
- Students with Disabilities
- Economically Disadvantaged Students

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Students with Attendance or Behavioral Risk Factors

Teachers, instructional coaches, and administrators will review this data during monthly Data Days and weekly PLC meetings. Subgroup trends will guide:

- Intervention assignment or intensification
- Additional scaffolding within core instruction
- Professional development needs
- Family engagement and support strategies

Staff Responsibilities:

- Testing Coordinator: Manages all state and national assessments
- RTI<sup>2</sup> Coordinator: Oversees MAP and progress monitoring implementation
- Teachers: Deliver classroom assessments, analyze results weekly
- Assistant Principal: Lead grade-level data reviews and coach teachers on instructional responses

This expanded assessment plan ensures that all students—especially those from at-risk groups—are closely monitored for academic progress and provided timely, targeted support. It reflects our deepened commitment to data-informed decision-making as an Opportunity Charter School and aligns with Tennessee’s accountability system and our ME<sup>2</sup> mission to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate.

Section 1.3 Response to Concern: Data-Informed Professional Development Plan

We appreciate the reviewer’s feedback and agree that a clear plan is necessary to demonstrate how data will be used to drive professional development for faculty and staff.

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Still I Rise Academy will implement a comprehensive, data-driven professional development (PD) cycle rooted in ongoing formative and summative assessment results, student growth data, classroom observation trends, and stakeholder feedback. The following steps will guide how data informs PD:

### 1. Quarterly Data Analysis Meetings

After each benchmark assessment cycle, instructional leadership—including the Principal, Academic Lead (this is one of the teachers), and Department Chairs—will facilitate structured data dives. During these meetings, trends in academic performance, student subgroup progress, and instructional challenges will be identified.

### 2. Individualized Teacher Action Plans (ITAPs)

Based on student performance data and classroom observation rubrics, each teacher will receive an ITAP outlining their focus areas for instructional growth. These plans will be co-developed with instructional coaches and tied directly to measurable outcomes.

### 3. Targeted PD Workshops

PD sessions will be developed based on the most pressing needs identified from data. For example:

- If ELA performance shows deficits in informational text comprehension, PD will include strategies for teaching complex texts.
- If math data reveals skill gaps in algebraic reasoning, PD will focus on manipulatives, math discourse, and task-based learning.

### 4. Ongoing Coaching and Support

Teachers will receive regular, non-evaluative instructional coaching aligned with their ITAP goals. Coaches will model lessons, co-plan, and observe instruction with immediate feedback loops to address identified challenges.

### 5. Mid-Year and End-of-Year PD Reviews

Leadership will compare student data at mid-year and year-end checkpoints to measure the impact of PD interventions. PD plans will be revised accordingly for maximum instructional effectiveness.

### 6. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

PLCs will meet biweekly to reflect on formative data, share best practices, and collaboratively address student misconceptions or underperformance.

This data-to-PD feedback loop ensures that professional development is not generic but instead responsive, strategic, and targeted—aligned with both the academic model and the school's mission to accelerate outcomes for opportunity youth.

By building PD around actual classroom and student data, Still I Rise Academy will continuously strengthen teacher capacity and ensure all students receive high-quality, effective instruction.

### Response to Concern #2 – Data-Driven Professional Development Plan

Still I Rise Academy is deeply committed to using student performance data to directly inform and drive professional development (PD) for all instructional staff. Our goal is to build a reflective and adaptive instructional team that continually improves based on student needs, subgroup trends, and assessment insights.

#### 1.

### Data-Driven PD Process Overview

We will implement a continuous improvement cycle aligned with our assessment system, where data analysis leads to tailored PD sessions throughout the year. The key steps in the cycle include:

- Data Collection: Weekly formative assessments, biweekly progress monitoring, NWEA MAP benchmark assessments (3x/year), and state testing
- Data Analysis: Teachers and administrators will meet in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and Data Days to analyze results
- PD Planning: Leadership will use assessment findings to plan targeted PD aligned with trends in performance, skill gaps, subgroup disparities, and instructional needs
- Implementation & Follow-Up: PD will be followed by classroom implementation with



## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

coaching, modeled lessons, and walkthroughs

- Ongoing Support: Additional PD topics will emerge from quarterly data reviews and teacher self-assessments

### 2.

#### **Types of PD Informed by Data**

The following PD focus areas will be selected based on evidence from academic data:

- Content Mastery & Standards Alignment: If NWEA MAP or TNReady results show low proficiency in specific standards, teachers will receive PD in content delivery aligned to Tennessee Academic Standards.
- Intervention Strategies & RTI<sup>2</sup> Implementation: Based on progress monitoring results, staff will receive PD in differentiated instruction, Tier II and III intervention planning, and use of progress monitoring tools like Aimsweb or EasyCBM.
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Subgroup data disaggregated by race, ELL status, and disability will inform PD around equity-focused instruction and inclusive practices.
- Formative Assessment Design & Use: If teachers struggle to respond to formative data, coaching will be provided on how to design, implement, and respond to classroom assessments.
- Supporting Special Populations: Data from IEPs, ILPs, and subgroup benchmarks will be used to deliver PD in special education accommodations, co-teaching models, and EL supports.

### 3.

#### **Cadence of PD Integration with Data**

- Weekly PLC Meetings: Include structured time for teachers to analyze data and identify needed strategies

## Section 1.3 – Assessments

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Monthly PD Days: Include sessions planned specifically around recent benchmark, progress monitoring, or subgroup results
- Quarterly Data Summits: Full-day sessions for cross-grade teams to review assessment results, revise goals, and plan instructional shifts

**4.**

### **Staff Involved in the PD Planning**

- Principal
- Data and Compliance Coordinator
- RTI<sup>2</sup> Coordinator
- EL and Special Populations Leads
- Instructional Coaches (as added in later years)

**5.**

### **Accountability and Evaluation**

We will use teacher surveys, coaching feedback, and student data trends to evaluate the impact of PD. Adjustments will be made quarterly to ensure ongoing alignment with student growth and instructional effectiveness.

## **Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule**

**(Required for All Sponsors)**

### Section 1.4 - School Calendar and Schedule

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-3004, Still I Rise Academy will maintain a 200-day school term, including 180 days of classroom instruction, in compliance with Tennessee law. Our instructional calendar and daily schedule are designed to maximize student engagement, provide targeted interventions, and support student well-being.

The school day will run from 9:15 AM to 4:15 PM, ensuring that students receive high-quality instruction while also allowing additional time for support services, enrichment, and extracurricular activities.

#### (a) Annual Academic Calendar

(See Attachment A for the full academic calendar.)

(See Attachment B for the full daily schedule by grade.)

Still I Rise Academy will operate on a 9:15 AM - 4:15 PM schedule to better align with adolescent sleep patterns, reduce tardiness, and improve focus.

### Why This Calendar and Schedule Are Optimal for Student Learning

Our schedule is designed to:

- ✓ **Promote Attendance & Engagement** – The 9:15 AM start time and Empower Hour create a strong incentive for students to attend daily while reinforcing motivation and emotional well-being.
- ✓ **Support At-Risk Students** – Dedicated time for tiered interventions (RTI<sup>2</sup>), credit recovery, and small-group instruction ensures that students receive targeted academic support.
- ✓ **Align with Adolescent Development** – Research shows that later school start times improve focus, mood, and academic outcomes.
- ✓ **Maximize Instructional Time** – The schedule allows for deep learning in core subjects while incorporating real-world skills through CTE, electives, and project-based learning.
- ✓ **Encourage College & Career Readiness** – Students engage in dual enrollment, internships, industry certifications, and hands-on learning to prepare for post-secondary success.

#### (d) Tiered Interventions, Enrichment, and Tutoring

Still I Rise Academy will integrate Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) and enrichment into

## Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

the daily schedule.

- ✓ Tier 1 (Core Instruction) – High-quality, differentiated teaching for all students.
- ✓ Tier 2 (Targeted Interventions) – Small-group tutoring during the 2:55 - 3:25 PM session to address skill gaps.
- ✓ Tier 3 (Intensive Support) – One-on-one instruction and credit recovery for students significantly below grade level.

Additional Support Strategies:

Extended Learning Time – Office hours and after-school tutoring.

Technology-Enhanced Learning – i-Ready and NWEA MAP adaptive learning platforms.

Mentorship & Advisory – Teachers and staff provide personalized academic and emotional support.

Extra-Curricular & Co-Curricular Activities

Still I Rise Academy will offer a variety of student-centered programs that support personal development and college & career readiness.

Funding Sources:

Grants (21st Century Community Learning Centers, Perkins CTE Funding).

Local business partnerships.

By structuring our school day from 9:15 AM - 4:15 PM, integrating Empower Hour, and providing tiered interventions, enrichment, and extended learning opportunities, Still I Rise Academy ensures every student has the support and motivation to succeed.

Key Takeaways:

- ✓ Empower Hour will make attendance and engagement a priority.
- ✓ A later start time supports adolescent learning and improves focus.

## **Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- ✓ Structured intervention time ensures personalized academic support.
- ✓ Extracurriculars, CTE, and internships prepare students for college and careers.
- ✓ Saturday & Summer School options help struggling students stay on track to graduate.

Through this intentional and research-backed schedule, Still I Rise Academy will create a culture of achievement, personal growth, and long-term success for all students.

### **Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule (Amended Response)**

In response to feedback from the review committee, Still I Rise Academy has revised its calendar and daily schedule to address all concerns while continuing to align with T.C.A. § 49-6-3004 and SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.31. The revised plan provides a more comprehensive structure that meets state law, optimizes learning for our at-risk student population, and reflects our commitment to college, career, and life readiness.

Key Amendments:

1. **Middle and High School Differentiation:** The daily schedule now explicitly distinguishes between middle (grades 6–8) and high school (grades 9–12) instructional programming. Specific minutes are allocated for each subject, with additional time for credit recovery, dual enrollment, and internships for upper-grade students. See revised Attachment B.
2. **Statutory Alignment:** The academic calendar (Attachment A) has been amended to fully reflect the required 200-day term, with 180 instructional days, 10 professional development days, 5 planning days, and 5 parent-teacher conference days. All components now fully align with current state law.
3. **Targeted Academic Interventions:** The revised calendar and schedule include embedded daily time for tiered interventions (RTI<sup>2</sup>), enrichment, tutoring, and project-based learning. These activities are tailored to the school's Opportunity Charter School mission and are integrated during and beyond the standard instructional day.
4. **Expanded Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities:** Still I Rise Academy now provides a detailed listing of enrichment programs, clubs, leadership opportunities, and athletics, including frequency and funding sources. These programs are structured to enhance school culture and support the social, emotional, and academic growth of our diverse student population.



## **Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

By integrating these revisions, the calendar and schedule now reflect a holistic and inclusive academic framework that supports our ME<sup>2</sup> Mission—Motivate, Educate, and Elevate—and ensures every student receives the time, resources, and enrichment needed to thrive.

### **Response to Concern #1 – Attachment B Schedule Revisions Summary**

In response to the concern regarding clarity and differentiation between middle and high school schedules, Attachment B has been revised to provide a comprehensive and clearly structured daily schedule that distinguishes between grades 6–8 (middle school) and grades 9–12 (high school). The updated schedule includes:

- Defined instructional minutes for each core subject per grade band to meet state standards.
- A structured period for credit recovery and tutoring during Empower Hour and afternoon sessions for high school students.
- Dedicated blocks for dual enrollment and internship participation for grades 11–12, aligning with our workforce and postsecondary readiness goals.
- Elective offerings and enrichment blocks that are grade-appropriate and reflect developmental needs.
- Clear scheduling of RTI<sup>2</sup> support for both middle and high school, with tiered intervention times embedded during the academic day.

These updates ensure that all schedules align with the academic rigor, career pathways, and support structures appropriate to each age group and grade level served by Still I Rise Academy.

### **Response to Concern #2 – Attachment A: School Calendar**

Still I Rise Academy has reviewed and revised its academic calendar to ensure full alignment with T.C.A. § 49-6-3004 and SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.31, which mandate:

- A minimum of 200 school days, including:

## Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- At least 180 instructional days for students
- Up to 10 in-service/professional development days
- One parent-teacher conference day
- Up to 9 administrative days for teachers

The updated calendar includes:

- 180 full instructional days for students
- 9 professional development (in-service) days, spaced strategically throughout the year for maximum instructional impact and teacher planning
- 1 dedicated parent-teacher conference day during the fall semester
- 10 administrative days for teacher setup, planning, grading, and end-of-year closure responsibilities

This breakdown totals 200 days, in full compliance with Tennessee statutory requirements.

Additionally, instructional days will meet or exceed 6.5 hours of instruction per day, resulting in a total of at least 1,170 instructional hours annually, consistent with SBE minimums for grades 6–12.

Our school calendar has been adjusted accordingly and will be included in the amended Attachment A to reflect this legal compliance.

### **Response to Concern #3 – Optimization of Academic Calendar and Schedule for Targeted Populations**

Still I Rise Academy's academic calendar and daily schedule were intentionally designed to serve the school's unique target population—students who have been historically underserved, including those who are chronically absent, parenting, homeless, previously retained, or have experienced

## Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

trauma or academic disengagement.

Key Design Features Supporting Student Learning:

1. Extended Learning Year (180 Days + Academic Interventions):

While we meet Tennessee’s statutory requirement of 180 instructional days, Still I Rise Academy also offers Saturday school, mandatory Empower Hour sessions, and extended day opportunities to provide additional academic support and intervention, particularly for students who are credit-deficient or need skill remediation.

2. Daily Empower Hour (Monday–Friday):

Empower Hour is embedded in the daily schedule and functions as a school-wide intervention and relationship-building block. During this time, students engage in structured academic reflection, goal-setting, RTI<sup>2</sup> tutoring, credit recovery work, literacy and numeracy enrichment, and social-emotional skill-building activities. For students with attendance issues, this time is also used to reconnect them with school-based mentors and establish short-term achievement goals.

3. Tiered Intervention System (RTI<sup>2</sup>):

Still I Rise Academy implements a formal Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) model.

- Tier I: High-quality, differentiated classroom instruction.
- Tier II: Small group tutoring in reading, math, or behavior, during Empower Hour or elective periods.
- Tier III: Intensive, one-on-one or small group remediation with progress monitoring.

Students are regularly assessed to determine tier placement and growth trajectory.

4. Tutoring and Credit Recovery Integration:

Students falling behind are flagged by academic data teams every three weeks for targeted tutoring or credit recovery. These interventions take place during Empower Hour, after

## **Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule**

### ***(Required for All Sponsors)***

school, and on Saturdays. For high school students, credit recovery uses both online platforms and teacher-led instruction to ensure standards mastery and graduation readiness.

#### **5. Flexible Schedule to Support Life Circumstances:**

Given our population includes parenting students and students working part-time to support families, the daily schedule includes early morning and after-school help blocks. This structure ensures they do not fall behind due to external obligations.

#### **6. Enrichment Opportunities:**

Students demonstrating proficiency are provided enrichment through career-based projects, dual enrollment preparation, entrepreneurship workshops, and community-based service learning. This ensures rigor is maintained and students remain engaged, not just remediated.

#### **7. Summer Bridge & Acceleration Academy:**

Before each school year, targeted students (especially new enrollees with high mobility or academic gaps) will participate in a two-week Summer Bridge program focused on literacy, numeracy, SEL, and school culture orientation. Additionally, a Summer Acceleration Academy will support those aiming to advance to the next grade or recover credits.

#### **8. Data-Informed Scheduling:**

Our school's leadership team will analyze academic and behavioral data at least every 4.5 weeks to adjust schedules, assign interventions, and deploy additional support staff. Students may rotate through different intervention blocks depending on their evolving needs.

#### **Conclusion:**

The academic calendar and schedule at Still I Rise Academy are not static frameworks, but dynamic tools built to be responsive to the needs of our high-risk population. By combining structured intervention time, daily enrichment, and a deep commitment to personalized learning, the school provides an environment where all students—regardless of prior setbacks—can thrive and graduate

## Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

prepared for college, career, and life.

### **Response to Concern #4 – Extracurricular and Co-Curricular Activities**

Still I Rise Academy is committed to providing a well-rounded educational experience that extends beyond the traditional classroom, especially for students who have been historically disengaged from school. Our extracurricular and co-curricular programming is specifically designed to align with our ME<sup>2</sup> Mission — to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate students — and to reinforce the academic, social, and emotional growth of our vulnerable student population.

Planned Clubs and Extracurricular Activities:

#### **1. Student Leadership Council (SLC)**

- Frequency: Bi-weekly meetings
- Funding Source: Operational budget; student activity fund
- Purpose: Provides students with leadership training and a voice in school culture decisions, including policies and event planning. Students develop civic engagement skills and public speaking confidence.

#### **2. Empowerment Ambassadors Program**

- Frequency: Weekly meetings with monthly community service projects
- Funding Source: In-kind partnerships with community organizations
- Purpose: Targets students who are formerly disengaged or chronically absent and engages them in community service, peer mentorship, and personal development.

#### **3. Entrepreneurship & Financial Literacy Club**

- Frequency: Weekly after-school sessions
- Funding Source: Supported through in-kind contributions from No Mistakes Allowed



## Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

LLC

- Purpose: Builds student understanding of personal finance, budgeting, investing, and small business creation. This aligns with our postsecondary readiness goals and prepares students for self-sufficiency.

### 4. Health Careers Club

- Frequency: Bi-monthly sessions and periodic field trips
- Funding Source: William & Johnson Career College partnership and grant funds
- Purpose: Exposes students to careers in healthcare, nursing, and public health. Includes hands-on experiences and guest speakers, aligned with our dual-enrollment CNA certification pathway.

### 5. Arts & Culture Collective

- Frequency: Weekly meetings with monthly showcases
- Funding Source: Community arts grant and PTA support
- Purpose: Provides an outlet for creative expression in music, visual art, spoken word, and theater. Encourages healing through the arts, particularly for students who have experienced trauma.

### 6. After-School Academic and Credit Recovery Program

- Frequency: Four days per week (Monday–Thursday)
- Funding Source: Charter grant and general fund
- Purpose: Offers students targeted tutoring, online credit recovery, and quiet space to complete assignments under the guidance of certified teachers.

## Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### 7. Saturday Academic Academy

- Frequency: Bi-weekly Saturdays
- Funding Source: Operational and charter grant funding
- Purpose: Offers test preparation, dual enrollment readiness, and project-based learning. Focuses on academic recovery and acceleration in small group settings.

### 8. Athletic and Fitness Activities

- Frequency: Weekly intramural sports and seasonal athletic clubs
- Funding Source: Community partners and grant funding
- Purpose: Promotes physical wellness, teamwork, and structure. Activities include basketball, fitness challenges, and wellness walks for student engagement.

### 9. Girls Who Rise / Kings of Resilience Mentorship Circles

- Frequency: Weekly small group mentoring sessions
- Funding Source: Partnering nonprofits and school counselor budget
- Purpose: Supports identity development, leadership, and emotional support among male and female students from at-risk backgrounds.

#### Program Oversight and Evaluation:

The Director of Student Enrichment (to be hired in Year 2 which will be a contract position) will coordinate and monitor all extracurricular activities in collaboration with school counselors, club sponsors, and community partners. Participation data, behavioral referrals, and academic

## **Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule**

***(Required for All Sponsors)***

performance of participants will be tracked quarterly to measure impact and ensure alignment with our mission.

Conclusion:

These activities are not merely optional add-ons—they are integral to the design of Still I Rise Academy. They promote student re-engagement, elevate student voice, provide trauma-informed healing experiences, and reinforce the career pathways that students pursue in their postsecondary plans. Every offering directly supports our mission to motivate, educate, and elevate Memphis' most vulnerable youth.

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

#### (a) Community Profile and Targeted Enrollment Area

Still I Rise Academy will be a designated safe zone for all eligible students across Memphis, Tennessee, providing a secure, inclusive, and empowering learning environment for students who have struggled in traditional school settings. We will serve students from all neighborhoods, while prioritizing zip codes with high dropout rates, retention rates, and academic disengagement.

Our targeted zip codes include:

- ✓ North Memphis & Frayser – 38127, 38108
- ✓ South Memphis – 38106, 38126
- ✓ Hickory Hill – 38115, 38141
- ✓ Orange Mound – 38111
- ✓ Cordova & Southeast Memphis – 38016, 38018
- ✓ Whitehaven & Westwood – 38109, 38116

These areas have high populations of students who are economically disadvantaged, academically at-risk, and in need of an alternative, trauma-informed education model.

#### Community Demographics & Existing Schools

- Over 80% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch, indicating significant economic challenges.
- Reading and math proficiency rates remain below state averages, with many schools receiving low TVAAS growth scores.
- High dropout and chronic absenteeism rates (over 25% in certain areas), demonstrating the urgent need for alternative pathways to graduation.
- Existing schools include: Aspire Memphis, Compass Community Schools, Frayser Community Schools, and district-run alternative programs—none of which offer a focused, competency-based approach for re-engaging students facing extreme adversity.

Still I Rise Academy will be a first-of-its-kind school in Memphis that provides a safe, structured, and motivational environment where students who have previously struggled are given a second chance

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

to succeed.

### (b) Community Demand & Need for Still I Rise Academy

Through community surveys, student focus groups, and discussions with local educators, social workers, and juvenile justice representatives, we identified the following urgent needs:

- ✓ A school that prioritizes students who have been retained twice, dropped out, or experienced trauma.
- ✓ An emotionally supportive environment that emphasizes healing, mentorship, and career readiness.
- ✓ A structured daily program (Empower Hour) that fosters school attachment and motivation.

These findings confirm that Memphis families are seeking an alternative to traditional schools, one that meets students where they are and empowers them to rise above their challenges.

### (c) Enrollment Summary & Anticipated Demographics

(See Table 1: Enrollment Summary and Table 2: Anticipated Demographics in the attached templates.)

Enrollment projections are based on:

- Current dropout and retention rates within targeted zip codes.
- Survey responses from parents and students seeking alternative education options.
- Anticipated transfers from district-run alternative schools.

Our projections align with the school's operating budget and staffing needs, ensuring sustainability and long-term success.

### (d) Enrollment Policy & Procedures (Attachment C)

The Still I Rise Academy Enrollment Policy (see Attachment C) will include:

- ✓ Safe Zone Admissions – Any eligible student in Memphis can apply, with priority given to students in targeted zip codes.
- ✓ Non-Discriminatory Admission – No student will be denied based on race, gender, ability, or socio-economic status (T.C.A. § 49-13-107).
- ✓ Rolling Admissions & Application Deadlines – Students can enroll year-round, with priority application



## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

windows for fall and spring enrollment.

✓ Lottery Process – If applications exceed capacity, a randomized lottery will be held (T.C.A. § 49-13-113).

✓ Waitlist, Withdrawals & Transfers – Policies for mid-year transfers and re-enrollment for students who have temporarily left the school.

Enrollment applications will be accessible online and at community centers, churches, and outreach events.

### (e) Enrollment Lottery Process

If applications exceed capacity, Still I Rise Academy will conduct a lottery per Tennessee charter school law (T.C.A. § 49-13-113).

Lottery Process:

1. Application Period: Open enrollment from January - April.
2. Lottery Date: Conducted in May, if needed.
3. Notification: Parents will receive placement confirmation via mail and email.
4. Waitlist Process: Students not selected will be placed on a waitlist and admitted as spots become available.

The process will be transparent, publicly available, and include community oversight.

### (f) Pre-Opening Student Recruitment Strategy

✓ Recruitment Oversight:

- The Director of Enrollment and Outreach will oversee all student recruitment efforts.
- Community-based Enrollment Ambassadors will assist in outreach.

✓ Marketing Strategies & Community Engagement:

- Direct outreach to community organizations (churches, youth programs, and shelters).
- Partnerships with social service agencies that support at-risk students.

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- School open houses & informational sessions in targeted neighborhoods.
- Social media campaigns & targeted digital ads promoting enrollment opportunities.
- Flyer distribution & door-to-door canvassing in high-need areas.

### ✓ Recruitment Timeline:

- November - December: Develop outreach materials, train Enrollment Ambassadors.
- January - March: Enrollment campaigns at community centers, shelters, and schools.
- April - May: Final application drives and family interviews.
- June - July: Onboarding & transition support for incoming students.

### (g) Ongoing Recruitment Plan Post-Opening

After opening, Still I Rise Academy will continue active recruitment to ensure that students who need an alternative school have access throughout the year.

✓ **Community Partnerships:** Maintain relationships with social service organizations, juvenile justice programs, and alternative education providers.

✓ **Referral Networks:** Establish student peer ambassadors to promote the school among disengaged youth.

✓ **Ongoing Parent Engagement:** Conduct regular family workshops to support retention.

Unlike pre-opening recruitment, post-opening recruitment will focus on re-engaging students who have dropped out mid-year or need an alternative learning environment.

### (h) Ensuring Equal Opportunity for All Students

Still I Rise Academy will actively recruit and support:

✓ **Economically Disadvantaged Families** – Outreach will include low-income housing areas, food banks, and community shelters.

✓ **Academically Low-Achieving Students** – Targeted interventions through Empower Hour, credit recovery, and individualized learning.

✓ **Students with Disabilities** – Full compliance with IDEA and Section 504, with dedicated special

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

education resources.

✓ English Learners (ELs) – Bilingual outreach materials, EL-certified instructors, and family support programs.

✓ Other At-Risk Populations – This includes homeless students, students in foster care, and pregnant or parenting teens. We will partner with social service agencies and community organizations to provide wraparound services.

✓ Empower Hour as an Engagement Tool – By making Empower Hour a dynamic, engaging daily experience, students will feel motivated to attend school daily and remain committed to their education.

Conclusion: A Holistic, Inclusive Approach to Enrollment

Still I Rise Academy's strategic recruitment and enrollment plan ensures that students across all of Memphis, Tennessee—especially those in \*\*North Memphis, South Memphis, Hickory Hill, Orange Mound, and Cordova—\*\*have access to a safe, supportive, and transformative educational experience.

✓ Providing a trauma-informed, competency-based model for re-engaging students.

✓ Removing barriers to enrollment with accessible applications and support services.

✓ Year-round recruitment to support students who need an alternative path to success.

✓ Empowering students through a structured, motivational, and high-impact school culture.

By prioritizing safety, equity, and engagement, Still I Rise Academy will transform education for Memphis students who need it most.

### **Response to Concern #1 - Demonstrating Community Demand and Distinction of Educational Options**

Still I Rise Academy was intentionally designed as an Opportunity Public Charter School in direct response to both state-identified needs and pressing local data that reflect a significant educational and social gap for at-risk youth in Memphis. Contrary to the concern raised, the demand for our school is not only clear but urgent—backed by state-level research, national crisis indicators, and district-level performance data.

### **Community Demand Was Determined by State and Local Data**

The Tennessee Department of Education created the Opportunity Charter School model specifically for vulnerable student populations who have been underserved in traditional public school

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

environments. Still I Rise Academy aligns precisely with this intent and is targeting:

- Dropout-reengaged students
- Students retained twice or more
- Chronically absent students
- Pregnant/parenting teens
- Youth with documented abuse, neglect, or trauma

This isn't a hypothetical population. It's a real and pressing demographic in Memphis.

- FBI Director Kash Patel publicly stated in 2025 that Memphis is the “homicide capital of America per capita”, a fact that reflects deeply embedded community trauma.
- Shelby County Schools’ chronic absenteeism rate exceeds 33%, more than double the state average.
- Graduation rates remain significantly lower for students attending alternative or zoned high schools in underserved zip codes (e.g., 38126, 38106, 38109, 38114).
- Tennessee’s Opportunity School legislation was born out of this data, making Still I Rise Academy not a redundant option, but a purpose-built response to an emergency.

### How Our School Differs from Existing Options

Still I Rise Academy does not replicate what already exists. Rather, it introduces a trauma-responsive, holistic academic ecosystem centered on the ME<sup>2</sup> mission: Motivate, Educate, and Elevate.

Here is how Still I Rise Academy distinctly differs:

- We implement Empower Hour daily—a structured, schoolwide social-emotional and motivational block tailored to reduce truancy and increase purpose-driven engagement.



## **Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- We embed Work-Based Learning and dual enrollment through standing MOUs with William & Johnson Career College and two employer partners, ensuring career alignment from the start.
- We offer wraparound mentorship, trauma-informed practices, and life planning coaching from day one—unlike traditional schools that offer interventions only after behavior issues arise.

No traditional public school, or current charter school in Memphis or Shelby County, combines these Opportunity School-specific, trauma-informed interventions with career-forward planning, designed explicitly for our targeted student group.

### **Conclusion**

To suggest that the community need has not been established ignores both the state's creation of the Opportunity School model and the well-documented crisis in Memphis education and youth outcomes. The educational options provided by Still I Rise Academy are innovative, targeted, and distinct from the region's status quo.

By meeting students where they are—physically, emotionally, and academically—Still I Rise Academy offers what no other school in Memphis currently does: a charter of last chance built on hope, healing, and high expectations.

### **Response to Concern #2 - Supporting Data for High-Need Areas and Zip Code Analysis**

Still I Rise Academy respectfully asserts that the State of Tennessee's establishment of the Opportunity Charter School model under T.C.A. § 49-13-111(k) is, by legislative design, a statewide acknowledgement of a need already verified through formal state-level data analysis and community need assessments. The Tennessee General Assembly and Department of Education did not create the Opportunity model in theory—they crafted it as a targeted remedy for real, data-backed educational crises, particularly in communities such as Memphis and Shelby County.

### **The State Already Established the Need**

- The Opportunity School designation was created specifically for students who are dropouts, pregnant/parenting, chronically absent, retained multiple times, or have documented histories of trauma or abuse. These criteria were defined by the state because the data already confirmed their prevalence and academic disconnect.

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Attempting to now require schools to reestablish the state's already acknowledged need in a city that ranks among the nation's worst in violent crime, dropout rates, and chronic absenteeism is redundant and inconsistent with the spirit of the Opportunity model.
- Memphis and Shelby County School data consistently demonstrate:
  - Chronic absenteeism exceeding 33%, as reported by MSCS and TDOE.
  - Graduation rates below 75% in several urban zip codes, including 38106, 38109, 38114, and 38126.
  - Disproportionately high rates of disciplinary referrals, school disengagement, and juvenile court involvement among economically disadvantaged youth.

These realities were referenced directly or indirectly in the TDOE's own rationale for launching the Opportunity Charter School model in 2022–2023.

### Zip Code Targeting and School Analysis

Still I Rise Academy has already committed to targeting high-need zip codes including:

- 38126, 38106, 38109, 38114, 38127, and surrounding neighborhoods with generational poverty, limited educational mobility, and poor academic outcomes.
- Schools within these zip codes (such as Hamilton High, Mitchell High, and South Side Middle) have faced state-level intervention, declining enrollment, or repeat underperformance—conditions that directly relate to the Opportunity School target demographic.

Still I Rise Academy will not duplicate the state's comprehensive demographic mapping already embedded in the Opportunity School designation. Instead, we will operationalize the solution by:

- Recruiting directly from neighborhoods already flagged by the state as high-need.
- Providing trauma-responsive and dropout recovery programming, which no other charter school in Memphis currently delivers.



## **Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Working with MSCS alternative education and social service agencies to identify eligible students.

### **Conclusion**

The demand for our model is not speculative—it is embedded in the very legislation and accountability model created by the State of Tennessee to empower Opportunity Charter Schools. Still I Rise Academy embraces this mandate and delivers on it with intentionality, compassion, and innovation.

### **Response to Concern #3 – Alignment of Enrollment Projections with Capacity Goal**

Still I Rise Academy acknowledges the importance of internal consistency across all sections of the charter application, particularly regarding enrollment projections. To address this concern, the application has been reviewed and amended to ensure that the enrollment summary, narrative references, and overall capacity projection are now fully aligned.

### **Clarification of Projected Enrollment**

Our school's long-term goal remains to serve 1,000 students at full capacity by Year 10, which reflects our commitment to meet the significant unmet needs of at-risk students in Memphis and Shelby County. The following multi-year enrollment plan has been clarified and consistently applied across all attachments and narrative sections:

### **Response to Concern #4 – Alignment of Enrollment Policy with State Law for Opportunity Charter Schools**

Still I Rise Academy has carefully reviewed and amended its Enrollment Policy to ensure full alignment with T.C.A. § 49-13-113, T.C.A. § 49-13-106, and SBE Rule 0520-14-01-.04, specifically as they pertain to Opportunity Charter Schools. The revised policy is now consistent across both the narrative and Attachment C, eliminating prior redundancies and ensuring legal compliance.

### **Key Revisions and Clarifications:**

1. Eligibility & Priority Enrollment:

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

In accordance with Tennessee's Opportunity School statute, enrollment priority will be given to students who meet the statutory criteria for at-risk populations, including but not limited to:

- ☐ Students who have dropped out
- ☐ Students retained twice or more
- ☐ Students who are pregnant or parenting
- ☐ Students with a history of chronic absenteeism
- ☐ Students with a history of abuse or neglect
- ☐ Students who are homeless or in transitional housing
- ☐ Students with significant behavioral or academic challenges

### 2. Enrollment Process:

The policy now clearly outlines:

- ☐ The tentative application window (January 15 – April 15 annually)
- ☐ Public lottery process in the event applications exceed capacity
- ☐ Transparent procedures for waitlists, withdrawals, and transfers

### 3. Non-Discrimination Statement:

The policy reiterates the school's commitment to non-discriminatory practices in all admission decisions, in full compliance with state and federal civil rights laws.

### 4. Consistency Across Documents:

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Prior inconsistencies between the narrative and Attachment C have been corrected. The full, updated Enrollment Policy is now consolidated in Attachment C, and the narrative refers directly to that policy without duplication.

### Concern #6 Section 1.5

#### Partner Organizations for Student Recruitment

Still I Rise Academy will actively partner with a range of community-based and service organizations that align with our mission of serving opportunity youth. Key perspective partners include but are not limited to:

- Juvenile Intervention and Faith-Based Follow-Up (JIFF) – to reach students impacted by the juvenile justice system.
- Porter-Leath – to connect with families in high-poverty zip codes.
- Daughters of Zion's Homeless Food Truck – to recruit students from food-insecure and housing-insecure households.

Daughters of Zion's Shelby Safe Initiative as they are a vendor with Memphis and Shelby County Juvenile Court

- Memphis Housing Authority – to disseminate enrollment information in public housing communities.
- William & Johnson Career College – to connect with student parents and transitional youth for dual enrollment and mentorship.

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

(Required for All Sponsors)

- Local Churches and Urban Ministries – to engage directly with families in underserved communities.

- Shelby County Schools (SCS) Transition Centers – to enroll students leaving alternative or expulsion settings who need a fresh academic start.

### Differentiated Pre- and Post-Enrollment Outreach Strategies

- Pre-Enrollment Strategies:

- Launch a multi-channel marketing campaign with flyers, social media, and community info sessions hosted in churches, community centers, and libraries.

- Offer virtual Q&A nights and in-person open houses to educate families about the school's unique model.

Assign the Director of Enrollment and Outreach to manage targeted campaigns for hard-to-reach populations (e.g., parenting teens, foster care youth, previously incarcerated youth)

- Post-Enrollment Strategies:

- Establish retention teams to follow up with newly enrolled students within the first 30 days

- Use family liaisons and advisory staff to assess needs and connect students to wraparound services.

- Provide summer onboarding academies for newly enrolled students, including orientation, baseline assessments, and support planning.

### Equity in Access for All Student Groups

Still I Rise Academy affirms our commitment to ensuring equal access and educational opportunity for all students regardless of background. Specifically:

- Academically low-achieving students will be supported through small class sizes,

## Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI2), individualized learning plans, and afterschool tutoring.

- Special populations, including students with disabilities, English Learners, homeless students, and foster care youth, will be identified during intake and assigned to our Student Services team for early interventions.

- All marketing and enrollment materials will be ADA-compliant and available in multiple languages.

- We will not administer entrance exams or require previous academic performance as a condition of enrollment, ensuring open access consistent with Tennessee charter school law.

Our outreach and recruitment practices are grounded in equity, designed to uplift students most often underserved by traditional systems, and fully aligned with the school's mission and vision.

**Table 1: Enrollment Summary**  
(Required for All Sponsors)

Student Enrollment Growth Over Years of Operation

<b>Year of Operation</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>	<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Year 7</b>	<b>Year 8</b>	<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Year 10</b>	<b>Full Capacity</b>
<i>Pre-K</i>											
<i>K</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>1</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>2</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>3</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>4</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>5</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>6</i>	30	45	55	60	90	105	120	135	150	160	160
<i>7</i>	20	40	50	60	80	100	120	135	150	170	170
<i>8</i>	20	40	50	60	80	100	120	135	150	170	170
<i>9</i>	20	35	45	55	70	90	105	115	125	140	140
<i>10</i>	20	35	45	55	70	90	105	115	125	140	140
<i>11</i>	20	30	35	50	55	70	80	90	100	110	110
<i>12</i>	20	25	35	50	55	70	80	90	100	110	110



## Table 2: Anticipated Demographics

(Required for All Sponsors)

**Note:** These data are available from the [TN State Report Card](#)

	Estimated % within Proposed School	Current % within Nearest Public School Serving the Same Grade Band (Applicable only if sponsor has identified a location for the proposed school)
% of Economically Disadvantaged Students	100	
% of Students with Disabilities	10	
% of English Learners	10	

**Table 3: Anticipated Demographics (Required for Sponsors that indicated "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 8)**

	Estimated % within Proposed School
% of At-Risk students <sup>11</sup>	100

## **Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and**

### **Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and Support**

#### **(a) Community Feedback and Parental Interest**

Community feedback and parental interest in Still I Rise Academy have been overwhelmingly positive and supportive, demonstrating a strong demand for an alternative, safe, and career-focused educational option for students in Memphis.

✓ Endorsements from Key Community Organizations – Support from From the Streets to Wall Street Foundation and William & Johnson Career College, both of which see the value in mentorship, financial training, and dual enrollment opportunities for students.

#### **(b) Validity & Incorporation of Feedback**

✓ College & Career Pathways – Dual enrollment with William & Johnson Career College to offer:

- A Business Administration degree program for students pursuing entrepreneurship and management careers.
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification for students interested in healthcare professions.

✓ Mentorship & Financial Training – A strategic partnership with From the Streets to Wall Street Foundation to provide:

- Mentorship and career coaching for students.
- Financial literacy training for students and parents, fostering generational economic empowerment.

✓ Safe Zone & Alternative Learning Support – Ensuring Still I Rise Academy is a designated “safe zone” for all eligible students, providing:

- Wraparound support services tailored to students overcoming adversity.
- Social-emotional learning, intervention programs, and structured support systems to foster academic success.

#### **(c) Parent & Community Engagement Strategies**

From the pre-approval stage through full operation, Still I Rise Academy will engage parents and the broader Memphis community through structured engagement, advisory committees, and

## Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and

transparent communication.

### ✓ Pre-Opening Engagement Strategies:

- Parent Advisory Council (PAC) – A committee of parents and guardians that will help shape school policies, academic programs, and student support services.
- Community Information Sessions – Monthly town halls and Q&A forums to maintain transparency, provide updates, and gather feedback from families.
- Direct Partnerships with Local Organizations – Collaborating with churches, youth programs, and social service agencies to ensure outreach efforts reach families in need.

### ✓ Post-Opening Engagement Strategies:

- Parent University – A monthly family engagement series covering financial literacy, college planning, and student success strategies, hosted in collaboration with From the Streets to Wall Street Foundation.
- Ongoing Mentor & Career Readiness Support – One-on-one mentorship programs provided through community partnerships, helping students transition into college, careers, or entrepreneurship.
- Quarterly Stakeholder Meetings – Engaging local business leaders, educators, and community organizations to assess school effectiveness and refine academic and career development programs.

These efforts will build a strong, engaged parent and community network, ensuring continued support, student retention, and long-term success.

### (d) Supporting Documents (Attachment D – Letters of Support)

The following letters of support from community stakeholders demonstrate strong backing for Still I Rise Academy and its mission:

✓ From the Streets to Wall Street Foundation – Letter confirming commitment to mentorship and financial training for students and parents.

✓ William & Johnson Career College – Letter confirming dual enrollment partnership for Business Administration and CNA certification programs.

✓ No Mistakes Allowed LLC – Letter confirming continued community outreach and recruitment efforts, validating strong enrollment demand.

✓ Parents & Prospective Students – Testimonial letters from families expressing strong interest in the

## Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and

school and its mission.

These letters confirm that Still I Rise Academy is a vital addition to the Memphis education landscape, particularly for students seeking a safe, structured, and career-focused alternative.

### (e) Community Partnerships & Business Collaborations

Still I Rise Academy has secured strategic partnerships to enhance student learning and provide critical resources beyond the classroom.

#### ✓ From the Streets to Wall Street Foundation

- Commitment: In-kind support via mentorship and financial training for students and parents.
- Purpose: Empower students with career readiness, entrepreneurship knowledge, and financial literacy.
- Scope: Monthly financial literacy workshops, business mentorship programs, and guest speaker events.

#### ✓ William & Johnson Career College

- Commitment: Dual enrollment partnership for students interested in:
- Business Administration (college credits toward an associate degree).
- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification (for students entering the healthcare field).
- Purpose: Provide fee-based postsecondary pathways, preparing students for college and workforce opportunities.
- Scope: Students can earn college credits or industry certifications while in high school.

#### ✓ No Mistakes Allowed LLC

- Commitment: Community outreach and student recruitment.
- Purpose: Conduct on-the-ground surveys and engagement efforts to assess student needs and promote enrollment.
- Scope:
- Conducted surveys confirming strong enrollment interest.



## Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and

- Established direct connections with families seeking alternative education options.

### ✓ Additional Collaborations (Under Development):

- Memphis-based businesses offering internships and job shadowing.
- Healthcare facilities for CNA certification fieldwork placements.
- Local universities for additional dual enrollment programs.

### Conclusion: A Community-Driven, Student-Centered Approach

By prioritizing community engagement, mentorship, career readiness, and postsecondary partnerships, Still I Rise Academy ensures that students receive academic, financial, and emotional support to succeed.

✓ Parental interest is strong, as evidenced by community outreach surveys and recruitment data.

✓ Strategic partnerships with William & Johnson Career College and From the Streets to Wall Street Foundation will provide real-world learning opportunities.

✓ No Mistakes Allowed LLC's research confirms that families actively seek an alternative, safe, and career-focused charter school in Memphis.

✓ Ongoing engagement through Parent University, mentorship programs, and career readiness workshops will sustain long-term community support.

Through inclusive outreach, strong partnerships, and a clear mission, Still I Rise Academy will become a transformative educational institution in Memphis, empowering students and families to break cycles of poverty and build brighter futures.

### Response to Concern #1 – Community and Partner Engagement Plan

As outlined below, Still I Rise Academy has revised and significantly strengthened its plan for engaging community members and partners both before the school opens and throughout ongoing operations, ensuring that our strategy fully reflects the expectations outlined in Section 1.6.

### Pre-Opening Community Engagement Strategy:



## **Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and**

### **1. Targeted Town Halls & Listening Sessions**

Beginning Fall 2025, Still I Rise Academy will host quarterly community forums in key zip codes where students experiencing homelessness or academic disconnection are most concentrated. These events will allow families, clergy, nonprofit leaders, and students to directly shape the academic offerings, cultural practices, and student support services of the school. Feedback will be collected via live surveys, breakout group facilitations, and bilingual access when needed.

### **2. Outreach Team and Door-to-Door Canvassing**

Led by our Director of Outreach and Enrollment, our team (with support from No Mistakes Allowed LLC) will conduct in-person visits to apartment complexes, shelters, food distribution sites, and community centers to connect with underserved families. These efforts are designed to build trust, educate the community on Opportunity Charter School eligibility, and cultivate early family commitments.

### **3. Community Leadership Roundtables**

We will initiate roundtables with faith leaders, local entrepreneurs, neighborhood associations, and mental health providers—ensuring community values, safety expectations, and cultural responsiveness are embedded into the school's design.

### **4. Media & Messaging Campaigns**

Through partnerships with local radio, social media influencers, and parent liaisons, we will broadcast the mission and enrollment process for Still I Rise Academy, emphasizing our role as Memphis's first homeless-focused charter school.

## **Post-Opening Strategy to Sustain Partnerships & Stakeholder Buy-In:**

### **1. Parent Empowerment Council**

Still I Rise Academy will launch a Parent Empowerment Council to provide formal, ongoing parent feedback and participation in academic planning, cultural events,

## Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and

school discipline policy, and staffing input. The council will represent families of students with disabilities, English learners, and parenting teens.

### 2. Community Partnership Coordinator

A dedicated staff member under our Office of Strategic Partnerships will oversee the execution, monitoring, and renewal of all MOUs and community collaborations. This includes coordinating mental health workshops with The Shalom House of Memphis and career mentoring with No Mistakes Allowed LLC and All About You Healthcare.

### 3. Quarterly Stakeholder Impact Reviews

These reviews will gather data from parents, students, and partners on school impact, identify service gaps, and adjust programming accordingly. Public dashboards will be posted to ensure transparency.

### 4. Work-Based Learning Integration

Through structured partnerships with local employers, including William & Johnson Career College, our students will gain access to job-shadowing, CNA certification, and internship pipelines that make learning real and future-focused.

## Demonstrated and Growing Community Support:

- Letters of support and MOUs have been secured from:
  - The Shalom House of Memphis
  - No Mistakes Allowed LLC
  - All About You Healthcare
  - William & Johnson Career College

## Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and

- Each has pledged in-kind donations, training, or educational services valued at over \$100,000 per year.



### Conclusion:

We respectfully assert that Still I Rise Academy's revised community engagement plan now exceeds the state's standards for stakeholder collaboration and long-term community integration. It is rooted in authentic voice, practical partnerships, and transparent collaboration—centered on the well-being of Memphis's most at-risk youth in accordance with Principle 3 of the Tennessee State Board's Quality Charter Authorizing Standards.

### Concern #2 Response: Community Feedback Collection Process

In our initial application, we referenced outreach surveys and public sessions without attaching adequate supporting documentation. To clarify and substantiate our efforts, Still I Rise Academy has launched a formal Community Input Survey distributed via text message on May 23, 2025, to over 1000 engaged parents, community leaders, educators, and local business stakeholders throughout Memphis and Shelby County.

The purpose of this survey was to gather direct feedback on the school's relevance, services, and design, especially as it pertains to our targeted student population: students who are behind two or more grade levels, chronically absent, formerly incarcerated, parenting, or facing trauma. Survey responses will be compiled and submitted as Figure X in Section 1.6 to provide tangible evidence of community input.

The following questions were included in the survey:

Still I Rise Academy – Community Input Survey

Distributed via text message – May 22, 2025

Still I Rise Academy – Community Survey Analysis (May 23, 2025)

Survey Sent To: 1,274 individuals via text message

Purpose: To gather community feedback and validate demand for a charter school serving at-risk youth in Memphis and Shelby County

## Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and

### Key Survey Results

#### 1. Community Belief in School Need

Question: "Do you believe Memphis needs a school specifically designed to serve youth who are behind two or more grade levels, parenting, formerly incarcerated, or chronically absent?"

- Yes: 100%
- No: 0%
- Not sure: 0%

Interpretation: Every respondent affirmed that Memphis needs a specialized school like Still I Rise Academy, indicating a unanimous recognition of the gap in services for this population.

#### 2. Most Important Services Identified by Respondents (Multiple Selections Allowed):

- Mental health and trauma support: 92%
- Small class sizes and mentoring: 84%
- Career training and certifications: 76%
- Parent support and daycare options: 64%
- Credit recovery and graduation help: 64%

Interpretation: Mental health support and personalized academic settings are the top priorities for community members, aligning precisely with Still I Rise Academy's proposed mission and academic model.

## Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and

### 3. Recommendation of School to Target Population

Question: "Would you support or recommend enrollment at Still I Rise Academy to a young person who meets the target population?"

- Yes: 100%
- No: 0%
- Not sure: 0%

Interpretation: Every respondent expressed confidence in the school's mission and purpose, further validating widespread support.

### 4. Stakeholder Representation Among Respondents

- Parent/Guardian: 56%
- Local Business Owner: 16%
- Faith-Based Leader: 8%
- Educator/School Staff: 16%
- Community Advocate: 16%

Interpretation: The survey drew input from a broad spectrum of the community, including educators, faith leaders, and local business owners—showing that Still I Rise Academy has cross-sector support.

## Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and

### Conclusion:

The survey results provide clear, overwhelming evidence of community demand for a school like Still I Rise Academy. With 100% of respondents affirming both the need for and their support of the school, and with mental health, mentoring, and workforce readiness identified as top priorities, this feedback substantiates the charter school's core design. The diversity of stakeholders who responded adds credibility to the community's endorsement.

Evidence the survey was submitted is shown in the screenshot below labeled as – "Figure X"

The screenshot displays the DialMyCalls.com interface. On the left, a 'Text Message Broadcast Confirmation' panel shows details for a broadcast sent on 05-22-2025 at 8:04 PM CDT. It lists 1274 contacts, 1274 credits used, and 1274 people contacted. Below this, there are promotional banners for 'Vanity Phone Numbers' and 'SMS Signposts'. At the bottom left is a 'Login To Your Account...' link. On the right, a 'Still I Rise Academy Community Input Survey' panel shows the same broadcast details and a 'Text Message' section with a link to the survey form: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLStuMc6su2RzUmqeuc7qaiH-piN9IqO3Yv8WWPkBL-AzrASiQ/viewform?usp=sharing&uid=104204011432562391096>.

Figure X



## **Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and**

This process aligns with Principle 3(1) of the Tennessee State Board of Education's Quality Charter Authorizing Standards by centering the voices of those most impacted—students and families in at-risk communities—and demonstrating our commitment to transparency, relevance, and student-centered planning.

### **Concern #3 Response: Partnership Terms, Scope, and In-Kind Commitments**

Still I Rise Academy has secured multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and or letters of support from community partners who are committed to advancing our mission to serve at-risk youth in Memphis and Shelby County. We clarify that all existing MOUs and or letters of support reflect in-kind commitments that will remain in effect for the entire duration of the school's charter term (10 years) or indefinitely, unless a formal contract is signed to expand services under mutually agreed-upon terms.

Each partner has committed to deliver services such as staff training, mentoring, counseling, career exploration, or community engagement at no financial cost to the school. These services will be reviewed annually to ensure relevance and effectiveness, and any future enhancement in scope will be formalized through new contracts that specify deliverables, service fees (if any), and performance expectations.

This in-kind partnership model ensures immediate access to high-quality support while maintaining fiscal responsibility during the school's critical startup and growth phases. It also reflects our alignment with Principle 3(1) of the Tennessee State Board of Education's Quality Charter Authorizing Standards by prioritizing student and community well-being through sustainable, mission-driven partnerships.

## **Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### Section 1.7 – School Culture and Discipline

#### Creating a Transformational School Culture at Still I Rise Academy

##### I. Desired School Culture and Ethos

Still I Rise Academy is committed to cultivating a positive, empowering, and disciplined school culture where students feel safe, supported, and inspired to achieve success despite past academic or personal challenges. Our school culture is built on the principles of resilience, accountability, empowerment, and self-discipline.

At Still I Rise Academy, we:

- ✓ Foster a Growth Mindset – Students are encouraged to embrace challenges, take ownership of their learning, and persist through difficulties.
- ✓ Prioritize Trauma-Informed Care – Staff are trained to recognize and respond to students facing adversity with compassion and support, ensuring a safe learning environment for all.
- ✓ Implement the Always Aware Disciplined Student Culture (AADSC) – A proactive approach that reinforces self-awareness, personal responsibility, and accountability to reduce Acts of Bad Discipline (ABD).
- ✓ Celebrate Student Success – Academic, behavioral, and personal growth milestones are recognized through Empower Hour, incentive programs, and school-wide events.

This culture directly aligns with our mission of re-engaging students who have dropped out, been retained twice, are chronically absent, are pregnant or parenting, or have experienced abuse or neglect—ensuring they rise above their challenges and achieve academic and career success.

##### II. Creating, Implementing, and Sustaining School Culture

###### A. First Day of School: Establishing the Culture

The foundation of our school culture is established on Day 1 through a comprehensive orientation program that includes:

- ✓ School-Wide Empower Hour Kickoff – A motivational assembly introducing our school's mission, core values, and behavioral expectations.
- ✓ Student Commitment Pledge – Students sign a Respect, Responsibility, and Resilience Pledge,

## Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

committing to academic success, personal accountability, and positive behavior.

✓ Teacher & Staff Training on AADSC – Faculty undergo extensive professional development on our discipline model, trauma-informed instruction, and strategies for fostering a positive classroom culture.

✓ Parent Engagement Sessions – Families attend an orientation to understand school expectations, policies, and how they can support student success.

### B. Daily and Ongoing School Culture Reinforcement

To sustain our school culture, we integrate Empower Hour, mentorship, and accountability structures into daily operations:

◆ Daily Empower Hour – Students participate in structured sessions reinforcing resilience, emotional intelligence, academic accountability, and teamwork:

- Monday Motivation – Guest speakers inspire students.
- Tuesday Talks – A safe space for students to share challenges.
- Wednesday Work – Focus on completing assignments.
- Thursday Together – Team-building and peer collaboration.
- Friday Finish Line – Weekly goal review and IEP tracking.

◆ Restorative Justice & Peer Accountability – Students engage in Restorative Circles, peer mentorship, and behavior reflection practices to encourage self-discipline and conflict resolution.

◆ Incentives for Positive Behavior – Students earn recognition, rewards, and privileges for demonstrating leadership, perseverance, and academic progress.

### C. Integrating Mid-Year Enrollees

Students who enter mid-year will participate in a Student Transition Program to ensure a smooth integration into our school culture:

✓ New Student Orientation & Mentor Pairing – Every new student is paired with a peer mentor to guide them through school expectations.

✓ Personalized Academic & Behavior Plans – A transition team will assess the student's academic standing, behavior history, and social-emotional needs, ensuring they receive the necessary supports.

✓ Immediate Enrollment in Empower Hour – New students will participate in Empower Hour activities to



## Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline

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foster a sense of belonging.

By ensuring seamless cultural integration, we prevent mid-year disengagement and increase student retention.

### III. Supporting Special Populations in Our School Culture

#### A. Embracing Students with Disabilities

Still I Rise Academy is fully inclusive and will ensure students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations under IDEA and Section 504.

- ✓ Personalized Behavior & Intervention Plans (BIPs) to support social-emotional growth.
- ✓ Trauma-Informed and Sensory-Supportive Classrooms to enhance learning.
- ✓ Special Education & Support Staff to provide one-on-one or small-group instruction.

#### B. Supporting English Learners (ELs)

- ✓ EL Student Support Teams provide language development assistance.
- ✓ Bilingual Staff & Translators available for family engagement.
- ✓ Culturally Responsive Curriculum to support diverse learning backgrounds.

#### C. Serving At-Risk Students

- ✓ Mental Health Services & Crisis Intervention for students in distress.
- ✓ Mentorship & Career Counseling to provide life and job readiness skills.
- ✓ School as a Safe Zone – Policies ensuring pregnant/parenting students, abuse survivors, and high-risk youth receive necessary support to thrive academically.

### IV. Student Attendance & Combatting Chronic Absenteeism

#### A. Attendance Goals & Expectations

Still I Rise Academy sets the following attendance benchmarks:

✧ 90% Attendance Rate Goal – All students are expected to attend at least 80% of instructional days.

✧ Chronic Absenteeism Rate Below 20% – Targeting students missing 20% or more of school days

## Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline

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for intervention.

### B. Strategies to Address Chronic Absenteeism

#### ◇ Early Identification & Intervention:

- ✓ Weekly attendance reports identify at-risk students early.
- ✓ Personalized Student Attendance Contracts for students with excessive absences.

#### ◇ Engagement & Incentives:

- ✓ Empower Hour Attendance Challenges – Recognizing students with consistent attendance.
- ✓ Student & Family Incentives – School-based rewards for students improving attendance.

#### ◇ Community & Family Collaboration:

- ✓ Parent University Workshops – Educating families on school engagement & attendance policies.
- ✓ Partnerships with Local Organizations – Connecting families with resources for childcare, transportation, and crisis support.

### V. Conclusion: A Culture of Excellence & Student Empowerment

Through the Always Aware Disciplined Student Culture (AADSC), Empower Hour, and targeted interventions, Still I Rise Academy will create a transformational learning environment where students feel valued, supported, and driven to achieve success.

Our culture is proactive, restorative, and student-centered, ensuring that all students—including those at risk—are given the tools to succeed academically and beyond.

## **Response to Concern #1 – School Culture Implementation and Sustainability for All Stakeholders**

Still I Rise Academy's school culture is grounded in our ME<sup>2</sup> mission—to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate—and is specifically designed to empower students who have historically been underserved. As a designated Opportunity Charter School, our cultural vision prioritizes the social, emotional, and academic well-being of every student from day one and throughout their educational journey, including those who enroll mid-year.

### A. Culture Creation Plan – Pre-Opening and Day One

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*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Prior to the first day of instruction, Still I Rise Academy will establish its culture through the following actions:

- **Staff Summer Institute:** A multi-week professional development session focused on restorative practices, trauma-informed teaching, culturally responsive engagement, and relationship building.
- **Family Engagement Forums:** Held in July and August, these forums will help build trust and community while introducing families to the school's culture and policies.
- **Student Empowerment Orientation:** All students, including mid-year enrollees, will participate in a multi-day orientation featuring goal setting, conflict resolution training, and community-building workshops.
- **ME<sup>2</sup> Visual Branding:** Classrooms, hallways, and common areas will display student-created affirmations and mission-aligned banners promoting motivation, education, and elevation.

### B. Mid-Year Enrollment Integration

Still I Rise Academy recognizes that students who enter mid-year—particularly those experiencing housing instability or academic disengagement—require intentional onboarding. We will:

- Assign each mid-year student a Peer Mentor and Faculty Advisor for academic and emotional support.
- Conduct a one-day Mid-Year Welcome Session to review school expectations, technology access, and behavior norms.
- Implement an Individual Learning & Transition Plan (ILTP) within the first 48 hours to ensure the student's academic, social, and emotional needs are supported.

### C. Inclusive Schoolwide Systems



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To sustain a positive and inclusive culture for all stakeholders, the following systems will be in place:

- Empower Hour (daily): A schoolwide session for personal development, motivational speaking, attendance engagement, and cultural rituals.
- Quarterly Culture Reviews: Staff, students, and families will complete culture perception surveys, which will be reviewed by the School Leadership Team to refine practices.
- Student Voice Circles: Held monthly to gather feedback directly from students on cultural issues, hosted by the Assistant Principal.
- Family Partnership Council: A structured advisory group of parents/guardians and community partners who meet monthly to advise on school climate and family engagement strategies.

### D. Staff Culture Sustainability

We believe that school culture starts with staff culture. Therefore, we are committed to:

- Bi-weekly Professional Circles: Opportunities for team reflection, peer coaching, and morale-building activities.
- Wellness Wednesdays: Staff self-care initiatives including mindfulness, access to mental health supports, and flexible professional learning time.
- Staff Recognition System: Monthly "Elevate Awards" recognizing team members who go above and beyond in modeling the school's mission.

### E. Cultural Alignment with Principle 3

This plan ensures that all actions taken—from student onboarding to stakeholder feedback loops—prioritize the well-being and interests of students and staff, in alignment with

## Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline

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Principle 3 of the Tennessee State Board of Education's charter authorizing standards.

### Response to Concern #2 – Clarifying the Cultural Model's Support for Diverse and At-Risk Students

Still I Rise Academy is proud to operate under the Opportunity Charter School model, a designation created by the State of Tennessee to serve youth who have been chronically underserved by traditional public education. Our ME<sup>2</sup> mission—to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate—is more than a slogan; it is a comprehensive framework of supports that empowers students, including those who are homeless, behind grade level, parenting, or experiencing trauma, to succeed academically and personally.

#### Clarifying Our Cultural Model

Our school culture is based on our AADSC Model (Always Aware Disciplined Student Culture), which is designed to:

- Build a safe, structured, and affirming school environment;
- Reinforce student awareness, accountability, and leadership through daily routines;
- Integrate restorative practices, culturally responsive teaching, and trauma-informed care;
- Provide targeted interventions and wraparound supports embedded within the daily schedule.

#### How It Supports Special Populations & Diverse Learners

##### 1. Students with Disabilities

- The model integrates inclusive classroom practices, RTI<sup>2</sup>-based interventions, and co-teaching models.

## Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline

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- Empower Hour and restorative circles foster peer relationships and confidence, supporting social-emotional development.

### 2. English Learners (EL)

- EL students receive language scaffolding within core instruction and additional support via ILP-integrated Empower Hour sessions.
- Cultural respect and multilingual communication are embedded in family engagement efforts.

### 3. Students At Risk of Academic Failure

- Tiered Intervention Time (2:55 – 3:25 PM) offers daily, scheduled academic remediation based on real-time performance data.
- Saturday School, Summer Credit Recovery, and Credit Acceleration ensure that academic gaps are addressed without stigma.
- Peer mentorship and advisory programs connect students with trusted adults and role models.

### 4. Students at Risk of Dropping Out

- Our advisory-based model includes Graduation Mentors who meet monthly with students behind in credits.
- Early warning indicators (chronic absenteeism, behavior changes, failed classes) trigger a Student Success Team Response.

### 5. Parenting Students & Students in Crisis

- Flexible scheduling, virtual tutoring, and embedded counseling services

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provide the necessary support to help students stay enrolled and graduate.

### Conclusion

Still I Rise Academy's cultural model directly responds to the specific student populations identified by the State of Tennessee's Opportunity Charter School statute. It was never designed as a traditional charter framework, but rather as an urgent response to the real conditions of Memphis youth. The model is not only clear—it is student-centered, research-backed, and built in direct alignment with Tennessee's own objectives and accountability framework.

This approach also fully embraces Tennessee Quality Charter Authorizing Principle 3, which requires that student well-being be the central driver of authorizer and school actions. We respectfully assert that our model upholds this principle at every level of implementation.

### Response to concern #3

#### Concern:

"The Student Handbook needs further development. The applicant should review to ensure it is comprehensive for the intended demographic and aligns with state law, rules, and the school's design."

#### How the Revised Handbook Resolves This:

1. Comprehensive for Intended Demographic
  - The handbook was written with the realities of at-risk, underserved, and vulnerable students in mind, including parenting students, chronically absent youth, and students with past trauma.
  - Policies are explained in clear, supportive, and restorative language suitable for families who may be unfamiliar with traditional school systems.
2. Alignment with State Law & Rules
  - Attendance policies, discipline rights, due process protections, and parent

## Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline

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involvement expectations are aligned with T.C.A. §§ 49-6-3001, 49-6-3401, IDEA, and Section 504.

- Language around suspension, expulsion, and protections for students with disabilities was clarified to ensure legal compliance.

### 3. Alignment with School's Design & Culture

- The revised handbook integrates the Empower Hour, Always Aware Disciplined Student Culture (AADSC), and tiered supports as part of the school's unique model.
- Includes supportive entry for mid-year enrollees, emphasizing individualized onboarding and community connection.
- Clearly outlines how student voice, family partnerships, and equity are central to the school's ethos.

### 4. Clarity & Usability

- The handbook uses plain language, breaking down legal terms and school policies for easy understanding.
- Key sections (attendance, discipline, rights) are structured for quick reference.

### Response to Concern #4,

we have updated Attachment F to clarify that the Principal, not a Dean of Students, will oversee school discipline in alignment with the staffing plan and budget.

### Response to Concern #5 – Empower Hour as a Tool to Increase Attendance

The Empower Hour initiative is a cornerstone of Still I Rise Academy's ME<sup>2</sup> (Motivate,

## **Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Educate, Elevate) school culture and is intentionally designed to improve daily student attendance—particularly for our Opportunity Charter School target population, which includes students who are chronically absent, formerly incarcerated, retained multiple times, or experiencing trauma.

Empower Hour is scheduled daily from 9:15–9:45 AM and serves as a motivational and relational block that includes inspirational talks, student goal-setting, culturally responsive reflection, and SEL-driven discussions. By starting each day with an engaging, emotionally supportive, and community-centered session, we provide students with an immediate reason to arrive at school on time. Research supports this approach: according to Attendance Works, strong school connection and morning routines that affirm identity and community increase the likelihood that chronically absent students will attend school consistently. Furthermore, the Learning Policy Institute has found that culturally responsive practices that integrate student voice and trauma-informed care have a direct correlation with higher attendance and reduced behavioral referrals.

Empower Hour incorporates these evidence-based practices to create a safe, meaningful space that transforms how students view the school day—from obligation to opportunity. This initiative will be monitored through attendance tracking, student engagement surveys, and stakeholder feedback to measure its impact. In essence, Empower Hour is not simply a cultural add-on—it is a strategic intervention aimed at reversing chronic absenteeism and fostering a school climate that welcomes students into learning each morning with purpose and pride.



## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### Section 1.8 – Special Populations

#### Supporting Every Student to Reach Their Full Potential

Still I Rise Academy is committed to educating, motivating, and elevating at-risk students to exceed expectations and achieve academic and career success. With over 100 years of combined experience, our leadership team has successfully supported students who face academic, linguistic, socio-emotional, and learning challenges. Our past work has led students to graduate from elite colleges and universities, enter the military, and obtain industry certifications in their chosen career paths.

At Still I Rise Academy, we do not define students by their challenges—we empower them to rise above them.

#### I. Leadership Team Experience with Special Populations

##### Students with Disabilities

- ✓ Our leadership team has extensive experience implementing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs), and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) for students with disabilities.
- ✓ Staff have successfully integrated students with disabilities into general education classrooms, ensuring equity in instruction and access to resources.
- ✓ Proven track record of developing inclusive education models, where students with disabilities achieve on par with their peers through supportive interventions.

##### English Learners (ELs)

- ✓ Our educators have worked with ELL (English Language Learner) students across diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, implementing differentiated instruction and structured language supports.
- ✓ We have a strong history of maintaining Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) and providing English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction that enhances both language acquisition and subject mastery.
- ✓ Staff are trained in Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) to support EL students across all subject areas.

##### At-Risk Students

- ✓ Our school leaders have successfully re-engaged dropouts, supported students who have been

## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

retained multiple times, and helped students overcome chronic absenteeism.

✓ We specialize in credit recovery programs, competency-based learning, and career certification pathways to ensure at-risk students stay on track.

✓ Our approach includes mentorship, social-emotional learning (SEL), and real-world learning experiences that inspire engagement and perseverance.

### Intellectually Gifted Students

✓ Our leadership team has developed customized advanced learning programs, early college coursework, and enrichment opportunities for gifted students.

✓ We implement project-based learning (PBL), independent research opportunities, and AP/dual enrollment courses for students needing advanced academic challenges.

✓ Teachers are trained to identify and support students who demonstrate exceptional abilities while keeping them engaged in a rigorous, stimulating curriculum.

## II. Identifying and Supporting Students with Disabilities

### Process & Methods for Identifying Disabilities

✧ Still I Rise Academy will comply with Title 49, Chapter 10, of the Tennessee Code, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to ensure proper identification of students with disabilities.

#### ✓ Referral Process:

- Any student suspected of having a disability will be referred for screening and evaluation.
- Parent input, teacher observations, academic records, and behavioral data will be used.

#### ✓ Evaluation Methods:

- We will use multi-tiered assessments, classroom observations, and norm-referenced testing to determine eligibility for special education services.
- A dedicated special education team will conduct Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) when necessary.

## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### III. Providing a Continuum of Services for Students with Disabilities

Still I Rise Academy will offer multiple levels of support to ensure students with disabilities receive an inclusive, high-quality education.

#### Service Continuum:

- ✓ Full Inclusion – Most students with disabilities will receive services within general education classrooms, with accommodations and supports.
- ✓ Resource Support – Some students will receive pull-out instruction in small groups for targeted interventions.
- ✓ Self-Contained Special Education – For students with low-incidence disabilities, specialized instruction will be provided in adaptive learning classrooms.
- ✓ Behavioral and Emotional Supports – Students requiring additional behavioral assistance will have counselors trained as educators and educators trained as counselors to provide wraparound care.

#### Integration of Special Education Services

- ✓ Teachers and special education staff will collaborate to ensure IEP accommodations are implemented without segregating students.
- ✓ Embedded Special Education Teachers will provide co-teaching and in-class support.
- ✓ IEPs will be reviewed regularly, ensuring progress toward goals is documented and updated.

#### Monitoring & Evaluation

- ✓ Progress monitoring tools will track academic growth, goal attainment, and intervention effectiveness.
- ✓ Quarterly IEP team meetings will review student performance and adjust supports as needed.
- ✓ Alignment with the authorizer's evaluation framework will ensure compliance with state and federal special education requirements.

#### High School Diploma Pathways for Students with Disabilities

- ✓ Students will have access to:
  - Standard High School Diplomas (with necessary accommodations).



## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

(Required for All Sponsors)

- Career & Technical Education (CTE) Diplomas linked to industry certifications.
- Alternative Diploma Pathways for students with significant cognitive disabilities under state-approved frameworks.

### IV. Identifying & Supporting English Learners (ELs)

#### Process & Compliance

- ✓ Initial Home Language Survey (HLS) will be administered at enrollment.
- ✓ WIDA Screener will determine EL eligibility.
- ✓ Annual WIDA ACCESS testing will track English language proficiency.

#### EL Student Services & Integration

- ✓ ESL-certified teachers will provide pull-out and push-in language instruction.
- ✓ Sheltered content instruction will integrate English learning into core subjects.
- ✓ Bilingual support staff and parent liaisons will ensure family engagement.

#### EL Monitoring & Exit Criteria

- ✓ Students must meet state-defined exit criteria before transitioning out of EL support.
- ✓ EL student progress will be monitored for two years post-exit to ensure continued success.

#### Staffing Plan

- ✓ Ratio of 1 ESL-certified teacher for every 35 EL students, as per SBE Rule 0520-01-19-03.

### V. Identifying & Supporting At-Risk Students

#### Identification Process

- ✓ Academic & Behavioral Data Review – Attendance, grades, discipline records, and teacher referrals will help identify at-risk students.
- ✓ Early Warning System – 20% absenteeism triggers intervention under our chronic absenteeism plan.

#### Programs & Supports

## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- ✓ Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs) for struggling students.
- ✓ Credit Recovery & Competency-Based Learning for students behind in credits.
- ✓ Small-Group & One-on-One Tutoring for academic support.
- ✓ Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Restorative Justice to improve behavior.

### VI. Identifying & Supporting Intellectually Gifted Students

#### Identification Process

- ✓ Students will be assessed using:
  - Gifted Rating Scales (GRS),
  - Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), and
  - Teacher/Parent Referrals.

#### Instructional Strategies

- ✓ Accelerated coursework, AP, and dual enrollment.
- ✓ Individualized Project-Based Learning (PBL).
- ✓ Competency-Based Advancement for students exceeding grade-level expectations.

#### Monitoring & Evaluation

- ✓ Gifted students will have Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs).
- ✓ Quarterly assessments will measure student growth.

### VII. Conclusion: Supporting Every Student's Success

- ✓ Our leadership team's 100+ years of experience ensures students with disabilities, ELs, at-risk students, and gifted learners receive the highest quality support.
- ✓ Innovative staffing, including counselor-trained teachers, will ensure students receive academic and emotional support.
- ✓ We will comply with all state and federal regulations while providing a unique, high-impact learning environment.

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Still I Rise Academy is committed to removing barriers, providing equitable access, and ensuring that all students have the tools to rise, succeed, and lead.

### **Response to Concern #1 – Section 1.8: Special Populations**

Still I Rise Academy acknowledges that no staff has been hired at this time, as the school has not yet received formal charter approval and is over 16 months from its proposed opening. However, our planning has included a comprehensive and strategic approach to ensure that the school is led and staffed by professionals with proven experience supporting students with disabilities, English Learners (EL), at-risk youth, and intellectually gifted students.

#### **Leadership Experience and Commitments:**

Our Executive Director, Dr. Gerald Kiner, is a former educator with over 25 years of experience serving at-risk and marginalized youth populations. He is a published author of *Educating the Urban Child* and *Engaging the Urban Caregiver*, and has extensive expertise in trauma-informed practices, restorative discipline, and differentiated instruction. He has also led nonprofit and educational initiatives that provide wraparound support for chronically absent, parenting, formerly incarcerated, and over-age students—the precise population Still I Rise Academy will serve.

Additionally, the board of directors includes:

- Annie Miller, a retired teacher with 30+ years of experience, specializing in academic intervention for struggling learners.
- Alysse Adams, a Memphis-Shelby County Schools teacher with 10 years of direct experience working with English Learners and at-risk youth.
- Corelatta Cromer, LMSW, a licensed master social worker with two decades of experience in providing behavioral and emotional support to students with disabilities and trauma histories.



## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### Staffing Plan to Serve Special Populations:

Still I Rise Academy is committed to hiring highly qualified and appropriately endorsed staff to meet the needs of all students. Our staffing plan includes the following critical roles:

- Special Education Coordinator (1 FTE): Oversees all IDEA compliance, IEP development, and implementation of a continuum of services, including inclusion, pull-out, and resource support models. This individual will be licensed in special education and experienced in serving students with high-incidence and low-incidence disabilities.
- ELL Interventionist / ESL-Certified Teacher (1 FTE): Maintains compliance with EL identification and support per SBE Rule 0520-01-19-.03 and ensures ILP development, sheltered instruction, and WIDA-aligned progress monitoring.
- RTI<sup>2</sup> Coordinator (1 FTE): Implements tiered intervention systems using universal screening, diagnostic tools, and progress monitoring to serve at-risk students and prevent academic failure.
- Gifted and Talented Instructional Coach (0.5 FTE shared): Coordinates the identification and enrichment of intellectually gifted students using research-based curriculum and strategies, including curriculum compaction, project-based learning, and dual enrollment pathways.
- School Counselor (1 FTE): Provides academic, behavioral, and emotional support for all students, with targeted interventions for at-risk and special populations.

### Compliance and Oversight:

The school will ensure compliance with IDEA, Section 504, and Title III by:

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Maintaining appropriate staff-to-student ratios
- Implementing Child Find protocols to identify students with disabilities and ELs
- Delivering services in the least restrictive environment
- Using qualified interpreters and multilingual communication systems for EL families

### **Conclusion:**

Although Still I Rise Academy is in the pre-operational phase and has not hired staff, our leadership and board possess deep knowledge and a proven track record in serving special populations. Our staffing plan is both strategic and compliant with federal and state law and ensures that all students—including those with disabilities, ELs, at-risk, and gifted learners—will have equitable access to rigorous instruction and supportive services.

### **Response to Concern #2 – Section 1.8: Special Populations**

Still I Rise Academy recognizes the importance of clearly outlining eligibility, monitoring, and exiting protocols for all special populations—including Students with Disabilities (SWD), English Learners (EL), at-risk students, and intellectually gifted (IG) students. We are fully committed to complying with federal and state laws and implementing best practices that ensure these students receive the individualized support necessary for academic success.

### **Students with Disabilities (SWD)**

#### **Eligibility:**

- The school will follow Child Find requirements in accordance with IDEA and

## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-10-101 et seq., ensuring that all students with potential disabilities are identified, located, and evaluated.

- Referrals may come from teachers, parents, or data indicating persistent academic or behavioral challenges.
- Comprehensive evaluations will be conducted by licensed professionals to determine eligibility under one or more of the 13 IDEA disability categories.

### Monitoring:

- Each student with a disability will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed and reviewed annually by a multidisciplinary team, including the parent or guardian.
- Progress toward IEP goals will be reviewed quarterly and documented in alignment with the reporting schedule for general education students.
- Service delivery logs, attendance, and assessment data will be used to ensure implementation fidelity.

### Exiting:

- A student may exit special education services if an IEP team determines the student no longer meets eligibility criteria through reevaluation.
- Written Prior Notice (WPN) and parent consent will be secured before any change in eligibility status.
- Exiting decisions will follow Tennessee Department of Education policies and IDEA regulations.

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **English Learners (EL)**

#### **Eligibility:**

- Students will be identified using a Home Language Survey during registration.
- If a language other than English is indicated, the student will be screened using the WIDA Screener or WIDA MODEL assessment.
- Students scoring below the state-designated English proficiency level will be identified as EL and will receive services.

#### **Monitoring:**

- Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) will be developed for each EL student and updated annually by certified ESL staff in collaboration with core content teachers.
- Progress will be monitored through classroom performance, benchmark assessments, and the annual WIDA ACCESS 2.0 assessment.
- Ongoing data will be used to tailor instruction and supports across content areas.

#### **Exiting:**

- EL students will exit the program once they meet state-established English proficiency benchmarks on the WIDA ACCESS assessment.
- Exited students will be monitored for four years post-exit per federal law to

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

ensure sustained academic success.

### **Response to Concern #3 – Section 1.8: Staff Training Opportunities for Special Populations**

Still I Rise Academy is fully committed to equipping all staff—teachers, administrators, and support personnel—with the training necessary to support diverse learners and special populations. In addition to trauma-informed practices and culturally responsive strategies already outlined in our original application, we are expanding our professional development (PD) offerings to reflect the full range of supports essential for student success, particularly for students with disabilities, English Learners (ELs), at-risk youth, and gifted students.

Below is an overview of comprehensive training opportunities:

#### **Comprehensive Staff Training Plan**

##### **1. Trauma-Informed Practices**

- Provider: The Shalom House of Memphis (licensed psycho-socio rehabilitation partner)
- Frequency: Quarterly (with ongoing coaching)
- Focus: Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), de-escalation techniques, and relationship-building with high-needs students.

##### **2. Culturally Responsive Teaching Strategies**

- Provider: In-house PD facilitated by experienced educators on the Still I Rise leadership team
- Focus: Differentiating instruction to reflect students' cultural backgrounds,



## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

(Required for All Sponsors)

validating diverse experiences, and reducing bias in classrooms.

### 3. Special Education Law and Service Delivery

- Provider: Independent SPED Consultant and/or Shelby County Schools SPED division
- Focus: IDEA, Section 504 compliance, IEP/ILP development, progress monitoring, behavior intervention plans (BIPs), and co-teaching models.

### 4. Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>)

- Provider: Tennessee Department of Education-aligned trainers
- Focus: Implementation of RTI<sup>2</sup> tiers, data-driven decision-making, use of screening tools like NWEA MAP and EasyCBM, and documentation.

### 5. English Learner (EL) Supports and ILP Implementation

- Provider: ESL Coordinator or licensed ESL consultant
- Focus: WIDA standards, ILP development, strategies for sheltered instruction, co-planning with general education teachers.

### 6. Gifted Education Identification and Differentiation

- Provider: Tennessee Association for the Gifted or a certified gifted instructor
- Focus: Screening tools, acceleration models, enrichment planning, and project-based learning for intellectually gifted students.

### 7. Behavior Management & PBIS

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Provider: Licensed behavior specialist
- Focus: Implementing a positive school climate through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), behavior data tracking, and consistent disciplinary protocols.

### **8. McKinney-Vento and Homeless Student Support**

- Provider: Executive Director (trained in federal homeless education law)
- Focus: Legal protections, enrollment flexibility, wraparound service coordination, and ensuring access to extracurricular and academic programs.

### **9. FERPA and Student Data Confidentiality**

- Provider: Compliance Officer or legal consultant
- Focus: Protecting student data, ensuring appropriate access to IEPs/ILPs, and safeguarding sensitive information.

## **Ongoing Professional Development Strategy**

- New Staff Orientation: Intensive onboarding covering the above topics.
- Monthly PD Days: Embedded in the calendar to provide ongoing targeted sessions based on current needs and data trends.
- Mid-Year Hires: Will receive a condensed onboarding package with follow-up mentoring and training sessions.

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Annual Evaluations: Tied to fidelity of implementing supports for special populations.

By expanding and institutionalizing these training opportunities, Still I Rise Academy ensures every staff member is fully equipped to serve the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally—while remaining compliant with federal and state regulations and aligned with best practices for equity and inclusion.

### **Response to Concern #4 – Section 1.8: Updated English Learner (EL) Programming and Assessments**

Thank you for this important observation. We have revised our application to ensure alignment with current federal and state expectations for English Learner (EL) services as guided by the most recent updates under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Tennessee Department of Education guidelines, and SBE Rule 0520-01-19-.03.

Below are the key corrections and clarifications reflecting updated EL programming and assessments:

### **Updated English Learner Identification Process**

Still I Rise Academy will follow the state-mandated EL entrance process, including:

- Home Language Survey (HLS): Administered upon enrollment to all new students.
- WIDA Screener: Used for initial identification of ELs in Grades 1-12. Kindergarten students will be screened using the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten.

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Students qualifying for EL services will receive an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), developed collaboratively with ESL-certified staff, general education teachers, and families.

### **Updated EL Program Model**

Still I Rise Academy will implement a Sheltered English Instruction model in tandem with pull-out ESL support, aligned with WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards. Supports include:

- ESL-endorsed staff delivering direct services through small-group instruction or co-teaching models.
- Use of language scaffolds, visual aids, sentence frames, and bilingual resources to support comprehension across all content areas.
- Embedded support during core classes using strategies such as SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol).

### **Updated EL Assessment System**

- Annual Assessment: All ELs will take the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 to measure English language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- Progress Monitoring: Quarterly language assessments using formative tools such as i-Ready or NWEA MAP, and ILP-aligned rubrics to monitor content and language development.
- Exit Criteria: EL students will exit the EL program in accordance with the TDOE's approved exit criteria, including achieving a composite score of 4.4 or

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

higher on the WIDA ACCESS and meeting all additional TDOE academic requirements.

### **Updated Monitoring & Reclassification Process**

- Post-Exit Monitoring: Former ELs will be monitored for four years following exit from the program, per ESSA.
- Designated ESL staff will maintain documentation of EL progress, update ILPs annually, and provide accommodation plans for classroom teachers.

### **Updated Professional Development for EL Supports**

- Ongoing training in ELD standards, WIDA implementation, ILP integration, and language acquisition strategies will be provided to all teachers and support staff.
- New staff will receive EL compliance training during onboarding and participate in at least two PD sessions annually focused on EL instruction.

### **Commitment to Compliance and Equity**

Still I Rise Academy's EL program is designed to ensure full compliance with federal and state regulations, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title III of ESSA, and to provide equitable access to high-quality academic instruction for all EL students.

These updates ensure that our EL policies and practices are both current and effective in meeting the diverse linguistic and academic needs of our student



## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

population.

Response to Concern #5 – Diploma Determination Process for Students with Disabilities (SWD)

Still I Rise Academy is committed to ensuring that all students, including students with disabilities (SWD), are given equitable access to earning a traditional high school diploma. In response to your concern, we have expanded and clarified our diploma determination process to reflect state requirements and best practices under IDEA, Section 504, and Tennessee State Board of Education policy.

### **Process for Determining Diploma Types for SWD**

#### **1. IEP Team Determination**

The determination of a student's appropriate diploma pathway will be made by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team, which includes:

- ☐ The student (as appropriate)
- ☐ Parent(s)/guardian(s)
- ☐ Special education teacher
- ☐ General education teacher
- ☐ School administrator or designee
- ☐ Related service providers (if applicable)

2. This team will convene no later than the beginning of 9th grade (or earlier, if the student begins high school coursework in middle school) to select the most appropriate diploma option based on the student's academic abilities,

## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

postsecondary goals, and support needs.

### 3. Alignment with Tennessee Diploma Options

Still I Rise Academy will offer the following diploma options for students with disabilities in alignment with TDOE guidelines:

- Regular High School Diploma: The IEP will identify appropriate accommodations to ensure the student can access the general education curriculum and assessments necessary to meet graduation requirements.
- Alternate Academic Diploma (AAD): For students with significant cognitive disabilities assessed via the alternate assessment, per T.C.A. § 49-6-6001 and SBE Rule 0520-01-03.
- Special Education Diploma: If a student completes their IEP goals but does not meet state graduation requirements, this diploma may be awarded with appropriate planning for postsecondary transitions.

### 4. Annual Review and Monitoring

Each student's diploma pathway will be reviewed annually by the IEP team. If a student's academic performance or postsecondary goals change, the diploma pathway may be adjusted accordingly. This ensures that students are not unnecessarily excluded from pursuing a traditional diploma.

### 5. Inclusive Access and Academic Planning

- SWD students will be scheduled in general education classes to the greatest extent appropriate, with access to co-teaching models, assistive technology, academic interventions, and accommodations.

## Section 1.8 - Special Populations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Credit recovery, extended school year services, and individualized tutoring will be available to support students on diploma tracks.
- The student's Transition Plan (beginning no later than age 14) will include career assessments, work-based learning options, and guidance aligned with their diploma pathway.

### 6. Professional Development for Staff

Teachers and support staff will be trained annually on:

- Diploma options for SWD
- Transition planning and postsecondary readiness
- Inclusive instructional practices and accommodations
- Legal compliance related to IDEA and state graduation policies

## Commitment to Equity and Excellence

Still I Rise Academy will ensure that all students with disabilities are given meaningful opportunities to pursue a regular high school diploma, with proper supports, planning, and collaboration. Our goal is to ensure that no student is tracked or limited by their disability, and that every diploma pathway leads to viable postsecondary and career outcomes.

Response to Concern #6 – Intervention Strategies for At-Risk Students

Still I Rise Academy was founded with a mission to serve the most educationally

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

marginalized youth, including students who are chronically absent, retained multiple times, pregnant or parenting, formerly incarcerated, and disengaged from traditional schools. Addressing this concern, we have clarified and expanded how we will implement intervention strategies to ensure academic and behavioral success for our at-risk student population.

### **Identification of At-Risk Students**

At-risk students will be identified through:

- Academic performance (e.g., scoring below proficient on TCAP or benchmark assessments)
- Attendance data (chronic absenteeism of 10% or more)
- Behavioral records (disciplinary referrals or trauma exposure)
- Social-emotional indicators (screenings and mental health referrals)
- Intake interviews and transcript reviews upon enrollment

Students meeting two or more risk criteria will be flagged for early intervention within the first two weeks of school, or upon entry if enrolled mid-year.

### **Tiered Intervention Framework (RTI<sup>2</sup>)**

Still I Rise Academy will use the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) model to support at-risk students academically and behaviorally.

#### **Tier 1 – Core Instruction for All**

- Differentiated, standards-based instruction in all classrooms

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Social-emotional learning (SEL) integrated through daily “Empower Hour”
- Data-driven instructional strategies using i-Ready, NWEA MAP, and formative assessments

### **Tier 2 - Targeted Small Group Support**

- Pull-out and push-in academic tutoring for students falling behind
- Biweekly academic intervention blocks built into the daily schedule (2:55–3:25 PM)
- Behavior intervention plans (BIPs) developed by licensed social workers or interventionists

### **Tier 3 - Intensive Individualized Interventions**

- 1:1 tutoring or academic coaching
- Personalized learning plans (PLPs) with SMART goals and weekly monitoring
- Trauma-informed counseling, mental health services, and parent case management

### **Holistic Support Strategies**

- On-Site Mental Health Professionals: Provided in-kind by licensed community partners (e.g., The Shalom House) to support students dealing with trauma or instability
- Credit Recovery & Acceleration: Online and in-person recovery options

## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

starting in 9th grade, including extended learning time and summer school

- Mentorship Program: Every at-risk student will be paired with a faculty mentor for goal-setting and weekly check-ins
- Family Engagement Plan: Case managers will coordinate family supports, home visits, and regular progress reports for students at risk of dropping out

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Weekly data team meetings to monitor student progress (attendance, grades, discipline)
- Quarterly progress reviews with parents/guardians for Tier 2 and 3 students
- Progress data entered and reviewed via our student information system (SIS) and used to adjust supports in real time
- At-risk student progress will also be a standing agenda item at monthly administrative leadership team meetings

### **Staffing and Training**

- Interventionists will be hired beginning Year 1 to implement RTI<sup>2</sup>
- All instructional and support staff will be trained in trauma-informed instruction, differentiated learning, and early warning indicator analysis
- Professional development will include behavior de-escalation, SEL integration,



## **Section 1.8 - Special Populations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)

### **Conclusion**

Still I Rise Academy's mission-driven model is built to serve at-risk students, not just include them. Our structured intervention plan—rooted in data, early identification, personalized support, and community-based resources—ensures these students will not only stay enrolled but thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

## **Section 1.9 - Conversion Charter School Planning**

*(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 12)*

## Section 2 – Operations Plan and Capacity

### Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

#### Section 2.1 – Governance

##### I. Governance Structure & Board Composition

Still I Rise Academy is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors, ensuring a diverse range of expertise to support the school's educational, operational, and financial success.

##### Board Composition

Our Board includes:

- ✓ Three Educators – Experts in curriculum, instructional best practices, and student engagement strategies.
- ✓ One Lawyer – Provides legal oversight, ensures compliance with education laws, and mitigates risks.
- ✓ One AP Mechanic – Brings expertise in technical education, workforce training, and industry certifications.
- ✓ One Licensed Social Worker – Ensures student mental health, social-emotional learning (SEL), and wraparound services are prioritized.
- ✓ One Medical Doctor – Provides guidance on health and wellness policies, ensuring a safe school environment and supporting students with medical needs.

##### Governance Committees

The Board will operate through four standing committees, ensuring effective oversight and stakeholder engagement:

##### ✦ Academic Excellence Committee (Led by an Educator)

- Ensures the school meets student achievement goals, state standards, and accountability measures.
- Oversees curriculum development and special population services.

##### ✦ Finance & Operations Committee (Led by the Lawyer & AP Mechanic)

- Reviews budgets, audits, and financial policies to maintain long-term sustainability.

## Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Ensures facilities, safety, and technology needs are met.

✧ Student & Family Support Committee (Led by the Social Worker & Medical Doctor)

- Develops policies on SEL, mental health services, student support interventions, and family engagement.
- Ensures compliance with student health, wellness, and nutrition policies.

✧ Governance & Compliance Committee (Led by the Lawyer)

- Ensures adherence to Tennessee charter school laws and manages board recruitment, training, and evaluation.
- Oversees leadership accountability and strategic planning.

This balanced governance structure ensures active representation of key stakeholders, supporting the school's mission of empowering at-risk students.

### II. Board Oversight & Evaluation of Success

The Board of Directors will evaluate success at three levels:

✧ School Performance (Academic & Operational)

✧ School Leadership Effectiveness

✧ Board Performance & Growth

#### A. School Performance Evaluation

The Board will measure school success through:

- ✓ Student Achievement & Growth – Measured by Tennessee's Opportunity Public Charter School Accountability Framework (including TCAP, TVAAS growth, and College & Career Readiness metrics).
- ✓ Attendance & Retention Rates – Ensuring students attend at least 80% of the school year, with intervention at 20% absenteeism.
- ✓ Graduation & Postsecondary Readiness – Monitoring credit recovery, dual enrollment, and career certification completion.
- ✓ Financial & Operational Health – Ensuring the school meets budgetary, compliance, and audit

## Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

requirements.

✧ Quarterly Board Meetings will include a dashboard review of these metrics, ensuring data-driven decisions.

### B. School Leadership Evaluation

✧ Annual School Leader Performance Review

The Principal and administrative leadership will be evaluated based on:

- ✓ Student performance outcomes aligned with the state's accountability system.
- ✓ Staff retention, teacher development, and instructional quality.
- ✓ Family & Community Engagement – Parent surveys and stakeholder feedback.
- ✓ Financial & Operational Efficiency – Meeting compliance and fiscal management goals.

✧ 360° Evaluation – The Principal will be assessed via:

- Self-assessment
- Teacher & staff feedback
- Board & stakeholder evaluations

✧ Action Plan for Leadership Growth – If performance falls below expectations, a leadership development plan will be implemented.

### C. Board Performance & Development

✧ Annual Board Self-Evaluation

- ✓ Effectiveness in Governance & Oversight
- ✓ Engagement with Stakeholders
- ✓ Compliance with State Regulations
- ✓ Strategic Growth & Leadership Accountability

✧ External Review Every 3 Years

- The Board will undergo an independent audit of governance practices to ensure



## Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

effectiveness and continuous improvement.

### Board-Principal Collaboration

- The Board will maintain a clear distinction between governance & operations, allowing school leadership to manage daily operations while the Board focuses on accountability, policy, and long-term strategy.

### III. Board Development & Recruitment

#### A. Recruiting New Board Members

##### The Board will recruit members based on:

- ☒ Legal & Compliance Needs (law, finance, governance)
- ☒ Academic & Student Services Expertise (education, special populations)
- ☒ Community & Workforce Representation (industry, healthcare, social work)

##### Succession Planning

- Board terms will be staggered, ensuring continuity and fresh perspectives.
- Board members may serve up to two consecutive terms (3 years each).
- A Nominating Committee will identify potential candidates one year in advance of term expiration.

#### B. Board Training & Development

##### Annual State-Approved Governance Training

- In compliance with T.C.A. § 49-13-111(o), all board members will complete annual training approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education.

##### New Board Member Orientation

- ☒ Overview of Still I Rise Academy's Mission & Goals
- ☒ Charter School Governance & Compliance
- ☒ Financial & Legal Responsibilities



## Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

✓ Review of Student Achievement & Accountability Metrics

✧ Ongoing Professional Development

✓ Quarterly training sessions on finance, academic performance oversight, and legal compliance.

✓ Attendance at charter school conferences & state education workshops.

✓ Peer mentorship for new board members.

### IV. Handling Complaints & Conflict Resolution

✧ When Complaints Are Brought to the Board

Complaints will only be escalated to the Board when all school-level resolution methods have been exhausted.

✧ Complaint Process

✓ Step 1: Resolution at School Level

- Complaints should first be addressed through teacher, administrator, or school leadership mediation.

✓ Step 2: Written Formal Complaint to the Board

- If unresolved, the complainant may submit a formal, written request to the Board Secretary.

✓ Step 3: Board Review & Resolution

- The Governance Committee will review the complaint, investigate, and recommend a resolution.

- For serious concerns (e.g., legal, financial, or governance issues), the full Board will conduct a formal hearing and issue a final decision.

✧ Conflict of Interest Policy

✓ If a Board Member has a conflict of interest, they must recuse themselves from all discussions and votes related to the complaint.

### V. Conclusion: A Governance Model for Success

## Section 2.1 – Governance

### (Required for All Sponsors)

- ✓ **Diverse, High-Impact Leadership** – A Board with educators, legal, medical, social work, and workforce expertise ensures holistic student support.
- ✓ **Strong Accountability Framework** – Performance evaluations for school leadership, Board members, and student success ensure continuous growth.
- ✓ **Proactive Board Development & Training** – Ensuring members remain engaged, knowledgeable, and effective.
- ✓ **Transparent & Fair Complaint Process** – A structured approach to resolving concerns with integrity.

Through strong governance, clear accountability, and a mission-driven leadership team, Still I Rise Academy is positioned for long-term success—ensuring students are educated, motivated, and elevated to exceed expectations.

### Response to Concern #1 – Board Expertise and Representation

We respectfully disagree with the suggestion that the governing board of Still I Rise Academy lacks operational and financial expertise. While none of our board members are labeled solely as “financial professionals,” each possesses significant experience managing or operating within large-scale operations and multimillion-dollar budgets in the private, public, or nonprofit sectors. Several board members currently serve or have served in senior leadership positions at organizations such as Federal Express, William & Johnson Career College, and All About You Home Healthcare—entities with complex financial structures and operational scopes far exceeding those of a typical public charter school as many charter schools have low enrollments .

For example:

- Christopher Dailey, a lead aviation mechanic at FedEx, helps maintain and manage the operational safety of equipment valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars. His work requires not only technical expertise but precision in planning, compliance, and budgeting for capital and human resources.
- Monique Wade, our Litigation Support Specialist and Postsecondary Academic Affairs Administrator, has overseen the regulatory and budgetary operations of two accredited postsecondary institutions, including compliance with the

## Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Department of Education.

- Our Executive Director, Dr. Gerald Kiner, has managed over 15 years of multimillion-dollar nonprofit programs, grant-funded initiatives, and educational institutions.
- Taken together, these individuals bring a depth of fiscal and operational knowledge that meets and exceeds the requirements for governing a public charter school.

Regarding parent representation: not only are all our board members parents but Senteria Johnson, a single mother and long-standing community advocate, serves as our parent voice on the board. She brings lived experience in navigating Shelby County's educational and social service systems and offers critical insight into the needs of our target student population—many of whom come from families headed by single parents.

Finally, we believe it would be constitutionally inappropriate to require charter school board members to represent specific professional sectors. There is no such requirement under Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-13-106, § 49-13-111, or the Tennessee State Board of Education's Charter Authorizing Standards. In fact, to do so could limit local, grassroots leadership that is most responsive to community needs—especially in underserved areas. Even the Shelby County Schools Board itself is not composed based on occupational quotas but by democratic election.

Still I Rise Academy's board was deliberately structured to reflect the lived experience, operational strength, educational knowledge, and community commitment needed to serve one of Memphis's most at-risk student populations. We are confident this board composition meets both the letter and spirit of the law and aligns with Principle 3, Standard 1 of the Tennessee State Board's Quality Charter Authorizing Standards: "making the well-being and interests of students the fundamental value informing all the authorizer's actions and decisions."

## Section 2.1 – Governance

(Required for All Sponsors)

### Response to Concern #2 – Complaint Process Timeline and Details

Still I Rise Academy is committed to maintaining a transparent and responsive complaint resolution process that reflects the values of fairness, accountability, and accessibility. We appreciate the reviewer's request for additional detail and have revised our complaint policy accordingly to include specific steps, timelines, and responsibilities.

Updated Complaint Resolution Process and Timeline:

#### 1. Step 1: Initial Attempt at School-Level Resolution

- Any student, parent, staff member, or community member with a concern is encouraged to first address it directly with the relevant teacher, administrator, or staff member.
- Timeline: Within 5 business days of the concern arising.

#### 2. Step 2: Escalation to Principal

- If the concern is not resolved, the complainant may submit a written complaint to the Principal using a standardized complaint form.
- The Principal will conduct a review, which may include meetings with relevant parties, review of documents, and proposed remedies.
- Timeline: A written response will be issued within 10 business days of the formal complaint being submitted.

#### 3. Step 3: Appeal to Board of Directors

- If the complainant is unsatisfied with the Principal's decision, they may appeal to the Board of Directors by submitting the complaint in writing to the Board Secretary.

## Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- The Board's Governance & Compliance Committee will review the matter and determine whether to hold a formal hearing.
- Timeline: The Board will acknowledge the complaint within 5 business days and issue a final decision within 20 business days of receipt, unless extended for due diligence (with written notice to the complainant).

### 4. Step 4: Resolution and Recordkeeping

- A written summary of the resolution will be provided to all parties.
- The complaint and its outcome will be documented in a complaint log maintained by the Principal and reviewed quarterly by the Board.

Safeguards for Students with Disabilities and Vulnerable Populations:

Complaints involving students with disabilities or English Learners will be handled in compliance with IDEA, Section 504, Title VI, and other relevant federal and state laws. Accommodations, including interpreter services or alternative formats, will be provided upon request.

By establishing this structured timeline and formal documentation process, Still I Rise Academy ensures that all grievances are addressed promptly, fairly, and in alignment with Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-13-111 and State Board Policy 6.300.

### **Response to Concern #3 – Board Development, Annual Training, Recruitment, and Attrition Planning**

Still I Rise Academy recognizes that the strength and sustainability of our governance relies on continuous board development, strategic recruitment, and strict compliance with Tennessee state law, including T.C.A. § 49-13-111(o) regarding annual board training. We have revised our governance narrative to fully address these concerns and implemented the following comprehensive plan:

### **Board Training and Development Plan**

## Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### 1. Annual State-Approved Training

- All board members will complete State Board of Education–approved governance training annually, as required by T.C.A. § 49-13-111(o).
- This training will cover finance, academic accountability, legal compliance, ethics, and governance best practices.
- Training documentation will be submitted to the charter authorizer annually.

### 2. New Member Orientation

- Within 30 days of appointment, all new board members will undergo an intensive onboarding process led by the Governance & Compliance Committee.
- Topics include:
  - Still I Rise Academy's mission, goals, and academic model
  - Roles and responsibilities of board members
  - Overview of charter law and authorizer expectations
  - Review of financial reports, accountability frameworks, and compliance systems

### 3. Quarterly Board Development Sessions

- The board will host quarterly development workshops, including guest-led trainings on:



## Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Trauma-informed education
- Serving at-risk youth
- Effective board oversight in charter schools
- Equity and culturally responsive governance

### 4. Three-Year Governance Review Cycle

- Every three years, the board will conduct an external governance audit to assess performance, identify areas for growth, and update bylaws and board policies accordingly.

## Board Recruitment and Attrition Management

### 1. Nominating and Governance Committee

- The Governance & Compliance Committee is responsible for identifying, vetting, and onboarding prospective board members one year ahead of term expiration.

### 2. Board Composition Strategy

- We seek diverse members with expertise in:
  - Education (K-12 and higher education)
  - Finance and operations
  - Legal and compliance

## Section 2.1 – Governance

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Nonprofit governance
- Health, mental health, and social services
- Career and technical education
- Community engagement and outreach

### 3. Succession Planning

- Board terms are staggered to avoid mass turnover.
- Members may serve up to five consecutive 5-year terms (25 years total), with leadership roles rotated every 2–3 years.
- A leadership succession plan is maintained for Board Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary roles.

### 4. Community Representation

- Our board includes members from the same at-risk communities our students come from, including parents, retired teachers, and nonprofit leaders.
- One voting board seat will be reserved for a parent representative selected through a public nomination process.

By implementing this structured board development and recruitment plan, Still I Rise Academy will ensure long-term stability, strong oversight, and compliance with Tennessee law and high-quality authorizing standards.

## **Section 2.1 – Governance**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **Response to Concern #4 – Transition from Nonprofit to Charter School Governance**

We respectfully clarify that Tennessee state law does not require an existing nonprofit organization to relinquish or radically alter its foundational governance structure to operate a public charter school. The charter school is a legally authorized extension of the organization's mission and purpose, not a replacement of it. As such, Still I Rise Academy will operate as a public charter school under the existing 501(c)(3) umbrella of Humanitarian Outreach Development Group, which was founded in 2008 and has consistently served vulnerable and underserved populations for over 15 years.

Operating a charter school is a natural and mission-aligned expansion of the nonprofit's work in education, workforce development, mental health support, and poverty alleviation. The charter school allows us to legally and sustainably deliver one of our core objectives: empowering youth through transformative, trauma-informed education.

### **Division of Responsibilities**

To maintain clear boundaries between nonprofit and charter school operations:

- Still I Rise Academy will have its own Principal, operational team, and instructional staff, led by an Executive Director who reports directly to the Board.
- The Board of Directors of Humanitarian Outreach Development Group will function as the governing board of the school. All oversight of academics, finance, legal compliance, and strategic planning related to the school will be delegated to board committees that are charter-specific (e.g., Academic Excellence, Finance, Governance & Compliance).
- The nonprofit's non-charter programs will remain administratively and financially distinct, with separate budgets, staff, and reporting mechanisms to avoid conflicts of interest and maintain compliance with all federal and state regulations.

### **No Change in Legal Structure Required**

This approach is consistent with charter law across Tennessee and widely accepted by authorizers throughout the state. Many successful charter schools have grown from

## **Section 2.1 – Governance**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

nonprofits without dissolving or dramatically restructuring their boards or missions. Humanitarian Outreach Development Group has updated its bylaws, conflict of interest policy, and governance procedures (see Attachments G–M) to ensure full compliance with T.C.A. § 49-13 and local authorizer requirements.

In conclusion, Still I Rise Academy does not represent a transition away from our nonprofit roots, but a strengthening of our long-standing mission to uplift, educate, and empower youth—particularly those most overlooked. We are confident that our structure upholds all legal, operational, and ethical expectations required to operate a successful public charter school.

**Table 4: Board Members**  
(Required for All Sponsors)

Name	Address	Current Role	Area of Focus / Expertise	Board Position	Proposed Total Term Length
		Job and Employer	Ex: Legal, Real Estate, Finance, etc.	Ex: board chair, other officer, parent representative, ex officio member	
Monique Wade	5940 Bishop Dale Dr Memphis, TN 38141	Managing Director	Management	Board Chair	10 yrs
Dr. Daalon Echoles, M.D.	1661 International Dr Ste 400 Memphis, TN 38120	Neurosurgeon	Medical	Officer	10 yrs
Dr. Kendrick Boyce, M.D.	1661 International Dr Ste 400 Memphis, TN 38120	Medical Doctor	Medical	Officer	10 yrs
Isaac Scott	1661 International Dr. Ste 400 Memphis, TN 38120	Engineer	Management	Treasurer	10 yrs
Annie Miller	5712 French Market Cir N. Memphis, TN 38141	Retired Educator	Education	Officer	10 yrs
Christopher Dailey	1331 Beautiful Place Collierville, TN 38017	Lead Airplane Mechanic	Management	Officer	10 yrs
Senteria Johnson	4422 Hickory Hill Road Memphis, TN 38141	Executive Administrator	Management	Secretary	10 yrs
Corelatta Cromer, LMSW	1661 International Dr Ste 400-Memphis, TN 38120	Licensed Social Worker	Master Social Worker	Officer	10 yrs

## **Section 2.2 – Facilities**

### ***(Required for All Sponsors)***

#### Section 2.2 - Facilities

##### Still I Rise Academy

#### I. Facility Needs Based on Academic Focus and Enrollment

Still I Rise Academy requires a modern, well-equipped facility that aligns with its academic focus on college and career readiness while supporting a safe and structured learning environment for at-risk students. The facility must accommodate small class sizes, flexible learning spaces, and career technical education (CTE) programs that provide hands-on training opportunities.

##### Facility Requirements:

- Total Square Footage: Approximately 40,000 – 50,000 square feet to accommodate student enrollment and specialized academic needs.
- Classrooms: Minimum of 15 standard classrooms, each between 800-1,000 square feet.
- Science Labs: Two fully equipped science labs, each 1,200 square feet.
- Career & Technical Education (CTE) Labs: Dedicated medical training lab (for the CNA program) and a business/entrepreneurship lab, each 1,500 square feet.
- Computer Lab: One lab with 30+ workstations, approximately 1,200 square feet.
- Library/Media Center: A digital and physical resource space, approximately 2,000 square feet.
- Gymnasium & Fitness Space: A multi-purpose gymnasium for physical education and extracurricular activities, approximately 5,000 square feet.
- Cafeteria & Kitchen: A full-service kitchen with dining space for at least 150 students per seating, approximately 3,500 square feet.
- Performance/Dance Room: A creative space for dance, drama, and student showcases, approximately 1,500 square feet.
- Main Office & Administrative Space: Includes offices for the principal, executive director, support staff, and meeting rooms, approximately 2,500 square feet.
- Teacher Workrooms: Two dedicated spaces for lesson planning and collaboration,



## Section 2.2 – Facilities

### *(Required for All Sponsors)*

approximately 1,000 square feet.

- Student Support & Wellness Spaces: Counseling offices, student lounge, and mental health support room, approximately 1,500 square feet.
- Restrooms: ADA-compliant restrooms for students, faculty, and staff on all floors.
- Security & Safety Features: Secure entrance, surveillance system, emergency exits, and storm shelter compliance.

#### II. Facility Improvement Costs & Budget Inclusion

The facility acquisition and renovation costs are included in the operating budget under capital expenditures and facility lease/maintenance costs. The total estimated cost for facility acquisition and improvements is approximately \$2.5M - \$3.5M, which includes:

- Lease or Purchase Costs: \$1.5M - \$2M
- Renovations & ADA Compliance Upgrades: \$500,000 - \$750,000
- Technology & Equipment Installation: \$250,000
- Furnishings & Fixtures: \$200,000
- Storm Shelter Compliance & Safety Enhancements: \$100,000

Renovation costs have been determined based on industry estimates, comparable charter school facility improvements, and consultation with contractors experienced in school construction projects.

#### III. Board & Leadership Experience in Facility Acquisition & Management

Still I Rise Academy's Board and Leadership Team bring extensive expertise in facility acquisition, management, and renovation.

- Isaac Scott (Engineer) – Provides technical oversight on infrastructure, renovations, and ADA compliance.
- Christopher Dailey (Lead Aircraft Mechanic) – Offers expertise in technical systems, facility safety standards, and maintenance management.
- Monique Wade (Litigation Support Specialist) – Ensures compliance with legal, zoning,

## Section 2.2 – Facilities

### *(Required for All Sponsors)*

and lease agreement negotiations.

- Dr. Kendrick Boyce & Dr. Daalon Echoles (Medical Professionals) – Assist in health and wellness facility design, ensuring hygienic, accessible, and student-friendly environments.

#### IV. Process & Timeline for Identifying and Securing a Facility

The facility acquisition process includes site identification, financial planning, zoning approvals, and renovation timelines to ensure the school is ready for occupancy by the opening date.

##### Facility Acquisition Timeline

- Phase 1: Site Identification (Months 1-3) – Engage real estate consultants, assess existing school properties, and conduct site visits.
- Phase 2: Lease/Purchase Negotiations (Months 4-5) – Finalize lease terms or purchase agreement and secure funding for renovations.
- Phase 3: Regulatory Approvals (Months 6-7) – Submit applications for zoning compliance, building code approvals, and ADA certification.
- Phase 4: Renovation & Compliance (Months 8-10) – Conduct renovations, install security & technology, and ensure ADA and fire safety compliance.
- Phase 5: Final Inspections & Occupancy Approval (Months 11-12) – Obtain state fire marshal and health department inspections and secure a certificate of occupancy.

#### V. Ensuring Compliance & Regulatory Approvals

The selected facility will meet all compliance and regulatory requirements, including:

- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Ensuring full accessibility with ramps, elevators, modified restrooms, and assistive technology.
- State & City Planning Reviews: Submission to local building authorities for compliance with zoning laws.
- Health & Safety Regulations: Adhering to Tennessee public school health standards, including clean water, air quality control, and food service compliance.
- Storm Shelter Compliance: Retrofitting spaces to meet county and municipal building codes for severe weather safety.

## Section 2.2 – Facilities

### *(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Fire Safety & Emergency Preparedness: Installing fire alarms, sprinkler systems, and conducting emergency drills per state requirements.

#### VI. Contingency Plan for Alternative Facilities

If the primary facility is unavailable or acquisition is delayed, Still I Rise Academy will implement a contingency plan that includes:

1. Backup Properties: Engaging two additional potential sites that meet the school's size and infrastructure needs.
2. Temporary Location Options: Utilizing a modular school setup or short-term lease of a vacant school building or community center.
3. Extended Lease Agreements: Exploring phased entry into a facility while renovations are ongoing.

#### VII. Properties Considered for the Proposed School

Still I Rise Academy is actively exploring several properties in Memphis, Tennessee, focusing on Hickory Hill, Orange Mound, and other high-need areas.

- Primary Location Considerations:
- Former school buildings for ease of conversion.
- Commercial buildings adaptable to educational spaces.
- Vacant church or community buildings with large square footage.
- Alternative Locations (Under NDA):
- Properties have been shortlisted based on accessibility, cost, and zoning compatibility.
- A final selection will be made within three to six months before opening.

#### VIII. Conclusion: A Facility Plan for Long-Term Success

Still I Rise Academy is committed to securing a safe, modern, and fully-equipped facility that meets academic, operational, and student wellness needs.

- Strategic Planning: A facility acquisition timeline and budget are in place.



## Section 2.2 – Facilities

### *(Required for All Sponsors)*

- **Board Expertise:** The leadership team has extensive experience in facility management.
- **Compliance & Safety:** The facility will meet all ADA, fire, and regulatory requirements.
- **Contingency Planning:** Backup properties and alternative options ensure uninterrupted school operations.

Through careful planning and execution, Still I Rise Academy will create an optimal learning environment that fosters academic excellence, career readiness, and student success.

### **Response to Concern #1 – Identification of Potential Properties**

To address the concern regarding the lack of a documented list of potential school facilities, we are pleased to submit a targeted selection of six viable properties that align with our academic model, enrollment projections, and geographic goals. These locations were previously discussed during the capacity interview and are now formally included in this amended application.

The following properties have been identified based on size, location, accessibility, and alignment with the needs of our targeted student population, including those experiencing high levels of poverty, homelessness, or academic disengagement:

Our search is not limited to the properties below

#### **1. Hamilton Elementary School**

- **Address:** 1378 Ethlyn Ave, Memphis, TN 38106
- **Square Footage:** 81,740 sq ft
- **Notes:** Located in South Memphis, this property offers ample space for growth and programmatic needs. It is available for purchase at an affordable price of \$650,000. Its size supports our long-term enrollment goals, while the location places the school in a community with both high need and accessible public transportation options.

#### **2. Magnolia Elementary School**

## Section 2.2 – Facilities

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Address: 2061 Livewell Ave, Memphis, TN 38114
- Square Footage: 76,804 sq ft
- Notes: Located in Southeast Memphis, Magnolia Elementary is adjacent to multiple family housing developments. Its size and layout are conducive to tiered interventions, CTE pathways, and extracurricular activities. Its proximity to residential areas supports strong family-school engagement.

### 3. Carnes Elementary School

- Address: 943 JW Williams Ave, Memphis, TN 38105
- Square Footage: 74,000 sq ft
- Notes: Centrally located, Carnes Elementary provides strong potential for regional community access. The building's infrastructure is suitable for academic and support services. The location supports our attendance and transportation flexibility model.

### 4. Shannon Elementary School

- Address: 2248 Shannon Ave, Memphis, TN 38108
- Square Footage: 54,522 sq ft
- Notes: Located in North Memphis, this property is in a diverse, high-need area. It has excellent access to public transportation, which aligns with our model of not providing daily transportation in Year 1 while still ensuring accessibility for students and families.

### 5. Corning Elementary School

- Address: 1662 Dabbs Ave, Memphis, TN 38127

## Section 2.2 – Facilities

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Square Footage: 47,149 sq ft
- Notes: Situated in the Frayser neighborhood—a community identified with high dropout and poverty rates—Corning Elementary is ideally positioned to serve the targeted Opportunity Charter population. Its mid-sized footprint supports up to 500 students.

### 6. Charjean Elementary School

- Address: 2140 Charjean Ave, Memphis, TN 38114
- Square Footage: 39,352 sq ft
- Notes: Located in the East Memphis corridor in a walkable neighborhood, Charjean Elementary is appropriate for early-stage operations. It provides space for core academic instruction, intervention, and family engagement.

All six sites have been preliminarily vetted and are consistent with our academic model, phased enrollment growth, and need for high-accessibility, community-centered locations.

Each of these buildings meets or exceeds the minimum space requirements for our phased enrollment growth and supports the delivery of core academic programming, CTE pathways, intervention spaces, and wraparound services.

These properties are currently available or under consideration, and we have consulted with local real estate professionals to ensure alignment with zoning, accessibility, and compliance needs. The identification and selection of one or more of these facilities will be finalized upon charter approval, and all projected lease or purchase costs have been reflected in the 5-year operating budget.



## Section 2.2 – Facilities

### *(Required for All Sponsors)*

Through this submission, Still I Rise Academy has met the requirement of identifying and considering multiple appropriate facilities within the proposed geographic area.

#### **Response to Concern #2 – Facilities Expertise and Contractor Identification**

Still I Rise Academy acknowledges the importance of demonstrating adequate experience and expertise in the facility acquisition, leasing, and renovation process. We respectfully disagree with the concern that our application lacks this capacity.

Our Executive Director, Dr. Gerald Kiner, brings over 20 years of experience as a seasoned real estate investor, having successfully purchased, developed, and remodeled over a dozen residential and commercial properties—many with values exceeding those of the school buildings currently under consideration. Dr. Kiner’s extensive experience in real estate finance, compliance with zoning regulations, contractor oversight, and facility inspections equips him with the essential skills necessary to manage the school’s facility acquisition and renovation process with professionalism and cost efficiency.

Dr. Kiner has personally managed site acquisition, architectural planning, contractor hiring, and property management for buildings of comparable or larger scope than the facilities on our identified list. His projects have consistently met Shelby County building codes and passed all regulatory inspections, including fire, safety, and accessibility reviews.

Additionally, during the authorizer’s capacity interview, we explicitly stated our intention to collaborate with the Memphis-Shelby County Schools’ (MSCS) facilities department and Shelby County Code Enforcement to ensure the selected facility meets all applicable requirements under T.C.A. § 49-13-107 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This collaborative approach ensures compliance with all health, safety, and operational regulations.

To further enhance our facility readiness, Dr. Kiner has identified a pool of qualified, licensed general contractors who are available to support renovation and buildout needs during the planning year and beyond. These include:

- JR Construction
- Landmark Construction

## Section 2.2 – Facilities

### *(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Collins Construction
- McCabe Construction
- Castle Black Construction

All of these contractors are experienced in school and commercial facility upgrades, ADA compliance, and timely project completion.

#### Conclusion:

Still I Rise Academy is fully equipped to acquire, lease, and renovate a school facility within the required timeframe. The combination of Dr. Kiner's real estate expertise, partnerships with reputable contractors, and our stated plan to work alongside MSCS facilities staff and Shelby County regulatory bodies, ensures a smooth and compliant facility process that prioritizes student and staff safety and learning conditions. This plan will be overseen directly by Dr. Kiner in coordination with the board's Facilities and Finance Committee to ensure transparency, timeliness, and fiscal responsibility.

#### Response to Concern #3 – Regulatory Compliance and Safety Planning

Still I Rise Academy fully recognizes that securing and operating a school facility requires comprehensive adherence to all federal, state, and local health, safety, and planning regulations. While we appreciate the reviewers' desire for a more detailed outline, we affirm that the proposed school has a clear and actionable plan to ensure full regulatory compliance prior to occupancy.

#### 1. Coordination with Local Authorities and Regulatory Agencies

Still I Rise Academy will work proactively with the following agencies to meet all compliance requirements:

- Shelby County Code Enforcement to ensure the building meets all local fire, plumbing, mechanical, electrical, and structural codes.
- Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office for inspections and occupancy approvals prior to student use.

## Section 2.2 – Facilities

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Shelby County Health Department to comply with all health and sanitation regulations.
- City of Memphis Planning and Zoning Office for required zoning compliance, occupancy permits, and any site adjustments necessary for school use.
- Shelby County Schools Facilities Department, should the selected facility be a former MSCS school, to ensure all prior school-use requirements are re-certified for public charter use.

### 2. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Accessibility Standards

Our facility selection process will require all candidate buildings to either be ADA-compliant or be upgraded to meet full compliance during the renovation phase. Accessibility audits will be conducted with licensed inspectors prior to occupancy to ensure:

- Barrier-free access to all classrooms and restrooms.
- ADA-compliant signage, entries, walkways, and emergency exits.
- Appropriate classroom design and seating configurations to support students with physical and learning disabilities.

### 3. Health and Safety Systems

Still I Rise Academy will ensure the facility has:

- Up-to-date HVAC systems, clean water, and air filtration aligned with Shelby County and CDC recommendations.
- Security systems, including controlled access points and emergency communication systems.

## Section 2.2 – Facilities

### *(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Clearly marked evacuation routes, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting, and tornado/storm safety protocols compliant with Tennessee school safety requirements.

#### 4. Licensed Professionals and Compliance Reviews

All renovation work will be performed under permits using licensed contractors, with compliance documents submitted to appropriate agencies for final review and approval. Prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy, the facility will undergo:

- Final inspections from the Fire Marshal, Health Department, and Code Enforcement.
- Walkthrough and compliance audit conducted by the school's Facilities Committee, with oversight from Executive Director Dr. Gerald Kiner, who has over 20 years of real estate and renovation experience.

#### 5. Documentation and Reporting

Still I Rise Academy will maintain an internal Facilities Compliance Log to track inspections, compliance documents, safety drills, maintenance schedules, and regulatory correspondence. This log will be reviewed quarterly by the Board's Finance & Operations Committee to ensure accountability.

#### Conclusion

The school's leadership, guided by Dr. Kiner's real estate expertise and a robust network of licensed contractors and compliance partners, is fully committed to securing a safe, healthy, and regulation-compliant environment. Our commitment to student and staff safety is foundational to our mission, and we will ensure that no student enters a facility until it meets all required health and safety standards.

#### Response to Concern #4 – Facility Contingency Planning, Timeline, and Budget Allocations

Still I Rise Academy recognizes the critical importance of securing a compliant, accessible, and well-located facility that meets the academic and operational needs of our students. While we have identified multiple potential school buildings within Memphis-Shelby County, we have also developed a comprehensive facility contingency plan to ensure that the school

## Section 2.2 – Facilities

### *(Required for All Sponsors)*

opens on time and in compliance with all state and local requirements.

#### 1. Primary Contingency Location – Jesus People Church Campus

As a strategic backup facility, Still I Rise Academy has secured a contingency plan to lease educational space from Jesus People Church, located at 4400 Hickory Hill Road, Memphis, TN 38141. This centrally located property, whose construction was overseen by Executive Director Dr. Gerald Kiner nearly 20 years ago, offers several advantages:

- Immediate availability of classroom and administrative space.
- Outdoor land capacity to install prefabricated modular classrooms that meet code.
- Active public transportation route that ensures strong accessibility for students in East, South, and North Memphis.
- Proximity to family housing developments and underserved communities, aligning with our target population.
- The campus is a fully gated community, providing enhanced safety and security for students, staff, and visitors. This feature distinguishes Still I Rise Academy from 99% of public and charter schools in Memphis and Shelby County, most of which are not gated.
- The site has previously hosted large community events, demonstrating it can handle high-capacity use and daily operations.

#### 2. Precedent for Charter School Use in Religious Facilities

It is worth noting that several approved charter schools in Memphis currently lease space from churches, including facilities in Hickory Hill, Frayser, and Parkway Village. This model is already vetted and accepted within the Shelby County charter school landscape. Still I Rise Academy will mirror the successful operations of such schools, ensuring complete operational independence between church and school as required by law.

## **Section 2.2 – Facilities**

***(Required for All Sponsors)***

### **3. Timeline for Contingency Activation**

We will activate our contingency facility plan if a final lease agreement is not executed with a traditional school property by February 1, 2026. Our timeline includes:

- August – November 2025: Continue negotiations and due diligence on top priority school properties.
- December 2025 – January 2026: Final selection and lease signing window for primary or contingency facility.
- February 2026: Site preparation and modular classroom installation (if necessary) at Jesus People Church campus.
- March – May 2026: Facility renovations, inspections, and permitting.
- June – July 2026: Fire marshal, ADA, and city inspections; certificate of occupancy obtained.

### **4. Budget Allocation for Facility Leasing**

Our Year 1 budget includes \$120,000 allocated for facility lease payments, which can fully accommodate either:

- Lease costs for an existing MSCS or vacant public school building, or
- Monthly lease payments to Jesus People Church (estimated at \$7,500/month) combined with prefab classroom setup and utility services.

Additional contingency funds have been budgeted for:

- Modular classroom installation (\$30,000 set-aside).
- Code-compliant utilities, HVAC, ramps, and ADA accessibility upgrades.



## Section 2.2 – Facilities

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Safety inspections and certifications.

### 5. Due Diligence and Compliance

As with any location, prior to occupancy the contingency site will undergo:

- Shelby County Code Enforcement inspection
- Fire Marshal approval
- ADA compliance audits
- Health and sanitation clearance

All renovations or additions (e.g., modular classrooms) will be performed by licensed contractors in consultation with Shelby County and Tennessee Department of Education guidelines.

### Conclusion

Still I Rise Academy has planned thoroughly to avoid any disruptions to our launch. Our contingency facility plan ensures full preparedness, cost effectiveness, and student access. By leveraging the centrally located, transportation-accessible, fully gated campus of Jesus People Church and utilizing budgeted lease funds and modular classroom options, the school can open safely, legally, and efficiently—regardless of long-term facility negotiations.

## Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan

(Required for All Sponsors)

### Response to Concern #1 – Clarity of Start-Up Timeline with Specific Dates

Still I Rise Academy recognizes the importance of a clear and time-bound roadmap for ensuring a successful launch. Below is a revised and fully detailed start-up timeline with specific months and key milestone dates aligned with the planning year (Year 0) and the expectations for opening in August 2026. This timeline ensures all core operational, academic, and compliance-related tasks are completed in a timely and strategic manner.

### Still I Rise Academy – Revised Year 0 Start-Up Timeline

Task	Deadline	Responsible Party
Finalize Facility Lease	August 2025	Dr. Gerald Kiner
Submit Zoning/Code Compliance Documents	August 2025	Executive Director + MSCS Facilities Liaison
Recruitment Campaign Launch	August 2025	Director Enrollment & Outreach + No Mistakes Allowed LLC
Begin Application Intake & Lottery Prep	September 2025	Director Enrollment & Outreach
Submit Charter Contract Documents	September 2025	Dr. Gerald Kiner
Begin Facility Renovation (if needed)	October 2025	Dr. Gerald Kiner + Contractor
Board Policy Finalization & Bylaws Update	October 2025	Board Governance Chair
Hire Principal	November 2025	Executive Director + Board HR Committee

## Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan

(Required for All Sponsors)

Issue Employment Offers to Initial Staff	December 2025	Principal + HR Committee
Admin Office Setup	January 2026	The Facilities & Operations Manager
Order Curriculum & Furniture	January 2026	Principal + Academic Committee
Conduct Professional Development Planning	February 2026	Board PD Liaison
Launch Empower Hour Curriculum Design	March 2026	Principal
Finalize Student Handbook + Discipline Policy	April 2026	Principal
Parent & Community Orientation Events	April - June 2026	Director Enrollment and Outreach
Final Facility Walkthrough + Fire Marshal	June 2026	Dr. Gerald Kiner + Facility Team
Enrollment Finalization & Waitlist	June - July 2026	Director Enrollment and Outreach
Staff PD Week & Culture Building	July 2026	Principal + PD Coordinator
School Opens	August 2026	All Staff

## Still I Rise Start-Up Costs - \$508,750

### 1. Personal Services - \$137,500

- a. Executive Director - \$50,000

## **Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- b. Director of Enrollment and Outreach \$20,000
- c. Principal - \$47,500
- d. The Facilities & Operations Manager - \$20,000

### **2. Contracted Services – \$266,250**

- a. Advertising - \$56,250
- b. Contract with Private Agencies - \$22,500
- c. Lease - \$135,000
- d. Other Contracted Services – \$52,500

### **3. Supplies and Materials - \$22,500**

- a. Instructional Supplies and Materials - \$22,500

### **4. Capital Outlay - \$82,500**

- a. Furniture and Fixtures - \$82,500

### **Response to Concern #2 – Execution Strategies and Pivot Plans**

Still I Rise Academy has developed detailed execution strategies to address anticipated startup challenges, with contingency and pivot plans designed to ensure timely and efficient resolution. Below is an expansion of our initial mitigation strategies to provide greater specificity as requested:

### **Challenge 1:**

## **Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **Recruiting and Retaining Quality Teachers**

Execution Strategy:

- Begin outreach to high-quality teacher candidates by October 2025, using platforms such as TeachTN, Handshake, and national teacher job boards.
- Host monthly virtual recruitment fairs in partnership with William & Johnson Career College and local HBCUs.
- Offer competitive salaries and benefits, including trauma-informed training and leadership pipeline opportunities.

Pivot Plan:

- If initial recruitment yields are low, we will offer \$1,500 signing bonuses, extend recruitment outreach to Teach For America alumni, and employ certified retired educators through Tennessee's Retiree Return to Work program.

### **Challenge 2:**

#### **Enrollment Shortfalls**

Execution Strategy:

- Launch a 3-phase marketing campaign: Digital ads, radio, and community-based canvassing (barbershops, churches, daycares).
- Engage No Mistakes Allowed LLC for outreach consulting.
- Host at least five enrollment events in underserved zip codes by March 2026.

## **Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Pivot Plan:

- If applications lag by more than 25% behind projection by February 2026, we will increase social media investment, offer referral incentives to parents (\$25/student referred), and extend the application window while securing additional grassroots ambassadors.

### **Challenge 3:**

#### **Securing a Suitable Facility**

Execution Strategy:

- Prioritize due diligence and leasing by September 2025 with a primary facility and a contingency facility (Jesus People Church campus).
- Engage contractors for walkthroughs and preliminary cost estimates.
- Ensure early inspection and permitting timelines with Shelby County Code Enforcement.

Pivot Plan:

- If facility negotiations stall beyond December 2025, we will activate the prefabricated classroom plan on the Jesus People Church's gated campus and request approval from the authorizer for use of modular classrooms.

### **Challenge 4:**

#### **Community Trust and Buy-In**



## **Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Execution Strategy:

- Conduct quarterly community advisory board meetings (first in August 2025).
- Distribute monthly community newsletters.
- Host parent listening sessions every 6 weeks starting January 2026.

Pivot Plan:

- If parent feedback reflects disconnect or misinformation, we will deploy culturally responsive parent liaisons from key zip codes and launch a targeted “Why We Rise” campaign featuring testimonials from local leaders and future students.

### **Challenge 5:**

#### **Unexpected Funding Delays**

Execution Strategy:

- Maintain 3-month operating reserve and stagger major purchases (e.g., technology) until Q2 2026.
- Leverage in-kind support pledged by No Mistakes Allowed LLC and William & Johnson Career College during Year 0.

Pivot Plan:

- If grant or disbursement delays exceed 30 days, we will access an emergency line of credit through Pathway Lending and reduce discretionary spending until funds are received.

## **Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

These execution strategies and pivot plans demonstrate Still I Rise Academy's capacity to operate proactively and responsively, ensuring a smooth, compliant, and timely school launch.

### **Response to Concern #3 – Clarifying Community Partnerships and Financial Structure**

Still I Rise Academy is firmly committed to cultivating meaningful, long-term relationships with community partners to enhance our educational model and serve our at-risk student population. As requested, we are providing further clarity on the nature, structure, and anticipated duration of these relationships.

#### **In-Kind Partnership Framework (Primary Model)**

All formal partners listed in our charter school application—including All About You Home Healthcare, No Mistakes Allowed LLC, William & Johnson Career College, and The Shalom House of Memphis—have pledged their participation as in-kind contributors for the duration of the approved charter term, unless otherwise specified. These in-kind contributions are:

- Non-monetary in nature;
- Voluntarily pledged by each partner;
- Designed to support the academic, emotional, and vocational development of our students without obligating school funds; and
- Reviewed annually by the Board of Directors to ensure alignment with school needs and compliance with applicable state laws and financial regulations.

Examples of in-kind services provided include:

- Sensitivity and trauma-informed training (Shalom House of Memphis)
- Student internships and entrepreneurial mentorship (No Mistakes Allowed LLC)

## **Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Dual enrollment and postsecondary readiness programming (William & Johnson Career College)
- Health education, wellness screenings, and CNA pathway guidance (All About You Home Healthcare)

### **Contingency for Formal Contracts (Enhanced Participation)**

In the event that a community partner's role must expand beyond the in-kind model—for example, if a partner provides staffing, curriculum design, equipment, or direct service delivery requiring payment—Still I Rise Academy will initiate a formal procurement process consistent with:

- T.C.A. § 49-13-111,
- State and federal charter school financial policies, and
- The Tennessee Charter School Financial Accountability Act.

Any partner seeking compensation in the future will be required to:

- Submit a formal scope of work and pricing,
- Undergo competitive vetting (if applicable),
- Enter into a Board-approved contract, and
- Be monitored through monthly performance reviews and financial compliance audits.

### **Duration of In-Kind Commitments**

Unless amended by mutual agreement or converted into a paid contract (as outlined

## **Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

above), all in-kind contributions will:

- Remain active for the full 10-year charter term,
- Be reviewed and renewed annually by the Still I Rise Academy Board, and
- Be documented in board minutes and financial reports for full transparency.

### **Conclusion**

By operating with a flexible but clearly defined partnership framework, Still I Rise Academy ensures that community collaborations are both cost-effective and strategically impactful. This hybrid model also protects the public interest by avoiding unauthorized expenditures while allowing the school to pivot when enhanced services are warranted.

This approach directly aligns with the Tennessee State Board of Education's Quality Charter Authorizing Standard – Principle 3, which emphasizes making the well-being and interests of students the fundamental value informing all decisions.

### **Response to Concern #4 – Clarification of Year 0 Budget, Staffing, and Facility Setup Plans**

Still I Rise Academy recognizes the importance of a realistic and well-supported Year 0 implementation strategy. We are pleased to confirm that this concern has now been fully addressed through our formal application for the State of Tennessee's \$750,000 Charter School Planning and Implementation Grant—a competitive funding opportunity designed specifically to support new and replicating public charter schools during the critical pre-opening phase.

### **Year 0 Planning & Implementation Grant – Overview**

The State of Tennessee Charter School Grant provides up to \$750,000 in funding to support planning, staffing, and operational readiness prior to the school's official opening. Still I Rise Academy has applied for this grant and outlined the following Year 0 investments in our submission:

- **Staff Compensation:** Funds are allocated to support staffing and contracts for key

## Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

roles such as the Executive Director, Principal designee, Director of Enrollment & Outreach, and planning-phase instructional consultants. This directly addresses the concern about staff recruitment and retention during Year 0 by ensuring compensation for all necessary pre-opening work.

- Facility Setup: A portion of the grant has been designated for lease deposits, insurance premiums and compliance upgrades.
- These funds will allow the school to secure and prepare a facility, including furnishings, classroom setup, and basic administrative infrastructure.
- Program Implementation: The grant includes funding for:
  - Curriculum development and procurement,
  - Student recruitment and enrollment outreach,
  - Professional development and staff training,
  - Strategic planning and board development.

### Addressing the Reviewer's Concern Directly

#### 1. Staff Compensation in Year 0:

While in-kind leadership and volunteer support from No Mistakes Allowed LLC, William & Johnson Career College, and All About You Home Healthcare will continue to supplement early planning activities, the \$750,000 grant ensures key staff will be compensated. This significantly strengthens our ability to recruit qualified professionals for Year 0 positions, thus eliminating the risk associated with unpaid planning roles.

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### 2. Facility Acquisition and Setup:

The planning grant includes budgeted allocations for lease agreements, setup costs, and code compliance activities. Additionally, Still I Rise Academy has:

- Identified a list of viable facilities,
- Secured a contingency partnership with Jesus People Church, a gated property with classroom and expansion potential, and
- Begun preliminary planning with licensed general contractors to ensure timely facility readiness.

### 3. Supplementary Support:

Our community partners have committed in-kind donations exceeding \$200,000 to assist with student recruitment, training, and administrative support—further reducing the financial burden on Year 0 operations.

## Conclusion

Still I Rise Academy's planning year will be fully supported by the State of Tennessee's \$750,000 implementation grant, which is specifically structured to address the very issues raised in this concern—namely, the need for paid staffing, facility readiness, and foundational implementation capacity. This strategic funding, combined with committed in-kind partnerships and a veteran school leadership team, ensures that our school will open on time, fully staffed, and operationally prepared to serve Memphis' most underserved students.



## **Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### Hiring and Staffing Plan for Still I Rise Academy

#### **I. Hiring Process and Timeline for School Principal**

The Executive Director will lead the hiring process for the school principal, ensuring a leader is in place well before the school opens to allow sufficient time for staff hiring, curriculum development, and student recruitment.

##### Hiring Timeline:

- Months 1-2: Develop job description, qualifications, and selection criteria.
- Month 3: Post the position through multiple channels, including educational job boards, professional networks, and local universities.
- Months 4-5: Conduct interviews and on-site evaluations with shortlisted candidates.
- Month 6: Final selection and offer extended.
- Month 7: New principal begins, overseeing staff hiring and school operations planning.

##### Key Qualifications and Characteristics for School Principal:

- Education & Licensure: Master's degree in education or related field; Tennessee administrator license.
- Leadership Experience: Minimum 5 years of school leadership experience, preferably in urban education or at-risk student populations.
- Cultural Competency: Strong understanding of culturally responsive education and commitment to serving diverse, at-risk communities.
- Strategic Vision: Proven ability to implement data-driven strategies to improve student achievement and operational success.
- Community Engagement: Strong background in parent and community involvement, aligning with Still I Rise Academy's mission.
- Operational Experience: Familiarity with budgeting, compliance, and school operational management.

The Executive Director will serve as the final decision-maker in the hiring process, with input from board members, key stakeholders, and a hiring committee that includes an educator, social worker,

## **Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

and legal specialist.

### **II. Principal Responsibilities and Development**

The Principal will oversee all academic and operational aspects of the school, ensuring alignment with Tennessee state regulations and Still I Rise Academy's mission. Their key responsibilities include:

- **Academic Leadership:** Implementing the curriculum, ensuring instruction quality, and managing assessments.
- **Staff Oversight:** Hiring, training, and evaluating teachers, assistant principals, and support staff.
- **Student Success:** Supporting academic growth, implementing intervention strategies, and fostering a positive school culture.
- **Parent & Community Engagement:** Partnering with families and community organizations to support student needs.
- **Compliance & Operations:** Ensuring adherence to SBE Rule 0520-02-01 and State Board Policy 5.201 for teacher and staff evaluation.

#### **Evaluation and Development:**

The principal will be evaluated using a state-approved administrator evaluation model, such as TEAM (Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model), assessing:

- Student academic growth and achievement data.
- Leadership effectiveness in staff development and school culture.
- Operational and financial management.

#### **Professional Development:**

- Quarterly leadership coaching with external mentors.
- Annual retreats & training in school leadership best practices.
- Ongoing professional learning communities with other charter school leaders.

### **III. Hiring Timeline for Additional Key Staff**

## **Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital**

### ***(Required for All Sponsors)***

The Principal, in coordination with the Executive Director, will lead the hiring process for teachers, operational staff, and administrators.

Key Hiring Phases:

1. Months 6-7: Hiring of Facility and Operations Manager and Director Enrollment and Outreach Coordinator
2. Months 8-9: Recruitment of teaching staff
3. Months 10-11: Hiring of operational staff (front office, support personnel, security paraprofessionals, and intervention specialists).
4. Month 12: Final hiring for all teachers

Selection Criteria for Staff:

- Teachers: Must be licensed in their content areas (SBE Rule 0520-02-03-01) and have experience in working with at-risk youth.
- Operational Staff: Experience in school administration, compliance, or student support services.

#### **IV. Diversity and Equity in Hiring**

Still I Rise Academy is committed to hiring a staff that reflects the diversity of its student body and the surrounding Memphis community.

Strategies to Achieve Diversity:

- Targeted recruitment from HBCUs, Hispanic-Serving Institutions, and community-based teacher preparation programs.
- Partnerships with Teach for America, local universities, and alternative teacher certification programs.
- Focused outreach to bilingual and culturally responsive educators.
- Training for hiring committees on unconscious bias and inclusive hiring practices.

The Executive Director will oversee hiring diversity metrics, ensuring a diverse and representative



## **Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

leadership and instructional team.

### **V. Teacher Licensure Compliance and Oversight**

The Principal and or future Assistant Principal will be responsible for ensuring all teachers hold proper licensure and endorsements in compliance with SBE Rule 0520-02-03-01.

Processes to Maintain Compliance:

- Quarterly audits of teacher licensure and endorsements.
- Ongoing professional development and certification renewal tracking.
- Assistance with licensure reciprocity for out-of-state educators.
- Incentives for advanced licensure and subject area endorsements.

### **VI. Staff Evaluation and Feedback Procedures**

Teacher Evaluations:

Still I Rise Academy will use the TEAM Evaluation Model, ensuring compliance with State Board Policy 5.201.

Key Components of the TEAM Model:

- 50% Classroom Observations: Assess instructional delivery, student engagement, and classroom management.
- 35% Student Growth Measures: TVAAS (Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System) data.
- 15% Student Achievement Data: State assessments and student progress indicators.

Feedback & Professional Growth:

- Biannual goal-setting meetings with teachers.
- Monthly instructional coaching sessions.
- Personalized growth plans for teachers needing additional support.

### **VII. Teacher Recruitment, Salaries, and Retention Strategies**

## Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital

(Required for All Sponsors)

Still I Rise Academy is committed to attracting and retaining high-performing educators through competitive salaries, strong professional development, and meaningful incentives.

Proposed Salary Ranges:

Position	Still I Rise Academy	Memphis-Shelby County Schools (MSCS)
Principal	\$95,000 - \$110,000	\$100,000 - \$115,000
Assistant Principal	\$80,000 - \$95,000	\$85,000 - \$100,000
Teachers	\$50,000 - \$65,000	\$50,000 - \$68,000
Support Staff	\$35,000 - \$50,000	\$36,000 - \$52,000

Incentives for Teacher Retention

- Leadership Pathways: Opportunities for teacher-leaders to become mentors, instructional coaches, or assistant principals.
- Reduced Workload Initiatives: Additional classroom support through paraprofessionals and intervention specialists.

Retention Strategies:

- Annual satisfaction surveys to address teacher concerns.
- Mentorship programs pairing new teachers with veteran educators.
- Work-life balance initiatives, including flexible professional development schedules.

Conclusion

Still I Rise Academy is committed to recruiting, hiring, and retaining high-quality school leaders and

## **Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

staff who are deeply invested in the success of at-risk students. Through a structured hiring process, diversity-focused recruitment strategies, and state-approved evaluation models, the school will build a high-performing, mission-driven team that reflects the values and goals of the community it serves.

### **Response to Concern #1 – Organizational Chart Alignment**

This concern has been addressed. The Year 1 and Full Enrollment organizational charts (Attachments N and O) have been fully revised to ensure all positions now align with the roles listed in Table 5 and throughout the application narrative. The updated charts clearly reflect the reporting structure and delineate all leadership, instructional, operational, and support positions, including the Executive Director, School Principal, Assistant Principal, Director of Enrollment and Outreach, Special Education Coordinator (a Special Ed Teacher will have this duty), and other key roles necessary for successful school operations. These revisions ensure internal consistency, transparency, and compliance with Tennessee charter school staffing expectations.

### **Response to Concern #2: Clarification of Leadership and Staff Hiring Timeline and Alignment with Year 1 Organizational Chart**

Still I Rise Academy has addressed this concern by clearly outlining a revised, date-specific hiring timeline that fully aligns with the updated Year 1 Organizational Chart provided in Attachment N. The hiring plan includes:

- Principal Hiring: November 2025

Led by the Executive Director and Board HR Committee. This aligns with the Organizational Chart showing the Principal reporting directly to the Executive Director.

- Director Enrollment and Outreach Coordinator: August 2025

Both positions are critical to the Year 0 recruitment and enrollment strategy and appear on the organizational chart as key operational leaders supporting student recruitment and family engagement.



## Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital

(Required for All Sponsors)

- Initial Instructional & Support Staff Hiring: December 2025 – March 2026

Includes core subject teachers, special education staff, counselors, and support personnel. These roles are clearly identified under the Principal's direct supervision in the Year 1 Organizational Chart.

- The Facilities & Operations Manager: January 2026

This administrative role supports facility setup, vendor coordination, and logistics, as reflected under the Executive Director on the updated chart.

- PD Coordinator and Academic Lead (this is one of the teachers): March 2026

These positions lead teacher onboarding and training during July 2026 and support instructional alignment with the ME<sup>2</sup> (Motivate, Educate, Elevate) model. Their roles are embedded within the instructional framework of the academic leadership team.

Each role is now tied to a specific hiring month, and the Updated Year 0 Timeline reflects how these hires will support the school's on-time opening in August 2026. This revised hiring strategy ensures organizational coherence and readiness, and it fulfills the Tennessee State Board of Education's expectations for alignment between planning timelines and staffing models.

### **Response to Concern #3: Clarification of Leadership Structure and Attachment P Alignment**

Still I Rise Academy has fully addressed this concern by updating and aligning the leadership structure across the budget, narrative, and attachments. The distinction between the Executive Director and the School Principal is now clearly delineated:

- The Executive Director, Dr. Gerald Kiner, is responsible for overall organizational oversight, community partnerships, and board relations, as

## Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital

(Required for All Sponsors)

reflected consistently across the application and organizational chart.

- The Principal, once hired, will serve as the school-level instructional leader, overseeing daily academic operations, teacher supervision, student performance, and implementation of the ME<sup>2</sup> (Motivate, Educate, Elevate) instructional model.

Regarding the principal's resume, we respectfully remind the reviewers that Attachment P instructions from the Tennessee Charter School Application Template state that a resume should be included only "if hired." As Still I Rise Academy has not yet selected a principal, we have instead submitted a detailed position profile in Attachment P outlining the minimum and preferred qualifications. These qualifications exceed Tennessee standards, ensuring we will recruit a highly qualified candidate with a strong background in trauma-informed leadership, academic improvement, and instructional excellence aligned with our school's unique model.

With these clarifications and updates, we believe Concern #3 has been fully resolved.

### **Response to Concern #4: Clarification on Teacher Retention Strategies and Incentives**

Thank you for your review and feedback. In response to Concern #4, Still I Rise Academy has removed all financial incentives from the application, including any references in the budget, staffing narrative, and supporting documentation. We acknowledge the importance of transparency in funding and have streamlined our compensation structure accordingly to focus on competitive base salaries and robust support systems for teacher retention.

While we are no longer offering direct financial incentives, our teacher retention strategies remain strong, mission-aligned, and uniquely designed for the needs of our target population, including:

1. Empowerment Through Culture: Teachers will help lead "Empower Hour,"

## **Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

participate in curriculum development, and contribute to shaping a school culture grounded in our ME<sup>2</sup> Mission—Motivate, Educate, and Elevate—which creates a meaningful sense of ownership and purpose.

2. **Trauma-Informed Professional Development:** Educators will receive targeted PD on trauma-informed care, restorative practices, and culturally responsive pedagogy—skills essential for serving our high-need student population effectively.
3. **Community & Collaboration:** Through shared planning time, coaching, mentorship, and active involvement in decision-making, teachers will experience a collaborative, empowered environment.
4. **Strong Leadership Support:** Ongoing coaching, open communication with the Principal and Executive Director, and performance-based development plans will ensure that high-quality educators feel supported and valued.

By removing financial incentives and reinforcing our non-monetary strategies, Still I Rise Academy maintains its commitment to teacher retention through meaningful, mission-driven support. This approach also ensures fiscal responsibility and budget transparency.

**Table 5: Staffing FTE Counts****(Required for All Sponsors)****NOTE: All positions are not required and/or may not apply to a charter school.**

Position	Year of Operation					
	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Principal(s)	1	1	1	1	1	1
Supervisor / Director	1	1	1	1	1	1
Internal Audit Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Classroom Teachers (core subjects)	0	8	14	17	19	25
Classroom Teachers (electives, world languages)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Special Education Teachers	0	1	1	1	2	2
English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers	0	1	1	1	2	2
Other Teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accountants/Bookkeepers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Computer Programmer(s)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Data Processing Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Purchasing Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Counseling Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Psychological Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homebound Teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Librarian(s)	0	1	1	1	1	1
Social Workers	0	1	1	1	1	2
Medical Personnel	0	1	1	1	1	1
Material Supervisor(s)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assessment Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Audiovisual Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Education Media Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Instructional Computer Personnel	0	0	0	1	1	1
Assistant Principal(s)	0	0	0	1	1	1
Mechanic(s)	0	0	0	0	0	0

Bus Drivers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Guards	0	2	2	3	3	3
Secretary(s)	0	1	1	1	1	2
Clerical Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Educational Assistants	0	3	3	3	5	5
Attendants	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cafeteria Personnel	0	2	2	3	3	3
Custodial Personnel	0	0	0	1	1	1
Maintenance Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Part-time Personnel	0	1	1	1	1	1
School Resource Officer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Speech Pathologist	2	4	4	4	4	4
Certified Substitute Teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Non-certified Substitute Teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total FTEs	4	30	36	44	51	59



## **Section 2.5 - Professional Development**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **Section 2.5 – Professional Development Plan**

#### **Still I Rise Academy**

#### **I. Overview of Professional Development (PD) Structure**

Still I Rise Academy is committed to ensuring that all staff, including educators, administrators, and support personnel, receive high-quality, ongoing professional development to drive student success. The PD program is designed to equip staff with culturally responsive teaching strategies, trauma-informed practices, and data-driven instructional techniques to support at-risk students, English Learners (ELs), and students with disabilities.

#### **II. Professional Development Calendar and Structure**

##### **Annual Professional Development Days & Hours**

- Pre-Opening PD: 10 days (full-day sessions) before the start of the school year
- Quarterly PD Days: Four full-day professional development sessions (one per quarter)
- Monthly PD Sessions: Two-hour sessions held during scheduled early dismissal days
- Weekly Collaborative Planning: 90-minute sessions every Wednesday
- Individualized Coaching & Training: On-demand support for instructional growth

##### **Daily Schedule & Staffing Support for PD**

The school's schedule incorporates weekly collaborative planning periods, ensuring teachers have time to analyze student data, refine lesson plans, and share best practices. The Assistant Principal will facilitate ongoing instructional coaching and data reviews.

#### **III. Core Components of the Professional Development Plan**

Professional development at Still I Rise Academy is aligned with the academic plan and state standards, ensuring teachers and staff have the skills and knowledge necessary to support all students, particularly those in special education, English learner (EL) programs, and those at risk of dropping out.

##### **1. Academic Excellence & Instructional Best Practices**

- Training on the Tennessee Academic Standards and competency-based learning



## Section 2.5 - Professional Development

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Regular analysis of student assessment data to inform instruction
- Collaborative lesson planning using Response to Instruction & Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>) frameworks
- Culturally responsive teaching strategies to engage diverse learners
- Differentiated instruction to address individual student needs

### 2. Special Education & English Learner (EL) Training

- Implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs)
- Compliance with legal requirements for discipline and behavioral interventions for students with disabilities
- Instructional strategies for EL students, including sheltered instruction and language development support
- Culturally responsive communication techniques to ensure EL families are engaged in the learning process

### 3. Behavioral & Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Development

- Classroom management techniques incorporating restorative justice and trauma-informed practices
- Training on the Always Aware Disciplined Student Culture (AADSC) model to reduce acts of bad discipline
- Implementation of school-wide positive behavior support systems (PBIS)
- Social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies to help students manage stress, resolve conflicts, and build resilience

### IV. Professional Development Prior to and During Year One

#### Pre-Opening Training (10 Days Before School Opens)

- Introduction to the school's mission, vision, and instructional model
- Training on curriculum and instructional strategies

## **Section 2.5 - Professional Development**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Classroom management and discipline policy training
- Student support services, including SEL, RTI<sup>2</sup>, and interventions for struggling learners
- Understanding and implementing Empower Hour

### **Ongoing Professional Development During the First Year**

- Quarterly full-day sessions to reinforce best practices and address emerging challenges
- Monthly sessions for targeted instructional and behavioral interventions
- Weekly collaborative planning meetings focused on lesson design, data analysis, and student interventions

### **V. Orientation for Mid-Year Hires**

All faculty and staff who are hired mid-year will receive orientation training that includes:

- Overview of the school's academic plan, culture, and behavioral expectations
- Introduction to curriculum, lesson planning, and assessment strategies
- Special education and EL compliance training
- Classroom management strategies aligned with the school's discipline policy

### **VI. Professional Development for School Leadership**

Still I Rise Academy is committed to developing strong school leadership through continuous professional development. Leadership training will include:

- Annual state-approved administrator evaluation training
- Monthly leadership meetings focused on instructional coaching, school culture, and operational excellence
- Peer mentoring and coaching for school administrators
- Attendance at state and national charter school conferences to stay informed of best practices in education leadership

## Section 2.5 - Professional Development

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### VII. Evaluation of Professional Development Effectiveness

To ensure that professional development is impactful, the school will:

- Conduct staff surveys to assess the effectiveness of training sessions
- Review student achievement and behavioral data to measure improvements
- Adjust PD topics and focus areas based on staff needs and school performance metrics

By implementing a comprehensive professional development plan, Still I Rise Academy will ensure that all educators and staff are equipped to create a supportive, engaging, and high-achieving learning environment for students.

### **Response to Concern #1:**

Still I Rise Academy has revised its professional development (PD) plan to directly reflect the unique needs of our Opportunity Charter School model and our commitment to educating at-risk youth, including those who are chronically absent, parenting, formerly incarcerated, or significantly behind academically. Our PD content is tailored specifically to equip staff with the tools necessary to effectively educate and support this population.

### Still I Rise Academy – Revised Professional Development Structure and Specialization

#### I. Pre-Opening Professional Development (10 Days – July 2026)

##### 1. July 15 – Mission-Driven Culture & Empower Hour Training

- Staff will be trained in the ME<sup>2</sup> mission (Motivate, Educate, Elevate) and how to facilitate Empower Hour, a daily SEL and motivational block tailored for at-risk students.

##### 2. July 16 – Understanding the Opportunity Charter Model

- Training on state Opportunity School criteria, trauma-informed practices, restorative justice, and re-engagement strategies for non-traditional students.

##### 3. July 17–18 – RTI<sup>2</sup> & Tiered Academic Interventions

## **Section 2.5 - Professional Development**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Two-day session focused on identifying academic gaps, implementing tiered interventions, using assessment tools, and tracking growth.
- 4. July 19 – Supporting Special Populations (IEPs, ILPs, ELs)
  - Training on legal compliance, cultural responsiveness, and integrating academic supports for students with disabilities and English learners.
- 5. July 22 – Work-Based Learning (WBL) & CTE Integration
  - Strategies for launching high-quality CTE programs, coordinating with employer partners, and aligning coursework to real-world skills.
- 6. July 23 – Data Analysis & Formative Assessments
  - How to use i-Ready, MAP, and other tools to drive instruction, monitor subgroup progress, and inform student supports.
- 7. July 24 – Behavioral Management in At-Risk Environments
  - Positive behavior supports, de-escalation training, trauma-responsive discipline, and student mentoring.
- 8. July 25 – Family & Community Engagement
  - Techniques to increase trust and engagement with underserved families and build relationships with community organizations.
- 9. July 26 – Team Building & Staff Culture Development
  - Activities to unify staff, clarify shared values, and establish a culture of excellence and high expectations for students.

## Section 2.5 - Professional Development

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### II. Ongoing Professional Development (August 2026 – May 2027)

- Weekly Collaborative Planning Meetings (Every Wednesday, 2:00–3:30 PM): Grade-level and departmental PLCs focused on disaggregated student data and targeted supports for underperforming subgroups.
- Monthly PD Workshops (1st Friday each month, 2 hours):
  - August: Differentiation for ELs and SWDs
  - September: CTE Curriculum Integration & Employer Engagement
  - October: Credit Recovery & Competency-Based Progression
  - November: Managing Compassion Fatigue & Vicarious Trauma
  - December: Mid-Year Data Dive & Action Planning
  - January: Dual Enrollment Readiness & Postsecondary Advising
  - February: Restorative Circles & Relationship Building
  - March: Preventing Dropouts & Increasing Daily Attendance
  - April: Literacy Across Content Areas (esp. for high school)
  - May: Student-Led Conferences & Academic Goal Setting



## **Section 2.5 - Professional Development**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **III. Programming-Specific PD Embedded During the Year**

- CTE/WBL Teachers: Quarterly industry partner seminars + PD with Tennessee Department of Education-approved providers.
- EL/IEP Specialists: Ongoing coordination with the Special Populations Coordinator, legal compliance training, and adaptive strategies.
- Credit Recovery Instructors: Training on online platforms, competency assessments, and student pacing.

### **IV. Mid-Year Hires Onboarding**

- 3-day crash course in school mission, trauma-informed practices, RTI<sup>2</sup>, literacy and math remediation strategies, and classroom management before entering the classroom.

### **Conclusion:**

This revised plan ensures our staff is not only trained but continuously developed to meet the diverse academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of our student body. All PD sessions are intentionally aligned with the Opportunity Charter School model and Tennessee academic standards to improve outcomes for students most at risk of failure or disengagement.

### **Response to Concern #2 – Mid-Year Hire Orientation Plan**

Still I Rise Academy recognizes the critical importance of ensuring that all staff—regardless of when they are hired—receive consistent, high-quality onboarding aligned with our mission and academic plan. In response to this concern, we have developed a formal Mid-Year Hire Orientation Protocol, which will be executed by the school's principal and the Professional Development (PD) Coordinator to ensure fidelity and depth of implementation.

#### **Mid-Year Hire Orientation Plan (3 Days – Scheduled Within First Week of Hire)**

- Day 1: Mission, Culture, and Instructional Foundations



## Section 2.5 - Professional Development

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Introduction to Still I Rise Academy's ME<sup>2</sup> Mission (Motivate, Educate, Elevate)
  - Overview of Opportunity Charter School expectations
  - Empower Hour philosophy and implementation
  - School policies and procedures (discipline, attendance, grading)
- Day 2: Instructional Systems & Student Support
  - RTI<sup>2</sup> framework and intervention schedule
  - i-Ready, MAP, and formative assessment systems
  - Overview of student data platform and how to use it for instructional planning
  - Serving special populations: EL, IEP, and at-risk supports
  - Introduction to the school's literacy and numeracy strategies
- Day 3: Classroom Management and Team Integration
  - Trauma-informed classroom practices
  - Classroom observations and model lesson walkthroughs
  - Introduction to grade-level or content teams
  - Weekly collaboration planning overview

## Section 2.5 - Professional Development

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Assignment of a mentor teacher for 30-day integration

Execution Oversight:

- The principal and PD Coordinator will schedule and monitor each mid-year orientation and ensure that new staff are prepared before entering the classroom.
- A post-orientation feedback survey and checkpoint meeting will be conducted within 15 days to evaluate teacher readiness and provide any additional support.

This structured plan ensures that mid-year hires are fully equipped to uphold our academic standards, meet student needs, and integrate seamlessly into our school's instructional culture from day one.

### **Response to Concern #3 – Curriculum and Curriculum-Creation Focus within Professional Development**

Still I Rise Academy has revised its Professional Development (PD) model to explicitly include curriculum study, development, and customization as a central component of both pre-service and ongoing training. Recognizing our unique mission as an Opportunity Charter School serving at-risk, academically disengaged, and non-traditional students, we believe that a static, one-size-fits-all curriculum is insufficient to meet the deep needs of our student population. Therefore, we have integrated curriculum creation and responsive adaptation into our professional development schedule.

Key Strategies to Address Curriculum Creation in PD:

#### 1. Summer Pre-Service PD (July 2026):

- Curriculum Analysis & Differentiation Planning (4 Days): Teachers will be trained on the TN Academic Standards and will unpack adopted curriculum maps (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies) with a focus on scaffolding content for students who are 2 or more grade levels behind.
- Designing Empower Hour Content (2 Days): Teachers and instructional staff will co-create culturally relevant, motivational, and trauma-informed advisory

## Section 2.5 - Professional Development

(Required for All Sponsors)

lessons aligned with Still I Rise Academy's ME<sup>2</sup> mission (Motivate, Educate, Elevate).

- WBL and CTE Planning (2 Days): CTE instructors and core teachers will collaborate to align academic content with real-world application in preparation for internships, job-shadowing, and career-readiness modules.

### 2. Ongoing Monthly PD (August–May):

- Curriculum Labs (Monthly, 2 hours): Teachers will bring student work, formative assessment data, and lesson plans to review the effectiveness of current curricular pacing and make adjustments in real time.
- Co-Teaching & Cross-Curricular Planning: Teachers will partner in grade-level and content teams to develop interdisciplinary units, particularly for project-based learning, credit recovery, and thematic instruction.
- Intervention Alignment: Teachers will regularly refine RTI<sup>2</sup> lesson templates and Tier II/III intervention materials to ensure they are responsive to evolving student academic gaps.

### 3. Instructional Coaches and Principal Oversight:

- The Principal and Academic Coach will lead quarterly reviews of unit plans to ensure alignment with standards, cultural responsiveness, and the school's academic model.
- PD time will also be used to train teachers in using backward design, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and flexible grouping strategies to tailor curriculum delivery.

By embedding curriculum study, adaptation, and design into every phase of teacher professional development, Still I Rise Academy ensures that all staff are prepared not only to teach existing materials but to actively shape and improve instruction to meet the needs

## Section 2.5 - Professional Development

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

of our high-priority student population. This approach reflects our commitment to rigorous academics, responsive instruction, and equitable opportunity for every learner.

### **Response to Concern #4 – Alignment of Professional Development with Academic Calendar and Compliance with State Law**

Still I Rise Academy has revised its professional development schedule and academic calendar to ensure complete alignment with Tennessee state law, which requires a minimum of 180 instructional days (T.C.A. § 49-6-3004) and compliance with SBE Rule 0520-01-02-.31 regarding minimum instructional hours.

Clarification and Alignment with the Academic Calendar:

- Our academic calendar (Attachment A) includes 180 full instructional days and 10 designated full-day professional development sessions throughout the school year, held on non-instructional days.
- In addition, we will implement monthly early release days on the last Friday of each month (August through May), releasing students at 1:15 PM (versus the regular 4:15 PM dismissal). This results in 10 early release PD days per year.
- To remain compliant with the state's minimum instructional time requirements (minimum 6.5 hours/day), Still I Rise Academy's standard school day is 7 hours long (9:15 AM–4:15 PM). By slightly exceeding the minimum instructional time on regular days, we accumulate a surplus of instructional minutes, which allows for early release on designated Fridays without falling below the annual minimum hour requirement.

Early Release PD Schedule Implementation:

- On each early release Friday, from 1:30 PM–4:30 PM, staff will engage in targeted professional development focused on:
  - Data-driven instruction
  - RTI<sup>2</sup> and differentiated learning practices

## Section 2.5 - Professional Development

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Supporting English Learners and Students with Disabilities
  - Culturally responsive pedagogy
  - Curriculum adaptation and pacing review
  - Leadership development and compliance updates
- These sessions will be led by the Principal, Academic Coach, and external consultants as needed, and will be aligned with the priorities outlined in our school improvement and accountability plans.

### Summary of Compliance and Alignment:

- Still I Rise Academy's PD structure fully aligns with the calendar, daily schedule, and state-mandated instructional requirements.
- The revised PD plan is strategically embedded in both non-instructional full days and monthly early release days to allow for staff development without sacrificing instructional time for students.
- This structure supports our mission to serve a high-needs population with well-trained educators and ensures ongoing instructional improvement throughout the school year.

This approach demonstrates both legal compliance and intentional planning to maximize staff effectiveness and student achievement.





## **Section 2.6 – Transportation**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **Revised Transportation Narrative – Response to Concern #1**

Still I Rise Academy acknowledges and agrees with the reviewers' assessment regarding the need to provide transportation for our targeted student population. Given the unique challenges faced by our students—many of whom are chronically absent, parenting, formerly incarcerated, homeless, or facing unstable living conditions—relying solely on public transit, carpooling, or ride-share solutions in Year 1 would present undue barriers to access and attendance.

In alignment with this feedback and consistent with our mission to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate at-risk youth, Still I Rise Academy will provide daily student transportation services beginning in Year 1. We will contract with a licensed and state-approved student transportation vendor to ensure safe and reliable transportation to and from school. This plan will also include transportation for extracurricular programming, Saturday school, field trips, and academic enrichment activities beyond the school day.

Transportation services will fully comply with all applicable federal and state regulations, including accommodations for students with disabilities as outlined in 34 CFR § 300.34(c), ensuring full adherence to FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) requirements. Compliance with T.C.A. § 49-6-2101 – 2119 and SBE Rule 0520-01-05 will be monitored on an ongoing basis.

Oversight of the transportation program will be the responsibility of the school's designated operations lead. In the Year 1 operational budget, this role is titled "Facilities and Operations Manager", while in the full 5-year budget, the same position is referred to as "Director of Compliance & Operations." Regardless of title, this individual will be responsible for day-to-day coordination with the transportation vendor, ensuring safety protocols, scheduling efficiency, communication with families, and overall compliance with state and district requirements.

The school's updated operating budget includes transportation costs under the "Contracted Services" section. Funding has been carefully allocated to ensure that transportation services are fully supported without compromising our investment in teacher quality, instructional programming, or wraparound supports.

## **Section 2.6 – Transportation**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

This revision directly supports the school's core values and affirms our commitment to Tennessee State Board Authorizer Standard Principle 3, Item 1—to place the well-being and interests of students at the heart of every decision.

### **Response to Concern #2: Compliance with Transportation Regulations**

Still I Rise Academy acknowledges and embraces the responsibility to comply with all applicable state and federal transportation regulations. Our revised transportation plan ensures full legal compliance and equitable student access while prioritizing the safety and well-being of our high-risk student population.

### **Tennessee State Compliance**

We will fully adhere to the Tennessee Public School Bus Transportation Act (T.C.A. §§ 49-6-2101 – 49-6-2119) and SBE Rule 0520-01-05, which govern the safe transportation of students. This includes:

- Ensuring annual safety inspections of all vehicles.
- Verifying appropriate driver licensure, drug testing, and background checks.
- Maintaining minimum insurance coverage for liability and vehicle damage as required by T.C.A. § 49-6-2115.
- Implementing safe loading/unloading procedures, emergency plans, and disciplinary policies for student riders.

### **Federal Compliance**

We will also comply with:

- 34 CFR § 300.34(c)(16) (IDEA): Students with IEPs that include transportation will be provided appropriate, accessible transportation services.

## **Section 2.6 – Transportation**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Transportation for homeless students will be coordinated with the district's McKinney-Vento liaison and tailored to individual needs.
- Civil Rights Compliance: All transportation services will meet the standards of Title VI, Title IX, and Section 504, ensuring non-discriminatory access for all students.

### **Vendor-Based Transportation Plan**

Our Director of Compliance & Operations (also listed in the Year 1 budget as the "Facilities and Operations Manager") will:

- Lead the competitive bidding process to select a qualified, licensed, and insured transportation provider.
- Review vendors for compliance with state licensure, insurance, and inspection standards.
- Execute a performance-based contract that includes compliance monitoring and termination clauses for failure to meet state or federal expectations.
- Monitor daily operations, safety, timeliness, and parent communications.

### **Contingency Plan: Direct Transportation Services**

In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-2101(a)(2), if Still I Rise Academy is unable to identify a qualified vendor that meets our safety, reliability, and cost-effectiveness standards, the school reserves the legal right to provide student transportation directly.

If this route is taken, Still I Rise Academy will implement the following plan:

1. Vehicle Acquisition/Leasing:
  - Lease or purchase yellow school buses or multi-passenger vans that meet Tennessee safety standards.

## Section 2.6 – Transportation

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- All vehicles will be registered, insured, and inspected in accordance with Tenn. Dept. of Safety and Homeland Security guidelines.

### 2. Driver Hiring & Credentialing:

- Hire CDL-licensed drivers with a school bus endorsement and clean background checks.
- Conduct random drug screenings and provide ongoing training in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-6-2109.

### 3. Route Planning & Oversight:

- Prioritize routes based on areas of highest need, including Title I zip codes and homeless student clusters.
- Utilize route optimization software to ensure fuel efficiency, safe stops, and on-time arrivals.

### 4. Operations & Safety Protocols:

- Daily inspections, incident tracking, parent communication tools, and student behavior expectations will be implemented under the oversight of the Director of Compliance & Operations.

### 5. IEP & 504 Compliance:

- Accessible vehicles and specialized driver training will ensure safe transportation for students with disabilities or those requiring individualized accommodations.

### 6. Budget:

## Section 2.6 – Transportation

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- A contingency line in our operational budget will support this alternative should it be needed, with capital and operational costs phased based on student enrollment and route demand.

### Conclusion

Still I Rise Academy is fully prepared to ensure transportation compliance and access by selecting a qualified vendor or, if necessary, providing services directly in alignment with Tennessee law. Our transportation strategy will prioritize equity, safety, and regulatory adherence—ensuring every student can reliably access school, regardless of their background or circumstance.

### Response to Concern #3: Future Transportation Plans and IEP-Related Transportation

Still I Rise Academy has revised its transportation strategy in response to the review team's concerns and will now offer transportation beginning in Year 1 to ensure that our most vulnerable students — including those experiencing homelessness, chronic absenteeism, or poverty — can consistently access our educational services.

### Future Transportation Plans

Still I Rise Academy affirms that transportation will be a permanent component of our operational model moving forward. We have now integrated transportation into our revised operating budget and will continue to fund this service annually through:

- State per-pupil funding allocations,
- Contingency reserves,
- And, if necessary, supplemental grant funding (e.g., McKinney-Vento or IDEA).

We are also developing a contingency plan to expand transportation services as enrollment grows, with an emphasis on adding more routes, accommodating special populations, and supporting extracurricular and work-based learning transportation needs (e.g., to and from

## **Section 2.6 – Transportation**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

internships or EPSO programs).

### **Transportation & Students with IEPs**

In accordance with 34 CFR §300.34(c)(16) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Still I Rise Academy will:

- Provide specialized transportation for any student whose IEP identifies transportation as a related service.
- Ensure transportation services are included in the IEP development process and implemented as prescribed, with input from special education staff, families, and support teams.
- Coordinate with the MSCS Exceptional Children Department or external vendors to provide accessible vehicles, aides, or specialized driver training, as needed.
- Maintain documentation and service logs to ensure compliance, monitoring, and reimbursement eligibility under state and federal guidelines.

### **Budget Adjustments for IEP-Related Transportation**

Anticipated costs related to IEP transportation have been accounted for in our operating budget's transportation and contingency lines. These include:

- Vendor contracts with flexibility for route modifications and individual accommodations,
- Additional funding sources such as IDEA Part B funds,
- A portion of our contingency reserve dedicated to addressing high-need, high-cost student services.

### **Conclusion**



## **Section 2.6 – Transportation**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Still I Rise Academy is fully committed to providing equitable and accessible transportation services to all students, including those with IEPs, and ensuring that these services are maintained and expanded as the school grows. Transportation is now integrated into our long-term operational and financial planning, reflecting our commitment to student success and legal compliance.

## Section 2.7 - Additional Operations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

As shown in attachment Q, Humanitarian already has insurance and will easily upgrade as required by state law.

### Technology Plan

The school will integrate technology to support academic instruction and operational efficiency.

- **Classroom Technology:** Smartboards, projectors, student Chromebooks/tablets, interactive learning platforms, and Wi-Fi access.
- **Computer and Science Labs:** Desktop computers, lab simulation software, 3D printers (if applicable), and high-speed internet connectivity.
- **Library/Media Center:** Computers with research access, digital catalogs, and e-books.
- **Main Office & Administrative Spaces:** Secure student information systems, digital attendance tracking, and administrative software.
- **Teacher Workrooms & Copy Rooms:** High-speed printers, copiers, and collaborative digital tools.
- **State-Mandated Assessments:** The school will ensure all students have access to computers and internet infrastructure for online assessments, including TNReady and other required state exams.

**Infrastructure Investment:** The technology costs, including hardware, software, maintenance, and training, will be outlined in the operating budget template and narrative.

### School Health and Nursing Services

- **Compliance with Coordinated School Health Program:** The school will implement preventive health screenings, immunization verification, and wellness programs in alignment with state and CDC guidelines.
- **School Nurse Hiring/Contracting:** The school will either hire a full-time registered nurse (RN) or licensed practical nurse (LPN) or contract with a local healthcare provider for medical services.

Health services will include:

## Section 2.7 - Additional Operations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Vision, hearing, and dental screenings.
- Management of student medication and health plans.
- Emergency response for student medical needs.
- Collaboration with local healthcare providers for vaccinations and physical exams.

### **Response to Concern #1 – Food Service Plan Alignment and Contingency Planning**

Still I Rise Academy has strengthened its food service plan to fully align with our school's Opportunity Charter School model, which prioritizes the well-being of at-risk students—including those who are economically disadvantaged, chronically absent, parenting, or facing food insecurity. Access to regular, nutritious meals is essential for improving student attendance, academic performance, and mental and physical health. Our revised plan ensures that no student will go without meals and includes both vendor-based and in-house service contingencies.

#### **1. Alignment with School Model:**

Our student-centered mission focuses on wraparound support. By offering breakfast and lunch daily at no cost to students, we eliminate hunger as a barrier to success and promote consistent school attendance. Our food service plan is a core component of our holistic approach to academic and behavioral support.

#### **2. Meal Serving Pattern:**

Still I Rise Academy will participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and implement the Traditional Meal Pattern, providing:

- One nutritious breakfast daily
- One lunch meeting USDA meal requirements
- Compliance with all Tennessee Department of Education School Nutrition Program guidelines

## **Section 2.7 - Additional Operations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

### **3. Meal Service Schedule:**

- Breakfast: 8:45 AM – 9:10 AM (grab-and-go format prior to Empower Hour)
- Lunch: 12:30 PM – 1:00 PM (coordinated across grade levels to manage flow and maintain supervision)

### **4. Vendor Selection Plan:**

The school will issue a formal Request for Proposal (RFP) no later than March 2026, seeking competitive bids from licensed school food service vendors. The process will be led by the Executive Director and the Facilities & Operations Manager in coordination with our Board's Finance and Operations Committee. Evaluation criteria will include:

- Prior experience serving public charter schools or Title I student populations
- Compliance with federal and state nutrition standards
- Cost-effectiveness and reliability of delivery
- Ability to accommodate dietary, cultural, and allergy-related restrictions

### **5. Oversight & Compliance:**

The Facilities & Operations Manager (also referred to as Director of Compliance & Operations) will manage vendor compliance, ensure health department inspections are passed, and supervise student satisfaction surveys. Oversight will also include coordination with the Principal, who will ensure that students with special dietary needs are served appropriately.

### **6. Contingency Plan – In-House Meal Service (if needed):**

Should no suitable vendor be secured through the RFP process, Still I Rise Academy is prepared to operate an in-house food service program. The contingency plan includes:

- Hiring a part-time certified nutrition consultant or school food manager to oversee

## Section 2.7 - Additional Operations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

menu planning and USDA compliance.

- Partnering with local food distributors (e.g., Sysco, US Foods) for ingredients.
- Utilizing on-site kitchen space at our facility or preparing meals off-site and delivering to classrooms.
- Training our custodial/maintenance team or support staff to assist with food handling and safety protocols under health department guidance.
- Budget allocations for necessary kitchen equipment, storage, sanitation, and labor have been factored into the general operating contingency fund.

This dual-track plan ensures that Still I Rise Academy can meet all nutritional requirements and avoid any disruption in meal provision. Whether vendor-based or school-operated, food service at Still I Rise Academy will reflect our deep commitment to serving the needs of our students and supporting their ability to thrive academically and socially.

### **Response to Concern #2 - Certificate of Insurance Documentation**

We appreciate the feedback and have addressed the concern by providing an updated, legible letter of insurance confirmation from our provider, P3 Insurance Solutions, signed by Darriet Wallace, CEO. This updated documentation clearly outlines all required coverages in alignment with Tennessee state charter school law, including:

- General Liability Insurance
- Workers' Compensation
- Sexual Misconduct and Molestation Liability
- Educators Legal Liability (including Board Members and Administrators)

## **Section 2.7 - Additional Operations**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Surety Bond Coverage
- Property and Equipment Coverage
- Athletic and Extracurricular Activity Liability
- Automobile Liability (if transportation services are initiated)
- Cyber Liability for student data protection

The updated document confirms our insurance provider's willingness to issue full coverage upon charter approval and successful underwriting, in compliance with all applicable state regulations. Additionally, the letter confirms that the Tennessee Department of Education will be notified of any changes or cancellations to coverage, as required by law.

This revised insurance confirmation satisfies all requirements outlined in the application rubric and ensures that Still I Rise Academy will begin operations with comprehensive risk protection and legal compliance.

### **Response to Concern #3 – Oversight and Budget for School Nurse**

We appreciate the reviewer's observation and have corrected the oversight in our application. The Facility and Operations Manager will be responsible for supervising the school nurse and ensuring full compliance with all Coordinated School Health Program requirements outlined by the Tennessee Department of Education.

Additionally, we have clarified that the school nurse will be contracted as a professional service provider and will be reflected under the "Contracted Services" category in the revised budget. This approach allows us to maintain operational flexibility while ensuring high-quality health services are accessible to all students.

### **Response to Concern #4 – School Safety Plan and Emergency Operations Planning**

We appreciate the reviewer's concern and agree that school safety and security must be addressed with the highest level of detail and intentionality.



## Section 2.7 - Additional Operations

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Still I Rise Academy has revised its safety and emergency operations planning process to ensure comprehensive preparedness. The Facility and Operations Manager —will be responsible for overseeing all school safety operations, including the development, implementation, and monitoring of the school's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP).

The EOP will be developed in alignment with the Tennessee Department of Education's Emergency Operations Planning guidance, and will be submitted to the appropriate local and state authorities prior to the start of the school year, as required by state law.

The emergency operations planning timeline is as follows:

- October 2025: Initial safety audit of the facility and surrounding grounds
- November 2025: Convene School Safety Committee (including leadership, staff, a parent representative, and law enforcement liaison)
- December 2025: Draft of Emergency Operations Plan (including response protocols for fire, weather, lockdown, evacuation, and health-related emergencies)
- January 2026: Training for administrative staff and facilities team
- February 2026: Training for all instructional and support staff
- March 2026: Final review and submission of the Emergency Operations Plan to Shelby County Schools and the Tennessee Department of Education
- April–May 2026: Two full-school safety drills and feedback reviews
- July 2026: Pre-opening safety training refresher for all staff

Still I Rise Academy will also ensure the school is fully compliant with all federal, state, and local safety requirements, including but not limited to T.C.A. § 49-6-804, the School Safety Act, and relevant SBE Rules.

Through this structure and timeline, the school will ensure a safe, secure, and responsive

## ***Section 2.7 - Additional Operations***

***(Required for All Sponsors)***

environment for students, staff, families, and visitors.

## ***Section 2.8 - Charter Management Organization***

*(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 6)*

## **Section 2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity**

*(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1,3,or 5)*

## **Section 2.10 – Network Governance**

*(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)*

## ***Section 2.11 – Network Management and Personnel***

*(Required if Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)*



**Table 6: Decision Making Responsibilities***(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)*

Function	Decision Maker	
	Network Responsibility	School Responsibility
Performance Goals		
Curriculum		
Professional Development		
Data Management		
Interim Assessments		
Promotion Criteria		
Culture		
Budgeting, Finance, and Accounting		
Student Recruitment		
School Staff Recruitment and Hiring		
Human Resources Services (payroll, benefits, etc.)		
Development / Fundraising		
Community Relations		
Information Technology		
Facilities Management		
Vendor Management / Procurement		
Other Operational Services, if applicable		

**Table 7: School Projections***(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)*

	Year of Operation					
	Prior to Opening	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Totals						
Number of elementary schools						
Number of middle schools						
Number of high schools						
Total number of schools						
Total projected student enrollment						

**Table 8: Network Staff Projections***(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)*

Position	Year of Operation					
	Prior to Opening	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Leadership [specify]						
Leadership [specify]						
Leadership [specify]						
Leadership [specify]						
Leadership [specify]						
Leadership [specify]						
Leadership [specify]						
Support Role [specify]						
Support Role [specify]						
Support Role [specify]						
Support Role [specify]						
Support Role [specify]						
Support Role [specify]						
Support Role [specify]						
<b>Total projected FTEs at CMO</b>						

**Table 9: School Staff Projections****(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)****NOTE: All positions are not required and/or may not apply to a charter school.**

Position	Year of Operation					
	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Principal(s)						
Supervisor / Director						
Internal Audit Personnel						
Classroom Teachers (core subjects)						
Classroom Teachers (electives, world languages)						
Special Education Teachers						
English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers						
Other Teachers						
Accountants/Bookkeepers						
Computer Programmer(s)						
Data Processing Personnel						
Purchasing Personnel						
Counseling Personnel						
Psychological Personnel						
Homebound Teachers						
Librarian(s)						
Social Workers						
Medical Personnel						
Material Supervisor(s)						
Assessment Personnel						
Audiovisual Personnel						
Education Media Personnel						
Instructional Computer Personnel						
Assistant Principal(s)						
Mechanic(s)						
Bus Drivers						

Guards						
Secretary(s)						
Clerical Personnel						
Educational Assistants						
Attendants						
Cafeteria Personnel						
Custodial Personnel						
Maintenance Personnel						
Part-time Personnel						
School Resource Officer						
Speech Pathologist						
Certified Substitute Teachers						
Non-certified Substitute Teachers						
Total FTEs						

## **Section 2.12 – School Replication**

*(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 4)*



## Section 3 – Financial Plan and Capacity

### Section 3.1 – Operating Budget

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

#### **Response to Concern #1 – Revenue Assumptions and Contingency Planning for High-Need Students**

We appreciate the reviewer's concern and have revised our revenue assumptions to present a more conservative and accurate estimation of Title I and IDEA funding based on comparative data from newly authorized charter schools in Tennessee. Rather than overestimating these federal allocations in Years 1 and 2, we have adjusted the budget to reflect a phased-in approach that anticipates partial receipt during the planning and early operational years.

#### **Addressing the Needs of High-Need Students Beyond Federal Funding**

Still I Rise Academy is uniquely designed to serve students with significant academic, social, and emotional needs—including students with disabilities, English learners, and those experiencing housing instability or trauma. In recognition that federal funding alone may not fully meet the demands of supporting these high-need populations, the school has developed the following layered contingency and support strategies:

##### **1. Emergency Contingency Reserve**

Each year of the operating budget includes a built-in contingency reserve. These funds—separate from projected revenues—are set aside specifically to address unforeseen needs, such as:

- Hiring additional paraprofessionals or contracted service providers (e.g., behavior specialists, ESL tutors, mental health clinicians).
- Procuring assistive technologies or adaptive learning materials.
- Providing emergency transportation or wraparound services to prevent chronic absenteeism.

##### **2. In-Kind Partnerships and Donated Services**

## Section 3.1 – Operating Budget

### (Required for All Sponsors)

Still I Rise Academy has secured over \$200,000 annually in committed in-kind services from partners such as:

- Shalom House of Memphis, which will provide up to \$100,000 in sensitivity training and mental health consultation for students with emotional and behavioral needs.
- William & Johnson Career College, which will extend instructional and postsecondary support for qualifying students.
- No Mistakes Allowed LLC, which has pledged up to \$100,000 in outreach and wraparound support, allowing us to allocate more financial resources to student interventions.

#### 3. Board-Controlled Contingency Protocol

The Board of Directors will conduct quarterly financial reviews to monitor:

- Any variances in enrollment-driven revenue.
- Unanticipated costs tied to IEP, EL, or trauma-related interventions.

Based on these reviews, the board may reallocate funds from discretionary budget lines (e.g., advertising or non-essential contracted services) to meet critical student needs.

#### 4. Direct Fundraising and Grant Diversification Strategy

The school will launch a development initiative in Year 0 to build an Unrestricted Support Fund supported by:

- Local and regional foundation grants.
- Corporate sponsorships from Memphis-based employers aligned with our CTE

### Section 3.1 – Operating Budget

(Required for All Sponsors)

model.

- Individual donations secured via Giving Days and community-driven events.

These flexible funds will be prioritized to fill funding gaps for high-need students and to supplement IDEA/Title I support.

#### 5. Flexible Staffing Design

Our staffing model includes the capacity to pivot part-time roles to full-time if student needs dictate and vice versa (e.g., converting a part-time interventionist into a full-time RTI<sup>2</sup> specialist). Additionally, contracted staff such as ESL or speech therapists will be scaled based on actual student need rather than forecasted averages.

Through these multipronged strategies—combining conservative budgeting, robust in-kind support, real-time financial monitoring, and a development plan tailored to community responsiveness—Still I Rise Academy is equipped to responsibly and effectively meet the needs of high-need students from Day 1.

#### **Response to Concern #2 – Revised and Complete Budget Submission**

We appreciate the reviewers' feedback and have fully addressed the concern by submitting a revised and complete multi-year budget using the Tennessee Department of Education's required budget template. The updated budget includes all required tabs and components, specifically:

- **Accurate Enrollment Projections:** Updated to reflect our final 10-year enrollment plan, aligning with Section 1.5 and Table 1 of the application.
- **Detailed Revenue Assumptions:** Includes confirmed per-pupil allocations, conservative estimates for federal funding (Title I, IDEA), and clear notations on anticipated and secured in-kind contributions.
- **Comprehensive Expenditure Breakdown:** Fully itemized across categories including Personal Services, Employee Benefits, Contracted Services, Supplies and Materials,

## Section 3.1 – Operating Budget

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Other Charges, Capital Outlay, and Debt Service. Each year's budget reflects expected growth and operational needs.

- Start-Up Year (Year 0) Alignment: Reflects the \$508,750 start-up cost detailed in Section 2.3, aligned with new timeline milestones and staffing assignments.
- Staffing Projections: Accurately match the organizational charts (Attachments N & O), including compensation, FTEs, and benefit assumptions.

This updated submission ensures all budgetary requirements are met and allows for a complete review of Still I Rise Academy's financial planning. We welcome further questions or clarification.

### **Response to Concern #3 – Alignment of Staff, Salaries, Expenses, and Funding Sources Across Application**

We acknowledge the concern and have conducted a comprehensive review and revision of the Still I Rise Academy application to ensure full alignment across the budget, staffing projections, organizational charts, and narrative sections. The following corrective measures were taken to resolve all inconsistencies:

#### 1. Staffing Alignment:

- Organizational Charts (Attachments N and O) now reflect all Year 0 and Year 1 staff roles mentioned in the application narrative and budget.
- Every staff member listed in the budget—including Executive Director, Principal, Director Enrollment and Outreach, Instructional Staff, and Support Personnel—matches the roles and responsibilities outlined throughout the application.

#### 2. Salary and Benefits Consistency:

- Salaries listed in the operating budget now align with narrative descriptions in Sections 2.3, 2.4, and 3.1.

## Section 3.1 – Operating Budget

(Required for All Sponsors)

- Employee benefits (Social Security, health insurance, retirement, etc.) are proportionally calculated and consistently reflected in the employee benefits line item across all five years.

### 3. Funding Sources Clarity:

- Revenue projections are consistently calculated using the Tennessee per-pupil allocation of \$12,330.84, applied to the finalized enrollment numbers per year.
- Budget clearly delineates anticipated grant funding (e.g., Charter School Planning & Implementation Grant), federal Title I/IDEA estimates, and secured in-kind contributions from community partners.

### 4. Cross-Section Narrative Corrections:

- All positions mentioned in recruitment, PD, operations, and discipline oversight are now accounted for in the staffing chart and funded in the budget.
- Updates were made to Sections 1.7 (School Culture), 2.3 (Start-Up Timeline), 2.4 (Personnel), and 3.1 (Budget Narrative) to reflect unified staffing, salary, and funding strategies.

These revisions ensure a fully coherent and consistent presentation of Still I Rise Academy's financial and personnel plans. We appreciate the opportunity to strengthen the application and demonstrate a sustainable, mission-aligned fiscal strategy.

### **Response to Concern #4 – Budget Assumptions, Alignment, and Realism of Salaries and Expenditures**

We appreciate the reviewer's feedback and have revised our application and budget to address the concern regarding missing assumptions and alignment between financial projections and narrative content. The following steps were taken:

## Section 3.1 – Operating Budget

(Required for All Sponsors)

### 1. Detailed Assumptions Documented:

- The revised operating budget now includes assumption notes explaining how each line item was calculated. These notes cover:
  - Enrollment-based revenue projections (using \$12,330.84 per pupil allocation).
  - Staffing levels per year, including FTE counts tied directly to student enrollment growth.
  - Salaries and benefits, based on competitive Memphis/Shelby County market benchmarks.
  - Instructional materials, contracted services, and capital expenses, derived from quotes, market data, and peer school comparisons.

### 2. Alignment with Application Narrative:

- Narrative sections (including Sections 2.3 – Start-Up Plan, 2.4 – Personnel, and 3.1 – Operating Budget) have been updated to reflect:
  - Consistent position titles across organizational charts, budget sheets, and staffing narrative.
  - The same number of instructional and support staff as indicated in the budget.
  - Accurate budget categories matching Tennessee's reporting structure (e.g., personal services, employee benefits, contracted services, capital outlay).

### 3. Salaries and Expenditures Realism:



### **Section 3.1 – Operating Budget**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- All staff salaries now reflect realistic ranges for the region, considering qualifications and market rates.
- Compensation levels were cross-checked against MSCS salary scales and charter school benchmarks.
- Benefits are calculated at 25% of total salaries to reflect a conservative and reasonable estimate.
- Non-personnel expenses, including lease estimates, insurance, and technology costs, are supported by local market data or vendor quotes.

#### **4. Financial Sustainability and Feasibility:**

- Budget accounts for contingency reserves, phased hiring, and scalable instructional materials based on enrollment growth.
- Start-up and part of Year 1 costs are fully funded through the Charter School Planning & Implementation Grant (\$750,000), and all in-kind contributions are documented.

Through these revisions, Still I Rise Academy's budget now provides a transparent, fully aligned, and fiscally responsible financial model that supports the school's mission and high-need student population.

### **Response to Concern #5 – Budget Inclusion of Contracts, Technology, Curriculum, and Special Education Resources**

We acknowledge the reviewer's concern and have taken concrete steps to ensure that all critical expenditures—particularly contracts, technology, curriculum, and special education resources—are now clearly and accurately reflected in the budget, assumption notes, and

## Section 3.1 – Operating Budget

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

accompanying narrative. Below is a summary of how this concern has been addressed:

### 1. Contracts:

- Included in the “Contracted Services” section of the revised budget are vendor agreements related to:
  - Transportation services (as now committed to in the revised plan).
  - Food service provider.
  - School nurse and health services (as professional service providers).
  - Maintenance and custodial contracts.
- Assumption notes now specify estimated annual costs based on local market rates or vendor quotes, including when services are expected to begin (e.g., facility cleaning services beginning July 2026).

### 2. Technology:

- Technology expenditures have been moved from general supplies to a distinct line under Capital Outlay and Contracted Services.
- The revised budget includes:
  - Student devices for 1:1 access aligned with testing and remote learning.
  - Admin devices for leadership and teachers.
  - Technology infrastructure (Wi-Fi routers, access points, servers).

## Section 3.1 – Operating Budget

(Required for All Sponsors)

- Annual software subscriptions (e.g., PowerSchool, Google Workspace, IEP management tools).
- All technology expenses are itemized and explained in the assumption notes.

### 3. Curriculum and Instructional Materials:

- Curriculum costs, previously under-reported, are now fully listed in the Supplies and Materials section, including:
  - ELA, math, science, and social studies curricular licenses.
  - Supplemental literacy and RTI<sup>2</sup> programs.
  - Career and Technical Education (CTE) instructional packages for WBL programming.
- Each curriculum purchase is justified in the assumption notes, tied to the academic model outlined in Section 1.2.

### 4. Special Education Resources:

- The updated budget includes:
  - IDEA-funded personnel and contracted services, including speech, OT, and psychological services.
  - Assistive technology, sensory tools, and modified instructional materials.

### **Section 3.1 – Operating Budget**

***(Required for All Sponsors)***

- Professional development related to IEP implementation and legal compliance.
- These items are listed under both Contracted Services and Supplies, and clearly explained in the budget narrative and assumption notes.

With these additions and clarifications, all previously omitted or unclear items are now fully integrated into our multi-year operating budget, with transparent justification and alignment to the school's mission, target population, and educational model. This ensures fiscal transparency and supports our commitment to serving diverse learners.

## **Section 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative**

**(Required for All Sponsors)**

### **Response to Concern #1 – Financial Management, Independent Audits, and CPA Oversight**

Still I Rise Academy appreciates the importance of robust financial oversight and transparent fiscal accountability. In alignment with the State of Tennessee’s “Indicators of a Strong Response” for Subsection 3.2, our financial systems, processes, and policies will reflect best practices and full legal compliance with all state and federal requirements.

#### **Accounting, Purchasing, and Payroll Oversight:**

Still I Rise Academy will utilize a cloud-based financial management platform approved for charter school use (e.g., QuickBooks for Nonprofits, Aplos, or comparable systems) to maintain accurate, real-time financial records. Internal policies will include a system of checks and balances to prevent fraud and ensure timely reporting. Key financial functions will be executed under the supervision of the Director of Compliance & Operations, who will oversee daily accounting, purchasing approvals, and internal payroll reporting.

#### **Annual Independent Audit and CPA Selection:**

In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-127 and all federal reporting obligations, Still I Rise Academy will conduct an independent annual financial audit. We will solicit competitive bids from at least three Tennessee-licensed independent accounting firms, with selection based on cost-effectiveness, prior charter school experience, and track record of compliance with state and federal education funding audits. Once selected, the firm will be responsible for:

- Conducting a GAAP-compliant financial audit
- Preparing required federal and state fiscal reports
- Identifying internal control weaknesses and recommending remedies

All final audit reports will be submitted to the Tennessee Department of Education, the authorizer, and made publicly available per transparency statutes.

#### **Financial Roles and Responsibilities:**

## Section 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

- Executive Director: Maintains executive oversight of all financial processes and ensures alignment with strategic goals and legal obligations.
- Director of Compliance & Operations: Oversees daily financial transactions, purchasing, payroll coordination, and contract compliance.
- Governing Board – Finance & Operations Committee: Reviews monthly budget reports, approves vendor contracts, audits, and financial policy updates. Ensures financial practices reflect fiduciary responsibility to the public.
- Board Treasurer: Provides financial guidance and monitors adherence to financial controls.

### Outsourcing Plan and Oversight:

Still I Rise Academy may outsource certain financial management functions, such as payroll processing, benefits administration, or audit preparation, to external vendors. All outsourcing agreements will:

- Be competitively bid and approved by the board
- Include annual performance evaluations and renewal clauses
- Be reviewed for compliance with FERPA, HIPAA, and state procurement laws

### Financial Expertise:

Our leadership team is anchored by Executive Director Dr. Gerald Kiner, the only Executive Director of a charter school in Shelby County, Tennessee to be formally recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) before the U.S. Senate Committee on Entrepreneurship for exemplary performance in managing the Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP) grant. Dr. Kiner's oversight of the CNPP grant resulted in the successful mentoring of over 1,000 small businesses both locally and nationally. His leadership brought together experts in banking, accounting, and finance to provide entrepreneurs with



## **Section 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

critical training in financial management, grants, and lending access—experience that directly translates to superior financial stewardship for Still I Rise Academy.

In addition, Dr. Kiner has been commended by the Tennessee Department of Human Services for his exceptional administration of the Family First Grant, demonstrating his ability to successfully manage complex, multi-million-dollar public funding initiatives.

Dr. Kiner is also a serial entrepreneur with decades of experience founding and operating successful ventures, including federally and state-funded nonprofit programs. His qualifications not only meet but exceed the financial oversight requirements necessary to manage a high-performing public charter school. His proven record in compliance, fiscal sustainability, audit readiness, and grant execution sets a new standard in charter school leadership.

Combined with a governing board that includes professionals with financial, operational, and regulatory expertise from organizations such as FedEx, healthcare systems, and higher education institutions, Still I Rise Academy is uniquely positioned to ensure robust financial management from day one.

### **Response to Concern #2 – Contingency Planning and Budget Scaling**

Still I Rise Academy has incorporated a comprehensive contingency framework aligned with best practices observed in successful Tennessee charter schools, including City University School, a longstanding Memphis charter school that has operated effectively with fewer than 20 students and was nonetheless renewed for another 10-year term due to its academic integrity, financial stability, and clear operational plan. We view City University as a model for sustainable operations in the face of enrollment variability, and we are fully prepared to follow its blueprint if enrollment targets are not initially met.

Our contingency planning includes the following components:

1. **Scalable Staffing and Operational Model:**

If enrollment falls below projections, we will scale back non-instructional staffing, defer select contracted services, and phase in elective programs to ensure financial viability while protecting core academic instruction.

2. **Emergency Cash Reserves and Budget Adjustments:**

## Section 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

Each year's budget includes a designated contingency reserve line item that provides flexibility to offset revenue shortfalls. These reserves are clearly delineated in our five-year budgets.

### 3. Access to Emergency Financing and Loans:

We maintain strong relationships with financial institutions and nonprofit lenders that can provide bridge financing or emergency lines of credit if necessary. Our leadership's past performance with federal and state grants makes us a low-risk borrower.

### 4. Community and Foundation Support:

We have secured multiple MOUs from community-based organizations indicating in-kind support. Should enrollment revenue be impacted, we are prepared to convert a portion of those in-kind contributions to direct financial support through revised service agreements.

### 5. Board Oversight and Monthly Financial Monitoring:

Our Board's Finance and Operations Committee will review monthly enrollment and financial performance against projections and trigger contingency actions at the first sign of deviation.

### 6. Facility Flexibility:

Our facilities plan allows for cost-saving adjustments, such as modular classrooms or shared community space at Jesus People Church, allowing us to right-size facility costs relative to enrollment.

Alignment with the Indicator of a Strong Response:

Our contingency framework fully meets and exceeds the Tennessee State Board of Education's Quality Authorizing Standard indicator, which states:

## **Section 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

“The response outlines contingency plans to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are lower than expected. It includes a detailed cash flow contingency plan in case revenue projections are not met or expenditures exceed expectations, with explanations of financing sources, including loans or alternative funding sources.”

Our plan should satisfy all these criteria. It reflects both realistic adjustments and innovative backup options grounded in precedent and best practices. We have built a flexible, responsible model that allows us to serve our targeted Opportunity Charter School population without jeopardizing financial health.

### **Response to Concern #3 – Financial Oversight and Executive Leadership Acumen**

We respectfully ask the reviewers to reconsider Concern #3 on the grounds that it misinterprets the indicators of a strong response outlined in Subsection 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative. As clearly defined by the Tennessee State Board of Education, this section requires the application to:

“describe the systems, processes, and policies for managing accounting, purchasing, payroll, and audits... [and] outline the financial roles and responsibilities of the school’s administration and governing board.”

There is no mandate requiring a sitting board member to hold a CPA license or formal financial title. Rather, what is required is demonstrated financial capacity, oversight systems, and strategic expertise—criteria that Still I Rise Academy has clearly met and exceeded.

Indeed, our application not only outlines financial processes and role clarity for board oversight, but also features unmatched executive financial acumen through our Executive Director, Dr. Gerald Kiner, whose qualifications and leadership exceed what is typically seen in charter leadership.

Dr. Kiner is the only Executive Director in Shelby County recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) before the U.S. Senate Committee on Entrepreneurship for his exceptional administration of the CNPP federal grant. As a serial entrepreneur and real estate investor, Dr. Kiner has decades of experience managing multi-million-dollar projects,

## **Section 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

overseeing SBA grants that support over 1,000 small businesses, and building property portfolios that rival those of seasoned developers.

Furthermore, in 2024, Dr. Kiner—through his From the Streets to Wall Street Foundation—along with funds from the Shelby County Commission, personally funded and organized an unprecedented educational trip to Wall Street in New York City, flying out students from Memphis-Shelby County Schools and Collierville High School, along with teachers and mentors, at no cost to them. This act alone reflects unparalleled financial leadership, generosity, and a deep understanding of long-term financial planning and execution in educational environments.

To imply that this level of expertise is insufficient fails to recognize that Dr. Kiner's financial leadership provides the school with superior strategic advantage, especially for a startup institution.

In conclusion, we respectfully submit that the concern about financial expertise is unfounded. Our structure provides strong, experienced financial oversight—rooted in lived experience, federal grant success, investment management, and entrepreneurial excellence. We have met—and in the case of leadership acumen, exceeded—the state's standard for financial responsibility.

### **Response to Concern #4 – Clarification of Revenue Assumptions and Methodology**

We appreciate the opportunity to clarify our updated revenue model.

In response to this concern, we have eliminated our prior reliance on private donations, grant awards, and anticipated philanthropic revenue from the operating budget projections for Years 1 through 5. Instead, our financial model is now overwhelmingly based on reliable, predictable public funding streams—primarily the Tennessee state per-pupil allocation, which is currently set at \$12,330.84 per student.

This change enhances both the clarity and sustainability of our financial projections and ensures that our operations are built on guaranteed revenue tied to enrollment. Given that student enrollment is the most direct and measurable variable, this adjustment allows for transparent, data-driven budget planning without the uncertainty associated with unconfirmed or speculative funding.

## **Section 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative**

*(Required for All Sponsors)*

While we will still pursue grants and philanthropic partnerships to enhance programs or support capital projects, those funds are no longer essential to the core operating budget. Any external revenue that may be received will be treated as supplementary and will not impact our ability to meet baseline obligations.

In short, the methodology now aligns with conservative budgeting best practices: we rely exclusively on confirmed state revenue per pupil, and all revenue assumptions are now both verifiable and replicable using enrollment projections already submitted and aligned across our narrative and financial sections.

### **Section 3.3 – Network Financial Plan**

*(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)*



## Section 4 – Portfolio Review & Performance Record

### **Section 4.1 – School Portfolio Summary**

*(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1)*

## **Section 4.2 – Academic Performance Record**

*(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1)*

**Section 4.3 – Fiscal and Operational Performance Record**  
**(Required if Answered “Yes” to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1)**

# Attachments

Use the Attachment Coversheets provided in the following section to clearly indicate the beginning of each attachment. All attachments must be included following the narrative section of the application. This approach preserves the narrative's clarity and allows reviewers to reference supporting documents easily.

Attachment	Section	Description	Requirement Notes
A	<a href="#">1.4</a>	Annual Academic Calendar	<i>Required for all sponsors</i>
B	<a href="#">1.4</a>	Daily Schedule	
C	<a href="#">1.5</a>	Enrollment Policy	
D	<a href="#">1.6</a>	Letters of Support	
E	<a href="#">1.7</a>	Student Handbook and Required Forms	
F	<a href="#">1.7</a>	Student Discipline Policy	
G	<a href="#">2.1</a>	Articles of Incorporation	
H	<a href="#">2.1</a>	Proof of Non-Profit and Tax-Exempt Status	
I	<a href="#">2.1</a>	By-laws	
J	<a href="#">2.1</a>	Board Member Code of Conduct	
K	<a href="#">2.1</a>	Conflict of Interest Policy	
L	<a href="#">2.1</a>	Board Member Resumes or Biographies	
M	<a href="#">2.1</a>	Board Policies	
N	<a href="#">2.4</a>	Organizational Chart: Year 1	
O	<a href="#">2.4</a>	Organizational Chart: Full Capacity	
P	<a href="#">2.4</a>	School Leader Resume <i>(if hired)</i>	
Q	<a href="#">2.7</a>	Insurance Coverage	
R	<a href="#">2.8</a>	CMO Agreement	<i>Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 6.</i>
S	<a href="#">2.9</a>	Network Annual Progress Report	<i>Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 3.</i>
T	<a href="#">2.11</a>	Organizational Chart: Year 1	
U	<a href="#">2.11</a>	Organizational Chart: Year 5	
V	<a href="#">2.12</a>	Previously Approved and Authorized Application for School Being Replicated	<i>Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 4.</i>
W	<a href="#">3.1</a>	Operating Budget Template	<i>Required for all sponsors.</i>
X	<a href="#">3.2</a>	Operating Budget Narrative	
Y	<a href="#">3.3</a>	Network Financial Plan	<i>Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 3.</i>
Z	<a href="#">4.1</a>	Portfolio and Performance Template	<i>Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 1.</i>
	<a href="#">4.2</a>		
	<a href="#">4.2</a>		
AA	<a href="#">4.3</a>	Performance and Evaluation Reports	
BB	<a href="#">4.3</a>	Renewal and Interim Reports	
CC	<a href="#">4.3</a>	Annual Reports	

DD	<a href="#">4.3</a>	Litigation Documents	
EE	<a href="#">4.3</a>	Audited Financial Statements	

## Attachment A Cover Page

Annual Academic Calendar

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment A - Page



**Attachment A: Still I Rise Academy – 2026-2027 Academic Calendar (Amended to Meet State Requirements)**

School Year Start Date: Monday, August 3, 2026

School Year End Date: Friday, May 21, 2027

Total Calendar Days: 200

Instructional Days: 180

In-Service (Professional Development) Days: 9

Parent-Teacher Conference Days: 1

Administrative Days: 10

Total Instructional Hours (Grades 6–12): 1,170+ hours

**Breakdown by Day Type**

Category	# of Days	Dates (Example)
Student Instructional Days	180	August 3, 2026 – May 21, 2027
Professional Development Days	9	July 27–31, 2026; October 11, 2026; January 4, 2027
Parent-Teacher Conference Day	1	October 22, 2026

Teacher Administrative Days 10

July 22–26, 2026; May 24–  
28, 2027

Total School Calendar Days 200

**Additional Notes:**

- Fall Break: October 12–16, 2026
- Thanksgiving Break: November 23–27, 2026
- Winter Break: December 21, 2026 – January 1, 2027
- Spring Break: March 15–19, 2027
- Holidays (School Closed):
  - Labor Day – September 7, 2026
  - MLK Jr. Day – January 18, 2027
  - Presidents' Day – February 15, 2027
  - Memorial Day – May 31, 2027 (after school year ends)

## Attachment B Cover Page

Daily Schedule

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment B - Page

Attachment B – Daily Schedule (Still I Rise Academy)

Effective Start Time: 9:15 AM

Minimum Instructional Days: 180

Grades Served: 6–12

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**Middle School Daily Schedule (Grades 6–8)**

Time	Period	Subject/Focus	Minutes
9:15 AM – 9:30 AM	Empower Hour	SEL / Attendance / College & Career	15
9:30 AM – 10:30 AM	Period 1	English/Language Arts	60
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Period 2	Math	60
11:30 AM – 12:15 PM	Period 3	Science	45
12:15 PM – 12:45 PM	Lunch	Lunch	30
12:45 PM – 1:30 PM	Period 4	Social Studies	45
1:30 PM – 2:15 PM	Period 5	Enrichment (Art/PE/Music/Tech)	45

2:15 PM – 3:00 PM	Period 6	RTI <sup>2</sup> Academic Intervention	45
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	Period 7	Remediation / Acceleration / Clubs	60

### High School Daily Schedule (Grades 9–12)

Total Instructional Time: 7 hours (including EPSO, recovery, and internships)

Time	Period	Subject/Focus	Minutes
9:15 AM – 9:30 AM	Empower Hour	College Readiness / SEL	15
9:30 AM – 10:30 AM	Period 1	English	60
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Period 2	Math	60
11:30 AM – 12:15 PM	Period 3	Science	45
12:15 PM – 12:45 PM	Lunch	Lunch	30
12:45 PM – 1:30 PM	Period 4	Social Studies	45

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM	Period 5	EPSO / Dual Enrollment / Career Lab	60
2:30 PM – 3:30 PM	Period 6	Credit Recovery / Work-Based Learning	60
3:30 PM – 4:00 PM	Period 7	Teacher Office Hours / Mentoring	30

#### Key Features

- Empower Hour: Daily college/career advisement, SEL, and culture setting.
- RTP<sup>2</sup> Block (Middle School): Tiered intervention for math and reading.
- EPSO Opportunities (High School): Includes dual enrollment with William & Johnson Career College.
- Work-Based Learning (High School): Partnership with All About You Home Healthcare and No Mistakes Allowed LLC.
- Recovery/Enrichment: After-school support for all students needing remediation, recovery, or enrichment.



## Attachment C Cover Page

Enrollment Policy

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment C - Page

## Attachment C

### Still I Rise Academy

#### Attachment C – Enrollment Policy

Effective Date: August 2026

#### I. Purpose

Still I Rise Academy is committed to providing equitable access to high-quality education for all students, with a focused mission to serve opportunity youth as defined by the State of Tennessee. This policy outlines the enrollment procedures, eligibility requirements, and student selection process in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-113, T.C.A. § 49-13-106, and SBE Rule 0520-14-01-.04.

#### II. General Admissions Eligibility

Any student who is a resident of the state of Tennessee is eligible to attend Still I Rise Academy, subject to the availability of space and compliance with statutory eligibility requirements for Opportunity Charter Schools.

#### III. Priority Enrollment for Opportunity Youth

As an approved Opportunity Charter School, Still I Rise Academy will prioritize enrollment for students who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Dropped out of school
- Retained in a grade twice or more
- Pregnant or parenting
- Chronically absent (as defined by state attendance policy)
- Experienced abuse or neglect
- Homeless or in transitional housing

- Involved in the juvenile justice system
- Demonstrating significant behavioral or academic struggles

Documentation of eligibility may include but is not limited to: school records, attendance data, social service referrals, court documentation, or self-reporting verified by a counselor or enrollment specialist.

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#### IV. Enrollment Timeline

- Application Period Opens: January 15
- Application Period Closes: April 15
- Lottery Date (if needed): April 30
- Notification of Admission: May 1
- Waitlist Activation (if applicable): May 2

Late applications may be considered on a rolling basis if space remains available.

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#### V. Enrollment Procedures

1. **Application Submission:** Families may complete applications online, in person, or by mail. Interpreters and alternative formats (e.g., large print, braille) will be available upon request to ensure accessibility.
2. **Verification of Eligibility:** Applicants will be reviewed for eligibility criteria, with priority granted to opportunity youth as defined above.
3. **Lottery:** If the number of eligible applicants exceeds capacity, a public lottery will be held in compliance with state law.
4. **Waitlist:** Students not selected in the lottery will be placed on a waitlist in the order drawn. The waitlist remains active through the end of the school year.
5. **Enrollment Confirmation:** Selected students must confirm enrollment within 10 business days or risk forfeiting their spot.

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## VI Non-Discrimination Statement

Still I Rise Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or age in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. The school will make every reasonable effort to remove barriers to enrollment and promote diversity.

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## VII. Re-Enrollment, Withdrawals, and Transfers

- **Re-enrollment:** Currently enrolled students will receive re-enrollment packets each spring and must confirm their intent to return for the upcoming year.
  - **Withdrawals:** Parents or guardians may initiate student withdrawals at any time. The school will document all withdrawals and provide transition assistance when applicable.
  - **Transfers:** Students transferring from another Tennessee public school will be eligible to apply if space is available and proper documentation is submitted.
- 

## VIII. Recordkeeping and Reporting

Still I Rise Academy will maintain complete enrollment records, including lottery results, waitlists, and applicant demographic data, and will provide documentation as required by the Tennessee Department of Education.

## Response to Concern #5: Director of Outreach and Enrollment Staffing Alignment

Still I Rise Academy acknowledges the oversight in the original application and has amended both the staffing projections and budget documents to include the Director of Outreach and Enrollment position beginning in Year 0 (planning year) and continuing throughout the operational years. This role is essential to the success of our community-based recruitment strategy, particularly as an Opportunity Charter School prioritizing outreach to vulnerable populations.

Amendments Made:

- **Staffing Plan Update:** The Director of Outreach and Enrollment is now clearly listed in the staffing chart for Years 0–5. In Year 0, this position is supported through in-kind services provided by No Mistakes Allowed LLC, with full funding allocated starting in Year 1.
- **Budget Update:** The salary and proportional benefits for the Director of Outreach and Enrollment have been included under “Administrative Staff” in the Personnel Services section of the operating budget. For Year 1, the total cost for this position is \$60,000 (inclusive of salary and benefits), with incremental increases in future years.

#### **Role and Responsibilities:**

The Director of Outreach and Enrollment will:

- Lead all student recruitment efforts and community outreach strategies;
- Coordinate enrollment events in targeted zip codes;
- Partner with community-based organizations to reach families of opportunity youth;
- Manage the application and enrollment process, including public lottery compliance;
- Support marketing, translation services, and communication strategies to ensure access for all families.

This position plays a pivotal role in achieving and maintaining full enrollment aligned with our mission, and it is now appropriately integrated into our organizational and financial plans.

#### **Response to Concern #6: Recruitment Partnerships and Equity Strategies**

As outlined below, Still I Rise Academy recruitment strategy now explicitly names community partners, differentiate between pre-opening and post-opening recruitment methods, and affirm its commitment to equitable access for all students, especially those who are academically low-achieving or members of special populations.

#### **Community Recruitment Partners (Confirmed or In Progress)**

We will partner with trusted grassroots organizations that have direct access to families in high-need zip codes. These include:

- **No Mistakes Allowed LLC** – Community-based organization that specializes in mentoring, outreach, and engagement with opportunity youth in Memphis. They will assist with door-to-door campaigns, weekend events, and social media targeting in

underserved communities.

- **All About You Home Healthcare** – A minority-led business with extensive relationships in South and North Memphis, particularly among families of special needs students. They will serve as recruitment hubs and distribute enrollment materials during home visits and health service events.
- **Shalom House of Memphis** – A psychosocial rehabilitation facility that serves families and youth experiencing trauma, instability, and mental health challenges. They will help recruit parenting teens, students with emotional disturbances, and opportunity youth.
- **William & Johnson Career College** – As an accredited postsecondary partner, they will assist with recruiting older youth and dropouts seeking CTE or CNA credentials, particularly those interested in dual enrollment pathways.

### **Pre-Opening Recruitment Strategies**

- Launch Parent Town Halls, weekend information sessions, and pop-up tables at local grocery stores, churches, and laundromats.
- Use bilingual outreach ambassadors to engage Spanish-speaking families and English Learners.
- Send personalized mailers to households in zip codes with high dropout and retention rates using targeted MATA bus ad campaigns and social media pushes.
- Offer transportation stipends or shuttle service for interested families to attend information sessions.
- Partner with local barbershops, salons, and rec centers to serve as informational satellite hubs.

### **Post-Opening Recruitment Strategies**

- Conduct student ambassador programs to encourage word-of-mouth peer recruitment.
- Host open houses, showcase days, and empowerment speaker series inviting prospective families to engage with staff and current students.
- Maintain ongoing community canvassing and direct outreach to families through our Outreach & Enrollment team.



- Utilize alumni and parent testimonials in print, digital, and in-person presentations.

## **Ensuring Equal Opportunity**

To ensure full and equitable access for all students, we will:

- Distribute materials in multiple languages, including Spanish, Arabic, and Vietnamese.
- Provide interpreters and translated application forms at all recruitment events.
- Ensure that recruitment staff receive training on McKinney-Vento eligibility, IDEA, and EL access rights.
- Host targeted outreach nights for special education families and English Learners to explain supports offered.
- Leverage data to identify and prioritize outreach to academically low-achieving zip codes, using MSCS school performance data and FBI-reported community risk indicators.
- Partner with homeless shelters, foster care agencies, and social services providers to identify and recruit opportunity youth.

By embedding these equity-focused recruitment strategies and community-based partnerships, Still I Rise Academy will ensure that every student—regardless of background, ability, or prior academic standing—has the opportunity to thrive in our school.

# Attachment D Cover Page

Letters of Support

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment D –  
Page



The Shalom House of Memphis

4400 Hickory Hill Road Suite 101

Memphis, Tennessee 38141

January 15, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of The Shalom House of Memphis, one of the only licensed Psycho-Socio Rehabilitation Facilities in Memphis, TN, licensed by the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, we are pleased to offer our full support to Still I Rise Academy and its ME<sup>2</sup> Mission—Motivate, Educate, and Elevate.

As a facility dedicated to mental health advocacy, rehabilitation, and holistic well-being, we recognize the critical role of trauma-informed education, inclusive learning environments, and specialized staff training in fostering student success. Still I Rise Academy's commitment to serving at-risk students and special populations aligns seamlessly with our mission, and we are proud to partner with the school to ensure all students receive the support they need to thrive academically and emotionally.

To demonstrate our commitment to this transformative initiative, The Shalom House of Memphis pledges up to \$100,000 annually in in-kind services to support staff training, consultation, and direct student and family services. These contributions will include the following:

**1. Sensitivity Training for Staff on Special Needs Populations**

- Comprehensive annual professional development workshops on special education, trauma-informed care, and behavioral interventions tailored for educators and support staff.
- Hands-on training modules on working with students facing mental health challenges, neurodiversity, and emotional regulation needs.

- Strategies for de-escalation, conflict resolution, and creating a supportive classroom culture that fosters equity, inclusion, and student well-being.

## 2. Consultation Services & Behavioral Health Support

- On-call consultation for school administrators and faculty to provide expert guidance on mental health interventions, crisis response, and classroom accommodations.
- Collaboration with student support teams to develop behavior intervention plans (BIPs) and ensure students with specialized needs receive proper support.
- Assistance in developing individualized student support strategies to align educational approaches with students' mental health and developmental needs.

## 3. Family & Community Support Initiatives

- Parent and caregiver workshops on mental health awareness, stress management, and student advocacy.
- Support groups and counseling resources for students and families facing social-emotional, behavioral, or trauma-related challenges.
- Referrals for clinical mental health and substance abuse support for students and families in need of additional services.

## 4. Crisis Intervention & Schoolwide Mental Wellness Programs

- Training for school leadership on crisis response and suicide prevention, ensuring a safe and supportive school environment.
- Student-centered programming focusing on self-regulation techniques, peer mentorship, and resilience-building.
- Schoolwide wellness initiatives to promote mindfulness, social-emotional learning (SEL), and healthy coping strategies.

The Shalom House of Memphis is deeply committed to ensuring that Still I Rise Academy is equipped with the knowledge, tools, and resources necessary to serve all students effectively, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds. By working together, we can foster an educational environment where every student feels seen, supported, and empowered to succeed.

We look forward to a meaningful and lasting partnership with Still I Rise Academy and are excited to contribute to its mission. If there are additional ways we can further support the school, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,



Natyia Harris

Outreach Coordinator

The Shalom House of Memphis

## MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Between

William and Johnson Career College

Office of Enrollment and Management

And

Still I Rise Academy

### I. PURPOSE

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishes a partnership between William and Johnson Career College (WJCC) and Still I Rise Academy (SIRA) to provide eligible students at SIRA with the opportunity to enroll in WJCC's Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program and Business Administration Degree Program as part of a career and postsecondary readiness initiative.

WJCC is accredited by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and is committed to preparing students for career success through high-quality academic instruction and hands-on professional training. This partnership is designed to create pathways for high school students to gain industry-recognized certifications and college-level business training, equipping them with the skills needed for success in healthcare, business, and related fields.

### II. AGREEMENT TERMS



### 1. Student Eligibility & Enrollment

- Eligible Still I Rise Academy students who meet WJCC's academic and program requirements will be granted admission into the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) Program or Business Administration Degree Program.
- WJCC's Office of Enrollment and Management, led by Enrollment Coordinator Aiyanna Jones or designee, will oversee the admissions process for SIRA students and provide necessary enrollment guidance.
- Students must complete WJCC's application process and satisfy any prerequisites required by the programs.

### 2. Program Benefits for Still I Rise Academy Students

- Students accepted into the CNA Program will receive hands-on clinical training and be eligible to sit for the Tennessee State CNA Certification Exam upon successful completion.
- Students accepted into the Business Administration Degree Program will complete coursework applicable toward an associate degree in business administration, providing them with essential business knowledge and workforce readiness.
- Students will have access to career counseling, industry mentorships, and networking opportunities through WJCC's professional partnerships.

### 3. Academic & Support Services

- WJCC will provide academic support, tutoring, and mentorship to participating students.
- SIRA will collaborate with WJCC to ensure students receive necessary academic advisement and scheduling assistance.
- WJCC will provide transcripts and program completion certificates for all successful students, ensuring they can transition into the workforce or higher education opportunities.

#### 4. Financial Considerations

- Students may qualify for scholarships, financial aid, or grant-funded support for program costs, subject to availability.
- WJCC and SIRA will work together to identify funding opportunities, dual enrollment grants, and external sponsorships to support student tuition and program expenses

#### 5 Program Oversight & Evaluation

- The Office of Enrollment and Management at WJCC will track student progress, program retention, and certification completion rates.
- Both institutions will meet annually to review program effectiveness, discuss student outcomes, and explore additional opportunities for partnership expansion

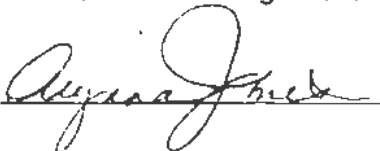
### III. TERM & TERMINATION

This MOU shall remain in effect from August 2026 to August 2036. Either party may terminate this agreement with 60 days' written notice, provided that enrolled students are allowed to complete their current program cycle.

#### IV. SIGNATURES

For William and Johnson Career College

Office of Enrollment and Management

Signature: 

Name: Aiyana Jones

Title: Enrollment Coordinator or Designee

Date: 2/2/2025

For Still I Rise Academy

Signature: 

Name: Dr. Gerald Kiner PhD

Title: Executive Director

Date: 2/2/2025

**No Mistakes Allowed LLC**

**Amber Crawford, CEO**

**acrawford@nomistakesallowedllc.com**

**January 23, 2025**

**To Whom It May Concern,**

**I am honored to submit this letter of support on behalf of No Mistakes Allowed LLC in enthusiastic endorsement of Still I Rise Academy and its transformative ME<sup>3</sup> Mission—Motivate, Educate, and Elevate students to reach their full potential**

**At No Mistakes Allowed LLC, we are deeply committed to ensuring that every young person—regardless of background—has access to meaningful educational opportunities, career readiness training, and community support networks that empower them to succeed. Still I Rise Academy embodies these values, and we wholeheartedly support its mission to educate, motivate, and elevate students to exceed expectations and pursue postsecondary opportunities, industry certifications, and career pathways.**

**To demonstrate our commitment to this shared vision, No Mistakes Allowed LLC pledges up to \$100,000 annually in in-kind support to assist with critical aspects of student recruitment and enrollment outreach. Specifically, we will provide the following.**

**1. Recruitment & Outreach Support**

- **Community engagement and direct outreach to parents, guardians, and students in underserved neighborhoods to ensure awareness of enrollment opportunities.**
- **Coordination of public information sessions, school tours, and town hall meetings to introduce prospective families to Still I Rise Academy.**
- **Strategic digital marketing campaigns, social media engagement, and printed recruitment materials to increase visibility.**

## **2. Application Assistance & Enrollment Services**

- **Assistance for families in navigating the application and enrollment process to eliminate any barriers to access.**
- **Dedicated support for economically disadvantaged students and families to ensure they have all necessary documentation and resources for a successful application.**
- **Multilingual support and translation services to accommodate English Learners (ELs) and ensure all families are fully informed.**

## **3. Parent & Community Engagement Initiatives**

- **Hosting Parent University workshops, community networking events, and family resource fairs to build strong partnerships between the school and families.**
- **Facilitating mentorship opportunities and partnerships with local businesses and organizations to enhance student support services.**

#### 4. Specialized Student Support Services

- Collaborating with school leadership to provide mentorship, academic intervention support, and career readiness workshops for students.
- Offering leadership training and career exploration opportunities to reinforce the school's mission of empowerment and self-sufficiency.

We recognize the vital role Still I Rise Academy will play in shaping the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs, and change-makers, and we are committed to ensuring its success. By working together, we can remove barriers to access, enhance student opportunities, and create a lasting impact on education in our community.

I look forward to continued collaboration with Still I Rise Academy and am eager to contribute to its launch and long-term sustainability. If there are additional areas where our expertise and resources can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

Amber Crawford

CEO, No Mistakes Allowed LLC

[acrawford@nomistakesallowedllc.com](mailto:acrawford@nomistakesallowedllc.com)



## Attachment E Cover Page

Student Handbook and Required Forms

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

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Attachment E – Page 

Attachment E  
STILL I RISE ACADEMY  
STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK  
(Attachment E – Revised as of May 22, 2025)

## I. INTRODUCTION

Still I Rise Academy is a Tennessee public charter school committed to serving at-risk youth under the Opportunity Charter School model. This handbook outlines expectations, policies, and procedures designed to foster a supportive, inclusive, and structured learning environment that prioritizes academic achievement, safety, and social-emotional growth.

## II. SCHOOL MISSION & CULTURE

Our ME<sup>2</sup> Mission is to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate. Through the Always Aware Disciplined Student Culture (AADSC) Model, we foster respect, personal responsibility, leadership, and resilience. Daily “Empower Hour” sessions are mandatory and focus on social-emotional development, conflict resolution, and school spirit.

## III. STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

- School Hours: 9:15 AM – 4:15 PM
- Students must attend a minimum of 80% of instructional days.
- Chronic absenteeism (20% or more) will trigger a Student Attendance Support Plan.
- Parents/guardians must notify the school of absences within 24 hours.

## IV. STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students are expected to maintain respect for themselves, peers, staff, and school property. Disciplinary infractions are categorized and addressed according to our school-wide behavior matrix.

Tiered Disciplinary Actions:

- Minor Infractions (e.g., tardiness, class disruption): Restorative conference, parent call, lunch detention.
- Moderate Infractions (e.g., defiance, profanity, bullying): Behavior contract, in-school suspension, counseling referral.
- Major Infractions (e.g., weapons, threats, assault): Suspension, expulsion hearing, law enforcement involvement.

## V. DRESS CODE POLICY

All students are required to wear the school uniform unless otherwise approved. Uniform violations may result in parent contact, behavior points deduction, or disciplinary action.

## VI. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- Special Education and 504 Services are available and implemented in compliance with federal and state law.

- English Learners (ELs) receive instruction aligned to Individualized Learning Plans.
- Academic and behavioral interventions are embedded through Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>).
- Counseling services are available for trauma, behavioral, and academic support.

## VII. PARENT ENGAGEMENT

Still I Rise Academy encourages consistent parent involvement through:

- Parent-Teacher Conferences (5 per year)
- Parent University Workshops
- Attendance and academic progress monitoring
- Annual parent feedback surveys

## VIII. TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY

Students must use school technology responsibly. Misuse may result in loss of privileges and disciplinary action.

## IX. DUE PROCESS & APPEALS

All students and parents have the right to due process. A student facing suspension or expulsion will be informed of their rights and provided the opportunity to appeal to the school administration and/or Board of Directors.

## X. ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Still I Rise Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, disability, or sexual orientation. The school adheres to all federal and state civil rights laws.

## XI. COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS

Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate regularly with teachers and administrators. Formal complaints or appeals must follow the school's conflict resolution process as outlined in Section IX.

## XII. STUDENT & PARENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All students and parents must sign the acknowledgment form confirming they have received, reviewed, and agreed to follow the policies outlined in this handbook.

For additional information or assistance, please contact the school office at 901-570-3220

## Attachment F Cover Page

Student Discipline Policy

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment F - Page 

## Attachment F

Still I Rise Academy

### Attachment F – Discipline Policy

Academic Year: 2025–2026

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Still I Rise Academy is committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and academically focused environment where every student is empowered to succeed. Our discipline policy reflects a restorative, equitable, and proactive philosophy. We aim to teach accountability and responsibility rather than simply punish behavior. This policy complies with all applicable Tennessee state laws, including T.C.A. § 49-6-3401, as well as federal guidelines concerning students with disabilities.

---

## II. PHILOSOPHY OF DISCIPLINE

Still I Rise Academy implements a tiered system of discipline rooted in prevention, reflection, and redirection. We believe discipline should:

- Be instructional rather than punitive;
- Address the root cause of behavior;
- Promote self-awareness and self-control;
- Involve collaboration between students, parents, and educators;
- Be equitably applied across all subgroups, including students with disabilities and English learners.

---

## III. ALWAYS AWARE DISCIPLINED STUDENT CULTURE (AADSC)

The AADSC model is our signature approach to reducing Acts of Bad Discipline (ABD) by reinforcing positive behavior and personal responsibility.

Key components include:

- Empower Hour: Daily motivational sessions to reinforce character and behavioral expectations;
- Peer Mentorship and Reflection Circles: Encouraging self-correction and community responsibility;
- Behavior Tracking and Early Intervention: Using real-time data to proactively address challenges;
- Restorative Conversations: Opportunities for students to reflect, make amends, and grow.

---

## **IV. DISCIPLINARY CATEGORIES**

### **Category 1 – Minor Infractions**

Examples: classroom disruption, uniform violation, tardiness, unapproved cell phone use

Consequences: verbal redirection, parent contact, reflective writing assignment, or lunch detention

### **Category 2 – Moderate Infractions**

Examples: defiance, profanity, repeated Category 1 violations, minor physical contact

Consequences: behavior plan, restorative circle, after-school detention, in-school suspension (1–3 days)

### **Category 3 – Major Infractions (Discretionary Suspension/Expulsion)**

Examples: physical fights, harassment, threats, property destruction, possession of contraband

Consequences: suspension (1–10 days), behavioral hearing, re-entry plan, and possible expulsion review

### **Category 4 – Zero-Tolerance Infractions (Mandatory Suspension/Expulsion)**

Examples: weapons, illegal drugs, violent assault, sexual misconduct



Consequences: immediate removal from school, expulsion proceedings, law enforcement notification (if applicable)

---

## **V. DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES**

All students have the right to due process, including:

- Notification of the infraction and potential consequence;
  - An opportunity to explain their perspective;
  - Parent/guardian notification and involvement;
  - Appeal procedures for suspensions exceeding 10 days or expulsions, in accordance with state law.
- 

## **VI. DISCIPLINE AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Still I Rise Academy strictly complies with IDEA, Section 504, and ADA regulations:

- **Manifestation Determination Review (MDR):** Required for suspensions longer than 10 consecutive days;
  - **Alternative Services:** Educational services will be provided for students with disabilities removed for disciplinary reasons;
  - **Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP):** Will be implemented for students with recurring behaviors linked to a disability.
- 

## **VII. PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE FOR DISCIPLINE**

The Principal will be the sole administrator responsible for implementing the school's discipline policy. Their duties include:

- Enforcing the Code of Conduct fairly and consistently;

- Facilitating restorative conversations and intervention plans;
  - Collaborating with parents, staff, and counselors to support student behavior;
  - Overseeing suspension, expulsion, and re-entry processes;
  - Monitoring discipline data to identify trends and implement corrective strategies.
- 

## **VIII. COMMUNICATING DISCIPLINE POLICY TO STAKEHOLDERS**

- Student & Parent Handbook: Policy included and distributed during enrollment;
  - Family Orientation Sessions: Mandatory events prior to the school year start;
  - Ongoing Communication: Reminders via school app, Empower Hour, and newsletters;
  - Parent Workshops: Training on conflict resolution, discipline rights, and school support systems.
- 

### **Conclusion:**

Still I Rise Academy's discipline approach emphasizes structure, respect, and dignity for all students. By promoting proactive behavior strategies, engaging families, and reinforcing expectations through the AADSC framework, we will build a school culture that supports academic growth and emotional well-being.

# Attachment G Cover Page

Articles of Incorporation

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment G –  
Page





**STATE OF TENNESSEE**  
**Tre Hargett, Secretary of State**  
Division of Business Services  
William R. Snodgrass Tower  
312 Rosa L. Parks AVE, 6th FL  
Nashville, TN 37243-1102

**BRUCE DAILEY**  
TENNESSEE  
1331 BEAUTIFUL PL  
COLLIERVILLE, TN 38017

February 4, 2016

**Request Type: Certificate of Existence/Authorization**  
**Request #:** 0192405

**Issuance Date:** 02/04/2016  
**Copies Requested:** 1

**Document Receipt**

**Receipt #:** 002430350 **Filing Fee:** \$20.00  
**Payment-Credit Card - State Payment Center - CC #:** 3662817267 **\$20.00**

**Regarding:** HUMANITARIAN OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT GROUP, INC.  
**Filing Type:** Nonprofit Corporation - Domestic **Control #:** 591195  
**Formation/Qualification Date:** 11/26/2008 **Date Formed:** 11/26/2008  
**Status:** Active **Formation Locale:** TENNESSEE  
**Duration Term:** Perpetual **Inactive Date:**  
**Business County:** SHELBY COUNTY

**CERTIFICATE OF EXISTENCE**

I, Tre Hargett, Secretary of State of the State of Tennessee, do hereby certify that effective as of the issuance date noted above

**HUMANITARIAN OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT GROUP, INC.**

- \* is a Corporation duly incorporated under the law of this State with a date of incorporation and duration as given above;
- \* has paid all fees, taxes and penalties owed to this State (as reflected in the records of the Secretary of State and the Department of Revenue) which affect the existence/authorization of the business;
- \* has filed the most recent annual report required with this office;
- \* has appointed a registered agent and registered office in this State;
- \* has not filed Articles of Dissolution or Articles of Termination. A decree of judicial dissolution has not been filed.

*Tre Hargett*  
Tre Hargett  
Secretary of State

Processed By: Carl Web User

Verification #: 015954635

Phone (615) 741-6488 \* Fax (615) 741-7310 \* Website: <http://tnbear.tn.gov/>

# Attachment H Cover Page

Proof of Non-Profit and Tax-Exempt Status

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment H -  
Page



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

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: **AUG 07 2009**

HUMANITARIAN OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT  
GROUP INC  
4400 HICKORY HILL RD  
MEMPHIS, TN 38141

Employer Identification Number:  
26 3789268  
DLN:  
17053084002029  
Contact Person:  
KAREN A BATEY ID# 31641  
Contact Telephone Number:  
(877) 829-5500  
Accounting Period Ending:  
December 31  
Public Charity Status:  
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)  
Form 990 Required:  
Yes  
Effective Date of Exemption:  
November 26, 2008  
Contribution Deductibility:  
Yes  
Addendum Applies:  
No

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined that you are a public charity under the Code section(s) listed in the heading of this letter.

Please see enclosed Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization.

Letter 947 (DO/CG)

-2-

HUMANITARIAN OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT



# Attachment I Cover Page

By-laws

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment I - Page



## **BYLAWS OF HUMANITARIAN OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT GROUP**

**A Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation**

### **ARTICLE I – NAME AND PURPOSE**

#### **Section 1. Name**

The name of this corporation shall be Humanitarian Outreach Development Group, a nonprofit organization incorporated under the laws of the State of Tennessee.

#### **Section 2. Purpose**

The corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, economic, and human development purposes, as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

The mission of Humanitarian Outreach Development Group is to:

- Design and implement economic and human development programs that improve the quality of life and prosperity of individuals and families.
- Develop and provide training programs, workshops, and services to support historic restoration, cultural development, and underserved populations including but not limited to infants, children, youth, young adults, adults, seniors, and disenfranchised individuals.
- Create programs for job development, housing assistance, financial literacy, and personal economic empowerment.

- Establish medical and educational initiatives that serve communities in need.
- Develop prosperity programs, new income sources, and survival support networks to promote self-sufficiency.

The corporation shall not engage in any activity that conflicts with its nonprofit, charitable, and educational mission.

## ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1. Membership

The corporation shall have no members. All corporate powers shall be exercised by or under the authority of the Board of Directors.

## ARTICLE III – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### Section 1. General Powers

The Board of Directors shall oversee the governance, strategic direction, financial sustainability, and mission fulfillment of the organization.

### Section 2. Number and Composition

- The initial Board of Directors consisted of three (3) members upon incorporation on April 18, 2009.
- The Board may expand up to nine (9) members.

### **Section 3. Terms of Office**

- **Directors shall serve five (5) year terms.**
- **Directors may serve a maximum of five (5) consecutive terms.**
- **Board terms shall be staggered to ensure continuity of leadership.**

### **Section 4. Board Member Qualifications**

**Board members should demonstrate:**

- **A commitment to the mission and purpose of the organization.**
- **Expertise in human services, economic development, historic preservation, education, finance, legal affairs, or nonprofit management.**
- **Willingness to actively participate in board meetings, committees, and organizational initiatives.**

### **Section 5. Election of Directors**

- **New Board members shall be nominated and elected by a majority vote of the existing Board.**
- **A Nominating Committee shall identify potential candidates and present recommendations.**

### **Section 6. Board Vacancies**

- A vacancy occurring before a term expires may be filled by Board appointment until the next scheduled election.
- If the Board falls below three members, it must act immediately to fill vacancies.

## **Section 7. Board Responsibilities**

The Board of Directors shall:

- Set the strategic vision for the organization.
- Ensure compliance with all federal, state, and local laws.
- Oversee the financial management of the corporation.
- Hire, evaluate, and support the Executive Director (if applicable).
- Engage in fundraising and resource development.
- Establish policies for program implementation and community impact.

## **Section 8. Board Compensation**

- Board members shall not receive compensation for their service.
- They may be reimbursed for pre-approved expenses incurred in carrying out board duties.

## **Section 9. Resignation and Removal**

- A Director may resign at any time by submitting a written notice to the Chairperson.

- A Director may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board if they:

- Fail to attend three (3) consecutive board meetings without prior notice.
- Engage in conduct inconsistent with the mission and values of the organization.

## ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

### Section 1. Officer Positions

The officers of the corporation shall be:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer

The Board may establish additional officers as needed.

### Section 2. Duties of Officers

- Chairperson – Provides leadership, presides over meetings, and ensures board effectiveness.

- Vice Chairperson – Supports the Chairperson and assumes duties in their absence.
- Secretary – Maintains official records, meeting minutes, and organizational documents.
- Treasurer – Oversees financial policies, budget development, and fiscal accountability.

### Section 3. Election and Term of Officers

- Officers shall be elected by the Board annually.
- Officers may serve consecutive terms if re-elected.

## ARTICLE V – MEETINGS

### Section 1. Regular Meetings

- The Board shall meet at least quarterly. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

### Section 2. Special Meetings

- Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or a majority of the Board.
- Board members must be given at least 48 hours' notice of a special meeting.

### Section 3. Quorum

- A majority of Board members shall constitute a quorum to conduct business.

### Section 4. Decision-Making

- Decisions shall be made by majority vote unless otherwise specified.

### Section 5. Meeting Participation

- Board members may attend meetings in person or via teleconference/video conference.

## ARTICLE VI – COMMITTEES

### Section 1. Standing Committees

The Board may establish committees to enhance organizational effectiveness, including:

- Finance & Audit Committee – Oversees financial health, audits, and compliance.
- Programs & Community Impact Committee – Ensures mission-driven program development.
- Governance & Nominating Committee – Recruits new board members and oversees training.



## **Section 2. Committee Appointments**

- Committees shall be chaired by a Board member but may include non-board community members.

## **ARTICLE VII – FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

### **Section 1. Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year shall run from January 1 to December 31.

### **Section 2. Financial Oversight**

- An annual budget shall be approved by the Board.
- The Board shall ensure accurate financial reporting and compliance with IRS regulations.
- Funds shall be used exclusively for nonprofit purposes.

### **Section 3. Contracts and Expenditures**

- The Board must approve major financial decisions and contracts.

## **ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS**

- These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board at any regular or special meeting, provided that the proposed changes were circulated at least ten (10) days in advance.

## **ARTICLE IX – DISSOLUTION**

- In the event of dissolution, assets shall be distributed to another 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that aligns with the mission of economic and human development. No part of the organization's assets shall benefit board members or private individuals.

#### ARTICLE X – COMPLIANCE & RECORDS

- The organization shall comply with all:
- Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act requirements.
- IRS 501(c)(3) regulations.
- Annual reporting and tax filings.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON: April 18, 2024

Chairperson Signature: Miguel

Secretary Signature: Julia

# Attachment J Cover Page

## Board Member Code of Conduct

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment J - Page

## **Board Member Code of Conduct**

### **Humanitarian Outreach Development Group**

#### **I. Introduction**

The Board of Directors of the Humanitarian Outreach Development Group is entrusted with ensuring the integrity, transparency, and ethical governance of the organization. Board members are expected to act in the best interests of the organization and the communities it serves. This Board Member Code of Conduct outlines the ethical standards, responsibilities, and expectations for all Board members.

#### **II. Commitment to the Mission and Purpose**

1. Board members shall demonstrate unwavering commitment to the mission, vision, and objectives of the Humanitarian Outreach Development Group.
2. Members will actively support programs, initiatives, and strategic goals that enhance the organization's impact on the community.
3. Board members will serve as ambassadors of the organization, advocating for its mission and ensuring its sustainability.

#### **III. Integrity, Ethics, and Transparency**

1. Board members must adhere to the highest standards of honesty, integrity, and accountability.

2. Members shall avoid conflicts of interest and disclose any personal, professional, or financial interests that could influence their decisions.

3. Board members must uphold confidentiality and avoid sharing privileged information acquired in Board meetings or through their service.

4. Members must ensure that their actions, decisions, and interactions align with ethical nonprofit governance practices.

#### **IV. Responsibilities and Professionalism**

1. Board members are expected to actively participate in Board meetings, committee assignments, and organizational events.

2. Members must be prepared for meetings by reviewing materials in advance and engaging in informed discussions.

3. Board members will treat fellow members, staff, and community stakeholders with professionalism, dignity, and respect.

4. Harassment, discrimination, or any form of unprofessional conduct is strictly prohibited.

#### **V. Attendance and Participation**

1. Board members are expected to attend at least 75% of scheduled Board meetings annually.

2. Members who are unable to attend a meeting must notify the Chairperson in advance and review meeting minutes to stay informed.

3. Repeated unexcused absences may result in removal from the Board, subject to a vote by the Board of Directors.

#### **VI. Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality**

1. Board members must disclose any financial, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that may affect their ability to make unbiased decisions.

2. Members shall not use their position to gain financial or personal advantage for themselves or their affiliates.

3. Board discussions, financial records, personnel matters, and other sensitive information must remain confidential unless legally required to be disclosed.

#### **VII. Fiduciary and Financial Responsibility**

1. Board members shall oversee the organization's finances responsibly and ensure fiscal sustainability.

2. Members must act in good faith to ensure funds are used efficiently, legally, and in alignment with the organization's mission.

3. Board members shall review financial reports, budgets, and audits to ensure transparency and accountability.

#### **VIII. Support of Board Decisions**

1. Once the Board votes on an issue, all members must support and uphold the final decision, regardless of individual opinions.

2. Members shall not publicly undermine Board decisions or engage in actions that could damage the organization's reputation.

#### **IX. Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

1. Board members must participate in annual Board training as required by the State of Tennessee and approved by the State Board of Education.

2. Members will engage in ongoing professional development to strengthen their governance skills and nonprofit leadership abilities.

#### **X. Handling Complaints and Disciplinary Action**

1. Complaints regarding Board member misconduct or violations of this Code shall be addressed by the Governance Committee or full Board.

2. The Board may issue warnings, suspensions, or removal for members found to have violated this Code, subject to a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote.

#### **XI. Resignation and Removal**

1. A Board member may resign at any time by submitting a written notice to the Board Chairperson.

2. A member may be removed by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote if they:

- Fail to fulfill their responsibilities as outlined in this Code.



- Engage in misconduct that harms the organization's reputation or effectiveness.
- Miss more than three (3) consecutive Board meetings without reasonable cause.

# Attachment K Cover Page

Conflict of Interest Policy

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment K – Page

## **Conflict of Interest Policy**

### **Humanitarian Outreach Development Group**

#### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this Conflict of Interest Policy is to protect the integrity of Humanitarian Outreach Development Group (HODG) by ensuring that decisions made by its Board of Directors, officers, employees, and key stakeholders are free from undue personal, professional, or financial influence. This policy ensures that the organization remains compliant with Tennessee state law and IRS regulations governing nonprofit organizations.

This policy provides a transparent framework for identifying, disclosing, and managing conflicts of interest that may arise in the course of conducting HODG's business.

#### **II. Definition of Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest occurs when a Board member, officer, key employee, or related party has a direct or indirect financial, professional, or personal interest in any transaction, contract, or decision involving Humanitarian Outreach Development Group.

A financial interest includes, but is not limited to, situations where an individual:

1. Has an ownership interest, compensation arrangement, or financial stake in an entity doing business with HODG.

2. **Receives gifts, favors, or benefits from organizations or individuals seeking to do business with HODG.**
3. **Serves as an officer, director, employee, or contractor of another organization that competes with or collaborates with HODG.**
4. **Has a close family member (spouse, child, parent, sibling, in-law, domestic partner) with a financial interest in a transaction involving HODG.**

**A non-financial conflict of interest may arise when:**

1. **A Board member's personal beliefs, affiliations, or loyalties unduly influence their decision-making responsibilities.**
2. **An individual's relationship with an outside organization, vendor, or funding entity affects their impartiality in fulfilling their duties.**

### **III. Duty to Disclose**

1. **Annual Disclosure – Each Board member, officer, and key employee shall complete and sign a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form annually, affirming they have reviewed this policy and disclosed any potential conflicts.**
2. **Ongoing Disclosure – If a conflict arises during the year, the individual must immediately disclose it to the Board Chairperson or Governance Committee.**
3. **Full Disclosure Required – Disclosures must include:**
  - **The nature of the conflict.**

- The individual or entity involved.
- The potential impact on decision-making.

#### **IV. Procedures for Addressing Conflicts of Interest**

##### **1. Review of Disclosure**

- The Board Chairperson and/or Governance Committee shall review all conflict disclosures and determine whether a conflict exists.

##### **2. Recusal from Decision-Making**

- If a conflict exists, the individual must recuse themselves from all discussions, deliberations, and votes related to the matter.
- The individual may be asked to leave the meeting during deliberations if deemed necessary.

##### **3. Board Action**

- If the Board determines that a transaction or relationship involving a conflict is fair, reasonable, and in the best interest of the organization, it may proceed only if approved by a majority of disinterested Board members.
- Alternatives must be considered before proceeding with the transaction.

##### **4. Documentation in Meeting Minutes**

- The nature of the conflict, the discussion surrounding it, and the Board's final decision must be recorded in the official meeting minutes.

#### **V. Violations of the Policy**

1. If a Board member or employee fails to disclose a conflict of interest, appropriate disciplinary action may be taken, including:

- A formal warning.
- Suspension from Board activities.
- Removal from the Board by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote if the conflict results in significant harm to the organization.

2. If an undisclosed conflict is discovered, the Governance Committee shall investigate and recommend corrective action.

#### **VI. Conflicts Involving Financial Transactions**

For financial transactions where a conflict is identified, the organization must:

1. Verify that the transaction is in the organization's best interest and follows fair market value.
2. Seek competitive bids or alternative options whenever feasible.
3. Ensure that no personal benefit is derived at the expense of the organization.

## **VII. Recordkeeping and Compliance**

### **1. Retention of Records**

- All disclosure forms, Board minutes, and conflict resolutions shall be kept on file for legal and compliance purposes.

### **2. Annual Policy Review**

- This policy shall be reviewed and reaffirmed annually by the Board of Directors.



# Attachment L Cover Page

Board Member Resumes or Biographies

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment L – Page

## **Board Member Biographies**

### **Still I Rise Academy**

#### **Dr. Daalon Echoles, M.D. – Neurosurgeon**

Dr. Daalon Echoles is a highly respected neurosurgeon with over 25 years of experience. A graduate of Princeton University and a proud product of East High School in Memphis, Dr. Echoles grew up in the high-risk community of Orange Mound. His journey from an at-risk background to a distinguished career in medicine serves as inspiration for students. His expertise in cognitive development, neuroeducation, and STEM mentorship strengthens the academy's commitment to academic excellence and resilience.

#### **Dr. Kendrick Boyce, M.D. – Medical Doctor**

Dr. Kendrick Boyce is a practicing medical doctor and proud graduate of Memphis City Schools (East High School, Class of 1989). With a passion for community health and student wellness, Dr. Boyce ensures that health policies, medical services, and student wellness initiatives align with best practices. His firsthand experience growing up in Memphis allows him to connect with and mentor students, emphasizing health equity and academic success.

#### **Corelatta Cromer, LMSW – Licensed Master Social Worker**

With over 20 years of experience in the social work field, Corelatta Cromer is a dedicated advocate for student mental health, social-emotional learning (SEL), and family support services. Her expertise in trauma-informed care, counseling, and intervention programs ensures that Still I Rise Academy provides wraparound support to students facing adversity. She plays a crucial role in building a school culture that prioritizes well-being and resilience.

#### **Isaac Scott – Engineer**

Isaac Scott is a highly accomplished engineer with over 25 years of experience in structural design, systems optimization, and operational efficiency. A Summa Cum Laude college graduate, he has excelled in problem-solving and innovation, ensuring strong STEM curriculum development and technology integration at Still I Rise Academy. His leadership supports the school's infrastructure planning and long-term operational success.

#### **Annie Miller – Retired Educator**

Annie Miller brings 30 years of experience in education, specializing in curriculum development, student engagement, and teacher mentorship. As a retired teacher from Memphis Shelby County Schools, she has dedicated her career to ensuring student success and supporting at-risk youth. Her expertise in instructional best practices and academic intervention strategies plays a key role in shaping Still I Rise Academy's student-centered approach to learning.

#### **Alysse Adams – Educator, Memphis-Shelby County Schools**

**Alysse Adams has been an educator in Memphis-Shelby County Schools specializing in teaching and mentoring at-risk youth. With a deep understanding of urban education challenges, she plays a key role in developing culturally responsive teaching practices, intervention programs, and student engagement strategies. Her experience ensures that Still I Rise Academy remains a supportive and high-achieving school for all students.**

**Monique Wade – Postsecondary Academic Affairs Administrator & Litigation Support Specialist**

**Monique Wade brings over 20 years of experience in higher education administration, compliance, and legal oversight. As an administrator with Concord Career College and William & Johnson Career College, she specializes in ensuring compliance with education laws, legal risk management, and postsecondary academic affairs. Her expertise strengthens dual enrollment programs, career readiness initiatives, and college pathways for Still I Rise Academy students.**

**Christopher Dailey – Lead Airplane Mechanic, Federal Express**

**With over 10 years of experience as a Lead Aircraft Mechanic at FedEx, Christopher Dailey brings a strong technical education and workforce development perspective to the board. His expertise in aviation mechanics, engineering principles, and hands-on skills training helps Still I Rise Academy develop industry-aligned Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs. His leadership supports students in exploring STEM, trade skills, and technical certifications.**

## **Senteria Johnson – Executive Administrator & Parent Advocate**

As an Executive Administrator and single mother, Senteria Johnson provides a firsthand perspective on the needs of families, single parents, and young mothers which is major population Still I Rise Academy will target. A strong advocate for parental engagement, she leads initiatives that connect families with school resources, student mentorship programs, and social services. Her expertise in community outreach makes her a vital voice in ensuring that all students have the support they need to succeed.

## **Conclusion**

The Board of Directors of Still I Rise Academy brings a powerful blend of educational, medical, legal, social work, engineering, technical, and community expertise. Together, they are committed to ensuring that every student at Still I Rise Academy has the opportunity to rise above challenges and achieve their highest potential.

# Attachment M Cover Page

## Board Policies

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment M – Page

## **Attachment M: Board Policies**

### **Humanitarian Outreach Development Group**

#### **I. Purpose and Scope**

The Board Policies of the Humanitarian Outreach Development Group (HODG) are established to ensure transparent governance, compliance with Tennessee state laws, and the efficient operation of the organization. These policies define the frequency of meetings, public access to meetings, and open records policies, ensuring accountability and adherence to best practices in nonprofit governance.

#### **II. Board Meetings**

##### **A. Frequency of Meetings**

1. The Board of Directors shall meet a minimum of four (4) times per year (quarterly).
2. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed at the discretion of the Board Chairperson or upon request by at least one-third (1/3) of Board members.
3. The annual schedule of meetings shall be published at the beginning of each fiscal year.

##### **B. Notice of Meetings**

1. Regular Board meetings shall require at least seven (7) days' written notice to all Board members.



2. Special meetings may be called with at least 48 hours' notice, specifying the purpose of the meeting.

3. Meeting notices will be sent via email and/or posted on the organization's official website, if applicable.

#### **C. Quorum Requirements**

1. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the currently seated Board members.

2. No official Board business shall be conducted without a quorum present.

3. In the absence of a quorum, meetings may proceed for discussion purposes, but no binding votes may be taken.

#### **D. Meeting Format**

1. Meetings may be held in person, via video conference, or teleconference as long as all members can participate fully.

2. Meeting minutes shall be recorded for all Board meetings and maintained as part of the organization's official records.

### **III. Open Meetings Policy**

#### **A. Compliance with Open Meetings Requirements**

1. The Humanitarian Outreach Development Group is committed to transparency and will conduct Board meetings in compliance with Tennessee's Open Meetings Act, where applicable.

2. Board meetings shall be open to the public unless a closed session is required for matters involving:

- Legal or personnel issues
- Confidential financial matters
- Other matters protected by privacy laws

#### **B. Public Participation**

1. Members of the public and stakeholders may attend open meetings.
2. A public comment period may be included in the agenda at the discretion of the Board.
3. The Board Chairperson may establish guidelines for public participation, including time limits and procedures for submitting comments.

#### **C. Closed Sessions**

1. The Board may enter closed (executive) session for discussions requiring confidentiality, including:
  - Legal consultations

- Personnel matters
- Contract negotiations

2. Any actions taken in a closed session shall be reported in the minutes of the next open meeting, when appropriate.

#### IV. Open Records Policy

##### A. Compliance with Open Records Laws

1. The organization shall comply with Tennessee's Public Records Act (T.C.A. § 10-7-503 et seq.), providing public access to records unless legally exempt.

2. Records available to the public may include:

- Board meeting minutes
- Financial reports and tax filings (IRS Form 990)
- Organizational policies
- Annual reports

##### B. Requests for Records

1. Requests for records must be submitted in writing to the Board Secretary or designated records officer.

2. The organization shall respond to requests within seven (7) business days, in accordance with state law.

# Attachment N Cover Page

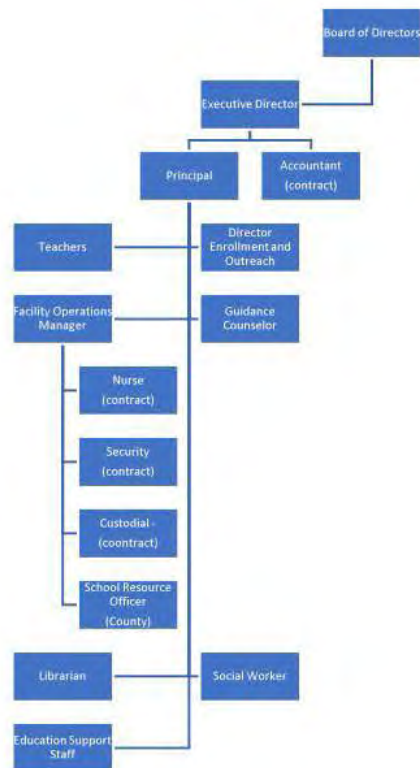
## Organizational Chart: Year 1

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment N -  
Page



## STILL I RISE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART YEAR 1



# Attachment O Cover Page

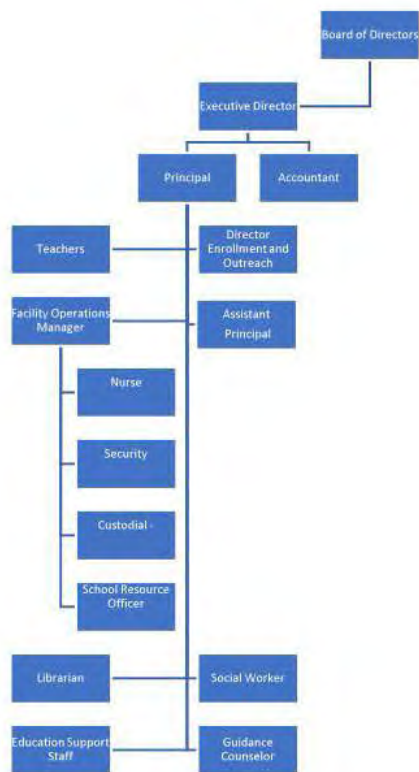
## Organizational Chart: Full Capacity

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment O –  
Page



STILL I RISE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART YEAR 5-10





# Attachment P Cover Page

School Leader Resume *(if hired)*

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment P - Page

## Attachment P – Anticipated Principal Qualifications Resume

Still I Rise Academy

Position Title: Principal

Location: Memphis, TN

Projected Start Date: January 2026 (Pre-Opening Leadership Phase)

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### Position Overview:

Still I Rise Academy seeks to hire a mission-driven, student-centered, and equity-focused Principal who will serve as the academic and operational leader of our 6–12 Opportunity Charter School. The Principal will drive academic excellence, instructional quality, student support, and a trauma-informed, relationship-centered school culture that reflects the unique needs of at-risk youth in Memphis and Shelby County.

The school will serve students who are overage and under-credited, previously expelled, parenting, housing-insecure, or have experienced chronic absenteeism or other barriers to traditional schooling. The Principal will be responsible for implementing and continuously improving an educational program that motivates, educates, and elevates students in alignment with Still I Rise Academy's ME<sup>2</sup> Mission.

---

### Required Qualifications:

- Minimum of 3 years experience in school leadership, preferably as a principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, or academic coordinator in a public, charter, or alternative school setting.
- Tennessee Principal Licensure or eligibility to obtain licensure before the start of the 2026–2027 school year.
- Demonstrated success in improving academic achievement for underserved populations, especially students who are at-risk, economically disadvantaged, chronically absent, or previously disengaged.
- Experience leading or supporting school-wide Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI<sup>2</sup>), Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), or similar academic and behavioral

frameworks.

- Strong instructional leadership skills, with evidence of implementing data-driven teaching practices that close achievement gaps.

---

Preferred Qualifications:

- Experience working in or leading programs serving opportunity youth, including previously incarcerated, parenting, or homeless students.
- Familiarity with Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSO), Work-Based Learning (WBL), and credit recovery pathways for grades 9–12.
- Experience supervising staff, leading professional learning communities, and cultivating a culture of teacher development and retention.
- Knowledge of Tennessee academic standards, state accountability frameworks, charter school authorizer expectations, and special education compliance.
- Strong organizational, interpersonal, and communication skills needed to engage diverse stakeholders including families, community organizations, and staff.

---

Key Responsibilities:

- Lead the implementation and ongoing development of an instructional vision aligned with Tennessee standards, the school's ME<sup>2</sup> mission, and the specific needs of opportunity youth.
- Build a high-performing academic program that includes tiered interventions, trauma-informed care, dual enrollment, CTE programming, and project-based learning.
- Ensure the school meets or exceeds all academic, organizational, and operational performance metrics outlined by the Tennessee Department of Education and charter authorizer.
- Recruit, evaluate, and develop faculty and staff committed to the school's mission and instructional approach.

- Partner with families, social service agencies, and community-based organizations to deliver wraparound support services to students.
- Foster a school culture centered on motivation, equity, and restoration that prepares students for postsecondary success.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies at the local, state, and federal level.

---

#### Commitment to Mission and Vision:

The Principal will be expected to lead by example in advancing Still I Rise Academy's ME<sup>2</sup> mission—to Motivate, Educate, and Elevate at-risk students through a holistic, community-centered approach. In accordance with Tennessee State Board of Education Quality Authorizing Standard Principle 3 #1, the Principal's actions will prioritize the well-being and interests of students above all else, ensuring that every learner has access to a safe, affirming, and high-quality educational environment.

# Attachment Q Cover Page

Insurance Coverage

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment Q –  
Page





8295 Tournament Dr., Ste 150  
Memphis, TN 38125  
(901)203-2630  
[Insurewithp3.com](http://Insurewithp3.com)

**To Whom It May Concern,**

P3 Insurance Solutions confirms its intent to provide full insurance coverage for *Still I Rise Academy*, pending charter approval and underwriting.

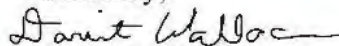
Coverage will include:

- General Liability
- Workers' Compensation
- Sexual Misconduct & Molestation
- Educators Legal Liability
- Surety Bond
- Property & Equipment
- Athletic Liability (if applicable)
- Cyber & Auto Liability (if applicable)

We will notify the TN Department of Education of any changes per state requirements.

We're proud to support *Still I Rise Academy*. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

  
Dariet Wallace

# Attachment R Cover Page

## CMO Agreement

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 6

Attachment R – Page



# Attachment S Cover Page

## Network Annual Progress Report

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 1

Attachment S - Page

# Attachment T Cover Page

## Organizational Chart: Year 1

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 3

Attachment T - Page

# Attachment U Cover Page

## Organizational Chart: Year 5

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 3

Attachment U -  
Page



# Attachment V Cover Page

Previously Approved and Authorized Application for  
School Being Replicated

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 4

Attachment V - Page

# Attachment W Cover Page

## Operating Budget Template

### REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

**NOTE: Sponsors must submit the completed Operating Budget Template as a separate document.**

## Charter School Creation Application Operating Budget Template

### Directions

Sponsors are required to complete this Operating Budget Template and submit the completed Excel document as Attachment W when submitting their Charter School Creation Application. This template is available on the Tennessee Department of Education's charter schools webpage. This operating budget should include detailed data on anticipated revenues, expenditures, student enrollment, and staffing assumptions.

Sponsors must complete all sheets in the Operating Budget template by entering budget information into the specified editable cells. The colored key below explains the colors used.



Input information into light grey cells



Input assumption information or notes into teal cells



Provides heading for specific tab or section of tab



Provides additional information or instruction for specific tab or section of tab



Cells with red comment tag include additional guidance and instruction

## Still I Rise Charter School

### Charter School Creation Application Operating Budget Template

#### Proposed School Information

Proposed School Name	Still I Rise Charter School
Lead Sponsor Name	Humanitarian Outreach Development Group
Lead Sponsor E-mail Address	<a href="mailto:hodgdevelopmentgroup@gmail.com">hodgdevelopmentgroup@gmail.com</a>
Lead Sponsor Phone Number	901-254-9238
CMO/EMO Affiliation	

Proposed Authorizer	Memphis-Shelby County Schools
Geographic District*	Memphis-Shelby County Schools
Proposed Opening Grade Level(s)	6th Grade
Proposed Final Grade Level(s)	12th
Proposed First Year of Operations	2026-27

*\*"Geographic District" means the school district that serves the geographic location in which the proposed charter school will operate.*



# Student & Staff Counts

## Student Enrollment Summary

	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
Pre-Kindergarten *	0	0	0	0	0
Kindergarten	0	0	0	0	0
1st Grade	0	0	0	0	0
2nd Grade	0	0	0	0	0
3rd Grade	0	0	0	0	0
4th Grade	0	0	0	0	0
5th Grade	0	0	0	0	0
6th Grade	30	45	55	60	60
7th Grade	20	40	50	60	80
8th Grade	20	40	50	60	80
9th Grade	20	35	45	55	70
10th Grade	20	35	45	55	70
11th Grade	20	30	35	50	55
12th Grade	20	25	35	50	55
<b>Total Enrollment</b> (excluding Pre-Kindergarten)	150	250	315	390	500
<b>Change in Net Enrollment</b>	150	100	65	75	110

\*Pre-K funding is not included in the State and Local funding in this budget template, and Pre-K enrollment is excluded from the Total Enrollment student counts. If the school serves Pre-K students, funders must indicate the funding used to do so on the "3 Revenues" sheet and include related costs on the "4 Expenditures" sheet within this template.

## Staff FTE Counts\*\*

Object Code and Line-Item Description	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
104 - Principals	1	1	1	1	1	1
105 - Supervisor / Director	1	1	1	1	1	1
113 - Internal Audit Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
114 - Teachers - Classroom Teachers (core subjects)	0	0	0	0	0	0
116 - Teachers - Classroom Teachers (electives, world languages)	0	0	0	0	0	0
116 - Teachers - Special Education Teachers	0	1	1	1	2	2
116 - Teachers - English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers	0	1	1	1	2	2
116 - Teachers - Other Teachers (must add assumption roles)	0	0	0	0	0	0
116 - Teachers	0	8	14	17	19	25
118 - Secretary to Board	0	0	0	0	0	0
119 - Accountants/Bookkeepers	0	1	1	1	1	1
120 - Computer Programmers	0	0	0	0	0	0
121 - Data Processing Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
122 - Purchasing Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
123 - Guidance Personnel	0	1	1	1	2	2
124 - Psychological Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
128 - Homelbound Teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0
129 - Librarians	0	1	1	1	1	1
130 - Social Workers	0	1	1	1	1	2
131 - Medical Personnel	0	1	1	1	1	1
132 - Material Supervisors	0	0	0	0	0	0
134 - Assessment Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
134 - Assessment Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
137 - Education Media Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
138 - Instructional Computer Personnel	0	0	0	1	1	1
139 - Assistant Principals	0	0	0	1	1	1
142 - Mechanics	0	0	0	0	0	0
146 - Bus Drivers	0	0	0	0	0	0
160 - Guards	0	2	2	3	3	3
161 - Secretaries	0	1	1	1	1	2
162 - Clerical Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
163 - Educational Assistants	0	0	0	0	0	0
164 - Attendants	0	3	3	3	5	5
165 - Cafeteria Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
166 - Custodial Personnel	0	2	2	3	3	3
167 - Maintenance Personnel	0	0	0	1	1	1
169 - Parkline Personnel	0	0	0	0	0	0
170 - School Resource Officer	0	1	1	1	1	1
171 - Speech Pathologist	0	0	0	0	0	0
180 - Other Salaries & Wages	2	4	4	6	6	6
195 - Certified Substitute Teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0
198 - Non-certified Substitute Teachers	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>59</b>

\*\*Schools that serve Pre-K students should include Pre-K staff in the provided staff counts within this section.

\*\*All positions are not required and/or may not apply to a charter school.

## Revenue Assumptions

**Directions:** This sheet allows sponsors to provide the proposed authorizer with an overview of any assumed revenue streams. This sheet includes a pre-populated average per-student state and local fund revenue amount. The average per-student amount is based off the geographic LEA's most recently approved final expenditure report and is populated in this sheet based on the sponsor's chosen "Geographic District" on the "Proposed School Information" sheet.

Sponsors must enter the amount of cash on hand/in bank within the "Beginning Cash Balance" section. Additionally, sponsors must enter any revenue from other sources including, but not limited to, grants, fundraising, and philanthropy. Assumption notes should clearly explain details related to any revenue sources that the sponsor adds to this sheet. When listing revenues, sponsors do not need to include any projected federal passthrough revenues (e.g., Title I, Title II, etc.).

**Average Per-Student State and Local Funds Revenue for the Selected Geographic LEA: \$12,330.84**

Beginning Cash Balance	Year 0 2025-26
Cash on hand/in bank	\$ -

State & Local Revenues	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
Average Per-Student State and Local Funds	<del>XXXXXXXXXX</del>	\$ 1,849,625.84	\$ 3,082,709.74	\$ 3,884,214.27	\$ 4,809,027.19	\$ 6,165,419.47

Grants / Fundraising / Philanthropy etc.	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31	Status of Funding	Assumption Notes
insert revenue source (remove this text if needed)	\$ -	\$ 225,000.00	\$ 375,000.00	\$ 472,500.00	\$ 585,000.00	\$ 750,000.00	In-planning	Federal Title I
insert revenue source (remove this text if needed)	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 12,600.00	\$ 15,600.00	\$ 20,000.00	In-planning	IDEA funding - assume 10% of population
insert revenue source (remove this text if needed)	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	In-planning	Private foundation grants and fundraising
insert revenue source (remove this text if needed)	\$ 750,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	In-planning	Contingent on us receiving the charter school
insert revenue source (remove this text if needed)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	In-planning	
insert revenue source (remove this text if needed)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	In-process	
insert revenue source (remove this text if needed)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
insert revenue source (remove this text if needed)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 281,000.00	\$ 435,000.00	\$ 535,100.00	\$ 650,600.00	\$ 820,000.00		

	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS</b>	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 2,130,625.84	\$ 3,517,709.74	\$ 4,419,314.27	\$ 5,459,627.19	\$ 6,985,419.47



## Expenditure Assumptions

Directions: This sheet allows sponsors to summarize planned expenses using the object codes and line items from Tennessee's standardized chart of accounts. Sponsors must enter all relevant expense amounts for the pre-opening year (year 0) through the fifth year of operation and include notes for any items requiring further explanation or that are unique to the school's model.

This template is not the actual budget but a summary to demonstrate readiness to operate a charter school. Sponsors should align their budget assumptions to specific object codes as outlined within the Tennessee Department of Education's Standardized System of Accounting and Reporting Guidance Document. When an item spans multiple functions, sponsors must list all applicable functions within the "Applicable Function Codes/Assumption Notes" column.

Access the Standardized System of Accounting and Reporting Guidance Document here: <https://eplan.tn.gov/DocumentLibrary/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentKey=2061546&inline=true>

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31	Applicable Function Codes/Assumption Notes
<b>1. Personal Services</b>							
<b>EXAMPLE: 116 Teachers</b>	\$ -	\$ 251,566.00	\$ 375,896.00	\$ 450,356.00	\$ 651,232.00	\$ 750,155.00	71100, 71200, 71300, 73400
104 Principal(s)	\$ 47,500.00	\$ 95,000.00	\$ 97,850.00	\$ 100,785.50	\$ 103,809.00	\$ 106,923.33	
105 Supervisor / Director	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 103,000.00	\$ 106,090.00	\$ 109,272.70	\$ 112,550.88	
113 Internal Audit Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
116 Teachers	\$ -	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 824,000.00	\$ 1,007,855.00	\$ 1,147,363.00	\$ 1,491,617.16	
118 Secretary to Board	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
119 Accountants/Bookkeepers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 51,500.00	\$ 53,045.00	This will be a contract position for years 3-year2
120 Computer Programmer(s)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	This will be a contract position
121 Data Processing Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
122 Purchasing Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
123 Guidance Personnel	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 51,500.00	\$ 53,045.00	\$ 109,272.70	\$ 112,550.88	Only one will be hired until year 3 and 2 in year 4 and 5
124 Psychological Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
128 Homebound Teachers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
129 Librarian(s)	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 41,200.00	\$ 42,436.00	\$ 43,709.00	\$ 45,020.35	
130 Social Workers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 61,800.00	\$ 127,308.00	This will be contract position up year 2 - will be 2 positions in year
131 Medical Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 61,800.00	\$ 63,654.00	This will be contract position up to year 3
132 Material Supervisor(s)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
135 Assessment Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
136 Audiovisual Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
137 Education Media Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
138 Instructional Computer Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 51,500.00	\$ 53,045.00	This will be contract position up to year 3
139 Assistant Principal(s)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 82,400.00	\$ 84,872.00	Due to student growth an assistant principal will be hired in 3 if ta
142 Mechanic(s)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
146 Bus Drivers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
160 Guards	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 123,600.00	\$ 127,308.00	This will be paid through a contract up to year 2
161 Secretary(s)	\$ -	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 36,050.00	\$ 37,131.50	\$ 38,245.00	\$ 78,020.70	We will have one secretary up to year 4 and 2 in year 5
163 Educational Assistants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
164 Attendants	\$ -	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 92,700.00	\$ 95,481.00	\$ 163,909.00	\$ 168,826.32	This includes Support Staff such as Aides Hall Monitor Attendance
165 Cafeteria Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
166 Custodial Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 92,700.00	\$ 95,481.00	This will be paid through a contract up to year 2
167 Maintenance Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 41,200.00	\$ 42,436.00	This will be paid through a contract up to year 2
169 Part-time Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
170 School Resource Officer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	This individual will be on staff but not paid by HODG budget funds
171 Speech Pathologist	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
189 Other Salaries & Wages	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 185,400.00	\$ 190,962.00	\$ 196,691.00	\$ 202,591.59	This includes the Director of Enrollment and Outreach RTI Interv
195 Certified Substitute Teachers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
196 In-Service Training	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
198 Non-certified Substitute Teachers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 137,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,090,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,431,700.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,183,786.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,478,771.40</b>	<b>\$ 2,965,250.21</b>	

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31	Applicable Function Codes/Assumption Notes
<b>2. Employee Benefits</b>							
201 Social Security	\$ -	\$ 36,890.00	\$ 88,765.40	\$ 135,394.73	\$ 153,683.83	\$ 183,845.51	Employee benefits will not be paid in year 0 and only the teachers
204 Pensions	\$ -	\$ 40,162.50	\$ 96,639.75	\$ 147,405.56	\$ 167,317.07	\$ 200,154.39	

206 Life Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
207 Medical Insurance	\$ -	\$ 59,500.00	\$ 143,170.00	\$ 218,378.60	\$ 247,877.14	\$ 296,525.02	
208 Dental Insurance	\$ -	\$ 2,975.00	\$ 7,158.50	\$ 10,918.93	\$ 12,393.86	\$ 14,826.25	
210 Unemployment Compensation	\$ -	\$ 595.00	\$ 1,431.70	\$ 2,183.79	\$ 2,478.77	\$ 2,965.25	
211 Local Retirement	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
212 Employer Medicare	\$ -	\$ 8,627.50	\$ 20,759.65	\$ 31,664.90	\$ 35,942.19	\$ 42,996.13	
215 On-behalf Payments to OPEB	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
217 Retirement Hybrid Stabilization	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 148,750.00</b>	<b>\$ 357,925.00</b>	<b>\$ 545,946.50</b>	<b>\$ 619,692.85</b>	<b>\$ 741,312.55</b>	

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31	Applicable Function Codes/Assumption Notes
<b>3. Contracted Services</b>							
302 Advertising	\$ 56,250.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	
304 Architects	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
305 Audit Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
307 Communication	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
308 Consultants	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	\$ 250,000.00	Behavior Specialists
309 Contracts With Government Agencies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
310 Contracts With Other Public Agencies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
311 Contracts With Other School Systems	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
312 Contracts With Private Agencies	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 280,000.00	\$ 350,000.00	\$ 420,000.00	\$ 500,000.00	\$ 550,000.00	WBL Coordinator
313 Contracts With Parents	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
314 Contracts With Public Carriers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
315 Contracts With Vehicle Owners	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
317 Data Processing Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
320 Dues & Memberships	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
321 Engineering Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
322 Evaluation & Testing	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
328 Janitorial Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
329 Laundry Service	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
330 Lease/SBITA Payments	\$ 135,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 100,000.00	
331 Legal Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
335 Maintenance & Repair Services Building	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
336 Maintenance & Repair Services Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
338 Maintenance & Repair Services Vehicles	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
340 Medical and Dental Services	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
342 Payments to Schools-Breakfast	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
343 Payments to Schools-Lunch	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
344 Payments to Schools-Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
345 Payments to Schools-Other USDA	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
348 Postal Charges	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
350 Internet Connectivity	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
351 Rentals	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
354 Transportation Other Than Students	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
355 Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
356 Tuition	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
359 Disposal Fees	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
367 Maintenance & Repair Services Records	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
369 Contracts for Substitute Teachers Certified	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
370 Contracts for Substitute Teachers Non-certified	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
399 Other Contracted Services	\$ 52,500.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 200,000.00	Includes Community Engagement Officers
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 266,250.00</b>	<b>\$ 530,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 705,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 860,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,025,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,150,000.00</b>	

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31	Applicable Function Codes/Assumption Notes
<b>4. Supplies and Materials</b>							
410 Custodial Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
411 Data Processing Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
412 Diesel Fuel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
413 Drugs & Medical Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
415 Electricity	\$ -	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	\$ 80,000.00	
418 Equipment & Machinery Parts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	



422 Food Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
423 Fuel Oil	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
424 Garage Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
425 Gasoline	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
426 General Construction Materials	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
429 Instructional Supplies & Materials	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 70,000.00	
430 Textbooks Electronic	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
432 Library Books/Media	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
433 Lubricants	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
434 Natural Gas	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
435 Office Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
437 Periodicals	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
448 T & I Construction Materials	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
449 Textbooks Bound	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
451 Uniforms	\$ -	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	
453 Vehicle Parts	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
454 Water & Sewer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
470 Cabling	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
471 Software	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
499 Other Supplies and Materials	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 22,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 90,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 120,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 150,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 180,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 210,000.00</b>	

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31	Applicable Function Codes/Assumption Notes
<b>5. Other Charges</b>							
501 Boiler Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
502 Building & Content Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
504 Indirect Cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
505 Judgments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
506 Liability Insurance	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	
508 Premium on Corporate Surety Bonds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
509 Refunds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
510 Trustee's Commission	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
511 Vehicle and Equipment Insurance	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
513 Workers Compensation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
524 In-Service / Staff Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
533 Criminal Investigation of Applicants TBI	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
534 Refund to Applicant for Criminal Investigation	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
535 Fee Waivers	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
590 Transfers Out	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
595 TISA On-behalf Payments	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
599 Other Charges	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 6,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 8,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 9,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 10,000.00</b>	

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31	Applicable Function Codes/Assumption Notes
<b>6. Debt Service</b>							
601 Principal on Bonds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
602 Principal on Notes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
603 Interest on Bonds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
604 Interest on Notes	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
610 Principal on Leases	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
611 Interest on Leases	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
612 Principal on Other Loans Payable	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
613 Interest on Other Loans Payable	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
620 Debt Service Contribution to Primary Government	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
699 Other Debt Service	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31	Applicable Function Codes/Assumption Notes
<b>7. Capital Outlay</b>							

701 Administration Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
704 Attendance Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
707 Building Improvements	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
709 Data Processing Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
710 Food Service Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
711 Furniture & Fixtures	\$ 82,500.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 105,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 125,000.00	
715 Land	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
717 Maintenance Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
720 Plant Operation Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
722 Regular Instruction Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
724 Site Development	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
725 Special Education Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
729 Transportation Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
735 Health Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
790 Other Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
799 Other Capital Outlay	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 82,500.00</b>	<b>\$ 100,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 105,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 110,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 120,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 125,000.00</b>	

	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 508,750.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,964,750.00</b>	<b>\$ 2,726,625.00</b>	<b>\$ 3,857,732.50</b>	<b>\$ 4,432,464.25</b>	<b>\$ 5,201,562.75</b>

## Summary

Note: Figures in this sheet are auto-calculated based on information provided within this template.

### Starting Fund Balance

	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
Totals \$	-	\$ 241,250.00	\$ 407,125.84	\$ 1,198,210.58	\$ 1,759,792.35	\$ 2,786,955.28

### Revenues

	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
State Revenues		\$ 1,849,625.84	\$ 3,082,709.74	\$ 3,884,214.27	\$ 4,809,027.19	\$ 6,165,419.47
Grants / Fundraising / Philanthropy	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 281,000.00	\$ 435,000.00	\$ 535,100.00	\$ 650,600.00	\$ 820,000.00
<b>Total Revenues</b>	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 2,130,625.84	\$ 3,517,709.74	\$ 4,419,314.27	\$ 5,459,627.19	\$ 6,985,419.47

### Expenditures

	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
Personal Services	\$ 137,500.00	\$ 1,090,000.00	\$ 1,431,700.00	\$ 2,183,786.00	\$ 2,478,771.40	\$ 2,965,250.21
Employee Benefits	\$ -	\$ 148,750.00	\$ 357,925.00	\$ 545,946.50	\$ 619,692.85	\$ 741,312.55
Contracted Services	\$ 266,250.00	\$ 530,000.00	\$ 705,000.00	\$ 860,000.00	\$ 1,025,000.00	\$ 1,150,000.00
Supplies and Materials	\$ 22,500.00	\$ 90,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 150,000.00	\$ 180,000.00	\$ 210,000.00
Other Charges	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Debt Service	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Outlay	\$ 82,500.00	\$ 100,000.00	\$ 105,000.00	\$ 110,000.00	\$ 120,000.00	\$ 125,000.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	\$ 508,750.00	\$ 1,964,750.00	\$ 2,726,625.00	\$ 3,857,732.50	\$ 4,432,464.25	\$ 5,201,562.76

### Summary

	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
Starting Fund Balance	\$ -	\$ 241,250.00	\$ 407,125.84	\$ 1,198,210.58	\$ 1,759,792.35	\$ 2,786,955.28
Total Revenue	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 2,130,625.84	\$ 3,517,709.74	\$ 4,419,314.27	\$ 5,459,627.19	\$ 6,985,419.47
Total Available Funds (Starting Fund Balance + Total Revenue)	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 2,371,875.84	\$ 3,924,835.58	\$ 5,617,524.85	\$ 7,219,419.53	\$ 9,772,374.76
Total Expenses	\$ 508,750.00	\$ 1,964,750.00	\$ 2,726,625.00	\$ 3,857,732.50	\$ 4,432,464.25	\$ 5,201,562.76
Ending Fund Balance	\$ 241,250.00	\$ 407,125.84	\$ 1,198,210.58	\$ 1,759,792.35	\$ 2,786,955.28	\$ 4,570,811.99



# Attachment X Cover Page

## Operating Budget Narrative

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment X – Page

## Response to Concern #1 – Financial Management, Independent Audits, and CPA Oversight

Still I Rise Academy appreciates the importance of robust financial oversight and transparent fiscal accountability. In alignment with the State of Tennessee's "Indicators of a Strong Response" for Subsection 3.2, our financial systems, processes, and policies will reflect best practices and full legal compliance with all state and federal requirements.

### Accounting, Purchasing, and Payroll Oversight:

Still I Rise Academy will utilize a cloud-based financial management platform approved for charter school use (e.g., QuickBooks for Nonprofits, Aplos, or comparable systems) to maintain accurate, real-time financial records. Internal policies will include a system of checks and balances to prevent fraud and ensure timely reporting. Key financial functions will be executed under the supervision of the Director of Compliance & Operations, who will oversee daily accounting, purchasing approvals, and internal payroll reporting.

### Annual Independent Audit and CPA Selection:

In accordance with T.C.A. § 49-13-127 and all federal reporting obligations, Still I Rise Academy will conduct an independent annual financial audit. We will solicit competitive bids from at least three Tennessee-licensed independent accounting firms, with selection based on cost-effectiveness, prior charter school experience, and track record of compliance with state and federal education funding audits.

Once selected, the firm will be responsible for:

- Conducting a GAAP-compliant financial audit
- Preparing required federal and state fiscal reports
- Identifying internal control weaknesses and recommending remedies

All final audit reports will be submitted to the Tennessee Department of Education, the authorizer, and made publicly available per transparency statutes.

### Financial Roles and Responsibilities:

- Executive Director: Maintains executive oversight of all financial processes and ensures alignment with strategic goals and legal obligations.
- Director of Compliance & Operations: Oversees daily financial transactions, purchasing, payroll coordination, and contract compliance.
- Governing Board – Finance & Operations Committee: Reviews monthly budget reports, approves vendor contracts, audits, and financial policy

updates. Ensures financial practices reflect fiduciary responsibility to the public.

- Board Treasurer: Provides financial guidance and monitors adherence to financial controls.

#### Outsourcing Plan and Oversight:

Still I Rise Academy may outsource certain financial management functions, such as payroll processing, benefits administration, or audit preparation, to external vendors. All outsourcing agreements will:

- Be competitively bid and approved by the board
- Include annual performance evaluations and renewal clauses
- Be reviewed for compliance with FERPA, HIPAA, and state procurement laws

#### Financial Expertise:

Our leadership team is anchored by Executive Director Dr. Gerald Kiner, the only Executive Director of a charter school in Shelby County, Tennessee to be formally recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) before the U.S. Senate Committee on Entrepreneurship for exemplary performance in managing the Community Navigator Pilot Program (CNPP) grant. Dr. Kiner's oversight of the CNPP grant resulted in the successful mentoring of over 1,000 small businesses both locally and nationally. His leadership brought together experts in banking, accounting, and finance to provide entrepreneurs with critical training in financial management, grants, and lending access—experience that directly translates to superior financial stewardship for Still I Rise Academy.

In addition, Dr. Kiner has been commended by the Tennessee Department of Human Services for his exceptional administration of the Family First Grant, demonstrating his ability to successfully manage complex, multi-million-dollar public funding initiatives.

Dr. Kiner is also a serial entrepreneur with decades of experience founding and operating successful ventures, including federally and state-funded nonprofit programs. His qualifications not only meet but exceed the financial oversight requirements necessary to manage a high-performing public charter school. His proven record in compliance, fiscal sustainability, audit readiness, and grant execution sets a new standard in charter school leadership.

Combined with a governing board that includes professionals with financial, operational, and regulatory expertise from organizations such as FedEx, healthcare

systems, and higher education institutions, Still I Rise Academy is uniquely positioned to ensure robust financial management from day one.

### **Response to Concern #2 – Contingency Planning and Budget Scaling**

Still I Rise Academy has incorporated a comprehensive contingency framework aligned with best practices observed in successful Tennessee charter schools, including City University School, a longstanding Memphis charter school that has operated effectively with fewer than 20 students and was nonetheless renewed for another 10-year term due to its academic integrity, financial stability, and clear operational plan. We view City University as a model for sustainable operations in the face of enrollment variability, and we are fully prepared to follow its blueprint if enrollment targets are not initially met.

Our contingency planning includes the following components:

1. Scalable Staffing and Operational Model:

If enrollment falls below projections, we will scale back non-instructional staffing, defer select contracted services, and phase in elective programs to ensure financial viability while protecting core academic instruction.

2. Emergency Cash Reserves and Budget Adjustments:

Each year's budget includes a designated contingency reserve line item that provides flexibility to offset revenue shortfalls. These reserves are clearly delineated in our five-year budgets.

3. Access to Emergency Financing and Loans:

We maintain strong relationships with financial institutions and nonprofit lenders that can provide bridge financing or emergency lines of credit if necessary. Our leadership's past performance with federal and state grants makes us a low-risk borrower.

4. Community and Foundation Support:

We have secured multiple MOUs from community-based organizations indicating in-kind support. Should enrollment revenue be impacted, we are prepared to convert a portion of those in-kind contributions to direct financial support through revised service agreements.

5. Board Oversight and Monthly Financial Monitoring:

Our Board's Finance and Operations Committee will review monthly enrollment and financial performance against projections and trigger contingency actions at the first sign of deviation.

6. Facility Flexibility:

Our facilities plan allows for cost-saving adjustments, such as modular classrooms or shared community space at Jesus People Church, allowing us to right-size facility costs relative to enrollment.

Alignment with the Indicator of a Strong Response:

Our contingency framework fully meets and exceeds the Tennessee State Board of Education's Quality Authorizing Standard indicator, which states:

"The response outlines contingency plans to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are lower than expected. It includes a detailed cash flow contingency plan in case revenue projections are not met or expenditures exceed expectations, with explanations of financing sources, including loans or alternative funding sources." Our plan should satisfy all these criteria. It reflects both realistic adjustments and innovative backup options grounded in precedent and best practices. We have built a flexible, responsible model that allows us to serve our targeted Opportunity Charter School population without jeopardizing financial health.

**Response to Concern #3 – Financial Oversight and Executive Leadership Acumen**

We respectfully ask the reviewers to reconsider Concern #3 on the grounds that it misinterprets the indicators of a strong response outlined in Subsection 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative. As clearly defined by the Tennessee State Board of Education, this section requires the application to:

"describe the systems, processes, and policies for managing accounting, purchasing, payroll, and audits... [and] outline the financial roles and responsibilities of the school's administration and governing board."

There is no mandate requiring a sitting board member to hold a CPA license or formal financial title. Rather, what is required is demonstrated financial capacity, oversight systems, and strategic expertise—criteria that Still I Rise Academy has clearly met and exceeded.

Indeed, our application not only outlines financial processes and role clarity for board oversight, but also features unmatched executive financial acumen through

our Executive Director, Dr. Gerald Kiner, whose qualifications and leadership exceed what is typically seen in charter leadership.

Dr. Kiner is the only Executive Director in Shelby County recognized by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) before the U.S. Senate Committee on Entrepreneurship for his exceptional administration of the CNPP federal grant. As a serial entrepreneur and real estate investor, Dr. Kiner has decades of experience managing multi-million-dollar projects, overseeing SBA grants that support over 1,000 small businesses, and building property portfolios that rival those of seasoned developers.

Furthermore, in 2024, Dr. Kiner—through his From the Streets to Wall Street Foundation— along with funds from the Shelby County Commission, personally funded and organized an unprecedented educational trip to Wall Street in New York City, flying out students from Memphis-Shelby County Schools and Collierville High School, along with teachers and mentors, at no cost to them. This act alone reflects unparalleled financial leadership, generosity, and a deep understanding of long-term financial planning and execution in educational environments.

To imply that this level of expertise is insufficient fails to recognize that Dr. Kiner's financial leadership provides the school with superior strategic advantage, especially for a startup institution.

In conclusion, we respectfully submit that the concern about financial expertise is unfounded. Our structure provides strong, experienced financial oversight—rooted in lived experience, federal grant success, investment management, and entrepreneurial excellence. We have met—and in the case of leadership acumen, exceeded—the state's standard for financial responsibility.

#### **Response to Concern #4 – Clarification of Revenue Assumptions and Methodology**

We appreciate the opportunity to clarify our updated revenue model.

In response to this concern, we have eliminated our prior reliance on private donations, grant awards, and anticipated philanthropic revenue from the operating budget projections for Years 1 through 5. Instead, our financial model is now overwhelmingly based on reliable, predictable public funding streams—primarily the Tennessee state per-pupil allocation, which is currently set at \$12,330.84 per student.

This change enhances both the clarity and sustainability of our financial projections and ensures that our operations are built on guaranteed revenue tied to enrollment. Given that student enrollment is the most direct and measurable variable, this adjustment allows for transparent, data-driven budget planning without the uncertainty associated with unconfirmed or speculative funding.

While we will still pursue grants and philanthropic partnerships to enhance programs or support capital projects, those funds are no longer essential to the core operating budget. Any external revenue that may be received will be treated as supplementary and will not impact our ability to meet baseline obligations. In short, the methodology now aligns with conservative budgeting best practices: we rely exclusively on confirmed state revenue per pupil, and all revenue assumptions are now both verifiable and replicable using enrollment projections already submitted and aligned across our narrative and financial sections.

### Still I Rise Academy Five-Year Budget (Year 0)

## Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions and Determination Methodology

## REVENUES

## Revenue Breakdown Methodology and Assumptions

The projected revenue sources for Still I Rise Academy include the grant funding from the charter school planning and implementation grant.

[illegible]

Humanitarian Outreach Development Group has applied for \$750,000 in grant funding from the Charter School Program to cover Planning and Implementation Costs in Year 0.

## EXPENDITURES

## Expenditures Breakdown, Methodology and Assumptions

Category	Description	Amount
<b>1. Personal Services</b>		
i. Principal (1)	Paid at full-time	\$47,500
ii. Executive Director (1)	Paid at full-time	\$50,000



iii. Other Salaries and Wages (1)	Director Enrollment and Outreach Paid at Part Time	\$20,000
	Facility & Operations Manager paid at part time	\$20,000

Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Employee Benefits</b>	All staff will be paid as contractors during Year 0 – no employee benefits will be paid	\$0

Category	Description	Amount
<b>3. Contracted Services</b>		
i. Advertising	School enrollment and recruiting Amount based on market trends	\$56,250

ii Contracts with Private Companies	To cover the costs of board and staff training – price based on market research	\$22,500
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iii. Lease/SBITA Payments	To cover the cost of building lease, minor maintenance and acquisition – Cost is based on current lease figures per-square foot	\$135,000
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iv. Other Contracted Services	To cover the cost training and also budget shortfalls will be funded from this line item	52,500
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Category	Description	Amount
<b>4. Supplies and Materials</b>		
i. Instructional Supplies Material	To purchase instructional material Price based on market Rates	\$22,500

Category	Description	Amount
<b>5. Other Charges</b>		
i. Liability Insurance		

Category	Description	Amount
<b>6. Debt Service</b>		
	No Cost	

Category	Description	Amount
<b>7. Capital Outlay</b>		
i. Furniture & Fixtures	To cover the initial cost for classroom set-up to cover desks chairs for students and teachers electronic blackboards etc – price based on internet search.	\$82,500

## Still I Rise Academy Five-Year Budget (Year 1)

### Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions and Determination Methodology

#### REVENUES

##### Revenue Breakdown Methodology and Assumptions

The projected revenue sources for Still I Rise Academy include state/local per-pupil funding, federal grants, private philanthropy, and fundraising.

Category	Description	Amount
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<b>1. State &amp; Local Revenues</b>	State/Local Per-Pupil Funding	
	150 students *\$12,330.84	\$1,849,625.84

Based on Tennessee's most recent per-pupil allocation of \$12,330.84 per student. Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	Federal Title I Funding: 150 students *\$1,500	\$225,000

Assumes eligibility for Title I funding based on serving 100% at-risk and economically disadvantaged students; Estimated using MSCS averages (\$1,500–\$2,000 for Title I – the minimum of \$1,500 was used for the projections; Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year: Funding projections are based on historical data from similarly structured schools; Awarded annually, with amounts increasing based on student growth.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>3. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	Federal IDEA Funding 150 students *10% *\$400	\$6,000

Supports students with disabilities as required by federal law; Estimated based on statewide per-student averages for schools with a similar demographic; Estimated using MSCS averages of \$400–\$600 for IDEA per eligible student and an estimate that 10% of the population will qualify for the funding and the minimum of \$400 for the calculations was used.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>4. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	50% from grant funding	\$25,000;
	30% from donations	\$15,000
	20% from fundraising-	\$10,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

## EXPENDITURES

### Expenditures Breakdown, Methodology and Assumptions

Category	Description	Amount
<b>1. Personal Services</b>		
i. Principal (1)	Paid at Full Time	\$95,000

	Salary based on Memphis City School Pay Scale Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	
ii. Executive Director (1)	Paid at Full Time Salary based on current Internet search; Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$100,000
iv. Teachers (10)	10 Teachers will be hired in Year 1 at salary of \$50,000- Salary based on Memphis Shelby County School Pay Scale; Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time. This number includes the Special Education Coordinator	\$500,000
v. Accountant/Bookkeepers (1)	Not hired - Services are performed through contract services.	
vi. Guidance Personnel (1)	Will be hired in Year 1 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$50,000
viii. Librarian (1)	Will be hired in Year 1 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$40,000
ix. Social Worker	Not hired in Year 1	

	Services available through contract service	
x. Medical Personnel (1)	Not hired in Year 1 Services available through contract service	
xi. Instructional Computer Personnel (1)	Not hired in Year 1 Services available through contract service	
xii. Assistant Principal	Not hired in Year 1 Services available through contract service	
xii. Guards	Not hired in Year 1 Services available through contract service	
xiii. Secretary (1)	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$35,000
xiv. Attendants (1)	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on internet research 3 * \$30,000 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$90,000
xv. Custodial Personnel	Not hired in Year 1 -services provided	
xvi. Maintenance Personnel	Not hired in Year1 Services available through	

contract service

xviii. Other Salaries and Wages	Includes Director Enrollment and Outreach (DOE) \$40,000 Facility and Operations Manager (FOM \$40,000; RTI <sup>2</sup> Interventionist, \$50,000 Data and Compliance Coordinator. \$50,000 Salary based on market research on Indeed.com Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	180,000
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Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Employee Benefits</b>	Calculated at 25% of total	
Social Security 6.2%	25% of \$595,000	148,750
Pensions 6.75%	Employee benefits	
Medical Insurance 10%	will be paid for the principal	
Dental Insurance 0.5%	and teachers in Year 1	
Unemployment compensation 0.1%	all other staff will be treated	
Employer Medicare 1.45 %	as contractors	

Category	Description	Amount
<b>3. Contracted Services</b>		
i. Advertising	School Promotion and recruiting Amount based on current costs that HODG pays for advertising	\$20,000
II. Consultants	To provide services such as behavior .modification	\$50,000

etc

ii. Contracts with Private Agencies

This contract is for transportation services and other services as needed

\$280,000

iii. Lease/SBITA Payments

To cover the cost of building lease– Cost is based on current lease figures per-square foot

\$100,000

vi. Other Contracted Services

To cover any shortfalls in the budget will be funded from this cost category.

\$80,000

Category  
**4. Supplies and Materials**

Description

Amount

i. Electricity

Utility usage for school operation  
Amount based on researching charter school utility usage

\$40,000

ii. Instructional Supplies & Material

The purchase of items to support teaching methods. This does not refer to a specific item – relevancy and cost will be assessed when requested.

\$30,000

iv. Uniforms

The purchase of uniforms to support school activities  
eg. School uniform, gym etc  
Items will be purchased in bulk  
\$133,33 for 150 students

\$20,000



Category	Description	Amount
<b>5. Other Charges</b>		
i. Liability Insurance	To cover required insurance for the charter school – based on what Humanitarian Outreach Development Group I currently paying for insurance	\$6,000

Category	Description	Amount
<b>6. Debt Service</b>	No Cost	

Category	Description	Amount
<b>7. Capital Outlay</b>		
i. Furniture & Fixtures	Classroom and Office Based on internet research	100,000

## Still I Rise Academy Five-Year Budget (Year 2)

### Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions and Determination Methodology – ice

#### REVENUES

#### Revenue Breakdown Methodology and Assumptions

The projected revenue sources for Still I Rise Academy include state/local per-pupil funding, federal grants, private philanthropy, fundraising and reimbursement for meals from local and federal sources.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>1. State &amp; Local Revenues</b>	State/Local Per-Pupil Funding	
	250 students *\$12,330.84	\$3,082,709.74

Based on Tennessee's most recent per-pupil allocation of \$12,330.84 per student. Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	Federal Title I Funding: 250 students *\$1500	\$375,000
Assumes eligibility for Title I funding based on serving 100% at-risk and economically disadvantaged students; Estimated using MSCS averages (\$1,500–\$2,000 for Title I – the minimum of \$1,500 was used for the projections; Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year: Funding projections are based on historical data from similarly structured schools; Awarded annually, with amounts increasing based on student growth		

Category	Description	Amount
<b>3. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	Federal IDEA Funding 250 students *10% *\$400	\$10,000
Supports students with disabilities as required by federal law; Estimated based on statewide per-student averages for schools with a similar demographic; Estimated using MSCS averages of \$400–\$600 for IDEA per eligible student and an estimate that 10% of the population will qualify for the funding and the minimum of \$400 for the calculations was used.		

Category	Description	Amount
<b>4. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	50% from grant funding	\$25,000;
	30% from donations	\$15,000
	20% from fundraising-	\$10,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

We will be applying for funding from foundations committed to supporting educational equity such as The Wal Mart Foundation, Truist Foundation, Kelloggs Foundation etc - **these grants are in the in-planning phase** ;• Includes direct donations as part of our fundraising drive from community organizations, non-profit partners, local businesses, and individual supporters; If grant funds are not secured, the school will adjust expenditures and seek alternative revenue sources; The Executive Director will oversee all fundraising, donations and grant applications.

## EXPENDITURES

### Expenditures Breakdown, Methodology and Assumptions

## REVENUES

### Revenue Breakdown Methodology and Assumptions

The projected revenue sources for Still I Rise Academy include state/local per-pupil funding, federal grants, private philanthropy, and fundraising.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>1. State &amp; Local Revenues</b>	State/Local Per-Pupil Funding	
	150 students *\$12,330.84	\$1,849,625.84

Based on Tennessee's most recent per-pupil allocation of \$12,330.84 per student. Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	Federal Title I Funding:	
	150 students *\$1,500	\$225,000

Assumes eligibility for Title I funding based on serving 100% at-risk and economically disadvantaged students; Estimated using MSCS averages (\$1,500–\$2,000 for Title I – the minimum of \$1,500 was used for the projections; Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year: Funding projections are based on historical data from similarly structured schools; Awarded annually, with amounts increasing based on student growth.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>3. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	Federal IDEA Funding	
	150 students *10% *\$400	\$6,000

Supports students with disabilities as required by federal law; Estimated based on statewide per-student averages for schools with a similar demographic; Estimated using MSCS averages of \$400–\$600 for IDEA per eligible student and an estimate that 10% of the population will qualify for the funding and the minimum of \$400 for the calculations was used.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>4. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	50% from grant funding	\$25,000;
	30% from donations	\$15,000
	20% from fundraising-	\$10,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

## EXPENDITURES

### Expenditures Breakdown, Methodology and Assumptions

Category	Description	Amount
<b>1. Personal Services</b>		
i. Principal (1)	Paid at Full Time Salary based on Memphis City School Pay Scale Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$97,850
ii. Executive Director (1)	Paid at Full Time Salary based on current Internet search; Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$103,000
iii. Teachers (16)	16 Teachers will be hired in in Year 1 at salary of \$51,500- Salary based on Memphis Shelby County School Pay Scale; Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time. This number includes the Special Education Coordinator	\$824,000
iv. Accountant/Bookkeepers (1)	Not hired - Services are performed through contract services.	
v. Guidance Personnel (1)	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$51,500

vi. Librarian (1)	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$41,200
Vii. Social Worker	Not hired in Year 2 Services available through contract service	
viii. Medical Personnel (1)	Not hired in Year 2 Services available through contract service	
xi. Instructional Computer Personnel (1)	Not hired in Year 2 Services available through contract service	
x. Assistant Principal	Not hired in Year 2	
xi. Guards	Not hired in Year 2 Services available through contract service	
xii. Secretary (1)	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$36,050
xiii. Attendants	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on internet research 3 * \$30,900 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$92,700

xiv. Custodial Personnel	Not hired in Year 2 - Services available through contract	
Xv. Maintenance Personnel	Not hired in Year 2 Services available through contract service	
xvi. Other Salaries and Wages	Includes Director Enrollment and Outreach (DOE) Facility and Operations Manager FOM; RTI <sup>2</sup> Interventionist Data and Compliance Coordinator. market research on Indeed.com Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	185,400

Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Employee Benefits</b>	Calculated at 25% of total	
Social Security 6.2%	25% of \$1,431,700	357,925
Pensions 6.75%	Employee benefits	
Medical Insurance 10%	for all staff	
Dental Insurance 0.5%		
Unemployment compensation		
0.1%		
Employer Medicare		
1.45 %		

Category	Description	Amount
<b>3. Contracted Services</b>		
i. Advertising	School Promotion and recruiting Amount based on current	\$35,000

	costs that HODG pays for advertising	
II. Consultants	To provide services such as behavior .modification etc	\$100,000
iii. Contracts with Private Agencies	This contract is for transportation services and other services as needed	\$350,000
iv. Lease/SBITA Payments	To cover the cost of building lease- Cost is based on current lease figures per-square foot	\$100,000
v. Other Contracted Services	To cover any shortfalls in the budget will be funded from this cost category.	\$120,000

Category	Description	Amount
<b>4. Supplies and Materials</b>		
i. Electricity	Utility usage for school operation Amount based on researching charter school utility usage	\$50,000
ii. Instructional Supplies & Material	The purchase of items to support teaching methods. This does not refer to a specific item - relevancy and cost will be assessed when requested.	\$40,000



iv. Uniforms	The purchase of uniforms to support school activities eg. School uniform, gym etc Items will be purchased in bulk \$120 for 250 students	\$30,000
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Category	Description	Amount
<b>5. Other Charges</b>		
i. Liability Insurance	To cover required insurance for the charter school – based on what Humanitarian Outreach Development Group I currently paying for insurance	\$7,000

Category	Description	Amount
<b>6. Debt Service</b>	No Cost	

Category	Description	Amount
<b>7. Capital Outlay</b>		
i. Furniture & Fixtures	Classroom and Office Based on internet research	105,000

## Still I Rise Academy Five-Year Budget (Year 3)

### Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions and Determination Methodology

#### REVENUES

##### Revenue Breakdown Methodology and Assumptions

The projected revenue sources for Still I Rise Academy include state/local per-pupil funding, federal grants, private philanthropy, fundraising and reimbursement for meals from local and federal sources.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>1. State &amp; Local Revenues</b>	State/Local Per-Pupil Funding 315 students *\$12,330.84	\$3,884,214.27

Based on Tennessee's most recent per-pupil allocation of \$12,330.84 per student. Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Grants/Fund Raising/Philanthropy</b>	Federal Title I Funding: 315 students *\$1500	<b>\$472,500</b>
Assumes eligibility for Title I funding based on serving 100% at-risk and economically disadvantaged students; Estimated using MSCS averages (\$1,500–\$2,000 for Title I – the minimum of \$1,500 was used for the projections; Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year: Funding projections are based on historical data from similarly structured schools; Awarded annually, with amounts increasing based on student growth		

Category	Description	Amount
<b>3. Grants/Fund Raising/Philanthropy</b>	Federal IDEA Funding 315 students *10% *\$400	<b>\$12,600</b>
Supports students with disabilities as required by federal law; Estimated based on statewide per-student averages for schools with a similar demographic; Estimated using MSCS averages of \$400–\$600 for IDEA per eligible student and an estimate that 10% of the population will qualify for the funding and the minimum of \$400 for the calculations was used.		

Category	Description	Amount
<b>4. Grants/Fund Raising/Philanthropy</b>	50% from grant funding	<b>\$25,000;</b>
	30% from donations	<b>\$15,000</b>
	20% from fundraising-	<b>\$10,000</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50.000</b>

We will be applying for funding from foundations committed to supporting educational equity such as The Wal Mart Foundation, Truist Foundation, Kelloggs Foundation etc - **these grants are in the in-planning phase** ;• Includes direct donations as part of our fundraising drive from community organizations, non-profit partners, local businesses, and individual supporters; If grant funds are not secured, the school will adjust expenditures and seek alternative revenue sources; The Executive Director will oversee all fundraising, donations and grant applications.

## EXPENDITURES

### Expenditures Breakdown, Methodology and Assumptions

Category	Description	Amount
Category	Description	Amount
<b>1. Personal Services</b>		
i. Principal (1)	Paid at Full Time Salary based on Memphis City School Pay Scale Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$100,785.5
ii. Executive Director (1)	Paid at Full Time Salary based on current Internet search; Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$106,090
iii. Teachers (19)	19 Teachers will be hired in in Year 1 at salary of \$53,045- Salary based on Memphis Shelby County School Pay Scale; Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time. This number includes the Special Education Coordinator	\$1,007,855
iv. Accountant/Bookkeepers (1)	Hired in Yr 3 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	50,000
v. Guidance Personnel (1)	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on Indeed.com research	\$53,045

Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.

vi. Librarian (1)	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$42,436
vii. Social Worker	Hired in Year 3 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time	\$60,000
viii. Medical Personnel (1)	Hired in Year 3 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when	\$60,000
ix. Instructional Computer	Hired in Year 3 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time	\$50,000
x. Assistant Principal	Hired in Year 3 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time	\$80,000
xi. Guards	Hired in Year 3 (3 @40,00) Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time	\$120,000
xii. Secretary (1)	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$37,131

xiii. Attendants (1)	Will be hired in in Year 1 Salary based on internet research 3 * \$31,827 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$95,481
xiv. Custodial Personnel	Hired in Year 3 (3 @30,000) Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time	\$90,000
xv. Maintenance Personnel	Hired in Year 3 40,000 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time	\$40,000
xvi. Other Salaries and Wages	Includes (DOE) (FOM \$ RTI <sup>2</sup> Interventionist, Data and Compliance Coordinator Salary based on market research on Indeed.com Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$190,962

Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Employee Benefits</b>	Calculated at 25% of total	
Social Security 6.2%	25% of \$2,183,786	545,946.50
Pensions 6.75%	Employee benefits	
Medical Insurance 10%	will be paid for all	
Dental Insurance 0.5%	staff	
Unemployment compensation 0.1%		
Employer Medicare		

1.45 %

Category	Description	Amount
<b>3. Contracted Services</b>		
i. Advertising	School Promotion and recruiting Amount based on current costs that HODG pays for advertising	\$40,000
II. Consultants	To provide services such as behavior modification etc	\$150,000
li. Contracts with Private Agencies	This contract is for transportation services and other services as needed	\$420,000
iii. Lease/SBITA Payments	To cover the cost of building lease- Cost is based on current lease figures per-square foot	\$100,000
vi. Other Contracted Services	To cover any shortfalls in the budget will be funded from this cost category.	\$150,000

Category	Description	Amount
<b>4. Supplies and Materials</b>		
i. Electricity	Utility usage for school operation Amount based on researching charter school utility usage	\$60,000

ii. Instructional Supplies & Material	The purchase of items to support teaching methods. This does not refer to a specific item – relevancy and cost will be assessed when requested.	\$50,000
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iv. Uniforms	The purchase of uniforms to support school activities eg. School uniform, gym etc Items will be purchased in bulk \$126 for 315 students	\$40,000
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Category	Description	Amount
<b>5. Other Charges</b>		
i. Liability Insurance	To cover required insurance for the charter school – based on what Humanitarian Outreach Development Group I currently paying for insurance	\$8,000

Category	Description	Amount
<b>6. Debt Service</b>	No Cost	

Category	Description	Amount
<b>7. Capital Outlay</b>		
i. Furniture & Fixtures	Classroom and Office Based on internet research	110,000

## Still I Rise Academy Five-Year Budget (Year 4)

### Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions and Determination Methodology –



## REVENUES

### Revenue Breakdown Methodology and Assumptions

The projected revenue sources for Still I Rise Academy include state/local per-pupil funding, federal grants, private philanthropy, fundraising and reimbursement for meals from local and federal sources.

Category	Description	Amount
1. State & Local Revenues	State/Local Per-Pupil Funding	
	390 students *\$12,330.84	\$4,809,027.19

Based on Tennessee's most recent per-pupil allocation of \$12,330.84 per student. Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year.

Category	Description	Amount
2. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy	Federal Title I Funding:	
	390 students *\$1500	\$585,000

Assumes eligibility for Title I funding based on serving 100% at-risk and economically disadvantaged students; Estimated using MSCS averages (\$1,500–\$2,000 for Title I – the minimum of \$1,500 was used for the projections; Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year; Funding projections are based on historical data from similarly structured schools; Awarded annually, with amounts increasing based on student growth

Category	Description	Amount
3. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy	Federal IDEA Funding	
	390 students *10% *\$400	\$15,600

Supports students with disabilities as required by federal law; Estimated based on statewide per-student averages for schools with a similar demographic; Estimated using MSCS averages of \$400–\$600 for IDEA per eligible student and an estimate that 10% of the population will qualify for the funding and the minimum of \$400 for the calculations was used.

Category	Description	Amount
4. <b>Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	50% from grant funding	\$25,000;
	30% from donations	\$15,000
	20% from fundraising-	\$10,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50.000</b>

We will be applying for funding from foundations committed to supporting educational equity such as The Wal Mart Foundation, Truist Foundation, Kelloggs

Foundation etc - **these grants are in the in-planning phase** ;• Includes direct donations as part of our fundraising drive from community organizations, non-profit partners, local businesses, and individual supporters; If grant funds are not secured, the school will adjust expenditures and seek alternative revenue sources; The Executive Director will oversee all fundraising, donations and grant applications.

## EXPENDITURES

### Expenditures Breakdown, Methodology and Assumptions

Category	Description	Amount
<b>1. Personal Services</b>		
i. Principal (1)	Paid at Full Time Salary based on Memphis City School Pay Scale Yearly increase of at least 2% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$103,809
ii. Executive Director (1)	Paid at Full Time Salary based on current Pay Scale at Daughters of Of Zion; Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$109,272
iii. Teachers (21)	21 Teachers will be on staff in in Year 4 at average salary of \$54,636.33 - Salary based on Memphis Shelby County School Pay Scale; Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time. This number includes the Special Education Coordinator	\$1,147,363.00
iv. Accountant/Bookkeepers	Paid at Full Time Salary based on	\$51,500 (1)

Indeed.com research  
Yearly increase of at least 3% of  
annual salary.

v. Guidance Personnel	Paid at Full Time Average salary based on Indeed.com research $\$54,636.35 \times 2$ An additional person will be hired to support the growth in student population Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary.	\$109,272.70
vi. Librarian (1)	Paid at full time Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$43,709
vii. Social Worker	Paid at full time Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary when full time.	\$61,800
viii. Medical Personnel (1)	Paid at full time Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary when full time.	\$61,800
ix. Instructional Computer Personnel (1)	Paid at full time Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary when full time.	\$51,500

X Assistant Principal	Hired in Year 3 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when	\$82,400
xi. Guards	Hired in Year 3 (3 @41,200) Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when	\$123,600
xii. Secretary (2)	Paid at Full Time Average Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary.	\$38,245
Xiii Attendants (5)	Paid at Full Time Average Salary based on internet research \$32,781.81*5 An additional person will be hired to support the growth in student population Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary.	\$163,909
xiv. Custodial Personnel (3)	Paid at Full Time Average Salary based on internet research \$30,900*3 Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary.	\$92,700
xv. Maintenance Personnel	Paid at Full Time Salary based on internet research Yearly increase of at least 3%of	\$41,200

annual salary.

xvi. Other Salaries and Wages	Includes (DOE) (FOM \$ RTI <sup>2</sup> Interventionist, Data and Compliance Coordinator Salary based on market research on Indeed.com Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time	\$196,691
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Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Employee Benefits</b>	Calculated at 25% of total	
Social Security 6.2%	25% of 2,478,771	619,692.85
Pensions 6.75%		
Medical Insurance 10%		
Dental Insurance 0.5%		
Unemployment compensation 0.1%		
Employer Medicare 1.45 %		

Category	Description	Amount
<b>3. Contracted Services</b>		
i. Advertising	School Promotion and recruiting Amount based on current costs that HODG is pay for advertising. New advertising strategy will be used in Y4 to reach targeted enrollment	\$45,000

II. Consultants	To provide services such as behavior .modification etc	\$200,000
iii. Contracts with Private Agencies	This contract is for transportation services and other services as needed	\$500,000
iv. Lease/SBITA Payments	To cover the cost of building lease and acquisition – Cost is based on current lease figures per-square foot	\$100,000
v. Other Contracted Services	To cover the 2-5% of expenses for contingency fees – shortfalls in the budget will be funded from this cost category.	\$180,000
<b>4. Supplies and Materials</b>		
i. Electricity	Utility usage for school operation Amount based on researching charter school utility usage	\$70,000
ii. Instructional Supplies & Material	The purchase of items to support teaching methods. This does not refer to a specific item – relevancy and cost will be assessed when requested.	\$60,000
iii. Uniforms	The purchase of uniforms to support school activities eg. School uniform, gym etc Items will be purchased in bulk \$128,00 per student (390)	\$50,000

Category	Description	Amount
<b>5. Other Charges</b>		
i. Liability Insurance	To cover required insurance for the charter school – based on what Humanitarian Outreach Development Group is currently paying for insurance	\$9,000

Category	Description	Amount
<b>6. Debt Service</b>	No Cost	

Category	Description	Amount
<b>7. Capital Outlay</b>		
i. Furniture & Fixtures	To cover the cost for classroom new and replacement to cover desks chairs for students and teachers electronic blackboards etc – due student growth based on general estimates from companies such as Worthington Direct, NextGen Furniture, JOMTech	\$120,000

## Still I Rise Academy Five-Year Budget (Year 5)

### Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions and Determination Methodology –

#### REVENUES

##### Revenue Breakdown Methodology and Assumptions

The projected revenue sources for Still I Rise Academy include state/local per-pupil funding, federal grants, private philanthropy, fundraising and reimbursement for meals from local and federal sources.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>1. State &amp; Local Revenues</b>	State/Local Per-Pupil Funding	
	500 students *\$12,330.84	\$6,165,419.47

Based on Tennessee's most recent per-pupil allocation of \$12,330.84 per student. Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year.



Category	Description	Amount
2. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy	Federal Title I Funding: 500 students *\$1500	\$750,000
Assumes eligibility for Title I funding based on serving 100% at-risk and economically disadvantaged students; Estimated using MSCS averages (\$1,500–\$2,000 for Title I – the minimum of \$1,500 was used for the projections; Projected student enrollment determines total funding each year: Funding projections are based on historical data from similarly structured schools; Awarded annually, with amounts increasing based on student growth		

Category	Description	Amount
3. Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy	Federal IDEA Funding 500 students *10% *\$400	\$20,000
Supports students with disabilities as required by federal law; Estimated based on statewide per-student averages for schools with a similar demographic; Estimated using MSCS averages of \$400–\$600 for IDEA per eligible student and an estimate that 10% of the population will qualify for the funding and the minimum of \$400 for the calculations was used.		

Category	Description	Amount
4. <b>Grants/Fund Raising/ Philanthropy</b>	50% from grant funding	\$25,000;
	30% from donations	\$15,000
	20% from fundraising-	\$10,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

We will be applying for funding from foundations committed to supporting educational equity such as The Wal Mart Foundation, Truist Foundation, Kelloggs Foundation etc - **these grants are in the in-planning phase** ;• Includes direct donations as part of our fundraising drive from community organizations, non-profit partners, local businesses, and individual supporters; If grant funds are not secured, the school will adjust expenditures and seek alternative revenue sources; The Executive Director will oversee all fundraising, donations and grant applications.

## EXPENDITURES

### Expenditures Breakdown, Methodology and Assumptions

Category Category Amount	Description	
<b>1. Personal Services</b>		
i. Principal (1)	Paid at Full Time Salary based on Memphis City School Pay Scale Yearly increase of at least 2% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$106,923.33
ii. Executive Director (1)	Paid at Full Time Salary based on current Pay Scale at Daughters of Of Zion; Yearly increase of at least 2% of previous annual salary when full time.	\$112,550.88
iii. Teachers (27)	27 Teachers will be on staff in in Year 4 at average salary of \$55,245.08 - Salary based on Memphis Shelby County School Pay Scale; Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when full time. This number includes the Special Education Coordinator	\$1,491.617.16
iv. Accountant/Bookkeepers	Paid at Full Time Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 2% of annual salary.	\$53,045.00
v. Guidance Personnel	Paid at Full Time Average salary based on Indeed.com research \$56,275.04*2 An additional person will	\$112,550.88

be hired to support the growth in student population  
Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary.

vi. Librarian (1)	Paid at full time _____ \$45,020.35 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 2% of previous annual salary when full time.
vii. Social Worker	Paid at full time _____ \$127,308.00 Indeed.com research A second social worker will be hired Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary when full time.
viii. Medical Personnel (1)	Hired in Year 3 _____ \$63,654 Services available through contract service
xi. Instructional Computer Personnel (1)	Paid at full time _____ \$53,045 Salary based on Indeed.com research Yearly increase of at least 2% of annual salary when full time.
x. Assistant Principal	Hired in Year 3 _____ \$84,872 Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when
xi. Guards	Hired in Year 3 _____ \$127,308 (3 @42,436) Yearly increase of at least 3% of previous annual salary when

xii Secretary (2)	<p>Paid at Full Time</p> <p>Average Salary based on Indeed.com research</p> <p>An additional person will be hired</p> <p>Yearly increase of at least 2% of annual salary.</p>	\$78,020.7
Xiii Attendants (5)	<p>Paid at Full Time</p> <p>Average Salary based on internet research</p> <p>\$33,765.2*5</p> <p>An additional person will be hired to support the growth in student population</p> <p>Yearly increase of at least 2% of annual salary.</p>	\$168,826
xiv. Custodial Personnel (3)	<p>Paid at Full Time</p> <p>Average Salary based on internet research</p> <p>\$31,827*3</p> <p>Yearly increase of at least 3% of annual salary.</p>	\$95,481
xv. Maintenance Personnel	<p>Paid at Full Time</p> <p>Salary based on internet research</p> <p>Yearly increase of at least 2% of annual salary.</p>	\$42,436
xvi. Other Salaries and Wages (2)	<p>Includes Recruitment and Outreach Coordinator ;</p> <p>and Operations Manager/Director of Operations</p>	\$202,591

\$52,264.  
 Salary based on  
 market research  
 on Indeed.com  
 Yearly increase of at least 3% of  
 annual salary.

Category	Description	Amount
<b>2. Employee Benefits</b>	Calculated at 25% of total	
Social Security 6.2%	25% of 2,965,250.21	741,312.55
Pensions 6.75%		
Medical Insurance 10%		
Dental Insurance 0.5%		
Unemployment compensation 0.1%		
Employer Medicare 1.45 %		
<b>3. Contracted Services</b>		
i. Advertising	School Promotion and recruiting Amount based on current costs that HODG is pay for advertising. New advertising strategy will be used in Y4 to reach targeted enrollment	\$50,000
II. Consultants	To provide services such as behavior .modification etc	\$250,000
iii. Contracts with Private Agencies	This contract is for transportation services and other services as	\$550,000

	needed	
iv. Lease/SBITA Payments	To cover the cost of building lease and acquisition – Cost is based on current lease figures per-square foot	\$100,000
v. Other Contracted Services	To cover the 2-5% of expenses for contingency fees – shortfalls in the budget will be funded from this cost category.	\$200,000
<b>4. Supplies and Materials</b>		
i. Electricity	Utility usage for school operation Amount based on researching charter school utility usage	\$80,000
ii. Instructional Supplies & Material	The purchase of items to support teaching methods. This does not refer to a specific item – relevancy and cost will be assessed when requested.	\$70,000
iii. Uniforms	The purchase of uniforms to support school activities eg. School uniform, gym etc Items will be purchased in bulk \$120 per student (390)	\$60,000
Category	Description	Amount
<b>5. Other Charges</b>		
i. Liability Insurance	To cover required insurance for the charter school – based on what Humanitarian Outreach Development Group is currently paying for insurance	\$10,000

Category	Description	Amount
<b>6. Debt Service</b>	No Cost	

Category	Description	Amount
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**7. Capital Outlay**

i. Furniture & Fixtures	To cover the cost for classroom new and replacement to cover desks chairs for students and teachers electronic blackboards etc ~ due student growth based on general estimates from companies	\$125,000
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# Attachment Y Cover Page

## Network Financial Plan

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 3

# Attachment Z Cover Page

## Portfolio and Performance Template

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 1

**NOTE: Sponsors must submit the completed Portfolio and Performance Template as a separate document.**

# Attachment AA Cover Page

## Performance and Evaluation Reports

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 1

# Attachment BB Cover Page

## Renewal and Interim Reports

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 1

# Attachment CC Cover Page

## Annual Reports

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 1

# Attachment DD Cover Page

## Litigation Documents

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 1

# Attachment EE Cover Page

## Audited Financial Statements

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT  
QUESTION 1