The Rock Academy

Amended Application to Create a Public Charter School

To Open in the 2026-27 School Year

Date of Submission:

May 23, 2025

Submitted To:

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools Charter Schools Office

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Cover Sheet

General Information

Name of Proposed Charter School	The Rock Academy		
Sponsor / Sponsoring Entity	The Rock Academy of Nashville		
Proposed Authorizer	Metro Nashville Public Schools		
Model or Focus of Proposed School *(i.e., STEAM, Montessori, Opportunity Charter, etc.)*	Opportunity Charter School		
Grade Structure *(i.e., K-5, 6-8, 9-12)*	**Year 1**	**Year 5**	**At Capacity**
	9	9-12	9-12
Projected Enrollment	**Year 1**	**Year 5**	**At Capacity**
	88	333	333
City, Neighborhood, and Community the School Intends to Serve	Nashville, TN - The Rock Academy is submitting a proposal to establish a public Opportunity Charter School aimed at serving at-risk students, as defined in the newly enacted legislation (HB2922-SB2820), across the city of Nashville.		
Projected Opening School Year	SY 2026-27		

Primary Point of Contact

Name	***Dr. Ahmed White***
Role	***Executive Director***
Mailing Address	***373 Solitude Circle***
Mailing Address Line 2	
City, State, Zip Code	***Goodlettsville, TN 37072***
Primary Telephone	***(615) 596-1082***
Alternate Telephone	
Email Address	***awhite@therockacademynashville.org***

Application Category

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

Category			Description
1	✔	**First-time Charter Sponsor**	This category applies to sponsors that meet **all** the following criteria: • Sponsor that seeks to open no more than one (1) public charter school or opportunity charter school during this application cycle. • 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.
2	☐	**Multi-School or Established Sponsor**	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
Dr. Ahmed White	**Goodlettsville, TN**	**Identified Executive Director**	**The Rock Academy**	**Executive Director**
Lekita Sims	**Antioch, TN**	**Identified Director of Operations**	**The Rock Academy**	**Director of Operations**
Linda Lentz	**Nashville, TN**	**Independent Consultant**	**Self**	**Advisor**

Is the sponsor a not-for-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status?	☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ In Progress
If not already obtained, describe the steps that have been taken to obtain 501(c)(3) status:	

Sponsor History and Intent

Question 1	
Has the sponsor or proposed charter management organization[1] 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[2] 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

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

[1] "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.

[2] "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.

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[3] or grade structure from an existing Tennessee charter school they operate?	☐ Yes ☒ No

Question 8	
Is the sponsor proposing an Opportunity Public Charter School[4]?	☒ Yes ☐ No

Question 9	
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?	☐ Yes ☒ No

Question 10	
Will the proposed school serve any combination of elementary grades of kindergarten through grade five (K-5)?	☐ Yes ☒ No

Question 11	
Will the proposed school serve any combination of high school grades nine through twelve (9-12)?	☒ Yes ☐ No

Question 12	
Will the sponsor convert[5] a non-charter public school to a charter school?	☐ Yes ☒ No

[3] "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)

[4] "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.

[5] "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.

Dr. Ahmed White — Signature of Authorized Representative

05/23/2025 — Date

Printed Name of Authorized Representative

Executive Director — Title of Authorized Representative

Completeness Checklists

Items Required for All Sponsors

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

1.1 – Academic Plan and Design	
Narrative	☒

1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Narrative	☒

1.3 - Assessments	
Narrative	☒

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

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

1.6 – Parent and Community Engagement and Support	
Narrative	☒
Attachment D	☒

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

1.8 – Special Populations	
Narrative	☒

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

2.2 – Facilities	
Narrative	☒

2.3 – Start Up Plan	
Narrative	☒

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

2.5 – Professional Development	
Narrative	☒

2.6 – Transportation	
Narrative	☒

2.7 – Additional Operations	
Narrative	☒
Attachment Q	☒

3.1 – Operating Budget	
Attachment W	☒

3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative	
Narrative	☒
Attachment 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: **Question 1** of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
4.1 – School Portfolio Summary	
Attachment Z	☐
4.2 – Academic Performance Record	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
Attachment Z	☐
4.3 – Fiscal and Operational Performance Record	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
Attachment AA	☐
Attachment BB	☐
Attachment CC	☐
Attachment DD	☐
Attachment EE	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 3** of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
2.10 - Network Governance	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
2.11 - Network Management and Personnel	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
Attachment T	☐
Attachment U	☐
Table 6	☐
Table 7	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 3** of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.11 - Network Management and Personnel (cont.)	
Table 8	☐
Table 9	☐
3.3 – Network Financial Plan	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
Attachment Y	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 4** of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.12 – School Replication	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
Attachment V	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 5** of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity	
Supplementary Narrative	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 6** of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.8 - Charter Management Organization	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
Attachment R	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 7** of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Supplementary Narrative	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 8** of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Supplementary Narrative	☒
Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment	
Supplementary Narrative	☒
Supplementary Table 3	☒

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 9** of Sponsor History and Intent	
2.2 – Facilities	
Supplementary Narrative	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 10** of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Supplementary Narrative	☐
1.3 – Assessments	
Supplementary Narrative	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 11** of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.2 - Academic Focus and Performance Standards	
Supplementary Narrative	☐

Required for Sponsors that answered "Yes" to: **Question 12** of Sponsor History and Intent	
1.9 – Conversion Charter School Planning	
Narrative	☐

Application Narratives

Section 1 – Academic Plan and Design

Section 1.1 – School Mission and Goals (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Provide a mission statement for the proposed charter school. At minimum, the mission statement should specify, in measurable terms, the school's objectives, the students it will serve, and the specific outcomes it aims to achieve. The school's mission statement will serve as the foundation for the entire application.

Mission Statement: The mission of Rock Academy is to re-engage disconnected youth to ensure that they succeed in the postsecondary pathway of their choice. We envision a world where all young people have **the power** to shape their own futures.

Rock Academy Students: Understanding Disconnected Youth: If approved, Rock Academy will be the first-of-its-kind Opportunity Public Charter School. To fully contextualize the mission, goals, and strategy of Rock Academy, it is critical to understand our target student population and the vision for Opportunity Public Charter Schools in the state of Tennessee.

Per Tennessee Code Annotated 49-13-104, an Opportunity Public Charter school is defined as "a public charter school serving any of the grades six through twelve for which at least 75% of the students, at the time of enrollment, are at-risk students." Per code, at-risk is defined as a student who, "at the time of enrollment in an opportunity public charter school, is a member of a family with a household income that does not exceed four hundred percent (400%) of the federal poverty level and meets at least one of the following criteria:

A. The student has dropped out of school without obtaining a high school diploma or high school equivalency credential;

B. The student has been adjudicated as a juvenile delinquent or is awaiting disposition of charges that may result in adjudication as a delinquent;

C. The student has previously been detained or incarcerated in a juvenile detention center;

D. The student has been retained at least twice in any of the grades kindergarten through eight (K-8), or the student is one (1) or more years behind in obtaining credit required for promotion to the next grade level or to graduate from high school in four (4) years with the student's cohort;

E. The student is chronically absent, as defined in Tennessee's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan established pursuant to the Every Student Succeeds Act (20 U.S.C 6301 et seq.);

F. The student is pregnant or a parent as defined in 49-1-903;

G. The student has a documented substance abuse issue; or

H. The student has experienced circumstances of abuse or neglect.

While these risk criteria are robust and diverse, they are all indicators of a shared outcome: a significantly increased risk of dropping out of high school and diminished long-term life outcomes.

While, upon enrollment, we will be able to identify individual risk categories and align support, not all risk categories are easily identifiable through open data records. One indicator, however, is universally tracked and often considered the proverbial canary in the coal mine in terms of student risk – chronic absenteeism. The State of Tennessee defines chronic absenteeism as "...a student missing 10 percent or more of the days the

student is enrolled-for any reason, including excused absences and out-of-school suspensions."[6] Research shows that "Tennessee students who are chronically absent in kindergarten are 15 percentage points less likely to reach proficiency in either third grade math or ELA [and…] Tennessee **students who are chronically absent in ninth grade are 30 percentage points less likely to earn an on-time diploma (62% vs. 92%).**[7]

Long term, the data for students who do not complete high school is bleak. It is **linked to poor outcomes throughout adult life, from poverty and diminished health**[8] **to involvement in the criminal justice system.**[9] In Nashville, a **third (33.6%)** of Nashville High School students - roughly 6,500 students - are chronically absent.[10]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, these trends are not evenly distributed. In our city's most historically underserved communities, the numbers are truly staggering. Nearly a third of all chronically absent high schoolers attend one of four high schools in Nashville:

School	Enrollment Count	Chronically Absent Count	Percent Chronically Absent
Antioch High School (SE)	2040	906.00	44.40
John Overton High (SW)	1943	857.00	44.10
McGavock High (NE)	2027	824.00	40.70
Cane Ridge High School (SE)	1923	819.00	42.60

The highest rates of chronic absenteeism are centered in the Northern pathways – in each of these schools, well over half the student population is chronically absent.

School	Enrollment Count	Chronically Absent Count	Percent Chronically Absent
Maplewood High (NE)	685	444.00	64.80
Pearl-Cohn High (NW)	585	363.00	62.10
Stratford STEM Magnet School (NE)	773	455.00	58.90

Notably, all these schools have higher than average enrollment rates of students who are economically disadvantaged and disproportionately high enrollment rates of students who are BIPOC as compared to district and state averages.

As detailed in the **Student Recruitment and Enrollment** section, nationally and locally**,** chronic absenteeism has seen a precipitous incline over the last 10 years, with the reasons students miss school varying widely. Data suggests that reasons for this increase include "...poor student mental health, lack of access to food and shelter, discipline practices, unsafe or unsupportive school environments, and changed family habits around attendance coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. Perhaps the most important, some argue, is students' relationships with those in the school."[11]

[6] https://www.tn.gov/education/families/student-support/chronic-absenteeism.html
[7] Ibid.
[8] https://www.nber.org/papers/w12352
[9] https://justicepolicy.org/research/education-and-public-safety-policy-brief/
[10] 2024 MNPS' Open Portal Data
[11] https://www.edsurge.com/research/guides/solving-america-s-student-absenteeism-crisis

Locally, we have done extensive research to understand the drivers of chronic absenteeism in Nashville (see **Student Recruitment and Enrollment** and **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** sections). While the reasons are diverse and complex, there are clear trends:

1. **Kids are disengaged:** Students and families repeatedly told our team that school was not relevant or engaging. Many failed to see the short- or long-term value of their academic experiences and, as a result, opted out. Others struggled with academic content, fell behind, and became disenfranchised.
2. **Schools are not designed to serve all kids equally:** Many students feel unsafe and/or unseen at school. For others, it is an issue of basic needs – unstable housing and transportation make getting to and from school a constant struggle; food insecurity makes staying engaged difficult; and lack of access to clean clothing and laundry facilities further complicates coming to school.

Regardless of the reason, the outcome of these realities is an increase in chronic absenteeism and increased and compounding participation in high-risk behaviors, such as those outlined in the Opportunity Schools legislation. These are the disconnected youth that Rock Academy seeks to serve. Opportunity Public Charter Schools exist to create school environments that provide the kinds of robust and personalized supports these students need and deserve to achieve success in life.

Objectives: As implied in our mission, our objective is to identify rising or repeat 9th grade students who are currently disconnected from school and provide them with the comprehensive support they need to:

1. Reconnect to school as evidenced by increased attendance;
2. Improve their academic and social emotional skills;
3. Engage with diverse post-secondary pathways and identify a pathway that meets their goals, interests and talents;
4. Graduate from high school prepared to persist in the pathway of their choice.

b. Describe the goals for the proposed school for the first five (5) years of operation. Explain how these goals align with the purposes for charter schools found in T.C.A. § 49-13-102(a), the state's accountability systems, the authorizer's performance framework, and any priorities the authorizer sets.

Goals in Context: When the Opportunity Schools legislation was passed, it included a provision for the creation of an alternative accountability matrix that took into consideration the special circumstances of Opportunity Public Charter Schools. The sponsors understood that capturing the progress of Opportunity Youth would be complex and require different measures. Additionally, they remained committed to striking a balance between maintaining transparency, a rigorous bar for achievement, and accounting for the challenges faced by Opportunity Youth. The Rock Academy is deeply, both spiritually and functionally, committed to these ideals.

In the fall of 2024, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) convened a working group to provide input around the Opportunity Public Charter Schools accountability framework. The group included representatives from "Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that authorize public charter schools, Charter Schools and Charter School Management Organizations, State Agencies, and Additional Organizations with Charter School Expertise.[12]" Given his extensive experience working with Opportunity Youth, Dr. Ahmed White, lead founder of Rock Academy, was a member of the working group.

In December 2024, the TDOE recommended, and the State Board of Education approved, a modified performance framework for Opportunity Public Charter Schools. The framework is "a modified version of the

[12] https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/stateboardofeducation/documents/2024-sbe-meetings/december-18%2c-2024-sbe-special-called-virtual-meeting/12-18-24%20IV%20C%20Opportunity%20Public%20Charter%20School%20Accountability%20Framework%20Clean.pdf

existing A-F school letter grade formula that was first implemented in 2023. The opportunity public charter school accountability framework includes several key adjustments designed to both acknowledge the populations of at-risk students these schools will serve while maintaining transparency about how well each school is preparing students academically. The changes in this framework adjust how student progress is measured with a greater emphasis on academic growth and rewarding schools for maintaining continuous enrollment of students." The table below outlines the modified measures for Opportunity Public Charter Schools.

Table of Indicator Weights

Indicators	Existing A-F School Letter Grade		Opportunity Public Charter School A-F Letter Grade	
	Middle School	High School	Middle School	High School
Achievement	50%	50%	45%	45%
Growth	40%	30%	45%	30%
Growth - Lowest 25%*	10%	10%	10%	10%
College & Career Readiness	N/A	10%	N/A	15%

*For Opportunity Public Charter Schools, the Growth – Lowest 25% indicator will be *either* the growth of the lowest 25% of the student population *or* a growth measure based on students with continuous enrollment, whichever results in a higher letter grade for the school. For further details, see the description of Opportunity Public Charter School Alternative Growth Measure below.

In their narrative, the TDOE provided the following additional context and recommendations:

Deferring Letter Grade Assignment in the First Year of Operation: Given the unique role intended for opportunity public charter schools, they will not be assigned official letter grades in their first year of operation. This flexibility allows the Department more time to study the program offerings and student population served in these schools.

Proficiency Adjustments and Weighted Growth: The weight of indicators in the letter grade calculation will be adjusted for opportunity public charter schools. Five percent (5%) of the weight of the achievement indicator will shift to the growth indicator for middle schools and the college and career readiness indicator for high schools. As such, for middle schools, the growth indicator will be increased by five percent (5%) and for high schools, the college and career readiness indicator will be increased by five percent (5%).

Continuous Enrollment Focus: Certain performance metrics are adjusted to account for students enrolled for multiple years. The achievement, college and career readiness indicator, and the opportunity public charter school alternative growth indicator will be weighted based on continuous enrollment of students attaining proficiency on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). Specifically, students continuously enrolled for two years who meet or exceed expectations on the TCAP will be counted twice. Students continuously enrolled for three years who meet or exceed expectations on the TCAP will be counted three times. This allows schools to emphasize long-term stability and reward progress over time for schools serving populations of students for whom stable educational placements may have been difficult.

Opportunity Public Charter School Alternative Growth Measure: The current A-F school letter grade system includes a metric weighting the growth of students in the bottom 25 percent (25%) of academic performance.

In the proposed opportunity public charter school accountability framework, schools will be scored on either the growth of the bottom 25% of their students or the growth of students continuously enrolled in their school, whichever results in a higher letter grade for the school. This revision is in keeping with the focus throughout this accountability framework on continuously enrolled students.

The opportunity public charter school Alternative Growth Measure is calculated by comparing each student's performance only to other students who performed similarly in the prior year. Students demonstrating typical growth will score at the 50th percentile. This statistic can be averaged across tests and students to estimate average growth for a school. Schools with average growth percentiles above 50% accelerated student performance relative to the average in Tennessee, regardless of how high or lower performing they may have been at the start of the year. Continuous enrollment weighting is also factored into this Alternative Growth Measure, using the same weighting applied to proficient students. Either the Growth of the Lowest 25% or the Alternative Growth Measure, whichever results in a higher letter grade for the school, will be used for an opportunity public charter school.

Alternative College and Career Readiness Metrics: The opportunity public charter school accountability framework introduces a second pathway for ACT-based college and career readiness. Unlike traditional public schools' A-F letter grades, where students must score 21 to qualify, the accountability framework for opportunity public charter schools also recognize students who improve their ACT score by at least four points from the junior year administration provided by the State to the senior re-take administration provided by the State, even if they do not reach a composite score of 21.

In concluding their recommendation, the committee summarized that, "Opportunity public charter schools are intended to serve students facing significant challenges and disengagement from the traditional classroom environment. PC 1066 requires the Department to develop an accountability framework for opportunity public charter schools that includes performance metrics and targets to ensure students are prepared for post-high school success. By **focusing on long-term growth, postsecondary readiness, and supporting continuous enrollment**, the Department's proposed accountability framework **acknowledges the unique population of students** these schools are meant to serve and their potential to serve as a **critical solution for students who need more tailored educational opportunities**."

Additionally, as the TDOE acknowledged, their recommended goals are best first draft and they are committed to using the extended period between Opportunity Schools launching and the assignment of their first letter grade to collect and analyze real-life data to further finesse target outcomes. Our school is nothing if not a learning organization. We humbly realize that neither we, nor our partners across the state, will get everything right out of the gate. Rather, we are committed to improvement and learning over time. Our initial goals are a thoughtful, well-researched draft. And we look forward to working with our authorizer and the state to leverage learning to make adjustments that capture the spirit of growth and accountability. That said, outlined below is our proposed framework for goals at Rock Academy.

Defining a Comparison Data Set: In considering our goals, TRA aligned its overall strategy with the Opportunity Schools Accountability framework. Specifically, we centered:

1. Acknowledging the unique population of students we serve;
2. Long-Term Growth;
3. Post-Secondary Readiness; and,
4. Emphasizing Continuous Enrollment.

These aims are aligned to the state, federal and authorizer frameworks. Typically, in setting goals, schools look to their peer data to set the context. As outlined above, The Rock Academy (TRA) focused on serving at-risk youth with a focus on rising and repeat 9th graders who are chronically absent, foster-involved and/or experience additional risk factors. Finding a peer data set was difficult for us for a few reasons. First, if approved, ours would be the first school of its kind in Tennessee. So, at present, we are peerless in Nashville and Tennessee. Additionally, the risk indicators we are focused on are not easily isolated in larger data sets. While achievement, growth, and post-secondary readiness are reported by demographic and economic subgroups they are not reported by risk categories in Tennessee. While there are national peers with Opportunity Public Schools, their state accountability frameworks often differ significantly from our own. In order to address this gap, we engaged with Momentum Strategy & Research to support us in setting goals aligned to our mission and the state's accountability framework.

Momentum is a non-profit organization headquartered in Denver, Colorado. Their mission is to ensure that all students have access to a quality education. They help to accomplish this by:

- Collecting and disseminating the best available data and information; and,
- Assisting schools, district, state education agencies, and charter school authorizers in using that data to inform improvements to K-12 policies and practices to improve educational outcomes for all students.

One of their primary areas of focus is on assisting schools that are not well measured by traditional accountability measures with the selection of more accurate measures, development of applicable goals, and setting of rigorous and attainable targets for success. As part of their work, Momentum often works with schools whose missions are to intentionally target students who have historically struggled in their educational careers. They refer to these schools as alternative education campuses, or AECs. Tennessee's newly adopted legislation refers to these schools as Opportunity Schools. Momentum's research consistently shows that the predominance of students who enroll in an AEC are, on average, functioning at 2-3 years behind grade level in both math and reading (Ernst, 2009; Ernst & Turnbull 2010, Ernst, 2014) . In addition, their research has found that students enrolled in AECs tend to grow at rates that are approximately 20% behind their same grade peers. This has been consistently found to be the case for measures of growth using state assessments (Ernst & Betebenner, 2009; Ernst, 2010) as well as on short-cycle, adaptive assessments such as NWEA MAP (Ernst & Turnbull, 2010; Ernst 2014, Ernst 2016) and Renaissance Learning's STAR assessments (Ernst & Beckler, 2015; Ernst 2016).

Based on their research findings, Momentum began collecting both policy and performance data from states that have policies (statute, regulations, and/or rules) that identify schools that qualify as AECs (such as the newly adopted Opportunity School statute) and states that have policies outlining separate or modified accountability systems for those qualifying schools. This work began in 2013 and has been ongoing since that time.

As part of two national charter school dissemination grants they partnered with the National Charter Schools Institute (A-GAME 2018-2021 and A-GAME: Measure What Matters 2022-2025) to develop and annually update a data dashboard that includes outcomes from AECs across the country; including data on 4-, 5-, 6-, and 7-year graduation rates, proficiency rates on statewide assessments of ELA, math, science, and social studies, various attendance metrics, college readiness scores, and dropout rates.

In the absence of available data for Tennessee, given there are not yet any standalone Opportunity Schools (data from district run alternative programs and programs within larger mainstream high schools are not available to the public), Momentum provided us with data from their database to inform both measures that are more appropriate for the school's mission, and targets for success that are based on national trends among AECs. The table below summarizes national AEC data points aligned to Tennessee's Opportunity Public Charter Schools

accountability framework for the last three years. It is worth noting that two major subcategories, TVASS Growth and College and Career Readiness, do not have national analogs for comparison.

National Data from Momentum Alternative Education Campuses Database

Indicator	Measure/Subject	National AEC Figures among All States with AECs		
		2021	2022	2023
Achievement (EOCs)	Math proficiency	9%	8%	9%
	ELA proficiency	20%	21%	21%
	Science proficiency	16%	20%	19%
	Social studies/ humanities proficiency	20%	24%	30%
Growth (TVASS)	Average Growth Index Score	Not collected nationally		
Attendance	Average daily attendance rate	78%	77%	78%
	Chronic absenteeism rate	51%	57%	59%
	Truancy rate	28%	35%	34%
	Stability rate	56%	46%	47%
	Mobility rate	52%	55%	46%
Average ACT Score	Composite Score	15.8	14.8	15.5
Grad Rate (reporting year)	4-year acgr	47.0%	52.0%	51.0%
	5-year acgr	58.0%	58.0%	61.0%
College & Career Readiness	Average CCR Score	Not collected nationally		

The table below captures 2023 AEC data with 2024 data from both Metro Nashville Public Schools and the State of Tennessee (note that these data are from different years but represent the most current for both data sets).

2023 AEC Data Compared to 2023 MNPS and Tennessee

Indicator	Measure/Subject	2023 AEC	2024 MNPS	2024 TN
Achievement (EOCs)	Math proficiency	9%	17.9%	36.4%
	ELA proficiency	21%	33.4%	38.8%
	Science proficiency	19%	29%	44.3%
	Social studies/ humanities proficiency	30%	26.8%	44.7%
Growth (TVASS)	Average Growth Index Score	n/a	5	n/a
Attendance	Chronic absenteeism rate	59%	24.1%	18.9%

Average ACT Score	Composite Score	15.5	17.5	19.0
Grad Rate (reporting year)	4-year ACGR	51.0%	81.2%	85.8%
College & Career Readiness	Percent Meeting 1 or more CCR Criteria	n/a	32.4%	48.9%

It is important to note that the AEC data set includes all AECs from the reporting states. And, as we have discovered in our planning and research phase, there are a diverse range of AECs represented in these data. Some, like Rock is proposing, enroll rising 9th graders - and ostensibly have four years to work with their students. Others start at middle school. Many others focus on students who have previously dropped out and are attempting to complete high school on an accelerated timeline, or in other settings focused on getting a GED rather than a typical diploma. Finally, many others support students who - for a variety of reasons - are over-aged and under credited.

For reasons we will outline more in later sections, we identified nine local high schools as focus schools for recruitment. The primary rationale, however, is that these schools have the highest percentage and/or total count of students in the county when it comes to chronic absenteeism. The table below, outlines the nine schools' chronic absenteeism rates, as well as other performance outcomes for this comparison set.

	Chronic Absent.	Achievement Rate	Achievement Level	TVASS Growth	Account. Rating	Letter Grade	Grad Rate
Antioch High School	37.7%	12.60%	1	3	TSI	D	70.80%
Cane Ridge High School	39.6%	9.10%	1	1	CSI	F	80.90%
Hunters Lane High	42.6%	13.30%	1	4	TSI	D	77.10%
John Overton High	30.6%	15.90%	2	2	TSI	D	73.20%
Maplewood High	57.2%	5.60%	1	3	CSI	D	58.80%
McGavock High	34.1%	11.90%	1	1	CSI	F	72.70%
Pearl-Cohn High	51.0%	7.20%	1	1	CSI	D	78.70%
Stratford STEM Magnet School	48.1%	12.70%	1	3		F	74.80%
Whites Creek	40.7%	10.60%	1	5		C	82.60%

In setting our goals, we largely looked to a combination of national AEC data, Tennessee averages, and MNPS averages – and tried to contextualize those goals to the mission and vision of TRA.

Five Year Goals: Leveraging our knowledge of state and federal accountability measures, the new Opportunity Public Charter Schools accountability framework, the national AEC database, and state and local data sets, TRA set the following goals for our first five years of operation. No authorizer priorities were published on the application site and thus are not included.

Goal 1: Student Attendance			
Each year, at least 80% of students will have an average daily attendance rate of at least 80%.			
Exceeds	90% or Above	Meets	80.0-89.9%
Approaches	60.0-79.9%	Does Not Meet	<60.0%

Rationale

Based on the federal definition, a student is considered chronically absent if they miss 10% of school days or more in an academic year. As outlined in the data above, rates of chronic absenteeism are staggeringly high at our focus schools, as well as for AECs, nationally. As highlighted in our mission and vision, as well as in the Opportunity School's accountability framework, the importance of sustained enrollment and attendance cannot be underscored. Our mission is REENGAGE students have been disconnected - and part of that engagement means coming to school more frequently. As outlined in this application, we will go to great lengths to make coming to school easier, more rewarding, and more effective. These efforts are meant, at least in part, to encourage kids to show up more often - so they can get the benefits of the program and ultimately achieve our end vision of post-secondary success.

In the schools we studied - those that were best at delivering transformational post-secondary outcomes for at-risk youth - chronic absenteeism rates remained high but improved in meaningful ways. Despite the tremendously thoughtful and evidence-based program design at TRA, we'd be foolish to assume that we will magically eliminate all incidences of chronic absenteeism. What we focus on instead is a thoughtful approach to prevention AND response to absenteeism. As an example, most of our peer AEC schools tracked subtypes of chronic absenteeism, including considering students who missed large swaths of consecutive days vs. those who were absent less frequently. Typically, these schools grouped students into high, medium and low attendance risk categories for the purposes of tailoring support. As an example, if a student missed five consecutive days because they were recently unhoused, the response would be different than if a student missed five random days across the course of a month. To be clear, both would be noted and support would be provided to the student in order to improve attendance. But the bottom line here is that our kids will likely continue to miss school - and our goal should be to capture their growth relative to outcomes. Our current hypothesis, based on our study of peer schools, is that if students attend 80% of school days, they are highly likely to succeed in our program. As such, our goal is that annually, 80% of students attend 80% or more days of school.

Goal 2: Student Achievement and Growth

- Each year, at least **90% of students who attend 80%** of instructional days or more in a given year will EITHER meet grade level skill (defined by test norms) OR show meaningful growth.
- Each year, at least **60% of students who attend 60-79.9%** of instructional days in a given year and are enrolled for a minimum of two testing cycles will EITHER meet grade level skill (defined by test norms) OR show meaningful growth.
- Each year, at least **35% of students who attend fewer than 59.9%** of instructional days in a given year and are enrolled for a minimum of two testing cycles will EITHER meet grade level skill (defined by test norms) OR show meaningful growth.

"Meaningful growth" can be demonstrated by achieving one or more of the following:

1. Meeting the growth target set by the test vendor, based on norms;

2. A student growth percentile of at least 40 (Momentum research);
3. Growing by a minimum of one grade level as measured by
    a. increase in grade equivalency score of .9 or more
    b. maintaining or improving their achievement percentile rank, based on vendor norms and reported data, or
    c. improving a proficiency level.

Rationale

Without any comparison data like TVASS, it was difficult to capture a student growth goal that reflected our state specific context. Additionally, in working with Momentum, we saw the outsized impact of setting achievement goals for AEC campuses that were based solely on state tests like EOCs. Nationally, AEC students predictably do not perform well on these metrics which are given one time per year and do not adjust to students' skill level. Particularly for students who are far behind grade level (e.g., two or more years), these tests lack the sensitivity to accurately assess what students know and how much they have grown over the course of a school year.

State standardized assessments of math and reading, for example, can only assess students who are functioning at or near grade level--often testing at grade level plus or minus one grade level. Thus, if a 9th grade student is reading at the 5th grade level and improves a grade level during that year (or even two grade levels), they will still be unable to access the content presented on states' 9th grade reading tests. And, given the student cannot access the content, the test will not reflect the amount of growth that student achieved. However, there are nationally normed assessments of math and reading that are adaptive, which can accurately assess students regardless of their skill level, and we will select one of these assessments after being approved. We also considered our goals around attendance, and the state accountability framework's emphasis on sustained enrollment. Taken together, we set tiered goals that highlight student growth in context around attendance. The more students attend, the more they will learn and grow.

Goal 3: College and Career Readiness

Each year, 50% of graduates will have successfully completed at least one of the state's defined college and career ready measures.

Exceeds	65.0-100.0%	Meets	50.0-64.9%
Approaches	30.0-49.9%	Does Not Meet	<30.0%

Rationale

We deeply appreciated the state's approach to defining college and career readiness in diverse and inclusive ways. This very much aligns to the approach at TRA. We know that many of our students will graduate and enroll in a 4-year college or university - and their ACT scores will be an important indicator of their readiness. Other students will choose to go directly to work in a high-demand, high-wage trade using an industry credential earned in school. At TRA, we would consider both of these outcomes equally successful - and realize that there will be many other ways for students to demonstrate readiness for postsecondary success. And, frankly, this measure is so central to our mission. We exist to reengage disconnected students so that they can achieve their own definitions of postsecondary success. And so it felt important to set a rigorous bar for these outcomes. Because the CCR measure is relatively unique to Tennessee, it was difficult to find a peer comparison group. Additionally, given our

mission, our model and our robust CTE program - we felt compelled and confident that Rock Students can be pacesetters here. As a result, we set our goal to match or exceed the State's average CCR rates - which would be nearly 17% above the district average.

Goal 4: Graduation Rate			
Exceeds	80.0-100.0%	Meets	63.0-79.0%
Approaches	50.0-62.9%	Does Not Meet	<50.0%
Rationale			

The long-term consequences of not graduating from high school are stark and wide reaching, and students who are chronically absent are much more likely to leave school without a diploma. "Tennessee **students who are chronically absent in ninth grade are 30 percentage points less likely to earn an on-time diploma (62% vs. 92%)."** For foster youth, it's even more dire. Foster youth in Nashville are almost twice as likely to drop out of school than their local peers, and more than four times as likely to drop out than their statewide peers. Students who do not graduate have significantly poorer outcomes later in life**, from poverty and diminished health to involvement in the criminal justice system.**

As a result, we know that graduation is a critical indicator of our mission. We also know that our students are coming to us with significant challenges - and there will be some who do not complete high school in four years but return for a fifth. Others might fall off the path and determine that a GED pathway is more suited to their goals. And others may - despite robust support - decide to leave school without graduating. And while, as evidenced in great detail in our application, we will go to great lengths to limit these outcomes with our evidence-based program - we will be too late or too little for some students. We debated the measure for this goal at length. Aiming to match national AEC averages felt inappropriate because some of those programs serve students with different goals and timelines. Aiming for the district or state averages seemed to ignore the intricacies of our student population. In the end, we set a goal to close the distance between the four year graduation rate of national AECs (51%) and the average graduation rate of our local focus schools (74%) by half. The distance between 51 and 74% is 23%. Rounding up, half of 23% is 12% - so our goal is 51%+12% or 63%.

In Summary, TCA §49-13-102 [13] outlines six purposes for public charter schools:

1. Improve learning for all students and close the achievement gap between high and low students;
2. Provide options for parents to meet educational needs of students;
3. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods, and provide greater decision making authority to schools and teachers in exchange for greater responsibility for student performance;
4. Measure performance of pupils and faculty, and ensure that children have the opportunity to reach proficiency on state academic assessments;
5. Create new professional opportunities for teachers; and

[13] https://law.justia.com/codes/tennessee/title-49/chapter-13/section-49-13-102/

6. Afford parents substantial meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children.

We believe that our goals and our model align to each of these purposes, and in alignment to the spirit and purpose of Opportunity Public Charter schools.

c. Describe the process for setting, monitoring, and revising goals. Detail how progress toward the goals is measured.

Setting and Revising Goals: At the end of each school year, the Leadership Team will convene to complete a holistic data stepback: reviewing areas of growth, areas in need of improvement, and key drivers of success. This team will include the Executive Director, the Principal, the Attendance Liaison, the Student Supports Coordinator and, when hired, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Culture Dean. During this stepback, the team will consider the data sources outlined in the table below. During stepbacks, all data will be disaggregated by individual, cohort and subgroup trends.

Rock Academy Data Portfolio					
Type of Data	**Frequency**	**Type of Data**	**Frequency**	**Type of Data**	**Frequency**
Formative Assessments	Ongoing	Summative Assessments	End of Instructional Unit	Diagnostic Assessments	BOY and As Needed
Norm-Referenced Standardized Tests	1-4 Times Per Year	Universal Screeners	3 Times Per Year	Report Card	Quarterly
Family Surveys	Quarterly	Social-Emotional Screener	Quarterly	Community Partner Surveys	Quarterly
Teacher Feedback	Quarterly	TNReady and TVAAS	Annually	Attendance and Culture Data	Bi-Weekly
Credit Attainment	Bi-Annually	Enrollment Data	Monthly	Industry Credentials Data	Annually

In addition to this internal data, we will work closely with our authorizer and the TDOE to share trends and stay abreast of statewide Opportunity Public Charter Schools data as we consider our ongoing goals. After careful consideration, the Leadership Team will set revised goals and submit to the Board of Directors for consideration and approval in advance of the upcoming academic year.

Monitoring Goals: A holistic summary of our overall assessment and monitoring strategy can be found in section 1.3 of this application. As outlined there and in the table above, TRA has a robust and ongoing system of data analysis that allows our team to closely monitor progress and make just-in-time adjustments to strategies. Additionally, given the nature of our mastery-based learning model (outlined in detail in the next section of this application), teachers are constantly receiving in the moment data on progress and making immediate adjustments to support individual student needs. Our mastery-based model is essentially a continuous cycle of RTI^2. As outlined in subsequent sections, our staffing model, as well as our daily and annual schedule, allow for substantive shared staff planning and development time. In alignment with our mission and values, the purpose

of these strategies is to ensure that our team has ample time to reflect on progress and adjust strategy. Given the nature of our student community, we know that our students' needs are likely to change and evolve over time - and so must our approach to meeting them. Additionally, we consider ourselves a learning organization. We know that a plan is simply the best *initial* strategy. But to truly achieve our mission, we must be constantly titrating our approach to meet the needs of the children in front of us at that moment. As a result, our team has a series of annual stepback days, weekly shared planning time, weekly coaching and development, robust student supports staffing and an intentionally flexible instructional model that allows for constant monitoring of progress and opportunities to adjust strategy in the moment.

d. Describe any innovative or unique features of the proposed school or education model, and detail how these unique features align with the mission of the school.

Key Design Elements: As an Opportunity Public Charter School, Rock Academy specifically exists to serve at-risk students, with a focus on youth who have been chronically absent from school and/or who are foster-involved. Our school design team has spent their careers - including thousands of hours over the last two years - researching and codifying how best to support Opportunity Youth in Nashville. Our design process was driven by two core commitments:

1. An understanding that our students will come to us in distinctly different places in their learning and with distinctly different needs, and we must rise to meet them; and,
2. Our students are not experiments. Our approach must leverage research- and evidence-based practices.

To that end, in our design phase, we were hyper-focused on deeply understanding our target student population and ensuring our design was aligned to their specific needs. Outlined in more detail in section 1.6, from local students, teachers, leaders, community support agencies as well as dozens of national Opportunity Public Charter Schools (often referred to by different names depending on the state). This research included spending weeks embedded in local juvenile and truancy courts talking to students, families, staff and support agencies; conducting focus groups with diverse stakeholder groups; convening an advisory group to guide our questions and support our analysis of trends; meeting with hundreds of community members and experts in the field; and attending dozens of site visits and learning experiences to learn from peer schools across the country. During this work, we found incredibly consistent themes from both our local and national partners.

In terms of what students need, we heard two clear themes from this diverse stakeholder group about why Opportunity Youth struggle to achieve success in traditional school settings:

- **Belonging:** Students and families did not feel seen, known, or cared for in their schools. Students did not engage in sports, clubs, or other opportunities to create community either because they did not feel welcome, because they did not have the time or money to participate, and/or because there were no options available that aligned to their interests.
- **Safety:** Students did not feel safe at their schools. Some had experiences of bullying at their previous schools that made them feel generally unsafe. Others experienced ongoing threats, retaliation, and peer pressure that followed them both in their neighborhoods and at school. Additionally, students who were targets of bullying were often identified as exhibiting unsafe behaviors – either as a defense mechanism and/or a response to their environments.
- **Engagement:** Students and families shared various reasons why they were not engaged and did not feel successful in school. Students often indicated that their classes were boring and often staffed by substitutes or unprepared and/or unkind teachers. Students indicated that they fell behind in learning and/or credits and did not see a path to catch up. If students (or families) fell ill, they also noted that they struggled to stay

engaged and/or catch up with their schoolwork. These challenges often compound, leading to year-over-year learning loss and a sense that there was no way to succeed.

- **Housing:** Many students indicated that they struggled with stable housing. This was exacerbated by income indicators and/or involvement in the foster care system. Moving frequently and/or experiencing homelessness makes attending school emotionally and logistically difficult.
- **Transportation:** Students relayed that they struggled to get to school. This was a nearly universal challenge for the students and families from whom we collected feedback in Nashville. Choice schools do not offer transportation, meaning students must rely on limited and time-consuming public transportation to get to school. These needs are exacerbated when families experience unstable housing. Nashville also has one of the earliest starting times for high school of any district in the country. These early start times are not only developmentally destructive, but they make transportation even more difficult.
- **Basic Needs:** Students stated that they faced challenges in getting their basic needs met, making attendance and engagement at school difficult. The most common struggles cited by students and families were lack of access to clean laundry/uniforms and food.

In terms of what IS working for this student population, we heard similar themes as well. Our peer schools, along with successful community support agencies across the state and the country, consistently named the following themes as critical to supporting Opportunity Youth.

1. **Belonging:** Kids (and adults) are disproportionately likely to achieve success when they feel safe, seen, and a valuable part of a rich community. They need and deserve a culture where they can learn prosocial competencies. They need and deserve a culture where they have shared accountability for belonging. They need and deserve a culture that values them explicitly and inherently.
2. **Flexibility:** While Opportunity Youth share some similar characteristics, their nuanced experiences and needs range dramatically. And their paths are not linear. This reality cannot be planned around, it must be planned for. The best outcomes for Opportunity Youth occurred in spaces where leaders built proactively flexible structures. They met kids where they were and, day by day, helped them move further down their path. They constantly ask “what does THIS student need at THIS moment to move closer to achieving their goals?” and design structures that allow for this flexible thinking.
3. **Relevance:** When juggling the complex realities of life - youth, particularly at-risk you, who don’t see the immediate and/or long-term value of their schooling experiences understandably tend to opt out. Opportunity Youth thrive in spaces that put a premium on creating deeply relevant learning experiences for youth.

These three characteristics - Belonging, Flexibility, Relevance - are the Key Design Elements of our school.

Research Based Framework: With clear design elements aligned with our target student population, our design team studied different school models that allowed for belonging, flexibility and relevance. Nearly all of our national peers were leveraging a similar well-researched school design framework: Whole Child Design. In and out of Opportunity School settings, many schools reference Whole Child Design, though often they are not fully implementing its complex research-based framework. Specifically, “a whole child education prioritizes the full scope of a child’s developmental needs to ensure that every child reaches their fullest potential. A whole child approach understands that students' education and life outcomes are dependent upon their access to safe and welcoming learning environments and rich learning experiences in and out of school.” [14] Whole Child Design challenges school practitioners to realize that modern school design was not constructed with equity or brain

[14] https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/topic/whole-child-education

science in mind. As such, change - in particular for our most at risk students - requires innovation that addresses both of these omissions. In 2021 the Learning Policy Institute, in partnership with Turnaround for Children (now ASU's Center for Whole Child Education) released a set of Design Principles for Whole Child Design schools, the result of a years-long and impressively collaborative research process. A core thesis in their findings was that there is no "single" Whole Child Design School, but rather all WCD schools are designed around a set of five guiding principles with three overarching design elements:

1. **Positive Developmental Relationships:** The cultivation of relationships in which caring and attachment are joined with adult guidance that enables children to learn skills, grow in their confidence and competence, and become more able to perform tasks on their own and take on new challenges.
2. **Environments Filled with Safety and Belonging:** Environments that support students in "all domains of development - physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and emotional." In doing so, they "buffer students from stress and adversity and provide safety and consistency, so that students can take risks, explore new experiences, and develop their identities."
3. **Rich Learning Experiences and Knowledge Development:** Rich learning experiences and knowledge development occur when "pedagogical approaches, curricular designs, and assessment practices…enable students to deeply understand disciplinary content and develop skills that will allow them to solve complex problems; communicate effectively; and, ultimately, manage their own learning.
4. **Development of Skills, Habits and Mindsets:** In addition to a rigorous and flexible approach to the development of academic knowledge and skills, Rock Academy is committed to teaching social, emotional, and cognitive skills with equal emphasis and opportunities for practice.
5. **Integrated Support Systems:** These are a web of supports and structures that address students' and families' comprehensive needs. Critically, these supports and services should be seamlessly integrated into the school experience to reduce delays in access and benefit.

Critically, each principle should be applied in a way that is personalized, culturally affirming, and empowering to the community it is designed to serve. So, for example, as an Opportunity Public Charter High School our approach to creating Rich Learning Experiences and Knowledge Development will look justifiably different from a bi-lingual elementary school. However, both schools could benefit from and create a school model steeped in the benefits of Whole Child Design. It is the alignment of each design principle to one another, and the alignment of all elements to the specific student population that matters most. Our innovative design framework does just that – it applies each of these guiding principles in ways that align to the needs and will allow us to realize our specific mission of serving Opportunity Youth. Much more detail around these design principles can be found in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards, School Calendar and Schedule, Parent and Community Engagement, School Culture and Discipline** sections. However, in the narrative below, we have highlighted some of the innovative ways Rock Academy's design ensures that the principles of Whole Child Design are applied in alignment with our student population and our key design elements.

Key Design Element 1: Belonging

- ➢ Whole Child Development Principle: Positive Developmental Relationships Each student will be assigned to a **House** that will be led by a full-time **mentor** that will loop with their house cohort as they matriculate through school. This allows mentors and their students to develop deep, rich, trusting relationships over time. Mentors will serve as students' and families' primary person, ensuring that they have a consistent adult at the school coordinating communications and support. Additionally, we will have **on-demand counseling** services on campus that every student can access. While many schools implement House or similar advisory programs, our innovation is in both the looping structure over time, as well as the fact that

mentors are full time, non-lead instructional staff members. This allows them to devote ample time to engaging with students in House, as well as in academic and non-academic settings.

➢ Whole Child Development Principle: Environments Filled with Safety and Belonging Rock Academy will also leverage a **small school model** with an emphasis on building **strong routines** and culture to ensure students feel safe and welcome. We will implement **restorative practices** aligned to a set of **core values** to support this work.

Key Design Element 2: Relevance

➢ Whole Child Development Principle: Rich Learning Experiences and Knowledge Development Students will engage in a diverse set of **career and technical education (CTE)** options that allow them to apply their learning to relevant, job-embedded experiences. While many schools offer CTE programs, our innovation stems from the breadth and purpose of our CTE offerings. Our approach must provide students with relevant learning opportunities that not only contextualize core academic skills, but also allow students to "try on" different pathways to post-secondary success. To this end, rather than providing students with a single CTE pathway option, all students will engage with a minimum of four diverse pathways - each of which is connected to careers in high-demand industries. In 9th and 10th grades, students will engage in introductory courses in all four pathways. By 11th grade, they will narrow their focus to two pathways where they will engage in more advanced coursework and work-based learning opportunities. Pathway options include:

- **Caring Pathway:** This pathway will expose students to skills relevant to caring for people and other living things. CTE pathways that align to the caring pathway include behavioral health, diagnostic services, sports and human performance, and therapeutic services.
- **Technical Pathway:** This pathway will expose students to the specialized skills needed to pursue a career in technology. CTE pathways that align to the technical pathway include coding, cyber security, digital arts and design, networking systems, and web design.
- **Trade Pathway:** This pathway will expose students to highly sought after trade skills. CTE pathways that align to the trade pathway include welding, MEP systems, structural systems, and residential and commercial construction.
- **Creative Pathway:** This pathway will expose students to creative skills and professions. CTE pathways that align to the creative pathway include culinary arts, digital arts and design and engineering.

In addition to these relevant CTE pathways, students' core curriculum materials are selected, in part, to ensure that they are **relevant and engaging**, and aligned to the diverse CTE pathways to ensure students see a connection between their academic work and their long-term goals.

Key Design Element 3: Flexibility

➢ Whole Child Development Principle: Development of Habits Skills and Mindsets When in classes, students will engage with a **culturally responsive curriculum**. Science definitively tells us that students learn better when they can personally relate to what they are learning and see themselves in the materials they are learning with – specifically, studies show that "drawing from students' cultural knowledge … contributes favorably to reading comprehension and mathematical thinking…using texts, materials, and examples that draw from students' cultural schemas and background knowledge makes learning easier because it leverages students' existing neural pathways."[2] In other words, students must be able to attach new ideas and skills to existing ones. Neurologist and former teacher Judy Willis reiterates that students need "to

attach a new piece of information to an old one, or it just won't stick. The brain stores information in the form of neural pathways, or networks. If a student acquires new information that's unrelated to anything already stored in his brain, it's tough for the new information to get into those networks because it has no scaffolding to cling to."[3]

- Whole Child Development Principle: Integrated Support Systems Our students need and deserve instruction responsive to lessons learned about adolescent brain science. To that end, Rock Academy will provide students with a **later start time**: school hours will be between 9:30 - 4:30. Classrooms will implement a **mastery-based learning** approach to instruction whereby students have the ability to engage with instruction and demonstrate mastery in a more flexible way. This innovative design sets us apart from other schools, the vast majority of whom approach education from a traditional, one-size-fits-all, linear design. This often looks like "setting forth a curriculum and benchmarks in advance and following a set plan for the duration of the school year. Students are expected to hit predetermined milestones in key subjects like reading and math."[1] While this time-bound approach is insufficient for many learner profiles, it is particularly problematic for Opportunity Youth. The traditional model inevitably leaves many students behind, as pacing has been predetermined and is not based on where students actually are in their learning and little (if any) time is left to fill those gaps. At Rock Academy, we will leverage a mastery-based approach to instruction - specifically the Modern Classrooms Project approach (described in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section). In addition to a flexible academic approach, we know that students need support in building skills and mindsets that address their specific needs and set them up for long term success. To support this, **social-emotional learning** will be initiated during daily House time and purposefully integrated into all other content and spaces.

  As a commitment to **health and wellness**, we will also require that all students take physical education (PE) classes three times a week every year they are enrolled in the school, well exceeding the state's requirement. Health and wellness will be embedded into PE time, ensuring that our students regularly engage in physical activity and are afforded the time to learn deeply about how to live a healthy life. We will also provide students with on-demand access to washers, dryers, and laundry supplies on campus to ensure that clean clothing does not become a barrier to attending school.

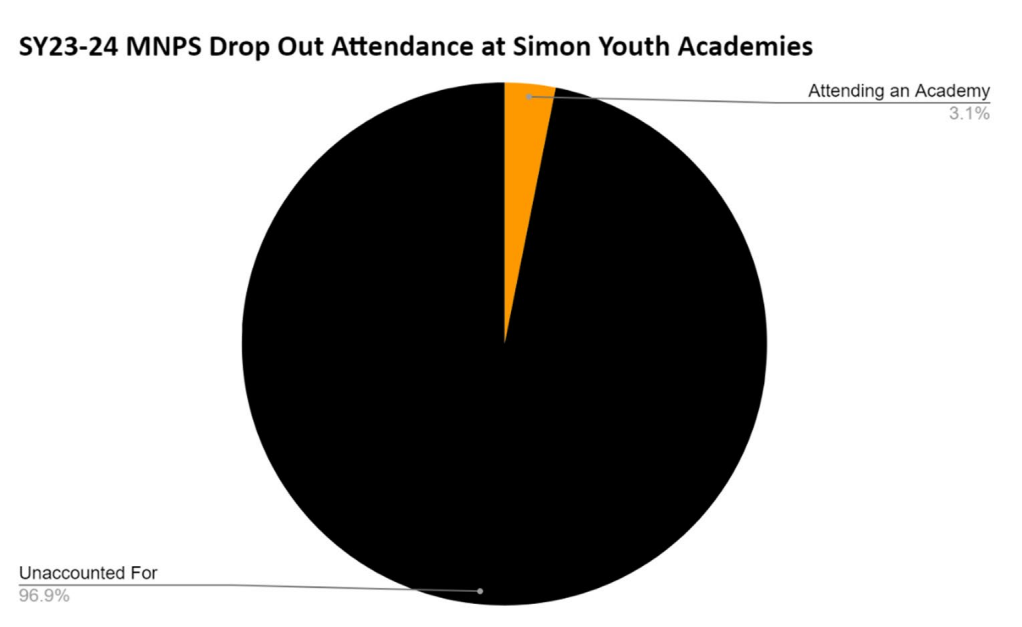
  Through robust and intentional **community partnerships**, Rock Academy will be a **one-stop-shop** for students and families to support their diverse and ongoing needs. These services include services such as housing support, food security, mental health resources and many others. Critically, this includes ensuring that all students have access to **transportation** to and from school that is flexible, convenient and free for families.

Taken together, Rock Academy's key innovation lies in our commitment to designing every aspect of our school to meet our specific population of students' unique needs. In doing so, we can realize our mission of re-engaging disconnected youth to ensure that they succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice. Our innovation further lies in the fact that, holistically, an option like the Rock Academy does not exist in Nashville. It is worth noting that while MNPS offers a vast array of traditional high school models with academy and magnet options, none of those options explicitly and exclusively serve the student population outlined in the Rock's mission and the Opportunity Schools legislation. In addition to traditional high school options, MNPS offers two additional programs for at-risk students.

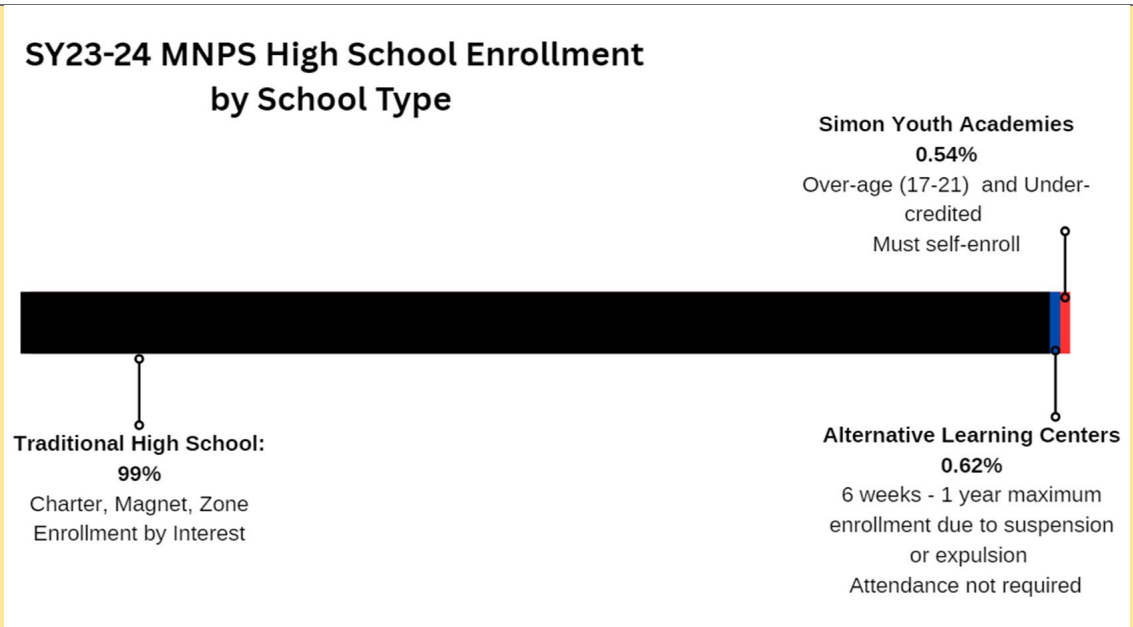
First, as required by law, students serving extended suspensions or expulsions can attend an Alternative Learning Center (ALC) for a maximum of one school year. These are inherently temporary placements where attendance is optional for students. Students can pursue HiSet completion or credit attainment while at an ALC but at the end of their suspension or expulsion term, they return to their school of zone.

In addition, MNPS operates three Simon Youth Academies. There are three Simon Youth Academies in Nashville: Hickory Hollow, Opry Mills and Old Cockrill. All require attendees to be between the ages of 17-21 and require eight credits of fewer of the 22 necessary to meet graduation requirements. Meaning, they must have completed more than 60% of the coursework and dropped out of their traditional school placement in order to be eligible to attend. In addition, The Academy at Opry Mills requires that "the students we serve must have a strong desire to complete their high-school education, as exhibited by no history of truancy and no record of suspension of 10 or more days per school year." In SY23-24 just 132 students attended one of the three Simon Youth Academies in Nashville. Because the enrollment is so small, they do not have enough data to generate report card grades or to publish EOC performance trends, however, their average ACT score was 14.5 and less than 13 total students achieved Ready Graduate Status – far below both state and district trends.

MNPS high schools enroll about 24,000 high school students each year. While the attendance is, by design, somewhat variable, Johnson ALC served 77 students in SY23-24. Citywide, the drop out rate is 17.6% - or 4,224 students each year. Combined, the three Simon Youth Academies served 132 students in SY23-24 - about 3% of overall drop outs, leaving 4,092 (97%) of students who dropped out unaccounted for:



ALCs and the Simon Youth Academies are an important part of the continuum of options for Nashville Students. However, taken together, and illustrated in the graph below, the vast majority - 99% - of MNPS high school students attend a traditional high school program. And no program – traditional or alternative – is designed to serve the student population identified in the Opportunity Youth legislation or in Rock Academy's mission.



Traditional MNPS high school programs offer a variety of supports and interventions for students who are at-risk as outlined in the Opportunity Youth Legislation. And for some – these are effective. However, there are literally thousands of students each year dropping out of high school and/or approaching drop out risk as evidenced by chronic absenteeism and other risk behaviors. And these students need and deserve an option built for them – that supports them in achieving their fullest potential.

As we have outlined above and expounded upon at length throughout the application, the Rock Academy's program is an evidence-based approach to exactly this student group – which is unlike any other option currently available to students, families or teachers in the district (or the state, for that matter).

Its design innovation lies in the combination of programmatic elements tailored specifically to the at-risk student population IN Nashville. These innovations include, but are not limited to;

- A small school model;
- Dedicated, longitudinal mentors for every student;
- A flexible model including a late start time
- Free, universal transportation
- Robust support staffing;
- A responsive and relevant curriculum delivered via mastery-based instruction;
- A personalized approach to social emotional learning built for this specific student population;
- A seasoned and proven leader with a long history of success serving this student population; and,
- A staff with a shared commitment and intentional support designed for this specific student population.

While individually many, but not all, of these elements are available in some MNPS schools there is no single school that combines all these relevant and responsive components with a specific intention of serving Opportunity Youth.

As such, these innovations meet all of the statutorily required purposes of charter schools in the state of Tennessee. The deep hope of Rock Academy is that it can partner with the district to provide another option in the continuum of options for our city's most vulnerable youth.

Section 1.2 – Academic Focus and Performance Standards (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Describe the academic focus for the proposed school.

We know that our students will come to us in distinctly different places in their learning and with distinctly different learning needs, styles, and gifts. We have designed our academic plan in alignment with research that demonstrates how to effectively reengage students who, for a myriad of reasons, have not had their needs met in their previous learning environments and have become disconnected from school. Additionally, we know that our students' paths will not be linear, and so our approach is designed to meet them where they are, day-by-day, and respond to their needs to ensure long-term success. The academic focus of our school is supporting Opportunity Youth to develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies to succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice. Our academic focus is centered around; mastery-based learning, rich social emotional learning, and relevant, career and technical education (CTE).

b. Describe the academic plan for the proposed school. Detail how the academic plan relates to the mission and goals of the proposed school. **"Academic plan" means a platform that supports the academic focus of the charter school and will include instructional goals and methods for the school, which, at a minimum, shall include teaching and classroom instruction methods, materials and curriculum that will be used to provide students with knowledge, proficiency and skills needed to reach the goals of the school pursuant to T.C.A. § 49- 13-104 (2)**

c. Detail key characteristics of the academic plan such as educational philosophy, instructional methods, and innovative teaching methods. Explain how the academic plan's characteristics support the school's mission, promote academic achievement, and align with Tennessee's academic standards.

(NOTE: subsection d proceeds this portion of the narrative as it made more sense in the context of considering subsections a,b,c,e, and f.)

e. Outline class sizes and structures for elementary, middle, and high school divisions, and note any significant differences among them.

f. Provide an overview of the curriculum the school will offer. Detail how the proposed curriculum is well-suited for the targeted student population and aligned to Tennessee Academic Standards. Identify any gaps within the curriculum related to Tennessee's Academic Standards and how those gaps will be addressed. ***Note: If an authorizer approves a charter application that includes textbooks and instructional materials not approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-2206, the approved application will serve as documentation of the authorizer's decision to waive the sponsor's requirement to use State Board-approved textbooks and instructional materials.*** *"Curriculum" means a list of courses available to students enrolled in the LEA, accompanied by a course description and a list of the materials that will be used to provide instruction for the course pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-2-138*

Instructional Goals: As outlined in the previous section, we have established four big goals, which are summarized in the table below:

Rock Academy Big Goals	
Goal 1: Student Attendance	**Goal 2: Student Achievement and Growth**
Each year, at least 80% of students will have an average daily attendance rate of at least 80%.	Each year, at least 90% of students who attend 80% of instructional days or more in a given year will

	EITHER meet grade level skill (defined by test norms) OR show meaningful growth.
Goal 3: Career Readiness	**Goal 4: Graduation Rate**
Each year, 50% of graduates will have successfully completed at least one of the state's defined college and career ready measures.	Beginning in year 4 of the contract term, and each year thereafter, Rock Academy's 4-year graduation rate be 63% or higher.

Also outlined in previous section, these goals align to our mission and vision because they focus on re-engaging disconnected youth and ensuring they are on a path to succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice.

Educational Philosophy: To achieve these goals, our educational philosophy is rooted in Whole Child Design, as outlined in section 1.1. Whole Child Design is an evidence-based framework that supports schools helping, "... youth build resilience and knowledge; develop their interests, identities, and passions; and grow the skills, habits, and mindsets they need to live lives of fulfillment." [15] All of which are in direct alignment with our mission.

The five core design principles of Whole Child Design are outlined in the table below:

Principle	Description
Positive Developmental Relationships	The cultivation of relationships in which caring and attachment are joined with adult guidance that enables children to learn skills, grow in their confidence and competence, and become more able to perform tasks on their own and take on new challenges.
Environments Filled with Safety and Belonging	Environments that support students in "all domains of development - physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and emotional." In doing so, they "buffer students from stress and adversity and provide safety and consistency, so that students can take risks, explore new experiences, and develop their identities."
Rich Learning Experiences and Knowledge Development	Rich learning experiences and knowledge development occur when "pedagogical approaches, curricular designs, and assessment practices…enable students to deeply understand disciplinary content and develop skills that will allow them to solve complex problems; communicate effectively; and, ultimately, manage their own learning."
Development of Skills, Habits and Mindsets	In addition to a rigorous and flexible approach to the development of academic knowledge, there must be a commitment to teaching social, emotional, and cognitive skills with equal emphasis to academic skills and opportunities for practice.
Integrated Support Systems	Integrated support systems are a web of supports and structures that address students' and families' comprehensive needs. Critically, these supports and services should be seamlessly integrated into the school experience to reduce delays in access and benefit.

[15] https://k12.designprinciples.org/sites/default/files/SoLD_Design_Principles_Integrating_DPs_12PAGE.pdf

Inherent to the Whole Child Design Model is the premise that different schools will operationalize the five key design principles differently - as they should align to the needs of the students at a given school, which will inherently vary from school to school. In other words, Whole Child Design outlines the research-based *what*; but schools must then design the *how* in alignment with the needs of their specific student population. To this end, we conducted extensive research into our student population to understand their needs.

We conducted thousands of hours of research over the course of two years, including holding interviews and focus groups and administering surveys, all in the spirit of understanding the *why* behind students in Nashville experiencing chronic absenteeism so that we could then design how to support them in reengaging in school. To this end, several key themes emerged around why students might struggle with attending and succeeding in school:

- **Belonging:** Students and families did not feel seen, known, or cared for in their schools. Students did not engage in sports, clubs, or other opportunities to create community - both because they do not feel welcome and/or because they do not have the time or money to participate.
- **Safety:** Students did not feel safe at their schools. Some had experiences of bullying at their previous schools that made them feel generally unsafe. Others experienced ongoing threats, retaliation, and peer pressure that followed them both in their neighborhoods and at school. Additionally, students who were targets of bullying were often identified as exhibiting unsafe behaviors – either as a defense mechanism and/or a response to their environments.
- **Engagement:** Students and families shared various indicators in which they were not engaged and did not feel successful in school. For instance, students indicated that their classes were boring and often staffed by substitutes or unprepared and/or unkind teachers. Students indicated that they fell behind in learning and/or credits and did not see a path to catch up. If students (or families) fell ill, they also noted that they struggled to stay engaged and/or catch up with their schoolwork.
- **Housing:** Many students indicated that they struggled with stable housing. This was exacerbated by income indicators and/or involvement in the foster care system. Moving frequently and/or experiencing homelessness makes attending school emotionally and logistically difficult.
- **Transportation:** Students relayed that they struggled to get to school. This was a nearly universal challenge for the students and families from whom we collected feedback. Choice schools do not offer transportation, meaning students must rely on limited and time-consuming public transportation to get to school. These needs are exacerbated when families experience unstable housing. Nashville also has one of the earliest starting times for high school of any district in the country. These early start times are not only developmentally destructive, but they make transportation even more difficult.
- **Basic Needs:** Students stated that they faced challenges in getting their basic needs met, making attendance and engagement at school difficult. The most common struggles cited by students and families were lack of access to clean laundry/uniforms and food.

To ensure we achieve our goals, we cannot plan *around* these challenges. Rather, we must plan *for* them. And the flexibility inherent in the framework of the Whole Child Design Model affords us the ability to plan for and respond to the vastly different needs our students will bring every year. From the research that informed the profile of struggles experienced by students and families above, we derived the overarching key design elements and supporting practices of our academic plan, all of which collectively align to the five tenets of the Whole Child Design Model. Below outlines the framework of our academic plan, which is subsequently described in

detail in response to prompt c. Research and data demonstrating the effectiveness of our academic plan in meeting our students' specific needs are outlined in prompt d.

Rock Academy Key Design Element 1: Belonging	
Whole Child Design Model Aligned Principles	**Rock Academy Aligned Practices**
Positive Developmental Relationships	• House System • Mentors
Environments Filled with Safety and Belonging	• Small School Model • Strong Routines • Core Values • Restorative Practices

Addressed Areas of Student and Family Needs		
Belonging	Safety	Engagement

Value of Belonging: An array of research definitively shows that feeling a sense of belonging is critical to human beings of all ages – children and adults alike. Researchers posit that feeling a sense of belonging is such a fundamental human need that it stands as a major factor in a person's psychological development. [16] In addition to affecting mental health, research indicates that having a sense of belonging has a marked positive impact on behavior, engagement, and academic performance. [17] Conversely, not having a sense of belonging carries negative consequences, with students feeling disconnected from their schools and the people in them, which leads to a significant risk of dropping out of school. [18] Since our students will come to us already feeling disconnected, cultivating a sense of belonging in all of our students will be paramount to achieving our mission of re-engaging every student we serve. To this end, a key design element of our academic plan is fostering a strong sense of belonging in all school stakeholders, especially in the students we serve. Our focus on ensuring all students feel a sense of belonging aligns to two of the Whole Child Model design principles: positive developmental relationships and environments filled with safety and belonging.

Aligned Practices: We will enact the following practices, all of which will work in tandem to cultivate and sustain belonging, ensuring our students form strong relationships and feel safe and welcome at school.

1. **House System:** We will implement a House system, which will function as the foundational structure for cultivating and sustaining students' sense of belonging. All students will be assigned to a House; each House will be led by an adult mentor who will serve as the primary person for each student in the House. Students will stay with their mentors in their assigned Houses throughout the entirety of their time at the school, allowing mentors and students to form rich, trusting relationships. House cohorts will be small. Similar to our small school model (described below), keeping House cohorts small allows mentors to provide robust, individualized support to the students in their Houses, as well as better ensures that students are able to form meaningful relationships with their House peers. As explained in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section and outlined in **Attachment B**, we have embedded time for House within the daily schedule.

[16] Stéphanie Girard, P. D. (2017). Sense of Belonging at School: Defining Attributes, Determinants, and Sustaining Strategies. IAFOR Journal of Education, 5(2), 105–119. https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.5.2

[17] https://k12engagement.unl.edu/REVIEW%20OF%20EDUCATIONAL%20RESEARCH-2013-Thapa-357-85.pdf

[18] Stéphanie Girard, P. D. (2017). Sense of Belonging at School: Defining Attributes, Determinants, and Sustaining Strategies. IAFOR Journal of Education, 5(2), 105–119. https://doi.org/10.22492/ije.5.2

Specifically, students will begin and end each school day in their Houses. Students will participate in a 30-minute House period at the start of school, where they will engage in an array of relationship building and social-emotional skill development activities. The morning House period will also function as time for mentors to individually check-in with students so that they can identify any issues that may be adversely affecting a student and plan for the provision of supports accordingly. Throughout the day, mentors will follow their students, pushing into their classes and providing any needed support as students engage in their academic classes. Mentors and their students will also end the school day together in a 45-minute House period, which will be flexibly used according to student need (explained in more detail in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section). One day a week the flexible House period will be used to deliver social-emotional focus lessons, providing students with explicit instruction about and opportunities to practice using social-emotional skills. In short, the House system will lend itself to mentors and students forming positive, supportive relationships that will be sustained over the course of students' time at the school and will afford students the opportunity to develop social-emotional skills.

2. **Mentors:** As explained above, every House will be led by a mentor, who will be a full-time employee of the school. Importantly these mentors are in addition to teachers. So, mentors are not responsible for planning and teaching core content in addition to their mentorship duties. Mentors will be integral in ensuring that all students feel a strong sense of belonging at the school as they will serve as each student's primary person. Mentors will loop with their students, serving as their mentor for the entirety of their time at the school. To this end, mentors will be expected to deeply know their cohort of students and will be responsible for ensuring that students receive all needed academic, mental, social-emotional, and physical supports and resources. Mentors will also support students in developing social-emotional skills and will support students in forming positive relationships with each other.

   The relationship between mentors and their students is critical to the success of our academic plan and to realizing our mission of re-engaging disconnected students. As previously noted, research definitively demonstrates the relationship between mental health, behavior, academic achievement, and feeling or not feeling a sense of belonging. Additionally, as already noted, not feeling a sense of belonging is a primary cause of disconnection and anxiety among students. Research also shows that students who are economically disadvantaged are much more likely to be chronically absent than their non-economically disadvantaged peers to be chronically absent and disengaged from school.[19] Research further indicates that students who are economically disadvantaged face immense challenges, as living in poverty or near the poverty line is definitively linked to steep barriers such as toxic stress, social-emotional skill deficits, and transience, which, taken together, greatly impede students' abilities to reach their highest potential.[20] As outlined in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** section, the vast majority of our students will be economically disadvantaged. Given this, ensuring that every student has a dedicated mentor whose sole role and responsibility at the school is to build positive, trusting relationships with and provide responsive support to their small cohort of students will foster the sense of belonging that has been lacking for our students in their previous schools. Research demonstrates the power and impact of even just one positive, trusting relationship with an adult at school. Specifically, as presented by Design Principles for Schools, "research has found that a stable relationship with at least one committed adult can buffer the potentially negative effects of even serious adversity" and foster emotional security and reduce anxiety in students.[21] The full range of responsibilities for mentors can be found in the **Human Capital/Personnel** section.

[19] https://www.epi.org/publication/student-absenteeism-who-misses-school-and-how-missing-school-matters-for-performance/
[20] https://www.nccp.org/publication/childhood-and-intergenerational-poverty/
[21] https://k12.designprinciples.org/positive-developmental-relationships

3. **Small School Model:** We have intentionally designed our school to be small. An array of research shows that smaller schools are safer schools. For instance, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, violence is significantly more likely to occur in a larger school setting, with a school that enrolls more than 1,000 students being eight times more likely to experience a serious violent incident than a small school that serves ~300 or less students.[22] Additionally, anonymity thrives in large school environments, where students and staff do not know each other and do not have meaningful, supportive relationships with each other. Because large school environments are likely to lack relationships between staff and students, they rely on tactics like random searches of lockers and metal detectors to ensure school safety. However, these efforts erode student trust and convey messages of criminality, making schools seem like prisons. Since large schools overwhelmingly employ external measures to ensure safety, students are not afforded the opportunity to develop conflict management skills and become contributors to their school community, both of which foster safety and a sense of belonging in school. Micheal Klonsky, an educational researcher and leader who pioneered the modern small school movement, asserts that small schools are characterized by the below attributes that work in tandem to foster safe learning environments for students and staff – as explained below, our small school will embody these features as well:

    - **School enrollment is no more than 400 students:** At capacity, we will only serve 333 students across grades 9-12. Class sizes in all grades levels will range between 18-25 students.
    - **Teachers know students well, and students know teachers well:** As outlined in detail above, fostering positive developmental relationships is one of the key design principles on which our academic plan is built. Students and staff will share meaningful, rich relationships that will create a strong sense of belonging at our school.
    - **A group of teachers stays together with a cohort of students for several years.** As noted above, we will employ a House system, with each House being led by a mentor, who will be a full-time employee of the school. Mentors will serve as each student's primary person, closely collaborating with teachers and other staff to ensure that students get the responsive supports they need to re-engage and be successful in school. Mentors will stay with their students, looping with them through their senior year and graduation.
    - **Teachers work collaboratively in a professional community, engage in reflective teaching practices, and look at student work as part of interdisciplinary teams.** Explained in detail in the **Professional Development** section, our teachers will participate in collaborative time daily, where they will analyze student data and use it to inform instruction and supports. Teachers will collaborate horizontally and vertically, as well as with non-instructional staff such as students' mentors.
    - **The school has a high degree of autonomy and teacher leadership.** Explained in detail below, we will implement a mastery-based approach to learning. To this end, teachers will be empowered to make curricular and instructional decisions that reflect where students are in their learning.
    - **The school has a curricular focus or a clear sense of purpose.** We have designed our academic plan in response to the specific population of students we will serve and to achieve our mission of re-engaging disconnected youth and ensuring that they are able to succeed in the postsecondary pathway of their choosing. In complement to this clear purpose, we will implement a robust career and technical education program that will expose our students to varied trades and careers while equipping them the durable academic, social, emotional, and cognitive skills needed to thrive in the postsecondary pathway of their choosing.

[22] https://ascd.org/el/articles/how-smaller-schools-prevent-school-violence

4. **Strong Routines:** As noted above, our school will be small, which will support the creation of a safe environment where all students feel like they belong. Working in complement to the small size of our school will be the strong routines that we implement across the school and in classrooms. Among these will be clearly defined procedures for arrival to and dismissal from school, entry into and exit from classrooms, common classroom-based procedures, and transitions from period to period throughout the school day, among others. Research shows that clearly defined routines create well-managed learning environments that are safe and are more likely to result in students feeling comfortable at and connected to school.[23] To this end, anchoring movement in common procedures will create predictability and foster a sense of calmness, both of which are important contributors to students feeling safe and secure at school. These procedures will be fully established prior to the start of summer professional development. Teachers and staff will be trained on these procedures, with opportunities to practice implementing them and supporting students in following them, all of which is outlined in detail in the **Professional Development** section. Students will be onboarded to these procedures during the first few weeks of school and will be afforded ongoing opportunities to practice and internalize them, as well as receive support if struggling to adhere to them – all of which is outlined in more detail in the **School Culture and Discipline** section.

5. **Core Values:** Functioning in complement to the strong routines that we will implement will be our core values. Research indicates that core values have a significant impact on children's development, with children who possess a strong sense of values exhibiting more positive outlooks and behaviors and having a sense of direction and purpose. To this end, children with exposure to and belief in a set of core values are better positioned to navigate challenges and make good decisions.[24] Our core values were created in alignment with the origin of our school, which was envisioned from the perspective of love: love for our community; love for young people; and love for oneself. We see love as a radical act of power. Society often sees love as a finite resource, but we view love as a boundless expression of hope and humanity that can be leveraged to cultivate a strong, supportive school culture that provides our students with a learning environment filled with safety and belonging that enables our students to thrive in school and beyond. As such, our core values are as follows:

    - **Humanity**: We lead with compassion - for ourselves and for others. We see the inherent value in those around us - flaws and all. We default to kindness and respect. We ask for help from others and give help generously.
    - **Belonging**: Human beings thrive in community. But in order to truly be *in* community, we must be seen, valued, and supported for who we are as individuals - and to extend those same commitments to the people around us. This is the true meaning of belonging. When we belong, we have the support, security and confidence to take chances, grow, and thrive.
    - **Courage**: We see our futures as endlessly hopeful when we are able to be bold, take chances, and see "failure" as a temporary source of feedback. We fall, but, more importantly, we get back up. We commit to looking in the mirror and courageously getting 1% better every day.
    - **Independence:** Rock Academy is not a place for lone wolves - we are a wolfpack. However, individually, we establish and live in alignment with our own personal values. In doing so, we learn to live with autonomy, chart our own futures, and take responsibility for our actions.

[23] https://www.augusta.edu/online/blog/why-is-classroom-management-important#:~:text=Students%20who%20are%20in%20a,in%20addition%20to%20academic%20achievement

[24] Berkowitz, M. W. (2012). The science of character education. In Handbook of research on schools, schooling, and human development (pp. 330-346). Routledge.

- **Gratitude**: We commit to consciously recognizing the blessings around us - be they big or small. We actively practice gratitude by seeking opportunities to recognize and share it.

6. **Restorative Practices:** We recognize that our students will come to us feeling disconnected and will likely carry trauma and toxicity as a result of their lived experiences. To this end, we will provide our students with relentless support in meeting expectations and achieving success in school. Among these will be the implementation of restorative practices, which will support students in building social-emotional skills in that the use of restorative, rather than punitive, practices provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their behavior and acknowledge how it breached the norms and values of the learning environment. Restorative practices also support students in analyzing why they choose to behave the way they did and provide students with pathways to repair the harm caused by their behavior. Key to the success of restorative practices is ensuring that students feel a sense of belonging and feel positively about their school. In short, students must feel like there is something worth repairing for restorative practices to be effective. If students perceive the school culture as negative, do not feel a sense of belonging, or do not feel safe, they will be unlikely to see the value in reflecting on their behavior and taking steps to repair harm as they already view the learning environment as harmful. The above practices will work in tandem to create a positive school culture characterized by safe learning environments for students where they feel a strong sense of belonging and connectedness to the routines and values of the school, which, in turn, supports the use of restorative practices as students will see their school environment and relationships with staff and other students as being worth repairing should harm be caused.

Rock Academy Key Design Element 2: Relevance		
Whole Child Design Model Aligned Principles	**Rock Academy Aligned Practices**	
Rich Learning Experiences and Knowledge Development	• Relevant Start Time • Culturally Responsive Curriculum • Career and Technical Education (CTE)	
Addressed Areas of Student and Family Needs		
Belonging	Engagement	Transportation

Value of Relevance: In addition to nurturing students' sense of belonging, we will also ensure that we provide learning experiences that are relevant to students' lives and goals, and that reflect their identities and cultures. An array of research definitively demonstrates when students can see themselves in their learning and can relate personally to the content and skills being taught, they are much more likely to meaningfully engage and achieve mastery. Our students will come to us likely having been immersed in learning experiences that lacked relevance – accordingly, it will be critical that we provide learning opportunities that leverage their identities, culture, and lived experiences.

Aligned Practices: We will enact the following practices to ensure students see the relevance of the work they are doing at Rock Academy.

1. **Relevant Start Time:** As outlined in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section and in **Attachment B**, we have designed our daily schedule to be relevant to our students' specific needs. School will begin at 9:30, approximately 2.5 hours later than most schools in Nashville. Research shows that starting school early is harmful to teenagers in particular. Specifically, health experts assert that teenagers undergo a natural change in their circadian rhythm, which causes them to fall asleep and wake up later. This results in a "significant mismatch between this demographic's preferred sleep time and social demands: namely,

school." [25] Consequently, when teens have to rise for early school start times, they overwhelmingly experience sleep deprivation. Research shows that "chronic sleep deprivation is bad for teens. It's been linked to a number of physical and mental health risks, lowered academic performance, and overall poorer quality of life." [26] Additionally, research shows that imposing early start times "can have significant adverse consequences for students, including increased rates of tardiness and absenteeism." [27] Conversely, researchers found that schools that start at 8:30 and later experienced significant improvements in graduation and attendance rates." [28]

2. **Culturally Responsive Curriculum:** As presented by EducationWeek, "the term [culturally responsive] was coined by researcher Geneva Gay in 2000, who wrote that 'when academic knowledge and skills are situated within the lived experiences and frames of reference for students, they are more personally meaningful, have higher interest appeal, and are learned more easily and thoroughly.'" [29] As explained above, children learn by connecting new information and skills to those that they already know. Emily Style, co-founder of the National Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity (SEED) Project wrote, "half of the curriculum walks in the door with students." Accordingly, studies show that "drawing from students' cultural knowledge and norms contributes favorably to reading comprehension and mathematical thinking…using texts, materials, and examples that draw from students' cultural schemas and background knowledge makes learning easier because it leverages students' existing neural pathways." [30] Explained in more detail below, we will implement a curriculum that reflects diverse identities and experiences so that it mirrors our students' cultures, as well as provides windows into others. In short, we will ensure that our students see themselves and their classmates in the work they complete and the texts they read.

   Research demonstrates the criticality of students seeing themselves and their peers in curricular materials. As children progress through school, they are forming their identities – a critical aspect of children's social development. In addition to gaining a sense of self, children are also subconsciously learning about their place in society and as noted throughout, are seeking to feel a sense of belonging. To this end, the content and texts students are exposed to through implementation of a school's curriculum plays a critical role in students' identity formation. Namely, when students do not see themselves in the curriculum and in what they are learning, it sends a powerful message about their place and perceived value in society. [31] Despite research clearly demonstrating that humans have a tendency to be more engaged and learn more effectively with content that reflects our identity, background, or culture, "many students of color graduate high school without ever having seen themselves represented in their school material." [32] We will provide a different experience for our students, who will come to us already disconnected and doubting their place and value in society. We will ensure that our curriculum fosters relevance through representation and communicates to students that they are seen, heard, and valued.

3. **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**: In addition to fostering relevance through a culturally responsive curriculum, we will provide our students with a robust CTE program that will allow them to pursue pathways

[25] https://www.edweek.org/leadership/teens-need-to-start-school-later-no-more-excuses-experts-say/2023/08?s_kwcid=AL!6416!3!602270476281!!!g!!&utm_source=goog&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=ew+dynamic+recent&ccid=dynamic+ads+recent+articles&ccag=recent+articles+dynamic&cckw=&cccv=dynamic+ad&gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA3Na5BhAZEiwAzrfagAsVoZpJr1lA3MxeBSR9sF739vAGCnKvu6742XnoOZzRE6FE6arcpxoCK3gQAvD_BwE
[26] Ibid.
[27] https://news.ncsu.edu/2020/04/school-start-times/
[28] https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/let-them-sleep-later-school-start-times-improve-graduation-and-attendance-rates#:~:text=A%20new%20study%20by%20Pamela,improved%20graduation%20and%20attendance%20rates.
[29] https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/culturally-responsive-teaching-culturally-responsive-pedagogy/2022/04
[30] https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/5-ways-culturally-responsive-teaching-benefits-learners/
[31] https://readtolead.org/why-its-critical-for-students-to-see-themselves-in-classroom-materials/
[32] https://psmag.com/education/education-materials-for-a-more-diverse-classroom/

of their choice. Our CTE program will also provide students with hands-on learning opportunities that are anchored in real-life experiences that will cultivate durable skills that students can apply in high school and beyond. CTE will support job placement and provide opportunities for students to obtain certifications in high school, as well as expose them to diverse pathways that they can pursue for future success, bridging the gap between school and the work force. All students enrolled in our school will participate in CTE. However, we will offer four distinct pathways to give students choices about which specific pathway(s) they pursue. To this end, we will offer distinct pathways, across four areas – all of which are related to high-demand jobs and industries:

a. **Caring:** This pathway will expose students to skills relevant to caring for people and other living things. We will focus on physical therapy through this pathway, but students will learn transferable skills that can be applied to other jobs within the caring career sector.

b. **Technical:** This pathway will expose students to the specialized skills needed to pursue a career in technology. While we will specifically focus this pathway on web and digital design, students will acquire valuable technological skills through this pathway that can be applied to other careers under the technical umbrella.

c. **Trade:** This pathway will expose students to highly sought-after trade skills. We will focus this pathway on construction, but the skills and knowledge students will acquire will benefit students across an array of trades.

d. **Creative:** This pathway will expose students to the culinary industry, allowing them to acquire related skills and learn about relevant job opportunities. As with the other pathways, students will be able leverage the skills and knowledge they learn through this pathway to pursue other creatively focused careers should they want.

As depicted and described above, all four pathways have connected careers and jobs that are in high demand – we elected to implement four pathways so that we can expose students to a range of career options that they can pursue after graduation. We purposefully diversified the type of pathways we will provide so that students are afforded the opportunity to select which type of pathway most resonates with them. To expose students to all four types of pathways, every 9th grade student will take one Level 1 CTE class in each of the pathways and every 10th grade student will take one Level 2 CTE class in each pathway. After being exposed to the foundational knowledge and skills and acquiring an understanding of the connected careers and jobs under each pathway, students will then decide which pathway they want to pursue for the remainder of their time at school. After selecting, they will take Level 3 and 4

classes, which also embed work-based learning opportunities. Our CTE programming will give students the opportunity to develop relevant knowledge and acquire durable skills in a career area of their liking and choosing, allowing us to realize our mission of ensuring that every student can pursue the postsecondary pathway of their choosing.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">Rock Academy Key Design Element 3: Flexibility</th></tr>
<tr><th>Whole Child Design Model Aligned Principles</th><th colspan="2">Rock Academy Aligned Practices</th></tr>
<tr><td>Development of Skills, Habits, and Mindsets</td><td colspan="2">● Mastery-Based Learning
● Responsive Use of Class Time
● Social-Emotional Learning
● Focus on Health and Wellness</td></tr>
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</table>

Value of Flexibility: We know that the students who enroll in our school will have very different achievement levels and have very different academic, social-emotional, and physical needs. As such, we know that we must be positioned to flexibly meet our students where they are so that we can support them in their academic and social-emotional growth. We also recognize that such growth is unlikely to unfold linearly. In short, our academic model must allow us to ask and flexibly respond to the question, "what does this student need at this moment in their educational journey with us?" Schools that are able to sustainably pivot in response to their students' specific needs at any given time plan for this non-linear learning and need trajectory. To this end, flexibility will serve as the backbone for the implementation of our key design elements of belonging and relevance as all aspects of our academic model must be pliable and support the nimbleness required to consistently meet our students' unique and ever-changing needs.

Aligned Practices: To achieve this, we will implement the following practices that will be core to sustaining the flexibility inherently required to successfully serve our student population.

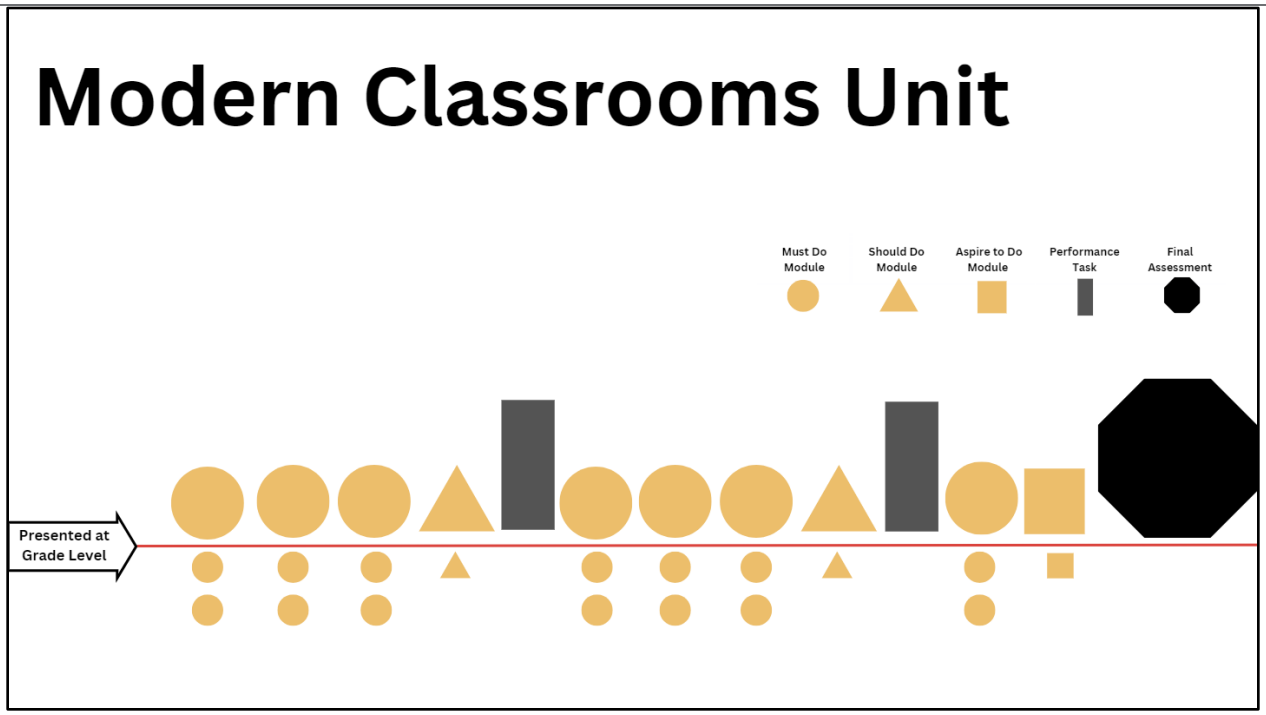
1. **Mastery-Based Learning:** As previously noted, we know our students will come to us in distinctly different places in their learning and with distinctly different learning needs. Given this, our approach to teaching and learning must allow for this inevitable reality. Mastery-based learning affords students the flexibility to progress in their learning at their own pace, without penalizing students for being behind, struggling to understand a concept, or creating insurmountable challenges if they miss school. For many students, the traditional approach to teaching and learning results in students either being left behind or held back as implementation of the curriculum progresses even if students have not mastered the concepts and standards just taught. Mastery learning takes the opposite approach, ensuring that students demonstrate mastery of the standards currently being covered before moving to the next set of standards. As Salman Khan, author of The One World Schoolhouse asserts, "at its most fundamental, mastery learning simply suggests that students should adequately comprehend a given concept before being expected to understand a more advanced one."

Researchers also assert that a mastery-based approach to learning positively impacts student learning, providing students with a more personalized and equitable educational experience.[33] Accordingly, while students will be in class together, will be learning the same curriculum, and will be assessed over the same standards, they will be working at their own pace and accessing content according to their individualized learning needs. To achieve this, we will implement the Modern Classrooms Project's approach to mastery-based learning.[34] The Modern Classrooms approach has demonstrated meaningfully increased student engagement and achievement, and enhanced teacher sustainability and efficacy when compared to a control group. In a Modern Classroom teachers create learning experiences that are rigorous and grade-level standards aligned but also allow students to move at their own pace to demonstrate mastery:

- ➔ For each state-standard- and curriculum-aligned unit, teachers create between 10-15 instructional modules (or lessons), 2-3 performance tasks and a final assessment.
- ➔ Each module/lesson includes:
  - ◆ Rock Teacher-created direct instruction delivered through an asynchronous video;
  - ◆ Aligned and leveled practice opportunities that include both individual and small group activities; and,
  - ◆ An exit ticket that allows students to demonstrate mastery of the module content.
- ➔ Modules are either classified as:
  - ◆ "Must do" – These account for between 60-80% of modules and are required for students to complete in order to be able to master course standards.
  - ◆ "Should do" - These account for between 15-20% of modules and are designed as extension work.
  - ◆ "Aspire to do." - These account for between 5-10% of modules and are designed for stretch experiences.
- ➔ Each performance task integrates several modules' content together and provides students with an opportunity to demonstrate their mastery of the shared content.
- ➔ Final assessments summative of the unit and allow students to demonstrate their mastery of the content of the unit as a whole.

[33] https://www.modernclassrooms.org/white-paper/mastery-based-learning

[34] https://www.modernclassrooms.org/



Importantly while students can access leveled modules aligned to their diagnostic data, performance tasks and final assessments are administered only on grade level. Before a student comes to class, teachers assign them a leveled module to begin on based on their individual needs and previous progress. Generally, as students start class - they begin by completing the direct instruction video, then begin work on the aligned practice assignments, individually, or in groups. When ready, students complete the end of module assessment or performance task and seek feedback from a teacher before moving on to the next module.

Because teachers are not delivering direct instruction en masse to the class, their role in class is to circulate and provide support as needed. This might include providing support to students engaged in practice work, delivering small group instruction to students who need more support accessing a module's grade level aligned content, or checking a student's module assessment or performance task, which are on grade level, to determine if they are ready to move onto the next module, or need additional support. During this time special educators and EL instructors are in class supporting students in alignment with individual needs. Additionally, while mentors are not responsible for instruction, they are also in classrooms acting as paraprofessionals. They are able to support basic needs, ensure culture remains strong and reinforce social emotional learning goals. This allows teachers, special educators, and EL instructors the ability to focus on more specific needs.

2. **Responsive Use of Class Time:** While the daily schedule includes codified start and end times for each period of the school day, how the time is used is based on hyper-timely, data-driven decisions about individual student needs; for example:

   - A student who enrolled reading at a third-grade level and a student on grade level can be accessing the same module content but using differently leveled materials.
   - A student who missed three days of school because they recently switched foster placements can come to class and seamlessly re-engage with their just-right module - because the teacher can make decisions about which modules that student needs to prioritize to prepare for their benchmark assessment, which is the determinant of mastery.

- A student who really struggled with module 3, for example, can get more time to practice and individualized support from teachers because the teacher isn't delivering a farcically "one-size-fits-all" direct instruction lesson to the full class.
- Teachers identify that several students are struggling with similar content and pulls them together as a group or whole class to provide additional instruction.
- Teachers can direct students to skip and prioritize certain modules based on pacing and needs so long as performance task content is mastered.
- Teachers have tremendous flexibility to adjust pacing and interventions based on real-time student data.

This flexible use of time prevents students from falling behind because they missed instruction and the class has moved on, as well as prevents students from having to wait for their peers to catch up before they can move on to new material. In this model, students progress through the curriculum at their own pace, which research shows is of benefit to all students but is an absolute necessity for our students. In short, traditional approaches to learning are time-based, dependent on the amount of time students physically spend in their classes with teachers progressing through a curriculum at a pre-determined pace, which produces varied results for students with some keeping up, some falling behind, and some becoming bored. However, mastery-based learning employs a flexible approach to class time, giving students the time they need to demonstrate mastery on a standard, whether that time takes one period or a week or even longer.[35] To this end, the responsive use of class time will be critical to making learning engaging for our students, closing skill gaps, supporting academic achievement, and, ultimately, ensuring that our students acquire the needed skills and knowledge for postsecondary success.

3. **Social-Emotional Learning:** A myriad of research has definitively demonstrated the correlation between social-emotional competence, behavior, and academic achievement, as well as shows that an emphasis on SEL brings positive outcomes for students, staff, and the school community as a whole.[36] Research also indicates that students who are economically disadvantaged have an increased risk of stymied social-emotional skill development.[37] Research further shows that children of color are more likely to be economically disadvantaged than white children.[38] Given the demographics of the students we will serve – largely students who are economically disadvantaged and who are of color – we know that the vast majority of our students will come to us having experienced significant challenges incurred by poverty. Our emphasis on social-emotional learning will support students in developing critical soft skills. Research consistently indicates that proficiency in soft skills such as empathy, emotional intelligence, communication, and self-awareness are greater predictors of postsecondary success than hard skills acquired through academic learning and knowledge.[39] Just as students will come to us in distinctly different places in their academic learning and with distinctly different academic needs, they will also come to us with distinctly different levels of social-emotional competence and areas of need. To this end, we will provide students with social-emotional learning opportunities that are responsive to their specific needs and development. To flexibly support students' social-emotional skill development, we will provide direct instruction and embedded opportunities for practice of soft skills during House meetings. While all students will be engaged in the same core set of social-emotional competencies, groups of students will likely need support around similar

[35] https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/how-mastery-based-learning-helps-every-student-succeed/
[36] https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-does-the-research-say/
[37] Mondi CF, Reynolds AJ. Socio-Emotional Learning among Low-Income Prekindergarteners: The Roles of Individual Factors and Early Intervention. Early Educ Dev. 2021;32(3):360-384. doi: 10.1080/10409289.2020.1778989. Epub 2020 Jun 26. PMID: 33731978; PMCID: PMC7959114.
[38] https://www.nccp.org/publication/childhood-and-intergenerational-poverty/
[39] https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2021/01/20/soft-skills-are-essential-to-the-future-of-work/?sh=542dda713416; https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-does-the-research-say/

clusters of social-emotional skills. The flexible delivery of this instruction and corresponding practice will be informed by student need. While House will function as a key structure for students to engage in explicit social-emotional learning, it will be reinforced throughout the entirety of the school day, with mentors and teachers modelling skills for students and responsively supporting students struggling to appropriately use them.

4. **Focus on Health and Wellness:** In addition to nurturing students' mental health by fostering a strong sense of belonging and supporting their development of social-emotional skills, we will have a strong focus on the health and wellness of our students. As noted throughout, the majority of our students will be economically disadvantaged. Research clearly shows that "poverty affects child health directly through the experience of deprivation, such as through food insufficiency or lack of housing."[40] As a result, studies show that "childhood poverty is associated with developmental delays, toxic stress, chronic illness, and nutritional deficits." Longitudinal studies also indicate that people who experience poverty during childhood are more likely to live in poverty as adults.[41] To combat the pronounced negative effects of poverty on our student's health and wellbeing, we will ensure our students have access to healthy, fresh meals and teach students about healthy living. As outlined in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section and detailed in **Attachment B,** all students across all grades will take physical education (PE) every year. Health and wellness education will be integrated into PE classes, allowing students to regularly engage in physical education and learn about healthy living over a sustained period of time, better ensuring that students internalize the knowledge and habits that support a healthy lifestyle.

   Research shows that "students from low-income families are more likely to have less opportunity for participation in physical activity."[42] Research also definitively indicates that regular physical activity is critical for healthy development and wellbeing in children, with insufficient activity leading to a range of negative health outcomes like obesity and diabetes in children.[43] Given our students likely have been practicing unhealthy habits and have not been getting enough physical activity, embedding time in every student's schedule for PE will ensure that they get the exercise they need. Not only will this improve our students' physical health and overall wellness, but research also shows that students who engage in regular physical activity improve their academic performance as it boosts cognitive skills like concentration and attention, as well as improves overall brain function.[44] As noted above, students will take PE with health and wellness each year, which well exceeds 1.5 credits required by the TDOE for graduation. This additional time in PE affords immense flexibility as teachers will have the latitude to use time flexibly and responsively in alignment with students' needs while still having the time to cover all required standards and content. Explained in more detail below, we will also ensure that our students have flexible access to the supports they need to nurture their health and wellness, including access to onsite laundry and counseling services. In short, ensuring that our students participate in PE, learn about health and wellness, and have access to the supports they need to lead a healthy lifestyle will help us realize our mission of re-engaging disconnected youth as the causes of chronic absenteeism are often linked to health issues.[45]

[40] https://www.milbank.org/quarterly/articles/child-poverty-and-health-the-role-of-income-support-policies/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiA3Na5BhAZEiwAzrfagCtyof6knxBxBHPTlm1PWhAI5SEuwJo7GxorUqelJwQ4VdEocVyfchoCaKsQAvD_BwE

[41] https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health/literature-summaries/poverty#:~:text=In%20addition%20to%20lasting%20effects,substance%20use%2C%20and%20chronic%20stress.&text=Finally%2C%20older%20adults%20with%20lower,rates%20of%20disability%20and%20mortality.

[42] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5667611/#:~:text=However%2C%20certain%20groups%20of%20our,or%20limited%20access%20to%20playgrounds.

[43] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10453900/#:~:text=It%20is%20well%20known%20that,10%2C11%2C12%5D.

[44] https://www.literacyplanet.com/blog/how-physical-activity-affects-school-performance/

[45] efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED592870.pdf

5. **One-Stop Shop Services**: We will provide a web of supports and structures that comprehensively address students' needs to ensure that they get exactly what they need, exactly when they need it. We also recognize that since our students have experienced challenges that resulted in them struggling with attending school and know that most of our students will be also experiencing the immense challenges caused by poverty. To this end, we must provide these services at our school so that students have immediate access to them right when they need them. Our model will directly staff and account for the following services:

    - Robust and **Multi-Modal Transportation** as outlined in the **Transportation** section.
    - **Attendance Staff** as outlined in the Personnel/Human Capital section, we will employ staff whose role is solely around supporting attendance. In addition to tracking attendance, these staff members will work closely with mentors and teachers to quickly intervene when a student is absent. These staff will help design and implement individualized attendance support plans and connect students and families with any needed resources to ensure that students are able to come to school.
    - As indicated throughout, most of our students will be economically disadvantaged and all will come to us having been chronically absent from their previous schools. Studies indicate that "each day, thousands of students miss school because they don't have access to clean clothes." [46] We will remove this barrier and provide students with **Laundry and Uniform Access -** including flexible access to washers, dryers, and laundry supplies on site, as well as provide them with uniforms at no cost to ensure that access to clean clothing does not cause our students to miss school. Further, access to clean clothing has been linked to confidence at school, so ensuring that all of students have clean clothing that is in good repair will also support their health and wellbeing, which as noted above, positively impacts academic performance. [47]
    - Additionally, we will provide the following on-demand services, which all students will be able to flexibly access. More detail on partners and service offerings can be found later in the application:
        - Counseling and Mental Health Services
        - Housing Placement Support
        - Language Learning Resources
        - Job Training/Search Supports
        - Community Health Supports

Materials and Curriculum (Courses, Course Descriptions, Materials): In alignment with state requirements, students will have access to all courses required for graduation as listed below. While our specific offerings may change in alignment with any changing requirements and/or as a result of our commitment to relevance and flexibility, we will always offer courses that meet all graduation requirements. For example, we may adjust our elective offerings, but any adjustments will always still allow students to satisfy all requirements for graduation. We will employ the descriptions provided by the TDOE for all of our courses. [48]

- Algebra I
- Algebra II
- Geometry
- Precalculus
- Statistics
- English I
- English II
- English III
- English IV
- Biology
- Physics
- TBD Elective
- US History and Geography
- Physical Education
- Wellness

[46] https://www.teachforamerica.org/stories/supporting-the-whole-child-with-access-to-clean-clothes
[47] Ibid.
[48] https://www.tn.gov/education/districts/lea-operations/correlations-of-course-and-endorsment-codes.html

	Lab Science	• World History and Geography • Government, Civics and Econ	• Personal Finance

As outlined above, we will also provide students with access to additional health and wellness courses, as well as a suite of CTE courses to meet elective requirements. In alignment with our mission, we will seek a waiver for fine arts and world language credits to "expand and enhance the elective focus."[49] Given our mission, key design elements, and target student population curriculum selection is a deeply important part of our academic program. We are committed to providing students with course materials that are:

1. Rigorous and in alignment with Tennessee State Standards;
2. Relevant; and,
3. Adaptable to the Modern Classrooms Mastery Based Instructional Model.

The table below outlines potential curriculum for Rock Academy. All potential curricula have been vetted to ensure alignment to TN State Standards, relevance, and adaptability. While not all materials are on the state approved list, per T.C.A § 49-1-201(d), TRA will apply for a waiver for T.C.A. § 49-6-2206 to allow the TRA's Board of Directors to approve or deny curricular materials. As outlined in our Start-Up plan, TRA will leverage the time between application and school opening to finalize proposed selections by continuing to cross walk and build pilot units, make proposals to the board for approval, and complete the initial build out of Mastery Based units. While we have listed some TDOE-approved CTE curriculum that we may implement in alignment with our offerings, we want to note that our CTE partners will largely implement their proprietary curricula that they created as a CTE provider and partner. However, we want to emphasize that all CTE curricula will align to CTE Program of Study course standards, even proprietary curricula created by our CTE partners.

Course Strand	Potential Curricula
English Language Arts	My Perspectives (SAVVAS) OUR Odell (Odell) StudySync (McGraw Hill)
Mathematics	Math Nation (Accelerate Learning) Open Up (Open Up Resources) enVision (SAVVAS)
Science and Wellness	Tennessee Experience Series (SAVVAS) Stemscope Science (Accelerate Learning) Tennessee Science (McGraw Hill)

[49] We will work closely with our authorizer to ensure that our schedule and course offerings enable all students to meet all graduation requirements and will adjust our sample schedule and sample course sequence as needed.

Social Studies	McGraw Hill Pearson
Finance	Goodheart-Willcox CEV Publishing
CTE Courses	CEV Publishing EMC Publishing
Remedial and/or Supplemental Courses	Springpoint (Multiple Contents) Skew the Script (Mathematics) Curriculum Associates (Mathematics) iXL (Mathematics) Lexia (Literacy) Corrective Reading (Literacy) Proprietary Curriculum from Peer School Partners including: - Urban Dove Schools - LEAD Newark - Elevate Charter Schools

d. Provide evidence that demonstrates how the school's academic plan will improve student performance and close achievement gaps specifically for the school's target student population and students with diverse needs.

As presented above, our academic plan is anchored in research that definitively demonstrates what most effectively supports learning for all students, as well as what specifically needs to be present in school to improve the performance of our specific students and close their achievement gaps. Below highlights the ample research embedded within the above description of our academic plan that demonstrates how we will improve our students' performance and close their achievement gaps:

- **Whole Child Design Model:** As explained throughout, the Whole Child Design Model is anchored in brain science about how the brain learns and develops and consists of five research-based tenets that work in tandem within the model to ensure that schools provide the conditions, implement the practices, and create the structures that all students need to be successful. Since the model functions as a flexible framework rather than a prescriptive set of practices, it can be layered into any academic focus, with the principles serving as guideposts that hold up and direct the specifics of the academic plan. The model was born out of the fact that science shows us that "there is a connection between adversity, stress, and academic performance. Children often endure stress from adverse experiences…unfortunately, most schools aren't designed or equipped to address the impact of stress on learning." [50] Science also tells us that "adversity doesn't just happen to children, it happens inside them," infiltrating their bodies and brains and putting learning and health at risk. However, science also shows us that the brain is malleable, and we can use what

[50] https://turnaroundusa.org/what-we-do/the-science/

we know about adversity and its impacts on the brain to design schools that support all students' growth and development. [51] Research clearly shows the positive impact the model has on academic achievement and social-emotional development, with high schools having significantly increased achievement, graduation, and college going rates and teachers reporting increased social-emotional competence in their students. [52]

- **Belonging:** As outlined above, having a sense of belonging is a fundamental human need and critical to students' development, leading students to exhibit positive behavior and increasing achievement. [53] We will nurture students' sense of belonging by developing positive relationships between staff and students through the implementation of a House system that is led by mentors. Research shows that a sound approach to solving unfinished learning is ensuring that students have access to strong relationships at school as this leads to students who are "more academically engaged, have stronger social skills, and experience more positive behavior." [54]
- **Relevance:** Science definitively shows that students learn best when they are given opportunities to engage with content through topics and activities that foster relevance to their identities and lived experiences. [55] An array of research definitively demonstrates that when students cannot see themselves in the curriculum and instructional materials, "a culture gap between students and the educational system" forms, causing disengagement from school and greatly contributing to the achievement gap. Conversely, when students can personally relate to their learning at school, it helps them "use their cultural backgrounds to aid in the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes…while helping to close the achievement/opportunity gaps, culturally responsive education also helps fight racisms and other forms of discrimination, bias, and oppression." [56]
- **Flexibility:** Core to our implementation of flexibility will be mastery-based learning, which research shows is effective in supporting academic achievement and closing learning gaps. Specifically, "years of research proves that mastery-based learning is linked with higher student achievement rates and positive student attitudes," as well as encourages lifelong learning. Studies show that when students are given sufficient time to learn and master concepts, they demonstrate more perseverance and confidence and gain a better understanding of their own learning needs. [57] Working in complement to academic mastery-based learning will be our emphasis on social-emotional learning. An array of research, including research presented by CASEL, demonstrates the correlation between social-emotional competence, behavior, and academic achievement, as well as shows that an emphasis on SEL brings positive outcomes for students, staff, and the school community as a whole. [58]

g. Outline the school's strategies to address academic underperformance. Include plans for Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) that align with Tennessee guidelines pursuant to SBE Rule 0520-01-03-.03.

As explained above and in the Special Populations section, we have designed our academic program to provide intervention and support to our students, who will come to our school specifically because their previous learning environments did not sufficiently meet their needs, resulting in them experiencing challenges with

[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] https://k12engagement.unl.edu/REVIEW%20OF%20EDUCATIONAL%20RESEARCH-2013-Thapa-357-85.pdf
[54] https://edtrust.org/rti/the-importance-of-strong-relationships/#:~:text=Students%20who%20have%20access%20to,and%20experience%20more%20positive%20behavior.
[55] Ibid.
[56] https://steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/ejroc/culturally-responsive-education-research-fact-sheet
[57] https://www.prodigygame.com/main-en/blog/mastery-learning/
[58] https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-does-the-research-say/

coming to school and being at risk of academic failure. The chart below articulates the strategies we will implement to address academic underperformance and ensure that our students achieve success:

Key Design Element: Belonging	
Strategy	**Description**
House System	● All students will be assigned to a House. ● Each House will be run by a dedicated mentor. ● As outlined in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section and outlined in **Attachment B**, we have embedded time for House within the daily schedule. ● Students will participate in a 30-minute House period at the start of school, where they will engage in an array of relationship building and social-emotional skill development activities in alignment with cohort and individual student's needs. ● The morning House period will also function as time for mentors to individually check-in with students so that they can identify any issues that may be adversely affecting a student and plan for the provision of supports accordingly. ● Mentors and their students will also end the school day together in a 45-minute House period, which will be flexibly used according to student need – for example: ○ Some students may require mental health or social-emotional support. ○ Other students may need academic intervention to close a skill gap. ○ Another group of students may engage in tutoring to remediate a specific standard covered earlier in the day. ○ Still others may receive intensive behavioral intervention support during this time. ● One day a week, students will attend an extended 70-minute period of House during which time they will receive social-emotional skills development and intervention in alignment with need.
Mentors	● Mentors will serve as each student's primary person and will be responsible for deeply knowing their cohort of students, including fluidly identifying and addressing each student's academic, social-emotional, and physical needs. ● Mentors will be key collaborators with teachers when determining intervention needs. ● Mentors will assist in delivering tiered behavioral interventions.
Restorative Practices	● As explained in detail in the **School Culture and Discipline** section, we will implement restorative practices as a means to provide proactive behavioral and social-emotional support.

	● The use of restorative practices will also be employed to provide restorative support to students who are struggling to meet behavioral expectations and require intervention. ● Restorative practices will be deployed in concert with other behavioral, mental health, and/or social-emotional interventions in accordance with students' individual needs.
Key Design Element: Flexibility	
Mastery-Based Learning	● This approach to learning affords students the flexibility to progress in their learning at their own pace, without penalizing students for having skill and content gaps that require intervention to close. ● Students will be in class together, will be learning the same curriculum, and will be assessed over the same standards, but they will be working at their own pace and accessing content according to their individualized learning needs, including academic intervention needs. ● Explained in detail below, we have embedded skinny blocks during ELA and math classes once a week – these blocks can be used to deliver tiered interventions. ● For some students, the intervention received during skinny blocks will provide students with just-in-time intervention to specifically address standards-based knowledge gaps to allow students to progress in their mastery-based learning modules and benchmarks. ● For other students, skinny blocks will be used to deliver more intensive interventions such as to close gaps that span multiple grade levels. ● Evidence-based curriculum and strategies will be employed when implementing prescribed interventions ● Skinny blocks can also be deployed to provide proactive intervention support through pre-teaching and front loading of content that will be covered during upcoming mastery-based learning modules. ● In addition to skinny blocks, three of the four weekly ELA and math mastery-based learning blocks will be used to teach and progress through the curriculum; the fourth block will also be used flexibly to provide intervention to students who require it.
Responsive Use of Class Time	● We have designed our daily schedule to reflect our commitment to flexibility, which underpins our academic plan and ability to meet our students' ever-changing needs, including those related to intervention. ● As explained in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section and outlined in **Attachment B**, we will implement extended blocks,

	allowing students ample time to learn and enabling the responsive use of class time. ● As noted above, we have embedded a skinny block with the extended ELA and math block once a week; extended blocks span 70 minutes and skinny blocks last 30 minutes – the responsive use of class time allows us to section off the extended block in alignment with students' needs. ● Students who require just-in-time intervention will receive it during these skinny blocks, with other students progressing with their mastery-based learning modules or receiving other supports and services, including more intensive intervention during this time. ● As stated above, in addition to skinny blocks, three of the four weekly ELA and math core blocks will be used to teach and progress through the curriculum; the fourth block will also be used flexibly to provide intervention to students who require it. ● Students will also end their day with a 45-minute flex block; this block will also be flexibly used in alignment with students' individual needs. ● Four days a week this flex block will be deployed as skinny blocks for students who require intervention in ELA and/or math, as well as will be used to deliver other interventions related to behavior and social-emotional skill deficits as needed. ● In sum, we have designed our schedule to allow for ample time for students to receive grade-level core instruction and progress through standards-based learning modules and benchmarks at their own pace. ● Time for core mastery-based learning will be augmented by a weekly ELA and math flex block and by skinny blocks for the delivery of tiered interventions – a total of six skinny blocks that can be used for intervention are embedded within the schedule across the week. ● Our robust staffing model (outlined above) will enable general education teachers, mentors, interventionists, and other providers of supports to flexibly respond to our students' intervention needs during these times. ● Our daily time for common planning allows providers of intervention protected time to collaborate about intervention needs and progress.
Social-Emotional Learning	● Explained in detail in the **School Culture and Discipline** section, we will emphasize social-emotional learning. ● As noted above, we have embedded a daily 30-minute House period in the schedule, where students will engage in social-emotional learning.

	● Additionally, once a week, students will attend an extended House period for 70 minutes, where they will engage in social-emotional learning lessons. ● As noted in the **School Culture and Discipline** section, we will employ a social-emotional learning curriculum that is competency-based and provides 9-12 longitudinal lessons. ● These lessons will be taught in accordance with the prescribed scope and sequence and will also be utilized for intervention needs for students who are struggling with specific social-emotional skills.
One-Stop Shop Services	● As outlined in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, we will provide an array of services and supports within the walls of school to support our students' needs. ● Among these will be partnerships with organizations that provide mental health support, psychological counseling, and therapeutic services, among others for students who require more intensive behavioral and social-emotional interventions.

i. Explain how the school will incorporate literacy remediation instruction for students who attend an Opportunity Public Charter School.

As stated throughout this application, we anticipate many students arriving at our school will require remedial support. As such, we outline our plan to leverage universal screeners section 1.3 as one way to identify a student's incoming performance levels. Once identified, there are two primary ways this remedial support will be provided to students.

First, as outlined above, our core instructional model creates ample space for intervention and remedial support. The mastery-based model allows for leveled assignments and individualized support. In addition, our staffing model combined with our schedule creates multiple opportunities each week for students to receive skinny blocks of support - either in the extended literacy block or in the flex period each week.

Additionally, any student who begins the year scoring below the 4th grade level in literacy (and numeracy, for that matter) will take part in a year-long remedial literacy course that will be led by our Interventionist during afternoon study hall/House.

l. Explain how the proposed school will meet Tennessee graduation requirements in accordance with State Board Policy 2.103. Detail how students earn credits, how grade-point averages are calculated, the information included on transcripts, and elective courses offered. Describe any additional graduation requirements exceeding those mandated by the State.

Graduation requirements. As noted above, we will adhere to the TDOE's requirements for graduation and offer courses in alignment with those requirements so that every student has the opportunity to graduate and earn their diploma. More specifically, we will implement a daily schedule that affords students the time needed to satisfy the prescribed 22 credit minimum for a high school diploma. Our course offerings will also enable students to meet all required course requirements for graduation. Students will be required to participate in the ACT or SAT, as well as take all state-mandated Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) exams. Below outlines a sample course sequence:

9th Grade		10th Grade	
Fall Semester	**Spring Semester**	**Fall Semester**	**Spring Semester**
Algebra I (A)	Algebra I (B)	Algebra II (A)	Algebra II (B)
English I (A)	English I (B)	English II (A)	English II (B)
Biology	Biology	Biology	Biology
PE	Wellness	PE	Wellness
CTE I	CTE I	CTE II	CTE II
11th Grade		**12th Grade**	
Fall Semester	**Spring Semester**	**Fall Semester**	**Spring Semester**
Geometry	Geometry	Precalculus or Statistics	Precalculus or Statistics
English III	English III	English IV	English IV
Physics	PE	Elective Lab Science	PE
Government/Civics/ Economics	CTE III (WBL/Dual Enrollment)	CTE IV (WBL/Dual Enrollment)	CTE IV (WBL/Dual Enrollment)
CTE III (WBL/Dual Enrollment)	CTE III (WBL/Dual Enrollment)	CTE IV (WBL/Dual Enrollment)	CTE IV (WBL/Dual Enrollment)

Credits. Students will earn credit for courses in which they are enrolled and earn a passing final grade as determined by demonstrating mastery on the required benchmarks (described in detail in the **Assessments** section). Courses will carry one credit each.

Grade-point averages. As explained above, we will implement a mastery-based approach to learning. To this end, all academic content taught across all courses will align to Tennessee Academic Standards. Students will be assessed via benchmarks to evaluate if they have achieved proficiency against state standards. Accordingly, students' grades and, relatedly, the awarding of credit will be determined by standards-based grading of the benchmarks. As noted throughout, our students will come to us in distinctly different places in their learning, and standards-based grading supports equitable grading as this approach assesses what students know and can do, removing bias and external factors from grading. [59] To this end, the following principles will be applied in our implementation of standards-based grading:

- Students' cumulative grade will be the average of the benchmarks they take, which measure mastery of standards in alignment with the curriculum and module lessons.
- Students are expected, and encouraged, to make mistakes as part of their learning process. For this reason, the results of formative assessments will only be used by teachers to inform instruction and as a feedback mechanism for students. Formative assessments will not be averaged into students' cumulative grades.
- Students' academic achievement will not be conflated with academic behavior; accordingly, behavior will not be considered when assessing mastery.

[59] Feldman, J. (2019). Grading for equity: What it is, why it matters, and how it can transform schools and classrooms.

- Alternate benchmarks are another opportunity for students to demonstrate proficiency on a standard not yet mastered. Students will not re-take the same benchmark but will be assessed over the same standard until mastery is demonstrated.

Teachers' gradebooks will reflect the course, clusters of standards addressed through each sequence of modules, and benchmarks. Grading will be cumulative and based on the level of mastery that students demonstrate on benchmarks. We will employ the below 0-4 scale to reflect the level of mastery demonstrated on each benchmark:

Standards-Based Proficiency Scale				
No Evidence of Proficiency	**Developing Proficiency**	**Partially Proficient**	**Proficient**	**Mastered**
0	1	2	3	4

The above scale will be converted to a traditional letter grade, using the guidance in the Uniform Grading System as outlined in State Board policy 3.301: [60]

Grade	A	B	C	D	F
Percentage Range	90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	0-59

Transcripts. We will include the following information on all student transcripts:

School Information	Student Information
● School Name	● Student Name and Identification Number
● School Address	● Courses Taken and Final Grades
● School Phone Number	● Teacher of Record by Course
● Executive Director Contact Information	● Grade Point Average
● School Counselor Contact Information	● Workforce Credentials Earned
● Mentor Contact Information	● Work-based Learning Experiences

Elective courses. As explained above and reflected in our proposed course sequence, we will implement a robust CTE program. Accordingly, with the exception of PE, which will also encompass wellness, our CTE courses will serve as our elective offerings.

m. Describe how any additional graduation requirements will ensure readiness for college or other postsecondary opportunities (i.e., technical colleges, community colleges, military, or workforce).

Not applicable; we will not establish additional graduation requirements.

n. Outline the systems or structures the proposed school will use to support students at risk of dropping out and/or not meeting graduation requirements.

As explained throughout, the entire population that we seek to serve are students who have already been identified as being at risk of dropping out and not meeting graduation requirements. Given this, we have designed our academic plan in alignment with research about the systems, structures, practices, and approaches that meet the needs of all students to ensure that they reach their highest potential in school and

[60] https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/stateboardofeducation/documents/2022-sbe-meetings/july-22%2C-2022-sbe-meeting/7-22-22%20III%20O%20Uniform%20Grading%20Policy%203.301%20Clean.pdf

beyond. Specifically, we anchored our academic plan, which is defined by three overarching key design elements, in the research-based Whole Child Design Model. This model is centered on providing students with safe and welcoming learning environments and rich learning experiences that all students need to be successful. Each of the five principles of the Whole Child Design Model are nestled under one of the key design elements of our academic plan. The flexibility inherent within the Whole Child Design Model, which does not prescribe specific ways in which the principles must be realized, enables us to apply the tenets of each principle to meet the needs of our specific students and, in turn, informs the programming and practices of each key design element of our academic plan – all of which functions in tandem to support our students in becoming re-engaged in school, meeting graduation requirements, and pursuing postsecondary pathways of their choosing.

o. Describe plans for incorporating early post-secondary (EPSO) and work-based learning (WBL) opportunities for students. Detail the funding sources for the school's EPSO and WBL programming and describe the physical location these opportunities will be offered.

As noted above, we will implement a robust CTE program, which, as illustrated in the course sequence sample provided above, will include opportunities for work-based learning beginning in grade 11 when students select their pathways. Students will also have access to early post-secondary opportunities through our CTE program. Specifically, all students will have the opportunity to earn an industry credential; specific credential offerings will be determined by our CTE partners but will align to the TDOE's Promoted Student Industry Credentials guidance.[61] As noted throughout, we have solidified relationships with our CTE partners, who already have developed EPSOs and WBL opportunities that our students will leverage and participate in five years' time when they start engaging in these experiences. Students will also have the opportunity to take dual-enrollment CTE courses. These work-based learning and early post-secondary opportunities will be offered and facilitated by our CTE partners at their specific sites. As outlined in the **Transportation** section and contain in the budget, we have earmarked ample funds to transport our students to and from our CTE partners' sites.

p. Identify each type of high school diploma that will be offered at the proposed school.

We will offer a traditional high school diploma. Students who satisfy the requirements for this type of diploma as outlined in State Board policy 2.103 will receive the traditional diploma. Since the traditional diploma keeps all postsecondary doors open, we will support as many students as possible in earning the traditional diploma. To this end, diploma pathway decisions will be made as soon as students enroll in the school, with conversations beginning during the intake period. If it is determined that a traditional diploma is not the right option for a student, we will also offer the occupational diploma and the special education diploma in alignment with State Board policy. As noted, decisions about these other diploma offerings will be made soon after enrolling in our school.

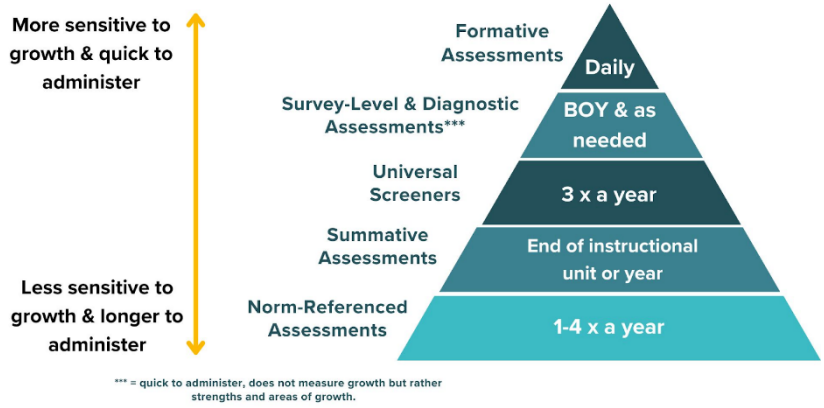
[61] https://www.tn.gov/education/educators/career-and-technical-education/student-industry-certification.html

Section 1.3 – Assessments (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Detail formative and/or summative assessments the school will utilize to determine the academic needs of individual students and student sub-groups. Explain how these assessments align with the school's academic plan and state standards. Detail the frequency and cadence of these assessments and identify the faculty and staff responsible for administering them.

As indicated throughout this application, we are committed to realizing our mission of reengaging disconnected youth to ensure that they succeed in the postsecondary pathway of their choice. As a key lever to achieve this, we will implement a mastery-based learning approach in alignment with our commitment to relevance and flexibility (explained in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section). We also know that our students will come to us in distinctly different places in their learning and with distinctly different needs. All of which makes implementing a comprehensive, coherent assessment program critical.

To this end, in addition to state-mandated assessments and assessments related to CTE credentials and endorsements (which will not be applicable until Year 3 of operation and are referenced in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section), we will employ a layered approach to assessment. Specifically, as illustrated in the visual below, we will implement the five layers of assessment found in the MMGI, with each layer serving a specific function, having a defined frequency and cadence, and involving a different level of administration complexity. Taking them together, these five layers work in tandem to provide teachers with the data they need to make immediate, short-term, and longer-term instructional and student support decisions. In other words, the five assessment layers enable teachers to understand the current needs of students, as well as allow student performance and progress to be understood holistically. From there, teachers are able to make in-the-moment adjustments and provide just-in-time support, determine remediation and intervention needs, and reflect on and adjust instructional practice.



This layered approach aligns with guidance provided by the TDOE around assessment and data. Specifically, the TDOE indicates that multiple layers of data should be collected and applied when identifying students' strengths and areas of need, stating, "educators should take the evidence collected from multiple forms of assessment and analyze the data for patterns, areas of need, and proof of mastery of content." [62] As described in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, students will receive instruction through our mastery-based learning approach that is aligned with the skills and knowledge necessary to reach proficiency in grade-level Tennessee State Standards. Given that our core curricular materials will align to Tennessee State Standards

[62]Tennessee Department of Education. (2023). Response to Intervention Manual. https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/rti/Updated_RTI2_Manual.pdf

and/or are on the Official List of Textbook and Instructional Materials for Tennessee, we will be able to consistently monitor progress toward proficiency of Tennessee State Standards. The chart below provides more detail about each of the five layers of assessment we will employ –teachers will serve as the administrator of each assessment across the five layers:

Assessment Layer	Description of Assessment Layer	Implementation of Assessment Layer
Formative	● Aligns to the standards taught ● Measures learning throughout the year ● Allows teachers to determine if progress is being made ● Informs just-in-time instructional support and plans for reteaching/ remediating	● Teachers will collect data through formative assessment throughout each day ● Teachers will use varied forms of formative assessment including: ○ Circulation: Ongoing throughout each period as described below ○ Exit Tickets: Taken at the end of each lesson module; allows students to demonstrate mastery of the module content, which aligns to state standards ○ Performance Tasks: Assessment that integrates standards-aligned content from several modules; allows students to demonstrate mastery of this shared content before moving to the final assessment (described below)
Diagnostic	● Enables teachers to pinpoint students' current level of understanding of grade-level content relevant to expected grade-level mastery ● Intended to determine instructional placement rather than to measure learning	● As needed based on curriculum
Universal Screeners	● Informational tools intended to measure current state of skills ● Brief assessments	● Will include an academic screener and a social-emotional screener ● All students will take both types of screeners three times a year ● First administration will establish a baseline and allow us to pinpoint

		students' areas of strength and need both academically and social emotionally ● Subsequent administrations enable us to measure academic and social-emotional growth and continued need over the course of the year
Summative	● Measures students learning at the close of instruction ● Assesses student proficiency and progress in relation to grade level expectations and standards	● Final assessment taken after sufficiently progressing through module lessons and performance tasks ● Demonstrates mastery of state standards and content of the unit as a whole ● Students cannot progress to another unit demonstrating mastery on final unit assessments
Norm-Referenced	● Provides a top-level overview of student mastery over the course of the school year	● Will be used with students who score below the 10th percentile on the above universal screener assessments

b. Describe the plan to collect and analyze academic data to ensure individual students make academic progress throughout the year. Explain how these plans will drive professional development for faculty and staff.

Plan to Collect and Analyze Data: As explained above, diagnostic and universal screening data will be used to establish baseline data about where students are in their learning, as well as to pinpoint their strengths and areas of need. Teachers will collect academic data on a daily basis through the ongoing use of formative assessments, including through lesson exit tickets, circulation, and performance tasks. To this end, teachers will be analyzing academic data fluidly over the course of each school day to inform the individualized, just-in-time instructional support they provide to students. All of this formative data will roll up to summative data collected through the completion of final assessments.

To expound on the above, as described in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, because teachers are not delivering direct instruction en masse to the class, their role in class is to circulate and provide support as needed based on the data gleaned during circulation. This might include providing support to students engaged in practice work, delivering small group instruction to students who need more support accessing a module's content, or checking a student's module assessment or performance task to determine if they are ready to move onto the next module, or need additional support. During this time special educators and ESL instructors are also in class supporting students in alignment with individual needs as revealed by data. After progressing through their modules and performance tasks, students will take summative assessments, which is how they will demonstrate mastery of the unit as a whole and progress to the next unit of learning. Teachers will be taking in all this data on an on-going, cyclical basis and using it to make instructional decisions

to best support their students.

Additionally, as explained in the **Professional Development** section, we have built common collaborative planning time into our daily schedule. Teachers will be required to meet bi-weekly during this time as a grade level review individual, grade level, and content-specific data trends and plan for support, including making instructional adjustments as evidenced by data. Since this time is scheduled commonly special educators, ESL teachers, and the intervention will participate in these meetings and provide input into the provision of such adjustments and support.

Further, at the end of each school year, the leadership team will convene to complete a holistic data stepback, which involves reviewing areas of growth, areas in need of improvement, and key drivers of success. This team will include the Executive Director, the Principal, the Attendance Liaison, the Student Supports Coordinator and, when hired, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Culture Dean. During this stepback, the team will consider an array of data sources, including data collected from our five layers of assessment. During stepbacks, all data will be disaggregated by individual, cohort and subgroup trends.

c. Describe the training and support that school leadership and teachers will receive to analyze, interpret, and use performance data to improve instruction.

As explained in detail in the **Professional Development** section, we will provide robust professional development to our leaders and teachers. Analyzing, interpreting, and using data underpins all of our professional development components and offerings. More specifically, leaders will attend five days of summer professional development, led by the Executive Director, that will provide intensive, individualized training relevant to their roles and responsibilities, as well as to the school, staff, and students at large. During this time, leaders will receive training and support in expectations for and protocols that guide data analysis and application at the leadership level, as well as staff level. Additionally, the leadership team will engage in ongoing training throughout the year through job-embedded data analysis and application opportunities. As described above, at the end of each school year, the leadership team will convene to complete a holistic data stepback, which involves reviewing areas of growth, areas in need of improvement, and key drivers of success. During this stepback, the team will consider an array of data sources, including data collected from our five layers of assessment, providing another layer of support and training around data fluency.

Also described in detail in the **Professional Development** section, teachers will be provided with robust and ongoing professional development opportunities, with data being a throughline through the four components of our professional development plan. More specifically, teachers will attend 21 days of summer inservice, during which time they will be introduced to our assessment program and oriented to the five layers of assessment and resultant data collection. We will introduce protocols for data analysis and application, providing opportunities for practice. We will continue to support our teachers in achieving fluency in analyzing and applying data through full-day professional development days, where leaders will facilitate data sessions, gradually releasing facilitation to teachers themselves. This will work in tandem with the data analysis that will occur in grade level teams on a biweekly basis. Finally, teachers will receive individualized coaching support, which involves observation, feedback, and targeted developmental support, including collecting, analyzing, and acting on data.

d. Identify the universal reading screener the school will use in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-1-905. Charter schools must select a universal reading screener from the list of nationally normed universal reading screeners identified by the Department and approved by the State Board pursuant to State Board Policy 3.302.

Not applicable.

Section 1.4 – School Calendar and Schedule (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Provide the annual academic calendar for the proposed school as Attachment A.

See **Attachment A**.

Please note - this is a draft calendar. Knowing that students at Rock Academy are likely to have siblings in other local schools, our goal is to align the annual calendar as closely as possible with the MNPS calendar. As the actual SY2026-2027 calendar is drafted by the district, we will adjust and prioritize alignment.

b. Provide the proposed school's detailed daily schedule by grade as Attachment B. Include the number of instructional hours/minutes in a day for core subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

As an Opportunity School, our students will arrive at school in distinctly different places in their learning, with distinctly different gaps, gifts, styles and needs. One of the Rock's Key Design Elements is flexibility - and our daily schedule is an important tool in creating flexible learning spaces.

Outlined in detail in the **School Mission and Goals** and **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** sections, Rock Academy will implement a mastery-based academic model, which is anchored in providing individualized instruction and learning opportunities to students. This approach allows us the flexibility to support the unique needs of every student who attends our school.

That said, another important variable in this approach is time: we must afford students ample time to engage with core content and intervention support. To this end, our daily schedule leverages extended core blocks, with each class spanning 70 minutes. These extended blocks ensure that students are provided with the time they need to backfill missed information and learn new content, while allowing students to progress in their learning at their own pace.

See **Attachment B** for detailed proposed daily schedules by grade, including instructional hours/minutes for all subjects. While the instructional minutes vary somewhat by grade level and course enrollment, generally speaking, the table below summarizes the number of instructional hours/minutes in a day for core subjects.

	Minutes/Block	Blocks/Week	Total Minutes/Week
Math	70	4	280
ELA	70	4	280
Science or Social Studies	70	4	280

c. Explain why the academic calendar and schedule will be optimal for student learning. Summarize plans to provide time within the daily schedule for tiered interventions, enrichment, tutoring, and other academic activities.

d. Describe any proposed extra-curricular or co-curricular activities or any other student-focused programming the proposed school will offer. Detail when these activities will start, their frequency, and their funding sources.

e. Describe any additional academic programs that the school will offer such as Saturday school, summer school, extra remediation, and student acceleration programs pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-1503. For each program, provide the following:

- **State the duration and list the hours it will be available each week to identified students.**
- **Detail the anticipated number of students and the method used to identify them.**
- **State whether the program is mandatory for identified students.**
- **Outline anticipated resources and staffing needs.**

Calendar Overview

Per State Board Rule 0520-01-02-.31, public schools in Tennessee must provide 180, 6.5-hour instructional days per year, for a total of 1,170 hours per year. Our calendar exceeds this minimum standard with 175, 7 hour days, for a total of 1,225 hours per year. As outlined below, these 1,225 hours are programmed with incredible intentionality.

In addition to instructional intentionality, staff development days are strategically interspersed throughout the year. Because The Rock's model is intended to be flexible and responsive to students' needs, teachers need time to assess progress and adjust accordingly. The daily schedule allows for this to happen in shorter bursts with high frequency. In addition, faculty have a staff professional development day approximately once per month to focus on data reflection and development. Further information on how those days and hours are spent in alignment with our mission can be found below.

Schedule Overview

At Rock Academy, we think about the schedule like a budget. Time, like money, should be spent in alignment with priorities. To this end, the schedule is holistically designed in alignment with our key priorities:

1. **Belonging:** Students begin and end each day in their House. Additionally, once a week, they have an extended 70-minute house block to implement SEL programming, to build team and to tend to restorative practices. As outlined in section 1.2 the House structure is a key element to creating a sense of belonging for students. This group of peers and the faculty mentor are the "primary people" for students. And the schedule intentionally creates consistent time for connection and responsive support. Additionally, as we expound upon below, the school is available to students from 8:00am - 6:00pm. Through both school faculty and community and afterschool partnerships, we're able to provide a safe and enriching space for students to 'belong' with various trusted adults.
2. **Flexibility:** While our curricular approach is deeply important to our commitment to flexibility, so too is our daily schedule.
    - **Intentional Start and End Times:** Knowing our target student population and their propensity for absenteeism, our school day will start the school day more than two hours later than typical local high schools. Our 9:30 start time is deeply important to our overall approach. The research is clear [63]: a later school start time for adolescents is correlated to better attendance, academic outcomes and improved overall wellness. In our ongoing outreach to families and students, this resonated deeply for a variety of reasons; families where older siblings support the transportation of younger siblings to school and those who rely on public transit face additional challenges to arriving at school, ready to learn by 7:05.

[63] https://www.apa.org/topics/children/school-start-times

Similarly, families communicated a desire for safe, enriching spaces for students to spend their afternoon and evenings. We know that enriching after school programs have varied benefits [64] for students - including reductions in risky behaviors, improved academic performance, improved overall attendance, and support for working families. As a result, while students' academic day ends at 4:30, universal after school programming will be available to students until 6:00

- **Teacher Data/Planning Time**: In order to execute our differentiated, mastery-based approach, teachers need daily time to reflect on student progress. Additionally, to support our mentorship priorities and the ability to respond to any student absenteeism and/or behavioral trends, mentors and teams need frequent time to reflect on and respond to data. As such, teachers are able to leverage an hour each morning of shared planning and collaborative time to tend to this work.
- **Tiered Intervention:** We have embedded time for tiered intervention in our daily schedule through the following:
    - **Extended Blocks with Skinny Block Flexibility**: A 70-minute block combined with our differentiated, mastery-based curriculum approach, and robust staffing (a core teacher + a mentor + 2 special education teachers + 1 EL teacher + 1 interventionist) allow incredible flexibility for tiered interventions and support within the blocks. The 70-minute block can be sectioned into skinny blocks to provide tiered intervention to various groups of students.
    - **Weekly Flex Blocks**: Three of the four core blocks each week will be used to teach and progress through the curriculum. The fourth block will be used flexibly to provide "just in time" intervention and tutoring. As teachers collect data throughout the course of the week, they will determine how to utilize the fourth block of the week to address current student needs. Some students may require intervention to address a skill gap while other students may need targeted tutoring to further their understanding of content covered during the week.
    - **Tutoring**: Each day, students have a 45 minute tutoring and study hall block to end the day. This time is used for additional intervention and support. As students progress through the school, this block can also be used for credit recovery as necessary.
- **Summer School:** We have designed our academic program and daily schedule in response to the needs of our specific population of students. We have embedded ample time for core instruction, intervention and tutoring, enrichment, and CTE in our daily schedule, as well as offer robust after school programming. Over time, tutoring and intervention blocks will also be used as opportunities for credit recovery. Over the summer, most students will extend their participation in CTE. More specifically, students will complete internships and/or get paying jobs through our CTE partnerships. Some students will participate in summer school - either as an opportunity for credit recovery or as an opportunity for additional remedial instruction. We have budgeted $20,000 to support teacher and leader stipends, supplies and transportation for this small cohort of students.

3. **Relevance:** Our daily schedule reflects our commitment to relevance through the following:

- **CTE Pathways:** Explained in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, and in alignment with our commitments to relevant instruction and postsecondary success planning,

[64] https://youth.gov/youth-topics/afterschool-programs/benefits-youth-families-and-communities

we will implement a robust CTE program at Rock Academy. CTE marries academic and experiential learning, equipping students with "practical skills and hands-on experience, preparing them for high-demand careers…enhancing employability and accelerating entry into the workforce." [65] This is the very literal embodiment of a relevant education. Additionally, a recent study found that students who earn workforce credentials in high school have higher rates of employment and increased income as compared to their peers who did not earn such a credential. [66] As such, the time embedded within our daily schedule for CTE will prepare students for success in their postsecondary pathway of their choosing.

Over the course of their time at our school, students will engage in introductory level coursework in four different CTE programs - providing them meaningful exposure to different, high-wage pathways. Over time, they will narrow their focus to one or two pathways most aligned to their own personal interests and goals - ultimately completing the full four-course sequence and work-based learning continuum for one to two selected pathways. This time is embedded in our daily schedule, with all students attending a 70-minute CTE block four times a week in 9th and 10th grade, with increased frequency over time. Once students identify a specialty, more time is allocated in the schedule to complete advanced coursework, work toward certifications and credentials, and/or participate in Work Based Learning experiences.

- **PE:** As earlier outlined, we define relevance broadly to include a program that meets the needs and interests of individual students' short and long term needs. To that end, Physical Education as a consistent course meets this definition. In addition to providing space to include state-mandated health and physical education credits and exposure, this longitudinal commitment to keep PE in the schedule each year reflects this commitment to relevance and growing research about the interconnectedness of physical health [67] with mental health and longitudinal life outcomes. Our schedule reflects this by including PE three times per week for 70 minutes.
- **Enrichment**: While relevant curriculum and relevant CTE pathways support our overall commitment to relevance, we know that students will have additional interests and passions they may wish to pursue. As outlined later in the application, our partnership with Martha O'Bryan's After School Student Union will provide students with additional, student-driven enrichment opportunities during after-school programming. In the past, programs have included everything from Dungeons and Dragons, to Pickleball, to Cooking Club. Critically, these offerings are driven by students' interest.

[65] https://www.atlanticcape.edu/admission/high-school-students/CTE,%20Career%20Exploration,%20and%20Enrichment.php#:~:text=CTE%2C%20Career%20Exploration%2C%20and%20Enrichment,demand%20careers%20across%20various%20industries

[66] Matt Giani. *How Industry-Recognized Credentials in High School Shape Students' Education and Employment Outcomes*. Washington D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Institute (August 2022). https://fordhaminstitute.org/

[67] https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2818132

Section 1.5 - Recruitment and Enrollment (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Describe the community from which the proposed school intends to draw students. Include demographic profiles, existing schools within the community (including other charter schools in the area), and targeted zip codes. Discuss the academic performance and enrollment trends of these schools (e.g., TCAP, TVAAS, Ready Graduate, etc.).

Community. As explained throughout this application, we are proposing to open an Opportunity School to serve Opportunity Youth and will be the first-of-its-kind charter school in the state. As such, we are implementing an intentionally different approach to recruitment. More specifically, traditional charter applicants frequently identify a proposed community to recruit from based on geographic criteria such as a shared feeder pattern or target zip codes. In other cases, recruitment efforts are based on students and families seeking a specific school delivery model (e.g., Montessori, Paideia, Big Picture). In still other instances, some charter applicants anchor recruitment efforts in targeting students and families with a set of shared interests that their schools satisfy (e.g., STEM, arts). This is similar to the approach that traditional district magnet schools employ when recruiting students.

As an Opportunity School, we are approaching recruitment more like that of traditional district magnet schools. However, while these schools center their efforts on reaching families and students with shared interests, we are organizing our efforts to target families and students with a set of shared ***needs***. In the **School Mission and Goals** and **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** sections, we detail the inspiration behind the founding of our school, as well as describe the profile of the Opportunity Youth we seek to serve. In these sections, we explain that the students we intend to serve feel disconnected from the schools that they have previously attended and, in alignment with Opportunity School legislation, have demonstrated one or more indicators of at-risk behaviors. Specifically, statute requires that at 75% of an Opportunity School's enrollment consist of students who "at the time of enrollment in an opportunity public charter school, is a member of a family with a household income that does not exceed four hundred percent (400%) of the federal poverty level and meets at least one of the following criteria:

A. The student has dropped out of school without obtaining a high school diploma or high school equivalency credential;

B. The student has been adjudicated as a juvenile delinquent or is awaiting disposition of charges that may result in adjudication as a delinquent;

C. The student has previously been detained or incarcerated in a juvenile detention center;

D. The student has been retained at least twice in any of the grades kindergarten through eight (K-8), or the student is one (1) or more years behind in obtaining credit required for promotion to the next grade level or to graduate from high school in four (4) years with the student's cohort;

E. The student is chronically absent, as defined in Tennessee's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan established pursuant to the Every Student Succeeds Act (20 U.S.C 6301 et seq.);

F. The student is pregnant or a parent as defined in 49-1-903;

G. The student has a documented substance abuse issue; or

H. The student has experienced circumstances of abuse or neglect."

We have also described the diverse needs of students whose situations satisfy the statute criteria outlined above and have indicated our intention to focus our program, and thus our enrollment, on serving rising 9th graders who meet criteria E (chronic absenteeism) or H (foster-involved). We understand that many students will have

overlapping risk criteria (e.g., chronically absent and pregnant or parenting). However, in our research, we found that almost all criteria coexist with chronic absenteeism. Additionally, of the above criteria, absenteeism is one of few that is universally reported to and documented on state and local databases, making this risk criteria possible to target and quantify for the purposes of enrollment. To that end, when we think about recruitment and enrollment, our proposed "community" from which we will recruit consists of students who exhibit chronic absenteeism as an indicator of additional risk subcategories.

There are more than 24,000 high school students enrolled in traditional and public charter schools in Nashville. Of those, **7,563** are chronically absent each year, which amounts to **31.2%** of overall public high school enrollment. Put another way, this percentage means that roughly ***1 in 3*** high school students who attend public schools in Nashville are chronically absent. At the state level, only 18.9% of high school students are chronically absent. As such, as a district, we have a chronic absenteeism rate that is roughly **60% higher** than the state.

However, chronic absenteeism is not evenly distributed across the city. More than 40% of the city's students who are chronically absent attend one of five high schools: Antioch, Cane Ridge, McGavock, Overton, and Hunters Lane. This means that of the 7,563 students who are chronically absent in Nashville's public high schools, over 3,000 of them are concentrated in just five of Nashville's 25 public high schools. The chart below outlines these five schools and corresponding data related to chronic absenteeism rates by student count in comparison to the city's other 20 public high schools.

MNPS Public High School Chronic Absenteeism Rates Ranked by Student Count[68]

School	Total Enrollment	# Chronically Absent	% Chronically Absent
Antioch High School	2114	797	37.7
Cane Ridge High School	1917	760	39.6
McGavock High School	1834	626	34.1
John Overton High School	1942	595	30.6
Hunters Lane High School	1371	584	42.6
James Lawson High School	1222	412	33.7
Maplewood High School	676	387	57.2
Hillsboro High School	1217	373	30.6
Glencliff High School	1064	366	34.4
Stratford STEM Magnet	759	365	48.1
Valor Flagship Academy	1390	280	20.1
Pearl-Cohn High School	520	265	51.0
Whites Creek High School	615	250	40.7
KA @ The Crossings	544	206	37.9
RePublic High School	613	185	30.2
KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School	456	158	34.6
East Nashville Magnet High School	523	147	28.1
STEM Prep High School	503	141	28.0
Martin Luther King Jr School	1211	137	11.3
Intrepid College Preparatory Charter School	840	133	15.8
LEAD Southeast	835	131	15.7
Nashville School of the Arts	554	97	17.5

[68] Data taken from the SY 2023-24 State Report Card

Lead Academy	468	78	16.7
Hume - Fogg High School	889	63	7.1
Nashville Big Picture High School	147	27	18.4
District HS Total	**24224**	**7563**	**31.2**

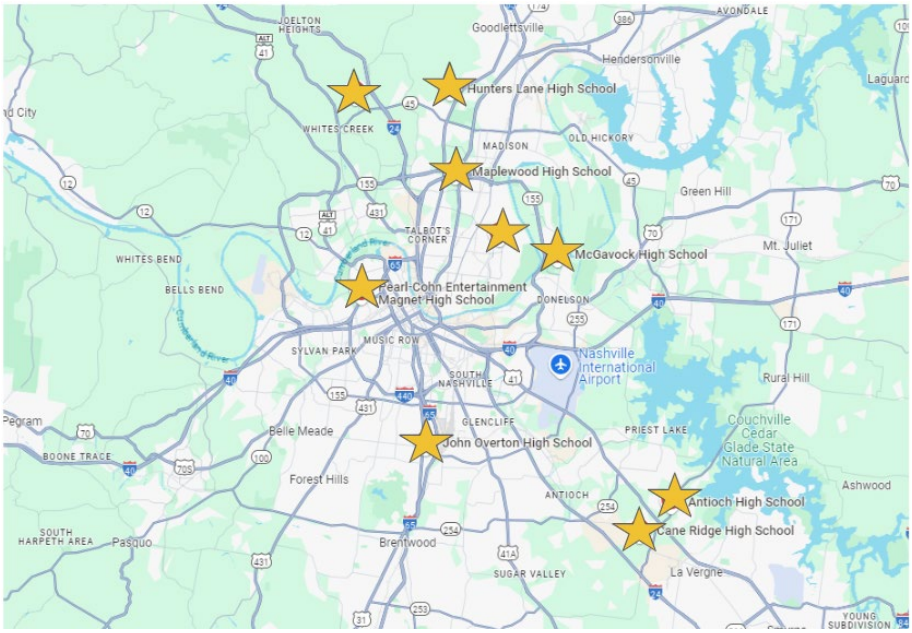
Additionally, at five of Nashville's 25 public high schools, the chronic absenteeism rate is over 40%; these schools are: Maplewood, Pearl-Cohn, Stratford STEM Magnet, Hunters Lane, and Whites Creek. Further, Hunters Lane falls into both categories, having the highest count of students who are chronically absent and having a chronically absent rate of higher than 40%. The chart below shows these five schools and corresponding data related to chronic absenteeism rates by percent in comparison to the city's other 20 public high schools.

MNPS Public High School Chronic Absenteeism Rates Ranked by Percent [69]			
School	**Total Enrollment**	**# Chronically Absent**	**% Chronically Absent**
Maplewood High School	676	387	57.2
Pearl-Cohn High School	520	265	51.0
Stratford STEM Magnet	759	365	48.1
Hunters Lane High School	1,371	584	42.6
Whites Creek High School	615	250	40.7
Cane Ridge High School	1,917	760	39.6
KA @ The Crossings	544	206	37.9
Antioch High School	2,114	797	37.7
KIPP Nashville Collegiate High School	456	158	34.6
Glencliff High School	1,064	366	34.4
McGavock High School	1,834	626	34.1
James Lawson High School	1,222	412	33.7
Hillsboro High School	1,217	373	30.6
John Overton High School	1,942	595	30.6
RePublic High School	613	185	30.2
East Nashville Magnet High School	523	147	28.1
STEM Prep High School	503	141	28.0
Valor Flagship Academy	1,390	280	20.1
Nashville Big Picture High School	147	27	18.4
Nashville School of the Arts	554	97	17.5
Lead Academy	468	78	16.7
Intrepid College Preparatory Charter School	840	133	15.8
LEAD Southeast	835	131	15.7

[69] Data taken from the SY 2023-24 State Report Card

Martin Luther King Jr School	1,211	137	11.3
Hume - Fogg High School	889	63	7.1
District HS Total	**24,224**	**7,563**	**31.2**

Taken together, the nine high schools that have the highest count of students who are chronically absent and/or have the highest chronically absent rates are: **Antioch, Cane Ridge, Hunters Lane, John Overton, Maplewood, McGavock, Pearl-Cohn, Stratford STEM Magnet, and Whites Creek.** The zones of these nine schools are the focus of our recruitment efforts. The map below highlights the geographic locations of these nine schools and surrounding communities:



Demographic Profile. Most of the nine schools on which we are focusing our recruitment efforts have higher rates of both minority and economically disadvantaged student enrollment than the district, and all but one have higher rates than the state. Some of these schools serve significantly higher rates of students who are ELs than the district, while others have significantly less. Additionally, seven of the nine have significantly higher rates of EL enrollment than the state. One school meets the state's enrollment, and another serves less than the state. Finally, just about half of the nine schools serve more students with disabilities than the district and state. The chart below displays these data and comparisons, as well as indicates each school's zip code.

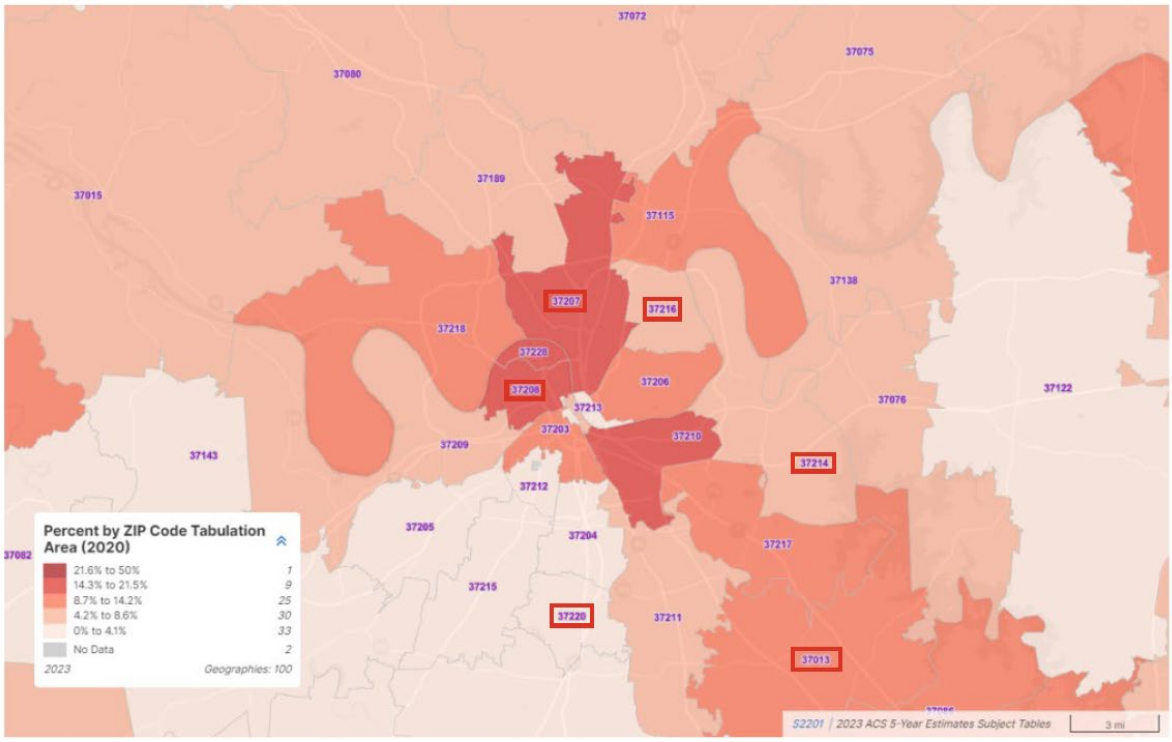
Focus Schools Demographic Data[70]					
School	**Zip Code**	**% Minority**	**% ED**	**% SWD**	**% EL**
Antioch High School	37013	85	27	11	39
Cane Ridge High School	37013	81	30	12	31
Hunters Lane High School	37207	87	39	14	27
John Overton High School	37220	70	26	10	35
Maplewood High School	37216	90	48	15	29

[70] Data taken from the SY 2023-24 State Report Card

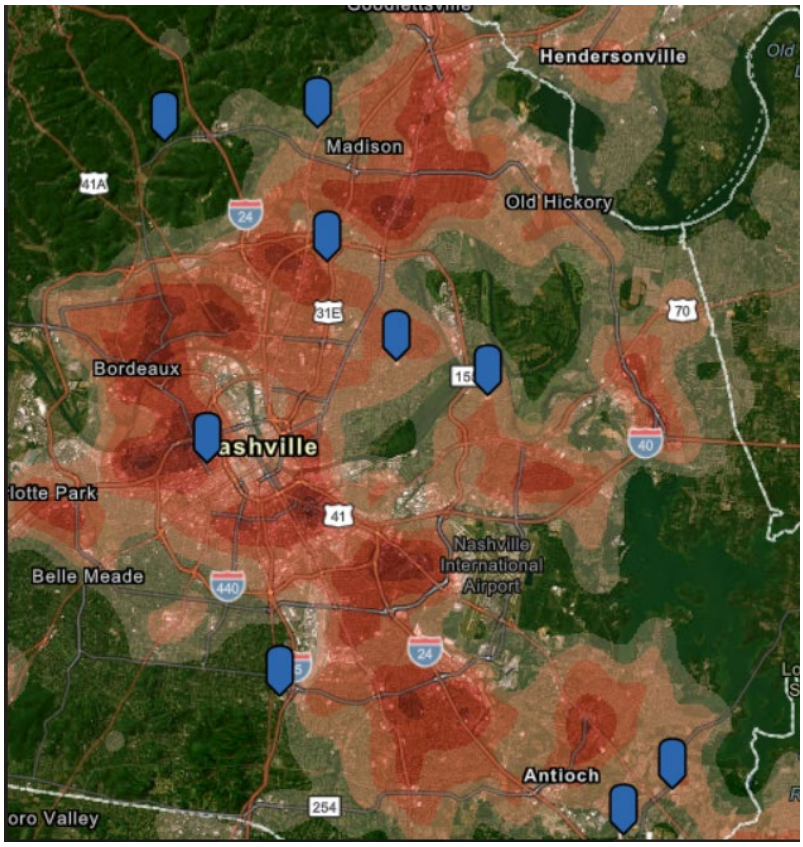
McGavock High School	37214	70	32	14	16
Pearl-Cohn High School	37208	95	62	17	6
Stratford STEM Magnet	37216	83	54	20	15
Whites Creek High School	37189	92	56	17	9
	State	**39**	**29**	**15**	**9**
	District	**72**	**31**	**14**	**29**

However, while only four of these nine schools have economically disadvantaged rates at or higher than 40%, the threshold for Title I status, the income levels of the households in the communities in which these nine schools are located suggest that these rates are not fully captured. More specifically, the greatest concentrations of households receiving food stamps through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are largely in the communities where these schools are located. The heat map below illustrates this, showing the highest concentrations of households receiving food assistance by zip code. The zip codes in which all but one of the above schools are located are boxed on the map. Two of the schools are located in communities with the highest rates of SNAP assistance by household; two are in communities with the second highest rate; and three are in neighborhoods with the third highest.

Households - Percent households receiving food stamps/SNAP



To illustrate further, the heat map below shows the locations of each school as indicated by a blue pin against the level of concentration of households that receive SNAP benefits, clearly showing that the nine schools with the highest incidences of chronic absenteeism by student count and/or overall attendance rates are largely located in and around communities with high rates of poverty and, thus, food assistance.



Academic Performance. Of the nine schools on which we are focusing our recruitment efforts (because they have the highest incidences of chronic absenteeism by student count and/or attendance rates), all but one earned a D or F rating on the SY 2023-24 State Report Card. Additionally, all but two carry Targeted or Comprehensive Support and Improvement designations. Finally, at all but one of these nine schools, dropout rates are higher than both the district and state. To elaborate, three of these schools' dropout rates are twice as high as the state, five are three times as high, and one is almost five times higher. Additionally, these schools' graduation rates are lower than both the district and state – all of which is outlined in the below table:

School	Ach. Rate	Ach. level	Acct. Rating	Letter Grade	Grad. Rate	Dropout Rate
Antioch High School	12.60	1	TSI	D	70.80	26.80
Cane Ridge High School	9.10	1	CSI	F	80.90	17.90
Hunters Lane High School	13.30	1	TSI	D	77.10	22.40
John Overton High School	15.90	2	TSI	D	73.20	26.10
Maplewood High School	5.60	1	CSI	D	58.80	38.90
McGavock High School	11.90	1	CSI	F	72.70	25.50
Pearl-Cohn High School	7.20	1	CSI	D	78.70	19.50
Stratford STEM Magnet	12.70	1	None	F	74.80	23.90

Whites Creek High School	10.60	1	None	C	82.60	17.40
State	**39.60**				**90.60**	**8.10**
District	**25.20**				**81.20**	**17.60**

As noted in the chart above and below all nine schools have a graduation rate lower than the state and all but one has a graduation rate lower than the district, with one school exceeding the district's rate by about one percentage point. In examining these schools' graduation data further, all nine have Ready Graduate rates lower than the state and eight of the nine are lower than the district. All nine also underperform the state and the district on the ACT, all of which is detailed on the below chart.

School	Ready Grad. Rate	ACT	Grad. Rate
Antioch High School	14.20	15.3	70.80
Cane Ridge High School	21.40	15.2	80.90
Hunters Lane High School	13.50	15.0	77.10
John Overton High School	36.60	16.7	73.20
Maplewood High School	8.10	13.5	58.80
McGavock High School	24.40	16.4	72.70
Pearl-Cohn High School	12.80	14.0	78.70
Stratford STEM Magnet	23.90	14.5	74.80
Whites Creek High School	26.80	15.0	82.60
State	**48.90**	**19.0**	**90.60**
District	**32.40**	**17.5**	**81.20**

b. Describe the community's demand and need for the school and detail how this demand or need was identified. Describe how the proposed school's educational options differ from those available in the geographic region.

Need. As stated throughout, as an Opportunity School, we will be the first-of-its-kind in the state of Tennessee, meaning that no other school currently offers the educational option our school will offer. However, as detailed above, the need for our school is great. To reiterate, there are currently more than 24,000 high school students enrolled in public schools in Nashville. Of those, **7,563** are chronically absent each year, which represents **31.2%** of overall high school enrollment. At the state level, only 18.9% of high school students are chronically absent. So, as a district, MNPS has a chronic absenteeism rate that is roughly **60% higher** than the state. At schools with the highest student counts and overall rates of chronic absenteeism, achievement and graduation rates are low and dropout rates are high. These three indicators are inextricably linked – if students are not at school, they cannot learn, resulting in low achievement rates and leading to dropping out of high school. Research definitively shows that students who experience chronic absenteeism for even just one year are seven times more likely to drop out of high school. [71]

The average dropout rate of the nine schools on which we will focus given their high student counts and/or overall rates of chronic absenteeism is **24.27%**, meaning that just about every **1 in 4** students these schools

[71] https://www.panoramaed.com/blog/the-effects-of-chronic-absenteeism-in-schools#:~:text=Increased%20Dropout%20Risk:%20Research%20indicates,drop%20out%20of%20high%20school

collectively serve will drop out of high school. Research definitively shows that students who drop out have significantly worse life outcomes than their peers who graduated. To expound, studies show that "individuals who had dropped out of high school [are] nearly 5 times more likely than high school graduates to have one or more negative outcomes and 24 times more likely to have as many as four or more negative outcomes." [72] More specifically, research showed that students who dropped out "were nearly four times more likely to be receiving government assistance, were twice as likely to have been fired two or more times, were more than three times more likely to have been arrested since the age of 18, were twice as likely to have used illicit drugs in the last six months, and were more than twice as likely to report poor health." [73]

In addition to the individual negative consequences students who dropout face throughout their lifetime, the cost of dropping out to society at large is significant. To expound, according to the Graduation Alliance, research shows that high drop out rates have devastating impacts for not only the student by American society as whole – this research- and fact-based organization asserts that, in 2014, the cost to society was $292,000 per dropout. [74] However, given that this statistic is over 10 years old, the cost has only risen. This number is informed by the following facts:

- Half of all Americans on public assistance are high school dropouts
- The unemployment rate for dropouts almost 10 percentage points times than the national average
- For dropouts who are employed, they make significantly less than their graduated peers, resulting in hundreds of thousands of dollars of lost income and lost taxes
- Over 80% of the nation's incarcerated population are dropouts, with the average cost of incarcerating just one individual ranging from $33K to $47K per year

As explained in the **School Mission and Goals** and **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** sections, we conducted extensive research to understand the drivers behind students across Nashville experiencing chronic absenteeism, which as noted above is a primary predictor of dropping out of school. Our efforts revealed the following top-line trends:

1. **Kids are disengaged:** Students and families repeatedly told our team that school was not relevant or engaging. Many failed to see the short- or long-term value of their academic experiences and, as a result, opted out. Others struggled with academic content, fell behind, and became disenfranchised.
2. **Schools are not designed to serve all kids equally:** Many students feel unsafe and/or unseen at school. For others, it is an issue of basic needs – unstable housing and transportation make getting to and from school a constant struggle; food insecurity makes staying engaged difficult; and lack of access to clean clothing and laundry facilities further complicates coming to school.

The key takeaway from the above trends is that students simply are not getting their academic, social-emotional, and physical needs met at their schools, which makes the need for our school critical. As explained in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, we have designed our school to sustainability meet these students' needs, anchoring our program in research and best practice about how to effectively serve this specific community of students and their families. Currently, there is no school in Tennessee that operates solely

[72] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4877222/#:~:text=Individuals%20who%20dropped%20out%20of,illicit%20drugs%20in%20the%20last
[73] Ibid.
[74] https://www.graduationalliance.com/2017/03/06/the-true-cost-of-high-school-dropouts/#:~:text=3.3%20Million%20Dropouts%20in%20One%20Year&text=%24292%2C000%20Per%20Dropout%20Per%20Year,the%20course%20of%20their%20lives.

to fulfill the mission of reengaging disconnected youth. With staggeringly high chronic absenteeism rates and dropout rates, the need for our school to serve this population of students cannot be overstated.

Demand. With great need comes great demand. Described in detail in the **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** section, our design and engagement efforts have unfolded over the past two years in two distinct phases. In Phase 1 (September 2023 – August 2024), we conducted extensive research and outreach to understand the challenges encountered and needs of the population of students and families we seek to serve, as well as to forge initial connections and relationships with individuals and organizations. We then transitioned to Phase 2 (September 2024 – Present), where we applied all of our learnings and pivoted our outreach to formally generate interest in and document demand for our school.

Our learnings from Phase 1 (described in detail in the **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** section) led us to understand that, as indicated above, our target community is not a physical place, rather it is a community of families and students who have a set of shared needs. We also learned that, while our community of families and students are diffused and have high rates of mobility across the city, they do coalesce in city-wide agencies and community organizations that provide services and supports. To this end, we learned that to reach our community and successfully recruit our students, we must do so through these community agencies and organizations that already serve and support our families and students.

We acted on this knowledge in Phase 2 (described in detail in the **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** section), forming partnerships and relationships with the city-wide and community-based agencies and organizations that serve and are already connected to our community of families and students who have a set of shared needs. Our relationships with city-wide agencies (detailed below) allows us to cast a wide net and be connected with families and students from all across the city. In addition to these agencies, we have established partnerships with at least one community organization that serves the communities in and around the location of our nine focus schools as outlined above. It is critical to note that these agencies and organizations already have deep, trusting relationships with the families and students we seek to serve. As such, our partnerships with them will, by extension, lend trust to our school as our connection to the future families and students we will serve will be initiated by an agency and/or organization that our community already trusts.

When establishing these relationships with the agencies and community organizations that exist to provide services and supports to our target community of families and students, we were met with overwhelming enthusiasm about partnering. To expound, while these agencies and organizations provide needed services to our target community of families and students, they are not schools. However, they have long recognized that the current educational options in Nashville have not sufficiently met the needs of the families and students they serve. To this end, these agencies and organizations fully support the founding of our school, knowing that we will provide access to an educational model specifically designed to meet the specific needs of our target community of families and students. To reiterate, as an Opportunity School, we must approach an array of functions differently as we are embarking to open an entirely different kind of school. Evidencing demand and recruiting for our school are among those differences. As such, we are extending our partnerships with enthusiastic support from the city-wide agencies and community organizations that serve our community as profound evidence for the demand for our school.

Below outlines the city-wide agencies that we have secured support from and formed recruitment partnerships with – as noted above these agencies are already connected to our target community of families and students and have established trusting relationships with them. As such, they will serve as effective recruitment partners, referring the families and students they serve to us. To reiterate, these agencies have agreed to partner with us because they fully support the founding of our school and understand that our school will fill a great need in the community.

City-Wide Agencies	
Agency	**Description**
Casa De Dios (Pastor Jose Rodriguez)	The largest Hispanic ministry in Nashville, TN, Casa De Dios supports the educational and community needs of Hispanic families. This collaboration is focused on ensuring that Hispanic students and families have access to the resources, guidance, and support they need to succeed. Casa De Dios will play a vital role in helping us recruit students, provide language translation services, and engage with the local community. Together, we aim to create a welcoming environment that fosters academic achievement and strengthens ties between the school and the Hispanic community, empowering students to excel in their education while preserving their cultural heritage. Through this partnership, we are committed to creating a supportive, inclusive educational experience for all families.
Clarvida (Casey Beavers)	Clarvida of Tennessee is a dedicated organization committed to empowering children, adults, and families through tailored counseling, foster care, and community-based services. With a focus on individual strengths and holistic care, Clarvida continuously innovates to meet the evolving needs of communities across Tennessee. The organization offers a wide range of support, including behavioral and mental health counseling, case management, psychiatric care, substance use recovery, and supported employment and housing. Delivered by trained specialists, licensed professionals, and peer support experts, these services aim to foster well-being, stability, and positive outcomes for every client. By providing in-home and community-based programs, Clarvida strives to create lasting change that enhances the lives of those they serve. Clarvida will serve as an impactful recruiting partner, connecting us to families and students who will benefit from our school.
Davidson County Juvenile and Truancy Court (Sheila Calloway)	The Davidson County Juvenile and Truancy Court is dedicated to transforming the juvenile justice system through a holistic approach that prioritizes the health, well-being, and safety of children, families, and the broader community. Guided by a vision to become a national model for juvenile justice, the court emphasizes prevention, fairness, and hope in addressing the challenges faced by youth. Rooted in evidence-based practices, the court upholds the intrinsic value of every child and believes in their capacity for positive change when provided with the right opportunities and support. By fostering an environment that encourages individuals to reach their full potential, the court not only addresses individual needs but also works to promote systemic reforms that enhance community safety and improve the lives of children and families. Through professionalism, respect, and commitment to these core values, the Davidson County Juvenile and Truancy Court strives to create lasting, meaningful impact, including by connecting us to potential families and students.
I Am Well (Maryam Abdallah)	This organization is dedicated to empowering individuals and communities to heal and thrive through compassionate, evidence-based therapy. I Am

	Well Consulting's mission to foster resilience and self-compassion aligns seamlessly with our commitment to nurturing the holistic well-being of our students and their families. By offering consulting services and resources, I Am Well provides a solid foundation for emotional learning, helping youth overcome adversity and build brighter futures. With a strong focus on inclusivity, I Am Well Consulting creates an affirming environment for all, celebrating diversity as a cornerstone of growth and healing. Together, we aim to cultivate resilience, foster empowerment, and create lasting positive change within our communities. I Am Well will be an impactful recruitment partner, referring families and students to us.
Judge Dinkins Educational Center (Tim Forbes)	The Judge Dinkins Educational Center (JDEC), located in Nashville, Tennessee, is a transformative program dedicated to empowering at-risk youth and those involved in the juvenile or criminal justice system. By providing vocational training, hands-on education, and mentorship, JDEC equips adolescents with the tools they need to build brighter futures. The center offers pre-construction and trades education, alongside social and emotional learning, to prepare students for long-term employment. With a dedicated social worker on staff, JDEC also addresses critical life skills such as financial literacy, ensuring holistic support for its participants. Serving the youth of Davidson County, the program emphasizes education and mentorship as a pathway to success, making a meaningful difference in the lives of its students, including by connecting them to our school.
Juvenile Justice Center (Judge Wade)	The Juvenile Justice Center, part of the Nashville Youth Campus for Empowerment (NYCE), represents a transformative approach to juvenile justice in Davidson County. Designed to replace the current detention center on Woodland Street, this 14-acre facility reimagines how young people and their families engage with the justice system by emphasizing rehabilitation over punishment. NYCE will house various resources and agencies dedicated to addressing the underlying trauma and challenges that contribute to youth involvement in crime. With a family-oriented, trauma-informed design, the center will provide pre-trial housing and programs aimed at equipping young people with the tools and opportunities to thrive. Featuring green spaces, courtyards, and state-of-the-art meeting and courtroom facilities, NYCE is the first of its kind in the nation. Spearheaded by Juvenile Court Judge Sheila Calloway and supported by community advocates like country music star Jason DeFord (Jelly Roll), the center embodies a vision of hope, connection, and second chances for youth. By focusing on healing and empowerment, the Juvenile Justice Center aims to create lasting change for children, families, and the Nashville community. This agency will serve as a meaningful recruitment partner, referring families and students to us.
Nashville Propel (Sonya Thomas)	Nashville Propel equips and mobilizes parent leaders to drive systemic change, ensuring that every child has access to high-quality education. Through this partnership, Nashville Propel will connect us to and support the parents of the at-risk students we seek to serve, providing them with the knowledge and tools to navigate and advocate for their children's educational journey. Together, we are committed to amplifying parent

	voices, championing school choice, and fostering pathways to success for all students.
StreetSolid (Ron Johnson)	StreetSolid is a Nashville-based non-profit organization dedicated to empowering individuals involved in the justice system through innovative social, emotional, and cognitive programming. Guided by trauma-informed practices and the latest research in medicine, psychology, and sociology, StreetSolid equips participants with the tools to build healthier identities, regulate emotions, and make responsible decisions. The organization emphasizes long-term mentoring relationships rooted in cognitive behavioral therapy principles, fostering growth in areas like communication, resilience, leadership, and emotional management. In addition to offering a carefully designed curriculum for participants, StreetSolid provides training for facilitators working with similar populations and creates meaningful volunteer opportunities for community members to engage in this transformative work. By helping participants build essential skills, StreetSolid strives to break cycles of incarceration and enable individuals to make positive contributions to their communities. StreetSolid will refer families and students to us.
Youth Villages (Frankie Boyette and Brittany Farr)	Youth Villages is an organization dedicated to creating positive, long-term changes in child welfare, juvenile justice, and children's mental health systems. With 1 in 20 children and youth in the U.S. in state foster care, this collaboration is especially important to reaching our target student community. Youth Villages is committed to connecting us with eligible families. Through Youth Villages' evidence-based, family-focused services, we are able to extend critical support to foster youth and their families. The partnership is anchored by two key programs: the LifeSet Program, which equips young adults transitioning out of foster care with the tools they need for a successful adulthood, and Multisystemic Therapy (MST), which provides at-risk teens with interventions to prevent out-of-home placement due to antisocial behavior. Together, we are bringing help, hope, and transformative opportunities to children and families, ensuring brighter futures for those who need it most.

Additionally, as noted above, we will focus on recruiting students who have experienced chronic absenteeism while attending one of the nine focus schools detailed above. As such, we have formed relationships with at least one community organization in the overall vicinity in which these schools operate knowing that, as indicated above, our target population of families and students have a shared set of unique needs that these community organizations fulfill. To this end, just like the city-wide agencies above, we will look to our partnerships with these community organizations to connect us to families and students who will benefit from our school. Also like the city-wide agencies listed above, these community organizations fully support the founding of our school and understand the critical need to effectively serve this population of students.

East Community	
Organization	**Description**
Martha O'Bryan Center (Kent Miller, Morgan Campey, and Sherica Clark Nelms)	The Martha O'Bryan Center is an organization committed to narrowing the achievement gap for economically disadvantaged students in Nashville. Our collaboration empowers students by providing them with critical academic support, social-emotional resources, enrichment programs, and career exploration opportunities. In addition to serving as a recruitment partner, our partnership also involves the Academic Student Unions (ASUs), vibrant, teen-driven spaces where students in grades 9-12 can receive tutoring, college application coaching, social-emotional counseling, and leadership development. Through these services, students gain the tools they need to thrive academically and personally. Additionally, job training workshops and paid work experience will provide hands-on skills to prepare them for future careers. With access to enriching activities in the arts, STEM, and beyond, students will be empowered to explore their passions and build a bright, successful future. Together, we will guide them on their path to post-secondary success and long-term achievement.

North Community	
Organization	**Description**
Ephesian Primitive Baptist Church (Pastor Cornelius Hill)	This church led by Pastor Hill will serve as an impactful recruiting partner, referring families and students to us. Pastor Hill is a dedicated community leader, mentor, and advocate for youth in the North Nashville community. Pastor Hill brings invaluable experience working with youth who have faced disengagement, adoption challenges, and various levels of trauma within their families and communities. His unwavering commitment to creating profound experiences and fostering a sense of belonging for every child aligns perfectly with our mission. Together, we are building a lasting partnership to empower and uplift our youth, ensuring they thrive in a supportive and nurturing environment.

South Community	
Organization	**Description**
Adorned Ministry LLC (Marcea Johnson)	We are excited to partner with Adorned Ministry LLC, an organization dedicated to empowering young women to embrace the truth of God's Word, walk in His Spirit, and disciple the next generation. Through this mentoring and recruitment partnership, Adorned Ministry LLC aims to support our mission by helping to decrease dropout rates, reduce youth unemployment, and foster a strong sense of purpose and belonging among students. By working together, we can inspire young women to reach their full potential and positively impact their communities.

c. Complete the provided templates for Enrollment Summary (Table 1) and Anticipated Demographics (Table 2). Describe the data, factors, and methodology used to determine initial enrollment projections. The information provided on these tables must match that provided on the operating budget template.

As outlined above and described in more detail in the **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** section, we have conducted extensive research about Opportunity Youth, including soliciting input from the students and families we seek to serve in Nashville, as well as conducting numerous site visits to schools that serve similar populations of students in states across the country. Four of the peer schools we visited were, and continue to be, instrumental in the design of our school. We have also examined a myriad of research-based academic models, as well as analyzed data and research related to school size – all of which informed the academic and operational plans contained in this application, including our key design elements of belonging, relevance, and flexibility. These key design elements will enable us to realize our mission of reengaging disconnected youth and, as such, stand as our core commitments to our students, families, staff, and the broader community. In sum, all of these inputs resulted in our initial enrollment projects.

More specifically, in alignment with our core commitment of belonging, a slow growth model is critical. We will begin with a cohort of 88 freshmen and add a grade/cohort each year until we achieve a full enrollment of 9-12th graders. We do this for several reasons. First, our culture is a critical element of our model. Great care must be taken to establish a shared commitment and sense of belonging, which goes hand-in-hand with safety. Focusing on one grade level at a time allows us to build this foundation. Additionally, our instructional model is complex. Growing slowly also allows us to ensure high-quality implementation of the model and time to adjust to input and experiences as we scale.

d. Provide as Attachment C the proposed school's Enrollment Policy, which should include and align with the following:

- **Tentative dates related to the school's application period and enrollment deadlines and procedures;**
- **Non-discriminatory admission policies, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-107;**
- **Any proposed articulation agreements, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-113; and**
- **Policies and procedures for student waitlists, withdrawals, re-enrollment, and transfers.**

See **Attachment C**.

e. Explain how the school will receive and process enrollment applications and detail the school's plan to conduct an enrollment lottery if the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. Enrollment lottery plans must align with T.C.A. § 49-13-113, T.C.A. §49-13-106, and SBE Rule 0520-14-01-.04.

We will accept electronic and hard copy applications. If an application is submitted via hard copy, it will be entered into our application database by school staff. All applications will be numbered and stamped with the date and time of receipt. Applicants will receive confirmation that their application was successfully received. If more applications are received than seats available, we will conduct a public lottery to determine who is enrolled. We will comply with all applicable State Board of Education rules and Tennessee state laws when implementing a lottery process. Accordingly, the lottery will be conducted on the seventh business day after the close of the application period. The lottery will be certified by a law firm or independent accounting firm. See **Attachment C** for our comprehensive enrollment policy and procedures.

f. Describe the plan to recruit students in the year prior to opening. Identify which staff position will oversee these student recruitment campaigns and detail any marketing strategies, targeted community organizations, activities, events, responsible parties, and timelines that will be integral to student recruitment.

Recruitment Strategy. We know that in order to connect with our target student population - who by definition experiences higher mobility and are likely disconnected from school - we need to take a different approach to recruitment than our peers in traditional charter schools.

As outlined above, we've launched Phase 2 of our recruitment work by forming deep partnerships with agencies that are already connected to our future families. Members of the founding design team have worked at local public charter schools - and generally the recruitment strategy is three-fold:

1. Do targeted canvassing in specific zip codes in an effort to connect directly with families;
2. Connect with geographically specific community organizations to connect with families; and,
3. Leverage Social Media campaigns to spread the word about the school and who is eligible.

While all of these strategies will be part of our recruitment plan, knowing the geographic spread of our community, their mobility, and their disconnection to many of these structures, we knew we needed another way to connect to our community. Additionally, as an Opportunity School, 75% of our overall enrollment must be students who fulfill one or more risk criteria. As a result, it is also important that our recruitment strategy is intentionally focused on connecting with those specific students and families.

We began by reflecting on our robust community outreach in Phase 1 of our design work (see the **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** section). We wondered: where are our future families coalescing? Who might they trust? Where are they already building community and relationships? And how can we ensure we are partnering with those spaces, places, and people to conduct outreach and recruitment.

What we saw was that the families we are trying to reach DO coalesce in certain agencies and community organizations. More specifically, we knew that the foster placement agencies serve exclusively eligible students, as did juvenile and truancy courts as well as their robust diversion programs. Additionally, many of our nonprofit partners do incredibly targeted work for our same student community.

Therefore, a key effort undertaken during Phase 2 was the establishment of partnerships with the agencies and organizations that we discovered our families and students do coalesce in. Described in detail above as evidence for demand for our school, these agencies and organizations are as follows – all have committed to referring families and students to us and supporting us in our recruitment efforts. To this end, these agencies and organizations are the crux of our recruitment strategy:

- Casa De Dios (Pastor Jose Rodriguez)
- Clarvida (Casey Beavers)
- Davidson County Juvenile and Truancy Court (Sheila Calloway)
- I Am Well (Maryam Abdallah)
- Judge Dinkins Educational Center (Tim Forbes)
- Juvenile Justice Center (Judge Wade)
- Nashville Propel (Sonya Thomas)
- StreetSolid (Ron Johnson)
- Youth Villages (Frankie Boyette and Brittany Farr)

- Martha O'Bryan Center (Kent Miller, Morgan Campey, and Sherica Clark Nelms)
- Ephesian Primitive Baptist Church (Pastor Cornelius Hill)
- Adorned Ministry LLC (Marcea Johnson)

Staffing and Timeline. As outlined in the **Personnel/Human Capital** section, upon approval of our application, we will hire the Executive Director, Director of Operations, Director of Development, and Principal – all of whom will be FTEs during the entire pre-opening year. The Director of Development will focus on implementing our Year O fundraising plan, and the Principal will largely focus on hiring staff during the pre-opening year. The Executive Director and Director of Operations will work in collaboration around student recruitment and enrollment. In January of the pre-opening year, we will hire an Attendance Liaison who will be instrumental in supporting the enrollment and then onboarding process. To further support onboarding, we will hire a Student Supports Coordinator in April of the pre-opening year, ensuring that we have ample staff in place to execute on recruitment and enrollment in alignment with our strategy and targets. Below outlines the general timeline for these functions:

Recruitment and Enrollment			
Task	**Owner(s)**	**Compensation**	**Timeline**
Finalize marketing materials	Executive Director	Salary	7/1/2025 – 7/30/2025
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Officially implement student recruitment and enrollment strategy	Executive Director	Salary	Upon Application Approval
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Finalize onboarding and intake timeline and responsibilities	Executive Director	Salary	By 2/27/2026 (End of application period)
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	
Accept and acknowledge student applications	Director of Ops	Salary	Until 2/27/2026 (Last Fri in Feb)
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	
Hold enrollment lottery (if needed)	Board	N/A	3/10/2026 (7 Business Days after Application Deadline)
	Executive Director	Salary	
Notify parents of lottery results and admission status	Attendance Liaison	Salary	3/11/2026 – 3/19/2026 (7 Business Days after Lottery)
Hold registration and onboarding (including intake)	Executive Director	Salary	4/1/2026 – 6/30/2026
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	

	Student Supports Coord	Salary	
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	
Plan and prepare for orientation to be held the first month of school	Executive Director	Salary	6/1/2025 – 6/30/2025
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	
	Student Supports Coord	Salary	
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	

To guide implementation of the strategy, plans, and timeline outlined above, we have established the following Enrollment and Recruitment Matrix that further articulates our approach to recruiting students to ensure that we meet our enrollment targets:

Enrollment & Recruitment Matrix Plan – Inputs					
Type	**Description**	**Outcome**	**May 22 Goal**	**July 22 Goal**	**Oct 1 Goal**
Committed Power Partners	Community organization serving target Rock Students in target geographies. **Committed to:** - Sharing monthly student referrals with the Rock - Inviting the Rock to a minimum of 1 quarterly event to interface with families and collect surveys	Signed MOUs Actual Delivery of Student Referrals	5 MOUs 25 student referrals 2 Events	15 MOUs 75 student referrals 6 Events	25 MOUs 125 student referrals 8 Events
Attend Community Events	City-wide or neighborhood-based events drawing large crowds of families with school-age children. **Committed to:** - Hosting a Rock table with flyers, interest forms, and school representatives - Capturing 5+ new leads per event - Offering families the chance to an Intent to Enroll Form (RSVP) and Interest Form for more info at the next round table session.	Round Table Interest Forms Intent to Enroll Forms	1 Info Session 3 Events	5 Info Sessions 9 Events	10 Info Sessions 12 Events

Door Knocking	Direct outreach to priority apartment complexes and residential neighborhoods near future school sites. **Committed to:** - Knocking on 200+ doors per week - Distributing bilingual flyers and interest forms - Submitting 10+ interest forms weekly from canvassing	Calendar of Events Door Knocking Tracker Interest Forms	200 Doors 20 Interest Forms	600 Doors 60 Interest Forms	1200 Doors 120 Interest Forms
Calls/Texts	Reconnect with families who previously expressed interest or were referred by partners/events. **Committed to:** - Scheduling follow-up conversations or invites to events - Moving leads toward application, RSVP, or survey completion - Making at least 50 outreach attempts monthly	Call Log	50 Calls	150 Calls	300 Calls
Targeted Mailers & Ad Campaign	Printed TRA materials sent to homes in high-need zip codes, focused on TRA's unique value proposition. Digital and print campaigns targeting zip codes with high populations of underserved families and rising 8th graders. **Committed to:** - Mailing 250+ postcards monthly - Including clear call-to-action for RSVP or interest form - Tracking returns and responses from specific codes - Generating 75 + unique clicks to interest form - Tracking and tagging all leads by campaign source - Driving signups for events, surveys, and future applications	Mailers Interest Forms	-	-	250 Mailers Ongoing 75 Interest Form Clicks Ongoing

Middle School Outreach	Collaborate with leaders of middle schools serving rising 8th graders in target zones to build early awareness of The Rock Academy. **Committed to:** - Partnering with principals and counselors to host information sessions for 7th grade families, focusing on high school readiness and the unique opportunities at TRA - Conducting 3+ middle school visits per semester (Presenting directly to parents at PTA meetings, parent nights, or through school-facilitated communications) - Capturing 50+ interest forms from these engagements (Securing completed surveys, interest forms, and early intent-to-enroll commitments from families considering high school options)	Middle School Parent Round Tables	1 Parent Round Tables	4 Parent Round Tables	6 Parent Round Tables
Potential Follow Up Contact	Targeted engagement for parents/guardians who have already indicated interest in The Rock Academy to keep them informed, excited, and connected. **Committed to:** - Requesting 5 new referrals per contact maintaining parent leads - Providing referral incentives (optional) - Providing opportunities to engage directly with TRA staff, receive updates on the school's progress, and ask questions - Capturing updated contact info, reaffirming interest, and encouraging referrals from attendees	Sign-In Sheets Capturing # of families who RE-Engage Referral Forms	15 Referrals	60 Referrals	90 Referrals

Leads Follow Ups	Engage and follow up on leads with a specific ask to refer additional families and power partners to TRA. **Committed to:** - Requesting 5 new referrals per lead follow-up - Tracking referral sources and conversion	Referrals Lead Tracker	5 Connects	10 Connects	30 Connects

Enrollment & Recruitment Matrix Plan – Outputs					
Type	**Description**	**Outcome**	**May 22 Goal**	**July 22 Goal**	**Oct 1 Goal**
Community Surveys	Gather surveys from community members to demonstrate support for The Rock Academy and gauge enrollment potential. **Committed to:** - Capturing key details including zip code, whether the respondent has age-eligible children, and an optional contact field for follow-up - Distributing surveys at community events, churches, through door-knocking, and digitally - Segmenting responses by survey type and demographic data for reporting purposes	# completed # in zip code	30 37207, 37210	90 37115	120 37207, 37208, 37115, 37210
Interest Forms	Survey and/or separate form from an age-eligible family who says they are interested in enrolling and learning more. **Committed to:** - Securing interest forms from families with age-eligible students expressing intent to enroll	Surveys	20	60	120
"Would've Been" Interest Forms	Survey and/or separate form from a previously age-eligible family who says they would have been interested in enrolling if Rock had	Surveys	30	90	120

	been available when they were rising 9th graders **Committed to:** - Securing "Would've Been Interest Forms – from families of older students who would have enrolled had TRA existed sooner				
Community Letters of Support	Written letters from community leaders and organizations articulating their support	Letters	10	30	60

We have also created a stepback plan, which will be implemented in response to not meeting the targets outlined above by month. More specifically, if any targets are missed, we will have a monthly stepback meeting with the recruitment team to achieve the following:

- **Reassess and Reallocate:** Shift energy to higher-performing outreach tactics (i.e., if cold calls aren't working, double down on pop-ups or church engagements).
- **Activate Booster Events:** Rapid-turnaround events in underserved zones with food/incentives to generate buzz and leads.
- **Expand Street Team Efforts:** Recruit parents or partners as enrollment ambassadors (stipend/micro-grant available).
- **Launch Mini-Campaigns:** "5 Days to Find 5" social push with storytelling and partner shares.

g. Describe student recruitment after the proposed school has opened. Detail how ongoing recruitment will differ from pre-opening recruitment.

As explained above, the community from which we will draw students is not defined by a set geographic location. Rather, our target community consists of families and students who have a set of shared needs. In our research, we found that this community is diffuse and ever-changing, with high rates of mobility across the city. Accordingly, our recruitment efforts will largely remain the same after pre-opening in that we will continue to partner with the agencies and community organizations that serve the population that we also seek to serve. To this end, we will continue to hold the recruitment and enrollment of our students as a top priority once we are operational.

h. Describe how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the proposed school. Specifically describe any plans for outreach to economically disadvantaged families, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, English learners, and other students at risk of academic failure.

Students who reside within the zoning of MNPS will be allowed to apply and enroll in our school as outlined in Tennessee state law. Accordingly, all students will be given equal opportunities to attend our school. We will not discriminate on any basis, including on personal and/or home situations, economic status, housing status, academic achievement level, need for specialized services, disability, creed, gender, color, race, home language, or national origin. We will fully implement nondiscriminatory admission policies, and we will not require any activities prior to enrollment. As described throughout, once enrolled, we will require families and students to participate in an onboarding process.

As explained in detail above, we are concentrating our recruitment efforts on reaching students whose previous schools did not meet their needs and who are experiencing chronic absenteeism. In other words, we are

specifically recruiting Opportunity Youth who have at-risk status. While chronic absenteeism underpins our efforts, our research shows that these students are very likely to have low levels of academic achievement and to be economically disadvantaged. Additionally, we anticipate that we will serve a significantly higher population of students with disabilities than the district given that our school is designed to meet students' diverse academic, behavioral, social-emotional and behavioral needs. We anticipate that we will serve roughly the same percentage of students who are ELs as the district. To reach and ultimately enroll our Opportunity Youth students, we are leveraging our partnerships and relationships with the agencies and community organizations that serve the families that we also seek to serve. To this end, we will advertise our school and our academic plan, which, as outlined in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, was designed specifically to serve students with at-risk status. In this, we will highlight how our program supports students who are economically disadvantaged, are academically behind, have disabilities, and who speak languages other than English. We will also provide all marketing and application materials in multiple languages, including English, Spanish and Arabic.

i. Describe how the student recruitment and enrollment practices, processes, and policies of the proposed school will differ from those at charter schools the sponsor operates or has operated.

Not applicable.

j. Detail the similarities and differences between the community of the proposed school and the communities served by other charter school(s) that the sponsor operates or has operated.

Not applicable.

k. Describe the plan to ensure that at-risk students constitute at least 75 percent of the school's enrolled student population. Detail how the school plans to verify a student's "at-risk" status upon enrollment.

As explained at length above, we have designed our recruitment strategy specifically for our intended population – Opportunity Youth – to ensure that we successfully attract and enroll students who qualify as being at-risk as defined by the Opportunity School legislation.

Currently, State Board of Education rules indicate that the operator of an Opportunity School must collect and submit data that evidences students' at-risk status upon enrollment. As referenced throughout this application, we will implement a robust onboarding process with our students and their families. A key component of onboarding will be the intake process, where families meet with school staff to submit documentation, complete needs assessments, and learn about the school's policies and procedures, among other things. During intake, we will collect documentation such as federal tax returns, detention records, transcripts, and birth certificates, among others to verify students' status of being at-risk.

However, we acknowledge that as the first-of-its-kind school in Tennessee, operating under new, first-of-its-kind legislation in Tennessee, with related rules being developed as recently as November 2024, rules and regulations are likely to evolve. As such, we will work closely with the State Board of Education and with our authorizer to ensure that we are in compliance with all rules and regulations pertinent to the verification of students' at-risk status.

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

Student Enrollment Growth Over Years of Operation

Year of Operation	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Full Capacity
Pre-K											
K											
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9	88	88	88	88	88	88	88	88	88	88	88
10	-	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85
11	-	-	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82	82
12	-	-	-	78	78	78	78	78	78	78	78

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	>75%	N/A – We will be an Opportunity School
% of Students with Disabilities	25%	N/A – We will be an Opportunity School
% of English Learners	29%	N/A – We will be an Opportunity School

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[11]	>75%

Section 1.6 - Parent and Community Engagement and Support (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Describe community feedback and parental interest regarding the proposed charter school. Explain how this feedback was collected and provide a rationale for its validity. Detail how this feedback was incorporated into the application.

We have spent the past two years collecting feedback from an array of stakeholders, including from students and families, regarding our school model. These efforts have unfolded in two phases – Phase 1 consisted of going out into the community and connecting with families and students and asking them about the challenges they experience and the needs they have, as well as connecting with and soliciting input from stakeholders and organizations that interact with these families and students. Phase 2 consisted of acting on the information that we collected during Phase 1 by designing our academic plan, forming relationships and partnerships with agencies and organizations that serve our intended population of families and students, and solidifying documented demand and support for our school – both phases are described in more detail below:

Phase 1: September 2023 – August 2024

We applied for and received a sizable grant from the New Schools Venture Fund (NSVF) to support the efforts of founding Rock Academy.[75] Our school's focus on meeting the needs of students who have experienced chronic absenteeism, along with other risk indicators such as placement in foster care and/or involvement in truancy and/or juvenile court, align with NSVF's priority of supporting racial equality as the vast majority of students who are chronically absent and carry other Opportunity risk indicators identify as people of color. Inherent in effectively serving this population is establishing robust and authentic relationships with the students and families we seek to serve and the community agencies and organizations that also serve and interact with them. To this end, the NSVF grant enabled us to conduct extensive outreach to collect data and information about the population we seek to serve.

The court system served as the backbone of our efforts during Phase 1. Over the course of many months, our lead founder, Dr. Ahmed White, spent on average 4 hours a day, 3-4 days a week at court. He immersed himself in this setting to build connections with those who interact with the court, including students, families, lawyers, judges, and other stakeholders such as court reporters. His immersion also built context as he attended court proceedings and interviewed key stakeholders, giving him great insight into the varied perspectives of these stakeholders. Dr. White spent **58 hours** observing truancy courts, allowing him to gain a robust understanding of the root causes of chronic absenteeism. Additionally, he spent **104 hours** observing juvenile delinquency courts, during which time he studied the nature and causes of student behaviors and infractions, as well as closely examined the court hearing process. This time in the courts provided invaluable insight into the lived experiences of the students and families we seek to serve, including the barriers and challenges they encounter on a daily basis, and gave us ideas about the supports and services these students and families need. After building connections and context in those initial months, Dr. White then formalized his outreach efforts as outlined below:

- **Formed an Advisory Group:** Knowing how important partnership, collaboration, and varied perspectives are to successfully engaging in this work, Dr. White formed an advisory group, with membership consisting of a judge, probation officer, charter school expert, service provider from the Martha O'Bryan Center, recent high school graduate, community leader, leader of a national organization that advocates for the educational needs of at-risk youth, and data analyst. The group met every two weeks from May-August

[75] https://www.newschools.org/venture/rock-academy/

2024. As the name suggests, the primary function of this group was to provide input, feedback, and perspective on how to best meet the needs of the students and families we seek to serve.

- **Administered Surveys:** We administered 152 surveys to gather critical feedback on the needs and challenges of the community of students and families we seek to serve. The stakeholders who completed the surveys include high school students, prospective families, probation officers, and social workers. The advisory group described above was instrumental in designing and administering these surveys as the members brought their expertise and pipelines to the process.
- **Conducted Focus Groups:** To complement the survey data, we held five focus groups. We hired an external facilitator who specializes in organizing and conducting focus groups to lead this effort. The five stakeholder groups interviewed were: 1. youth from a detention center, 2. juvenile court social workers, 3. probation officers, 4. allies and educators, and 5. parents. Taken together, the focus groups spanned 12.5 hours, and each consisted of between 8-12 participants. Each group interviewed offered their unique perspectives and shared valuable insights, collectively shedding light on the challenges and areas of opportunities that exist in Nashville's current school system. The input collected across these focus groups allowed us to gain a 360-degree view of perspectives regarding chronic absenteeism as we heard from the Opportunity Youth and families we want to serve, the education and advocacy professionals that work to support them, and the court professionals charged with supervising them.

After collecting an immense amount of input and feedback about the students, families, and community we seek to serve through the mechanisms and methodology described above, we then looked outside of Nashville to continue our information gathering efforts. More specifically, as indicated throughout, our school will be the first-of-its-kind in Tennessee, so there are no existing peer schools to turn to in the state for input and feedback. However, there are schools driven by a similar mission and, as such, serve similar populations of students with similar needs across the United States. We visited eight such schools, spending nearly 100 hours on site. Four of these schools emerged as invaluable thought partners and lenders of support, contributing greatly to the design of our program and providing ongoing support. We also attended two conferences focused on serving Opportunity Youth – during these conferences, we spent more than 30 hours engaged in learning about the needs of students and families and how schools and organizations can support them. Further, Dr. White participated in an additional 24 hours of training, where superintendents and other top educational leaders collaborated to learn about innovative and effective practices in education.

Phase 2: September 2024 – Present

After taking a full year to collect input and feedback from an array of stakeholders and organizations as described above, we moved into Phase 2 of our efforts, which focused on solidifying the design of our school and on forming relationships and establishing partnerships with agencies and organizations that serve, support, and otherwise interacting with the community of students and families we seek to serve.

- **School Design:** To summarize the extensive input and feedback we collected through observation, surveys, and focus groups as described above, clear high-level trends emerged from the students and families we seek to serve – these are:
    - **Kids are disengaged:** Students and families repeatedly told our team that school was not relevant or engaging. Many failed to see the short- or long-term value of their academic experiences and, as a result, opted out. Others struggled with academic content, fell behind, and became disenfranchised.
    - **Schools are not designed to serve all kids equally:** Many students feel unsafe and/or unseen at school. For others, it is an issue of basic needs – unstable housing and transportation make getting

to and from school a constant struggle; food insecurity makes staying engaged difficult; and lack of access to clean clothing and laundry facilities further complicates coming to school.

These top-level trends, along with all of the additional input we gathered from other stakeholders, research, peer schools, conferences, and professional learning, essentially informed our mission, vision, key design elements, and resulting academic plan. To this end, we knew that to successfully reengage disconnected Opportunity Youth, we would have to anchor our programming in our core commitments of belonging, relevance, and flexibility. To date, we have collectively spent over 1,000 hours collaboratively developing this application to start our school.

- **Relationships and Partnerships:** As explained in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** section, all our outreach efforts resulted in our understanding that the population of students and families we seek to serve are not centrally located geographically – there is no one community or area in which we can target our engagement efforts because our population is diffuse, with ever-changing locations across the city. However, we learned that our population does tend to coalesce in the community agencies and organizations that serve, support, and provide services relevant to their specific needs. From this realization, we wondered: where are our future families coalescing? Who might they trust? Where are they already building community and relationships? And how can we ensure we are partnering with those spaces, places, and people to amass support and conduct outreach and recruitment.

  What we found was that the families we are trying to reach DO coalesce in certain agencies and community organizations. Accordingly, a key effort undertaken during Phase 2 was the establishment of partnerships with the agencies and organizations where we discovered our families and students do coalesce. Described in detail in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** section, these agencies and organizations are as follows – all have extended their robust support for our school and have committed to referring families and students to us as recruitment partners:

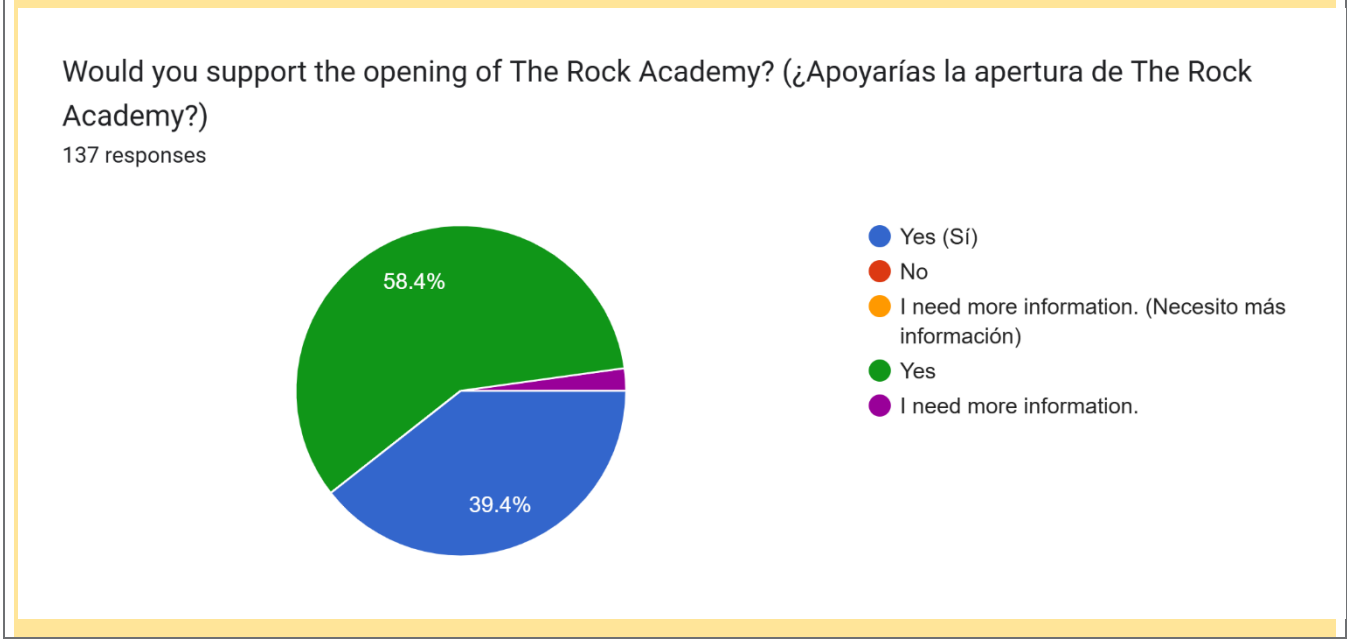
  - Casa De Dios (Pastor Jose Rodriguez)
  - Clarvida (Casey Beavers)
  - Davidson County Juvenile and Truancy Court (Sheila Calloway)
  - I Am Well (Maryam Abdallah)
  - Judge Dinkins Educational Center (Tim Forbes)
  - Juvenile Justice Center (Judge Wade)
  - Nashville Propel (Sonya Thomas)
  - StreetSolid (Ron Johnson)
  - Youth Villages (Frankie Boyette and Brittany Farr)
  - Martha O'Bryan Center (Kent Miller, Morgan Campey, and Sherica Clark Nelms)
  - Ephesian Primitive Baptist Church (Pastor Cornelius Hill)
  - Adorned Ministry LLC (Marcea Johnson)

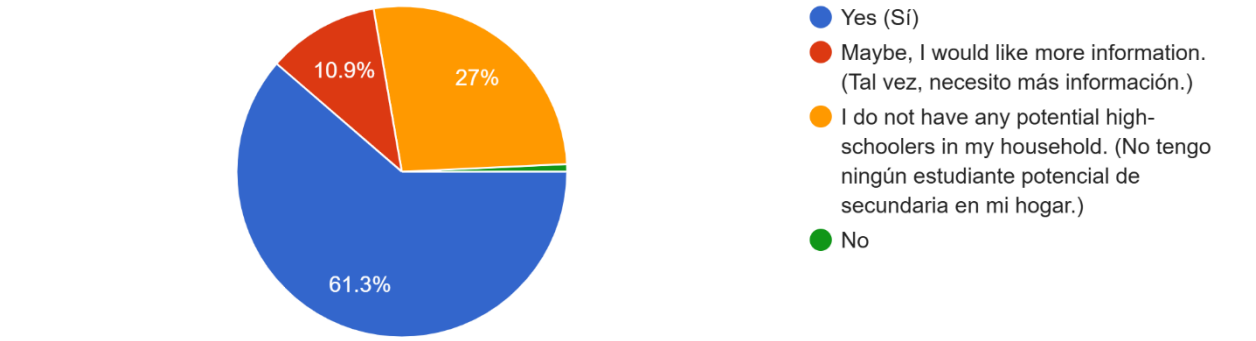
  In addition to the above agencies and community organizations who have pledged their support for our school and have committed to being recruitment partners, we have conducted additional engagement efforts to garner wider community support for our school. To expound, as noted, we see relationships as the key to solidifying support for our school and reaching our target community, which consists of families and students who have a set of shared needs rather than who share a specific geographic location. To this end, we have spent over 330 hours forging relationships with other agencies and organizations than those

listed above. Specifically, we have engaged with and have support from over **85** youth organizations, agencies, and community leaders.

- **Additional Interactions with the Community:** As indicated throughout, we are deeply committed to engaging with the community to build a strong foundation of support for our school in service to our students and families. To this end, we have additionally conducted the following engagement efforts, which allowed us to have another layer of interactions with the community we seek to serve:
    - **Interest Surveys:** As noted above, we administered surveys during Phase 1 of our efforts to collect input and feedback to help us fully understand the needs of the students and families we seek to serve. We administered another set of surveys in Phase 2 to capture support for and interest in our school. To date, we have 255 completed surveys.
    - **Home Visits:** Through the partnerships we have established (as described above and in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** section, we have conducted 65 home visits, directly connecting with the families of and students who qualify as Opportunity Youth. During these visits, we foster trust, expose families and students to our school, and continue to build our base of support. We will continue to conduct home visits as way to directly engage our families and students.
    - **Community Events:** We have attended an array of community events, spending close to 35 hours at these events to bring awareness to our school. At these events, we are able to meet community members, share information about our school, disseminate marketing materials, and collect contact information from parents interested in enrolling their children.
    - **Social Media:** We have launched a robust social media campaign across multiple platforms, often featuring our presence at community events, to spread awareness and generate interest in our school. To date, we have over 800 followers across our various platforms, further amplifying our reach.

Our efforts have resulted in pronounced demand for our school. More specifically, as noted above, we have been administrating interest surveys. During Phase 2 of our efforts, we have successfully surveyed 137 parents with school-aged children; their survey responses are overwhelming supportive of our school and show high levels of interest in having their children attend as depicted below:

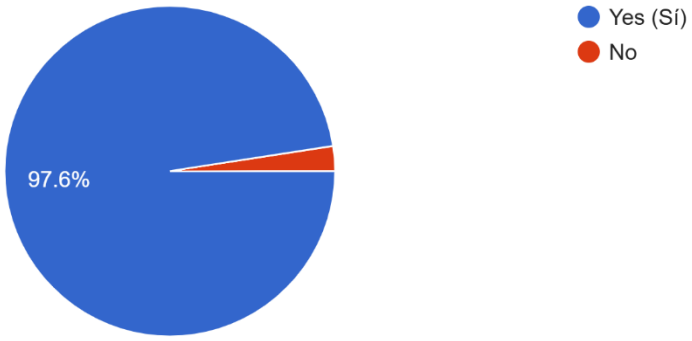




As noted in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** section, we are also gathering survey data from parents whose children are no longer of school age but who would have been interested in sending their children to our school should it have been an option for them while their children were of high school age. As indicated below, we have gotten 123 responses from such parents, all of whom support the opening of our school and the vast majority of whom think our school would have been a great fit for their children:

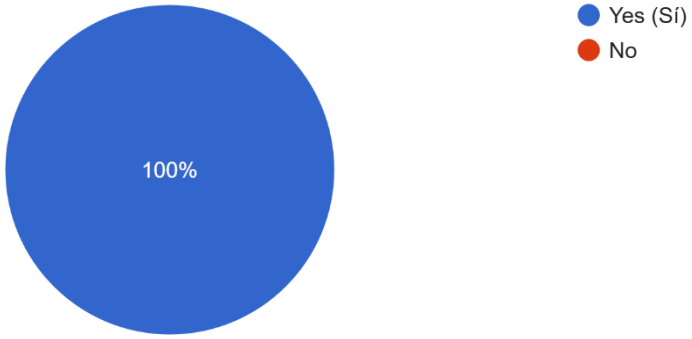
The Rock Academy's model would have been a great fit for me or my child who has already completed high school. El modelo de Rock Academy ...ra mi hijo, que ya terminó la escuela secundaria.

123 responses



Do you support the opening of The Rock Academy? (¿Apoyarías la apertura de The Rock Academy?)

123 responses



b. Describe planned strategies to engage parents and community members from school approval through its operation. Detail strategies to establish buy-in and interest from the community during the pre-opening period.

As explained in detail above, we have conducted community engagement efforts for the past two years and will continue these efforts after approval, during the pre-opening year, and perpetually into operation. To this end, leveraging the relationships we have established with the above community agencies, organizations, and leaders will continue to anchor our engagement efforts. However, we will continue to forge relationships with other agencies and organizations, as well as will continue to survey families, conduct home visits, attend community events, and post on social media to continue to build buy-in from parents and the larger community. We know that the population we seek to serve is diffuse and ever-changing, with high rates of mobility across the city. As such, our engagement efforts will always be ongoing and robust to ensure that we are able to reach, engage, and serve our target population of students and families.

c. Provide any of the following documents that show support from the proposed school's targeted community as Attachment D:

- **Outreach communications intended for the families of potential students.**
- **Documentation of parental intent to enroll their children in the proposed school.**
- **Memoranda of understanding that shows the community welcomes the proposed school, sees it as an attractive educational option, and believes it meets local needs and interests.**
- **Letters of support from the local community that clearly express commitment to the proposed school and suggest that such support will ensure that the school will meet its enrollment goals. These letters may also confirm financial support or ongoing community engagement.**

Contained in **Attachment D** are 75 letters of support, with 9 from parents, 34 from community leaders and supporters, 6 from school-based partner organizations, 14 from youth and social work agencies, 7 from educators, and 5 from Board members.

d. Outline partnerships with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of these partnerships, including any fee-based or in-kind commitments to enhance student learning opportunities.

As explained in detail above, we have spent two years forging relationships and partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and other educational institutions – these relationships and partnerships are the backbone of our school and are the key to reaching and serving our community of students and families, are critically important to executing our academic plan and, and ensure that we are positioned to meet all of their needs inside and outside the walls of our school. Below details the key partnerships that we have codified as well as partnerships that are in still in the process of being solidified:

Codified Partnerships

- **Communities in Schools (CIS):**[76] A nationally recognized organization, CIS is dedicated to empowering students through community support and onsite wraparound services. Through a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), CIS will bring their proven model to our school, ensuring that students have access to the resources they need to succeed. CIS site coordinators will work closely with school administrators, teachers, mentors, and families to address barriers to school attendance, such as transportation challenges, housing insecurity, childcare needs for siblings, and mental health or anti-bullying support. With a track record of success, CIS ensures that 99% of their students show up prepared and ready to learn and 96% of seniors supported by CIS graduate or earn a GED.
- **Diverse Learners Cooperative:**[77] This organization is dedicated to empowering educators with high-quality resources and helping them design collaborative learning experiences for students of all abilities and backgrounds. Through this partnership, we will create positive change for diverse learners by identifying challenges, analyzing data, and co-developing action plans that align with our shared mission. Diverse Learners Cooperative provides invaluable leadership development opportunities for educators, helping them refine their skills and become better equipped to inspire the students who rely on them. With a focus on continuous reflection and improvement, this collaboration allows us to implement evidence-based strategies, celebrate successes, and ensure that every student, regardless of background, has the opportunity to thrive in their educational journey.

[76] https://www.communitiesinschools.org/
[77] https://diverselearnerscoop.com/

- **Martha O'Bryan Center:**[78] Committed to closing the achievement gap for economically disadvantaged students across Nashville, this organization empowers students by providing them with robust academic support, social-emotional resources, enrichment programs, and career exploration opportunities. The core of this partnership centers on the Academic Student Unions (ASUs) that are facilitated by the center as afterschool programming. These ASUs are teen-driven spaces where students across grades 9-12 receive academic tutoring, college application coaching, social-emotional counseling, and leadership development. Additionally, students have access to job training workshops and paid work experience, providing hands-on skills to prepare them for future careers. With access to enriching activities anchored in the Arts and STEM, among others, students are empowered to explore their interests.
- **Modern Classrooms Project:**[79] Described in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, we will implement mastery-based learning, anchored in the Modern Classrooms Project's approach. To ensure that we implement mastery-based learning and employ the Modern Classrooms Project successfully, we have partnered with the organization to provide our staff with critical training around implementation, including the provision of robust lesson and module design support. Since implementing a mastery-based approach to learning using the tenets of the Modern Classroom Project is critical to upholding our commitments of relevance and flexibility, this partnership is crucial to ensuring that our staff get the training and support they need to be successful and effective for our students.
- **Newark Opportunity Youth Network (NOYN):**[80] This organization has almost a decade of experience serving a similar population of students. To this end, NOYN has acted as a thought partner, offering us insight about the organization's community-centered strategy, focus on education, workforce development programs, policy advocacy, ad systems building. In sum, NOYN has, and continues to be a model for harnessing the power of community coordination to achieve transformative outcomes for underserved youth.
- **Pathways Kitchen:**[81] This organization is dedicated to empowering youth ages 15-19 who have been impacted by the juvenile justice system. Through a signed MOU, Pathways Kitchens will serve as a key partner for our Culinary Creative Pathway, offering students culinary training which culminates in paid culinary internships that provide life skills and an ecosystem of support. Their training and development program adheres to the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) Restaurant Ready curriculum, enabling students to earn culinary certifications that enhance their career opportunities. This partnership reflects a shared vision of a world where no young person is defined by their past but is instead empowered to navigate their unique journey toward success.
- **Tennessee Center for Applied Technology (TCAT):**[82] A renowned institution that has been serving the residents of Middle Tennessee for years, TCAT holds accreditation from the Council of Occupational Education. As such, TCAT Nashville provides hands-on, college-accredited vocational training in a variety of fields such as transportation, manufacturing, human services, and allied health occupations. This partnership strengthens our mission to enabling students to pursue the postsecondary pathway of their choosing by providing access to vocational training, internships, and career readiness programs. By collaborating with TCAT Nashville, we empower our students to develop practical skills, secure sustainable employment, and seamlessly transition into the workforce or higher education.
- **Urban Dove:**[83] Another peer school, Urban Dove has over 20 years of experience serving a similar population of students. Urban also has served, and continues to serve, as a thought partner, providing us

[78] https://marthaobryan.org/
[79] https://www.modernclassrooms.org/
[80] https://www.newark-oyn.org/
[81] https://www.pathwayskitchen.org/
[82] https://tcatnashville.edu/
[83] https://urbandove.org/

with valuable expertise and expertise in innovative curriculum specially designed to reengage at-risk youth and prepare them for college and career. Additionally, their restorative practice model has provided us with guidance given its tight alignment with our core commitment of belonging, which includes providing our students with a safe, supportive, inclusive school community.

- **Youth Villages:**[84] This organization is dedicated to creating positive, systemic change in child welfare, juvenile justice, and children's mental health systems. With 1 in 20 children and youth in the U.S. in state foster care, this collaboration is especially meaningful to our founders, who have personally fostered students and are deeply committed to supporting this population. Through this partnership, we are able to offer Youth Villages' evidence-based, family-focused services to the foster youth who attend our school. More specifically, our partnership is anchored by two key programs that will be implement at our school: the LifeSet Program, which equips young adults transitioning out of foster care with the tools they need for a successful adulthood, and Multisystemic Therapy (MST), which provides at-risk teens with interventions to prevent out-of-home placement due to antisocial behavior.

In Process Partnerships

- **Community Arts Organization:** We are in the process of and excited to partner with an community arts organization to integrate creativity and self-expression into the student experience as part of our commitment to relevance. Aligned with our "Creative" pillar within the CTE pathways we will offer, this partnership will bring arts programming, workshops, and performances to our school, which will foster innovation, teamwork, and confidence within our students. By engaging with the arts, students will develop critical skills that prepare them for success in post-secondary pathways and beyond. This collaboration will allow students to explore their passions, embrace their unique talents, and envision limitless possibilities for their futures, empowering them to thrive in both their personal and professional lives.
- **Community Mental Health Services:** This partnership will provide our students with access to social-emotional supports once solidified. To expound, this collaboration will entail access to counseling, crisis intervention, and mental health education. The aim of this partnership is to ensure that our students have on-demand access to the mental health supports and services that they need to build resilience, treat trauma, and gains the skills and tools needed to achieve lifelong well-being.
- **Local Social Services Organization:** This impending partnership will ensure that students and their families have access to essential resources, including housing, food assistance, and family support services. This collaboration addresses foundational needs, allowing students to focus on their education and post-secondary goals, rather than expending energy and enduring toxic stress around finding ways to meet their most fundamental needs.

[84] https://youthvillages.org/

Section 1.7 - School Culture and Discipline (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Provide as Attachment E the Student Handbook and/or forms that will be provided to or required of students and families.

See **Attachment E**.

b. Describe the desired school culture or ethos of the proposed school. Explain how it will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce the school's mission, goals, and objectives.

As outlined throughout, our school will exist to serve Opportunity Youth. As explained in detail in the **School Mission and Goals** and **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** sections, we know that Opportunity Youth are likely to have had experiences in and out of school that have made them feel unsafe, unseen, and/or unwelcome at school. Additionally, in order to realize our ambitious vision for our culture in the short and long term, we know that we have to create and maintain a rich and thriving culture that ensures students are safe, feel a sense of shared accountability, and feel a true sense of belonging, which stands as one our core commitments and key design elements of our academic plan. Additionally, we must ensure that our faculty and staff uphold these cultural tenets and have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to support our collective culture in thriving.

Our students – like *all* kids – are bound to encounter challenges as it is simply the essence of adolescence, and, given that our target student population will be coming to us with disproportionate levels of at-risk behavior, we anticipate this will be particularly true at our school. Accordingly, our culture must be one where students feel holistically safe – safe to be themselves, safe to take chances, safe to make mistakes, and safe to repair the harm caused by those mistakes. They must also believe that - mistakes and all - they are and always will be valuable members of the community. Our school must also be a place where our rich community of stakeholders – families, partners, staff – are meaningful participants in and stewards of our school culture.

In alignment with this vision, we will implement a combination of two evidence-based practices to establish our culture: Positive Behavioral Interventions Supports (PBIS) and Restorative Practices (RPs). These practices will be further articulated through our Core Values, which will provide a common language for our cultural expectations, which will be shared across students, staff, families, and partners. Our use of PBIS, RPs, and Core Values are described in further detail below:

- **PBIS**: Much like RTI² (described in detail in the **Special Populations** section), PBIS is a tiered approach to teaching and responding to student behavior. There are universal strategies that support all students, which work in tandem with opportunities for more intensive support as needed. Importantly, PBIS will be implemented throughout the school, establishing clear and consistent agreements across all areas. As such, successful implementation of PBIS requires a shared commitment to providing explicit instruction around behavioral expectations with many opportunities for students to internalize, make sense of, practice, and receive actionable feedback on these expectations. Students should get feedback both when they are struggling to uphold the expectations that inform our community culture, as well as when they are demonstrating behaviors in alignment with our cultural expectations. Strong implementation of PBIS systems requires strong data systems, so that students and adults alike can see trends, reinforce wins, and create plans for areas of growth (see the **Assessments** and **Professional Development** sections for detail about our data practices). PBIS alone can be successful, but it can also lead to environments where culture is overly transactional, and so to balance the benefits of PBIS, we will pair it with Restorative Practices.
- **RPs:** These are processes that *proactively* build healthy relationships and a sense of community - both as an end unto itself, and a means to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing. RPs focus is on resolving conflict by focusing on repair and holding individuals or groups responsible for their behaviors in a way that

is not judgmental but focused on growth. However, this can only happen if there is already a strong culture in place. When a school is infused with restorative practices, conflict resolution and repair are more seamless and productive because they are rooted in a shared set of values, expectations, and norms and a supportive culture that are already in place. As we often heard from the peer schools we visited in our design work (see the **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** section), "for RPs to work, you need a culture that is worth repairing." Given our student population, it is important to note that schools that leverage restorative practices have demonstrated meaningful reductions in exclusionary discipline practices (like suspensions and expulsions). Given that exclusionary discipline is disproportionately likely to negatively impact at-risk youth, this is deeply important for the culture of our school.

- **Core Values:** As noted above, our Core Values will provide our school with a common language to articulate cultural expectations and norms, giving shared language to aspects of PBIS and RPs. Our core values were created in alignment with the origin of our school, which was envisioned from the perspective of love: love for our community; love for young people; and love for oneself. We see love as a radical act of power. Society often sees love as a finite resource, but we view love as a boundless expression of hope and humanity that can be leveraged to cultivate a strong, supportive school culture that provides our students with a learning environment filled with safety and belonging that enables our students to thrive in school and beyond. As such, our core values are as follows:
    - **Humanity**: We lead with compassion - for ourselves and for others. We see the inherent value in those around us - flaws and all. We default to kindness and respect. We ask for help from others and give help generously.
    - **Belonging**: Human beings thrive in community. But in order to truly be *in* community, we must be seen, valued, and supported for who we are as individuals - and to extend those same commitments to the people around us. This is the true meaning of belonging. When we belong, we have the support, security and confidence to take chances, grow, and thrive.
    - **Courage**: We see our futures as endlessly hopeful when we are able to be bold, take chances, and see "failure" as a temporary source of feedback. We fall, but, more importantly, we get back up. We commit to looking in the mirror and courageously getting 1% better every day.
    - **Independence:** Rock Academy is not a place for lone wolves - we are a wolfpack. However, individually, we establish and live in alignment with our own personal values. In doing so, we learn to live with autonomy, chart our own futures, and take responsibility for our actions.
    - **Gratitude**: We commit to consciously recognizing the blessings around us - be they big or small. We actively practice gratitude by seeking opportunities to recognize and share it.

c. Describe the plan to create, implement, and sustain this culture for students, teachers, administrators, and parents starting from the first day of school. Describe the plan for integrating students who enter mid-year.

As explained above, we will implement PBIS and RPs in tandem to establish and maintain our school culture, which will be anchored in a shared commitment to the common language of our core values. Critically, the implementation of PBIS, RPs, and Core Values are most successful when they are employed consistently across the school. To this end, it is important that all stakeholder groups are deeply rooted in and aligned to these core schoolwide practices. We will achieve this through the following:

Faculty: As outlined in the **Professional Development** section, faculty will receive robust professional development over the course of 21 days of summer inservice. Topics related to building and maintaining culture and understanding and implementing discipline policies and practices, including analyzing and responding to

academic, behavioral, and social-emotional data, will be key components of this summer training. Also outlined in that section, as well as in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section, is the common time we have embedded within the daily schedule, creating ample opportunity for faculty to develop new skills and refine existing ones, as well as to reflect on cultural and discipline data and strategize for solutions and supports in alignment with identified trends. To reiterate, all staff have one hour of planning time that is commonly scheduled every day. In addition to using this time to collaboratively plan, staff will meet as a grade level team on a bi-weekly basis to examine data, identify needs, and prescribe supports, including PBIS interventions and RPs.

This commonly scheduled time will also be used to deliver targeted professional development based on data to further support our faculty in refining their skills and practices, including those related to culture and discipline. We will also implement a robust coaching program – specifically, all staff will engage in regular observation and feedback sessions. During these sessions, staff will receive individual coaching and support from school leadership around culture and discipline. The array of robust professional development provided during our daily common time will be extended and built upon during the 10 full professional development days that will be held throughout the year to further support faculty in giving them the tools and skills they need to ensure that we build and sustain our intended culture. Finally, faculty who are hired midyear will receive robust onboarding, including in culture and discipline practices.

All of the above internally delivered professional development will be augmented by the support we receive through our ongoing collaboration with Urban Dove and the Newark Youth Opportunity Network, as well as through ongoing support from the Nashville Incubator, where our lead candidate for Executive Director is a Fellow. These three organizations will provide faculty with additional coaching and support regarding culture and discipline. More specifically, these organizations will conduct culture walkthroughs, provide feedback, collaborate about how to leverage our areas of strength and address areas of need, share best practices, and act as thought partners to support our critically important culture work.

Students: As explained above, impactful implementation of PBIS and RPs require that students have ample opportunities to learn, make sense of, and build ownership around expectations before they are held accountable to upholding them and/or repairing harm caused by not upholding them. As such, before the start of school, students will engage in a robust onboarding process, where they will meet with leaders and staff to complete an intake process and begin to get oriented to the culture, expectations, and norms of the school. Once school has begun, students will have multiple opportunities to receive explicit instruction, practice, and receive feedback in proactive, low-stakes settings. An ample amount of time will be spent orienting students to the school in the first month of the year. More specifically, through our partnerships with peer schools in other states (Lead and Urban Dove) and our mastery-based learning service provider (The Modern Classrooms Project), we will flesh out a robust orientation plan for students. This plan entail intensive acculturation in the beginning weeks, with the intensity gradually being reduced in the later orientation weeks to ensure that our students have ample time and opportunity to be immersed in the cultural and behavioral expectations and norms of the school, as well as expose them to immense and varied channels of support in place to help them in meeting those expectations, including opportunities to repair harm.

Once orientation closes, acculturation will continue, with the primary structure being House (described in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section). During House, mentors will lead direct instruction around key behavioral expectations and around our social-emotional curriculum. Mentors will leverage the Circle Process to provide this direct instruction. While circle structures have multiple purposes in a restorative culture, they can be particularly useful when teaching new skills. In a Circle, students will establish shared agreements for engaging with each other, have brief check ins, complete a focused discussion or lesson, and end with closing reflection. At the beginning of the year and during new SEL units, circles will be used often as

a way to roll out new tools and structures, as well as to establish, practice, and provide feedback on cultural norms and behavioral expectations.

As outlined in our student handbook (contained in **Attachment E**), when there are breaches in culture, students will participate in a variety of restorative practices, including restorative justice, community conferencing, peer mediation, and/or community service. Again, given the flexible structures of the school and the consistent use of data setbacks (as described in the **Professional Development** section), faculty will have many opportunities to identify, and problem solve, in the event that they pinpoint trends in student culture that need to be addressed.

Families: As noted above, we will implement a robust onboarding process upon enrollment to our school prior to the year starting. Among other critical functions, onboarding will be used to first introduce our families to the culture of the school and corresponding expectations and norms. Also, like for students, onboarding will be followed by an orientation process for our families, where we will further review our cultural expectations and norms, reiterating the highly supportive nature of our culture. To emphasize, the success of our school-based culture relies on our families also understanding and reinforcing the tenets of our culture at school and home. To this end, we will provide comprehensive support to families to achieve this.

Our onboarding and orientation processes will be complemented by the array of events we will hold for families. Among these events will be parent/family nights, which we anticipate occurring on a quarterly cadence. These nights will have a dual focus on academic and social-emotional learning; the specific topics covered under the umbrella of each focus will be determined by parents/families themselves as we will seek their input and collaboration when designing and implementing these nights. We will also engage parents and families in our culture by offering them supports as well, including access to GED and ESL programming, among others. In sum, we will work to establish our families as key and vital contributors to and collaborators in our intended school culture.

d. Explain how the school culture will embrace special populations such as students with disabilities, English Learners, and those at risk of academic failure or dropping out.

As explained throughout, as an Opportunity School, we will exist to serve special populations of students, with the vast majority, if not all, of our students being at risk of academic failure and dropping out. Further, as noted throughout, we expect to serve significantly more students with disabilities and students who are ELs than average across the district. To this end, our school was specifically designed to serve special populations of students whose academic, behavioral, social-emotional, mental health, and/or physical needs were not sufficiently met at their previous schools. As indicated throughout and explained above, one of our core commitments is ensuring all students authentically feel a sense of belonging at our school. Through the implementation of our specially designed model, all of which is anchored supporting meeting every single one of our students' individual needs, our culture and school at large will embrace all of our students and their unique needs, gifts, and identities.

e. Provide the school's proposed student discipline policy as Attachment F. The proposed policy must comply with any applicable state laws and regulations.

See **Attachment E**; our discipline policy is embedded within our Student Handbook, which is contained in **Attachment E**.

f. If not addressed in the student discipline policy, describe the philosophy for student discipline that supports the proposed school's model, including:

- **Practices the school will use to promote good discipline, including both penalties for infractions and incentives for positive behavior;**

See **Attachment E**.

- **A list and definitions of the offenses for which students in the school must (where non- discretionary) and may (where discretionary) be suspended or expelled, respectively; procedures for due process when a student is suspended or expelled as a result of a code of conduct violation, including a description of the appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion;**

See **Attachment E**.

- **An explanation of how the school will protect the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings;**

See **Attachment E**.

- **Identify the staff position responsible for carrying out the school's discipline policies and provide a brief job description of the position; and**

In Years 1 and 2 of operation, the Executive Director will be responsible for carrying out the school's discipline policies. Responsibility for the school's discipline policies will shift from the Executive Director to the Culture Dean upon this position's hiring in Year 3. Full job descriptions for both the Executive Director and Culture Dean can be found in the **Personnel/Human Capital** section.

- **How students and parents will be informed of the school's discipline policy.**

As explained above, families and students will participate in a robust onboarding process, during which time they will be given a cursory overview of the school's discipline policy. Onboarding will be followed by a comprehensive orientation program that will further inform students and parents of the discipline policy.

g. Detail any goals related to student attendance and describe the plan to collaborate with families and the community to address and combat chronic absenteeism.

As explained throughout, we will be an Opportunity School, with the intent to serve students who have experienced chronic absenteeism. To this end, we have designed all aspects of our school to achieve our mission of reengaging disconnected youth, which is underpinned by our partnerships with an array of community organizations (discussed in detail in the **Student Recruitment and Enrollment** and **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** sections) and collaborations with families as described above and in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section. To this end, as outlined in detail the **School Mission and Goals** section, we have established the following student attendance goal:

Goal 1: Student Attendance			
Each year, at least 80% of students will have an average daily attendance rate of at least 80%.			
Exceeds	90% or Above	Meets	80.0-89.9%
Approaches	60.0-79.9%	Does Not Meet	<60.0%
Rationale			
Based on the federal definition, a student is considered chronically absent if they miss 10% of school days or more in an academic year. As outlined in the data above, rates of chronic absenteeism are staggeringly high at our focus schools, as well as for AECs, nationally. As highlighted in our mission and vision, as well as in the Opportunity School's accountability framework, the importance of sustained enrollment and attendance cannot be underscored. Our mission is REENGAGE students have been			

disconnected - and part of that engagement means coming to school more frequently. As outlined in this application, we will go to great lengths to make coming to school easier, more rewarding, and more effective. These efforts are meant, at least in part, to encourage kids to show up more often - so they can get the benefits of the program and ultimately achieve our end vision of post-secondary success.

In the schools we studied - those that were best at delivering transformational post-secondary outcomes for at-risk youth - chronic absenteeism rates remained high, but improved in meaningful ways. Despite the tremendously thoughtful and evidence-based program design at TRA, we'd be foolish to assume that we will magically eliminate all incidences of chronic absenteeism. What we focus on instead is a thoughtful approach to prevention AND response to absenteeism.

As an example, most of our peer AEC schools tracked subtypes of chronic absenteeism, including considering students who missed large swaths of consecutive days vs. those who were absent less frequently. Typically, these schools grouped students into high, medium and low attendance risk categories for the purposes of tailoring support. As an example, if a student missed five consecutive days because they were recently unhoused, the response would be different than if a student missed five random days across the course of a month. To be clear, both would be noted and support would be provided to the student in order to improve attendance. But the bottom line here is that our kids will likely continue to miss school - and our goal should be to capture their growth relative to outcomes.

Our current hypothesis, based on our study of peer schools, is that if students attend 80% of school days, they are highly likely to succeed in our program. As such, our goal is that annually, 80% of students attend 80% or more days of school.

[redacted]

Section 1.8 - Special Populations (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Describe the school leadership team's experience supporting students with disabilities, English learners, at-risk students, and intellectually gifted students. Explain the plan to ensure the school is appropriately staffed to meet these student groups' needs.

Experience. Dr. Ahmed White is the leading candidate to serve as the Executive Director of Rock Academy. Dr. White would come to this role with significant experience overseeing programming for and delivering services to special populations of students. More specifically, Dr. White launched his education career by serving as an Education Liaison at Monroe Harding Children's Home, an orphanage for displaced youth that seeks to fulfill its mission of changing young people's lives.[85] As an Education Liaison, Dr. White worked with students who were in custody and living in a group home. In this role, he developed an educational curriculum for students to earn their GED, established relationships with local high schools so that his students had access to earning regular education diplomas while in custody, taught students life and social-emotional skills to support their transition from custody and the group home to independent living, and supervised and trained educational staff to serve and meet the needs of this specific population of students.

After his time at Monroe Harding, Dr. White went on to serve as a Teacher Counselor at Genesis Academy, a school that specifically serves children with special needs.[86] The students who attend Genesis have been diagnosed with emotional and psychiatric disorders, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, dual-diagnosis, and/or developmental delays. In his role, Dr. White worked with students who had severe behavioral challenges, providing counseling and delivering responsive interventions. He also designed a reward system anchored in field trips and created a level system to support students in setting and achieving personal goals. Dr. White was also tasked with conducting IEP meetings for his caseload of students. In this role, Dr. White effected great success, with 90% of the students he served graduating from the program.

Dr. White then went on to serve as a Special Educator at Whites Creek Comprehensive High School. In this role, he led a moderate intervention program for behavior. To ensure that students received the services and support they needed to be successful, Dr. White performed student reviews and developed tailored lessons in alignment with students' individual needs. Dr. White also facilitated ongoing communication with caregivers, collaborating with them about solutions to support students' behavioral challenges. Dr. White again effected great success, with more than 70% of his students graduating from the intervention program and successfully integrating into general education classes. Dr. White also supported his students academically, providing specially designed instruction in alignment with students' IEPs in all core subjects.

Dr. White then transitioned to school leadership roles, first serving as an Assistant Principal at White House Middle School, where he implemented a school-wide PBIS program, developed reading programs, integrated culturally responsive instructional practices, and designed courses in alignment with students' needs, among others. As Executive Principal of Thomas William Hunter Middle School, Dr. White expanded services for students with autism, implemented an anti-bullying program, opened a therapeutic intervention program, implemented an RtI^2 program, and expanded access to tutoring, among numerous other accomplishments. To this end, under Dr. White's leadership, students' achievement levels significantly rose, with literacy achievement improving by 10 percentage points up to ~74% and numeracy achievement moving from ~20% to 72%, a staggering ~50 percentage point gain. Dr. White then went on serve as Executive Director and Principal of Smithson Craighead Academy, where he developed wraparound services for families, made GED and ESL classes accessible to the community at large, implemented a character education program, and created a parenting

[85] https://www.monroeharding.org/
[86] https://www.genesislearn.org/genesis-academy

academy, among numerous other initiatives to best support the students, families, and community members that the school served. In sum, Dr. White would come to this role with 25 years of experience and dedication to serving all students, especially those with special needs. He brings vast experience and expertise in developing, implementing, and overseeing programming for special populations of students and will ensure that students at Rock Academy receive all needed supports and services to achieve success.

Staffing. As explained in detail in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** section, the community from which we are recruiting is not place-based, rather we are recruiting from a community of families whose children's needs have not been sufficiently met in their previous school environments, causing them to be chronically absent. This community of families also largely face economic disadvantage and come from historically marginalized communities. To this end, the community from which we will recruit is diffuse and is not localized in one specific area from which we can draw demographic data to inform our anticipated population of students who have disabilities and/or who are ELs.

Given that we will be an Opportunity School, serving Opportunity Youth, we expect that we will serve a significantly higher percentage of students with disabilities than the average MNPS school. To this end, we have built our staffing model around the assumption that 25% of our students will require special education services, as compared with 13% for MNPS as a whole. For students who are ELs, we are assuming that 29% of our student body will be ELs, which aligns with the percentage MNPS serves. Since we will be an Opportunity School, we are assuming that virtually all of our students will come to us already being at-risk.

The chart below shows our student assumptions and corresponding staffing model, which will ensure that we are appropriately staffed to meet our students' needs. Note that the below staffing model reflects roles that will be hired and employed by the school specifically to provide services and support to special populations of students. To the greatest extent possible, general education teachers will also be dual-certified; holding certification in their content area and in ESL so that they can shelter content and support students who are ELs in gaining English language proficiency. However, those aspirational counts are not included in the chart.

Additionally, the chart below does not reflect roles that will be staffed through partnerships and will not be employed by the school. For instance, as explained in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards**, we will provide an array of support and services to our students through our one-stop-shop services and through off-campus services, both of which will be delivered by partnerships with community organizations. These may include mental health and psychological counseling and physical health services, among numerous others; the providers of these are not indicated in the below chart.

Also note that we will come to scale in Year 4 of operation, with staffing assumed to remain consistent in subsequent years. That said, should we enroll more students with disabilities and/or students who are ELs than assumed, we will adjust our staffing plan accordingly to ensure that we are appropriately staffed to meet all our students' needs and in compliance with state standards. A summary of these roles and descriptions are provided below.

Special Populations Staffing				
Role	**Y1: SY 2026-27**	**Y2: SY 2027-28**	**Y3: 2028-29**	**Y4: 2029-30**
Executive Director	1	1	1	1
Culture Dean	--	1	1	1
Student Supports Coordinator [87]	1	1	1	1

[87] The Student Supports Coordinator will have a small caseload of students to whom they provide services

Special Education Teacher	1	1	2	3
Interventionist [88]	1	1	1	1
ESL Teacher [89]	1	2	2	3
Mentor [90]	4	8	11	14

Summary of Special Populations Staff Responsibilities by Role	
Executive Director	• Holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring all students, including special populations of students receive all needed and required supports and services • Ensures compliance across all special education programming • Reports to and is supported by the Board
Culture Dean	• Builds and maintains a safe, positive school culture to ensure a sense of belonging across the school • Oversees behavior and discipline, including implementation of Restorative Justice practices • Supports delivery of behavioral interventions and supports • Oversees social-emotional programming, including delivery of related professional development • Collaborates closely with school leaders and staff to ensure students are connected to and receive all needed social-emotional, behavioral, mental health, and physical supports • Reports to and is supported by the Principal
Student Supports Coordinator	• Oversees the identification, instruction, and support of students with disabilities and students who are ELs • Ensures compliance with all legal requirements and fostering a supportive school culture for all learners • Oversees development and ensures implementation of IEPs and ILPs • Manages and supports special education and ESL teachers • Services a small caseload of students with IEPs • Reports to and is supported by the Principal
Special Education Teacher	• Provides students with learning activities and experiences designed to help them fulfill their educational potential • In collaboration with content teachers, develops or modifies curricula and prepares lessons and other supplementary instructional materials appropriate to the students' accommodations and modifications in their IEPs

[88] The Interventionist will be a certified in special education

[89] FTE count does not include core teachers who will be dual certified (certification in their content areas and ESL); starting in Y2, one ESL FTE will assume coordinator duties and will receive a stipend for compensation of these additional responsibilities

[90] Mentors will be certified paraprofessionals

	● Prepares snapshots, reflective of students' IEPs, for content teachers and works in partnership with content teachers to ensure students' needs are met ● Reports to and is supported by the Student Supports Coordinator
Interventionist	● Provides personalized support that is based on the goals and identified needs of individual students and teachers in alignment with the overall instructional practices within the school ● Teaches remedial literacy and numeracy during afternoon House blocks ● Holds special education certification ● Reports to and is supported by the Student Supports Coordinator
ESL Teachers	● Provides support for students who are identified as English Learners (ELs) in a variety of settings, including co-teaching, small group instruction, and consultation with general education teachers ● Serves as a resource for students who are learning the English language ● Works to provide direct Structured English Immersion (i.e., English Language Development [ELD]) instruction and assists general education classroom teachers with internalization of appropriate curricula and the development of appropriate strategies to meet the unique needs of ELs ● Follows regulations set forth by the State Department of Education, including those associated with ELD standards, instructional, assessment, and reporting requirements that pertain to Title III. ● Reports to and is supported by the Student Supports Coordinator
Mentors (Paraprofessionals)	● Builds meaningful relationships, serves as a first point of contact for redirection and support, and fosters success through individualized attention and resource connections ● Tracks and documents students' academic, social, and emotional development, collaborating with staff and families to address challenges ● Delivers behavioral interventions ● Provides non-IEP and SEL support during academic classes ● Identifies and connects students to wraparound services, extracurricular programs, and other resources that align with their needs and goals ● Holds paraprofessional certification ● Reports to and is supported by the Culture Dean

9. Describe the process and methods by which the school will properly identify students with disabilities in compliance with Title 49, Chapter 10, of the Tennessee Code, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

As noted above, we anticipate that we will serve a significantly higher population of students with disabilities than MNPS as a whole. To ensure that we properly identify students with disabilities in compliance with Tennessee Code, IDEA, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, we will implement the following processes and methods:

Students with Existing Individual Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans

- We will embed the identification process in our intake procedures to ensure that we identify students with existing IEPs who newly enroll in our school.
- We will conduct a rigorous intake process, part of which will be convening meetings with families as early as possible (i.e., spring/summer) prior to the start of school.
- As part of the intake process, we will obtain an array of documentation, including students' cumulative file to ensure we are aware of pertinent documentation such as IEPs and 504 plans.
- Also as part of the intake process, we will conduct a needs assessment, which will include asking caregivers if the child who they are enrolling has ever been evaluated for, diagnosed with, and/or received services for a disability.
- If so, we will connect with the student's previous school to obtain the IEP and/or 504 plan should we not have it already.
- The IEP and/or plan will be reviewed as part of the intake process and the creation of a plan for engaging the student's IEP team during the first month of school will be formed and documented.
- To ensure expedient delivery of services, the student's IEP team will formally convene as planned during intake during the first month of school to make any updates to the IEP.
- All IEPs and 504 plans will be formally reviewed on an annual basis at minimum.

Students Referred for Evaluation

- If a student is suspected to have a disability but has not yet been identified, the student's parents/guardian or school staff may request that the child be evaluated.
- Once requested, we will adhere to all mandated timelines around notification and evaluation.
- If the student's parents make the request, the referral for evaluation will proceed immediately and in accordance with prescribed timelines.
- We will contract with outside related service providers, including a licensed school psychologist, to execute the evaluation effectively.
- If the referral is generated from school staff, we will implement the following steps prior to proceeding with a referral to ensure that the student has been screened and has received tiered interventions prior to being evaluated (all of which is explained in more detail in response to prompt g below):
    - **Universal Screening:** As noted in the **Assessments** section, we will administer screeners to all students three times a year in ELA and math, as well as administer social-emotional

screeners to enable us to pinpoint academic and social-emotional skill gaps and gauge progress.

- **Early Warning System (EWS)**: We will implement an EWS in alignment with the guidance outlined in the TDOE's RtI^2 Manual. The EWS will involve the collection of multiple sources of data such as grades, screener results, internal and external assessment data, attendance rates, behavioral records, past intervention documentation, and past instances of retention, among other data points. At minimum, an attendance indicator, a behavioral indicator, and academic competency indicator will be included in the EWS.
- **Implement Interventions:** As explained in the **Professional Development** section, teachers will have time every day to collaborate, examine data, and make instructional decisions accordingly. As detailed in the response to prompt g below, we have embedded time for tiered interventions during our school day. Students will undergo constant monitoring, with interventions being adjusted and/or intensified should progress not be evident.
- **Refer for Evaluation:** If a student does not show sufficient progress after receiving the most intensive interventions, then a referral will be made to evaluate the student to determine eligibility for special education services. The evaluation will not move forward until parent/guardian permission is obtained.
- **Create IEP:** If the results of an evaluation indicate that a student does have a disability and the parent/guardian consents to services, then an IEP will be created accordingly. The IEP will outline all mandated services, accommodations, and/or modifications, as well as articulate the student's personalized learning goals. The IEP will be implemented with fidelity and, at a minimum, will be formally reviewed annually as required by law.

b. Explain how the school will offer a continuum of services, ensure appropriate access to the general education program, and support academic success for students with disabilities and students with low incident disabilities. Describe specifically how the school plans to integrate special education services into the school's daily schedule.

As explained in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, we have designed our academic plan in alignment with research that demonstrates what all students, including those with disabilities, need to be successful. Since we will be an Opportunity School and serve Opportunity Youth, our students will come to us in distinctly different places in their learning and with distinctly different needs. As such, we have created our program to provide a continuum of services to all students, including those with disabilities. To this end, all students with disabilities will be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible and will have access to the general education program. As noted above, our robust intake process will be focused on ensuring that we are aware of and plan for the need to deliver specialized services so that we are able to expediently provide services across disability type and based on each student's individual needs.

As outlined in response to prompt g below and as explained in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section, we have designed our daily schedule to allow for the delivery of special education services. More specifically, we will implement extended learning blocks, spanning 70 minutes each. We have allocated time within these extended blocks to address students' individual needs. Additionally, we will close the day with a 45-minute flex period that will be used in alignment with student need. To this end, students whose IEPs require that they receive pull-out services will receive them during these times so as not to interfere with core instructional time. General education teachers will provide all required modifications and accommodations in tandem with the

supports and services delivered by special education teachers through push-in, pull-out, and/or specially designed instruction.

We have designed our staffing model to ensure that we employ a sufficient number of special educators, all of whom will possess certification in special education. To ensure that we are equipped to support all of our students with IEPs, including those with low incidence disabilities, we will prioritize hiring a special educator with experience delivering services to students with low incidence disabilities. We have also designed our daily schedule to provide protected time for general education teachers and special educators to collaborate. Further, related services such as occupational, speech, and physical therapy will be provided within the school day as mandated by students' IEPs.

c. Explain the school's plan to monitor and evaluate the progress and success of students with disabilities. Detail how this plan coordinates with the authorizer's monitoring and evaluation plans.

As outlined in the **Assessments** section, we will administer an array of primary internal assessments, which will be given in complement to external assessments such as the ACT and state-mandated exams. Special education teachers will also track progress toward IEP goals using norm-referenced assessments (e.g., AimsWeb, Fastbridge), as well as through individual assessments based on IEP goals (e.g., weekly probes, daily observations). Progress toward mastery of grade-level standards will be tracked through performance on benchmark assessments and grades. As a high school, specific focus will be placed on tracking progress toward transition goals (e.g., postsecondary goals) through the administration of evidence-based transition assessments, as well as through student input. All of these monitoring data will be used to make decisions about the supports and scaffolds needed for the student to be successful. To this end, IEPs will undergo formal review on an annual basis and will be adjusted as deemed necessary. Further, all students with IEPs will be re-evaluated for special education services by an assessment specialist once every three years as required by IDEA; the results of re-evaluation will function as an additional data point for monitoring and evaluating students' progress.

d. If serving high school grades, describe how the school will determine which diploma type is appropriate for individual students with a disability. Detail how the school will ensure that students with a disability are not precluded from earning a traditional high school diploma.

Every student, including those with disabilities, will have the opportunity to earn a traditional high school diploma. As explained in detail above, we will implement a robust staffing plan, educate students in the LRE, ensure access to the general education program, embed time for the delivery of services throughout the course of the school day, provide ample time for collaboration between general education teachers and certified special educators, and robustly monitor progress – all of which ensures our students with disabilities are not precluded from earning a traditional high school diploma. In addition, we will offer the occupational diploma and special education diploma. Through the robust staffing and practices described above, we will determine which diploma type is appropriate for each student with disabilities we serve. Such diploma pathway decisions will be made as soon as students enroll in our school.

e. Describe the process and methods for identifying English learners (EL) in compliance with SBE Rule 0520-01-19-.03. Describe the plan to ensure the school is appropriately staffed to maintain Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) and support EL students' academic success. Detail the plan to monitor and track the ratio of ESL-licensed staff to maintain one licensed ESL teacher for every 35 EL students.

Identification. To ensure that we identify English learners in compliance with State Board of Education Rule, we will employ the following process:

Process Component	Description
Home Language Survey (HLS)	● For students who newly enroll with us, we will determine whether they have attended another public school in the United States ● If so, we will make every attempt to secure the students' original HLS [91] ● If not, we will administer the HLS, which will consist of the following three questions: 1. What is the first language your child learned to speak? 2. What is the language your child speaks most often at home? 3. What is the language that is most often spoken to your child at home? ● The student will be identified as having a non-English language background (NELB) if any answer to the questions above is a language other than English
NELB Assessment	● Students who are determined to have a NELB through the HLS process described above will assessed for their level of English proficiency ● We will administer the ELPA21 screener, which is approved by the TDOE, to determine EL status ● Every student identified as having a NELB will be assessed with the exception of students who have documentation from their previous Local Education Agency (LEA) or state that explicitly states that the student has achieved fluent English proficiency

Staffing. As noted above, the community from which we are recruiting is not place-based, rather we are recruiting from a community of families whose children's needs have not sufficiently met in their previous school environments, causing them to be chronically absent. This community of families also largely faces economic disadvantage and come from historically marginalized communities. To this end, the community from which we will recruit is diffuse and is not localized in one specific area from which we can draw demographic data to inform our anticipated population of students who are ELs. As such, we have crafted our staffing plan based on the overall district's demographic data, which indicates that students who are ELs comprise roughly 29% of MNPS overall student body – this projection is broken down by year in the chart below – note that we come to scale in Year 4 of operation:

As noted above, we will employ a Student Supports Coordinator. This role will be hired part-time (0.25) in the pre-opening year so that this person can assist with onboarding students, including ensuring that services for special populations of students, including ELs, are in place at the very start of school. This role will be converted to an FTE starting in Y1 of operation. The Student Supports Coordinator will oversee the teachers who provide services to students who have disabilities and who are ELs, including the maintenance of ILPs and tracking of student/teacher ratios to ensure compliance. Additionally, as noted above, one ESL teacher will assume coordinator duties in Y2 of operation and will receive a stipend for these additional responsibilities. This person will be supervised by the Students Supports Coordinator as previously indicated. To maintain the required ratio of ELs to teachers, as well as to allow for the actual implementation and maintenance of students' ILPs and

[91] In the event that we are unable to secure the students' original HLS, we will administer the HLS to ensure that all students are identified appropriately

ensure that students receive the support they need to achieve academic success, we will hire one ESL teacher in Year 1, two ESL teachers in Years 2 and 3, and three ESL teachers in Year 4 and beyond. In addition to the ESL teachers (whose full-time role includes case management, which is supported by the stipended ESL coordinator and Student Supports Coordinator), our goal is to hire as many core teachers as possible who are dual certified, holding certifications in both their content areas and in ESL. We will prioritize hiring teachers who already possess dual certification, as well as support teachers who we hire who do not yet have ESL certification through mechanisms like connecting them to ESL programs, providing financial assistance, and giving incentives for obtaining dual certification. As explained in detail in the **Professional Development** section, we will provide ample daily collaboration time that will be common across the entire staff, allowing the Student Supports Coordinator, ESL teachers, and core teachers protected time to collaborate to ensure that all students who are ELs receive the services they need to gain English proficiency as quickly as possible and ILPs are being implemented with fidelity, as well as to monitor our ratios to ensure we are compliance. Further, we will provide ongoing professional learning to develop and refine teachers' use of scaffolds to support all students, especially those who are ELs, in accessing content. This layered approach to staffing will allow strategies that support ELs to be infused throughout core instruction by dually certified teachers, enabling ESL-specific teachers to focus on language acquisition and development.

As indicated above, the community from which we will recruit is not placed-based, rather it is a collective of students whose needs simply have not been met in their previous learning environments and who largely face steep barriers to success due to having economic disadvantage and coming from historically marginalized communities. To this end, we anchored our assumptions in the district's EL data. Should we enroll more students who are ELs than assumed and/or have less dually certified staff than anticipated, we will make any needed adjustments in our staffing plan to ensure that we remain in ratio and have the qualified staff needed to maintain ILPs and deliver services to our students.

f. Describe the plan to ensure EL students receive supports as outlined in their ILPs and these supports are integrated into the school's daily schedule. Detail the process and methods for monitoring and evaluating EL students' progress toward completing the EL program.

Delivery of Supports. Students who are ELs will receive language supports as outlined in their ILPS and in alignment with the following:

- **Ratio:** We will not exceed a 35:1 student/teacher ratio to ensure that we remain in compliance and are able to provide students who are ELs with the support they need to acquire proficiency in English as quickly as possible. As noted above, we will employ a sufficient number of ESL teachers to maintain this ratio. Additionally, many of our core teachers will be dually certified, holding certification in their content areas and in ESL.
- **Structure:** Students will either receive supports from an ESL teacher in a one-on-one, small group, or whole class setting with their EL peers, or they will receive supports in the general education classroom by a dual certified core teacher or ESL teacher who pushes into the general education classroom and supports a core teacher who does not possess dual certification.
- **Time:** Students who are ELs will receive at least 60 minutes of language support a day.
- **Delivery:** Supports will be delivered through TDOE-approved service-delivery models, such as the following: [92]

[92] https://www.tn.gov/education/students/student-supports-in-tn/english-learners.html

Service-Delivery Model	Description
Sheltered English Instruction	● Content will be sheltered during classes to help students who are ELs access the general education curricula. ● ESL teachers and general education teachers will utilize research-based strategies such as physical activities, graphic organizers, visual aids, audio and video clips, and the surrounding classroom environment to assist students in comprehending academic content.
Co-Teaching English Instruction	● When appropriate, ESL teachers will provide co-teaching support to students who are ELs largely during ELA classes. ● In these cases, ESL teachers will collaborate with students' general education teachers to align lessons and the delivery of support. ● As described above, both general education teachers and ESL teachers shelter instruction to effectively support students in the general education classroom.
Structured English Immersion	● This program is designed to rapidly increase English language proficiency and will be taught by a certified ESL teacher. ● The hallmark of this program is that the focus is on English, not specific content, for extended periods of time. ● Traditional English language development (ELD) classes are often considered Structured English Immersion courses. ● These courses are common in middle and high school programs for students who have difficulty accessing content in an English-only classroom.

In sum, students who are ELs will receive supports as outlined by their ILPs. In all cases, ESL teachers will collaborate with general education teachers to ensure that accommodations pertaining to the learning environment, instruction, and assessment are implemented. Such accommodations will be provided in addition to any services, accommodations, or services for students who are dually identified EL and special education. Students who are ELs also will have access to tiered interventions (described in detail below).

Monitoring and Evaluating Progress. We will monitor and evaluate the progress of students who are ELs toward completion of the EL program through the following processes and methods:

Processes and Methods	Descriptions
Ongoing Assessment and Monitoring	● Students will be assessed through a variety of methods such as teacher observation, benchmark performance, and standardized assessments. ● ESL teachers will work in collaboration with general education teachers to examine assessment data and monitor progress toward meeting language acquisition and academic goals outlined in students' ILPs (as detailed below). ● All students who are ELs will take the ELPa21 every year to gauge progress in acquiring English proficiency.

	● In addition to monitoring at the individual student level, we will comparatively analyze students' performance at the EL cohort level and students who are ELs to their native English-speaking peers.
Management of ILPs	● As required by the State Board of Education, every student identified as being an EL will have an ILP. ● ILPs will be created collaboratively, with oversight from the Student Supports Coordinator, leadership from the ESL coordinator, case management from the ESL teacher, and input from general education teachers, as well as parents/guardians. ● ILPs will document language acquisition and academic goals, as well as progress toward meeting them (as outlined above). ● ILPs will be implemented with fidelity and progress will be reviewed every quarter; ILPs will be updated accordingly throughout the year ● ILPs will be shared with students' caregivers in the language of their preference.
Compliant Exit Procedures	● We will implement the exit criteria outlined in State Board of Education rule. ● Once exited from the program, we will monitor and support students with additional accommodations during the transition period, following the TDOE's recommendations for transitional ELs. Specifically, as outlined by the TDOE: [93] ○ Exiting from ESL service is based on a student's proficiency in all areas of language—listening, speaking, reading, and writing. ○ English proficiency is based on attaining fluent English proficiency on the summative, spring ELPA21 Summative Assessment. ○ EL students who score 4 or higher on all non-exempt domains on the ELPA21 Summative Assessment or score 3 or above in all non-exempt modalities of the Alt ELPA21 Summative shall be exited from Direct or Indirect ESL Services. ○ We will monitor the progress of exited ELs for two calendar years

[93] https://eplan.tn.gov/documentlibrary/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentKey=2136172&inline=true

g. Describe the process and methods by which the school will appropriately identify at-risk students and specify how academic and behavioral data will aid in this identification. Describe the plan to monitor academic progress and address the learning needs of at-risk students. Detail the programs, strategies, and supports the school will use to ensure the success of at-risk students.

Identification. As indicated throughout this application, we are proposing to open an Opportunity Charter Public School, which, as presented in detail in the **Mission and Goals** section, is defined by Tennessee Code Annotated 49-13-104 as "a public charter school serving any of the grades six through twelve for which at least 75% of the students, at the time of enrollment, are at-risk students." To this end, virtually all of our students will come to us already being at-risk. As explained thoroughly in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, we have designed our academic program to serve this specific population of students. To this end, our academic program essentially serves as a Tier 2 intervention that all students receive, since virtually all of them will come to us at-risk. However, while all of our students will require intensive support, we recognize, and have designed our program to reflect, that our students will come to us in distinctly different places in their learning and with distinctly different needs. Accordingly, we will implement the TDOE's RtI^2 framework to ensure that we accurately identify each student's specific intervention needs: [94]

RtI^2 Framework Component	Description of Implementation
Universal Screening	● Universal screeners will be administered to all students across all grades in reading and math. ● Assessment results will enable us to pinpoint students' individual levels of performance, as well as allow us to examine data at the subgroup level to identify trends. ● The results of the screeners will be analyzed in comparison with student outcomes on other assessments to ensure alignment of performance.
Early Warning System (EWS)	● EWS involve the collection of multiple sources of data such as, grades, internal and external assessment data, attendance rates, behavioral records, past intervention documentation, and past instances of retention, among other data points. ● In alignment with guidance outlined in the TDOE's RtI^2 Manual, at minimum, an attendance indicator, a behavioral indicator, and academic competency indicator will be included in the EWS. ● We anticipate using PowerSchool as our Student Information System (SIS); PowerSchool offers an EWS as part of its platform, collecting, storing, and analyzing student data and information. ● As part of this EWS platform, students who pass established thresholds are flagged as requiring follow-up.
Data Analysis	● The varied data points collected as part of the EWS will be examined at the beginning of the school year to initially determine where students are in their learning and identify corresponding needs.

[94] https://www.tn.gov/education/districts/instruction/tdoe-rti2/rti2-rediect/rti2-resources.html

	● Data analysis will be ongoing (as explained in the **Assessment** and **Professional Development** sections), enabling students' specific and evolving needs to be identified and tracked. ● As outlined in the **Assessments** section, teachers and mentors will collect data daily, which, along with initial screening, ongoing monitoring (e.g., curriculum-based measurement, norm referenced assessments) and the EWS, will be used to determine each students' specific intervention needs.
Data-Driven Decisions	● Students will be prescribed interventions based on the results of the ongoing data collection and identification efforts described above. ● Teachers and staff will have daily common, protected time to meet, with grade level teams, consisting of teachers, student services staff, and mentors meeting at least once a week to discuss students' needs and progress ● Since essentially all of our students will come to us in very different places in their learning due to an array of factors, our data collection and analysis will enable us to pinpoint students' specific and evolving needs. ● To illustrate, some students may enroll multiple grade levels behind and require intensive intervention to close this gap while other students, especially as they matriculate through the school, may need "just in time" intervention to address gaps as they emerge.

Programs, strategies, and supports. As noted above, we have designed our academic program to provide intervention and support to our students, who will come to our school specifically because their previous learning environments did not sufficiently meet their needs, resulting in them experiencing challenges with coming to school and being at risk of academic failure. The chart below articulates the programs, strategies, and supports we will provide to close gaps and ensure that our students achieve success:

Key Design Element: Belonging	
Program/Strategy/Support	**Description**
House System	● All students will be assigned to a House. ● Each House will be run by a dedicated mentor. ● As outlined in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section and outlined in **Attachment B**, we have embedded time for House within the daily schedule. ● Students will participate in a 30-minute House period at the start of school, where they will engage in an array of relationship building and social-emotional skill development activities in alignment with cohort and individual student's needs. ● The morning House period will also function as time for mentors to individually check-in with students so that they can identify any

	issues that may be adversely affecting a student and plan for the provision of supports accordingly.
	● Mentors and their students will also end the school day together in a 45-minute House period, which will be flexibly used according to student need – for example:
	  o Some students may require mental health or social-emotional support.
	  o Other students may need academic intervention to close a skill gap.
	  o Another group of students may engage in tutoring to remediate a specific standard covered earlier in the day.
	  o Still others may receive intensive behavioral intervention support during this time.
	● One day a week, students will attend an extended 70-minute period of House during which time they will receive social-emotional skills development and intervention in alignment with need.

Mentors	● Mentors will serve as each student's primary person and will be responsible for deeply knowing their cohort of students, including fluidly identifying and addressing each student's academic, social-emotional, and physical needs. ● Mentors will be key collaborators with teachers when determining intervention needs. ● Mentors will assist in delivering tiered behavioral interventions.
Restorative Practices	● As explained in detail in the **School Culture and Discipline** section, we will implement restorative practices as a means to provide proactive behavioral and social-emotional support. ● The use of restorative practices will also be employed to provide restorative support to students who are struggling to meet behavioral expectations and require intervention. ● Restorative practices will be deployed in concert with other behavioral, mental health, and/or social-emotional interventions in accordance with students' individual needs.
Key Design Element: Flexibility	
Mastery-Based Learning	● This approach to learning affords students the flexibility to progress in their learning at their own pace, without penalizing students for having skill and content gaps that require intervention to close. ● Students will be in class together, will be learning the same curriculum, and will be assessed over the same standards, but they will be working at their own pace and accessing content according to their individualized learning needs, including academic intervention needs.

		● Explained in detail below, we have embedded skinny blocks during ELA and math classes once a week – these blocks can be used to deliver tiered interventions. ● For some students, the intervention received during skinny blocks will provide students with just-in-time intervention to specifically address standards-based knowledge gaps to allow students to progress in their mastery-based learning modules and benchmarks. ● For other students, skinny blocks will be used to deliver more intensive interventions such as to close gaps that span multiple grade levels. ● Evidence-based curriculum and strategies will be employed when implementing prescribed interventions ● Skinny blocks can also be deployed to provide proactive intervention support through pre-teaching and front loading of content that will be covered during upcoming mastery-based learning modules. ● In addition to skinny blocks, three of the four weekly ELA and math mastery-based learning blocks will be used to teach and progress through the curriculum; the fourth block will also be used flexibly to provide intervention to students who require it.
	Responsive Use of Class Time	● We have designed our daily schedule to reflect our commitment to flexibility, which underpins our academic plan and ability to meet our students' ever-changing needs, including those related to intervention. ● As explained in the **School Calendar and Schedule** section and outlined in **Attachment B**, we will implement extended blocks, allowing students ample time to learn and enabling the responsive use of class time. ● As noted above, we have embedded a skinny block with the extended ELA and math block once a week; extended blocks span 70 minutes and skinny blocks last 30 minutes – the responsive use of class time allows us to section off the extended block in alignment with students' needs. ● Students who require just-in-time intervention will receive it during these skinny blocks, with other students progressing with their mastery-based learning modules or receiving other supports and services, including more intensive intervention during this time. ● As stated above, in addition to skinny blocks, three of the four weekly ELA and math core blocks will be used to teach and progress through the curriculum; the fourth block will also be used flexibly to provide intervention to students who require it.

	● Students will also end their day with a 45-minute flex block; this block will also be flexibly used in alignment with students' individual needs. ● Four days a week this flex block will be deployed as skinny blocks for students who require intervention in ELA and/or math, as well as will be used to deliver other interventions related to behavior and social-emotional skill deficits as needed. ● In sum, we have designed our schedule to allow for ample time for students to receive grade-level core instruction and progress through standards-based learning modules and benchmarks at their own pace. ● Time for core mastery-based learning will be augmented by a weekly ELA and math flex block and by skinny blocks for the delivery of tiered interventions – a total of six skinny blocks that can be used for intervention are embedded within the schedule across the week. ● Our robust staffing model (outlined above) will enable general education teachers, mentors, interventionists, and other providers of supports to flexibly respond to our students' intervention needs during these times. ● Our daily time for common planning allows providers of intervention protected time to collaborate about intervention needs and progress.
Social-Emotional Learning	● Explained in detail in the **School Culture and Discipline** section, we will emphasize social-emotional learning. ● As noted above, we have embedded a daily 30-minute House period in the schedule, where students will engage in social-emotional learning. ● Additionally, once a week, students will attend an extended House period for 70 minutes, where they will engage in social-emotional learning lessons. ● We will employ a social-emotional learning curriculum that is competency-based and provides 9-12 longitudinal lessons. ● These lessons will be taught in accordance with the prescribed scope and sequence and will also be utilized for intervention needs for students who are struggling with specific social-emotional skills.
One-Stop Shop Services	● As outlined in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, we will provide an array of services and supports within the walls of school to support our students' needs. ● Among these will be partnerships with organizations that provide mental health support, psychological counseling, and therapeutic services, among others for students who require more intensive behavioral and social-emotional interventions.

h. Describe the plan and procedures to identify intellectually gifted students. Detail the use of research-based instructional programs, practices, strategies, and opportunities to meet these students' academic needs. Explain how the school will monitor and evaluate the progress and success of intellectually gifted students.

Given that we will be an Opportunity School that serves Opportunity Youth, we do not anticipate many students will enroll with gifted identification per an IEP as a result of their chronic absenteeism. However, we recognize that our students will come to us with many gifts, including potential instances of intellectual giftedness. To formally identify these students, we will implement a robust EWS (described in detail above), which collects data around several indicators that can indicate potential intellectual giftedness. Just as the EWS will be a primary mechanism in identifying students with other disabilities, we will deploy our EWS to flag students with possible giftedness. If a student is suspected of being intellectually gifted, we will follow the special education identification procedures outlined above. Should the results of evaluation identify a student as being intellectually gifted, a special educator will be assigned to serve as the student's case manager.

When providing services, we will incorporate general education and mental health staff as required by the student's needs. A special educator employed by the school who has gifted certification will deliver services to the student, or we will implement a consultation model where consulting services will be secured to collaborate with the student's general education teachers to design services in alignment with the student's IEP. The student will receive services and undergo monitoring through the same methods as described above for other students with IEPs.

Section 1.9 - Conversion Charter School Planning (Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 12)

Not applicable.

Section 2 – Operations Plan and Capacity

Section 2.1 – Governance (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Describe the composition and size of the governing board and board committees. Explain how the proposed governance structure and composition will ensure there will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders and will ensure the proposed school will be an educational and operational success.

Governing board composition and size. The board currently consists of five members who hold a deep commitment to realizing our unique and critical mission of reengaging disconnected youth to ensure that they succeed in the postsecondary pathway of their choosing. These board members also collectively possess the needed experience and skills to successfully found and effectively govern our school. Specifically, our members come to the board with expertise in organizational management, law, community involvement, education, and personnel/human capital. Additionally, the composition of our board reflects experience specific to our student population as detailed below:

- **Nathan Garrett:** Mr. Garrett currently serves as the President of Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT). As explained in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, we will implement a robust CTE program in alignment to our commitment to ensuring our academic offerings are relevant to our students' needs and interests. Mr. Garrett brings a wealth of experience and expertise related to CTE programming. He is skilled in securing an array of grants to support CTE programming and has experience leading and growing CTE programs. In this work, Mr. Garrett has successfully shepherded the creation of CTE-related partnerships with Metro Nashville Public Schools. Further, he has first-hand experience working with our student population and supporting them in pursuing postsecondary pathways of their choosing. To this end, his leadership at TCAT has resulted in impressive program completion rates, which stem from high persistence rates, especially in students' first semester at TCAT.
- **Tera Hambrick:** Ms. Hambrick serves as the Director of Regulatory Affairs and Legal Counsel at the Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center, which is an organization dedicated to providing high-quality health care to all, at a cost that every person can afford. In this role, she acts as General Counsel for the organization and oversees its in-house Legal Department. Ms. Hambrick brings valuable legal experience to the Board as a practicing attorney, as well as possesses an acute understanding of the challenges low-income families face. She brings an array of connections to medical wraparound services that our student population will inevitably need and holds a deep commitment to serving marginalized communities.
- **Jon Rybka:** Mr. Rybka holds extensive experience in K-12 public education as a former educator and staunch advocate for students, especially those who have been historically marginalized. He started in education as a classroom teacher and most recently served as the CEO of RePublic Schools, a network of seven charter schools that operate in Nashville, TN and Jackson, MS. In its portfolio, RePublic Schools operates a high school, and all of its schools serve students who are primarily economically disadvantaged and from marginalized communities. To this end, Mr. Rybka possesses first-hand experience serving similar populations of students and leading charter schools, including a high school. Mr. Rybka also brings experience as program officer at the Michael and Susan Dell Foundation, offering the Board valuable experience in the areas of facilities, grants, and philanthropy.
- **Jennifer Wade:** Ms. Wade served as a Magistrate for the Davidson County Juvenile Court, presiding over and directing the Metro Student Attendance Center. She now serves as the Court Administrator for Davidson County Juvenile Court, overseeing all aspects of the court. In addition to her extensive legal experience, Ms. Wade brings deep familiarity with and established connections to the population of students we seek to

serve. She understands the barriers and challenges our students and their families face, which result in students being unable to attend school. She is also fully aware of the immense life-long consequences of not attending and graduating from high school.

- **Guadalupe Davalos Meyers:** is the Director of Community Organizing at Rocketship Tennessee. She has held a number of community-facing positions, including working with first-gen college students for both non-profits and city government as well as parent & community organizing with charter schools as well as leading national organizations such as Innovate Public Schools. Her native fluency in Spanish and deep cultural competence in working with Latino families are crucial skills she brings to the work of launching new schools and supporting existing programs.

Taken together, members' deep commitment to our mission and student population and collective expertise position the board to effectively oversee the school's academic, operational, and financial performance in alignment with our mission and model.

The bylaws require the Board have the following officer roles:

- **Chair:** The Chair will preside at all meetings of the Board; appoint committee chairs (unless otherwise specified by the bylaws), and execute any other duties as assigned by the bylaws.
- **Vice Chair:** The Vice Chair will stand ready to act as the Chair in the Chair's absence and perform any duties of the Chair as delegated by the Chair.
- **Secretary:** The Secretary will keep minutes, maintain and protect Board files and documents, and perform any other responsibilities as assigned by the bylaws.
- **Treasurer:** The Treasurer will oversee the budget, keep full and accurate accounts of all receipts and disbursements; maintain an inventory of assets and record of liabilities, deposit money and all other securities, disperse funds, prepare statements and reports, and fulfill any other duties as outlined by the bylaws.

Board committee composition and size. The following committees will be formed as stipulated by the bylaws: Executive, Governance, Academic, and Finance.

Active and effective representation of key stakeholders. The Board will ensure active and effective representation of key stakeholders through the following:

Ex-Officio Representation	● To ensure the representation of students and staff, the Executive Director will serve as a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board. ● The Executive Director will regularly attend meetings, providing a comprehensive Executive Director report to the Board. ● Reports will include key data points related to the school's academic, operational, and financial performance and needs, including input and feedback from staff and students at the school.
Caregiver Representation	● While not required by the Tennessee Code for Opportunity Schools, we anticipate having a caregiver of a student who is enrolled in our school on the Board. ● We will try to appoint this member to the Board within 6 months of the school's initial operation to ensure that we have timely caregiver representation.

Public Representation	● We will ensure that all Board meetings are open to the public in accordance with the requirements of the Tennessee Open Meetings Act. ● We will encourage members of the public to attend Board meetings and will post meeting dates, agendas, and minutes on our school website. ● Time for public comment will be a standing agenda item for Board meetings, providing the public with the opportunity to speak directly to the Board. ● The board's bylaws and policies will also be publicly available on our website. ● We will make all publicly posted materials available in the languages spoken by the families we serve, as well as additional languages upon request.

Educational and operational success of the school. The Board is ultimately responsible for the educational and operational success of the school as the Board will hold the charter. As noted above, the bylaws stipulate a specific leadership structure for the Board, consisting of the following officer roles: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The bylaws articulate the responsibilities of each role and prescribe well-defined lines of authority across these offices, ensuring clarity for each officer's role and scope of responsibility.

In accordance with the bylaws, committees of the Board will also be formed, with the bylaws clearly outlining the composition, purpose, and responsibilities of each. As noted above, the required committees include Executive, Governance, Academic, and Finance, ensuring close oversight of the school's academic, operational, and financial performance in alignment with our mission and student population. The bylaws also allow for the formation of ad hoc committees, giving the Board the ability to respond flexibly and proactively to issues and needs as they are anticipated and/or as they arise. Coupled, the Board's standing committee structure and ability to convene ad hoc committees allow the Board to provide targeted oversight over key aspects of the school and Board itself – all this work then rolls up to the full Board, allowing for effective governance of the school and oversight of the mission.

Underpinning the Board's defined leadership and committee structure are the members themselves – as noted above, the Board consists of five diverse individuals who hold a deep and authentic commitment to the mission of the school and student population the school will serve. Working in complement to this commitment are the members' experience and skillsets, which collectively include expertise in academics and operations. Individually, our members bring experience relevant to our student population and/or academic model – all of which will work in tandem to ensure that the school is an educational and operational success in alignment with the tenets of our mission, needs of our student population, and commitments contained in our charter.

b. Explain how the board will evaluate the success of the school, the school leader, and its own performance.

Success of the school. To evaluate the success of the school, the Board will analyze performance against a set of established goals (outlined in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section). These goals define annual targets in the areas of academics, operations, and finances in alignment with the Opportunity School Performance Framework and our academic model and student population.

As noted above, the Board will implement a robust committee structure; committees will meet regularly to review and discuss data relevant to the purview of each. Committee findings and recommendations will then

be presented to the full Board for review and discussion. The full Board's consideration of committee presentations and recommendations may be augmented by additional data such as those delivered during Executive Director presentations.

Data examined by committees and the full Board will be disaggregated to ensure that members are able to analyze the data in multiple ways such as by subgroups of students, individual students, and cohorts of students. Presenting data in aggregate and in disaggregated views ensures that the Board is able to decipher and respond to trends as they emerge.

Further, in alignment with our academic model and commitment to meet all our students' needs, data will not be presented and analyzed in silos – rather, data will be consumed holistically, with academic data being presented alongside other related factors such as attendance, behavior, and other data points relevant to our model and students. This approach to examining data will ensure that the Board sees a full picture of performance and will allow the Board to more precisely monitor progress toward goals and pinpoint trends that require response. To this end, among the data points that the Board will analyze to evaluate the success of the school include:

Academic Data	Operational Data	Financial Data
● Diagnostic Assessments	● Student Opportunity Status	● Philanthropy and Fundraising
● Benchmark Assessments	● Attendance Rates	● Financial Sustainability Model
● TCAP	● Enrollment Rates	● Annual Budget
● State Letter Grade	● Discipline Referral Rates	● Annual Audit
● TVAAS	● Student Retention Rates	● Invoices
● PSAT/SAT/ACT	● Staff Retention Rates	● Receipts
● Work-Based Learning Completion		● Budgeted vs. Actual Expenditures
● Credentials		
● Graduation Rates		

Success of the school leader. The Board will evaluate the success of the Executive Director on an annual basis, holding the Executive Director accountable for the success of the school's academic, operational, and financial performance. To do this, an evaluation tool that reflects our mission, academic model, and performance goals will be utilized. The tool will allow for feedback from the Board to be incorporated within the evaluation, as well as clearly indicate a rating for each competency on which the Executive Director will be evaluated. The tool will employ the following rating scale defined by Board Education Partners a non-profit organization with extensive experience and expertise in charter school Boards and governance practices): [95]

[95] https://www.edfuel.org

- **Exceeds Expectations:** Consistently delivers exceptional results and is a model for others to follow
- **Meets Expectations:** Consistently meets expectations in all areas
- **Partially Meets Expectations:** Meets expectations in some areas, but needs improvement in others
- **Does Not Meet Expectations:** Needs significant improvement quickly

The following evaluation process will be employed, which is the recommended evaluation process set forth by Education Board Partners:

EVALUATION PROCESS	
Process Component	**Description**
Set Goals	● The Executive Director will create 3-5 goals on which to be evaluated to ensure that the leader and Board share a common understanding of what success entails. ● Established goals will align to the school's performance goals and will also include goals related to the continued development of the Executive Director as the school's top leader. ● In addition to defining performance and professional development goals, the sources of data that will be used to evaluate success in meeting the goals will be identified, further ensuring clarity of expectations and outcomes from both the Executive Director and Board. ● The Board will review and approve these goals at the start of the school year.
Monitor and Provide Feedback	● The Board will periodically monitor progress against the goals throughout the school year. ● Embedded within the Board's monitoring will be the provision of actionable feedback to the Executive Director to drive progress toward meeting goals.
Collect and Review Data	● A designated individual Board member will be tasked with taking the lead on analyzing data relevant to the school's academic, operational, and financial performance, which will also be examined in relation to the Executive Director's established goals. ● The designated member will complete a draft of the Executive Director's performance evaluation and share it with the full Board. ● When reviewing, the full Board will intentionally apply an equity lens to the evaluation and the key data that informed it.
Complete Self-Evaluation	● Concurrent to the Board's completion of the draft evaluation, the Executive Director will complete a self-evaluation, which will mirror the evaluation tool completed by the Board. ● Once completed within the established timeframe, the Executive Director will send the self-evaluation to the designated Board member, who will share it with the full Board.

Evaluate Performance	● The designated Board member will share the completed draft of the performance evaluation and the completed self-evaluation with the full Board at least 72 hours in advance of the meeting at which they will be discussed. ● The results of the completed evaluation and self-evaluation will be discussed during an open session, with a closed session being convened to discuss compensation as applicable. ● The designated Board will update the evaluation in alignment with any agreed upon changes and send it to the Executive Director.
Review Evaluation	● The designated Board member, Board Chair, and Executive Director will meet to review the evaluation. ● They will discuss the key data points that inform the evaluation, as well as the evaluation outcomes and establish next steps. ● The evaluation will then be sent back to the full Board for formal approval via vote. ● Once formally approved, the evaluation will be included in the Executive Director's personnel file.

The Board will establish a concrete timeline for the above evaluation process to unfold; the timeline will likely mirror the one recommended by Board Education Partners:

- **Set Goals:** April – June
- **Monitor and Provide Feedback:** July - May
- **Collect and Review Data:** May – June
- **Complete Self-Evaluation:** June
- **Evaluate Performance:** June
- **Review Evaluation:** June - August

Success of the Board. To ensure the success of the Board collectively and as individual members, the Board will complete a self-evaluation on an annual basis. The self-evaluation will occur in two phases – first, individual members will each complete an evaluation of themselves, assessing indicators such as Board meeting attendance, engagement in discussion, committee participation, and participation in votes, among other areas. Individual evaluations will be rolled up into a collective evaluation, with both being examined to determine individual and collective areas of strength and opportunity. The self-evaluation will also capture the areas of expertise and experience represented on the Board, allowing the Board to identify any skill and background gaps. The results of the individual and collective evaluations will also be used to set development priorities for individual members and for the full Board.

c. Describe how the board will develop over time. Explain plans for recruiting board members with identified skills and addressing board member attrition.

As outlined above, the Board currently consists of five members who hold the individual and collective experience and expertise to lead the school through the initial founding period. Active recruitment is underway to add three additional members, with expertise in facilities and finance being prioritized as skills being sought in new members. The Board seeks to reach seven members by the time the application is approved, ensuring that membership is large enough to provide robust oversight during the pre-opening year and once the school

is operational and serving students. With the addition of members with facilities and finance backgrounds, Board membership will collectively possess all needed skillsets to successfully start and govern the school and ensure it is an academic, operational, and financial success.

As noted above, the Board will form committees, including the Governance committee. One of the primary functions of this committee will be Board recruitment and development. To this end, the Governance committee will be tasked with leveraging professional and personal pipelines to identify potential candidates for the Board to fill vacancies as they arise from both planned and unplanned instances of attrition. The Governance committee will establish procedures for vetting candidates and will be the body that brings potential members to the full Board for consideration. The vetting process will be rigorous to ensure that potential members hold a deep commitment to the school's mission and students, as well as fully understand the scope of the commitment that comes with serving on the Board of the school. This robust vetting process will proactively mitigate instances of attrition. Additionally, Board member recruitment will be an on-going area of focus for the committee to ensure that a deep pipeline of potential members consistently exists.

d. Describe the training or orientation new board members will receive. Detail the ongoing development will existing board members receive. Note that T.C.A. § 49-13-111(o) requires all annual board training to be approved by the State Board of Education; documentation of this training must be provided to the authorizer.

New member training and orientation. To ensure that new members are fully equipped to execute their responsibilities as a board member, we will require that they participate in a comprehensive orientation facilitated by the Board Chair and Executive Director. During this time, topics such as the following will be covered: mission and vision, student profile, academic model, performance goals, bylaws, conflict of interest policy, and Tennessee Opening Meeting Act, among other pertinent areas to cover. The Governance Committee will be tasked with ensuring new member training and orientation.

Existing member development. In addition to completing at least one training annually that is certified by the Tennessee Charter School Center and approved by the Tennessee State Board of Education, the Board will engage in ongoing development activities. As explained above, the Board will complete a self-evaluation on an annual basis, the results of which will reveal areas of opportunity for the Board collectively and for individual members. These results will inform development activities. The Board will also participate in training opportunities relevant to the school's mission, model, and student population as they arise. Topics will be determined in alignment with data-driven trends that demonstrate the need for training.

e. Describe the circumstances under which complaints will be brought to the board, and the process for addressing them.

Complaint Process	
Informal Complaints	**Formal Complaints**
● Caregiver, student, or other stakeholder feels that there has been a denial of service, unfair treatment, harassment, or other action that has resulted in harm that does not involve violation of the charter and/or law ● Complaint brought to the Executive Director immediately	● Caregiver, student, or other stakeholder feels that there has been a violation of the charter and/or law ● Complaint brought to the Board immediately ● The complaint must be: ○ Written (assistance will be provided by the school as needed to fulfill this requirement) ○ Signed by the complainant

● If the complaint involves the Executive Director, the complaint bypasses the Executive Director and goes to the Board
● The complaint must be:
  ○ Written (assistance will be provided by the school as needed to fulfill this requirement)
  ○ Signed by the complainant
  ○ Specific about the details leading to the complaint and the resolution being sought
● The Executive Director (or the Board as specified above) will review the complaint
● A decision by the Executive Director will be rendered within 30 days of the submission of the complaint
● Should the complaint not be resolved by the Executive Director within 30 days, it may be escalated to the Board
● Should the complainant not be satisfied with the outcome rendered by the Executive Director, it may be escalated to the Board
● If reviewed by and/or escalated to the Board, a final decision will be rendered by the Board within 45 days of receiving the complaint
● The Board's decision will be final
	○ Specific about the details leading to the complaint and the resolution being sought
	● The Board will review the complaint and render a decision
	● An appeal may be filed with the school's authorizer if the decision is deemed unsatisfactory

f. List all current and identified board members and their areas of focus or expertise in Table 4: Board Members. Add rows as needed.

See below.

g. Provide the following documents as attachments:

- **Articles of Incorporation as Attachment G**
- **Proof of non-profit and tax-exempt status as Attachment H**
- **By-laws as Attachment I**
- **Board Member Code of Conduct as Attachment J**
- **Conflict of Interest Policy as Attachment K**
- **Board member resumes or biographies as Attachment L**
- **Board policies (including frequency of meetings, open meetings, and open records) as Attachment M**

See **Attachments G, H, I, J, K, L,** and **M.**

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	
Nathan Garrett	White House, TN	President, TCAT	Education, Finance, Organizational Management, CTE	Member	3 years
Tera Hambrick	Nashville, TN	Director of Regulatory Affairs and Legal Counsel, Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center	Legal, Community Engagement	Vice Chair	3 years
Jon Rybka	Nashville, TN	Advisor, Apuro Advisory	Education, Organizational Management, Finance, Facilities	Treasurer	3 years
Jennifer Wade	Mt. Juliet, TN	Court Administrator, Davidson County Juvenile Court	Legal, Chronic Absenteeism, Foster Care, At-Risk Youth	Chair	3 years
Guadalupe Davalos Meyers	Nashville, TN	Director of Community Organizing, Rocketship Tennessee	Education, Public Relations, Community Engagement	Secretary	3 years

Section 2.2 – Facilities (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Describe the facility needs for the proposed school based on its academic focus, academic plan, and projected enrollment. List requirements such as number of classrooms, square footage per classroom, classroom types, common areas, overall square footage, and amenities. Identify additional school spaces and their square footage, including science labs, art room, computer labs, library/media center, cafeteria, performance/dance room, gymnasium and athletic facilities, auditorium, main office and satellite offices, work room/copy room, supplies/storage, teacher work rooms, restrooms, and other spaces.

Our facility strategy is to spend the first five years of operation in an incubation site, before moving into a permanent facility. Co-location is another, less likely option, however the budgetary implications are similar. As such, our budget reflects an incubation scenario.

In terms of location, as outlined in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** section, Rock Academy's student population is not isolated to a narrow geographic catchment area. Rather, our target student population of chronically absent students exists citywide, with dense enrollment pockets in the northeast and southeast corridors of the city. Geographically, our goal is to locate a facility that is centrally located - providing easy access to this large student population. Additionally, as outlined in the **Transportation** section, robust student transportation is a critical element of our student support plan and we have planned for expansive transportation to ensure Rock Academy is truly accessible to families.

The chart below details our facility needs based on our educational program, projected enrollment, and strategy for housing Rock Academy for those first five years of operation. It is worth noting a few assumptions that drive the projections below:

- At our incubation site, we will not require significant CTE space as we plan to bus students to and from their respective work-based CTE sites, which we have budgeted for in the **Transportation** section.
- Our incubation site will have a multipurpose space, which will be used as an eating space for students, as well as will accommodate PE classes. While our forever facility that we will occupy starting in Year 6 of operation will feature more space such as a dedicated cafeteria and gym, our space plan for our incubation site will allow us to sufficiently implement all aspects of our educational plan while we come to scale.
- Rather than a full commercial kitchen and prep space, we assume that our incubation site will have a food warming station and we will cater food for students.

Years 1 - 5 Space Needs

Space Needs										
Grades Served		9		9-10		9-11		9-12		9-12
Number of Students		85		165		240		310		310
Minimum Sq Ft		8,500		16,500		24,000		31,000		31,000
		Y1		Y2		Y3		Y4		Y5
		2026-27		2027-28		2028-29		2029-30		2030-31
Room Type	SQ FT EACH	QTY	SQ FT	QTY	SQ FT	QTY	SQ FT	QTY	SQ FT	QTY	SQ FT
Educational Spaces											
Classrooms	800	3	2400	7	5600	11	8800	14	11200	14	11200
Science Classroom	1,200	1	1200	1	1200	1	1200	2	2400	2	2400
CTE Space	1,000	2	2000	2	2000	2	2000	2	2000	2	2000
Resource Spaces	300	2	600	3	900	4	1200	4	1200	4	1200
Total Educational Space SF		**8**	**6,200**	**13**	**9,700**	**18**	**13,200**	**22**	**16,800**	**22**	**16,800**
Assembly Spaces											
Food Prep	500	1	500	1	500	1	500	1	500	1	500
Multipurpose Space	2000	1	2000	1	2000	1	2000	1	2000	1	2000
Total Assembly Space SF		**2**	**2,500**	**2**	**2,500**	**2**	**2,500**	**2**	**2,500**	**2**	**2,500**
Admin Spaces											
Main Office	150	1	150	1	150	1	150	1	150	1	150
Offices	100	2	200	3	300	3	300	4	400	4	400
Conference Spaces	100	2	200	3	300	4	400	4	400	4	400
Nurses Clinic	150	1	150	1	150	1	150	1	150	1	150
Total Admin Space		**6**	**700**	**8**	**900**	**9**	**1,000**	**10**	**1,100**	**10**	**1,100**
Other Spaces											
Security and Reception	400	1	400	1	400	1	400	1	400	1	400
Student Restroom	500	2	1000	2	1000	4	2000	4	2000	4	2000
Adult Restroom	80	1	80	2	160	2	160	2	160	2	160
Custodial Facilities	80	2	160	2	160	2	160	2	160	2	160
IT Closet	80	1	80	1	80	1	80	1	80	1	80
Storage	80	4	320	4	320	4	320	4	320	4	320
Mother's Room	80	1	80	1	80	1	80	1	80	1	80
Total Other Space		**12**	**2,120**	**13**	**2,200**	**15**	**3,200**	**15**	**3,200**	**15**	**3,200**
		Overall Totals									
		2026-27		2027-28		2028-29		2029-30		2030-31	
		SQ FT		SQ FT		SQ FT		SQ FT		SQ FT	
		11,520		15,300		19,900		23,600		23,600	

b. Explain how the above-described facility and tenant improvement costs were determined and describe how the improvements are included in the proposed school's operating budget.

Planning and budgeting for facilities is a highly variable process. This is not lost on our planning team. That said, we have worked closely with our team, local supporters, recently authorized schools in Nashville, and local and national experts in school facilities and finance to make our cost projections.

Based on input from this team of advisors, our budget assumes the following:

1. $300,000 in up front tenant improvements;
2. A lease rate of $25 per square foot;
3. An additional $4 per square foot for utilities and janitorial services;
4. An escalating use of space based on enrollment; and,
5. Furniture, decorum and infrastructure costs based on bids received from schools currently navigating opening.

Based on current trends in the market, we believe these estimates are conservative. In addition, our facilities planning team has begun conversions with local and national lenders to support our long-term needs and/or our short-term needs should they exceed our projected budget.

Additionally, these estimates - and the corresponding timelines detailed throughout - were made in careful consultation with our facilities team (see section 2.2c) using comparative data from the last four Nashville new-

start charter schools - including those set to open in SY25-26. These peer schools have all leveraged an incubation model, acquiring temporary leased space that required up front tenant improvements and included a graduated increase in square footage use. Three of the four facilities required compliance with enhanced storm shelter requirements. The 2025-2026 lease rates for these schools are $11.78, $18.00, $18.00 and $22.00, with a median lease rate of $18.00 per square foot and an average lease rate of $17.44 per square foot - making our projection of $26.00 per square foot conservative. Each of these peer schools made up front investments in tenant improvements to the full future square footage use because there are cost and time efficiencies associated with this approach. Our one-time, up front, $300,000 tenant improvement estimate for this incubated space is based on these current market trends. All four completed their projects on the same timeline as projected for Rock Academy - accounting for permitting and lead time.

Our plan to occupy a temporary space for the first five years of operation is typical in Nashville for new-start charters who increase by one grade per year. This kind of conservative, graduated approach ensures the space allows for successful implementation of the program without overleveraging the school. Our talented facilities team (see section 2.2c) is focused on ensuring a strong start. That said, they are also looking to the future.

c. Describe the board or school leadership team's experience in facility acquisition, management, and renovation/construction management. Detail which members of the school's board and leadership team will manage the facility acquisition process.

The Rock Academy has a robust team of experts working diligently to support our facilities plan. This team is a mix of staff, board members, supporters, and expert contractors. Specifically, our Facilities Team includes:

- Dr. Ahmed White, Rock Academy Lead Founder and Proposed Executive Director
- Lekita Sims, Rock Academy Co-Founder and Director of Operations
- Shelby Goodfriend, Nashville Incubator Director of Facilities
- Jon Rybka, Rock Academy Board Member
- Lewis Agnew, President of Charles Hawkins Co
- Jake Morris, Senior Vice President at Charles Hawkins Co.,
- Mark Zeizel, Senior Vice President at Charter Schools Development Corporation
- Jimmy Henderson, Level Field Partners
- Greg Barro, Southeast Venture

As outlined above, Dr. White and Ms. Sims have a long history working in traditional and public charter schools in Nashville. Their deep relationships with community leaders has also been highlighted in this application. Their combined knowledge and relationships are a tremendous asset to the facilities work.

Dr. White is currently a Fellow with Nashville Incubator – an organization dedicated to supporting experienced school leaders in designing and launching innovative charter schools to expand high-quality public-school options for families across Nashville.[96] As part of this Fellowship, Nashville Incubator provides robust support around identifying and securing a facility in two primary ways.

1. The Incubator employs a Director of Facilities whose core role is to support the Rock Academy and other founding teams in the planning and execution phase of facilities development. Ms. Shelby Goodfriend currently serves in this role, and she brings a wealth of experience to the position. She previously served as the Director of Charter Schools for the TDOE, supporting charter operators across the state. Prior to that,

[96] https://tnincubator.org/

she served as the Director of School Operations for Intrepid College Prep. In this role, she oversaw significant renovation efforts to the school's facility. Ms. Goodfriend has a background in interior architecture and design and, during a sabbatical from serving in educational roles, she managed facilities projects across the country for a commercial business, The Escape Game. During her time in this role, she oversaw five store site launches, two store site expansions, and five store site renovations. In her current role, Shelby provides and sources development around site viability, financing, codes, etc. supporting fellows in developing their knowledge and understanding of charter schools facility planning and financing. Additionally, she is a critical member of the planning team where she supports our work in sourcing sites and planning and executing due diligence.

2. In addition to the tactical support Shelby supports, the incubator has also committed generous funding to support Rock Academy's facilities work. As outlined in his letter of support, Executive Director Scott Cambell details two core financial commitments towards facilities funding:
    a. Access to a tenant improvement fund of up to $250,000; and,
    b. Access to a due diligence fund for incubation consultation of up to $350,000.

Jon Rybka's an advocate and former educator who obtains a wealth of executive experiences in facilities and finances.

Charter School Development Center (CSDC), a nonprofit real estate developer, will also be involved in managing the overall facility acquisition process. CSDC offers customized solutions for charter schools. The organization specializes in guiding schools through site selection, acquisition, financing, and construction, using its "lease-to-own" model to provide schools with a clear pathway to facility ownership. CSDC has developed over 8.4 million square feet of educational facilities and has a strong track record of delivering cost-effective, high-quality facilities for charter schools. Their team will provide strategic real estate development support, financial modeling, and construction oversight throughout the entire process, ensuring that the school is equipped to manage its facility from initial planning through project completion.

Mark Zeizel, Senior Vice President at Charter Schools Development Corporation (CSDC), will play a central role in managing the facility acquisition process. Mark has extensive experience in real estate development, financing, and construction management, having overseen CSDC's Turnkey Development Program for charter schools in the Eastern U.S. since 2013. His responsibilities include initial underwriting, credit analysis, securing project financing, and managing the development and construction process from predevelopment through project delivery. In addition, Mark provides ongoing technical assistance and portfolio monitoring for charter school clients. His expertise will be invaluable in ensuring that the acquisition and development process aligns with the school's strategic needs, budget, and long-term goals.

Our team will also benefit from the expertise of Lewis Agnew, President of Charles Hawkins Co. With a background in structural engineering from his time at Stanley D. Lindsey & Associates, where he designed structural systems for various building types, Mr. Agnew brings a wealth of experience. He holds a professional engineering license (PE) and is a LEED Accredited Professional (AP). Afterward, he joined Boyle Investment Company, where he was involved in financial analysis and due diligence for a $100 million private equity fund focused on retail and office acquisitions across the Southeast. His extensive experience in real estate development, financing, and engineering will provide invaluable guidance throughout the facility identification and acquisition process, ensuring both technical feasibility and financial sustainability.

Additionally, Jake Morris, Senior Vice President at Charles Hawkins Co., will contribute his specialized knowledge of the greater Nashville metro area. Mr. Morris focuses on commercial real estate transactions in the region, offering services in brokerage representation, investment analysis, and portfolio management. His expertise will

be critical in identifying suitable properties, conducting market studies, and providing investment analysis to ensure that the selected facility is both a sound investment and a strategic fit for the school's needs. With his deep understanding of local markets and his ability to navigate complex real estate transactions, Jake will play a key role in securing a location that aligns with the school's goals and long-term vision.

Partners

Jimmy Henderson, a Partner at Level Field, is dedicated to leveraging his expertise to address the critical real estate and financing challenges faced by charter schools. Level Field is a mission-driven brokerage dedicated to empowering high-quality public charter schools with cost-effective access to first-class facilities. With over 80 years of collective experience in charter school real estate, financing, and operations, their team brings unmatched expertise and a deep understanding of the sector. Guided by a commitment to what's best for the schools they serve, Level Field combines sophisticated commercial strategies with a passion for education. Having worked on 125+ projects across 29 states, including impactful initiatives in Nashville, Memphis, and Knoxville, they have facilitated the development of over 4.2 million square feet of educational space, totaling $1.1 billion in project costs.

Greg Barro is an experienced commercial real estate professional at Southeast Venture, specializing in site selection, negotiation, and acquisitions. Since joining the firm in 2019, Greg has built a strong track record in landlord-tenant representation, commercial land sales, and advising on light industrial and distribution facilities. His recent success in securing an incubation facility for Nurse's Middle College highlights his ability to minimize costs and streamline the leasing process. Greg's expertise extends to evaluating zoning and property use to ensure compliance with local regulations, helping clients make informed decisions. With a background in commercial real estate marketing and as a member of the Tennessee Bar, Greg combines legal insight with practical real estate knowledge to provide exceptional service to his clients.

Taken together, this team brings together critical expertise to guide this process. Pending authorization, a Board Facilities Committee will be formed and charged with monitoring progress towards our start-up goals and identifying the potential need for additional technical support.

d. Describe the process and timeline for identifying and securing a facility, including any brokers or real estate consultants employed to assist in finding a facility. Include a contingency plan for alternative facilities if the primary location becomes unavailable or acquisition is unsuccessful.

Timeline. The chart in response to prompt g below outlines our anticipated timeline for identifying, securing, renovating, and occupying our facility.

Contracted assistance. As outlined above, TRA is working with The Nashville Charter Incubator, Charles Hawkins and CSDC to support our facility search plans.

Contingency plans. As part of the application design process, we are constantly searching for available commercial properties that meet our space needs. As noted above, the Executive Director's participation in a Fellowship with Nashville Incubator gives him access to and the support of the organization's Director of Facilities, who has, and will continue to, provide assistance with these identification efforts.

Working in tandem to these sources of support is the extensive outreach that we have conducted. Namely, in addition to connecting with students and caregivers, we have formed relationships and partnerships with a myriad of community organizations that are deeply supportive of the founding and operation of our school. As such, these organizations are valuable sources of information and will alert us if they become aware of a facility that becomes available that can potentially meet our space needs. Taken together, our constant efforts to find

a facility coupled with the support of community organizations will allow us to identify an alternate facility should the one we ultimately select falls through.

Our facilities team also understands the tactical and financial importance of finding a facility that meets our tactical and financial needs in a reasonable timeline. While we believe this is unlikely, if contingency plans prove insufficient, the Board would consider exploring a delayed opening to ensure a sustainable start.

e. Describe the plan to ensure that the selected facility meets all necessary compliance and regulatory requirements. Provide a detailed explanation of how the facility complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), all applicable city planning review procedures, and all health and safety requirements as required by T.C.A. § 49-13-107. Outline any necessary facility changes that support the school's academic plan, projected enrollment, ADA compliance, and regulations outlined in SBE 0520-01-04-.01. Include all associated costs in the operating budget template in section 3.1.

The facilities team is deeply knowledgeable of and committed to ensuring the facility complies with all ADA requirements, all applicable city planning review procedures, all health and safety requirements per Tennessee Code, and all applicable State Board of Education regulations.

Since we have not yet secured a facility, we cannot predict what specific facility changes will be required, but we have determined our specific space needs in alignment with our educational plan and student enrollment (see the chart in response to prompt a). Rock Academy will ensure that all facilities are ADA compliant or create a plan in collaboration with an architect and ADA inspector to ensure ADA compliance is achievable. Additionally, we will consult with a code assessor to support and assist in fulfilling all necessary due diligence. The Facilities Committee will ensure that our final plan is in compliance with all ADA requirements, city review requirements, and safety requirements per TN Code § 49-13-107.

f. Describe the plan to comply with county and/or municipal building code requirements related to storm shelters.

The facilities committee - alongside a statewide team of contractors, policy leaders, state agency representatives, local fire and safety leaders, and codes leaders - has spent countless hours over the last year seeking to understand updated storm shelter code and understanding the implications for TRA's facility plan. We understand the implications of IBC 500 and are confident about and committed to a facilities plan that is in full compliance with these requirements. As part of the due diligence process for potential facilities, the team considers whether a given property either has a compliant storm shelter or assesses the viability and cost of building one. All properties under consideration meet one of these criteria and our team understands that in order to be a viable site, any additional properties would also need to meet these standards. As properties are identified as potentially viable, the facilities team meets with Metro Fire to discuss needs and viability as early in the process as is practicable.

g. Present a timeline with reasonable assumptions for facility selection, requisition, renovation, state fire marshal and health inspections, and occupation.

The chart below outlines our anticipated timeline for facility selection, requisition, renovation, inspection, and occupation. We plan to launch renovations in November 2025 as our application may not receive approval until October 2025. To this end, we built our timeline assumptions around this possibility.

Action	Sept 2024-June 2025	July 2025	Aug 2025	Sept 2025	Oct 2025	Nov 2025	Dec 2025	Jan 2026	Feb 2026	Mar 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	Jul 2026
Identify and assess properties for lease														
Negotiate lease terms and tenant improvements with property owner														
Design facility														
Make tenant improvements and renovations														
Purchase and move-in furniture and equipment														
Final inspections and preparations														
Occupy facility														

h. List the properties considered for the proposed school. If under a non-disclosure agreement, provide the general location. If no suitable property has been identified, describe the steps taken to confirm suitable facilities within the proposed geographic area.

Over the last 12 months the facilities team has spent hundreds of hours planning for facilities and sourcing viable options. Our team has made significant progress and remains confident an appropriate facility can and will be procured in advance of our proposed opening and within our stated budget and/or contingencies.

While a final property has not been identified, several are under consideration, each of which could allow for staged incubation and require various tenant improvements that are compatible with our programming and budget needs. Currently, there are three top contenders - all of which meet our budget and program needs. All are currently under non-disclosure agreements to allow for good-faith negotiations and are summarized below:

	Zip Code	Total Square Footage Available	Projections in Budget for Lease & Improvements?	Potential Permanent Location?
Property 1	37207	36,707	Yes	Yes
Property 2	37214	80,000	Yes	Yes
Property 3	37214	22,000	Yes	No

Additionally, our facilities team has identified dozens of additional properties in our ideally geographic area that could meet our program and budget needs. As a result of our robust community engagement, we have also received several tangible leads from local developers, nonprofits, and community agencies that could become co-location partners. Formal negotiations cannot begin in advance of authorization. However, through this growing network, our Board, and other facility partners mentioned above, we are confident in our ability to secure a suitable facility to open in August 2026.

Section 2.3 – Start-up Plan (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Provide a detailed timeline that outlines the specific tasks the school's governing body and leadership must accomplish to ensure the school starts on time. Include key areas such as staffing, student recruitment, and facilities changes, along with deadlines and specific milestones that must be achieved in each area to meet the opening date. Additionally, identify the individuals responsible for each task and specify their compensation amounts. Sponsors must ensure the revenues and expenditures for "Year 0" align with the Operating Budget Template in section 3.1.

Below outlines a detailed timeline for completing key tasks during the pre-opening year, as well as identifies the owners (i.e., responsible individuals) for each task and how they will be compensated in alignment with our Year 0 budget in **Attachment W**, which outlines specific salaries. While this timeline does not include every task that needs to be completed over the course of the pre-opening year, it captures the primary ones that need to be accomplished. The timeline starts in July 2025 and goes through July 2026. As noted in the budget, the Executive Director, Director of Operations, Director of Development, and Principal are all FTEs during the entire pre-opening year, with the Attendance Liaison and Student Supports Coordinator being hired later in the year. Finally, as we progress through the pre-opening year, we will adjust this plan as needed as it will function as a living document.

Task	Owner(s)	Compensation	Timeline
Operations			
Finalize student and parent handbook	Executive Director	Salary	10/1/2025 – 1/2/2026
Finalize manual and crisis and emergency plans and procedures	Director of Ops	Salary	1/2/2026 – 4/1/2026
Create internal compliance calendar	Director of Ops	Salary	1/2/2026 – 5/1/2026
Launch transportation RFP process	Board	N/A	8/1/2025 – 1/2/2026
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Finalize transportation contract	Board	N/A	1/2/2026 – 4/1/2026
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Launch RFP for or coordinate food service with MNPS	Director of Ops	Salary	1/2/2026 – 4/1/2026
Set up student information system (SIS)	Director of Ops	Salary	1/2/2026 – 6/30/2026
Identify vendors/service providers for supplies, furniture, equipment, etc.	Board	N/A	By 4/1/2026
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	

Negotiate and execute vendor/service provider contracts	Board	N/A	By 5/1/2026
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Procure school supplies, furniture, equipment, etc.	Board	N/A	By 6/1/2026
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	
Determine transportation routes	Director of Ops	Salary	By 7/1/2026
Finance			
Adopt fiscal management policies and procedures	Board	N/A	By 8/31/2025
Execute back-office service provider contract	Board	N/A	By 7/31/2025
Create standing financial package for Board	Board	N/A	By 8/31/2025
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Director of Dev	Salary	
Hire auditor	Board	N/A	By 3/31/2026
Revisit the budget after student enrollment and facilities plan deadlines	Board	N/A	By 4/30/2026
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Director of Dev	Salary	
Implement Year 0 fundraising plan	Board	N/A	Present – 6/30/2026
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Dev	Salary	
Human Resources			
Finalize personnel manual	Board	N/A	7/1/25 – 10/1/25
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Launch hiring process for Attendance Liaison	Executive Director	Salary	10/1/2025 – 12/31/2025
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Target start date for Attendance Liaison	N/A	N/A	1/2/2026
Launch hiring process for Student Supports Coordinator	Executive Director	Salary	1/2/2026 – 3/31/2026
	Principal	Salary	
Target start date for Student Supports Coordinator	N/A	N/A	4/1/2026

Launch hiring process for school staff	Executive Director	Salary	1/2/2026 – 6/30/2026
	Principal	Salary	
Target start date for staff	N/A	N/A	7/6/2026
Recruitment and Enrollment			
Finalize marketing materials	Executive Director	Salary	7/1/2025 – 7/30/2025
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Officially implement student recruitment and enrollment strategy	Executive Director	Salary	Upon Application Approval
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Finalize onboarding and intake timeline and responsibilities	Executive Director	Salary	By 2/27/2026 (End of application period)
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	
Accept and acknowledge student applications	Director of Ops	Salary	Until 2/27/2026 (Last Fri in Feb)
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	
Hold enrollment lottery (if needed)	Board	N/A	3/10/2026 (7 Business Days after Application Deadline)
	Executive Director	Salary	
Notify parents of lottery results and admission status	Attendance Liaison	Salary	3/11/2026 – 3/19/2026 (7 Business Days after Lottery)
Hold registration and onboarding (including intake)	Executive Director	Salary	4/1/2026 – 6/30/2026
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	
	Student Supports Coord	Salary	
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	
Plan and prepare for orientation to be held the first month of school	Executive Director	Salary	6/1/2025 – 6/30/2025
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	
	Student Supports Coord	Salary	
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	

Academics			
Create daily student and teacher schedules	Principal	Salary	6/1/2026 – 8/1/2026
	Student Supports Coord	Salary	
Purchase all curricular assessments, programs, resources, and supplies	Board	N/A	By 5/1/2026
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	
Plan summer inservice	Executive Director	Salary	By 7/01/2026
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	
	Student Supports Coord	Salary	
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	
Hold summer inservice	Executive Director	Salary	7/6/2026 – 8/3/2026
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	
	Student Supports Coord	Salary	
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	
Plan fall professional development	Executive Director	Salary	By 8/31/2026
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	
	Student Supports Coord	Salary	
	Attendance Liaison	Salary	
Create professional development calendar	Executive Director	Salary	By 8/31/2026
	Director of Ops	Salary	
	Principal	Salary	
	Student Supports Coord	Salary	

Facilities			
Design and procurement phase	Board	Salary	7/1/2025 – 10/31/2025
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Tenant improvements and renovations phase	Board	Salary	11/1/2024 – 6/1/2025
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Final inspections and preparations phase	Board	N/A	6/1/2026 – 6/30/2026
	Executive Director	Salary	
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Occupy facility	Executive Director	Salary	7/1/2026
	Director of Ops	Salary	

b. Describe any anticipated challenges during the start-up plan implementation and the strategies to address these challenges to ensure the school opens on time.

Anticipated Challenges and Strategies to Address Them
Being the First-of-Its-Kind Charter School in TN
● Opportunity School legislation was just passed in 2024 – less than a year before submitting our application. ● Rules, regulations, and policies that govern Opportunity Schools are still underway, with new rules most recently going into effect in Fall 2024 while we were writing our application. ● If approved, our school will be the first Opportunity School in the state, and we are fully aware that being the first poses a unique challenge as there is no precedent, established playbook, or history to draw from – this is true for us as the operator of the school and for our authorizer. ● While we are entering uncharted territory in TN, peer schools with similar models that serve similar populations of students DO exist across the country in multiple states. ● Explained in detail in the **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** section, we spent the past two years conducting intensive research, including visiting, learning from, and partnering with peer schools in other states, to ensure that we designed our school in alignment with research-based best practices that have shown to effectively serve at-risk youth. ● Embedded with the fabric of our design is the understanding that, to succeed, we must be a learning organization. We fully appreciate that new rules, regulations, and policies will continue to emerge and that we will have to adapt and pivot to ensure compliance with them. ● We fully understand, and have planned for, the fact that our students will come to us year after year in distinctly different places in their learning and with distinctly different needs. ● To this end, we fully appreciate that an array of "unknowns" will inevitably exist, which is why one of our core commitments and key design elements is flexibility. ● In sum, we have designed our academic, operational, and financial plan around our core commitment of flexibility, which works in tandem with our understanding that to succeed, we must

be a learning organization that leverages our ability to flexibly pivot, adjust, and refine as needed to ensure that we maintain compliance and achieve our mission of reengaging disconnected youth.

Recruiting Staff

- Attracting and hiring highly qualified, mission-aligned staff will be critical to successfully implementing our model and realizing our mission.
- In addition to the challenge posed by the national teacher shortage, we know that working with Opportunity Youth requires our staff to have growth mindsets and be committed to learning. Working with this population also requires our staff to be highly emotionally regulated, as it is inevitable that our students will experience challenges with regulating themselves. Staff must possess the ability to maintain their regulation when students struggle with doing so.
- As outlined in the **Personnel/Human Capital** section, we have a robust plan for staff recruitment, including advertising the opportunity to be a part of an educational first in TN, helping us realize our deeply important mission of reengaging disconnected youth, deploying proven recruitment mechanisms, highlighting our unique, innovative approach to teaching and learning, and offering competitive compensation and benefits.
- Additionally, as outlined in detail in the **Personnel/Human Capital** and **Professional Development** section, we fully understand that we will need to provide robust training and support to our staff. For instance, we do not expect our teachers to come to us with expertise in implementing mastery-based learning. Rather, we have planned to provide robust training and implementation support to teach them how to implement this approach.
- We also have agreements with three organizations experienced in serving this population to further support us with the development of our staff. If needed, we could intensify the level of support provided by these partners.
- To this end, getting the right people to serve our students will be a challenge, but we have planned for the need to fill skill gaps so that we can ensure that we recruit and hire staff who are mission aligned, possess growth mindsets, have the ability to stay regulated, and are willing to go with us into the uncharted territory of operating the very first Opportunity School in the state.

Recruiting Students

- As explained in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** section, while there are significantly more students who qualify as Opportunity Youth than seats available at our school, we fully understand the challenge and criticality of meeting our enrollment targets.
- As noted throughout this application, there are an array of factors that lead to students experiencing chronic absenteeism. Chief among them are not feeling connected to their peers, teachers, and school in general, as well as facing challenges with getting to and from school and having their basic physical needs met (e.g., clean clothes to wear to school).
- Further, many students who experience chronic absenteeism are also economically disadvantaged, which often results in high rates of mobility across the city.
- To this end, after conducting our extensive research and outreach, we knew that we needed to implement a different approach to recruiting our students. We researched and identified the schools with the highest counts and rates of chronic absenteeism – isolating the top nine. Concurrently, we also started forging partnerships with city-wide agencies that serve families in need.
- All of this led us to the understanding that our target community is not a geographic place, rather it is a community of families and students with a set of shared needs. We also came to realize that

rather than living in a common geographic place, our target community coalesces in common city-wide agencies and in organizations that serve the communities in and around where our nine focus schools are located.

- To this end, as documented in **Attachment D**, we have developed strong partnerships with these city-wide agencies, as well as with at least one leader of a community organization in and around the neighborhoods of our nine schools. These agencies and organizations have committed to connecting us with families and students who qualify as Opportunity Youth. It is through these connections that we will recruit and ultimately enroll our students.

Securing a Facility

- We appreciate the challenge of finding a suitable facility, especially in a tight, competitive market like Nashville.
- As explained in the **Facilities** section, we have assembled a dedicated facilities team, with each member holding robust experience around facilities. This team consists of Board members, school leadership, and contracted expert service providers.
- Collectively, this team possesses the experience and expertise needed to identify and secure a suitable facility and then execute renovations and occupancy.
- We have also strategically approached our facilities plan – namely, we will spend five years in an incubation site and then secure our forever facility.
- Further, we have secured funding specifically to support facilities costs, including up to $250K for tenant improvement and up to $ 350K for incubation consultation.

Implementing the Academic Plan

- As noted throughout, we will be the first Opportunity School in TN. We conducted extensive research to understand the root causes of chronic absenteeism and to identify the research-based best practices that yielded success in serving at-risk youth in peer schools that operate in other states – all of which informed the design of our academic program.
- From our research, we know that our students will come to us in distinctly different places in their learning and with distinctly different needs that will be ever-changing.
- We also know that our staff will come to us with skill gaps around key practices of our academic plan.
- All of this informed the design of the academic plan and our approach to implementing it. To this end, we have planned for these factors rather than planning around them, which is why flexibility stands as one of our core commitments and key design elements.
- Additionally, as explained in the **Personnel/Human Capital** and **Professional Development** sections, being mission-aligned is a top hiring priority as we can close skill gaps specific to our academic plan, but we cannot expend resources closing mindset gaps.
- To this end, we will provide our staff with a full month of summer in-service, daily common time for collaboration and professional learning, embedded professional development days throughout the school year, and training through secured partnerships with providers of professional development such as The Modern Classrooms Project to ensure that our staff get the support they need to successfully implement their pieces of the plan.
- We have also designed our leadership structure to ensure that we have a dedicated instructional leader in Year 1 of operation, employing a Principal whose primary focus will be teaching and learning.

- Further, we are learning organization – we fully understand and expect that we will encounter unforeseen challenges and setbacks as we implement our plan. However, our commitment to our mission and flexibility, strategic leadership structure, hiring of mission-aligned staff, robust professional development plans, and established partnerships position us to tackle the unforeseen and continually refine our plan in service of our students.

Ensuring Financial Viability

- As outlined in **Attachment W** and explained in **Attachment X**, we have designed our school in alignment with research-based best practices and the findings of the extensive research we conducted, which led us to anchor our model in three core commitments: belonging, relevance, flexibility.
- As noted throughout the application, our approach to executing these core commitments, as well as to other key operational elements, is innovative and materially different than traditional district and charter public schools. However, with innovation comes expense. To express it simply – our model is expensive.
- Yet, to meet our mission and goals we cannot possibly do what we have outlined in this application relying only on the same resources provided to a significantly lower risk student population. It would be both intellectually dishonest and bound to fail.
- To that end, we have outlined an intellectually honest, fiscally conservation approach to budgeting and sustainability for our school, as well as future Opportunity Schools in TN.
- In this approach, we are committed to ensuring that our school meets the financial management standards specified in the Model Charter School Performance Framework, regardless of what we spend per pupil or how we take in those dollars.
- However, our per pupil spending will be more than what TISA provides. After carefully considering three distinct pathways (as explained in detail in **Attachment X**), we ultimately leaned into our commitment to the Opportunity Youth we will serve and our confidence in our ability to raise the necessary funds to support our model.
- To this end, we have developed a robust sustainability plan that will be executed by our Director of Development, who will be hired in the pre-opening year. We have also engaged in robust contingency planning to ensure that we are prepared should revenues fall short.

Section 2.4 - Personnel / Human Capital (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Describe the school's leadership structure. Attach the organizational chart for Year 1 as Attachment N and the organizational chart at full capacity as Attachment O. The organizational charts should clearly delineate the board, administration, staff, any related bodies (such as advisory bodies or parent/educator councils), and any external organizations that will play a role in managing the school.

To ensure that we are positioned to realize our mission of reengaging disconnected youth and are able to effectively implement our complex model (described in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section) with fidelity, we will employ the below school leadership structure, which is also outlined in **Attachments N** and **O**.[97]

- **Executive Director:** As the senior leader of the organization, the Executive Director is responsible for providing visionary and dynamic leadership and will oversee the leaders who manage the school's academic, operations, and financial functions. The Executive Director will work closely with the Board of Directors and the school leadership team (as listed below) to ensure effective and impactful leadership of the first Opportunity School in TN. The Executive Director reports to and is evaluated by the Board. The Executive Director is responsible for the following:

Strategic Leadership & Program Development	Board Engagement & Governance
• Plan, organize, and direct the organization's operations and programs, ensuring alignment with its mission and strategic objectives • Develop, implement, and oversee new programs to enhance The Rock Academy's services and impact as a 501(c)(3) organization • Collaborate with the school principal to manage all aspects of school operations, including academics, staffing, and community engagement	• Serve as the primary liaison between the organization and the Board of Directors. • Report regularly to the Board on organizational performance, program updates, school operations, and financial health. • Coordinate annual budget reviews, periodic forecasting, and provide transparent updates to the Board.
Operational Management	**Educational Leadership**
• Oversee contracts, vendor agreements, and all organizational expenditures to ensure financial integrity • Lead staff efforts to ensure robust support for all programs, fostering a collaborative and effective team environment • Retain and nurture a diverse, highly qualified staff through professional development and career coaching	• Collaborate with school leaders to ensure effective curriculum implementation, instructional quality, and student success • Provide direct support for school personnel during absences or emergencies to ensure smooth operations • Stay informed on educational trends and charter legislation to advocate effectively for the school and its students

[97] Note that we will employ a Director of Development (starting as an FTE in the pre-opening year); this role will lead the implementation of the school's financial sustainability plan and will not have leadership responsibilities specific to staff or to the operation of the school

Community Engagement & Advocacy	Program Implementation & Evaluation
● Build relationships with students, attend school events, and actively engage with parents and families ● Represent The Rock Academy at collaborative meetings such as the Nashville Charter Collaborative ● Develop and cultivate relationships with community stakeholders to expand the organization's reach and impact ● Support the securing and management of grants to ensure the financial sustainability of The Rock Academy ● Establish and maintain funding relationships to meet or exceed strategic goals	● Initiate and oversee the implementation of new programs aligned with The Rock Academy's vision and mission ● Regularly evaluate program effectiveness and make recommendations for improvement

- **Director of Operations:** This role oversees the school's operational, financial, and logistical functions, ensuring a safe, efficient, and supportive environment for students, families, and staff. This role designs and implements systems and policies aligned with the school's mission, including recruitment, team management, nutrition, transportation, facilities, and safety. At The Rock Academy, especially in its early years, this position embodies an "all-hands-on-deck" approach to drive success. The Director of Operations reports to and is evaluated by the Executive Director. The Director of Operations is responsible for the following:

Pre-Opening Operational Setup	Finance and Budget Oversight
● Develop and implement policies, procedures, and administrative systems for enrollment, attendance, transportation, and communication ● Oversee facility setup, including furniture and supply procurement, in collaboration with the Executive Director ● Establish IT systems and classroom technology ● Set up support services and family communication channels ● Develop and implement safety protocols, including risk assessments, and emergency response procedures	● Manage invoicing systems for timely and accurate payments ● Oversee school credit card usage, including receipt collection and submission ● Work with the Executive Director on budgeting and financial management ● Oversee procurement processes for vendors and contractors, including obtaining bids, tracking purchases, and managing inventory
Facilities and Transportation Management	**School Nutrition Program**

• Supervise daily student bus transportation and coordinate arrival/dismissal routines and bus routes • Serve as the primary liaison between the school and transportation team to address bus-related issues • Manage dining schedules and vendor relationships to ensure consistent meal service and support for food service staff • Oversee facility cleanliness, safety, and maintenance, including repairs and upkeep. • Coordinate school field trips, ensuring logistical alignment with transportation and facilities	• Ensure the school nutrition program complies with regulations and standards. • Act as liaison between the school and food services team, addressing any issues that arise • Monitor and improve meal service operations to meet the needs of students and staff
Recruitment and Enrollment	**Team Leadership and Management**
• Develop and implement student recruitment strategies, including mailings, calls, and community engagement events • Manage and enhance the student enrollment process to ensure full enrollment at all times	• Directly oversee the operations team, including custodial staff, vendors, volunteers, and interns • Support the professional growth and development of operations team members • Collaborate with the Executive Director and leadership team to align school procedures and goals
• Design, implement, and ensure accurate student attendance plan and records to meet district and CTE requirements in the student information system • Develop and manage procedures for student arrival, dismissal, tardiness, and early dismissals. • Establish protocols for assisting families and visitors on campus • Manage external communications, including newsletters, academic and behavior reports, and important notifications	

- **Principal:** This role drives academic excellence, fosters a thriving school culture, and ensures that all students are prepared for post-secondary success. The Principal holds a strong commitment to mastery-based learning, personalized instruction, and community engagement, while demonstrating exceptional leadership and management skills. The Principal's primary focus is to lead instructional excellence by supporting and developing staff, ensuring student achievement, and building a sustainable organization through strategic planning, collaboration, and talent development. This role requires a strong ability to connect with students, staff, and families while maintaining alignment with The Rock Academy's mission and vision. The Principal reports to and is evaluated by the Executive Director. The Principal is responsible for the following:

Student Achievement & Instructional Leadership	Organizational Leadership & School Culture
• Set high academic expectations for all students and lead the development of rigorous, mastery-based curricula aligned with Tennessee Academic Standards • Use data-driven practices to evaluate and improve instructional quality and student outcomes • Observe, coach, and develop teachers, instructional leaders, and staff to ensure the delivery of high-quality instruction and student growth • Promote innovative teaching strategies and a culture of continuous improvement in the classroom	• Create and maintain a safe, inclusive, and supportive school culture that reflects The Rock Academy's values • Build collaborative relationships with staff, students, and families, ensuring strong communication and a shared commitment to student success • Develop and implement school policies, procedures, and expectations to ensure a positive and equitable learning environment • Lead efforts to address student attendance, behavior, and engagement in alignment with school-wide goals
Talent Development & Human Resources	**Family & Community Engagement**
• Recruit, select, onboard, and retain highly effective teachers and staff • Evaluate staff performance regularly and provide actionable feedback to foster growth and accountability • Design and lead professional development opportunities to build capacity and promote leadership within the staff • Foster a collaborative environment and encourage teacher-led initiatives to enhance the school's mission	• Act as a liaison between the school, families, and the community to build trust and strengthen partnerships • Maintain clear and open communication with families regarding curriculum, events, and student progress • Develop opportunities for families to engage in school life and contribute to their child's education

- **Director of Curriculum and Instruction:** This role supports the development, implementation, and evaluation of our instructional program. This leader plays a vital role in implementing the school's instructional vision, ensuring alignment with Tennessee Academic Standards, and fostering high-quality teaching and learning experiences for all students. With a focus on equity, rigor, and the unique needs of our target student population, the Director of Curriculum and Instruction works collaboratively with school leadership, teachers, and community stakeholders to ensure student success. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction reports to and is evaluated by the Principal. The Director of Curriculum and Instruction is responsible for the following:

Instructional Leadership	Curriculum Development
• Collaborate with the Principal to implement the comprehensive instructional vision aligned with The Rock Academy's mission • Lead the adoption and implementation of evidence-based teaching practices, ensuring	• Lead teams to design, review, and update curriculum materials, ensuring alignment with Tennessee Academic Standards and addressing any gaps.

alignment with Tennessee Academic Standards ● Analyze student achievement data to identify trends, address achievement gaps, and inform instructional decisions ● Ensure the effective use of assessment data to drive instruction and student growth ● Oversee curriculum implementation, ensuring it meets the needs of diverse learners and aligns with state requirements	● Select and adopt instructional materials, textbooks, and resources tailored to the needs of the student population ● Support the development of differentiated curriculum strategies to support the unique needs of students, including those with disabilities and English Learners (ELs). ● Ensure the curriculum supports mastery-based learning and rigorous academic standards ● Stay informed about state and federal education policies, ensuring curriculum and instructional practices comply with all regulations ● Contribute to the development of school-wide instructional policies and procedures
Teacher Development and Support	**Assessment and Data Analysis**
● Design and deliver professional development opportunities to enhance teacher capacity and effectiveness ● Mentor and coach teachers, providing actionable feedback to improve instructional practices ● Conduct regular classroom observations to monitor instructional quality and provide targeted support ● Support the implementation of inclusive teaching strategies and differentiated instruction ● Ensure compliance with federal and state laws, including IDEA and ELL regulations, in collaboration with the Student Supports Coordinator ● Support the development and monitoring of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and ensure progress toward student goals ● Support with oversight of the coordination of EL assessments, language intervention programs, and classroom integration strategies	● Oversee district-wide assessments, including Renaissance STAR, to monitor student progress and drive instructional improvement ● Use data to inform curriculum adjustments, instructional strategies, and intervention decisions ● Communicate data findings to stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, and families
	Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement
● Support the implementation of Tennessee's RTI Framework by collaborating with teachers and intervention teams	● Work closely with school leaders, teachers, and community stakeholders to ensure

• Monitor student progress and adjust interventions to meet individual learning needs • Provide data-driven recommendations to improve the effectiveness of RTI strategies	curriculum alignment and effective implementation • Engage with families and community members to communicate curriculum goals, academic expectations, and student progress • Foster a collaborative culture among educators to promote continuous improvement and professional growth

- **Culture Dean:** This role plays a critical role in fostering a positive, inclusive, and achievement-oriented school culture at The Rock Academy. This leadership position focuses on promoting student character development, creating a safe and nurturing environment, and ensuring that high expectations are consistently met by all students and staff. The Culture Dean collaborates with school leadership, teachers, families, and the community to implement restorative practices, positive behavior interventions, and social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies. The Culture Dean reports to and is evaluated by the Principal. The Culture Dean is responsible for the following:

Student Culture and Behavior Management	**Restorative Practices and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)**
• Collaborate with the Principal to implement a joyful, positive, and achievement-oriented school culture vision and plan • Oversee school-wide behavior management system with logical incentives and consequences rooted in restorative practices and character development • Serve as the point person for addressing breaches of culture for a specific grade level, including managing systems for removals, detentions, suspensions, and parent re-entry meetings • Lead efforts to ensure effective Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III behavior Response to Intervention (RTI) programs • Supervise daily school activities such as student entry, breakfast, lunch, transitions, and dismissal to ensure safety and a positive culture	• Oversee SEL programs that support students' emotional well-being and promote conflict resolution strategies • Train teachers to integrate SEL practices into the curriculum and daily routines to enhance classroom culture • Act as a mediator to resolve conflicts among students, staff, and parents, fostering understanding and cooperation
Community and Stakeholder Engagement	**Teacher and Staff Support**
• Lead school-wide culture-building events such as recognition assemblies • Collaborate with parents and guardians to implement the parental involvement plan,	• Facilitate training and professional development for teachers on relationship-building, classroom management, and maintaining high culture standards

strengthen family-school connections, and run the parent involvement committee ● Organize and execute school-wide culture and community events that reflect the school's mission and values ● Ensure the physical environment of the school reinforces school culture and student growth	● Conduct regular culture walkthroughs, classroom observations, and audits to ensure consistency and excellence ● Coach Mentors on leading behavior analysis meetings and supporting their teams in maintaining a strong culture ● Provide ongoing feedback to staff to improve classroom culture and overall school climate

Administrative and Reporting Duties
● Track and analyze student behavior data using systems such as Infinite Campus, DeansList, and other regional reporting tools ● Prepare reports for school leadership and external stakeholders on culture-related metrics and trends ● Participate as the LEA in IEP meetings for students with behavior-related goals. ● Work with the Director of Operations to ensure effective planning of field lessons, school events, and extracurricular activities

- **Student Supports Coordinator:** This role functions as a dedicated advocate for student success, responsible for overseeing services and supports to special populations of students, including students with disabilities and students who are ELs. This role entails collaborating with teachers, families, and leaders to develop and implement strategies that address the diverse needs of students, ensuring they thrive academically and personally. This role designs and manages student support plans, provides direct services, and facilitates professional development for staff. This role also serves as a liaison for external services and partners to further enhance student support systems. The Student Supports Coordinator reports to and is evaluated by the Principal. The Student Supports Coordinator is responsible for the following:

Student Support Plans	**Direct Support**
● Lead meetings with teachers to identify students needing academic, behavioral, or social-emotional support ● Analyze student performance data, behavioral records, and standardized assessments to develop individualized support plans ● Monitor the implementation of support plans and adjust based on progress and feedback ● Schedule regular student and teacher check-ins to ensure the success of interventions ● Maintain compliance with IEP and 504 plan requirements, coordinating with external agencies when necessary	● Provide targeted interventions to individual students or small groups in areas such as executive functioning, academic challenges, and behavioral needs ● Assist students with modifications to classwork, homework, and assessments ● Offer one-on-one mentorship and advocacy for students navigating academic or personal challenges

Collaboration and Professional Development	Family and Community Engagement
• Work closely with teachers to create and implement best practices for supporting students with diverse needs. • Lead professional development sessions on topics such as behavior management, academic accommodations, and social-emotional learning strategies. • Partner with the school counselor to align academic and social-emotional interventions.	• Serve as the primary contact for families regarding student support plans, ensuring open communication and collaboration. • Host regular meetings with families to discuss student progress and address concerns. • Act as a liaison with community organizations and external partners to access additional resources for students.
Program Coordination and Compliance	**Assessment and Reporting**
• Coordinate the retention and promotion process, ensuring data-driven and equitable decisions. • Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all student support plans and interventions. • Oversee compliance with district and state requirements related to student support services, including annual reviews of 504 plans. • Assist in creating policies and procedures for mental health, dropout prevention, and attendance improvement.	• Conduct and coordinate regular academic assessments, such as literacy or math benchmarks, to monitor student growth. • Use assessment results to inform interventions and provide actionable feedback to teachers. • Collaborate with school leadership to prepare reports and documentation for student success metrics.

b. Describe the process and timeline for hiring the school leader, and outline the skills, qualifications, and characteristics the sponsor will seek in a leader. Detail who will lead the hiring process and serve as the decision-maker in the hiring. If the leader has already been identified, attach the leader's resume as Attachment P.

As referenced throughout, we have identified the lead candidate for Executive Director, Dr. Ahmed White. Upon approval of our application, the Board intends to formally hire Dr. White. He brings extensive experience leading schools and experience working with our target population of students. More specifically, as outlined in **Attachment P**, Dr. White most recently served as the Executive Director of Project Reflect Inc./Smithson Craighead Academy, the oldest charter school in Middle Tennessee. During his leadership, he transformed Smithson Craighead Academy (SCA) from the brink of closure into a desirable educational option within the greater Nashville community. Under his guidance, SCA earned recognition as a Tennessee Reward School and a Changemaker Charter School for its consistent growth. He successfully expanded the school by adding two grade levels, which doubled its enrollment and capacity for scholars. As the leader of Project Reflect, he also initiated GED and ESL classes, provided essential resources like diapers and food for families in need, and offered additional community support services.

Before his role in Project Reflect, Dr. White was the Principal of TW Hunter Middle School in Sumner County, where he led the school to achieve an impressive academic ranking of 31 out of over 500 middle schools. In addition to his school leadership, Dr. White has served as a state trainer for Superintendents and Administrators

in TEAM evaluations. He was selected for the 2022 cohort of the AASA Urban Superintendents Academy at Howard University, which trains leaders who serve or aspire to serve in urban areas across the nation.

Prior to his time in Sumner County, Dr. White worked as a MIP Conduct special education teacher at Whites Creek High School in Nashville, TN, and served as a Teacher Counselor for Genesis Academy, a contract school focused on severe behavioral interventions. He has also held the position of Education Liaison for Monroe Harding Children's Home, assisting students in a Level I group home in earning their GEDs and navigating their high school education while in custody.

To this end, Dr. White possesses the skills, qualifications, and characteristics sought by the Board to lead our school; these are outlined below:

Skills and Qualifications

- Proven leadership and management experience, including running a 501(c)(3) organization
- Strong background in school administration and educational leadership
- Demonstrated ability to design and implement new programs effectively
- Socially conscious and committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Strong organizational, multitasking, and creative problem-solving abilities
- Skilled in inclusive and collaborative decision-making
- Excellent interpersonal, public relations, and communication skills

Characteristics

- Visionary leader with a passion for educational equity and innovation
- Capable of balancing strategic planning with operational management
- Enthusiastic and proactive in community engagement and relationship building
- Committed to fostering a positive and impactful environment for students, staff, and families

c. Describe the responsibilities of the school's principal or head of school. Detail plans to support and develop this person and identify the state-approved administrator evaluation model by which this individual will be evaluated pursuant to SBE Rule 0520-02-01 and State Board Policy 5.201.

Responsibilities, Skills, and Qualifications. As outlined above, the Principal will hold responsibility for the following, as well as will possess the following skills and qualifications:

Core Responsibilities	
Student Achievement & Instructional Leadership	**Organizational Leadership & School Culture**
• Set high academic expectations for all students and lead the development of rigorous, mastery-based curricula aligned with Tennessee Academic Standards • Use data-driven practices to evaluate and improve instructional quality and student outcomes	• Create and maintain a safe, inclusive, and supportive school culture that reflects The Rock Academy's values • Build collaborative relationships with staff, students, and families, ensuring strong communication and a shared commitment to student success

• Observe, coach, and develop teachers, instructional leaders, and staff to ensure the delivery of high-quality instruction and student growth • Promote innovative teaching strategies and a culture of continuous improvement in the classroom	• Develop and implement school policies, procedures, and expectations to ensure a positive and equitable learning environment • Lead efforts to address student attendance, behavior, and engagement in alignment with school-wide goals
Talent Development & Human Resources	**Family & Community Engagement**
• Recruit, select, onboard, and retain highly effective teachers and staff • Evaluate staff performance regularly and provide actionable feedback to foster growth and accountability • Design and lead professional development opportunities to build capacity and promote leadership within the staff • Foster a collaborative environment and encourage teacher-led initiatives to enhance the school's mission	• Act as a liaison between the school, families, and the community to build trust and strengthen partnerships • Maintain clear and open communication with families regarding curriculum, events, and student progress • Develop opportunities for families to engage in school life and contribute to their child's education
• Certification as a school administrator or principal, as required by the state of Tennessee. • Bachelor's degree required; master's degree in educational leadership, administration, or a related field strongly preferred • At least 4 years of teaching experience • A minimum of 3 years in a leadership role such as Assistant Principal, Dean, or Principal • Proven success in coaching, mentoring, and developing staff to achieve measurable results • Experience leading or implementing a mastery-based learning model preferred	

Support and Development Plans. As outlined in the **Professional Development** section, the lead candidate for Executive Director will continue to receive development support from the Fellowship in which he is currently an active Fellow. He is also enrolled in the Modern Classrooms Leadership Coaching cohort and will receive coaching from the New Schools Venture Fund – all of which will ensure that he receives targeted support related to implementing our complex academic plan and leading the first Opportunity School in the state of TN. The Executive Director will draw on these arms of coaching when providing targeted support to the Principal. Specifically, in June, the Principal and the rest of the leadership team will engage in five days of targeted development to prepare for summer inservice and for the start of school, which will be led by the Executive Director. Additionally, throughout the year, the Executive Director will provide individualized support and training to the Principal. Additionally, the Principal will have access to external PD opportunities. As outlined in **Attachment W**, we have budgeted specifically for PD to ensure that we earmarked funds to address any PD needs as they arise.

Evaluation. The Principal will report to and be evaluated by the Executive Director using the Tennessee Educator Accelerator Model (TEAM) for administrators, which is a state-approved administrator evaluation model.[98] TEAM will be implemented with fidelity and all evaluation timelines prescribed by the TDOE will be followed.

d. Explain the plan and timeline to recruit and hire additional key staff, including, but not limited to, operational staff, administrators, and teachers. Identify the leader and decision-maker of this process, and list hiring selection criteria, required experience, and special considerations relevant to the school's design.

Below outlines our recruitment plan for the leaders and staff who will be hired for Year 0 and Year 1 of the school's operation.

Operational Staff and Administrators. The Executive Director, Director of Operations, Director of Development, and Principal will be formally hired upon approval of our application, employed as FTEs for the entirety of the pre-opening year. The Attendance Liaison will be hired in January 2026, and the Student Supports Coordinator will be hired in April 2026. Below outlines the specific recruitment and hiring timeline for these two positions:

Task	Owner(s)	Compensation	Timeline
Launch hiring process for Attendance Liaison	Executive Director	Salary	10/1/2025 – 12/31/2025
	Director of Ops	Salary	
Target start date for Attendance Liaison	N/A	N/A	1/2/2026
Launch hiring process for Student Supports Coordinator	Executive Director	Salary	1/2/2026 – 3/31/2026
	Principal	Salary	
Target start date for Student Supports Coordinator	N/A	N/A	4/1/2026

Attendance Liaison. This person will possess the below skills and qualifications. While the Executive Director holds the ultimate authority over hiring, the Director of Operations will serve as the hiring manager.

- High school diploma or GED; previous office experience preferred
- Alignment and commitment to The Rock Academy's mission and vision
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills, capable of building positive relationships with students, staff, and parents
- Excellent organizational skills and the ability to manage time efficiently
- Ability to multitask effectively in a fast-paced environment
- Proficient in basic computer skills and knowledge
- Ability to maintain a professional and friendly demeanor

Student Supports Coordinator. This leader will possess the below skills and qualifications. While the Executive Director holds the ultimate authority over hiring, the Principal will serve as the hiring manager.

- Bachelor's degree required, master's degree in special education, social work, counseling, or a related field preferred

[98] https://team-tn.org/administrator-evaluation/

- Special education certification required
- Minimum of 4 years of teaching experience
- Alignment and commitment to The Rock Academy's mission and vision
- Experience leading or participating in student support teams (SSTs) preferred
- Strong background in academic and behavioral interventions
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Proficiency with technology tools (Microsoft Office, Google Suite, virtual platforms)
- Strong organizational skills with the ability to manage multiple tasks effectively
- Commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all students
- Experience with intervention-focused coursework or training preferred

Teachers and Mentors. Teachers and mentors will have a start date of July 6, 2026. Below outlines the specific recruitment and hiring timeline for these two roles, grouped together as staff:

Task	Owner(s)	Compensation	Timeline
Launch hiring process for school staff	Executive Director	Salary	1/2/2026 – 6/30/2026
	Principal	Salary	
Target start date for staff	N/A	N/A	7/6/2026

General Education Teachers. These teachers will possess the below skills and qualifications. While the Executive Director holds the ultimate authority over hiring, the Principal will serve as the hiring manager for general education teachers employed in Year 1.

- Bachelor's degree in education or a related field,
- Teaching certification required
- Certification in ESL strongly preferred
- Alignment and commitment to The Rock Academy's mission and vision
- Proven experience in lesson planning, classroom instruction, and student assessment
- Strong understanding of high school curriculum standards, including English, mathematics, science, social studies, and CTE pathways
- Excellent organizational, communication, and interpersonal skills
- Ability to create an engaging, inclusive, and safe classroom environment
- Proficiency in using technology and educational tools to enhance teaching and learning
- Familiarity with state testing protocols and requirements
- Demonstrated ability to work with diverse student populations and address varying learning needs

CTE Teachers. These teachers will possess the below skills and qualifications. While the Executive Director holds the ultimate authority over hiring, the Principal will serve as the hiring manager for CTE teachers employed in Year 1.

- Possession of a valid teaching license, including a CTE endorsement required
- Proven experience in Career and Technical Education (CTE) or related workforce development fields
- Alignment and commitment to The Rock Academy's mission and vision
- Comprehensive knowledge of curriculum standards and instructional strategies for high school students, particularly in grades 9-12
- Skilled in incorporating practical industry knowledge into engaging and relevant classroom instruction
- Exceptional organizational abilities, coupled with strong communication and relationship-building skills
- Commitment to fostering a positive, inclusive, and student-centered learning atmosphere
- Proficiency in a specialized trade or technical area, with hands-on industry expertise
- Demonstrated capability to manage instructional labs, prioritize safety protocols, and provide hands-on training
- Familiarity with and ability to utilize industry-standard tools, equipment, and software effectively
- Effective instructional delivery methods that inspire student interest and support career readiness
- Passion for equipping students with skills for success in careers, post-secondary education, and life
- Ability to build relationships with parents, students, and community partners

Special Education Teachers. These teachers will possess the below skills and qualifications. While the Executive Director holds the ultimate authority over hiring, the Principal will serve as the hiring manager until the Student Supports Coordinator is hired in April during the pre-opening year.

- Bachelor's degree in education or a related field; bachelor's degree as in special education preferred
- Certification in special education required
- Alignment and commitment to The Rock Academy's mission and vision
- Experience in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and designing and delivering aligned student-based learning experiences
- Knowledgeable of all federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to the education of students with disabilities and the special education services that would benefit them
- Self-starter who is detail oriented
- Meticulous attention to data collection and data analysis to drive decision making
- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with students, staff, families, advocates, and the community
- Remains current regarding changes and developments in the profession by attending professional meetings, reading professional journals and other publications, and discussing problems of mutual interest with others in the field to ensure quality leadership

ESL Teachers. These teachers will possess the below skills and qualifications. While the Executive Director holds the ultimate authority over hiring, the Principal will serve as the hiring manager until the Student Supports Coordinator is hired in April during the pre-opening year.

- Bachelor's degree in education or a related field, bachelor's degree as a Teacher of English Learners preferred
- Certification in ESL required
- Alignment and commitment to The Rock Academy's mission and vision
- Experience in developing Individual Learning Programs (ILPs) and designing and delivering aligned student-based learning experiences
- Knowledgeable of all federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to the education of ELs and the services that would benefit them
- Self-starter who is detail oriented
- Meticulous attention to data collection and data analysis to drive decision making
- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with students, staff, families, advocates, and the community
- Remains current regarding changes and developments in the profession by attending professional meetings, reading professional journals and other publications, and discussing problems of mutual interest with others in the field to ensure quality leadership

Interventionist. This teacher will possess the below skills and qualifications. While the Executive Director holds the ultimate authority over hiring, the Principal will serve as the hiring manager until the Student Supports Coordinator is hired in April during the pre-opening year.

- Bachelor's degree in education or a related field required; bachelor's degree as in special education preferred
- Certification in special education required
- Alignment and commitment to The Rock Academy's mission and vision
- Experience in delivering evidence-based interventions
- Experience in developing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and designing and delivering aligned student-based learning experiences
- Knowledgeable of all federal, state, and local laws and regulations pertaining to the education of students with disabilities and the special education services that would benefit them
- Self-starter who is detail oriented
- Meticulous attention to data collection and data analysis to drive decision making
- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with students, staff, families, advocates, and the community
- Remains current regarding changes and developments in the profession by attending professional meetings, reading professional journals and other publications, and discussing problems of mutual interest with others in the field to ensure quality leadership

Mentors. Mentors will possess the below skills and qualifications. The Executive Director will serve as the hiring manager for mentors hired for Year 1.

- Demonstrate alignment and commitment to The Rock Academy's mission and vision
- Passion for working with youth, especially those from underserved or at-risk backgrounds
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to build trust and maintain confidentiality
- Possess skill in empathy and active listening
- Experience with conflict resolution and demonstrated problem-solving abilities
- Possess cultural competence and sensitive to diverse backgrounds
- Experience in mentoring, counseling, education, or related fields is preferred
- Meets requirements to be a paraprofessional
- Bachelor's degree in education, social work, psychology, or a related field preferred but not required

Recruitment Plan. As soon as our application is approved, we will formally launch recruitment efforts. As noted above, upon approval of our application, we will officially hire our lead candidate for Executive Director and will also hire the Director of Operations and Principal – all three of which will be FTEs during the entirety of the pre-opening year so that they are able to execute critical pre-opening tasks, including hiring and HR functions. We will also hire the Attendance Liaison and Student Supports Coordinator during the pre-opening year, with the Attendance Liaison starting in January 2026 and the Student Supports Coordinator starting in April 2026. As explained in the **Professional Development** section, we are prioritizing mission alignment as we can bridge skill gaps specific to our innovative and unique model but cannot expend the time or resources attempting to shift mindset. Below outlines how we will recruit and hire Year 1 teachers and mentors as all other staff will be hired for the pre-opening year:

Recruitment Strategy	Description
Highlight Our Mission and Model	• We will prominently feature our unique mission and innovative model across all of our recruitment strategies • The opportunity to work in the first-of-its-kind charter school in TN will be an impactful recruitment technique
Leverage Employment Platforms	• We will leverage the services and reach of multiple employment platforms that are highly regarded for identifying high-quality candidates • Among the platforms we anticipate using are LinkedIn, Indeed, and Get Selected
Advertise on Social Media	• We will advertise vacancies on our multiple social media platforms • We will also ask our partners to post on their platforms to ensure that we reach as wide an audience as possible.
Leverage Partnerships	• Described in detail in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** and **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** sections, we have established an array of partnerships with organizations, agencies, and leaders across the city

	● In addition to leveraging these partnerships for student recruitment, they will also help with staff recruitment, particularly for mentors ● These partnerships not only connect us to the families and students we seek to serve, but also to the providers of resources and services to our population ● As such, they will serve as a valuable recruitment arm, also connecting us to prospective staff
Employ Professional and Personal Pipelines	● In additional to the above strategies, we will look to the established professional and personal pipelines of the Board, Executive Director, Director of Operations, Director of Development, Principal, Student Supports Coordinator, and Attendance Liaison to support with Year 1 hiring

Hiring Process. Once we have identified candidates through the mechanisms described above, we will implement the following hiring process, which is anchored is assessing the following four questions:

1. **Does the candidate demonstrate strong alignment to our mission and commitment to serving Opportunity Youth?**
2. **Does the candidate demonstrate a growth mindset and eagerness to accept feedback and continually learn?**
3. **Does the candidate demonstrate a commitment to personal responsibility and the ability to take initiative.**
4. **Does the candidate demonstrate proficiency in the ability to create strong relationships, collaborate with others, and foster safe learning environments.**

To arrive at the answers to the above questions, we will implement the following process:

Process Component	Description
Application	● Candidates will be required to submit an application and resume ● In addition to personal and professional information, the application will include questions to screen for mission alignment and mindset
Virtual Interview	● Candidates whose applications meet the minimal requirements and demonstrate mission alignment and growth mindset will be invited to participate in a short virtual interview ● The virtual interview will be conducted by the relevant hiring manager and will be used an additional layer of screening
In-Person Interview	● Candidates whose performance was sufficient during the virtual interview will move to an in-person interview ● The relevant hiring manager will conduct the interview, with questions tailored to the role and designed to further vet mission alignment and mindset ● Answers to questions will be evaluated using a pre-developed rubric

Performance Task	● As part of the in-person interview, candidates will complete a performance task relevant to the responsibilities of their role ● Performance tasks will be designed to evaluate proficiency in the most critical skills needed to execute the role being applied for ● Performance tasks will be evaluated using a pre-developed rubric
References	● References will be checked for those who emerge as lead candidates
Employment Offer	● The identified lead candidate for the role will receive an employment offer (contingent on completion of background checks as required by applicable law)

e. Describe how recruiting and hiring practices will ensure that the school's leadership team and staff reflect the diversity of the student body and surrounding community.

We understand the importance of ensuring the school's leadership team and staff reflect the diversity of the student body and community we serve. As noted throughout, we will serve Opportunity Youth, the vast majority of whom identify as people of color. Our lead candidate for Executive Director and identified Director of Operations – both of whom will be officially hired upon approval of our application – are Black. To ensure that the rest of our leadership team and staff mirror the diversity of our students, we will employ the above recruitment strategies. Given the varied approaches of these strategies, they will work in tandem to cast both wide and narrow nets, better ensuring that we attract candidates who look like our students. To expound, we will advertise positions on social media and through employment platforms – both of which cast wide. We will also leverage the extensive partnerships that we have established with the agencies and organizations that serve our specific student population and their families. This narrower recruitment channel will connect us to candidates who very likely already are experienced with working with our community of students and families and, as such, are more likely to mirror their diversity. Similarly, we will look to leverage Board members' and identified school leaders' personal and professional pipelines, which will also serve to connect us to diverse candidates. Additionally, as noted throughout, we are prioritizing mission and mindset alignment in our hiring and have planned (as outlined in the **Professional Development** section) for the fact that staff will come to us with skill gaps specific to our very innovative and unique model. To this end, we have created our job descriptions and hiring process with inclusion and diversity in mind.

f. Explain how the school will ensure teachers are licensed and endorsed in their content areas, as required in SBE Rule 0520-02-03-.01, and identify the staff member responsible for overseeing licensure compliance.

To effectively serve our students and to achieve our mission, we will need highly qualified teachers who are appropriately credentialed. As outlined above, while we are prioritizing mission alignment and mindset, we have established required qualifications for teachers – namely, an active teaching license. This required will be explicitly communicated throughout all components of the hiring process, from the application phase to the offer of employment. Upon receiving an offer, teachers will be required to submit proof of licensure, with failure to do so resulting in the offer being rescinded. The Director of Operations will be tasked with verifying licensure and maintaining licensure records as required by the TDOE.

g. Describe the policies and procedures for staff evaluation and providing feedback and identify the school's state-approved evaluation model for teachers, as required by SBE Rule 0520-02-01 and State Board Policy 5.201.

Staff Evaluation. We will utilize TEAM as our evaluation model for teachers; this model is state-approved and adheres to Board Rule 0520-02-01 and Policy 5.201. We will implement TEAM with fidelity, including complying with the evaluation procedures and timeline as defined by the state.

Feedback to Staff. As explained in detail in the **Professional Development** section, we will provide robust coaching to all teachers, which will serve as the primary mechanism for providing targeted, individualized feedback. Specifically, our approach to coaching involves the following:

- Developmental walkthrough tools aligned in instruction, culture, and operations, as well as aligned to arcs of the year will be leveraged to conduct weekly teacher observations
- Teachers will engage in weekly coaching focused on their walkthrough and performance data
- Coaches will leverage Behavior Skills Training (BST) coaching – an evidence-based coaching structure rooted in behavior science
- A cycle of BST includes instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback
- Teachers will receive targeted development and feedback during common collaborative time to ensure that they are receiving are needed support to implement our academic plan and effectively serve all students, including those with disabilities and who are ELs

h. Explain the school's strategy to retain high-performing teachers. Outline the school's proposed salary ranges, employment benefits, and any incentive structures. Compare the salary ranges to the resident district and explain how they are sufficient to recruit teachers.

As explained throughout this application, we will be the very first Opportunity School in TN. We are also driven by a compelling mission to reengage disconnected youth. To do this, we will implement a highly innovative, unique academic model. Further, we will provide our teachers with extensive professional development and support, allowing them to refine their practice and learn new techniques. We will also provide a highly supportive professional culture that prioritizes belonging and well-being for our staff – all of which makes working at our school very attractive to teaching professionals.

Additionally, as outlined in detail in **Attachment X**, we will offer competitive salaries. Specifically, we have budgeted for a starting salary of $64K for our general education teachers and $65K for our specialized teachers, well exceeding MNPS' starting salary of ~$52K.[99] We will also provide a generous benefit package to our employees, offering comprehensive health insurance, as well as life insurance and retirement contributions.

Taken together, our compelling mission, opportunity to work in the first-of-its-kind school, innovative model, robust professional development support, highly supportive professional culture, and competitive salaries and benefits will ensure that we are attractive and able to recruit the teachers we need to be successful.

[99] https://k12mnps-my.sharepoint.com/personal/mnpsoa_mnps_org/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?ga=1&id=%2Fpersonal%2Fmnpsoa%5Fmnps%5Forg%2FDocuments%2FMNPSWebContent%2FDivisions%2FHuman%20Resources%2FSalary%20Schedules%202024%2FCertificated%20Salary%2FCertificated%20Salary%20Schedule%201%20Days%202024%2D25%2Epdf&parent=%2Fpersonal%2Fmnpsoa%5Fmnps%5Forg%2FDocuments%2FMNPSWebContent%2FDivisions%2FHuman%20Resources%2FSalary%20Schedules%202024%2FCertificated%20Salary

i. Complete Table 5: Staffing FTE27 Counts with staffing projections. Modify or include additional positions to accommodate different school models.

See the table below.

Table 5: Staffing FTE Counts (Required for All Sponsors)

NOTE: All positions are not required and/or may not apply to a charter school.	Year of Operation					
Position	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Executive Director	1	1	1	1	1	1
Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1
Director of Operations	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student Supports Coordinator	.25	1	1	1	1	1
Culture Dean	-	-	-	1	1	1
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	-	-	-	1	1	1
Attendance Liaison	.5	1	1	1	1	1
Mentors (Paraprofessionals)	-	4	8	11	14	14
Director of Development	1	1	1	1	1	1
Classroom Teachers (core subjects)	-	3	6	8	9	9
PE Teacher	-	1	1	1	1	1
Special Education Teachers	-	1	1	2	3	3
English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers	-	1	2	2	3	3
CTE Teachers	-	1	1	2	2	2
Interventionist	-	1	1	1	1	1
Total FTEs	4.75	18	26	35	41	41

Section 2.5 - Professional Development (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Describe the expected number of days and hours for professional development throughout the school year and explain how the proposed school's calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure support this plan. Include time scheduled for collaborative planning and how such time will typically be used.

Faculty and staff at any school need and deserve ongoing support and development. School work is learning work - and time and resources need to be allocated to do that learning work. This is especially true for Rock Academy. As a first of its kind school, the work we're doing will be, to some extent, new for everyone. While we will seek to hire staff who have experience working with Opportunity Youth, there is not currently a school in Nashville that combines all the elements outlined above. As such, we know that we must invest time, money, and staffing to ensure that the faculty and staff have the support they need to learn, successfully execute, and continue to help us refine the model in pursuit of our mission.

Expected Number of Days and Hours for Professional Development (PD)			
	Days	**Hours**	**Total Hours**
Summer Inservice	21	8/day	168
Professional Development Days	10	8/day	80
Collaborative Planning	175	1/day	175
		TOTAL HOURS	**423**

PD Plan Support. As outlined in **Attachment A**, we have built 21 days into the calendar for summer inservice, with the inservice launching for all staff on July 6, 2026, and concluding on August 3, 2026. After our first year of operation, summer inservice will continue to span 21 days in perpetuity for both returning staff and those new to the school. Also as documented in **Attachment A**, we have embedded a total of 10 PD days throughout the course of the school year. As noted in **Attachment B**, as part of our commitment to relevance, school will not start for students until 9:30, which enables us to build common time for collaborative planning into the daily schedule from 8:00-9:00 every morning. As outlined in the **Personnel/Human Capital** section, we will employ a robust leadership team consisting of an Executive Director, Director of Operations, Principal, and Student Supports Coordinator – all of whom will be hired during the pre-opening year. While the Principal will ultimately oversee teaching and learning and will own PD (until the Director of Curriculum and Instruction is hired in Year 3), all members of the leadership team will contribute to PD – below provides a top-level summary of the PD topics to which each leader will contribute:

Executive Director	Director of Operations	Principal	Student Supports Coordinator
• Mission, Vision, Goals • School Culture • Core Values • Behavior and Discipline • Systems and Routines	• Policies and Procedures • Arrival and Dismissal • IT, Data, and HR • Safety	• Mastery-Based Learning • Curriculum and Assessment • Lesson Planning and Internalization	• RtI • Strategies for Serving Special Populations • IEPs • ILPs • 504 Plans • Child Find

b. Describe the core components of a professional development plan and detail how those components will support effective implementation of the academic plan. Address the areas of special education and English learners, including implementation of individualized educational plans (IEPs) and individualized learning plans (ILPs), discipline of students with disabilities, and communication with EL families.

As outlined in the **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** section, we conducted extensive research to understand the root causes of chronic absenteeism and to understand the needs of Opportunity Youth, including visiting peer schools in other states that serve a similar population. What we definitively learned is every cohort of students who come to our school will enroll with different needs than the previous cohort. In short, we learned that no year will be the same. To that end, we have planned for, rather than around, this inevitability, anchoring our academic plan in our core commitment to flexibility so that our ability to pivot to meet our students' ever-changing needs is baked into our plan.

Additionally, working in complement to our commitment to flexibility, we are committed to being a learning organization. To this end, we know that collectively, we all must always be learning, regardless of experience or tenure given that no year will be the same and no group of students will be the same. We must also commit to being a learning organization given the specialized, innovative nature of our model specifically designed for Opportunity Youth. As such, we know that our staff will come to us with skill gaps related to our academic plan. We have designed our PD plan with this in mind, knowing that they will need (and deserve) robust and responsive training and support. Further, our teachers and mentors will be the closest to the students we serve, so we must give them the time and resources they need, including access to data, to customize the support they provide to students.

With the above at core of our approach to PD, we will center PD around three core strands:

1. Instruction [100]
2. Culture and Discipline
3. Operations

These strands will be articulated by an Arc of the Year approach, which is anchored in the premise that, for big results, we start small. To this end, we think about the year in bite-sized arcs that largely follow the developmental arc of students and curricular focus as it unfolds throughout the year. Schoolwide arcs will generally be paced as follows:

- Quarter 1 – Strong Start Arc: Establish the conditions for learning
- Quarter 2 – Shift to Rigor Arc: Identify, understand, and address learning gaps quickly
- Quarter 3 – Respond to Data Arc: Increase students' grappling with challenging tasks and texts
- Quarter 4 – Transition Arc: Build stamina, reflect on progress, and set goals for transitions

Teacher needs, student needs, and individual curriculum demands will inform the specific foci of each arc, and, while arcs are being built, school leaders will take care to consider the following:

- Defining the area of focus within the arc, including providing clear definitions of success and aligned artifacts such as videos, student work samples, and rubrics for reference
- Setting measurable goals for school leaders, teachers, and students to achieve within the arc
- Creating aligned developmental experiences, including time to step back, reflect, and adjust

[100] The instruction strand includes serving special populations of students and responding to data

- Planning for the rollout, including establishing a clear throughline to the longer-term vision and goals

We will implement four core PD structures to enable execution of the components described above, support implementation of our academic plan, and ensure that we effectively serve our special populations of students.

PD Structure	Description
Summer Inservice	● As noted above, we will provide 21 days of summer inservice prior to opening our doors to students ● Summer inservice will serve as the kickoff of the three PD strands: Instruction, Culture and Discipline, and Operations ● Given that our academic plan is anchored in our commitments of belonging, relevance, and flexibility, which include aspects from all three PD strands, summer inservice will provide the foundational knowledge needed to initially implement our academic plan ● Embedded within the Instruction strand is content related to serving special populations of students, including students with disabilities and ELs ● Content related to implementation of IEPs and ILPs will be covered, as well as discipline for students with disabilities and communication with EL families ● After our first year of operation, we will continue provide 21 days of summer inservice to both returning and new staff in perpetuity ● After our first year of operation, specific sessions held and content covered during summer inservice will be informed by the previous year's data and identified trends, as well as the identified needs of incoming staff and students
PD Days	● We have embedded 10 full PD days in our annual calendar ● Full PD days extend the initial learnings of summer inservice, allowing us to go into deeper detail into topics related to the three strands and anchored in the arc cycles described above ● The three strands are anchored in the components of our academic plan, the crux of which center on our core commitments to belonging, relevance, and flexibility ● Embedded within PD days and the instruction strand is the ongoing focus of supporting students with disabilities and who are ELs ● We will continually revisit and expand upon prior learnings about serving these special populations of students, including focusing on IEP and ILP implementation, discipline, and communication with families ● We will also use this time to step back on quarterly data trends, adjust practice, and plan for conferences
Collaborative Planning	● As noted above, we have built daily common collaborative time in our schedule – every morning, teachers have a full hour of such time ● As outlined in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, our academic plan depends on teachers and mentors constantly and

	consistently monitoring student progress, so providing them with ample time to analyze and discuss data is crucial to the success of our model ● As such, biweekly, teachers will use this time to meet as a grade level team to review individual, grade level, and content-specific data trends and plan for support ● Notably, by scheduling this time commonly across the school, special educators and ESL teachers will be a part of all collaborative meetings ● Additionally, as noted throughout, our academic plan is complex, and staff will need training and support to implement it ● Daily common time also affords teachers the opportunity to share challenges, learnings, and solutions, as well as collaboratively plan ● Additionally, on a biweekly basis, staff will receive targeted development during this time based on the three strands and informed by ongoing coaching and walk through trends to further support development of their practice in alignment with our complex plan
Coaching	● Developmental walkthrough tools aligned in instruction, culture, and operations, as well as aligned to arcs of the year will be leveraged to conduct weekly teacher observations ● Teachers will engage in weekly coaching focused on their walkthrough and performance data ● Coaches will leverage Behavior Skills Training (BST) coaching – an evidence-based coaching structure rooted in behavior science ● A cycle of BST includes instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback ● As noted above, teachers will receive targeted development during common collaborative time to ensure that they are receiving are needed support to implement our academic plan and effectively serve all students, including those with disabilities and who are ELs ● Walkthrough tools will also be used during biweekly whole school walkthroughs conducted by the leadership team ● The results of whole school walkthroughs will inform full PD day offerings, as well as the targeted development provided during common collaborative time ● These trends will also be used to inform future cycles of summer inservice

c. Provide an overview of professional development (PD) that will take place prior to and during the first year of operation. Detail how the school's leadership will determine needed PD.

As indicated throughout, we will provide 21 days of summer inservice prior to opening our doors to students. After our first year of operation, summer inservice will continue to span 21 days and the specific sessions held and content covered during subsequent summer inservice will be informed by the previous year's data and identified trends, as well as the identified needs of incoming staff and students. During every summer inservice, content will be differentiated by role and needs. All staff, from teachers to mentors will fully participate in summer inservice.

To expound on mentor participation – as explained in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, mentors are integral to the implementation of our academic plan and success of our students. They are the foundation from which we will realize our core commitment of belonging as they will be students' primary person. As such, chief among their responsibilities is forming trusting, positive relationships with their cohort of students. Mentors are also pivotal to our core commitments of relevance and flexibility as they will follow their students throughout the day, deliver both proactive and reactive SEL and behavioral support, will be responsible for teaching SEL lessons during weekly extended House periods, and will ensure that students are connected to the resources and supports they need, among other duties. To this end, like teachers, mentors will participate in academically and instructionally focused sessions to ensure that they are provided with the training and support they need.

Below outlines the key topics that we will cover during our initial 21-day summer inservice:

- Overarching
    - Teambuilding
    - Mission and Vision
- Curriculum and Instruction
    - Instructional Framework: Modern Classrooms and Mastery Based Instruction [101]
    - Curriculum Deep Dives, Internalization and Planning (differentiated by content)
    - Mastery Based Grading
    - Ongoing Coaching and Collaboration Structures
    - Independent Planning Time
- Special Populations Support
    - Introduction to Implementing RTI2 and Supporting Diverse Learners
    - Special Education, 504, and ESL Services Overview
    - Legal Protections for Students
- Culture and Discipline:
    - Restorative Practices
    - SEL Curriculum
    - Intercultural Competence
    - Trauma Informed Practices and Universal Design for Learning
    - Building Relationships with Students and their Support Systems - including communication with EL families
    - De-escalation Strategies
- Operations
    - Safety and Emergency Response Training
    - School Systems, Policies and Expectations

[101] We have an MOU with The Modern Classrooms Project; they will provide ongoing training and support

- PowerSchool

- First Week Preparations
  - Student Orientation Preparation
  - Building Walkthroughs and Practice

d. Describe how faculty and staff who are hired mid-year will receive orientation training relative to the charter school's academic plan.

As explained throughout, we have designed an innovative and unique academic plan in alignment with research-based best practices and the findings of the research that we conducted over the past two years. To this end, our model is complex – as it should be to effectively serve Opportunity Youth. We understand that care must be taken to support staff who are newly hired after the start of school to ensure that that are properly onboarded and set up for success. As noted throughout, we are prioritizing mindset and mission alignment and fully expect that our staff will come to us with skills gaps related to our academic plan, which, again, is innovative and complex. In other words, just like our students, we know that staff will come to us in a variety of places in their practice and with a variety of professional development needs. As such, a comprehensive and individualized onboarding plan will be developed for all new staff. Minimally, this will include a period of 4-5 days of shadowing, development, and coaching that addresses previously covered content that was missed due to the timing of their hire. Once embedded in their role, new staff will be paired with a staff mentor and engage in increased coaching and debriefs to ensure a successful launch in their role.

e. Describe the plan to provide professional development for school leadership. Detail how the plan will ensure that current and future leadership will have access to the knowledge needed to effectively manage and lead the school.

As explained in the **Personnel/Human Capital** section, the bulk of the school leadership will be hired during the pre-opening year, including the Executive Director, Director of Operations, Principal, and Student Supports Coordinator. To this end, they will receive development and support as they progress through the pre-opening year through contracted support from Nashville Incubator and through established relationships with peer schools that operate in different states.

As detailed in the **Personnel/Human Capital** section, the lead candidate for Executive Director will continue to receive development support from the Incubator Fellowship in which he is currently an active Fellow. He is also enrolled in the Modern Classrooms Leadership Coaching cohort and will receive coaching from the New Schools Venture Fund – all of which will ensure that he receives targeted support related to implementing our complex academic plan and leading the first Opportunity School in the state of TN. As explained below, the Executive Director will draw on these arms of coaching when providing targeted support to his direct reports.

In June, the leadership team will engage in five days of targeted development to prepare for summer inservice and for the start of school, which will be led by the Executive Director. Additionally, throughout the year, the Executive Director will provide individualized support and training to the Director of Operations and Principal. The Student Supports Coordinator will receive targeted support from the Principal. In Year 3, we will hire a Director of Curriculum and Instruction and a Culture Dean, both of whom will receive development support from the Principal. The leadership will also be continually developed by leading and participating in the professional development structures described above, including stepback processes. As described in the **School Mission and Goals** section, at the end of each school year, the Leadership Team will convene to complete a holistic data stepback: reviewing areas of growth, areas in need of improvement, and key drivers of success. During this stepback, the leadership team will consider an array of data points, all of which will be disaggregated by individual, cohort and subgroup trends. Additionally, all members of the leadership team will have access to

external PD opportunities. As outlined in **Attachment W**, we have budgeted specifically for PD to ensure that we earmarked funds to address any PD needs as they arise.

As described above, we will provide ongoing, robust professional development to our teachers, including coaching that will be individualized according to each teacher's strengths and areas of growth. Coaching will be used in tandem with our other development structures to cultivate future leadership capacity. More specifically, teachers identified as having potential leadership skills and interest will receive individualized coaching and support to build their capacity. Like school leaders, teachers will also have access to external development opportunities as well, for which we have budgeted. Taken together, our robust development plans for current and future leaders builds and protects institutional knowledge, as well as ensures that we are cultivating a pipeline of future leaders from within.

Section 2.6 – Transportation (Required for All Sponsors)

a. Describe the plan to provide daily transportation to students, if applicable.

b. Describe the plan to provide applicable transportation services related to extracurricular activities, field trips, summer camps, post-secondary visits, work-based learning etc. Detail the budgetary impact and assumptions related to transportation services.

c. Describe the plan to provide transportation to students whose individualized education plan (IEP) requires transportation to ensure the student receives a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) pursuant to 34 CFR §300.34(c).

d. Describe how the transportation vendor will be selected or, in the alternative, how the proposed school will provide transportation.

e. Detail whether the proposed school will provide its own transportation services, contract out for transportation, request that a district provide transportation, or a combination thereof. Describe the plan to provide oversight of transportation services and identify who on the school's staff will provide this daily oversight.

f. Explain how the proposed school will ensure compliance with all federal and state transportation laws and regulations, including, but not limited to, T.C.A. § 49-6-2101 - 2119 and SBE Rule 0520-01-05.

As outlined throughout this application - every stakeholder we have engaged with has named transportation as one of the primary impediments to sustained attendance. As a school focused on reengaging disconnected youth, robust transportation is critical to our commitments to belonging and flexibility in particular. More specifically, students who feel like school is inaccessible to them as a result of transportation barriers will never develop a sense of belonging. Furthermore, knowing our student population is managing various complexities such as housing instability, the impacts of poverty, and inconsistent access to personal transportation, our approach to transportation must be intentionally robust and flexible.

We are committed to working with families to remove this barrier, in part by making transportation available to all families. Through a partnership with a private transportation provider, we will provide daily bus routes for arrival and dismissal, transportation on field trips, transportation to and from CTE sites, and participation in as many after-school activities as is feasible. This is in stark contrast to other choice options that provide no free transportation, only provide limited routes, or only provide access to city bus routes which are often prohibitively infrequent or unreliable. Additionally, it is worth noting that our later start and end times provide additional flexibility for more responsive transportation.

Our budget reflects an assumption that 90% of our students will use transportation each year at an estimated $85,000 per bus, with two buses being assumed for Y1 of operation when we will serve 88 total students. This cost estimate is based on local market research on private transport companies. We also have budgeted an additional $25,000 per school year should any students need special transportation and $50,000 per cohort for transportation to and from CTE sites. All amounts and projections are reflected in our budget.

We will select a transportation contractor that has the capability to provide services to students with disabilities (for students who have special transportation as part of their IEP) and has assumed the cost of these services within the overall assumptions presented above. If there are more students who need transportation services than we have estimated above, we will adjust our budget and resources and provide transportation for those students.

Our transportation routes will be determined after receiving information regarding transportation needs from families. We will collaborate with community organizations and families to create routes that result in minimal

time spent on the bus and ease for families. We have also begun conversations with bus vendors about leveraging the use of smaller Type-A buses that would allow us to run more, shorter bus routes to a geographically disparate student population.

We will abide by state and federal regulations pertaining to transportation and will work with the selected bus vendor to ensure compliance, especially as it pertains to the McKinney Vento-Homeless Assistance Act. This federal act ensures students who are experiencing homelessness or are temporarily displaced receive transportation services, even if they are temporarily residing outside of the general boundaries where transportation services are provided.

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-6-2116, the Director of Operations will oversee our contract and partnership with our select bus vendor. TRA will work in collaboration with the bus vendor to ensure drivers, monitors, routes, and buses are in compliance with federal and state laws and regulations. Our Director of Operations and Finance will provide the necessary training to ensure compliance. In collaboration with our vendor, the Director of Operations and Finance will create systems to maintain, as applicable, necessary records on bus maintenance, inspections, driver credentials, training records and complaints. All complaints regarding transportation will be submitted to the Director of Operations and Finance (included in our handbook), and families will receive a formal response to the complaint within 48-72 hours.

g. If the school will not provide daily transportation services to and from school, describe how students will get to and from school and how the school will address any transportation barriers for student attendance.

Not applicable; we will provide transportation.

Section 2.7 - Additional Operations (Required for All Sponsors)

State law requires that charter schools have appropriate insurance coverage. Sponsors should check with their district to determine the necessary coverage amounts. As Attachment Q, provide the following:

a. A list of the types and corresponding amounts of insurance coverage the proposed school will secure. Types of insurance should include, at minimum, workers' compensation, employer liability, property, professional liability, surety bonds pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-111(n), and sexual abuse.

b. A letter of coverage from an insurance company stating they will provide the required coverage upon approval of the charter application. The letter should include provisions for assuring that the insurance provider will notify the Tennessee Department of Education within ten (10) days of the cancellation of any insurance it carries on the charter school, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-107(b)(19). Note: if the proposed school intends to have school athletics, additional liability coverage will be required.

See **Attachment Q** for a letter that lists the types and corresponding amounts of coverage that we will secure.

Food Service Plan:

c. Describe the plan to offer food service to the students. Within the proposal, detail how the proposed school will offer food service to students, as well as how the school will comply with applicable district, state, and federal guidelines and regulations related to food services.

d. Describe how the school food service plans meet the needs of low-income students.

e. Describe how the food service vendor will be selected or, in the alternative, how the proposed school will provide meals in-house.

We will provide a nutrition program, in accordance with T.C.A. §§ 49-6-2301—2307. Sample contract provisions and expectations include:

- Maintaining Tennessee Health Department Bi-Annual Inspection with a Passing Score
- Having a HACCP program in place and be able to provide proof of such
- Maintaining Daily Individual Meal Food Production Records
- Maintaining Daily Individual Meal Component Documentation
- Maintaining a "Buy American" Provision
- Maintaining 21-day Monthly Cycle Menus
- Making accommodations for Food Allergies
- Insuring hot meals maintained at 140 degrees or above and cold meals at 40 degrees or below prior to and during transport and delivery
- Providing meals that are individually packaged and sealed.
- All meals will be priced as a unit, which meet USDA requirements
- Any provider shall implement the "Traditional Menu Planning Approach"
- All meals and menus will be appropriate to the age of Encompass students
- The provider substitutes food components for a student with disabilities (7 C.F.R. Section 15b) if their disability restricts their diet.

Our food service vendor will be selected by our food service team, in collaboration with the Executive Director. We will seek bids from local food service providers and will seek a comparison of contracts between providers by reviewing per meal as well as a reimbursable meal including milk, condiments applicable to the menu, serving utensils if applicable, packaging and containers needed to transport food in a sanitary manner, and transportation to and from the school. Any vendor must submit milk in a variety of fat contents as defined by current regulations of the National School Lunch Program. We have accounted for the delivery of meals in our facilities planning. We will work with our selected vendor to ensure we have the proper equipment necessary to deliver meals in a sanitary manner.

Our proposed community has a high percentage of low-income students. Therefore, it is essential that we have a plan to support food services to meet the needs of students identified as low-income. This first begins with accurate collection, reporting, and maintenance of free and reduced-price lunch information. These efforts will be led by our Director of Operations. This process will begin at the onset of enrollment. We will provide ongoing support regarding related forms, and ensure that all families are able to complete them.

Our food service team will include the Director of Operations, Attendance Liaison and Executive Director. Together, this team will work to explore options for food services that provide both breakfast and lunch to students. Additionally, the food service team will explore potential partnerships with community organizations to provide access to food services for families during non-school hours.

Technology:

f. List the technology required to meet the academic and operational needs of the proposed school.

g. List technology needed for classrooms, computer and science labs, library/media center, auditorium, main office, copy rooms, teacher work rooms, and other relevant spaces.

As explained in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, we will implement a mastery-based approach to learning, specifically implementing the Modern Classrooms Project's approach to this model of learning. As such, all students will have one-to-one Chromebook or similar device access. Additionally, teachers and mentors will be provided with laptops and document cameras so that they can execute their professional responsibilities. To ensure the smooth and safe operation of our school, we will also have phone and camera systems installed.

Additional specific technological needs for classrooms and other instructional spaces such as science labs will be determined during the pre-opening year and subsequent years of operation. The main office and teacher workrooms will be equipped with printers and copiers, and other staff who require computers to execute their job responsibilities will be issued one. As indicated, we know that the school's technological needs will evolve with operation, and we have budgeted accordingly.

As accounted for in our budget, we will partner and contract with a vendor to oversee IT services, repairs and maintenance.

h. Describe how the proposed school will ensure student access to the technology required for state-mandated assessments; include infrastructure requirements and costs in the operating budget template and narrative.

We will follow the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) Test Administration for Computer-Based [102] testing requirements and work in collaboration with our IT vendor to ensure compliance. Using the Test Administrator's Checklist provided by the TDOE. Below details guidance from Spring 2024. We will utilize

[102] Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP). (2024). Test Administration Manual (TAM)- Computer-Based Testing https://tn.mypearsonsupport.com/resources/userguide/EOCCBTAM.pdf

the most updated testing procedures. While our preparation will include compliance with all guidelines, we detail below specific guidelines as it pertains to the use of computers for state testing.

- Attending test administrator training session or completing an online administrator training
- Review the Test Administration Manual (TAM)
- Review the non-secure Test-Administrator/Proctor Scripts (TAPS).
- Online administration security protocols
- Training for test administrators on State Test Security Guidelines
- Review of Test Security Manuals
- Verify access to PearsonAccess-next.
- Coordinate with Encompass's IT vendor to ensure all testing devices have the testing platform application installed.
- Confirm all students are scheduled to be tested as in the PearsonAccess-next platform. If a student cannot be found, immediately notify the building testing coordinator (BTC). Students not found in PearsonAccess-next cannot participate in online testing.
- If the TestNav application is not on a testing device, inform the BTC immediately.
- Review and training on Tennessee Comprehensive Accessibility and Accommodations Manual
- School preparation for online testing in testing sessions:
    - Ensure the availability of TestNav Quick Tips for Students (Navigation & Tools) handout
    - Test Administrators monitor student testing.
        - Only PearsonAccessnext should be open on the TA's device.
        - Student progress should be monitored throughout each subpart.
    - Student preparation
        - Test Administrators are not allowed to assist students with TestNav functionality and navigation during online testing. Discuss accessibility and accommodations tools with students prior to testing to explain the materials or types of assistance available to them during the assessment. Students may use the Quick Tips for Tools in TestNav handout. This resource is also available on LiveBinders, in the TAPS appendix, and from the BTC
    - Student Materials
        - Students may have only the following materials at their workspace during testing for computer-based materials.
        - Testing device that meets the minimum technology specifications (Chromebooks)
        - Student Testing Ticket – provides the username and password needed to sign into TestNav.
        - Materials necessary for the administration of accommodations or accessibility features.
        - Headphones for students using text-to-speech.
        - Scratch paper and two No. 2 pencils.

- Reference sheets for Mathematics and Science assessments: If not printed, reference materials are available to students through the Exhibits tab in TestNav.
- One handheld calculator that meets allowable requirements as detailed in Handheld Calculator Types.

- After testing sessions
  - Ensure that all students have properly exited and signed out of TestNav.

All costs described in this section are reflected in our projected budget.

School health and nursing services:

i. Describe the plan for compliance with the Coordinated School Health Program, including any plans to hire or contract with a school nurse.

Coordinated School Health Program	
Component	**Description**
Health Education	Our academic plan prioritizes providing health education to our students; specifically, students will take physical education (PE) classes three times a year, every year that they are enrolled in our school. Health and wellness education is embedded within PE classes, ensuring that our students receive on-going, sustained instruction around how to lead a healthy lifestyle and learn strategies to foster wellness.
Health Services	We will contract out for a registered nurse, who will be on campus and attend to the medical needs of students and staff as they arise. Additionally, as explained in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, we will provide integrated support systems as part of our commitment to flexibly meeting our students' ever-changing needs. We will have an array of one-stop shop services available onsite, where students will be able to access an array of health services on demand as they need them, which will include access to counseling and mental health support and laundry supplies and appliances. We are also in the process of formalizing partnerships with an array of community organizations, including those that provide health care. To this end, students will have access to a spectrum of health services to ensure that their physical, mental, and social-emotional health needs are consistently and sustainably met.
Nutrition	As noted above, we anticipate contracting with MNPS for food service, which will provide every student with daily access to nutritious breakfast and lunch meals. Also indicated above, students will participate in PE classes each year that they are enrolled in our school – content pertaining to health and wellness will be embedded in PE classes, including instruction related to nutrition.
Physical Education and Activity	As noted throughout, we prioritize PE and activity as part of our commitment to ensuring our academic program meets our students' needs and will require that students take PE classes each year that they are enrolled. We know that the vast majority of our students will be

		economically disadvantaged. As outlined in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** section, research shows that "students from low-income families are more likely to have less opportunity for participation in physical activity." [103] Research also definitively indicates that regular physical activity is critical for healthy development and wellbeing in children, with insufficient activity leading to a range of negative health outcomes like obesity and diabetes in children. [104] Given our students likely have been practicing unhealthy habits and have not been getting enough physical activity, embedding time in the every student's schedule for PE will ensure that they get the exercise they need. Not only will this improve our students' physical health and overall wellness, but research also shows that students who engage in regular physical activity improve their academic performance as it boosts cognitive skills like concentration and attention, as well as improves overall brain function. [105]
	Healthy School Environment	As explained in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards,** we have a core commitment of ensuring that all students feel a strong sense of belonging at our school, which research shows has an array of positive impacts on students' mental and physical health in addition to supporting positive academic and behavioral outcomes, as well as being a key contributor to a positive, healthy school culture. Our commitment to establishing and maintaining a sense of belonging extends to school staff and other stakeholders as well, which will further ensure a healthy school environment. We will also ensure that the physical learning environment is healthy by making sure our school facility is always in good repair, clean, aesthetically appealing, and safe.
	School Counseling, Psychological, and Social Services	As indicated above, we will provide integrated support systems as part of our commitment to flexibly meeting our students' ever-changing needs. To this end, all students will have on-demand access to counselling, psychological support, and social services. Further, explained in detail in the **Academic Focus and Performance Standards** and **Personnel/Human Capital** sections, we will employ mentors as full-time employees of the school. Every student will be assigned a designated mentor, who will loop with their students as they matriculate through the school. Mentors will serve as students' primary people and will provide social-emotional support to students, as well as ensure that they receive all needed services to support their mental and social-emotional health.
	Student, Family, and Community Involvement	Through our core commitments of belonging, relevance, and flexibility, which serve as the key design elements that underpin our academic plan, we will involve students in every facet of our school, including in our efforts to ensure their physical, social-emotional, and mental health. Outlined in the **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** section, we have established an array of partnerships with organizations who

[103] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5667611/#:~:text=However%2C%20certain%20groups%20of%20our,or%20limited%20access%20to%20playgrounds.
[104] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10453900/#:~:text=It%20is%20well%20known%20that,10%2C11%2C12%5D.
[105] https://www.literacyplanet.com/blog/how-physical-activity-affects-school-performance/

	provide supports aimed at ensuring our students, staff, and caregivers are healthy. To this end, like students, caregivers will have access to an array of health-related services.
School Staff Wellness	As noted throughout, ensuring our staff, like our students, feel a strong sense of belonging at the school is a key commitment of ours. As cited above, research demonstrates that feeling a sense of belonging has numerous benefits, including bolstering overall wellness. Additionally, as indicated throughout, we know that our students will come to us with a myriad of individual needs and in distinct places in their academic learning and with varying levels of social-emotional competence. We also know that meeting our students' needs potentially will be taxing on our staff as our students will require intensive and sustained support. To this end, we fully appreciate the importance of ensuring the wellness of our staff and understand the criticality of preventing burnout. Just as we will flexibly respond to our students' needs, we will also be responsive to our staff's needs to ensure their wellness.

j. Identify who at the proposed school will supervise the school nurse and his/her role in ensuring compliance with health regulations.

As noted above, we will contract out for a registered nurse. At the school-level, the nurse will report to the Student Supports Coordinator (hired as a full-time FTE in Y1 of operation), who will be tasked with ensuring compliance with all health regulations in coordination with the contracted agency that provides the nurse.

Safety and security:

k. Describe the plan for ensuring the safety and security of students, staff, guests, and property. Identify the person or position responsible for school safety operations.

l. Describe the process and timeline for creating the school's emergency operations plan.

The Director of Operations will be responsible for school safety operations.

TRA will follow state and district guidelines for school safety and security. Using the available Emergency Operations Plan template, the Executive Director and Director of Operations will create the school's emergency operations plan in collaboration with local emergency response agencies. As noted in the **Start-Up Plan** section, this plan will be finalized and approved by the Board during the preopening year. The final plan will be submitted to all required entities, including MNPS and local public service and law enforcement agencies.

While many specifics are facility-dependent, the plan will, minimally, include the following:

- All faculty and staff members will wear an identification badge at all times while on campus.
- Volunteers and visitors for school activities are welcome and must sign in at the office before going to the classroom and must wear an identification badge when in the building. Visitors must also check out in the office when they leave for the day. Visitors and volunteers will be accompanied by a staff member at all times.
- We will utilize a visitor management system that will conduct instant background checks when individuals enter the premises. This will allow front office staff to assess any potential threat to the safety of our community.

- We will ensure compliance with all guidelines detailed in HB022 as it pertains to security vestibules.
- We will install camera intercom locks at the main entrance of the building. This will ensure that office support staff assess visitors and their purpose for entering the building.
- We will comply with all state laws to ensure appropriate drills are conducted each year. This includes safety drills, armed intruder drills and fire drills. The Director of Operations will develop a system to monitor, track and record drills, to ensure the school community is prepared and in compliance.
- All classrooms will be equipped with a lock system that allows staff to immediately lock a classroom door without having to open it.
- We will install a camera security system throughout the interior and exterior spaces of the facility to allow for continuous monitoring of the premises.
- The Director of Operations in collaboration with the Executive Director will conduct regular walkthroughs to assess fidelity of security measures (locked exterior doors, camera system upgrades, classroom emergency plans, etc.). Additionally, the Director of Operations will work in collaboration with the Metro Nashville Public Schools security office to ensure ongoing compliance of codes and security implementation.

Section 2.8 - Charter Management Organization (Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 6)

Not applicable.

Section 2.9 – Network Vision, Growth Plan & Capacity ***(Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1,3,or 5)***	
☐	**If checked, sponsor answered "No" to Sponsor History & Intent Question 1 and will not provide a narrative reponse for applicable items in this section.**
☐	**If checked, sponsor answered "No" to Sponsor History & Intent Question 3 and will not provide a narrative reponse for applicable items in this section.**
☐	**If checked, sponsor answered "No" to Sponsor History & Intent Question 5 and will not provide a narrative reponse for applicable items in this section.**
Not applicable.	

Section 2.10 – Network Governance (Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)

Not applicable.

Section 2.11 – Network Management and Personnel (Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)

Not applicable.

Table 6: Decision Making Responsibilities (Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)

	Decision Maker	
Function	**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					
Totals	**Prior to Opening**	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**4th**	**5th**
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)*

	Year of Operation					
Position	**Prior to Opening**	**1st**	**2nd**	**3rd**	**4th**	**5th**
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]						
Total projected FTEs at CMO						

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.	Year of Operation					
Position	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)

Not applicable.

Section 3 – Financial Plan and Capacity

Section 3.1 – Operating Budget (Required for All Sponsors)

See Attachment W.

Section 3.2 – Operating Budget Narrative (Required for All Sponsors)

See Attachment X.

Section 3.3 – Network Financial Plan (Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 3)

Not applicable.

Section 4 – Portfolio Review & Performance Record

Section 4.1 – School Portfolio Summary (Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1)

Not applicable.

Section 4.2 – Academic Performance Record (Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1)

Not applicable.

Section 4.3 – Fiscal and Operational Performance Record (Required if Answered "Yes" to Sponsor History and Intent Question 1)

Not applicable.

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	1.4	Annual Academic Calendar	*Required for all sponsors*
B	1.4	Daily Schedule	
C	1.5	Enrollment Policy	
D	1.6	Letters of Support	
E	1.7	Student Handbook and Required Forms	
F	1.7	Student Discipline Policy	
G	2.1	Articles of Incorporation	
H	2.1	Proof of Non-Profit and Tax-Exempt Status	
I	2.1	By-laws	
J	2.1	Board Member Code of Conduct	
K	2.1	Conflict of Interest Policy	
L	2.1	Board Member Resumes or Biographies	
M	2.1	Board Policies	
N	2.4	Organizational Chart: Year 1	
O	2.4	Organizational Chart: Full Capacity	
P	2.4	School Leader Resume *(if hired)*	
Q	2.7	Insurance Coverage	
R	2.8	CMO Agreement	*Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 6.*
S	2.9	Network Annual Progress Report	*Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 3.*
T	2.11	Organizational Chart: Year 1	
U	2.11	Organizational Chart: Year 5	
V	2.12	Previously Approved and Authorized Application for School Being Replicated	*Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 4.*
W	3.1	Operating Budget Template	*Required for all sponsors.*
X	3.2	Operating Budget Narrative	
Y	3.3	Network Financial Plan	*Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 3.*
Z	4.1	Portfolio and Performance Template	*Required if "yes" on Sponsor History and Intent Question 1.*
	4.2		
	4.2		
AA	4.3	Performance and Evaluation Reports	
BB	4.3	Renewal and Interim Reports	
CC	4.3	Annual Reports	
DD	4.3	Litigation Documents	
EE	4.3	Audited Financial Statements	

Attachment A Cover Page

Annual Academic Calendar

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Rock Academy 2026 - 2027 Calendar

Upated January 2025

July 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

October 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

December 2026						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

January 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

March 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

April 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

May 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June 2027						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Key Dates

July 1 - July 3	Independence Day Observed, Rock Offices Closed
July 6 - Aug 3	Staff Inservice
Aug 4	First Day of School
Sept 7	Labor Day, Rock Offices Closed
Sept 8	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
Oct 9	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
Oct 12 - 16	Fall Break
Nov 11	Veteran's Day, Rock Offices Closed
Nov 23-27	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 18	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
Dec 21 - Jan 1	Winter Break
Jan 4 - 5	Stockpiled PD Days (no students)
Jan 18	MLK Holiday Observed, Rock Offices Closed
Feb 15	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
March 8 - 12	Spring Break
March 15	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
March 26	Spring Holiday, Rock Office Closed
May 26	Last Day of School
May 27 - 28	Stockpiled PD Days (no students)
May 31	Memorial Day, Rock Offices Closed
June 18	Junteenth Observed. Rock Offices Closed

Key	Kids in School
	Offices Closed, No Students
	Staff Development Days

Stockpiled PD Days	Sept 8, Oct 9, Dec 18, Jan 4, Jan 5, Feb 15, March 15, May 27, May 28
Inclement Weather Make Up Days	Feb 15, March 15, April 12, May 27, May 28
Instructional Days	175
Instructional Hours (7/day)	1225

Attachment B Cover Page

Daily Schedule

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Rock Academy Sample Daily Schedule

Start Time	End Time	Length	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00:00 AM	9:00:00 AM	1:00:00	**Teacher Prep and Meeting Time**				
9:00:00 AM	9:30:00 AM	0:30:00	**Arrival**				
9:30:00 AM	10:00:00 AM	0:30:00	**House**				
10:00:00 AM	10:05:00 AM	0:05:00					
10:05:00 AM	**11:15:00 AM**	1:10:00	**Math**	**Math**	**Math**	**PE**	**Math**
11:15:00 AM	11:20:00 AM	0:05:00					
11:20:00 AM	**12:30:00 PM**	1:10:00	**ELA**	**PE**	**ELA**	**ELA**	**ELA**
12:30:00 PM	1:15:00 PM	0:45:00	Lunch				
1:15:00 PM	**2:25:00 PM**	1:10:00	**Sci/SS**	**Sci/SS**	**House**	**Sci/SS**	**Sci/SS**
2:25:00 PM	2:30:00 PM	0:05:00					
2:30:00 PM	**3:40:00 PM**	1:10:00	**CTE**	**CTE**	**CTE**	**CTE**	**PE**
3:40:00 PM	3:45:00 PM	0:05:00					
3:45:00 PM	4:30:00 PM	0:45:00	**Tutoring/SH**	**Tutoring/SH**	**Tutoring/SH**	**Tutoring/SH**	**Tutoring/SH**
4:30:00 PM	6:00:00 PM	1:30:00	**Dismissal After School Programming**				

School Day Hours (not including afterschool)		7:00:00
Place for skinny blocks		

Attachment C Cover Page

Enrollment Policy

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment C: Enrollment Policy

Students who live within the zoning of Metro Nashville Public School will be permitted to apply to and enroll in our school as mandated by Tennessee state law. Students will be given equal opportunity to apply to, enroll in, and attend our school. We will not discriminate on the basis of national origin, home language spoken, race, color, gender, creed, disability, need for specialized services, level of academic achievement, housing status, economic status, or personal and/or home situations. We will fully uphold all nondiscriminatory admission policies, pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-13-107. Parents and students will not be required to complete any pre-admission activities; however, we will require that parents and students participate in an onboarding process after being admitted. While we do not have any relevant agreements in place, we will fully adhere T.C.A. § 49-13-113 as it applies to our school. Further detail about our enrollment procedures and policies is as follows:

- **Application Period:** Applications may be submitted through the last Friday in February.
- **Application Submission Procedures:** Applications may be submitted electronically or by hardcopy. Upon receipt, all applications will be numbered and stamped with the date and time of receipt. We will provide acknowledgments of receipt for all applications received.
- **Enrollment and Lottery:** If we receive more applications than seats available, we will conduct a public lottery to determine who is admitted. We will adhere to all applicable Tennessee state laws and State Board of Education rules. As such, if needed, the lottery will be held seven business days after the close of the application period and will be certified by either an independent accounting firm or law firm. As an Opportunity School, we will give preference to applicants who meet the risk categories defined in Opportunity legislation. When applying this preference, we will fully adhere to the law and requirements outlined in T.C.A. § 49-13-113, T.C.A. §49-13-106, and SBE Rule 0520-14-01-.04.
- **Notification:** We will inform parents and students about the results of the lottery within seven business days of the lottery. If a student was not selected through the lottery process, the notification will also detail the student's place on the waitlist. Parents of students who are accepted through the lottery will have two weeks, or 14 days, to confirm their intent to enroll their child. Confirmation must be provided in writing. If confirmation is not provided within the timeframe, the seat will be forfeited and filled by the waitlist.
- **Waitlist:** Students who are not selected for enrollment via the lottery will be placed on a waitlist. In the event that seats become available, students will be accepted from the waitlist in the order assigned by the lottery. Applications that are submitted after the application period has passed will be placed at the end of the waitlist on a first-come, first-served basis. If seats are available after enrolling all students on the waitlist, students will be admitted on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Transfer or Withdrawal:** If a student transfers out of, or withdrawals from, the school, the vacant seat will be given to the student who is next in line according to the waitlist.
- **Re-Enrollment:** In the event that a student who previously transferred out of, or withdrew from, the school wants to re-enroll in the school, the same process for all other applicants, as described above, will be applied.

Attachment D Cover Page

Letters of Support

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment D – Page 198

January 24, 2025
2400 Buena Vista Pike Apt 35
Nashville, TN 37205

Dear Members of the Board.

I am writing to offer my full support for Rock Academy, which is set to open in August 2026. The school's dedication to providing robust Career, Technical, and Education (CTE) programs stands out as a critical step in addressing the evolving needs of both students and the workforce. The world is rapidly changing, and Rock Academy's vision of integrating practical skills training into its curriculum will equip students with the essential tools needed for success in today's competitive job market.

The growing demand for skilled workers across various industries highlights the need for more accessible pathways to technical careers. Many students today are looking for alternatives to traditional four-year college routes, and CTE programs offer them an opportunity to learn valuable, hands-on skills that directly translate into well-paying jobs. By offering courses in fields like advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, and construction, Rock Academy will be preparing students for careers that are both financially rewarding and in high demand.

I am particularly impressed with the school's commitment to ensuring that these programs are not just relevant, but forward-thinking. The integration of the latest industry standards and technology into the curriculum will give students an edge, allowing them to graduate not only with knowledge, but also with the experience that employers seek. This practical approach will be instrumental in fostering a generation of skilled professionals who are ready to contribute to the workforce from day one.

Moreover, Rock Academy's focus on CTE will help students develop problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and adaptability—skills that are in demand across all professions. The hands-on nature of the CTE programs also promotes a deeper understanding of how theory and practice intersect, which is essential in developing a well-rounded professional mindset.

I am confident that Rock Academy's commitment to CTE will make a meaningful impact on the students it serves, as well as the broader community. By providing an education that is aligned with industry needs, Rock Academy is helping to build a future-ready workforce that will drive innovation and growth.

Thanks,

Alaxus Hogan
(615) 426-4707

Ephesians Primitive Baptist Church
January 21, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

It is with great enthusiasm and unwavering conviction that I, Pastor Cornelius Hill of Ephesians Primitive Baptist Church, extend my full support for the establishment of The Rock Academy (TRA). This institution offers a transformative opportunity to re-engage disconnected and at-risk youth, ensuring their success in the post-secondary pathway of their choice.

The Rock Academy's mission, *"To re-engage disconnected youth to ensure they succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice,"* aligns deeply with the values of our church and my personal commitment to building stronger communities. Of particular significance is TRA's emphasis on the foundational principle of Belonging—a transformative approach that creates a supportive environment for youth to thrive.

TRA's dedication to its first key characteristic, **Belonging**, is especially commendable. This principle is reflected in several impactful practices, including:

- **Positive Developmental Relationships** that foster trust and personal growth.
- **The House System**, which nurtures a sense of community and shared accountability.
- **Mentorship Programs** that guide and inspire students toward success.
- **Safe and Supportive Environments** where students feel empowered to achieve.
- **Strong Routines** that provide stability and structure.
- **Core Values** that shape character, resilience, and purpose.

With the support of new legislation for Opportunity Charter Schools, TRA is uniquely positioned to deliver innovative solutions tailored to youth who may not thrive in traditional educational settings. The Rock Academy will undoubtedly become a beacon of hope for families, providing a safe haven where children can grow academically, socially, and emotionally.

As a pastor, mentor, and community advocate, I am deeply vested in the success of this initiative. I encourage our community, educators, and stakeholders to join in supporting The Rock Academy. Together, we can ensure that every child experiences a profound sense of belonging, purpose, and the tools they need to achieve greatness.

With prayers for continued success,

Pastor Cornelius Hill
Ephesians Primitive Baptist Church
(615) 320-0621
cahill1977@gmail.com

Inc.
220 Nathan Drive |Goodlettsville, TN 37072 | 615-810-6630
|

Darrell Caldwell
Executive Director
Why We Can't Wait, Inc.

January 11, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Darrell Caldwell, and I am the Executive Director of Why We Can't Wait, Inc., a resident of the 37072-zip code. As both a community member and professional working within this area, I want to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. I can say with confidence that a school kike The Rock Academy is not only needed but also vital to the future of our community.

I fully endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve disconnected youth. The school's focus on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or become disengaged from traditional education is incredibly important. Many young people in our community are at risk of falling through the cracks, and The Rock Academy's approach of individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path can provide them with the opportunity to succeed. I believe this institution can be a game-changer for many youths in our area, helping them to rediscover their passion for learning and better prepare for their future, whether in higher education or the workforce. Our organization currently operates a program in the Davidson County Juvenile Detention Center and engages with youth and families that reside in the 37210-zip code. We can work in collaboration with The Rock Academy to recruit, educate, and empower families about this wonderful opportunity.

The impact of The Rock Academy on our city and community would be profound. By providing a space where disconnected youth can find support and motivation, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, decrease youth unemployment, and foster a sense of purpose and belonging among young people. This, in turn, will strengthen our broader community, creating a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in every way possible, whether through direct collaboration, family engagement and through our summer teen job program. I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that will result from the opening of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

Darrell Caldwell
Darrell Caldwell
Executive Director
Why We Can't Wait, Inc.
Email: dcaldwl@comcast.net

Deaira Hatcher
3711 Dickerson Pike, Apt C317
Nashville, TN 37207
(615) 524-1494
deairahatccher16@gmail.com

December 14, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Deaira Hatcher, and I am a proud parent from the 37207 community. I am writing this letter to express my full support for the opening of The Rock Academy in Nashville, TN. My daughter had the privilege of attending a previous school where Ms. Sims and Dr. White were leaders, and the experience was transformative for our family.

My daughter was a bright but shy student who truly blossomed under their leadership. The sense of belonging she felt at their school was one of our main attractions as a family. She loved going to school every day, and the positive environment fostered her growth, confidence, and academic success. Even after we moved and she had to change schools, Ms. Sims kept in contact with our family, and Dr. White always reminded her of how much he believed in her potential.

The Rock Academy's focus on belonging resonates deeply with me. I firmly believe that creating a space where students feel seen, loved, and valued is critical to their ability to thrive. Through mentorship, student voice, and additional supports, I know The Rock Academy will create this environment for students across Nashville.

I wholeheartedly support the mission of The Rock Academy, which is designed to help disconnected students succeed in the pathway of their choice. This school will be a tremendous asset to our community, and I am excited to see the positive impact it will have on students and families.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me if further information is needed.

Sincerely,

Deaira Hatcher

January 21, 2025

Dear MNPS Authorizers,

My name is Jennifer Walker, and I am writing to express my full support for the opening of The Rock Academy in Nashville, TN. As a proud parent who had the privilege of seeing my daughter thrive under the leadership of Dr. White and Ms. Sims at Smithson Craighead Academy, I cannot overstate the impact they had on her academic and personal growth.

Before enrolling at SCA, my daughter struggled academically and lacked motivation. However, her experience at SCA transformed her. The leadership, care, and innovative teaching approaches provided her with a sense of RELEVANCE. The Rock Academy's mission to deliver meaningful, real-world learning experiences aligns with what she received at SCA—creating pathways for students to achieve their goals. My daughter not only improved her grades but also developed a clear vision for her future.

Currently, she is not doing well academically at her new school. I have tried countless times to communicate with staff members, but there is no response or support. This lack of communication and care is disheartening, especially after seeing how much she benefited from an environment where she felt seen, heard, and valued. At SCA, I always knew that Dr. White and Ms. Sims were serious about my daughter's success. They created an environment where students had a sense of belonging and relevance.

The Rock Academy's approach to ensuring students feel connected to their learning and have access to diverse career pathways is exactly what our community needs. I have no doubt that this school will provide countless students, including my daughter, with the tools they need to succeed academically and in life.

I wholeheartedly support the opening of The Rock Academy and believe it will be a major asset to our community. Thank you for considering this letter of support, and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I live at 2714 Murfreesboro Pike, Lot 38, Antioch, TN 37013, and you can reach me at jennifers1979@mail.com.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Walker

January 24, 2025

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Rock Academy, which is set to open in August 2026. As an advocate for innovative education that equips young people with the skills they need to succeed in the modern workforce, I firmly believe that Rock Academy's focus on Career, Technical, and Education (CTE) programs will have a transformative impact on the students it serves.

In today's rapidly changing economy, students must have access to education that prepares them not only for college but also for meaningful careers in a variety of fields. Rock Academy's dedication to providing high-quality, hands-on learning experiences in technical areas will give students the tools and confidence to excel in their future professions. I am particularly excited about how the academy's CTE programs will bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application, offering students an invaluable edge in their career paths.

I have long been a supporter of career-based education, understanding how vital it is in helping students find their passions and build a foundation for success in an increasingly competitive job market. By providing students with practical skills in industries such as information technology, healthcare, and engineering, Rock Academy will not only help them become workforce-ready but also encourage them to explore a wide range of career possibilities.

Moreover, Rock Academy's commitment to inclusivity, innovation, and academic excellence is evident in its mission and vision. I am confident that the school will create an environment where students thrive and are encouraged to think critically, collaborate, and lead with integrity.

Please consider this letter as my wholehearted endorsement of Rock Academy. I am excited to see how the academy will grow and positively impact the community. I look forward to the opening of the school and the opportunities it will provide for the next generation of leaders and professionals.

Sincerely,

Kyuonia Powell

Kyuonia Powell
(615) 479-3879
2400 Buena Vista Pike Apt. 97
Nashville, TN 3728

Tommy Springer
Co-Pastor

Overflow Of Abundance International Ministries

December 20, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Tommy Springer, Co-Pastor of Overflow of Abundance International Ministries Church. I reside in Clarksville, TN. I was raised in Nashville, TN, where I work and minister in the community. I'm a graduate of Peabody College at Vanderbilt University. I was on the basketball team at Vanderbilt from 1976-1980. I currently serve as a member of the Board of Directors for the Police Activities League (PAL) in Nashville, were I work closely with children from Nashville, Davidson County schools. As, a (PAL) board member, I have an opportunity to see the potential of many at risk kids who often go unnoticed.

I support and endorse Rock Academy under the leadership of Ahmed White and Lekita Stevenson. They have exemplified their expertise and passion to help children grow their educational endeavors. I believe that Rock Academy will provide educational opportunities with lifelong skills to help students succeed. This will allow each student to be supported with individualized learning time to best meet their needs and abilities. The Rock Academy will allow parents to be apart of the learning path selection for their child. As, a former at-risk student being raised by a single parent, I encourage non-traditional schools designed to meet the individual needs of each student while involving parents in the process.

The impact of the Rock Academy on our city and community will be profound. By providing a space where disconnected youth find support and motivation, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, decrease youth unemployment, and foster a sense of purpose among of young people. This will also strengthen our broader community, creating a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce. I fully support The Rock Academy School as an addition to the greater Nashville community.

Sincerely,

Tommy Springer

Co-Pastor

Overflow of Abundance International Ministries Church

615-596-1485

Tonya Osborne

1309 Briarville Rd. Suite 102

Madison, TN 37115

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy and its transformative mission to re-engage disconnected youth and ensure their success in the post-secondary pathways of their choice. In a world where education is a cornerstone of opportunity, The Rock Academy serves as a beacon of hope and possibility for children who might otherwise fall through the cracks.

As an advocate for equitable education, I believe every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, especially those in marginalized neighborhoods who face systemic barriers. The Rock Academy provides a critical lifeline, fostering a supportive environment that empowers students to reconnect with their education and pursue brighter futures.

The Rock Academy will step into this gap with unwavering commitment, offering a lifeline to youth who have been overlooked or left behind. They will foster a culture of inclusivity, personalized support, and high expectations, The Rock Academy not only reconnects students to their educational journeys but also prepares them to thrive in college, career, or other meaningful pursuits.

The Academy's work is an investment in the future of our communities. When we empower young people to succeed, we create ripple effects that benefit families, neighborhoods, and society as a whole. It is my commitment to help them in any way I can to achieve their mission with success.

Sincerely,

Tonya Osborne

Owner, Tonya Osborne Photo & Design

615.414.2266 - tonya@tonyaosbornephoto.com

TERA T. HAMBRICK, JD
P.O. BOX 330524
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

January 30, 2025

RE: Support for the Opportunity Public Charter School Application for The Rock Academy

To Whom It May Concern:

I am Tera T. Hambrick, a native and current resident of Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee. I write this letter of support for The Rock Academy and its application to establish an opportunity public charter school (the "Application") as a long-standing community member and proud product of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools. I am inspired by the vision for The Rock Academy and I support its mission to serve disconnected youth with a focus on the needs of the whole person.

I fully recognize firsthand the immense value The Rock Academy can add to our community. As a person who once served as one of the caregivers and authority figures for a nephew and niece experiencing significant trauma during their childhood after a car accident caused their mother to live with quadriplegia, I have witnessed how youth with boundless potential can easily become disconnected and miss opportunities. I am committed to sharing my time, expertise, talents and professional network to further the aims of The Rock Academy to provide individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path for disconnected youth because I know this educational approach could have made a significant difference for my nephew. The youth of Nashville-Davidson County who are like my nephew as a tween and teen - beautiful, caring, smart, full of potential ***AND*** at-risk and facing adversity – deserve the ***opportunity*** that I am certain The Rock Academy will provide.

I am confident that this community will observe swift, positive impact for the youth that The Rock Academy will serve. Additionally, I envision that such impact will be multiplied for the community at-large as The Rock Academy's work will help to lower dropout rates and create a more prepared and engaged workforce. Furthermore, The Rock Academy would reduce marginalization and foster inspiration for those in future generations whose best opportunities to thrive might be outside of the traditional public school, which I also support whole-heartedly.

As a member of The Rock Academy's initial governing board, I encourage your approval of this Application, will gladly continue to serve The Rock Academy's mission, and look forward to seeing how its service to youth changes lives and this community for the better.

Sincerely,

Tera T. Hambrick

Tera T. Hambrick, JD
Native-Nashvillian, Caregiver, Attorney, and Consultant Serving to Improve Lives for Vulnerable Communities

Judge Dinkins Educational Center

January 7, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been fortunate enough to live in the Nashville area for most of my life. For almost twenty years, I had the opportunity to work in school administration in the community. I worked for a decade at Father Ryan High School and I also served in Williamson County as an elementary school principal. Currently, I am the executive director of the Judge Dinkins Educational Center in North Nashville. We are a diversionary program for students who have been engaged in juvenile court or Metro Student Attendance Center. Students involved in our program are trained in construction training, soft skills, and are working towards completing their high school education.

There is a need in Nashville for a comprehensive high school experience for adolescents who are disenfranchised or disengaged. High school is such a pivotal part of human development and identity formation. Therefore, students who have not been successful in traditional schools need an environment which supports their growth. The Rock Academy's design elements of belonging and relevance allows them to create a school which meets students' diverse needs. At the JDEC, there are numerous referrals for students. We cannot come close to meeting the needs of all of these students.

According to a report put together by Nashville City Councilman Thom Druffel, over 1,000 youth appear before the judge or the magistrates of the juvenile courts. According to the same report, over half will be before the judge or a magistrate prior to their 18th birthday. There has not been a longitudinal study in Nashville of the recidivism rates of individuals after they turn 18. I suspect those numbers would be high as well. The Rock Academy could benefit the city by providing stability, educational opportunities, and support for these young people. It provides a commodity that is needed for our youth, hope.

As a lifelong educator, and now serving a similar population, I believe in the mission of the Rock Academy. I believe it will be an asset to the community and provide post secondary opportunities that do not currently exist.

Sincerely,

Tim Forbes
Executive Director
Judge Dinkins Educational Center

Sonya Thomas

1021 Whites Creek Pike

Nashville, Tennessee 37207

1/23/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong support for The Rock Academy, an educational institution dedicated to serving at-risk students in Davidson County, Nashville, Tennessee.

The Rock Academy plays a critical role in our community by providing a safe, nurturing, and empowering environment for students who face significant challenges. Through personalized instruction, innovative programs, and a focus on social-emotional growth, the school equips students with the tools they need to succeed academically and personally.

Many of the students served by The Rock Academy have struggled in traditional educational settings. The school's tailored approach not only addresses their academic needs but also fosters confidence, resilience, and a renewed sense of purpose. By offering resources and support systems that extend beyond the classroom, The Rock Academy ensures that students are prepared for lifelong success.

As a member of this community, I have witnessed the positive impact of The Rock Academy's work. It is clear that the school is a vital resource for at-risk youth and a pillar of hope for families seeking better opportunities for their children.

I wholeheartedly support The Rock Academy in its mission to transform lives through education, and I urge others to recognize and champion the importance of their work.

Sincerely,

Sonya Thomas

Subira Gordon
Chief Executive Officer
Nashville Charter Collaborative

Jan 28, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of The Rock Academy to express our enthusiastic support for Dr. Ahmed White and his team as they undertake the significant initiative of designing the first ever Public Opportunity Charter School in Nashville, TN. This effort reflects a deep understanding of the importance of catering to the diverse needs of all students through a targeted, needs-based assessment approach. Dr. White's vision aligns closely with our mission to provide equitable and impactful education opportunities to all learners.

Within the first 5 minutes of hearing from Dr. White about the Rock Academy, I was sold. Nashville is a city where the story of certain communities are not told. The bright lights of broadway shine over the real stories in communities. Many people, specifically young black men are unable to access the economic opportunity that seems so bright for many Nashvillians. The overwhelmingly high incarceration rate in North Nashville shows that there is much work to be done. While The Rock is not a silver bullet to solve the systemic crises this school will build a path to success for many.

The proposed academic programing along with the focus on career development will make a difference in the lives of many. As the leader of the Nashville Charter collaborative I am excited for this school to be a part of the portfolio of schools that provide great public school options to families in nashville. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in every way possible, whether through I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that will result from the opening of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,
Subira Gordon
Chief Executive Officer
Nashville Charter Collaborative
subira.gordon@nashvillechartercollaborative.org
615-982-4810

INCUBATOR
NASHVILLE

To Executive Director Stovall and the TN Charter Commissioners,

I am excited to write this letter of support on behalf of The Rock Academy and founder Dr. Ahmed White. For the past 1.5 years Ahmed has devoted himself full-time to researching, designing, and telling the story of the Rock. As the first TN Opportunity Charter School, I know that Rock will pave the way for the exact innovation that our state legislature was looking for when they approved Opportunity Charters. As the Executive Director of the Nashville Incubator, I am proud to walk beside Ahmed and his team and provide them with the financial and social capital needed to be successful in launching and running a successful opportunity charter.

The Nashville Incubator was founded in 2021 with the goal to recruit and support school leaders to launch innovative high-quality schools that provide families with diverse public school options here in Nashville. Over the past three years under the leadership of Amy Huffman, the Nashville Incubator has supported the opening of Aventura Community School, MNPS District approved charter, and Tennessee Nature Academy, a commission approved school. We have also supported the charter application of the Invictus Nashville Charter School, Encompass Community School, and Nurses Middle College Nashville which were all approved by the Tennessee Charter Commission last fall. In addition to providing funding to allow Ahmed to be a full-time founder, the incubator has supported Ahmed with multiple learning trips, professional coaching, community development support, and is committed to continuing these supports until opening. Ahmed has been working hand in hand with one of our best program designers, Linda Lentz, who has years of experience supporting founders to build excellent schools. Because of the complexity of his model and the pending state legislation, the Incubator agreed to give Ahmed an additional year of coaching and support, meaning he will have had three years of full-time focus on The Rock Academy before it is open.

The Nashville Incubator is supported by the generous contributions and leadership of the Joe C. Davis Foundation, SCORE, City Fund, and the Bill and Crissy Haslam Foundation. These foundations are committed to high-quality innovative schools in our city and state and the incubator is one of the primary strategies identified for launching these schools.

We know that one of the greatest challenges faced by founders is the ability to find a great incubation facility to launch. In order to ensure that facilities are not the barrier that prevents these schools from being successful the Nashville Incubator is providing targeted facilities support to our founders in a few ways. First of all, we hired a full-time Director of Facilities to support each of our founders in the selection, acquisition, and renovation of their incubation facility last fall. Shelby Goodfriend, our Director of Facilities, is the former Director of Charter Schools for the Tennessee Department of Education. She also served in various charter operations and leadership roles as well as has experience

in construction and architecture. Second, we are covering pre-construction costs associated with acquisition, architects, and construction management. Third, the Nashville Incubator board members have generously committed to supporting these schools in their opening upon approval. One example is a grant opportunity of up to $250,000 from the SCORE to support construction costs associated with the opening of an incubation facility. This grant will be able to be used by the Rock to cover any financial expenses related to the construction, downpayment, or rent of a short-term incubation facility. We have also supported each of our founders in the application process for CSP, State Facility, NSVF, and GSGF grants with a high rate of success. Our board members are committed to ensuring that Incubator schools are ultimately successful. So each school we incubate will have opportunities for additional grant applications upon approval and opening.

Finally, from a personal level, I wanted to share my confidence in the quality leader that Ahmed White is. As I have worked to recruit and support innovative leaders in this city, one truth holds true, great schools always have great leaders. Dr. White is an experienced, measured, thoughtful, joyful, and visionary leader with years of experience in Nashville and surrounding counties. While his personal story as a foster parent and special education teacher is central to his "why", his deep career experience focused on serving the most vulnerable and needy in our society is his "what". As a former principal, I know there were a handful of students I just never figured out how to reach and best serve. In many cases these students were in and out of school due to family and legal troubles. For these students to come back into a place where they often felt behind and rarely seen led to cycles of struggle. If the Rock Academy were an option at that time I know that many of these students would have found their place of belonging. Previous to my new role I was able to serve on the TN Charter Commission Review Board and review multiple applications and participate in capacity interviews. As I review The Rock Academy's application it checks all the boxes of what the Commission has expressed interest in seeing more of. It is an innovative school with a strong leader, lots of community support, a team of experts committed to helping it open and operate successfully, and a school that will provide a choice for families they desperately need and don't currently have. The Rock Academy is going to be a school that will impact generations of Nashvillians and hopefully reform the way many educational and policy leaders think about serving all students. Ahmed White is an extraordinary leader and his school will be an extraordinary school that fulfills the commitment we make as public educators in Tennessee to grow an informed citizenry. I am grateful to play a small role in seeing The Rock Academy flourish.

Sincerely,

Scott M. Campbell
Executive Director, The Nashville Incubator

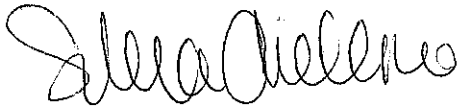
January 20, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I, Silvia Arellano Castro, a current member of the 37115 Madison Community, would like to offer my full support to Dr. Ahmed White and Ms. Lekita Sims in the establishment of The Rock Academy. I have had the privilege of witnessing first hand the outstanding work and positive impact brought about by Dr. White and Ms. Sims. In my professional capacity I have seen Dr. White and Ms. Sims's consistent commitment to excellence, their ability to work well with others, and their strong work ethic. My three children were also their former students and they thrived tremendously under their leadership. It is without reservation that I offer my full endorsement and support for their endeavors. I am confident that The Rock Academy will make a significant impact on our youth and positively influence the lives of those they serve.

Thank you for considering my support for Dr. White and The Rock Academy. I am confident that their ongoing efforts will yield remarkable results and create lasting change for the better.

Sincerely,



Silvia Arellano Castro
silviaarellano01@gmail.com
(917) 302-1183

January 24, 2025

Miss Lekita Sims,

We are pleased and honored to support you and The Rock Academy Nashville in your application for a charter school in the Metro Nashville community.

InVocation Inc. serves the community of non-profit organizations such as yours (and over 60 others) that strive to provide a better life to those less fortunate. Education is the base from which all young people must rise into adulthood and become productive citizens of our country.

[Your] education model is very promising and should be studied by other schools & systems of education. In these times, focusing solely on STEM or the traditional "three-Rs", as it were, is not enough to sustain the country. There must be a dedicated effort to be practical and the model you presented most certainly aims to accomplish that goal. Life skills, vocations, traditional reading/writing/arithmetic, and appreciation of our fellow man combined will achieve much more than what is found in contemporary educational institutions.

We fervently hope that The Rock Academy Nashville will be approved as a Charter School in your upcoming application review. Furthermore, we pray that you will receive the funding [you] need to complete a facility purchase and refurbishment with ongoing contributions for its continued success.

Supporting you all,

Rory R. Williams

Rory R. Williams
Compliance Director
InVocation Inc
931.637.8990

January 11, 2025

Dear Dr. White,

My name is Ron Johnson, and I am the founder of Street Solid, a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering youth and providing them with opportunities for growth and development. As a resident of Nashville TN. I can say with confidence that The Rock Academy is a vital addition to our community. The need for a school that addresses the unique challenges faced by disconnected youth has never been more pressing.

I am writing to express my strong support for The Rock Academy, which aims to re-engage and empower students who have become disengaged from traditional education. The innovative approach of The Rock Academy—focusing on belonging, relevance, and flexibility—will provide the necessary support and resources for these students to thrive. As someone who has witnessed firsthand the struggles of our youth, I believe that establishing Tennessee's first Opportunity Public Charter School is a crucial step towards creating an equitable educational landscape.

The positive impact of The Rock Academy on our city and community cannot be overstated. By providing a safe and nurturing environment, the school will foster a sense of belonging for students who may feel alienated and unsupported. The culturally responsive curriculum and career and technical education pathways will equip students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce or pursue further education. I am committed to supporting the opening of The Rock Academy through my organization, Street Solid, by providing mentorship, resources, and community engagement initiatives that align with the school's mission.

Thank you for your dedication to creating a brighter future for our youth. I look forward to working together to ensure the success of The Rock Academy and to fostering a community where all students can thrive.

Sincerely,

Ron Johnson
Founder, Street Solid
615-977-2130
1512c Jones Ave
Nashville, TN 37207

Ramona L Johnson
Analyst - Technical Broking, NPP
Willis Towers Watson

December 23, 2024

To whom it may concern,

My name is Ramona Johnson, and I am an Analyst at WTW, residing in the 37115 ZIP code area. As both a professional and a member of this community, I am writing to offer my full support for The Rock Academy. From my perspective as a local resident, I can confidently say that a school like The Rock Academy is not only necessary but crucial for the future of our neighborhood.

I wholeheartedly endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve disconnected youth. The academy's emphasis on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or disengaged from traditional education is both vital and timely. Many young people in our community face the risk of being left behind, and The Rock Academy's individualized approach—offering mentorship and customized educational paths—provides these students with the opportunity to succeed. I am confident that this institution can be transformative for many youth in our area, helping them rediscover their passion for learning and better preparing them for their futures, whether in higher education or the workforce.

The potential impact of The Rock Academy on our city and community cannot be overstated. By providing a supportive and motivating environment, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, lower youth unemployment, and instill a sense of purpose and belonging in young people. This, in turn, will strengthen our community by fostering a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce.

I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy and am eager to assist in any way possible—whether (direct involvement, potential partnerships, or assisting in connecting the school with important resources within our community). I look forward to seeing the positive change that The Rock Academy will bring to our community.

Sincerely,
Ramona Johnson
Analyst at WTW
Resident, 37115 ZIP code

Sincerely,

Ramona Johnson
Analyst - Technical Broking, NPP
Willis Towers Watson
Ramona.saine@wtwco.com
615-397-6642

Positive Images
& Associates
EMPOWER • ENRICH • EDUCATE

Dr. Rubin Cockrell
CEO
Positive Images & Associates LLC
info@drrcockrell.com
615-752-9414

1/24/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Dr. Rubin Cockrell, and I am the CEO of Positive Images & Associates LLC, an organization committed to empowering individuals and communities through innovative training, mentorship, and leadership development. As a long-time advocate for education and community engagement in Nashville, I can confidently state that The Rock Academy is a critical and much-needed institution for our city.

I wholeheartedly support The Rock Academy and its mission to provide individualized support, mentorship, and tailored educational pathways for disconnected youth. These young individuals often face significant barriers to success, and the academy's commitment to meeting them where they are will make an immeasurable difference. At Positive Images & Associates LLC, we have successfully implemented similar transformative approaches, and I know that The Rock Academy will have a profound impact on the lives of countless students.

Our organization is uniquely positioned to assist The Rock Academy in reaching Nashville's most marginalized families. Through our extensive community networks and experience in outreach, we can help connect the school to families who will benefit most from its programs. Moreover, we are prepared to offer additional support through leadership training, student mentorship initiatives, and resource development, ensuring that The Rock Academy not only opens successfully but thrives as a beacon of hope for the community.

The positive impact of The Rock Academy cannot be overstated. By addressing the needs of at-risk youth, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, increase opportunities for higher education and workforce readiness, and strengthen the fabric of our city. I am honored to support this endeavor and look forward to collaborating with the academy to bring its vision to life.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at info@drrcockrell.com or 615-752-9414 for further discussion or collaboration opportunities.

Sincerely,

Dr. Rubin Cockrell

Rubin L. Cockrell

CEO
Positive Images & Associates LLC
www.drrcockrell.com
info@drrcockrell.com

NEWARK
OPPORTUNITY
YOUTH NETWORK

60 Park | Newark, NJ | 862-772-1724 | newark-oyn.org

January 5th, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Robert Clark, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of Newark Opportunity Youth Network. I am writing to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. As a practitioner with years of experience working with and designing strategies to support opportunity youth, I can say with confidence that a school like The Rock Academy is vital to the future of the Nashville community.

I fully endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve disconnected youth. The school's focus on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or become disengaged from traditional education is incredibly important. As we have experienced in Newark, young people in the community are at risk of falling through the cracks, and The Rock Academy's approach of individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path can provide them with the opportunity to succeed. I believe this institution can be a game-changer for many youth in the area, helping them to rediscover their passion for learning and better prepare for their future, whether in higher education or the workforce.

By providing a space where disconnected youth can find support and motivation, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, decrease youth unemployment, and foster a sense of purpose and belonging among young people. This, in turn, will strengthen the broader community, creating a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in every way possible and will be available as a resource and thought partner in their efforts to advance a community centered strategy. I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that will result from the opening of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

Robert Clark
rclark@oyn-nj.org

Josue Rodriguez
Assistant Pastor
Casa de Dios USA

01/28/2025

Greetings,

My name is Josue Rodriguez, I'm an associate Pastor at Casa de Dios USA located on 3030 Dickerson Pike, Nashville, TN 37207. The purpose of this letter is to let you know that we fully support and endorse the dream of the upcoming Rock Academy.

As a Pastor with a congregation of so many young and teenage kids I've noticed how impactful a school can be in the growth and development of our children. Schools like Rock Academy will help provide children, parents, and our community with more choices that will undoubtedly benefit us all. Each child is a gift from God and made unique in His image. They all deserve access that will foster their intellectual, spiritual and moral development.

Rock Academy will be a school that will focus on the needs of the parents and children and that is why we as a church fully endorse and support this unique and wonderful opportunity for all our kids.

May God bless you and your family as we all work together to build a great future for our children.

In Christ,

Pastor Josue Rodriguez
Casa De Dios USA
615.262.2511

Nathan Garrett
President
Tennessee College of Applied Technology Nashville

1/14/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Nathan Garrett, and I am the President of the Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Nashville, a resident of the 37209 ZIP code. As both a community member and professional working within this area, I want to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. As a resident of the 37210 ZIP code, I can say with confidence that a school like The Rock Academy is not only needed but also vital to the future of our community.

I fully endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve disconnected youth. The school's focus on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or become disengaged from traditional education is incredibly important. Many young people in our community are at risk of falling through the cracks, and The Rock Academy's approach of individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path can provide them with the opportunity to succeed. I believe this institution can be a game-changer for many youths in our area, helping them to rediscover their passion for learning and better prepare for their future, whether in higher education or the workforce. TCAT Nashville shares a similar educational model that focuses on providing competency-based hands-on training.

The impact of The Rock Academy on our city and community would be profound. By providing a space where disconnected youth can find support and motivation, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, decrease youth unemployment, and foster a sense of purpose and belonging among young people. This, in turn, will strengthen our broader community, creating a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

Nathan Garrett
President
TCAT Nashville
nathan.garrett@tcatnashville.edu
615-425-5500

Tennessee College of Applied Technology Nashville does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, ethnicity or national origin, sex, disability, age, status as a protected veteran or any other class protected by Federal or State laws and regulations and by Tennessee Board of Regents policies with respect to employment, programs, and activities. The Vice President has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies: Human Resources, TCAT Nashville, 100 White Bridge Road, Nashville, TN 37209, 615-425-5540. The Tennessee College of Applied Technology Nashville policy on nondiscrimination can be found at https://tcatnashville.edu/about/non-discrimination-statement.

EOE/AA/Title IX/Title VI/ADA Employer
"A Tennessee Board of Regents Institution"

Charter Schools Development Corporation
www.CSDC.org

January 23, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express Charter Schools Development Corporation's ("CSDC") support for The Rock Academy ("The Rock") charter application to launch in Nashville, TN.

Charter Schools Development Corporation (CSDC) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting charter schools by providing comprehensive real estate development and financing services. Focused on underserved communities, CSDC helps charter schools navigate the complexities of acquiring, financing, designing, and constructing educational facilities. Through its Turnkey Development Program, financing guidance, and flexible lending options, CSDC ensures schools can secure affordable, sustainable, and high-quality spaces that align with their educational missions. As a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), CSDC also offers credit enhancements and other financial tools to make school ownership and long-term financial sustainability attainable. Ultimately, CSDC empowers charter schools to thrive by delivering facilities that support better student outcomes and community growth.

Over the years, CSDC has significantly expanded its impact, receiving substantial funding, including three Federal Credit Enhancement Grants totaling $38 million and a $70M Bond Guaranty Program (BGP) award, the largest of its kind from the Opportunity Finance Network (OFN) in 2022. This allows CSDC to act as a Senior Lender for its own projects, increasing its ability to support charter schools. The organization also created the Tom Nida Charter School Innovation and Academic Excellence Award, recognizing schools for excellence in financial performance, academics, leadership, and governance. Today, CSDC serves over 100,000 students, helping charter schools secure the facilities and financial tools they need to thrive.

We are proud to support The Rock Academy's Chief Executive Officer, senior leadership team and Board of Directors in the following ways:

- **Site Selection and Acquisition**: CSDC supports the site search process, helping schools evaluate potential locations to ensure they meet both educational requirements and financial feasibility.
- **Financing and Loan Assistance**: CSDC offers flexible financing options, including short-term loans, lease-to-own models, and credit enhancement programs to help the school secure funding for its facility.
- **Facility Design and Construction Support**: CSDC provides expertise in the design and construction of school buildings, ensuring that the facility meets the specific needs of the school's model and student population.
- **Financial Modeling and Budgeting**: CSDC assists in developing financial models, cash flow analysis, and budgeting strategies to ensure the school can maintain financial sustainability while building its facility.
- **Permitting and Regulatory Support**: From navigating local regulations to securing necessary permits, CSDC offers guidance and support throughout the entire development process, helping the school avoid delays and stay on track.

These services help new charter schools focus on their educational goals while CSDC takes care of the complex logistical and financial aspects of starting up.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for The Rock Academy. Please reach out should you have any questions.

With best regards,

Mark Zeizel
Senior Vice President, Real Estate Investments & Strategy
mzeizel@csdc.org

1/27/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing on behalf of The Rock Academy to express my enthusiastic support for Dr. Ahmed White and his team as they undertake the significant initiative of designing the first ever Public Opportunity Charter School in Nashville, TN. I first met Dr. White when he flew to Idaho to learn from us and tour our facilities. His time and effort here reflected a leader with a deep understanding of the importance of catering to the diverse needs of all students through a targeted, needs-based assessment approach.

With the enactment of new legislation supporting Opportunity Charter Schools, this initiative holds tremendous promise for reaching and engaging at-risk youth who may struggle in traditional school environments. I have built four schools that focus on at risk youth By integrating Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs into the school's framework and have seen it prove successful for the students and community alike. Dr. White and his team are creating similar pathways for students to achieve academic growth while also gaining valuable technical, professional, and creative skills. These pathways not only enhance their educational experience but also lead to meaningful outcomes such as post-secondary certifications, possible college credits, and even direct job placement opportunities.

This innovative model will be particularly beneficial for students who face unique challenges, such as those in foster care, have had other life challenging experiences that are beyond their control, or those who have been chronically absent. By providing a supportive and engaging environment tailored to their needs, the Opportunity School will empower these students to reconnect with their education, graduate with a diploma, and acquire certifications that prepare them for the workforce. The measurable goals established by this initiative represent a transformative approach to education that prioritizes both academic and personal success.

As a charter leader, I fully endorse and encourage this model and cannot emphasize enough how impactful it can be. We believe that this initiative will have a lasting and positive impact on the Nashville community. Dr. White's leadership and vision will play a critical role in ensuring the success of this effort, and we are confident that this Opportunity Charter School will truly serve as a model for addressing the needs of at-risk youth.

Thank you for considering this impactful project, and I strongly urge your support for Dr. Ahmed White and his team. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me at 208-407-4963

Sincerely,

Monica White
CEO
Elevate Academy Network of Schools

Moises Rodriguez
Vice President
Mana Sports Club Inc.

Jan. 01, 2025

To whom it may concern,

My name is Moises Rodriguez. I am vice president of Mana Sports Club Inc. located on 3030 Dickerson Pike Nashville, TN 37207 registered in the state of TN. I am also an assistant pastor at Casa de Dios USA. I can say without an ounce of doubt in my mind that Nashville needs more charter schools. I fully support the establishment of The Rock Academy.

My son attended a charter school from kindergarten to fifth grade. I noticed the amount of attention and care he received. I witnessed the passion and dedication the teachers and the staff had for all the children. I encouraged others to sign up their kids to the same school. My son loved his experience and excelled in his studies thanks to the support he had all around him.

I pray more charter schools become available to our community. Please feel free to contact at any time. Contact information below.

Sincerely,

Moises Rodriguez

Mana Sports Club Inc. 3030 Dickerson Pike Nashville TN 37207
Tel. 615-229-7720
email: manasportsclub@gmail.com

Ms. Marcea Johnson

Ministry Leader of LYLAS

Adorned Ministry / Marcea Rosette LLC

1/24/25

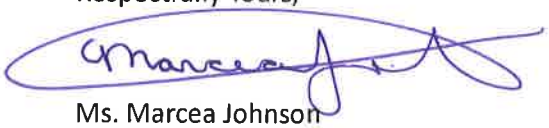
To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Marcea Johnson and I am the owner of Adorned Ministry and Marcea Rosette LLC, an active ministry leader and mentor for teen girls ages 13 to 18 in the Loving You Like A Sister (LYLAS) Ministry at Lake Providence Missionary Baptist Church, and a resident of Davidson County in the 37013 area. As a member of the Davidson County community and an advocate for the women and youth, I am honored to express my support for the establishing of Th Rock Academy.

I fully endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve our youth who feel disconnected and overlooked within the school system. The focus of The Rock Academy is to re-engage students enrolled in their program who have fallen behind and who have become disengaged from traditional learning which is vital for addressing the needs of students who have fallen through the cracks in our educational system. The Rock Academy's approach of individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path can provide the youth with an opportunity to succeed. I believe this institution can be a safe foundational place that shifts the trajectory of the lives for the youth in our community by helping them re-discover a passion for learning and better preparing the youth for their future whether, in higher learning or the workforce. I am also onboard for serving as a mentor for teens enrolled at the Rock Academy as well.

The impact of the Rock Academy on our city and community by addressing the needs of our youth who feel disconnected from the traditional educational system here in Davidson County would be phenomenal and profound. The youth could benefit from the program by receiving support and motivation to excel in desired academic areas and skill development while building confidence and a sense of security. This can reduce drop out rates, decrease youth unemployment, and foster a sense of purpose and belonging. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in every way possible by helping to connect the school to valuable resources and by offering a mentoring partnership if the opportunity presents itself. I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes from the opening of The Rock Academy.

Respectfully Yours,



Ms. Marcea Johnson

Owner of Adorned Ministry & Marcea Rosette LLC

Mentoring Ministry Leader of Loving You Like a Sister (LYLAS)

marcearjohnson@gmail.com

615-707-7330

Modern Classrooms Project

The Modern Classrooms Project
15 14th St. SE
Washington, DC 20003

January 15, 2025

To whom it may concern,

As a nonprofit organization built to empower teachers to meet the needs of every student, The Modern Classrooms Project (MCP) is pleased to offer our support for Rock Academy. MCP is a leader in the field of student-centered learning and teacher professional development. We partner with over 100 schools and districts across the country to equip teachers with the tools to build mastery-based and self-paced learning environments.

After meeting with Dr. Ahmed White, we are excited about the impact the school will have on young people and families in Nashville, TN. We are particularly supportive of the school's focus on belonging and flexibility for all learners. We believe this aspect of the school will provide learners the individual support needed to achieve their full potential. The vision shared with us also left us with the strong impression that this school will be more than a place of learning, as Dr. White is committed to building strong relationships with families and has a deep commitment to being a part of the community.

The Modern Classrooms Project will partner with Rock Academy by providing training and support to educators and their school leadership team. For example, leaders from Rock Academy will join our Modern School Leader Fellowship this Spring, learning about how school design can incorporate effective professional learning and educator leadership. They will continue partnering with us to engage in personalized design support starting in Summer 2025.

The Modern Classrooms Project is committed to ensuring all students are appropriately challenged and supported. We see Rock Academy as an organization that believes strongly in this mission. We strongly endorse the vision of Dr. Ahmed White for Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

Matthew Hickson

Matthew Hickson
Director of Partner Transformation
The Modern Classrooms Project

Vireo Systems, Inc.
305 Williams Avenue
Madison, TN 37115
Phone 615.724.6134 Fax 615.865.8327

January 3, 2025

Mark Faulkner
CEO
Vireo Systems, Inc.

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Mark Faulkner and I am the founder and CEO of Vireo Systems, Inc. which started in Madison, TN in June of 2002. In the past 23 years I have watched our community ebb and floe with growth and goodness, but also unfortunate stumbles as we try and positively impact the lives of our youth through education.

Because I believe so firmly that education is the key to the successful trajectory of children's lives, I want to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. I know Dr. Ahmed White very well and I have seen what he and a team of people he leads can do in terms of making a huge difference. I fully endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve disconnected youth. The school's focus on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or become lost to traditional education is incredibly important. Too many valuable young people in our community are at risk of falling through the cracks, and The Rock Academy's approach of individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path can provide them with the opportunity to succeed.

When students experience school success, it helps them rediscover their passion for learning and helps prepare them for a productive future, whether in higher education or the workforce. The impact of The Rock Academy on our city and

community would be profound. I firmly believe the Academy will help reduce dropout rates, decrease youth unemployment, and foster a sense of purpose and belonging among young people. This, in turn, will strengthen our broader community, creating a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce – that is important to me as a business owner in trying to find GOOD young people to help fill our jobs. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy and I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that will result from the opening of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

615-724-6134
markf@vireosystems.com

Ray of Hope Community Church
2311 Murfreesboro Pike
Nashville, TN 37217

(615) 227-4110 office
(615) 227-4532 fax
www.rayofhopenashville.org

January 1, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Martin L. Espinosa, the Founder and Senior Pastor of Ray of Hope Community Church, Nashville Tennessee. I currently reside at 4004 Cedar Circle, Nashville Tennessee 37218. As a former college administrator and professor and parent of a child who attended one of Nashville's elite private schools, I want to express my unequivocal commitment and support without reservation, for The Rock Academy. Institutions such as this are an essential part of the strategy to level the playing fields of our society, by providing all students with an education which will make them virtuous and productive citizens of our society.

Having had several years to assist in shaping the theology and social praxis of Dr. Ahmed White and having personally met with him and his assistant Ms. Lekita Sims, I believe they have positioned themselves to be the competent and qualified leaders of The Rock Academy. The specified vision and mission of The Rock Academy to connect disconnected youth to the seedbed of higher education, makes this Academy unique at its core. I'm confident that the strategies they have decided upon will be effective in meeting their stated objectives of reengaging those students who have fallen through the traditional cracks of the public school system.

If necessity is the mother of all inventions, and if imagination fosters the creation of the impossible, I firmly believe that The Rock Academy's impact, when experienced, will exceed every expectation. This Academy will stand out like a pink unicorn in the school system of the State of Tennessee. If given the political will and financial support to be successful, we will all observe the manifestation of a prototype of what every Academy and public school can be. Education at The Rock Academy will be more than an exercise in academic rigor. Education at The Rock Academy will be a holistic experience in every sense of the word. Students who FEEL good about themselves and their futures do not drop out of school, commit crimes of survival nor become dependents of the social systems of the state.

Consequently, I reemphasize my support without reservation, for approval of The Rock Academy!

In the meantime, be encouraged and may God inspire you to approve the launch of The Rock Academy!

Sincerely,

Martin L. Espinosa, MTS
Founder and Senior Pastor
Ray of Hope Community Church
Nashville, Tennessee

29th January, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dr Mallory Dwinal-Palisch and I am the Executive Director of Craft Education System. It is my privilege to write and convey wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. As a resident of 37204 ZIP code, it's clear to me that a school like The Rock Academy is very important to the future of our community and city.

I have seen the impact of students who fall behind and become disengaged with traditional education. Having a school like The Rock Academy, with its focus on serving disconnected students who have not found success in traditional school settings, is vital. The Rock Academy's unique approach to re-engaging these students which includes individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path with rich learning experiences provides a pathway to success.

I fully endorse the Rock Academy and their vision to see a world where all young people have the power to shape their own futures. Through the provision of education, support and motivation, The Rock Academy will play a crucial role in transforming the lives of disconnected youth, building a solid foundation for their next phase of life and beyond.

I believe that the opening of The Rock Academy has the potential to significantly benefit this city, and I look forward to supporting its success and growth.

Sincerely,

Dr Mallory Dwinal-Palisch, PhD
Executive Director
Craft Education
mallory.dwinal@crafteducation.com
253 232 2234

615.543.6589
iamwellconsulting@gmail.com
www.iamwellconsulting.com

Maryam Abdallah, LCSW
Founder & Clinical Director
I Am Well Consulting, LLC

January 10, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Maryam Abdallah, and I am the Founder & Clinical Director of I Am Well Consulting. As both a community member and professional working within this area, I am honored to express my support for The Rock Academy. Also, as a resident of the 37189 zip code and a mental health therapist in Nashville, I can confidently say that a school like The Rock Academy is not only a necessity, but would also be instrumental in creating change in the future of our youth, families and community as a whole.

I wholeheartedly endorse The Rock Academy and its vital mission to serve disconnected youth. The school's primary focus on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or become disengaged from traditional education is crucial. Many young people in our community are struggling emotionally and socially, leading to disengagement from learning. This can manifest as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and behavioral challenges. The Rock Academy's approach, with its emphasis on individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path, addresses these underlying mental health concerns. By providing a safe and supportive environment, the Academy can help students develop essential social-emotional skills, such as self-regulation, resilience, and empathy. This holistic approach not only improves academic outcomes but also fosters overall well-being, empowering these young people to overcome adversity and thrive.As a mental health professional, I am committed to offering consulting and resources to help build a solid emotional learning foundation for the youth and families served.

615.543.6589
iamwellconsulting@gmail.com
www.iamwellconsulting.com

The impact of The Rock Academy on our city and community would be transformative. By providing a nurturing environment that prioritizes emotional wellness, the academy will not only reduce dropout rates and youth unemployment but also cultivate a generation of resilient and emotionally intelligent individuals. By fostering a strong sense of purpose, belonging, and self-worth within these young people, we are investing in the future of our community. This will lead to a more engaged, productive, and compassionate workforce, contributing to a more vibrant and thriving society for all. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in partnership and by helping to connect the school with valuable resources in our community. I eagerly anticipate witnessing the positive outcomes that will result from the opening of this vital institution.

Sincerely,

Maryam Abdallah

Maryam Abdallah, LCSW
Founder & Clinical Director
I Am Well Consulting, LLC
iamwellconsulting@gmail.com
615.543.6589

To whom it may concern,

I am expressing my wholehearted support for establishing The Rock Academy, a new high school charter school in Nashville. As someone deeply familiar with the individuals spearheading this initiative, Dr. Ahmed White and Ms. Lekita Sims, I am confident their leadership and dedication will transform our community, particularly for at-risk youth.

Dr. Ahmed White is a proven leader in the field of education, with a record of exceptional service and innovative approaches to addressing the diverse needs of students. He brings a unique and compassionate perspective, understanding firsthand the challenges vulnerable youth face. His ability to merge professional expertise with personal experience ensures that the school will create an environment where every student can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

Ms. Lekita Sims has an honorable and extensive history of community service and a wealth of experience in education. Her commitment to empowering young people and fostering growth in underserved communities has been evident throughout her career. She embodies a genuine heart for service and has consistently worked to uplift those around her, making her an invaluable asset to this initiative.

This charter school is a much-needed addition to our educational landscape and a critical step in addressing the unique challenges faced by at-risk youth in Nashville. The vision and integrity of Dr. White and Ms. Sims ensure that this venture will offer students opportunities they might not otherwise have, providing them with the tools to build brighter futures. The school will serve as a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change in our community.

I encourage you to support this endeavor, as it has the potential to be life-changing for countless young people in our area. Please feel free to contact me at lauraneal51@yahoo.com or 615-569-9530 if you have any questions or want to discuss my endorsement further.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am confident that The Rock Academy will bring about meaningful and lasting change in the lives of Nashville's youth.

Sincerely,

Laura Neal
Creative Arts Instructor/Event Corrdinator

Freddie O'Connell
Mayor

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY

LONNELL MATTHEWS, JR.
JUVENILE COURT CLERK

Juvenile Justice Center
100 Woodland Street
PO Box 196316
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37219-6316
PHONE: (615) 862-7980
EMAIL:LonnellMatthews@jisnashville.gov

Lonnell Matthews
Juvenile Court Clerk
Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County

January 24, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Lonnell Matthews and I am the **Juvenile Court Clerk** of **Davidson County**, and a resident of the **37218** ZIP code. As both a community member and professional working within this area, I want to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. As someone who deeply understands the unique challenges that youth face today, I can say with confidence that a school like The Rock Academy is not only needed but also vital to the future of our community.

I fully endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve disconnected youth. The school's focus on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or become disengaged from traditional education is incredibly important. Many young people in our community are at risk of falling through the cracks, and The Rock Academy's approach of individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path can provide them with the opportunity to succeed. I believe this institution can be a game-changer for many youth in our area, helping them to rediscover their passion for learning and better prepare for their future, whether in higher education or the workforce. Juvenile Court can aid in identifying potential students that can thrive in the type of school environment the Rock Academy aims to provide.

The impact of The Rock Academy on our city and community would be profound. By providing a space where disconnected youth can find support and motivation, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, decrease youth unemployment and foster a sense of purpose and belonging among young people. This, in turn, will strengthen our broader community, creating a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in every way possible, whether through direct collaboration or by helping to connect the school with valuable resources in our community. I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that will result from the opening of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

Lonnell Matthews
Juvenile Court Clerk
Metropolitan Government of Nashville & Davidson County
lonnellmatthews@jisnashville.gov
(615) 862-7996

LaTrya Gordon, LSSW, MSW
Youth Mental Health Provider

January 22, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is LaTrya Gordon, a Licensed School Social Worker and Counselor to adolescents. I am a resident of the 37218 zip code and a Nashville native. I am writing this letter to express my enthusiastic support for The Rock Academy, projected to launch in 2026 as Nashville's first-ever successful free Opportunity Charter School. As a youth mental health provider and someone who grew up in the same vulnerable communities that many of the youth this school aims to serve come from, I deeply understand the importance of this mission.

The Rock Academy's mission to re-engage disconnected youth and ensure they succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice is not just admirable; it is vital. Disconnected youth, often navigating environments that lack stability, resources, and positive role models, face profound disadvantages. These circumstances can lead to cycles of crime, diminished opportunities, and a pervasive sense of hopelessness. I have seen firsthand how the lack of access to meaningful education, rehabilitation opportunities, and community support impacts the trajectory of young lives. Without intervention, many of these youth feel trapped, believing that their current environment defines their future.

Growing up in a similarly disadvantaged community, I witnessed and experienced the systemic barriers that perpetuate cycles of poverty and crime. The lack of opportunities, compounded by environments that often overlook the potential of young individuals, creates an overwhelming sense of defeat. This impact on mindset during critical developmental years is profound. Youth in these circumstances may struggle with self-worth, lack hope for a better future, and become vulnerable to influences that perpetuate the cycle.

Over the past six years, I have worked in these environments, striving to provide mental health services to youth. I have seen the devastating consequences of not having programs or schools like The Rock Academy to help re-engage and uplift these young individuals. Without accessible and tailored opportunities for growth, many youth succumb to the negative influences of their surroundings. Conversely, those given a chance to learn, develop skills, and see a vision for their future can break free from these cycles.

The Rock Academy represents a beacon of hope and a critical solution to fill this gap. By focusing on reconnecting youth with education and guiding them toward post-secondary success, the school offers more than just academic instruction—it provides a pathway to transformation. This initiative not only equips students with the tools they need to succeed but also addresses the broader environmental factors that impact their development. The Academy's focus on the whole person

aligns with the “person-in-environment” perspective, recognizing that external influences profoundly shape individual outcomes.

As someone who has dedicated my career to supporting youth, I wholeheartedly endorse The Rock Academy. The school’s mission has the potential to alter life trajectories, break cycles of systemic disadvantage, and inspire hope in countless young lives. By providing these students with opportunities for change, The Rock Academy can be a pivotal force in creating a brighter future for Nashville’s most vulnerable youth.

Thank you for considering my perspective as someone who has lived and worked in these environments. I am confident that The Rock Academy will be an invaluable addition to our community and a catalyst for change.

Sincerely,
LaTrya Gordon

Licensed School Social Worker, MSW

January 9, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Larry Glover, and I am the Associate Professor of education at Fisk University, an institution of higher learning in the north Nashville community. The university is in the 37208 ZIP code. As both a community member and professional working within this area, I want to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. As a resident of the 37210 ZIP code, I can say with confidence that a school like The Rock Academy is not only needed but also vital to the future of our community.

I fully endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve disconnected youths. The school's focus on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or become disengaged from traditional education is incredibly important and would be one of the first of its kind in middle Tennessee. Many young people in our community are at risk of falling through the cracks, and The Rock Academy's approach of individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path can provide them with the opportunity to succeed and gain a sense of self-worth to the community. I believe this institution can change the lives of many youths in our community, helping them to rediscover their passion for learning, gain a sense of belonging, and better prepare for their future, whether in higher education or the workforce.

The impact of The Rock Academy on our city and community would be profound. By providing a space where disconnected youth can find support and motivation, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, decrease youth unemployment, and foster a sense of purpose and belonging among young people. This, in turn, will strengthen our broader community, creating a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in every way possible, whether through direct collaboration with pre-service teacher partnership through our department, and by helping to connect the school with valuable resources in our community. Additionally, I personally plan to assist with educational resources to make the academy successful.

I look forward to seeing all the positive outcomes that will occur because of the opening of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

Larry Glover

Larry Glover, Ed. D.
Associate Professor
Teacher Education – Fisk University
lglover@fisk.edu
(615) 400-76833

L. Makenzie Collie

M . E D

Makenzie.collie@gmail.com

480.273.0654

January 20, 2025

To Whom it may Concern:

It would be impossible to overstate the respect and admiration I have for Founder, Dr. Ahmed White, and Co-founder, Lekita Sims, of The Rock Academy.

Dr. White and Ms. Sims are the embodiment of service with a pure heart. Both have spent their careers supporting youth education and development. They were school leaders during the four years I worked with them, and under their administration, culture for teachers, staff, and students flourished. Their expectations of scholars are always high, and students bloom in the environment of unwavering belief in student achievement.

I'm excited that our community will have The Rock Academy, which will fill opportunity gaps for students who may be struggling. I know that students attending The Rock Academy will find their purpose and follow their path to success.

If you have any questions about my unwavering support for Dr. White and Ms. Sims and the work they're doing to bring The Rock Academy to our community, please don't hesitate to contact me. I would be delighted to answer any questions about my experience working with these two amazing people.

Best Regards,

Makenzie Collie, M.Ed

January 10, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

As residents of the 37207 zip code, we, the Ward-Pruitt Family, are writing to express our full support for the establishment of The Rock Academy. Having had the privilege of our children being under the leadership of Dr. White and Ms. Sims, the founders of The Rock Academy, we can personally attest to the profound and lasting impact they have had on our family.

Under their guidance, our children experienced a transformative change. Their excitement to attend school each day grew significantly, their confidence blossomed, and they felt genuinely valued and important. Dr. White created an environment where our children thrived academically and personally, always taking the time to ensure they knew "We love you, we believe in you, and there is absolutely, positively nothing you can do about it!" That statement was ingrained in children daily. Ms. Sims consistently went above and beyond to support families, often finding ways to assist outside of the classroom. She was a true supporter and resource for our family. Together, they went the extra mile to help us personally, a kindness and dedication we will never forget.

The Rock Academy's mission aligns perfectly with the passion and care that Dr. White and Ms. Sims have demonstrated throughout their careers. If The Rock Academy is approved, we will proudly be first in line to enroll our current 7th grader, confident in the positive impact it will have on their future and the futures of so many other students in our community.

We fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in 2026. It is a much-needed educational resource for our community, and we believe it will make a meaningful difference for families in the 37207 area and beyond.

Thank you for considering our wholehearted endorsement of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

Katilya Ward
katilyaw@gmail.com
(573) 803-8609

January 3, 2025

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Kimberly Stevens, and it is my great pleasure to write this letter of support on behalf of Dr. Ahmed White and Ms. Lekita Sims and their future school, The Rock Academy.

I am currently the lead fourth grade teacher as well as the English Language Arts lead teacher (grades 3-5) at Smithson Craighead Academy in Madison, Tennessee. This is my sixth year within this organization. I began in the kindergarten setting, moving up to 4th grade these past three years. As a resident and an educator within the Nashville area, I have watched students who, through both circumstances within and beyond their control, fall through the cracks of our educational system as well as societal safety nets.The Rock Academy will be an invaluable addition to our educational landscape, giving those students that have been "left by the wayside" a second chance as becoming a beneficial, productive member of our community.

I support The Rock Academy not only because I believe in their mission of re-engagement of some of our most vulnerable youth, but because I have worked with both Dr. White and Ms. Sims and know their heart and passion for working with today's young adults. I have witnessed first hand Dr. White engaging with students at a middle school and elementary school level, befriending and becoming confidants for the "hard to love" students and their parents, creating a school atmosphere that engages students and makes them want to be in school. I was lucky enough to be able to watch Ms. Sims create from the ground up a preschool program within Smithson Craighead Academy that has given our youngest students a marked head start on their academic journeys. Both Dr. White and Ms.Sims have an educator's servant heart that shows in all that they do.

The Rock Academy will bring to Nashville something that it has never had before: A school for students who may feel hopeless because of past, youthful indiscretions to feel they belong. A school that doesn't look at them as though they are not enough, and even more so, a school that ingrains in them that they are more than enough and worthy of acceptance, a quality education and a future they can look forward to.

Thank you,

Kimberly Stevens

Kimberly Stevens
4th Grade Teacher
Smithson Craighead Academy
kimstevens19@gmail.com
615-707-2865

January 22, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

The need for The Rock Academy is something I witness daily in my community. As a parent and someone who both lives and works here, I see so many young people who are disconnected from their education and unsure of their next steps. These kids aren't lacking potential—they're lacking opportunities that meet them where they are and guide them toward success.

I've spent years watching families struggle to find resources that truly support their children. Traditional schools often can't provide the flexibility, mentorship, or individualized attention that some students desperately need to thrive. That's why I believe The Rock Academy is essential. It's not just another school—it's a lifeline for students who feel unseen, unheard, and uncertain about their future.

What excites me most about The Rock Academy is the focus on re-engaging students through tailored educational paths and mentorship. I've seen firsthand how transformative it can be when a young person feels like someone truly believes in them. This school has the potential to create those life-changing moments for so many kids in our community.

The ripple effect of this work will be undeniable. When students succeed, families feel stronger, communities grow closer, and the long-term benefits touch every corner of our city. I fully support The Rock Academy because I know the difference it will make—not just for the students who walk through its doors but for everyone who calls this community home.

Sincerely,

Kristin Kindall-Richardson

Kristin Kindall Richardson

January 14, 2025

To whom it may concern:

The Martha O'Bryan Center is pleased to partner with The Rock Academy (TRA) in their mission to re-engage disconnected youth and ensure students succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice. Our organization looks forward to serving Rock Academy students and merging our successful Academic Student Union model (ASU) with TRA's holistic approach to academic achievement, workforce readiness, and social-emotional development.

Modeled after college student unions, MOBC's Academic Student Unions (ASUs) are vibrant, teen-driven spaces designed to support high school grade students on their academic journey. Recognizing that less than 30% of Nashville high school graduates obtain a post-secondary degree, we have purposefully partner with local high schools that have the lowest college-going rates, highest percentage of economically disadvantaged students, and greatest need for wrap-around college access and success services. Providing supports at Stratford, Maplewood, and Hunters Lane High Schools, MOBC's ASU's allow students to self-select from an interconnected menu of services, including subject-specific tutoring, ACT preparation, college prep workshops, homework help, and enrichment clubs. Through project-based learning and career readiness workshops, students develop key social-emotional skills. Key competencies include identifying a strong support person, cultivating leadership, critical thinking, conflict resolution, cooperation, resume building, and long-term goal setting. ASU activities are designed to provide students with opportunities to interact positively with peers, explore their passions, build skillsets associated with college and career success, and develop social and resource support networks. On average, our ASU's serve more than 800 students per year, and more importantly have supported 2,152 students in enrolling in post-secondary education and have helped students receive $146 million in scholarships and financial aid since first launching in 2010.

As an anti-poverty organization, the Martha O'Bryan Center has a longstanding history and deep community roots, grounded in tradition and strengthened by innovation. Our work began in 1894 when Miss O'Bryan organized the Gleaner's Society to support impoverished Nashville residents, and since 1948 we have operated from the heart of Cayce Place—our city's oldest, largest, and poorest public housing community. This is where we continue in service, partnering with families to open doors of possibility, create a culture of attainment, and build prosperity. We help vulnerable families and individuals overcome the barriers of poverty through education, employment, and wellness supports—serving more than 10,000 clients each year.

We look forward to collaborating with The Rock Academy. Please contact me at kmiller@marthaobryan.org or 615-254-1791 if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

Kent Miller

Kent Miller
Chief Operating Officer

Mary K. Friskics-Warren
1719 Holly Street
Nashville, TN 37206
Kakifw@gmail.com
615.418.8787

January 9, 2025

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

My name is Kaki Friskics-Warren, Executive Director of the Dan & Margaret Maddox Fund. I am a resident of 37206 writing to you in support of The Rock Academy.

My support is rooted in two fundamental convictions: 1) our community's commitment to being a place where everyone belongs requires us to create onramps for disconnected youth; and 2) my sincere belief that Dr. Ahmed White is the right leader to create these new pathways.

In 2024, Nashville went through an extensive strategic visioning process called Imagine Nashville in which 40% of youth stated that they felt left behind. The young people served by The Rock Academy feel disconnected for many reasons -- school mismatch, family distress, neighborhood instability and the criminalization of poverty. Drowning in systems that have failed them, these youth need flexible places to connect with adults who believe in them. The leadership of The Rock Academy understands the complexities of intersectional trauma and knows how to design environments that promote healing and learning. The Rock Academy will create a sense of belonging where young people see themselves as strong, capable and inherently valuable members of their community.

As stated before, I believe that Dr. Ahmed White is uniquely equipped to lead a new school for disconnected, disappointed and discouraged youth. While his administrative skills have been proven and his pedagogical command has been tested, it is Dr. White's conviction that all young people have something to offer the community that

has driven him to create The Rock Academy. Dr. White will meet each student's unique challenges with individualized support and tailored educational opportunities to forge unforeseen breakthroughs. Dr. White will shepherd each student toward a sense of belonging and full participation in community life. He will not give up on any student no matter how long it takes.

I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions you might have. Feel free to reach out to me at 615-481-8787.

Sincerely,

Mary K. "Kaki" Friskics-Warren

Kalinda Fisher
Owner/President
Advocate Market Research Bureau

13 December 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Kalinda Fisher, and as both a community member and professional who has worked extensively in the educational sector, I want to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. Having spent considerable time conducting research and engaging with students, parents, and support staff in schools and the legal system, I have seen firsthand the challenges many young people face in our current educational environment. A school like The Rock Academy is not only needed but vital to the future of our community.

Through my research, it has become clear that many marginalized students are left behind in traditional educational systems, creating a broader public health concern. Too often, schools prioritize disciplinary actions over incentivizing positive engagement, leading to disengagement and missed opportunities for growth. Additionally, practices like mis-tracking students can limit their potential, further widening the gap in achievement. The Rock Academy's commitment to addressing these systemic issues with individualized support and tailored educational paths makes it uniquely positioned to re-engage and empower students.

The findings also underscore the importance of fostering an environment that prioritizes connection and growth. By providing mentorship, creating close-knit classroom communities, and emphasizing incentive-based learning, The Rock Academy will inspire students to rediscover their passion for education. This approach has the potential to reduce dropout rates, equip students for future success, and strengthen the broader community by cultivating a motivated and prepared workforce.

I fully support the establishment of The Rock Academy and am eager to see the positive outcomes that will result from its opening. Whether through collaboration, community engagement, or helping connect the school with valuable resources, I am committed to supporting this vital initiative.

Sincerely,

Kalinda L. Fisher

Kalinda Fisher
Owner/President
Advocate Market Research Bureau
kalinda@advocatemr.com
615-752-7573

FREDDIE O'CONNELL
MAYOR

Juvenile Court
METROPOLITAN NASHVILLE & DAVIDSON COUNTY

SHEILA D.J. CALLOWAY, JUDGE

JUVENILE COURT OF DAVIDSON COUNTY
100 WOODLAND STREET
P.O. BOX 196306
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37219-6306

January 21, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my support for the charter application of The Rock Academy Nashville, an innovative Opportunity Public Charter High School scheduled to open in 2026. As a Juvenile Court Judge, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges that many of our young people face, particularly those who are chronically absent, at risk of dropping out, or navigating systemic inequities. The mission and model of The Rock Academy align closely with the needs of these students, and I believe this school has the potential to transform lives and strengthen our community.

The Rock Academy's focus on belonging, relevance, and flexibility is uniquely designed to re-engage underserved youth. Their commitment to fostering a sense of belonging through mentorship and comprehensive wraparound support is critical to building trust and creating a nurturing environment for students. By offering career-connected learning pathways and individualized instruction, The Rock ensures that every student can access meaningful opportunities that prepare them for success in school and beyond.

Dr. Ahmed White, the founder and CEO of The Rock Academy, brings over 20 years of expertise in working with high-needs students, including those in state custody and foster care, as well as students with significant learning challenges. His proven track record and innovative vision offer a solid foundation for the academy's success.

As a court that frequently supports youth and families, we recognize the urgent need for educational models like The Rock Academy, which provide students with the tools to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. This school will play a vital role in reducing the risks associated with chronic absenteeism and dropout rates while empowering students to build brighter futures.

We support the application of The Rock Academy and urge you to approve this charter school as an essential resource for our community. Thank you for considering this critical initiative for our youth.

Sincerely,

Judge Sheila D.J. Calloway
Davidson County Juvenile Court

Jennifer N. Wade, J.D
Administrator/ Former Judicial Magistrate

December 11, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Jennifer Wade, J.D., and I am a founding board member of The Rock Academy and a resident of Davidson County, TN (37122). While I write this letter in an individual capacity, my professional role as a leader within the Juvenile Court of Davidson County and my personal experiences working with justice-involved youth uniquely inform my perspective.

Every day, I witness firsthand the challenges faced by justice-involved youth, many of whom are African American males disproportionately left behind in our education system. These young individuals often lack the necessary school supports and resources to thrive, leading to disengagement from traditional education. The Rock Academy is uniquely positioned to address these gaps, offering not only a pathway back to education but also critical connections to mental health services and essential skills to help develop them into contributing citizens.

The Rock Academy's mission to re-engage students who have fallen behind or become disconnected from traditional schools is not only commendable but essential to the future of our community. By providing individualized support, mentorship, and tailored educational pathways, the academy offers young people the opportunity to succeed academically and personally. This school can serve as a lifeline for many youths, reigniting their passion for learning and equipping them for success in higher education or the workforce.

The broader impact of The Rock Academy will be transformative. By reducing dropout rates, addressing youth unemployment, and fostering a sense of purpose and belonging, the academy will strengthen the fabric of our community. It will directly address the needs of disconnected youth, many of whom are among our most vulnerable populations, and empower them to become active, productive members of society.

I wholeheartedly support the opening of The Rock Academy and am committed to contributing to its success in every way possible, whether through collaboration, partnerships, or by connecting the school with valuable resources in the community. The positive outcomes of this initiative will be far-reaching, improving the lives of young people and the community as a whole.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Wade, J.D

Jennifer Wade, J.D.

Court Administrator
Founding Board Member, The Rock Academy
Resident, Davidson County, TN

January 25, 2025

To the Application Review Committee:

As a founding member of the Board of Directors, I write in staunch support of approving The Rock Academy's application. As a resident of Davidson County and former CEO of RePublic Schools, I firmly believe that we need schools that meet the differing needs of our children. For many children and families, the current landscape of schools meets their educational needs. Unfortunately, we also see that our current system is not designed to support the unique needs of our most vulnerable children.

As a former educator, I saw the challenge of balancing the deep needs of specific students with limited resources and seemingly limitless mandates on schools. As an uncle, I felt desperation in trying to find the right combination of placements and schools for my nephew. When asking judges, social workers, and dedicated staff at Child Protective Services about services and schools that could be a good support for my nephew, they did not share names of places in Davidson County. They shared names of other places in Tennessee hundreds of miles away with long waiting lists or private residential facilities with price tags that seemed impossibly out-of-reach.

I am incredibly impressed by the character, commitment, and expertise of both Ahmed White and Lekita Sims. Both in their personal and professional lives, you see evidence of two leaders who are deeply committed to children who are currently underserved in our community. The leadership team at The Rock Academy seem ideally suited to be among the first to open an Opportunity School in our community.

Thank you for your consideration.

With Appreciation,

Jon Rybka

(Resident of Davidson County and former Educator)

James Robinson
Executive Director
SCA/ Project Reflect

1/28/25

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is James Robinson, and I am the **Executive Director** of **Project Reflect**, a resident of the 37067 ZIP code and a school leader serving in Nashville for 10 years. As both a community member and professional working within this area, I want to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. *I can say with confidence that a school like The Rock Academy is not only needed but also vital to the future of our community.*

I fully endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve disconnected youth. The school's focus on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or become disengaged from traditional education is incredibly important. Many young people in our community are at risk of falling through the cracks, and The Rock Academy's approach of individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path can provide them with the opportunity to succeed. I believe this institution can be a game-changer for many youth in our area, helping them to rediscover their passion for learning and better prepare for their future, whether in higher education or the workforce.

The impact of The Rock Academy on our city and community would be profound. By providing a space where disconnected youth can find support and motivation, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, decrease youth unemployment, and foster a sense of purpose and belonging among young people. This, in turn, will strengthen our broader community, creating a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in every way possible, whether through direct collaboration, sharing their news, or helping with tutoring or supports for younger siblings of students at The Rock. I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that will result from the opening of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

James Robinson

Executive Director
Project Reflect
james.robinson@scanashville.org
585.957.6278

THE BOARD

Mark Benerofe
CampGroup

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David Schwartz
Blackstone

Dr. Daphne Scott
Hospital for Special Surgery

Jim Shook
Dozen Digital

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Jai Nanda

January 17, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great enthusiasm that I write this letter of support for The Rock Academy. Dr. White and his team are addressing a critical need in creating a unique and innovative school environment designed specifically to serve the needs of at-risk youth in Nashville. Their experience in education, particularly in working with vulnerable students makes them uniquely qualified to launch this important initiative.

Urban Dove's network of five charter schools here in New York City serve a similar population to those targeted by The Rock Academy. Dr. White and his team have visited us several times and shown an impressive commitment to utilizing the experiences and best practices of other similar models to ensure The Rock Academy has a successful launch. We look forward to an ongoing partnership with them in which we can share experiences to continuously improve on the educational promises we have made to our students and families.

Those of us in education have seen too many students struggle in school because they are unable to find a setting that meets their challenges and needs – many of which go far beyond academics. The Rock Academy's holistic model understands these myriad challenges and is designed to support students in all aspects of their development. It is critical to communities that these types of alternative educational settings exist so that every student can receive a high quality public education.

Thank you so much for your consideration and please feel free to contact me if Urban Dove can be of any assistance to them during this application process or in the future.

Sincerely,

Jai Nanda
Executive Director

January 24, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express Level Field Partners' ("Level Field" or "LFP") support for The Rock Academy ("The Rock") charter application to launch in Nashville, TN.

Level Field's mission is to enable cost-effective access to first-class facilities for high-quality public charter schools. Our team has more than 80 years of experience helping charter schools address some of their most pressing real estate and related financing challenges in order to educate more children, enrich learning environments, and strengthen their economic standing. The team has deep internal sector knowledge from having served as charter school financial and operations leaders, in-house real estate developers, and general counsels. We are proud that our structure allows us to combine sophisticated commercial expertise with a mission-driven approach guided only by what's best for the schools we serve.

Our unique approach, depth of expertise, and strong national partnerships have enabled us to work on behalf of leading charter school organizations in 29 states, including fairly extensive projects in Nashville, Memphis and Knoxville. Collectively, the Level Field team has financed and developed 125+ charter school projects representing more than 4.2MM square feet of educational space and totaling more than $1.1B+ in project costs.

We are proud to support The Rock Academy's Chief Executive Officer, senior leadership team and Board of Directors in their search for and evaluation of prospective locations in Nashville. Our support may include, but is not limited to the following:

- Supporting the site search and feasibility assessment of prospective expansion locations in Nashville (inclusive of temporary and permanent campuses)
- Reviewing and refining key facility inputs into multi-year financial models
- Identifying potential financing sources and engaging in initial outreach efforts
- Leading the assemblage of key project team members to refine project schedule and project scope, inclusive of test fits
- Assisting acquisition negotiations on prospective facility options with The Rock's legal counsel and leadership team to result in a clear acquisition timeline
- Acting as a sounding board on a range of facilities and start-up topics

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for The Rock Academy. Please reach out should you have any questions.

With best regards,

Jimmy Henderson
Partner
Jimmy@levelfieldpartners.com I 770.547.3763

January 29, 2025

Dr. Adrienne Battle
Director of Schools
Metro Nashville Public Schools
2601 Bransford Avenue
Nashville, TN 37204

RE: Metro Nashville charter school application

On behalf of GT3 Group, I am writing in strong support of The Rock Academy, a grades 9-12 charter school being founded by Dr. Ahmed White.

GT3 has the pleasure of working with and supporting high-quality charter organizations like The Rock Academy, through back-office services as well as strategic consulting, including startup and growth initiatives.

In that capacity, I have had the opportunity to work with Dr. White, and have witnessed firsthand his leadership capacity and his dedication and diligence in designing a unique, high performing organization that will re-engage disconnected youth to ensure they succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice. GT3 has worked alongside The Rock Academy in developing a well thought-out, responsible budget that will enable the organization to successfully implement its mission and programming and that will create long-term sustainability for the school. Further, GT3 Group intends to work with The Rock Academy in a back-office services capacity to help the school in developing and maintaining strong and sustainable financial operations.

I appreciate your efforts in creating an environment that has produced a high-quality charter sector in Nashville. It is my belief that The Rock Academy will be a critical long-term partner for MNPS in serving the Nashville community and in establishing an environment of high expectations across the district.

Thank you for your consideration of The Rock Academy's application. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if I may be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Greg Thompson
CEO
GT3 Group

January 30th, 2025

Dear Members of the MNPS Board of Education,

I am writing to express my strong support for The Rock Academy's charter application. As a board member of The Rock Academy and a first-generation Latina college graduate, I know firsthand the transformative power of education and the role that strong, mission-driven schools play in ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have access to meaningful opportunities for success.

The Rock Academy's mission to re-engage disconnected youth and provide them with pathways to post-secondary success is deeply personal to me. As someone who navigated the complexities of higher education without a roadmap, I understand how critical it is for students to have a school that not only provides rigorous academics but also fosters a sense of belonging, mentorship, and real-world relevance.

Under the leadership of Dr. Ahmed White, The Rock Academy is positioned to fill a crucial gap in Nashville's educational landscape. His track record of revitalizing schools and prioritizing student-centered learning demonstrates the kind of leadership necessary to create an environment where students feel seen, supported, and empowered.

What makes The Rock Academy especially compelling is its commitment to meeting students where they are through flexible learning models, wraparound services, and career and technical education pathways that ensure they graduate with the skills needed for success in college, career, and life. Their emphasis on restorative practices and mentorship mirrors the kind of support that first-generation students, like myself, often need to persist and thrive.

I urge the MNPS Board of Education to approve The Rock Academy's charter application. The students of Nashville deserve educational options that recognize and respond to their diverse needs, and I am confident that The Rock Academy will be a vital addition to our city's public school landscape.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Guadalupe Davalos Meyers

GROUNDSWELL
NETWORK

January 13, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Greg Lippman, and I am the founder/CEO of Groundswell Network, a national organization working to identify, strengthen, and scale the best schools designed for the most at-risk students. I have been working in Tennessee since 2022 on both statewide policy initiatives like the Opportunity Charter School legislation as well as in Nashville and Memphis, recruiting and supporting phenomenal educators like Ahmed White, founder of The Rock Academy, in their efforts to design and build new Opportunity Charter Schools and provide new options for Tennessee's most challenged students.

I have had the privilege of working closely with Ahmed from the very genesis of The Rock Academy, starting with early discussions about the need in Nashville for an innovative new high school and visits to exemplary schools around the country. I have had a chance to get to understand both Ahmed's academic and programmatic vision as well as how his personal trajectory (both in terms of his family history as well as his professional growth and experiences) make him the ideal leader for a new school in Nashville designed to help at-risk children transform their lives and future, in school and beyond.

The Nashville community is blessed to have an educator like Ahmed take on the challenge of being the first to open an Opportunity Charter School. Ahmed has all of the crucial technical and leadership skills; he has done everything from working in a group home to teaching high-need Special Education students to taking a charter school on the verge of closure and transforming it from a Priority School to a Reward School, in the process becoming one of the most respected voices in Davidson County on how to best serve families in crisis.

The model of The Rock Academy takes its inspiration from some of the best alternative schools in the country, combining proven programs and curricula around youth development, academic growth, career & technical education, and family engagement into a school that is tailored to the needs and aspirations of Nashville families and students who have not yet experienced success in school. I have been deeply impressed by Ahmed's work in synthesizing the best of what the alternative schools sector has to offer and turning it into an innovative model that I am confident will live up to the spirit and hope of the Opportunity Charter School legislation and provide something fundamentally new to the Nashville public school landscape.

Ahmed and his team and families at The Rock Academy have my full support and confidence, and I am very excited to see what Ahmed's pioneering efforts will bring to the most at-risk children in the communities he loves and has served successfully for decades.

Sincerely,

Greg Lippman
Founder/CEO

SOUTHEAST VENTURE

January 21, 2025

MNPS Charter Schools Office
2601 Bransford Avenue
Nashville, TN 37204

Re: Letter of Support for The Rock Academy – Charter School

To Whom It May Concern:

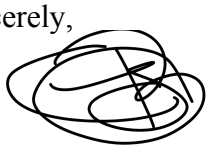
I am writing to offer my enthusiastic support for the opening of The Rock Academy ("The Rock"), a charter school dedicated to re-engaging disconnected youth and empowering them to succeed in their post-secondary pathways of choice. As a real estate professional with extensive experience in commercial properties and community development, I have had the privilege of working closely with The Rock's leadership team to select a suitable site for the school. I am confident that The Rock will make a profound difference in the lives of our youth and strengthen the fabric of our community.

The mission of The Rock is to empower youth to shape their own futures, by providing deeply relevant, hands-on learning experiences regardless of their circumstances. The reality is that students have drastically different backgrounds, needs, and experiences. Many of them often opt out of schooling because they don't see the immediate need or long-term value. The Rock recognizes this and provides a holistic, student-centered approach to education to ensure that every student has a pathway to success that is tailored to their individual needs and aspirations. Whether a student is pursuing a college degree, vocational certification, or entering the workforce directly, The Rock prepares them to take the next step with confidence and competence.

I fully support The Rock in its mission to re-engage disconnected youth and provide them with the tools, support, and community they need to succeed. I am eager to be a part of the positive impact this school will have on our city's youth and look forward to supporting its success in any way I can.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Greg Barro, Jr.
Affiliate Broker

Holy Family Catholic Church
Faith. Family. Fellowship. Service.
9100 Crockett Road ~ Brentwood, TN 37027-8450

December 11, 2024

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Fr. John J. Raphael and I am the Associate Pastor of Holy Family Catholic Church in Brentwood, TN. I am a resident of the 37205 Zip Code. I am writing to express my full support for and endorsement of the Rock Academy. I am absolutely confident that a school such as the Rock School Academy is not only beneficial, but also necessary for the success of all children in our community.

My endorsement is based on my experience as a secondary school teacher, principal and president (and alumnus) of a Catholic High School in New Orleans that served a predominantly minority community. My endorsement is also based on my seven years of experience as a member of the Board of Directors, and five years as Chair of the same Board, of Project Reflect/Smithson Craighead Academy. During my time at PR/SCA I had the opportunity to work directly with the Founder and Co-Founder of The Rock Academy. I witnessed the extraordinary turnaround in the stability and documented success of the school under their leadership. From firsthand experience, I believe that the excellent academic and social environment provided in that setting will also characterize the atmosphere of The Rock Academy. Attention to students' academic needs, family circumstances and social environment needs is necessary for students from all backgrounds to succeed academically and personally. These are matters of critical importance in the lives of children from challenging backgrounds, and difficult financial and family settings. If approved, The Rock Academy will have a comprehensive and holistic approach to the education of students.

The impact of The Rock Academy will not only be seen in the measurable outcomes of student achievement, it will also be seen in the investment that parents and other community members will make in the work that will be accomplished by the Academy. I say this not speculatively, but based on my direct observation of the philosophy, work ethic and commitment to school culture building that I have already witnessed in the leaders of this school.

I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy and I pledge my full support in any meaningful capacity to ensure the success of this school.

Sincerely,

Rev. John J Raphael
Associate Pastor
Father.john@holyfamilycc.com
202-321-5994 (cell)

Youth VILLAGES
The force for families

To Whom It May Concern,

Our Youth Villages team is writing to express our support for Rock Academy as they launch a public charter school aimed to change the trajectory at risk youth. Youth Villages is a nationwide non-profit agency with its roots in Tennessee. Our team serves Davidson Co and the surrounding Middle Tennessee areas. Our clinical programs provide in-home therapeutic services for high-risk youth, therapeutic foster care, and lifeset services for young adults who age out of care. We also have group homes in the local areas with children who attend public schools. We aim to provide services to the most vulnerable youth and families within the community; a goal that we share with Rock Academy.

We have seen firsthand the unique challenges our kids face day to day at school. Our kids suffer from trauma and toxic stress that impacts their learning, and they need additional support and commitment from adults at school. Rock Academy aims to catch the kids falling through the cracks and ensure individualized support, mentorship, community resources, and tailored learning. Rock Academy sticks out to us because they understand that in order for children to be successful in education they must first have some of their most basic needs met like safety, stability, and positive relationships with adults.

We feel confident that Rock Academy is committed to ensuring kids are successful at school despite their circumstances and that kids have hope for and confidence in a bright future. We know that Rock Academy will have a positive impact on high school youth feeling a sense of belonging and community. We believe
Rock Academy will have positive impacts on truancy and dropout rates. In turn, our community will see more successful engaged adults entering the workforce.

Youth Villages is committed to collaboration with Rock Academy. We have numerous foster families that are earning for a more supportive trauma informed school

environment that understands the challenges their kids face. Youth Villages is happy to assist in spreading the word about Rock Academy to fill its halls. Youth Villages can commit to ensuring the children at Rock Academy have access to therapeutic services through our agency as needed. We are excited to see the positive impacts Rock Academy will have on our community and are looking forward to continued collaboration.

Frankie Boyette, LMSW.

Regional Supervisor, Treatment Foster Care.

Claire Moses, LCSW

Assistant Director for Contract DCS Programs and Foster Care

Nikki Swann, MA

Director of Community Based Programs

Brittany Farrar

Brittany Farrar, MSSW

Executive Director | Youth Villages

January 23, 2025
To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Edward Kindall, and I am a former District Councilman, a former School Board Member for Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools for 28 years, Chairman for 3 terms and Vice-chairman for 11 terms, the author of *A Historic Walk Down Jefferson Street*, and a practicing attorney for 43 years. As a long-time advocate for education and the betterment of our community, I am writing to express my full support for establishing The Rock Academy.

The mission of The Rock Academy to serve disconnected youth is not only commendable but also critically important to the future of our community. Too often, young people who fall behind in traditional educational settings are left without the resources, support, or opportunities to regain their footing. The Rock Academy's commitment to individualized learning, mentorship, and tailored educational paths offers these students a chance to re-engage, thrive, and build successful futures.

Our community has long faced challenges related to high dropout rates, youth unemployment, and disengagement. The Rock Academy has the potential to directly address these issues, creating a pathway for young people to achieve their full potential. This school's innovative approach will empower students to see the value in their education and develop the skills needed for higher education or prepare them for the workforce.

As someone who has dedicated much of my career to advocating for the betterment of Nashville's youth, I believe the opening of The Rock Academy would have a profound and lasting impact in this community. It would not only reduce the number of students who slip through the cracks but also strengthen our city's social and economic fabric. The academy's emphasis on mentorship and community-building will inspire a generation of young people who are both motivated and equipped to contribute meaningful and profound impact to society.

Having served as a long-time member of the Board of Education and on the Board at Smithson Craighead, I have had a first-hand opportunity to observe Mr. White's dedication, commitment, and skillful leadership. This further demonstrates his ability to accomplish this feat with The Rock Academy upscaling our youth.

I wholeheartedly support Mr. White, the mission and vision of The Rock Academy, and look forward to seeing the positive change it will bring to Nashville. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can assist in building connections, supporting outreach efforts, or providing further advocacy for this important initiative.

Sincerely,

Edward T. Kindall
Former District Councilman
Former School Board Member, MNPS (28 years)

Former Chairman School Board, MNPS (3 terms)

Former Vice-Chairman School Board, MNPS (11 terms)

Former Board Member of Smithson Craighead (2 terms)

Author, *A Historic Walk Down Jefferson Street*
Attorney

December 20, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dr. Maya Faison, and I serve as the Founder & CEO of The Faison Advisory Group. As a current leader in Nashville and former CEO of the TN Charter School Center (TCSC), I can say with confidence that The Rock Academy is needed within our community. The challenges facing our disconnected youth require innovative solutions, and I believe The Rock Academy offers exactly that.

I wholeheartedly support The Rock Academy's mission to re-engage disconnected youth and ensure their success in their chosen post-secondary pathway. As Tennessee's first Opportunity Public Charter School, The Rock Academy addresses a critical gap in our educational landscape. Their three-pillar approach of fostering belonging, ensuring relevance, and providing flexibility demonstrates a deep understanding of what disconnected students need to succeed. I am particularly impressed by their commitment to offering four diverse CTE pathways - Caring, Creative, Technical, and Trade - which will provide students with practical skills aligned with high-demand industries. This is exactly the type of school I envisioned as the CEO of TCSC when our team helped to pass the recent legislation that made Opportunity Charter Schools possible.

The impact of The Rock Academy on Metro Nashville Public Schools and our broader community cannot be overstated. In a district where some students struggle to find their place in traditional educational settings, The Rock Academy offers a vital alternative that could help reduce dropout rates and increase post-secondary success. Their focus on culturally responsive curriculum, restorative practices, and career exploration will help build a stronger workforce pipeline and create more opportunities for Nashville's youth. My company surely look forward to supporting The Rock Academy's opening by serving as a community partner. This school represents a crucial step forward in ensuring that every student in Nashville has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their past educational experiences.

Sincerely,
Dr. Maya B. Faison
Founder & CEO
The Faison Advisory Group

December 20, 2024

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dr. Maya Faison, and I serve as the Founder & CEO of The Faison Advisory Group. As a current leader in Nashville and former CEO of the TN Charter School Center (TCSC), I can say with confidence that The Rock Academy is needed within our community. The challenges facing our disconnected youth require innovative solutions, and I believe The Rock Academy offers exactly that.

I wholeheartedly support The Rock Academy's mission to re-engage disconnected youth and ensure their success in their chosen post-secondary pathway. As Tennessee's first Opportunity Public Charter School, The Rock Academy addresses a critical gap in our educational landscape. Their three-pillar approach of fostering belonging, ensuring relevance, and providing flexibility demonstrates a deep understanding of what disconnected students need to succeed. I am particularly impressed by their commitment to offering four diverse CTE pathways - Caring, Creative, Technical, and Trade - which will provide students with practical skills aligned with high-demand industries. This is exactly the type of school I envisioned as the CEO of TCSC when our team helped to pass the recent legislation that made Opportunity Charter Schools possible.

The impact of The Rock Academy on Metro Nashville Public Schools and our broader community cannot be overstated. In a district where some students struggle to find their place in traditional educational settings, The Rock Academy offers a vital alternative that could help reduce dropout rates and increase post-secondary success. Their focus on culturally responsive curriculum, restorative practices, and career exploration will help build a stronger workforce pipeline and create more opportunities for Nashville's youth. My company surely look forward to supporting The Rock Academy's opening by serving as a community partner. This school represents a crucial step forward in ensuring that every student in Nashville has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of their past educational experiences.

Sincerely,
Dr. Maya B. Faison
Founder & CEO
The Faison Advisory Group

Dawana L. Wade, CEO
Salama Urban Ministries, Inc.

January 27, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Dawana Wade, and I am the CEO of Salama Urban Ministries, Inc., and a resident of the 37076 ZIP code. As both a community member and professional working within this area, I want to express my wholehearted support for The Rock Academy. Salama is located in the 37203 ZIP code, where we serve primarily low to moderate income students and families. I can say with confidence that a school like The Rock Academy is not only needed, but also vital to the future of our entire community.

I fully endorse The Rock Academy and its mission to serve disconnected youth. The school's focus on re-engaging students who have fallen behind or become disengaged from traditional education is incredibly important. Many young people in our community are at risk of falling through the cracks, and The Rock Academy's approach of individualized support, mentorship, and a tailored educational path can provide them with the opportunity to succeed. I believe this institution can be a game-changer for many youth in our area, helping them to rediscover their passion for learning and better prepare for their future, whether in higher education or the workforce. Because our families are always seeking the very best educational outcomes for their students, we are often a primary source for sharing recommendations, resources, and support in locating such. We commit to sharing information about Rock Academy with our families, as well as those who are a part of the Salama and Edgehill community. We are also a part of a number of community and youth serving coalitions and community groups committed to the best outcomes for students across the city. We will share information amongst those groups and partners, recognizing that Rock Academy staff are also very well acquainted and recognized in many of the same circles.

The impact of The Rock Academy on our city and community would be profound. By providing a space where disconnected youth can find support and motivation, the academy will help reduce dropout rates, decrease youth unemployment, and foster a sense of purpose and belonging among young people. This, in turn, will strengthen our broader community, creating a more vibrant, engaged, and productive workforce. I fully support the opening of The Rock Academy in every way possible, whether through student referral, collaborative efforts to provide after school and summer services, advocating for Rock Academy, as well as its students and families, and/or serving as thought partners for strategic ways the entire city can become an even more supportive environment for all youth. I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that will result from the opening of The Rock Academy.

Sincerely,

Dawana L. Wade

Dawana Wade, CEO
Salama Urban Ministries
dwade@salamaserves.org
615-251-4050, ext. 115

Debra Lister Consulting

January 13, 2025

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Debra Lister and I am an independent consultant who works with charter school boards. I was previously a Partner at Education Board Partners for eight years, where I coached and trained school leaders and charter school board members around implementing good governance practices.

I have been working with The Rock Academy leadership to effectively understand and communicate the roles and responsibilities of a charter school board; recruit, interview, select, and onboard new board members; set up strong board structures; and design policies and processes through a liberatory process.

I have been impressed with the lens that Dr. Ahmed White approaches his vision for The Rock Academy. He has seen a significant need in the community and utilized his skills, experience and network to solve this need through the development of a charter school for opportunity youth. I have worked with hundreds of school leaders and boards across the country and am able to recognize outstanding leadership. Dr. Ahmed White and his team have been conducting thoughtful community engagement in preparation for the school. Additionally, Dr. White has been strategic about inviting community members to potentially serve on the board of the school. His communication and expectations are clear and he works diligently to set up board members for success. Board development will continue as the school gets authorized and develops plans for opening.

I am confident that The Rock Academy will fulfill a need in the Nashville community and that the board governing the school will be prepared and effective.

If I can answer any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,
Debra Lister
Debra Lister

January 9, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

It is my privilege to write this letter of support on behalf of The Rock Academy, a new charter school projected to open in Nashville, Tennessee, in 2026. My name is Darryl Dinning, and I am the Founder and Head Chef of Panache Catering Inc. Over the past seven years, I have had the honor of working closely with the Founder and Co-Founder of The Rock Academy in a school nutrition capacity for a charter school. Together, we addressed food disparities during the pandemic, ensuring students and families had access to healthy meals during a time of great uncertainty.

Through these years of collaboration, I have witnessed firsthand the profound and lasting impact these leaders have had on the lives of our community and students. Their commitment to equity, education, and holistic student well-being has been nothing short of transformative.

As a resident of the 37207 ZIP code, I have seen how positive partnerships, a culture of belonging, and educational leaders who genuinely believe in and support at-risk students can pivot their success pathways. The Rock Academy's mission aligns perfectly with what our community needs—an institution that fosters opportunity, nurtures growth, and prioritizes student success.

I, Darryl Dinning, fully endorse and support The Rock Academy as a new charter school projected to open in 2026. I wholeheartedly believe in their vision and know their presence will significantly enrich the lives of students and families in Nashville. Should The Rock Academy be approved, it is my personal goal to support them to the best of my abilities, especially as it relates to their school nutritional programs and services.

The Rock Academy has my full support and endorsement. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information or assistance.

Sincerely,

Darryl Dinning
Founder and Head Chef
Panache Catering Inc.
(615) 289-0987
dinning@tds.net

Darnnelle Ellison-Carter
1514 Enclave Cl,
Nashville, TN 37207

January 3, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for The Rock Academy and its mission to re-engage disconnected youth and help them succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice. This innovative institution will play a transformative role in the lives of students who have struggled to find success in traditional school settings, offering them a renewed sense of purpose and a pathway to achievement.

The Rock Academy is designed to serve a growing and underserved population of students in Tennessee. As the state's first Opportunity Public Charter School, established under newly approved legislation, the Academy will offer a unique educational model tailored to meet the needs of disconnected youth. By focusing on students who have become disengaged with traditional education, The Rock Academy fills a critical gap in our educational landscape.
The school's design is centered on three essential elements that foster student success:

1. ***Belonging*** - The Rock Academy prioritizes creating a safe and supportive environment where students feel valued and understood. Through positive relationships, a small school model, restorative practices, and consistent routines, the school will provide the foundation students need to thrive academically and emotionally.
2. ***Relevance*** - By offering a culturally responsive curriculum, career and technical education (CTE), and engaging learning experiences, The Rock Academy ensures that students see the connection between their education and their future. This relevance is vital for re-engaging students and motivating them to pursue their goals.
3. ***Flexibility*** - The school's mastery-based learning approach, social-emotional support, and emphasis on career exploration give students the flexibility to learn at their own pace and prepare for success beyond high school. The Academy's four CTE pathways—Caring, Creative, Technical, and Trade—equip students with real-world skills in high-demand fields, ensuring they are well-prepared for both careers and post-secondary education.

The Rock Academy represents a groundbreaking opportunity for Tennessee to better serve students who need it most. Its focus on belonging, relevance, and flexibility will not only help students achieve academic success but also empower them to build a brighter future.
I wholeheartedly support The Rock Academy and its mission, and I am confident that it will make a lasting and positive impact on our community.

Sincerely,

Mr. Darnnelle Ellison-Carter; M.TH
615-836-8175

CHARLES HAWKINS CO.

January 27, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express Charles Hawkins Co's ("Charles Hawkins") support for The Rock Academy ("The Rock") charter application to launch in Nashville, TN.

Charles Hawkins Co., established in 1962, has built a reputation for integrity, stability, and tenacity in the real estate industry. Specializing in tenant representation, the firm has always focused on creating long-term, relationship-driven partnerships with its clients. By emphasizing a comprehensive, step-by-step process, Charles Hawkins Co. ensures each client receives the best value and the best fit for their real estate needs. The company's commitment to ethical business practices and careful, strategic planning has helped it navigate changing market conditions while delivering successful outcomes. Today, the firm remains dedicated to upholding these values, offering clients a smooth and successful experience from start to finish.

Jake Morris and Lewis Agnew bring a powerful combination of expertise, leadership, and a commitment to service that will be invaluable to the founding school as it navigates its real estate needs. With Jake's deep experience in commercial leasing, sales, and acquisitions across the Metropolitan Nashville area, particularly in high-demand markets, he is well-positioned to identify and secure the ideal properties for the school's growth and expansion. Lewis, as President of Charles Hawkins Company, oversees a vast portfolio of commercial real estate and offers a strategic, financial-driven approach to asset management and acquisitions. His background in engineering, financial analysis, and asset oversight allows him to bring a comprehensive and methodical approach to real estate decisions. Together, they will provide the school with expert guidance in finding the right space, negotiating favorable terms, and strategically managing any acquisitions or developments to ensure long-term success.

We are proud to support The Rock Academy's Chief Executive Officer, senior leadership team and Board of Directors in the following ways:

- **Expert Market Knowledge**: Charles Hawkins has in-depth expertise in the local real estate markets, particularly in the Metropolitan Nashville area, allowing them to identify the best opportunities and negotiate competitive terms for clients.
- **Comprehensive Tenant Representation**: Offering full-service tenant representation, the firm ensures clients receive tailored solutions, whether leasing, acquiring, or disposing of commercial properties.
- **Tailored Acquisition & Leasing Solutions:** Charles Hawkins supports clients with both leasing and acquisition strategies, helping businesses find the best spaces for growth while negotiating optimal lease terms and purchase deals.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for The Rock Academy. Please reach out should you have any questions.

With best regards,

Jake Morris
Senior Vice President, Brokerage
jmorris@charleshawkinsco.com

Lewis Agnew, CCIM
President
lagnew@charleshawkinsco.com

January 15, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express enthusiastic support for Dr. Ahmed White and his team as they undertake the significant initiative of designing the first ever Public Opportunity Charter School in Nashville, TN. This effort reflects a deep understanding of the importance of catering to the diverse needs of all students through a targeted, needs-based assessment approach. Dr. White's vision aligns closely with our mission to provide equitable and impactful education opportunities to all learners.

With the enactment of new legislation supporting Opportunity Charter Schools, this initiative holds tremendous promise for reaching and engaging at-risk youth who may struggle in traditional school environments. By integrating Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs into the school's framework, Dr. White and his team are creating pathways for students to achieve academic growth while also gaining valuable technical, professional, and creative skills. These pathways not only enhance their educational experience, but also lead to meaningful outcomes such as post-secondary certifications, possible college credits, and even direct job placement opportunities.

This innovative model will be particularly beneficial for students who face unique challenges, such as those in foster care, have had other life challenging experiences that are beyond their control, or those who have been chronically absent. By providing a supportive and engaging environment tailored to their needs, the Opportunity School will empower these students to reconnect with their education, graduate with a diploma, and acquire certifications that prepare them for the workforce. The measurable goals established by this initiative represent a transformative approach to education that prioritizes both academic and personal success.

As a Nashville charter leader, I got to know Dr. White personally and professionally over the past decade. I believe Dr. White's leadership and vision will play a critical role in ensuring the success of this effort, and am confident that this Opportunity Charter School will truly serve as a model for addressing the needs of at-risk youth.

Thank you for considering this impactful project, and we strongly urge your support for Dr. Ahmed White and his team. If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Ch M. Friedman

Charlie Friedman
Executive Director, Nashville Classical Charter Schools
CFriedman@nashvilleclassical.org

city fund

January 28, 2025

Metro Nashville Public Schools
Attn: Ms. Freda Player, Board Chair
601 Bransford Avenue
Nashville, TN 37204

Dear MNPS School Board:

Since 2016, the City Fund board of directors has approved over $12M in grants to support public education efforts in Nashville. A portion of that budget has been allocated towards the creation of high-performing public charter schools, and **we will provide support to the Rock Academy team as it works to create an innovative new public school model to serve the Nashville community.**

Rock Academy will provide an important option to students often left behind by the existing programs in our city. Given the unique needs of the students and families the Rock Academy team is hoping to serve, it is exactly the type of innovative school model our community needs.

We are confident in Rock Academy's academic and financial leadership capacity to launch a high quality option for kids and families in Nashville, and we respectfully encourage you to authorize the school.

Sincerely,

Chris Barbic
Partner

Berta L. Young
Parent and Advocate
340 Nesbitt Ln.
Madison, TN 37115

Dear Members of the Board of Education,

My name is Berta Young, and I am a proud, 25 year resident of the 37115 zip code in Madison, Tennessee. As both a community member and a retired professional in this area, I want to share my enthusiastic support for The Rock Academy.

As someone who lives and breathes the vibrancy of our community, I can confidently say that a school like The Rock Academy is not only needed but essential for the future of our neighborhood. This institution is poised to make a significant difference by re-engaging students who have struggled within traditional educational settings.

The Rock Academy's mission to serve disconnected youth resonates deeply with me. Many young people in our community are at risk of falling through the cracks, and The Rock Academy's individualized support, mentorship, and tailored educational paths could offer them a chance to succeed. I firmly believe this school can be a transformative force, helping many of our youth rediscover their passion for learning and better prepare for their futures, whether in higher education or the workforce.

As a parent to three school-aged boys, my family is committed to advocating for the youth in our community. We are ready to participate, volunteer, and support The Rock Academy in any way possible. The positive impact of this school on our community would be profound—reducing dropout rates, decreasing youth unemployment, and fostering a sense of purpose and belonging among our young people.

I wholeheartedly support the opening of The Rock Academy and look forward to seeing the incredible outcomes that will undoubtedly follow. Thank you for considering this vital addition to our community.

Warmest Regards,

Berta Young

Berta L. Young

Brooke Allen
Executive Director
Diverse Learners Cooperative
January 9, 2025

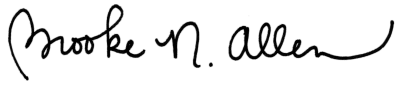
To Whom It May Concern,

I am Brooke Allen, Executive Director of Diverse Learners Cooperative, writing to share my enthusiastic support for The Rock Academy. Through our work empowering educators and creating inclusive learning environments across Nashville, I've seen firsthand the critical need for innovative educational approaches. As a resident in the 37217 ZIP code, I can say with confidence that this school is needed within our community, particularly given the gaps we've observed in serving disconnected youth.

The Rock Academy's mission deeply resonates with our work at Diverse Learners Cooperative. Since 2018, we've partnered with over 125 schools to enhance educational opportunities for 45,000+ students, and we've consistently seen the need for specialized programs that meet students where they are. The Academy's three-pillar approach – focusing on belonging, relevance, and flexibility – aligns perfectly with what we know is effective for re-engaging students who haven't found success in traditional settings. I'm particularly impressed by their commitment to offering diverse curriculum, career, and technical pathways while maintaining a strong emphasis on individualized support and cultural responsiveness.

At Diverse Learners Cooperative, we have witnessed first-hand the profound impact that innovative, inclusive education can have on both individual students and the broader community. The Rock Academy's model addresses critical gaps we've observed in our current educational landscape. Their combination of small-school community, career-focused pathways, and individualized support will create transformative opportunities for youth who have become disconnected from traditional education. When students find a sense of belonging and purpose through meaningful career exploration and mastery-based learning, we see them become more engaged citizens, skilled workers, and community leaders. The Rock Academy's targeted focus on re-engagement will strengthen our city by creating new opportunities for youth who might otherwise remain disconnected, ultimately building a more inclusive and vibrant Nashville community.

Sincerely,



Brooke Allen
Executive Director
Diverse Learners Cooperative
brooke@diverselearnerscoop.com

January 30, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Rock Academy which is seeking authorization in Nashville.

As someone who has been a leader in the Nashville education space for the past 13 years, I can firmly and confidently say that a school such as the Rock Academy is sorely needed to support some of our most marginalized students. I am thrilled to call Ahmed White a trusted peer and colleague, and have the utmost confidence in his ability to plan for and execute on a school that impacts Nashville in a significant way.

My team and I are eager to support the staff of the Rock Academy in their start up efforts – providing wisdom, knowledge, and resources as they seek to make their mission known, once approved. Nashville's graduation rate for students who have been disenfranchised by the traditional system is abysmal, and we are in full support of any academic institution that hopes to right that wrong.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding my unwavering commitment to and support for this institution.

Warmly

Abigail Rockey
CEO
Intrepid College Prep
arockey@intrepidcollegeprep.org

January 28, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

As the founder of Infused Evolution, a national organization focused on supporting charter schools in the implementation of sustainable pathways to achieving their mission and vision, I have come to recognize the characteristics of successful teams. The founding team of The Rock Academy exudes these characteristics including intentionality, an unwavering commitment to the core elements of the model and a relentless persistence to student success.

The mission of The Rock Academy is focused on re-engaging disconnected youth to ensure they succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice. Creating a sense of belonging is central to success, ensuring students and staff see themselves as strong, capable and inherently valuable members of their community. Flexibility is planned for, allowing the team to meet students where they are and help them move further down their path. And the integration of deeply relevant learning experiences for students, connecting the immediate and long-term value of education, aims to re-engage each individual.

Under the leadership of Dr. White, I have had the privilege of witnessing the development of an investment strategy that places students first. While many founding teams start with the available funding and build a model within those constraints, the Rock team stayed true to determining the necessary resources to implement the model with fidelity, without compromise. And, when the gap in funding was identified, they didn't dilute the vision, rather they invested time and resources into developing a sustainability plan to fuel the plan. The sustainability plan, inclusive of community partnerships, individual and corporate philanthropy, foundation support, and Federal grant competitions, is comprehensive and diverse, vastly increasing the likelihood of success. As evidence, the team has already raised $500K and have an equal amount awaiting grant approval.

I applaud Dr. White for his leadership and visionary approach in creating a sustainability plan at the onset to support the real needs for the future students of The Rock Academy. And in working with dozens of charter schools across the country on resourcing their models, I have seen few teams as equipped and committed as The Rock Academy team. I cannot wait to see the impact The Rock Academy has on the community of Nashville!

With gratitude,

Angi Beland

Angi Beland
Founder

Formerly Camelot Care Centers, LLC
262 E. Main St.
Gallatin, TN 37066
(615) 447-6799

Re:
The Rock Academy Nashville

January 23, 2025

To whom it may concern:

I am Casey Beavers with Clarvida, a therapeutic foster care agency. My role is foster parent support - Resource Parent Support Team Lead. I have worked with Mr. and Mrs. White throughout their foster parenting journey for the last 9 years. During these last 9 years it has been such a genuine joy in working with this couple. I have personally seen this family in some of their best and more difficult of times in life. What has stood out during these moments for this couple is that they are a constant to their children, family, faith and community. They both have a genuine love, knowledge and the drive to serve children within their community. Getting to know Mr. White from a middle school principle in earlier years to present day he is always disciplined in doing what he can to better himself, to serve more and to advocate for all children within his community, especially those that may have less opportunities than others.

Given my personal work experience within the foster care system I have seen firsthand how many of our children fall behind. Some of the challenges our foster children face consistently is simply getting enrolled, getting proper tutoring and or accommodations. It has been my agencies experience often times schools will give push back due to a child that is years behind with fear of it hurting schools' numbers and funding. I fully support The Rock Academy as this is exactly what it stands for by filling in the gap in order to get the proper support to these children so they can have a fair shot in life once they turn 18.

Having The Rock Academy in Nashville, TN I personally feel is long overdue and my hope is that this will be a leading model for all communities even outside Nashville. The Rock Academy and help our young people in this community receive a second chance. I believe this could also make an incredible impact within the community by seeing more young people becoming successful, crime rates decreasing and seeing more stability within the community.

Respectfully,

Casey Beavers,
Resource Parent Support Team Lead
Casey.beavers@clarvida.com

Casey Beavers

January 22, 2024

Dear Rock Academy,

I am writing to express my heartfelt support for the Rock Academy, a school that you both have envisioned and are now bringing to life. As a parent of a child who is currently thriving in your Pre-K program, I have witnessed firsthand the incredible impact you both have on young minds. Your dedication, passion, and commitment to nurturing greatness in your students are truly inspiring.

As an educator who has had the privilege of working under Mr. White's guidance, I have seen the transformative power of his teaching philosophy firsthand. He instilled in me a sense of confidence and purpose, and I am forever grateful for the lessons he taught me about the importance of taking chances and striving for excellence. His influence has stayed with me, and I am proud to say that I have carried those lessons forward into my own teaching practice.

Ms. Sims, your passion for nurturing relationships with people and your ability to connect with children is truly remarkable. Your Pre-K program is a shining example of what can be achieved when educators are dedicated to creating a supportive and stimulating environment. My child has blossomed under your leadership, and I have no doubt that they will continue to grow and thrive with your guidance.

I am thrilled to see you both embarking on this new venture, the Rock Academy, with the goal of re-engaging disconnected youth. I firmly believe that your combined efforts will have a profound impact on the lives of these young people, and I am honored to be a part of your journey. Your commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environment is a testament to your character and your dedication to making a positive difference in the world.

I want to express my deepest gratitude for all that you do. Your work is not just about educating children - it is about nurturing greatness, and I have no doubt that the Rock Academy will be a beacon of hope and transformation for the young people it serves. I wholeheartedly support your efforts and encourage others to join you in this mission.

Please know that you are making a difference, and your work is valued and appreciated. I am humbled to be able to call you both "family," and I look forward to continuing to support the Rock Academy as it grows and flourishes.

Thank you for your support, and I have no doubt that the Rock Academy will do the same for countless others.

Sincerely,

Madyson Cole

Madyson Cole

January 24, 2025

Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to express my full support for Rock Academy and its mission to create an innovative and inclusive learning environment for students in our community. As an advocate for education that reaches all students, I believe The Rock Academy's approach will play a critical role in addressing the needs of those who may feel disconnected or discouraged by traditional pathways to higher learning.

The barriers to pursuing higher education—whether due to financial constraints, lack of academic preparation, or uncertainty about career prospects—can leave many students feeling lost or disheartened. Rock Academy has the opportunity to reinvigorate these students by offering them not just a second chance, but a truly empowering path forward. By combining Career, Technical, and Education (CTE) programs with flexible schedules and a supportive environment, Rock Academy is creating an institution where students can regain their sense of purpose, build confidence, and rediscover the value of education.

Many students today face challenges that are not always addressed by traditional schools, and as a result, they may feel alienated or unsupported in their academic pursuits. Rock Academy's commitment to providing a personalized, hands-on education that is connected to real-world careers offers students a fresh start. The school's focus on CTE programs is especially important, as it allows students to see direct, tangible connections between their education and future employment opportunities. This sense of purpose is often the key to reigniting a student's passion for learning.

Additionally, Rock Academy's flexibility in scheduling and its emphasis on mentorship further reinforce the school's dedication to helping students thrive. The ability to work around other life responsibilities—such as part-time jobs, family obligations, or personal challenges—makes higher education more accessible and achievable for many students who would otherwise feel excluded from traditional school models.

I am excited about Rock Academy's potential to inspire and guide students who may have lost faith in higher learning. It is more than just an academic institution; it is a place of transformation, offering students the tools, skills, and support they need to create a brighter future for themselves and the community.

Please accept this letter as my wholehearted endorsement of Rock Academy. I look forward to seeing the positive change it will bring to the students it serves.

Sincerely,

Shakina James
1336 11th Ave
Nashville, 37203

Stephanie Hood-Thompson
780 Evening Ave
Antioch TN 37013
Stephanie@engpropertiestn.com

January 20, 2025

Re: Letter of Support for The Rock Academy

To whom this letter may concern,

I am honored to write this letter in enthusiastic support of the Rock Academy, a proposed charter school set to serve the Nashville community. As the mother of two young men in the 37013 community, I wholeheartedly support the vision and mission of the Rock Academy to provide students with an educational experience that unlocks their potential, empowers their future, and fosters a deep sense of belonging.

The Rock Academy will be a transformative asset to our neighborhood, offering families a high-quality educational option that aligns with our community's values and aspirations. I am confident that this school will enhance the academic landscape in whatever area they land and empower students to become confident, compassionate leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I strongly urge your support in approving Academy, as it represents an invaluable investment in the future of our children and community.

Warm Regards,

Stephanie Hood-Thompson

Stephanie Hood-Thompson,
CEO, ENG Properties, LLC

January 04, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Shaneiqua Wilson. I am writing this letter to express my strong support for the opening of The Rock Academy in Nashville, TN. I am a proud parent from the 37206 community. My son attended Smithson Craighead Academy under the leadership of Ms. Sims and Dr. Ahmed White, and their dedication to students and families made a lasting impact on our lives.

As a mother of four, I have faced my share of challenges. What stood out to me about Ms. Sims and Dr. White was their flexibility and willingness to work not only with my son but also with our entire family. My son had a curious and busy mind, but they never dismissed him. Instead, they met him where he was, encouraged his growth, and helped him come out of his shell. Today, he is thriving and even supports his younger siblings.

The Rock Academy's focus on flexibility—meeting students where they are and providing individualized support—is something I know will make a difference for families across Nashville. With frequent progress monitoring sessions, personalized instruction, and pathway choices, The Rock Academy is designed to help students overcome obstacles and achieve success.

I fully support the mission of The Rock Academy to help disconnected students succeed in the pathway of their choice. This school will be a major asset to our community, and I am excited about the positive change it will bring.

Thank you for your time, and please feel free to contact me if you need additional information.

With honor,

Shaneiqua Wilson

Shaneiqua Wilson
1500 Porter Rd, Apt S1
Nashville, TN 37206
(615) 473-8032
wilson.shaneiqua@yahoo.com

Memorandum of Understanding

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (the "Document") made as of this 19 day of December, 2024 (the "Execution Date"),

BETWEEN:

The Rock Academy Nashville of 301 Northcreek Blvd #164, Goodlettsville, TN 37070
Communities In Schools® (CIS ™) of Tennessee of 500 Interstate Blvd S. Suite 100 Nashville, TN 37210

(individually the "Partner" and collectively the "Partners")

BACKGROUND:

A. The Partners wish to associate themselves in business as a partnership.

B. A period of negotiation and exchange of information is needed in order to finalize terms.

This Document will establish the basic terms to be included in a future partnership agreement (the "Partnership Agreement") between the Partners. The terms contained in this Document are not comprehensive and it is expected that additional terms may be added, and existing terms may be changed or deleted. The basic terms are as follows:

Non-Binding

1. This Document does not create a binding agreement between the Partners and will not be enforceable. Only the Partnership Agreement, duly executed by the Partners, will be enforceable. The terms and conditions of the Partnership Agreement will supersede any terms and conditions contained in this Document. The Partners are not prevented from entering into negotiations with third parties with regard to the subject matter of this Document.

Formation

2. By this Document the Partners signal their intention to enter into a general partnership (the "Partnership") in accordance with the laws of the State of Tennessee subject to negotiation of the terms of the Partnership Agreement. The rights and obligations of the Partners will be as stated in the applicable legislation of the State of Tennessee (the "Act") except as otherwise provided in the Partnership Agreement.

3. The firm name of the Partnership will be: ***The Rock Academy Nashville and Communities In Schools of Tennessee.***

4. The principal office of the business of the Partnership will be located at 500 Interstate Blvd S., Suite 100 Nashville, TN 37210 or such other place as the Partners may from time to time designate.

5. The purpose of the Partnership will be: Educational Support Services.

Closing Date

6. The Partnership Agreement will be completed on or about the 20th day of December, 2024 (the "Closing Date"). All obligations as indicated in the Partnership Agreement will be completed and met by the Closing Date.

Representations

7. The Partners each represent and warrant that the qualifications, skills and experience which they will each bring to the Partnership are truly and accurately reflected in any descriptions of the same given to any of the other Partners. The Partners further represent and warrant that they are each in a position to make any agreed capital contribution to the Partnership on, or in advance of, the Closing Date. If the representations of one of more of the Partners are untrue upon the Closing Date, then any remaining Partners may terminate the Partnership Agreement without penalty.

This Document accurately reflects the understanding between the Partners, signed on this 19 day of December, 2024.

Per: _____ (Seal)
The Rock Academy Nashville (Partner)

Per: _____ (Seal)
Communities In Schools® (CIS ™) of Tennessee (Partner)

Memorandum of Understanding

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (the "Document") made as of this ____8th__ day of _November , 2024 (the "Execution Date"),

BETWEEN:

The Rock Academy Nashville located at PO Box 164, Goodlettsville, TN 37070
Pathways Kitchen located at 4636 Lebanon Pike #168, Hermitage, TN 37076, USA

(individually the "Partner" and collectively the "Partners")

BACKGROUND:

A. The Partners wish to associate themselves in business as a partnership.

B. A period of negotiation and exchange of information is needed in order to finalize terms.

This Document will establish the basic terms to be included in a future partnership agreement (the "Partnership Agreement") between the Partners. The terms contained in this Document are not comprehensive and it is expected that additional terms may be added, and existing terms may be changed or deleted. The basic terms are as follows:

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Formation

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3. The firm name of the Partnership will be: The Rock Academy Nashville and Pathways Kitchen.

4. The principal office of the business of the Partnership will be located at 4636 Lebanon Pike #168, Hermitage, TN 37076, USA or such other place as the Partners may from time to time designate.

5. The purpose of the Partnership will be for Educational Services.

Closing Date

6. The Partnership Agreement will be completed on or about the 11th day of October, 2024 (the "Closing Date"). All obligations as indicated in the Partnership Agreement will be completed and met by the Closing Date.

Representations

7. The Partners each represent and warrant that the qualifications, skills and experience which they will each bring to the Partnership are truly and accurately reflected in any descriptions of the same given to any of the other Partners. The Partners further represent and warrant that they are each in a position to make any agreed capital contribution to the Partnership on, or in advance of, the Closing Date. If the representations of one of more of the Partners are untrue upon the Closing Date, then any remaining Partners may terminate the Partnership Agreement without penalty.

This Document accurately reflects the understanding between the Partners, signed on this ___8th___ day of __November___, 2024.

Per: _____ (Seal)
The Rock Academy Nashville (Partner)

Per: RBryant _____ (Seal)
Pathways Kitchen (Partner)

Memorandum of Understanding

THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (the "Document") made as of this 24 day of JANUARY, 2025 (the "Execution Date").

BETWEEN:

The Rock Academy Nashville of 301 Northcreek #164, Goodlettsville, TN 37070
Persist Nashville of 301 Plus Park Blvd #300, Nashville, TN 37217

(individually the "Partner" and collectively the "Partners")

BACKGROUND:

A. The Partners wish to associate themselves in business as a partnership.

B. A period of negotiation and exchange of information is needed in order to finalize terms.

This Document will establish the basic terms to be included in a future partnership agreement (the "Partnership Agreement") between the Partners. The terms contained in this Document are not comprehensive and it is expected that additional terms may be added, and existing terms may be changed or deleted. The basic terms are as follows:

Non-Binding

1. This Document does not create a binding agreement between the Partners and will not be enforceable. Only the Partnership Agreement, duly executed by the Partners, will be enforceable. The terms and conditions of the Partnership Agreement will supersede any terms and conditions contained in this Document. The Partners are not prevented from entering into negotiations with third parties with regard to the subject matter of this Document.

Formation

2. By this Document the Partners signal their intention to enter into a general partnership (the "Partnership") in accordance with the laws of the State of Tennessee subject to negotiation of the terms of the Partnership Agreement. The rights and obligations of the Partners will be as stated in the applicable legislation of the State of Tennessee (the "Act") except as otherwise provided in the Partnership Agreement.

3. The firm name of the Partnership will be: **The Rock Academy Nashville and Persist Nashville.**

4. The principal office of the business of the Partnership will be located at 301 Plus Park Blvd, Nashville, TN 37217 or such other place as the Partners may from time to time designate.

5. The purpose of the Partnership will be: ***Educational Support Services.***

Closing Date

6. The Partnership Agreement will be completed on or about the 20th day of December, 2024 (the "Closing Date"). All obligations as indicated in the Partnership Agreement will be completed and met by the Closing Date.

Representations

7. The Partners each represent and warrant that the qualifications, skills and experience which they will each bring to the Partnership are truly and accurately reflected in any descriptions of the same given to any of the other Partners. The Partners further represent and warrant that they are each in a position to make any agreed capital contribution to the Partnership on, or in advance of, the Closing Date. If the representations of one of more of the Partners are untrue upon the Closing Date, then any remaining Partners may terminate the Partnership Agreement without penalty.

This Document accurately reflects the understanding between the Partners, signed on this 24 day of JANUARY, 2025.

Per: _____ (Seal)
The Rock Academy Nashville (Partner)

Per: _____ (Seal)
Persist Nashville (Partner)

Attachment E Cover Page

Student Handbook and Required Forms

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

2026-2027 Student Handbook

Dr. Ahmed White, Founder
Lekita Sims, Co-Founder

DRAFT PENDING LEGAL REVIEW

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Section 1: Introduction & Overview

Dear Students and Families,

On behalf of the entire leadership team and as the Founder and Co-Founder of The Rock Academy, we are thrilled and honored that you have chosen to join us on this transformative journey.

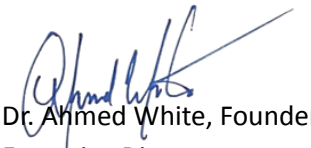
The Rock Academy was founded with a clear and purposeful mission: to **re-engage disconnected youth and support their success in the post-secondary pathways of their choice.** We are committed to creating a safe, supportive, and empowering environment where youth can rediscover their potential and thrive. Our motto, **"We love you, we believe in you, and there is absolutely, positively nothing you can do about it!",** reflects the unwavering dedication and love that drive everything we do.

As a student of the TRA community, you are an essential part of our shared vision. Together, we will strive to provide the resources, support, and opportunities needed for every student to achieve academic, personal, and professional success.

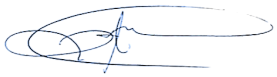
We look forward to working with you to create an environment where everyone—students, staff, and families—can flourish. Thank you for entrusting us with your education and growth.

Here's to a year of discovery, achievement, and excellence.

Welcome to The Rock Academy!



Dr. Ahmed White, Founder
Executive Director



Lekita Sims, Co-Founder
Director of Operations

Mission, Vision and Values

The mission of The Rock Academy is to re-engage disconnected youth, ensuring they succeed in the post-secondary pathway of their choice.
We envision a world where all young people have the power to shape their own futures.
Our work is guided by our five core values:

1. **Humanity:** We lead with compassion - for ourselves and for others. We see the inherent value in those around us - flaws and all. We default to kindness and respect. We ask for help from others and give help generously.
2. **Belonging:** Human beings thrive in community. But in order to truly be in community, we must be seen, valued, and supported for who we are as individuals - and to extend those same commitments to the people around us. This is the true meaning of belonging. When we belong, we have the support, security and confidence to take chances, grow, and thrive.
3. **Courage:** We see our futures as endlessly hopeful when we are able to be bold, take chances, and see "failure" as a temporary source of feedback. We fall, but, more importantly, we get back up. We commit to looking in the mirror and courageously getting 1% better every day.
4. **Independence:** Rock Academy is not a place for lone wolves - we are a wolfpack. However, individually, we establish and live in alignment with our own personal values. In doing so, we learn to live with autonomy, chart our own futures, and take responsibility for our actions.
5. **Gratitude:** We commit to consciously recognizing the blessings around us - be they big or small. We actively practice gratitude by seeking opportunities to recognize and share it.

Non-Discrimination Notice

Rock Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, creed, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, color, age and/or disability in admission to, access to or operation of its programs, services or activities. Rock Academy does not discriminate in its hiring or employment practices.

FERPA Notice

Rock Academy is required to provide annual notice of The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the rights it provides parents and students. The FERPA gives parents, students over 18 years of age and others certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the school receives a request for access. Parents of eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request an amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate or misleading. Parents or eligible students may ask the school to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write to the school

principal (or appropriate official), clearly identify the part of the record they want changed and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the MNPS Board of Public Education; a person or company with whom the school has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant or therapist); community partners that assist MNPS with attendance, educational and social emotional needs of students; a parent or student on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official performing his or her tasks; or an attorney from the Department of Law with a legitimate educational interest. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his/her professional responsibility. Upon request, the school can disclose education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. (Note: FERPA requires a school district to make a reasonable attempt to notify the parent or eligible student of the records request unless it states in its annual notification that it intends to forward records on request.)
4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the school to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA are:

    Family Policy Compliance Office
    U.S. Department of Education
    400 Maryland Avenue, SW
    Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Student directory information is restricted in accordance with FERPA guidelines. If you do not want MNPS to disclose the types of information designated below as directory information from your student's education records without your prior written consent, you must notify your student's school annually either in writing or by completing the Directory Information Permission form, available in the permissions portal and the handbook forms packet or from the Family Information Center by the deadline stated for each school year.

Rock Academy has designated the following information as directory information:

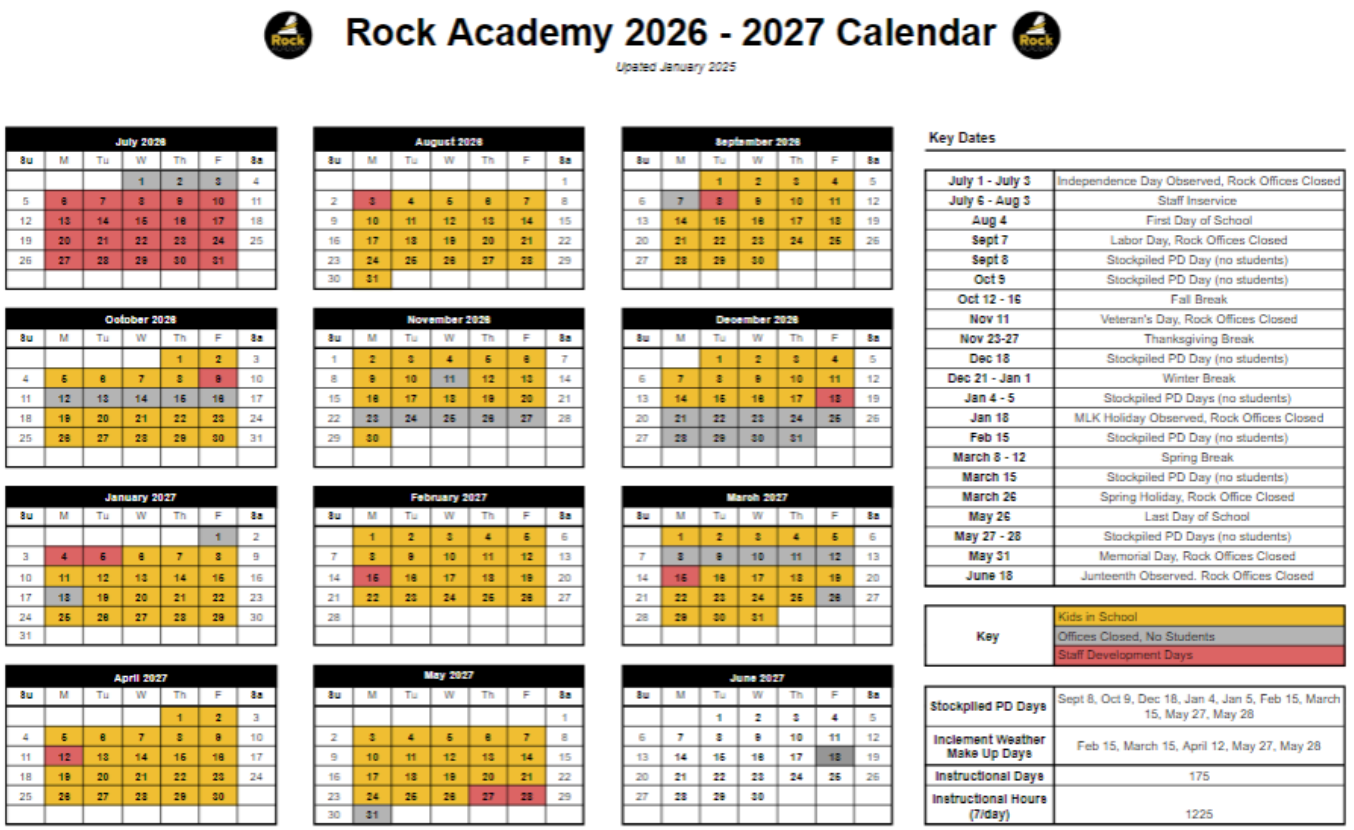
- Student's name
- Address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth

- Major field of study
- Dates of attendance
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Phone number
- Email address
- Grade level completed

Staff Directory

Name	Role	Contact Information
This section will be completed after school authorization is granted.		

School Calendar



Rock Academy 2026 - 2027 Calendar

Upated January 2025

July 2026

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August 2026

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September 2026

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October 2026

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November 2026

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December 2026

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January 2027

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February 2027

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March 2027

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April 2027

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May 2027

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June 2027

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Key Dates

July 1 - July 3	Independence Day Observed, Rock Offices Closed
July 6 - Aug 3	Staff Inservice
Aug 4	First Day of School
Sept 7	Labor Day, Rock Offices Closed
Sept 8	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
Oct 9	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
Oct 12 - 16	Fall Break
Nov 11	Veteran's Day, Rock Offices Closed
Nov 23-27	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 18	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
Dec 21 - Jan 1	Winter Break
Jan 4 - 5	Stockpiled PD Days (no students)
Jan 18	MLK Holiday Observed, Rock Offices Closed
Feb 15	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
March 8 - 12	Spring Break
March 15	Stockpiled PD Day (no students)
March 26	Spring Holiday, Rock Office Closed
May 26	Last Day of School
May 27 - 28	Stockpiled PD Days (no students)
May 31	Memorial Day, Rock Offices Closed
June 18	Junteenth Observed, Rock Offices Closed

Key	
	Kids in School
	Offices Closed, No Students
	Staff Development Days

Stockpiled PD Days	Sept 8, Oct 9, Dec 18, Jan 4, Jan 5, Feb 15, March 15, May 27, May 28
Inclement Weather Make Up Days	Feb 15, March 15, April 12, May 27, May 28
Instructional Days	175
Instructional Hours (7/day)	1225

School Hours

Rock Academy Doors open at 9:15am for 9:30am start time.

Classes end at 4:30pm and optional afterschool programs run until 6:00pm.

Section 2: Policies and Procedures

Attendance

Regular attendance is critical to students' success at Rock Academy. Tennessee law requires children ages 6 through 17 to attend school. Attending school daily helps students succeed academically. Missing school not only leads to difficulties for a student academically, but also socially and emotionally.

The following qualify as excused absences:

- Student's personal illness
- Family member's illness that requires the student's temporary help
- Death in the family (up to three days)
- Deployment of a parent or guardian serving in the military (one day for deployment, one day for return and up to 10 days when the service member is on temporary leave at home)
- Head lice (up to three days per infestation)
- Recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the student's faith
- Court appearance or legally mandated meetings
- Documented college visitations (up to three days per year for juniors and seniors)
- The principal may allow the following circumstances to be considered an excused absence if the parent or guardian submits a written request:
    - Unexpected emergencies such as car problems
    - Job interview or conference
    - Doctor or dental appointments
    - Other circumstances requested in writing by the parent or guardian that the principal considers to require a student's absence

In order to document an excused absence:

- The parent or guardian of the student must send in a written note explaining why the student missed school within three days of the student's return to school after being absent.
- Because students sometimes lose notes or forget to turn them in, the parent or guardian should make sure the designated school staff in the front office has received the written excuse notes.
- The parent or guardian should keep a copy of the written excuse note for personal record.
- If a written excuse note is not turned in, the absence will be considered an unexcused absence.
- Absences will be marked on the student's attendance record as either excused or unexcused. The parent or guardian can request copies of the student's attendance record from the school's front office.

Given our mission and vision, the team at Rock Academy works diligently to keep track of student attendance and ensure that any impediments keeping students from coming to school are met with the

appropriate resources. If a student is struggling with classwork and frustrated - we'll work on a support plan. If the family is struggling with transportation - we'll work on a support plan. If there is an issue with another group of students - we'll work on a support plan. Bottom line: we want kids at school. And we want to help them build self-awareness and skills to identify impediments and seek resources to solve them. To support them in that work, Rock Academy has a robust House system and restorative culture that seeks to proactively avoid issues impacting attendance (and other factors). But in the event that a student misses one more days of school, the following steps will be taken by the Attendance Liaison, the Director of Operations, the student's mentor and/or the Principal.

Absence Threshold	Actions/ Interventions
Daily absence not excused in advance	● The school will contact guardians by call and/or text.
3 Unexcused Absences	● The student's family will receive an attendance notification ● The student will have a conference with their mentor during House to attempt to problem solve
5 unexcused absences	● Attendance meeting between school representative and guardian ● Attendance Improvement plan developed and shared with stakeholders ● Truancy letter sent home
7 unexcused absences	● Attendance meeting between school representative and guardian ● Attendance Improvement plan reviewed and updated ● Truancy next steps shared with families
10 unexcused absences	● The Rock Academy is mandated by Compulsory School Attendance Law (TCA § 49-6-3001) to report a truancy concern to the Juvenile Courts. ● Executive Director communicates this requirement to families.

Late Arrivals and Early Dismissals

Students must attend at least 50% of the scheduled school day to be counted present.
If a student attends less than 50% of a scheduled school day, the student will be marked as absent. A written excuse note should be submitted to the front office for this to be considered an excused absence.
Students who arrive after the designated start time of school will be counted as tardy. A student who leaves prior to the end of school will be marked as early dismissal.

Students are expected to get an admit slip to class from the office staff upon arriving at school.

Students will not be released from school for early dismissal without prior approval from the parent or guardian and no students will be released within 30 minutes of dismissal.

Student Release

The school will not release students to unauthorized persons. If a doubt arises regarding the relationship to the student, the teacher will check the student's file for authorized names. Families should alert the school to changes in household personnel or cases of custody and divorce, and should inform the office if these occurrences indicate a revision of names on the authorized list.

ID Badge Policy

Students will be issued a school ID badge with their photo. Students will be required to bring the ID to school each day and it will be used to “swipe in” for daily and individual classroom attendance.

Building Movement Policy

During class time, students should be in classrooms. If they are outside of the classroom during class hours, they must have a pass. Bathroom passes are only distributed to one per class at a time. If students require a visit to the nurse, a pass is required and a return pass is required to class. The nurse is to maintain a log of all incoming and outgoing students and must notify the main office when a student is in their office so that attendance can be reconciled accordingly.

Visitor Policy

All faculty and staff members will wear an identification badge at all times while on campus. Volunteers and visitors for school activities are welcome, and for safety reasons must sign in at the office before going to the classroom and must wear an identification badge when in the building. Visitors must also check out in the office when they leave for the day.

School Closure Procedures, Delayed Opening, and Early Dismissal

Rock Academy will abide by all MNPS school closure, delayed opening or early dismissal decisions In the due to inclement weather or other calamity. All extracurricular activities scheduled for those days will be canceled or postponed. The Executive Director or designee will notify and post notice to the school website, social media account. Parents and families will also be notified via the school auto dialer no later than 6:30 a.m.

If school dismisses:

- Students will be released from school only after the principal has determined that appropriate notice has been given to parents or guardians. Proper sign out and safety procedures should be implemented.
- Staff members should accompany students on the bus to ensure adult supervision is available and document safe release to an authorized adult.

- All school site staff may be released by the school principal when they are no longer needed to supervise students.

Emergency Drills

Safety of students is our top priority. Rock Academy is vigilant in its communication with all stakeholders within the school. Exterior doors are locked at all times. To enter the school, visitors must enter through a security buzzer equipped with a camera in the front office during school hours. Throughout the school year, teachers, students, and staff participate in the following drills:

- Secure: Is when there is a threat in the area that is not school specific but could affect the school in which no one is allowed to transition in or out of the building. In these situations, the Metro Nashville Police Department in partnership with TRA maintains ongoing communication regarding the nature of the incident.
- Lockdown: This is when there is a threat of any nature that requires that all classrooms and exterior doors remain locked and no student movement within the building as the school implements its crisis response plan.
- Shelter in Place: This is a weather-related response in which students are kept inside the school in safe areas of the building when there is a risk of inclement weather. Students will remain in their shelter-in-place locations until the danger has passed.
- Fire Drills: TRA is required to conduct at least one fire drill monthly. Fire drills require full evacuation from the school.
- Tornado Drills: TRAis required to conduct tornado/severe storm drills twice a year. TRA has developed procedures to minimize risks to students, staff, and visitors in the event of tornadoes and severe storms.

McKinney-Vento Act

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, reauthorized in 2015 by Title IX, Part A of the Every Student Succeeds Act, (42 U.S.C. § 11431 et seq.) is a Federal law that addresses the educational needs of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

The McKinney-Vento Act addresses educational barriers and challenges created by homelessness by guaranteeing students experiencing homelessness the right to enroll in and attend school, and providing supports needed for school success. The law places the responsibility for ensuring the rights of homeless students on states and school districts.

McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to:

- receive a free, appropriate public education;
- enroll in school immediately, even if lacking documents normally required for enrollment, or having missed application or enrollment deadlines during any period of homelessness;
- enroll in school and attend classes while the school gathers needed documents;

- continue attending the school of origin, or enroll in the local attendance area school if attending the school of origin is not in the best interest of the student or is contrary to the request of the parent, guardian, or unaccompanied youth;
- receive transportation to and from the school of origin, if requested by the parent or guardian, or by the local liaison on behalf of an unaccompanied youth; and
- receive educational services comparable to those provided to other students, according to each student's need.

Home Communication

Parents must be informed of the current curriculum, major assignments, projects, upcoming classroom/school events, extension activities to further the learning process at home and other pertinent information.

The following guidelines inform communication during the year:

- Teachers and/or Mentors will keep in close contact with parents by email, phone, or through notes home especially when there are areas of concern and when there is good news to share.
- Faculty have up to 48 hours during the work week to respond to parent questions or requests.
- Weekly class or grade level communication will be shared with families via email, a class blog, or other format as determined by teaching teams.
- TRA leadership will offer special parent information sessions during the year.

Language Policy

We value the diverse culture at Rock Academy - including the lingual diversity. Families have the right to request an interpreter for any communication with the school. To request an interpreter, contact the Director of Student Supports of the Director of Operations.

Dress Code

At The Rock Academy, we believe in fostering positive self-expression while maintaining a safe and distraction-free learning environment. Although we do not require uniforms, students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Tops
    - Must be solid color. Logos may not be bigger than 2 inches (no text).
    - Collars are not required. Students can wear long, short, or sleeveless tops (wide straps only). No tank tops.
    - Sweaters, cardigans, or additional layers of clothing must be a solid color. Logos may not be bigger than 2 inches (no text). No winter jackets can be worn inside the building.
    - No hats or raised hoodies inside the school. Headwear is only permitted for religious reasons.
    - No oversized or undersized clothing allowed.

- No top longer than bottoms. Bottoms must be visible. Midriff must be covered.
- School spirit wear may be worn any day.

2. Bottoms
    - Pants/khakis/jeans/shorts/skirts/athletic pants must be solid color.
    - Leggings (solid colors) may be worn under dress/skirts/shorts and must cover middrifts and buttocks.
    - Shorts/dresses/skirts must be to fingertip length.

3. Shoes
    - Sneakers/tennis shoes are strongly encouraged.
    - Shoes must have a closed toe. No flip flops or house shoes.

4. Other Prohibited Items:
    - Pajamas or sleepwear.
    - Biker shorts.
    - Logos, trademarks or images that contain references to illegal substances, obscene gestures and language, including (but not limited to) gangs, racial or ethnic slurs, drugs, alcohol, tobacco and/or their paraphernalia.

Acceptable Use of Technology Policy

Internet access is available to all students and staff. Access for students is for educational purposes only. Technology is integrated into the curriculum and daily lives of students to enhance learning. Students have computers and tablets available in their classrooms and we will have a 1-1 device structure.

The main objectives of our technology integration program and the technology curriculum are to foster confidence and skills in the use of the computer and computer applications, to develop student's critical and creative thinking, to stimulate and foster an interest in and understanding of the use of technology for communication and research purposes, and to encourage students to work with a computer either independently or in cooperative situations.

Rock Academy reserves the right to intercept, access, monitor, copy, review, or download any communications or files that are sent, received, or stored on its network. Students are cautioned not to open any attachments sent from unfamiliar email addresses, and they should report all such emails to the system administrator as soon as feasible. Only software authorized by Rock Academy may be used on Rock Academy computers. The use of the internet for illegal, commercial, or unethical actions is strictly prohibited. All illegal activities such as transmission of any material in violation of any U.S. federal or state regulations are prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to: copyrighted material, threatening or obscene material, or material protected by trade secrets. Rock Academy computers shall not be used to access social media sites. Any form of digital or electronic bullying will be addressed. All students will sign an Internet Acceptable Use Student User Agreement prior to using the Rock Academy computers.

Violations of this Policy or Contract may result in discipline, as well as referral to civil and/or criminal authorities for further legal action.

Cell Phone and Personal Device Policy

The Rock Academy is a phone-free zone during school hours (9:30AM - 6:00PM). Students are expected to bring their Yondr pouch to secure their phones and AirPods upon arrival.

The use of additional personal technology during instructional periods is prohibited. A student who brings his/her device to school does so at his/her own risk. No searches or investigations will be conducted for lost or stolen devices. Personal technology includes, but is not limited to:

- cellular phones
- wireless earpieces
- iPods
- iPads
- other mp3 players
- calculators
- portable gaming devices

Damage to Yondr pouches or failure to comply with these rules will result in confiscation of the device. Guardians must retrieve devices from administration at the end of the school day.

Medications and Student Illness

Students should never bring medication to their classroom. Each prescription medication to be administered by school personnel must be accompanied by a signed statement from the physician/ parent detailing the dosage to be administered and the time for administration. The student's doctor must fill in the section stating that the medication must be administered at school. All medications will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office. Calls to parents or guardians to verify the information in the request may be placed by school personnel.

School personnel will distribute no medication until a completed medication form is on file.

If your student has a temperature equal or above 100.5 F, please do not send him/her to school. Students must be fever-free without the use of medication for at least 24 hours before returning to school. If your student has vomited in the past 24 hours, do not send them to school. If your student has or has recently had lice, they may not return to school until nits, eggs and lice are all completely gone.

If a student becomes ill during class appropriate first aid will be provided in consultation with the student's parents. A student will only be authorized to go home after parents' approval.

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act 1990 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disabilities.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides that no otherwise qualified individual with handicaps in the United States solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination on the basis of disability in services, programs and activities provided by state and local government entities.

Anyone may use the informal complaint procedures to report and resolve complaints of disability discrimination. Use of the informal complaint process is not required prior to filing a grievance. A parent or guardian is encouraged to first meet and discuss the complaint with the school's 504 Coordinator, teacher or building administrator involved with the objective of resolving the matter promptly and informally. If the complaint is not resolved as of that meeting, or if the complainant wishes to bypass the informal complaint process, the parent or guardian may file a grievance.

Complaints of disability discrimination may be made orally or in writing to the 504 coordinator who will endeavor to accomplish prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by the ADA/Section 504. The complainant and subject of the complaint will be provided the opportunity to present witnesses and evidence. The coordinator will respond to all complaints within 20 days with a written response, as well as information on further grievance procedures that may be followed if the complaining party is not satisfied with the coordinator's proposed resolution.

If the parent or guardian wishes to appeal the decision of the 504 Coordinator, he/she may submit a signed statement of appeal to the Executive Director or his/her designee within 10 days after receipt of the coordinator's response. The Executive Director or his/her designee will meet with all parties involved, formulate a conclusion and respond in writing to the grievance within 15 days.
If appropriate, the school will take steps to prevent recurrence of any harassment and to correct its discriminatory effects on the student and others.

The complainant may file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at any time before or during these grievance procedures.

Individuals with Disabilities Act

IDEA is a federal law that ensures services to children with disabilities. It governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services. IDEA requires schools to provide parents of a child with a disability with a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards available under the IDEA, U.S. Department of Education regulations and Tennessee law and regulations. If you have questions regarding IDEA, email the Director of Student Supports.

Rock Academy complies with all state and federal procedural safeguards which can be found linked here.

Mandated Reporting

Under Tennessee state law, any person with reasonable cause to believe a child is being abused or neglected is a mandated reporter, meaning they must immediately report to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services or to local law enforcement. All TRA staff members are mandated reporters, under this law. TRA staff members are not required to discuss their suspicions with families prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the law, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. As mandated reporters, staff members cannot be held liable for reports made to the Department of Children's Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith." Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

If your child or family is in need of resources or support that are impacting your child's or family's well being, please reach out to any TRA teacher or staff member with whom you feel comfortable.

Section 3: Academics

Graduation Requirements

At The Rock Academy, we are committed to providing students with a rigorous, relevant, and adaptable education that aligns with Tennessee State Standards and supports mastery-based learning. All students will be prepared for postsecondary education and the workforce, with a challenging course of study that ensures academic excellence and success.

Key Design Elements:

- Rigorous Coursework: Aligned with Tennessee State Standards.
- Relevance: Materials that reflect real-world applications.
- Adaptability: Designed to support Mastery-Based Instructional Models for modern classrooms.

Graduation Requirements: To earn a regular high school diploma, students must complete a minimum of 22 credits in the following subject areas:

Course Strand	Potential Curricula
English Language Arts	My Perspectives (SAVVAS) OUR Odell (Odell) StudySync (McGraw Hill)
Mathematics	Math Nation (Accelerate Learning) Open Up (Open Up Resources) enVision (SAVVAS)
Science and Wellness	Tennessee Experience Series (SAVVAS) Stemscope Science (Accelerate Learning) Tennessee Science (McGraw Hill)
Social Studies	McGraw Hill Pearson
Finance	Goodheart-Willcox CEV Publishing
CTE Courses	CEV Publishing EMC Publishing
Remedial and/or Supplemental Courses	Springpoint (Multiple Contents) Skew the Script (Mathematics) Curriculum Associates (Mathematics) iXL (Mathematics) Lexia (Literacy) Corrective Reading (Literacy) Proprietary Curriculum from Peer School Partners

Students must also complete the ACT or SAT prior to graduation, if the student was enrolled in a Tennessee public school during their eleventh (11th) grade year; and have a satisfactory record of attendance and discipline.

Grading Policy

Mastery-Based Approach

At Rock Academy Nashville, we implement a mastery-based approach to learning that aligns all academic content with the Tennessee Academic Standards. Our grading policy is designed to assess students equitably, focusing on their demonstrated proficiency in relation to state standards. Grades will be determined through standards-based grading of benchmarks rather than traditional grading methods

Key Principles of Standards-Based Grading

1. **Cumulative Grading Based on Benchmarks**
    - Students' cumulative grades will be the average of their benchmark assessments, which measure mastery of standards aligned with the curriculum and module lessons.
2. **Use of Formative Assessments for Learning, Not Grading.**
    - Mistakes are a natural part of the learning process. Formative assessments will serve as feedback tools for students and instructional guides for teachers but will not factor into students' cumulative grades.
3. **Separation of Academic Achievement and Behavior**
    - Academic behavior, including participation, effort, and conduct, will not be considered when assessing mastery. Grades will solely reflect academic proficiency.
4. **Opportunities for Mastery Through Alternate Benchmarks**
    - Students who do not demonstrate mastery on an initial benchmark will have additional opportunities to be assessed on the same standard through alternate benchmarks. However, they will not retake the exact same benchmark assessment.
5. **Transparent and Aligned Gradebook Structure**
    - Teachers' gradebooks will reflect courses, clusters of standards addressed through module sequences, and benchmark assessments.
    - Grading will be cumulative, reflecting students' demonstrated levels of mastery over time.

Standards-Based Grading Scale

To assess mastery, we will employ a 0-4 scale:

Score	Description
4	Mastered – Student demonstrates a comprehensive and advanced understanding of the standard.
3	Proficient – Students consistently meet the expectations for proficiency on the standard.
2	Partially Proficient – Student demonstrates partial understanding and is progressing toward proficiency.

1	Developing Proficiency – Students show beginning understanding but require significant support.
0	No Evidence of Proficiency – Student has not demonstrated understanding of the standard.

Awarding of Credit and GPA Calculation

- Course grades will be determined by the average of benchmark assessments taken within a grading period.
- A student's GPA will be calculated based on final course grades, using a conversion scale aligned with mastery-based grading.
- The standards-based grading scale will be converted to a traditional letter grade using the guidance in the Uniform Grading System as outlined in State Board policy.
- Students will have opportunities to demonstrate growth, ensuring that their final grades reflect their highest level of mastery achieved.

This approach to grading ensures that all students are evaluated based on their demonstrated knowledge and skills, fostering a fair and equitable learning environment.

Academic Honesty Policy

The Rock Academy upholds academic integrity, fostering scholarship, character, and responsibility. Violations of this policy will be addressed through a structured process: teachers will discuss concerns with students, document incidents, and submit referrals to the Principal. Confirmed violations result in escalating consequences—ranging from a warning and assignment redo to zeros on assignments and potential suspensions for repeated offenses. Academic dishonesty also affects eligibility for honors, including the honor roll and National Honor Society. Our goal is to instill ethical decision-making that extends beyond the classroom, ensuring student success with integrity.

RTI and EWS

The Rock Academy will follow the Tennessee Department of Education's Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTI²) framework, ensuring that all students have access to high-quality instruction with appropriate scaffolds throughout the school day. Our approach prioritizes early intervention when students begin to struggle, aiming to prevent prolonged academic difficulties and support their long-term success. While our model does not encompass all aspects of RTI² implementation, it is designed to provide a clear vision and expectations for its practical application, aligning closely with the framework used by MNPS (Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools).

Additionally, we will implement an Early Warning System (EWS) to identify at-risk students in grades 9-12 by analyzing multiple data sources. The EWS will focus on three core indicators:

Attendance Indicator

- Chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of instructional days)
- Patterns of tardiness

Behavior Indicator

- Discipline referrals and suspensions
- Behavioral patterns, including repeated classroom disruptions

Academic Competency Indicator

- Renaissance Star results
- Grades in core subjects
- End-of-Course (EOC) exam scores
- Achievement test data (including from grades K-8)
- Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) score projections
- ACT/SAT or other nationally normed assessments

Additional Factors

- Retention history
- Past RTI interventions
- Teacher observations

The intervention plans are implemented and monitored using the Response to Intervention (RTI²) framework, which comprises three tiers of support.

Tier I focuses on core instruction, providing all students with high-quality, standards-based teaching. Renaissance Star will be administered three times annually, and performance data is regularly reviewed to ensure students are on track***. Tier II*** provides targeted interventions in small groups for students who do not respond to Tier I strategies. These interventions are monitored every two weeks and may include specialized reading or math programs and behavioral support plans. ***Tier III*** offers intensive, individualized support for students who continue to struggle despite Tier II interventions. Progress is monitored weekly, and interventions may include one-on-one tutoring, wraparound services, and behavioral therapy.

By leveraging multiple sources of data, we will identify and support students at risk of academic failure, behavioral challenges, or chronic absenteeism. This comprehensive, data-driven approach will allow us to provide timely and effective interventions, ensuring that all students receive the necessary support to reach their full potential.

Student Risk Identification & Intervention Plan

At The Rock Academy, we are committed to proactively identifying and supporting students who may be at risk academically, behaviorally, or socially. To achieve this, we utilize a Student Risk Identification Form and an Intervention Plan Template to ensure that students receive timely and effective interventions tailored to their needs.

English Language Learners

School districts must have procedures in place to identify potential EL students accurately and in a timely manner.

All school districts use a home language survey (HLS) at the time of enrollment to gather information about a student's language background and identify students whose primary or home language is other than English. (Tennessee State Board Rule on English as a Second Language Programs, Chapter 0520-01-19.)

A parent/guardian must complete an HLS when the student enrolls. An HLS should be completed only once in a student's educational career. The form must be completed in its entirety, signed and dated.

Students with Disabilities

It is the responsibility of the district to seek ways to meet the unique educational needs of all children within the general education program prior to referring a child to special education. Tennessee's approach to teaching and learning is called RTI2.

Pursuant to IDEA Regulations at 34 C.F.R. §300.301(b), a parent or the school district may refer a child for an evaluation to determine if the child is a child with disability. If a student is suspected of an educational disability at any time, he or she may be referred by the student's teacher, parent, or outside sources for an initial comprehensive evaluation based on referral concerns. The team, not an individual, then determines whether it is an appropriate referral (i.e., the team has reason to suspect a disability) for an initial comprehensive evaluation. The school team must obtain informed parental consent and provide written notice of the evaluation.

Child Find is the affirmative, ongoing obligation of states and local districts to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities residing within the jurisdiction who are in need of special education and related services. Learn more about Child Find.

Section 4: Culture and Discipline Policies

PBIS and Restorative Practices

At Rock Academy, our school culture is deeply rooted in our core values and the evidence-based principles of Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) & Restorative Practices, reflecting our unwavering commitment to high expectations for every member of our community.

PBIS is an evidence-based, tiered approach to student behavior and culture. There are universal strategies to support all students, and opportunities for more intensive support as needed. Importantly, PBIS is implemented school-wide, creating clear and consistent agreements across the school. Successful implementation of PBIS requires a commitment to explicit instruction around behavioral expectations with ample opportunities for students to internalize, make sense of, practice, and get feedback. Students should both get feedback when they are struggling to uphold community culture, but also when they are demonstrating strong cultural expectations.

Restorative Practices compliment PBIS. Restorative Practice are processes that proactively build healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing. RP focuses on resolving conflict by focusing on repair and holding individuals or groups responsible for their behaviors in a way that is not judgmental but focused on growth.

This approach fosters an inclusive and equitable environment that prioritizes the growth, well-being, and success of our students, staff, and families. By building respectful relationships and emphasizing interdependence, we create a supportive culture where everyone feels valued and empowered. We address conflicts and challenges courageously and nonviolently, promoting accountability and reconciliation within our community. Additionally, we nurture healthy, safe behavior and personal growth, guiding students to make constructive choices that meet their needs. When harm occurs, whether intentional or unintended, we work collaboratively to repair it, fostering trust and accountability. Backed by research and a proven track record, this evidence-based approach ensures that our high expectations and commitment to these values create a culture where every individual can thrive.

House Mentors and Proactive Relationship Building

In alignment with our core values, Rock Academy invests heavily in proactively building strong relationships and culture.

Central to our strong implementation of PBIS and RP is the House system, which is led by our dedicated team of mentors. Mentors, assigned to specific houses, work closely with students and staff throughout the day to ensure each student feels connected and supported. Mentors provide direct instruction and opportunities for practice and feedback around behavioral expectations and culture. They also provide social emotional learning instruction, along with opportunities to implement restorative practices. While these systems are meaningfully integrated school-wide, students begin their learning in their House.

Together with their House and Mentors, students learn to navigate challenges and reintegrate into the community when conflicts arise, emphasizing accountability, reconciliation, and personal growth.

House mentors leverage various skills and strategies for building positive relationships and a safe and affirming culture. These include:

1. Active Listening
    - Practice reflective listening by paraphrasing what others say.
    - Avoid interrupting and focus on understanding their perspective.
2. Empathy
    - Acknowledge and validate others' feelings.
    - Use phrases like, "I understand how you feel."
3. Conflict Resolution
    - Use restorative circles to address conflicts.
    - Focus on collaborative problem-solving instead of assigning blame.
4. Communication
    - Use "I" statements to express needs and feelings without blaming others.
    - Be clear, concise, and respectful in your language.
5. Courageous Conversations
    - Create a safe space to discuss sensitive topics.
    - Practice staying calm and respectful, even when discussing differences.
6. Trust-Building
    - Follow through on promises and commitments.
    - Be consistent and transparent in your actions.
7. Positive Reinforcement
    - Acknowledge and celebrate achievements, no matter how small.
    - Focus on strengths and provide encouragement regularly.
8. Team-Building
    - Engage in group activities that require collaboration and communication.
    - Facilitate debrief circles to reflect on teamwork and growth.
9. Mindfulness
    - Practice stress-reduction techniques, such as deep breathing or meditation, together.
    - Encourage journaling to develop self-awareness.
10. Accountability
    - Set clear expectations and follow up on commitments.
    - Support repairing harm through restorative practices when mistakes are made.

Interventions and Response to Student Misbehavior

As the first Opportunity Public Charter School, The Rock Academy is proud to serve Opportunity Youth, providing a restorative, trauma-sensitive environment where every student has the opportunity to succeed academically, socially, and emotionally.

Through PBIS, restorative practices, and social-emotional learning (SEL) our approach to student behavior prioritizes **prevention** (as outlined above). However, when students do misbehave we strive to intervene using positive, safe, and growth focused strategies. At The Rock Academy, we understand that challenging behaviors often stem from the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), toxic stress, and systemic barriers. We use these insights to design interventions that promote accountability while addressing the root causes of behavior, ensuring that students feel supported and valued.

At the Tier 1 universal level, we emphasize:

- Teaching and reinforcing schoolwide expectations and classroom norms.
- Establishing clear and consistent consequences that maintain student dignity.
- Training staff to build positive, supportive relationships with students.
- Embedding SEL practices such as mindfulness, self-regulation strategies, and stress management into daily routines.

For students who experience repeated behavioral challenges, the S-Team process is initiated to develop Tier 2 behavior support plans tailored to their unique needs. For more complex situations, we conduct a functional behavior assessment (FBA) to design a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). These plans include:

- Explicit teaching of replacement behaviors to address the root causes of maladaptive actions.
- Assigning a supportive adult Mentor to build trust and foster a sense of belonging.
- Integrating stress regulation and self-management techniques to empower students.

The Rock disciplinary team plays a vital role in designing and implementing individualized plans to address behavioral challenges. A restorative approach is at the heart of our philosophy.

Additionally, as needed, student interventions may include:

- Mentor Check Ins
- Community Conferences
- Community Service
- Parent Outreach
- Peer Mediation
- Conflict Resolution
- Restorative Circles
- Referrals for Substance Abuse Support
- Referrals to school-based or mental health clinics and/or other support services

Family Assistance

At Rock Academy, we believe that a strong partnership between families and the school is essential to support students in overcoming challenges related to behavior and attendance. This Family Assistance Plan outlines the ways we collaborate with parents, foster parents, caseworkers, and other supportive individuals to create a network of accountability and care for each student.

1. Open Communication and Relationship Building
    - Mentor-Family Connection: Each student is assigned a Mentor who is responsible for building a positive and supportive relationship with their parent, foster parent, or caseworker.
    - Staff availability: Parents are always welcome to visit the school to meet with staff and discuss their child's progress. Mentors will communicate consistently with families to share updates and address concerns as they arise.
    - Regular Updates: Families will receive regular reports on their child's attendance, behavior, and academic progress.

2. Home Meetings for Comprehensive Support
    - Team Collaboration: Students, along with their Mentor, a staff member, and a parent or a non-Rock individual of their choice, will participate in home meetings. These meetings provide a safe and supportive environment to assess the student's progress, identify challenges, and create action plans for improvement.
    - Student-Led Discussions: Home meetings will give students a voice in the conversation, allowing them to share their perspective and goals while receiving support from their team.

3. Restorative Practices to Address Behavior
    - Collaborative Problem-Solving: When behavioral challenges arise, Mentors will work closely with families to identify the underlying causes and collaboratively develop strategies to address the behavior.
    - Responsive Circles: Restorative circles may be used to repair harm and rebuild trust between the student, their peers, and the school community. Families are invited to participate in these circles when appropriate.

4. Attendance Support
    - Personalized Attendance Plans: For students struggling with attendance, Mentors and families will work together to create individualized plans to address barriers to consistent attendance, such as transportation or personal challenges.
    - Daily Check-Ins: Mentors will check in with students daily to encourage attendance and celebrate improvements.

5. Social-Emotional and Academic Support
    - Resources for Families: The school will provide families with access to community resources, parenting workshops, and tools to support their child's social-emotional development.
    - Goal-Setting and Reflection: Families and students will collaborate with Mentors to set realistic goals for behavior and attendance, regularly reflecting on progress and adjusting plans as needed.

6. Strengthening the School-Family Relationship

- Open Door Policy: Families are encouraged to reach out to Mentors or staff at any time to discuss concerns or seek support.
- Celebrating Success: The school will host regular events to celebrate student achievements and strengthen the connection between families and the school community.

By fostering trust, open communication, and collaboration between families and Rock Academy, this Family Assistance Plan ensures that students receive the guidance, accountability, and care they need to thrive both inside and outside the classroom.

Discipline Table

We utilize discipline policies and guidelines from Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS). The table, code, and response type are directly from MNPS.

Type 1 Behaviors					
Behavior	**Code**	**Definition**	**Response**	**High School (9-12) OSS**	**High School (9-12) Expulsion**
Tardy to School, Bus or Class	100	Arriving late to school, bus, class or activity.	A	No	No
Noncompliance With a Reasonable Request	102	Not following the reasonable request of a teacher or staff member.	A	No	No
Agitating Other Students	103	Unwanted and/or unreciprocated picking on or bothering other students.	A	No	No
Profane or Indecent Language	104	Using profane or indecent language, such as cursing. If directed at a teacher, staff member or administrator, see Code 301.	A	No	No
Possession of Fireworks	106	Knowingly possessing fireworks. Fireworks will be confiscated and not returned.	A	No	No
Dress Code Violation	107	Wearing clothing that does not comply with the school's Standard School Attire policy or requirements for appropriate dress.	A	No	No

Type 2 Behaviors

Behavior	Code	Definition	Response	High School (9-12) OSS	High School (9-12) Expulsion
Repeated Violations of a Pattern of Same Type 1 Behaviors, With Evidence of Implemented Interventions	200	Repeated Violations of a Pattern of Same Type 1 Code behaviors, with evidence of implemented interventions. The student must engage in 3 or more documented incidents of the same Type I Code (minimum of 3 within one semester before Code 200 is used). There must be evidence of multiple implemented interventions to address the Type I behavior. Interventions must be documented in the referral and in Support and Intervention. Schools are to use RPA's Peace Centers, Advocacy Centers, (Tier 2 behavior plan, collaborative referral, behavior contract, restorative consequence, etc.) to address behavior concerns	A, B, T	No	No
Non-Compliance with an Administrative Directive	201	Refusing to follow an administrative directive.	A, B	No	No
Possession of Tobacco Products	202	Possessing any tobacco products, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, vapor or e-cigarettes, or chewing tobacco. All items will be confiscated and not returned. Students under 18 will be issued a citation.	A, B	No	No
Electronic Devices	203	Using a cell phone, electronic device, or the internet for non-educational purposes or without the permission of the classroom teacher or school administrator. A teacher may withhold a student's phone from the student for the duration of the instructional time if the student's phone is a distraction to the class or the student.	A, B	No	No

		-TCA Title 49, Chapter 2 and Title 49, Chapter 6.			
Disruption of School	204	Continuously and intentionally disrupting the classroom learning environment to the extent that the learning of other students or the routine functioning of the class is significantly impaired. The discipline referral must describe the significant impairment to the learning or routine functioning of the class.	A, B	No	No
Gambling	208	Betting on games or activities for money or things of value.	A, B	No	No
Drug Paraphernalia	210	Possessing any material used to produce or consume illegal drugs. Drug paraphernalia includes, but is not limited to, bongs, roach clips, miniature spoons and pipes used to consume illegal drugs. All items will be confiscated and not returned.	A, B	No	No
Cutting Class	211	While on school property, failing to attend a scheduled class or activity without authorization. If a student is not attending any classes while in the building for the entire school day for five days, truancy protocol should be triggered.	A, B	No	No
Inappropriate Physical Contact With Other Students	212	Engaging in unwanted minor physical contact with another student such as pushing, bumping or touching.	A, B, T	No	No

Type 3 Behaviors					
Behavior	**Code**	**Definition**	**Response**	**High School (9-12) OSS**	**High School (9-12) Expulsion**

Repeated Violations of a Pattern of Same Type 2 Behaviors, with Evidence of Implemented Interventions	300	Repeated Violations of a pattern. The student must engage in 3 or more documented incidents of the same Type 2 Code (minimum of 3 within one semester before Code 300 is used). Must be evidence of multiple implemented interventions. Interventions must be documented in the referral and in Support and Intervention. Schools are to use Restorative Practices Assistant's Peace Centers, Advocacy Centers, (Tier 2 behavior plan, collaborative referral, behavior contract, restorative consequence, etc.) to address behavior concerns.	B, C, T	Yes	No
Profane or Indecent Language Towards Teacher or Staff	301	Directing profane or indecent language toward a teacher, staff member or administrator.	B, C, T	Yes	No
Leaving School Grounds or Bus Without Authorization	302	Leaving school grounds without the permission of school officials. Exiting the bus at an unauthorized stop or jumping from exit doors or windows.	B, C, T	Yes	No
Vandalism Under $1000	304	Willfully destroying or defacing school or personal property. The damage caused is less than $1000. A child's willingness to repair property damaged or to make restitution will be taken into account in determining appropriate level of response.	B, C, T	Yes	No
Theft Under $1000	305	Taking the property of another individual or the school without permission, with the intent of depriving the owner of the property. The value of the property taken is under $1000. A child's willingness to return or replace item taken or make restitution will be taken into account in determining the appropriate level of response.	B, C, T	Yes	No

Falsifying School Records	306	Falsifying or altering school records, including, but not limited to, written, electronic or digital school records. This does not include cheating.	B, C	Yes	No
Inappropriate Sexual Behavior	307	Engaging in mutual activity of a sexual nature that does not meet the criteria of harassment or sexual assault. First offense for sexual intercourse should range between 1-3 days of OSS including a Restorative Conference with guardians upon returning to school. *A referral to DCS will be made.	B, C, D, T	Yes	No
Indecent Exposure	308	Intentionally exposing body parts generally considered private. For shirts exposing cleavage, use Code 107 (Dress Code).	B, C, T	Yes	No
Offensive Touching	309	Engaging in unwanted or offensive touching of areas generally considered private.	B, C, T	Yes	No
Instigating/Inciting	310	Initiating or encouraging someone else to engage in behavior(s) that lead to disruption of the school environment.	B, C, T	Yes	No
Fighting	311	Mutual participation in an incident involving physical contact (e.g., slapping, closed fists, pulling hair, kicking, biting).	B, C, D, T	Yes	No
Alcohol or Drug-Like Substance: Use or Possession, Under the Influence	312	Possessing, using or being under the influence of substances that have the potential to intoxicate. A collaborative referral may be required. Students violating this code are not eligible for the First Time Drug Offender Program.	B, C, T	Yes	No
Threats, Class 1	313	A threat to cause harm to students, staff or school in which no plan exists to carry out the threat. The threat must be one that would	B, C, T	Yes	No

		cause a person to reasonably fear bodily injury. A Building Level Threat Assessment must be completed.			
Possession of a Non-Lethal Weapon or Replica of a Lethal Weapon	314	Possessing a non-lethal weapon, including but not limited to weapon replica, stun gun, BB gun, air gun, air soft gun, pellet gun, cap gun, Orbitz gun, realistic toy gun, etc. Water guns are excluded, but not encouraged to have on school campus.	B, C, T	Yes	No
Inappropriate Use of Electronic Devices	315	Viewing or distribution of sexually explicit images/videos and/or fights (i.e., air drop, social media post, etc.) If a student's rights are perceived to be violated, this may rise to the level of a Title IX investigation/incident. and standard Title IX procedures should be followed. A teacher may withhold a student's phone from the student for the duration of the instructional time if the student's phone is a distraction to the class or the student. -TCA Title 49, Chapter 2 and Title 49, Chapter 6	B, C, T	Yes	No
Possession of Other Weapons	317	Possessing an instrument capable of causing serious bodily injury, including but not limited to ammunition, knife, taser, and/or pepper spray. Weapons will be confiscated and turned over to the appropriate authorities. Use of taser and/or pepper spray may result in higher level codes (i.e. 413 – Extreme Disruption or 420 – Reckless Endangerment)	B, C, D, T	Yes	No

Trespassing on School Grounds	318	Entering and remaining on school property or during school-sponsored activities without authorization. Parents will be called. If a student remains on campus, law enforcement may be contacted.	B, C	Yes	No
Inappropriate Physical Contact Toward School Staff	319	Engaging in intentional physical contact with MNPS staff that does not rise to the level of bodily injury.	B, C, T	Yes	No
Gang Activity: Recruitment, Display or Possession of Symbols or Paraphernalia	320	Displaying gang symbols, gang paraphernalia or participating in the recruitment/initiation of a student into a gang (violent or disruptive group).	B, C, D, T	Yes	No
Use of Tobacco Products	321	Using any tobacco products, including but not limited to, cigarettes, cigars, vapor or e-cigarettes, or chewing tobacco. For the first offense, a B response will be used. All items will be confiscated and not returned. Students under 18 will be issued a citation.	B, C, D, T	Yes	No
Noncompliance With an Assigned Disciplinary Response	322	Repeatedly refusing to comply with an assigned disciplinary response (i.e. failure to report to ISS, Saturday School, R.E.S.E.T.).	B, C, T	Yes	No

Type 4 Behaviors					
Behavior	**Code**	**Definition**	**Response**	**High School (9-12) OSS**	**High School (9-12) Expulsion**
Harassment of School Staff	400	Repeated incidents of intentional verbal, electronic, sexual, or physical harassment or intimidation directed at teachers, administrators or school staff. Documentation of incidents must be included in the referral.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes

Assault of a Student	401	Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly committing an unprovoked physical attack on another student. Minor physical contact, such as pushing or shoving, does not constitute assault. Students may not receive the same disciplinary consequences for their involvement in an altercation if the school administrator determines they acted in self-defense to protect themselves from physical harm (TCA 49-6-3401). Response E may be used if the assault or the resulting injuries are severe. When response E is used, evidence documenting the incident's severity and any resulting injuries must be included in the discipline referral.	D, E	Yes	Yes
Under the Influence of Illegal Drugs and/or Controlled Substance	402	Being under the influence of any illegal drug(s) and/or a controlled substance not authorized for use by the student (e.g., prescription medicine) while on school grounds or at school-sponsored activities. 1st offense: Mandatory collaborative referral for substance abuse will be made for any student found in violation of this code and up to 3 days suspension for high school. 2nd offense: Required to attend First Time Drug Offenders Program (FTDOP) or Counseling and up to 5 days suspension for high school. If a student does not attend, the student is expelled. 3rd offense: Level E response option	C, D, E	Yes	Yes

Threats, Class 2	403	A threat to cause harm to students, staff or to a school. 1. The threat must be verbal or written and include a detailed plan. 2. Evidence must support that the threat is actually or potentially harmful or lethal to the safety of other students or staff in the student's school. 3. A Threat Assessment, Building or District Level, must be completed within 3 school days from when school administrators are made aware to determine appropriate safety measures and support. A District Level Threat Assessment can be conducted with approval and/or at the discretion of the Chief Officer of Student Services.	D, E	Yes	Yes
Threats by Electronic Transmission	404	A student who transmits, by an electronic device, a credible threat: 1. To cause bodily injury or death to another student or school employee 2. Creates actual disruptive activity at the school that requires administrative intervention. 3. A Threat Assessment, Building or District Level, must be completed within 3 school days from when school administrator is made aware to determine appropriate safety measures and support. A District Level Threat Assessment can be conducted with approval and/or at the discretion of the Chief Officer of Student Services.	D, E	Yes	Yes

Bullying	405	Any intentional act that is severe, persistent or pervasive and substantially interferes with a student's educational benefits, opportunities or performance, and has the effect of: Physically harming a student or damaging a student's property Knowingly placing a student(s) in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student's property Causing emotional distress to a student(s) Creating a hostile educational environment Bullying incidents must be reviewed for civil rights violations. If bullying is repeated over time and persists after documented administrative intervention, expulsion may result. Hazing is an intentional or reckless act on or off MNPS property, by one student acting alone or with others, directed against any other student, that endangers the mental or physical health or safety of that student, or that induces or coerces a student to endanger that student's mental or physical health or safety. Hazing does not include physical contact associated with athletic events, training or with competition conducted under a coach's or sponsor's supervision.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes
Cyberbullying	406	Using technology, including, but not limited to email, cell phones, voicemails, texts, photos, video messages, instant messaging, defamatory websites, social networking sites, online personal polling sites or journals to bully	C, D, E	Yes	Yes

		another student. See the definition of bullying above.			

Harassment

Based on a student's real or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, disability or ancestry.

Harassment is misconduct that:

1. May be perceived or described as bullying, hazing, or cyberbullying, discrimination or intimidation
2. Is based on a student's real or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, disability, or ancestry, and
3. Creates a hostile environment when the conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive or persistent to interfere or limit a student's ability to participate in school services, activities, or opportunities. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.

Includes codes: 407, 408, 409.

Based on a student's real or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or appearance.

Harassment is misconduct that:

1. May be perceived or described as bullying, hazing, or cyberbullying, discrimination or intimidation
2. Is based on a student's real or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or appearance; and
3. Creates a hostile environment when the conduct is sufficiently severe, pervasive and objectively unreasonable to interfere or limit a student's ability to participate in school services, activities, or opportunities. Harassment does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents.

Includes codes: 410, 411.

Type 4 Behaviors, continued					
Behavior	**Code**	**Definition**	**Response**	**High School (9-12) OSS**	**High School (9-12) Expulsion**
Harassment Based on Race, Color or National Origin	407	See definition above.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes
Harassment Based on Religion or Creed	408	See definition above.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes
Harassment Based	409	See definition above.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes

on Gender, Gender-Identity or Sexual Orientation					
Harassment Based on Disability	410	See definition above.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes
Sexual Harassment	411	See definition above. This code should not be used outside of the formal investigation process. Contact your Executive Director and Deputy Title IX Coordinator and Civil Rights Compliance Officer prior to issuing any discipline consequence (including the two- day summary suspension option).	C, D, E	Yes	Yes
Assault of a Teacher or Staff	412	Any act, intentional or unintentional, that causes or has the potential to cause physical injury to a teacher or school staff. An assault is more than incidental contact. Pushing or bumping a bus driver while the bus is operating constitutes assault of staff.	D, E, T	Yes	Yes
Extreme Disruption of the School Environment or Bus	413	Disrupting the school environment or bus to the extent that the safety of other students is at risk. The discipline referral must include evidence of actual disruption and actual risk of harm. Starting a fire or igniting fireworks constitutes extreme disruption. Using technology to access and alter student records or electronically tampering with MNPS technology systems and services (including but not limited to electronic records, databases, networks, and cloud services) in a manner that impairs normal school functioning constitutes extreme disruption.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes

Group Fighting	414	Three or more students engaging in a physical altercation. The altercation may include more students against a few students or multiple one on one fights.	D, E	Yes	Yes
Repeated Violations of a Pattern of Same Type 3 Behaviors, with Evidence of Implemented Interventions	415	Repeated Violations of a Pattern. The student must engage in 3 or more documented incidents of the same Type 3 Code (minimum of 3 within one semester before Code 415 is used). There must be evidence of multiple implemented interventions in which one must include an informal hearing to address the same Type 3 Code. Interventions must be documented in the referral and in Support and Intervention.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes
Gang Intimidation	416	A gang-involved student behaving in a way that would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury to any person. Evidence must be provided in the referral showing that a student is gang-involved and intimidation is gang-related.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes
Off Campus Behavior: For a felony charge under T.C.A 49-6-3051(b) OR An act committed against a member of the student's school community that poses a threat to the safety of the school	417	Students may be subject to disciplinary action for off-campus behavior when: 1. The student's behavior results in a felony charge under T.C.A. 49-6-3051(b): murder, rape, aggravated robbery, kidnapping, aggravated assault, felony reckless endangerment and aggravated sexual battery and the student poses a threat to the safety of other students or staff. 2. When a student commits an act against a member of the student's school community that poses a threat to the safety of other students or school	C, D, E	Yes	Yes

		staff in the student's school. 3. A Threat Assessment, Building or District Level, must be completed within 3 school days from when school administrators are made aware of the threat to determine appropriate safety measures and support. A District Level Threat Assessment can be conducted with the approval and/or at the discretion of the Chief Officer of Student Services.			
Sexual Assault	418	Unwanted sexual contact with the use of force against a person's will or when the victim is unable to give consent that poses physical, emotional or psychological distress or injury upon the victim. This code should not be used outside of the formal investigation process. Contact your Executive Director and Deputy Title IX Coordinator and Civil Rights Compliance Officer prior to issuing any discipline consequence (including the two- day summary suspension option).	D, E	Yes	Yes
Robbery	419	Intentionally or knowingly taking the property of another person by use of violence or with the use of a weapon.	D, E	Yes	Yes
Reckless Endangerment	420	A reckless action in which the behavior causes serious injury or may potentially cause serious injury. The potential harm must be foreseeable by a reasonable person.	D, E	Yes	Yes

Vandalism Over $1000	423	Willfully destroying or defacing school or personal property. The damage caused is over $1000. A child's willingness to repair the damage or make restitution will be taken into account in determining the appropriate level of response.	D, E	Yes	Yes
Theft Over $1000	424	Taking the property of another individual or of the school without permission with the intent of depriving the owner of the property. The value of the property is over $1000. A child's willingness to return or replace an item taken or make restitution will be taken into account in determining the appropriate level of response.	D, E	Yes	Yes
Refusing or Fleeing Drug or Weapon Search	425	A student who refuses to submit to a drug or weapon search when requested is in violation of this code. Reasonable suspicion of drugs or firearms must exist for expulsion. A student violating this code is not eligible for the First Time Drug Offenders Program.	C, D, E	Yes	Yes

Type 5 Behaviors					
Behavior	**Code**	**Definition**	**Response**	**High School (9-12) OSS**	**High School (9-12) Expulsion**
Rape	501	Committing oral, anal or vaginal penetration with use of force, against a person's will or when the victim is unable to give consent.	E	No	Yes
Attempted Homicide	502	Attempting to kill another person.	E	No	Yes
Homicide	503	Killing another person.	E	No	Yes
Drugs	505 (ZT)	Unlawful possession, use or distribution of drugs on school grounds, including any controlled	E	No	Yes

		substance or legend drug (prescription drug). Distribution of drugs is defined as the intentional transfer of any prohibited drug for money or other benefit. A collaborative referral for substance abuse will be made for any student found in violation of this code. If it is the student's first offense under unlawful possession and use, not distribution, of drugs, the student qualifies for the First Time Drug Offender program. After completion of the 1st Time Drug Offender program, a 30-day follow up with parent and student to determine what additional services were offered and whether the student/parent participated/completed the services/support provided. MNPS defines distribution based on possession as the following: 1. Possession of 1 or more ounces of any controlled substance and/or legend drug (prescription). 2. Possession of 3 or more vapes containing a controlled substance. 3. Possession of 3 or more items containing illicit substances (e.g., edibles, bags of chips, gummies, etc.).			
Aggravated Assault of Teacher, School Staff or a School Resource Officer (SRO)	506 (ZT)	Intentionally or knowingly 1. Causing serious bodily injury or	E	No	Yes

		2. Committing an assault with a deadly weapon of a teacher, school staff, or SRO. "Serious bodily injury" is an injury that requires more than basic first aid. A "deadly weapon" is a weapon, such as a firearm or knife, that is designed to inflict serious bodily injury.			
Explosives	507 (ZT)	Possession of any destructive device, which includes any explosive, incendiary device or poison gas, including bombs, grenades, rockets, missiles, mines and similar devices. Possession of fireworks altered or modified to constitute an explosive may be considered a Zero Tolerance offense only if the altered fireworks are identified as an explosive by law enforcement officials. Fireworks are not considered an explosive.	E	No	Yes
Firearm	508 (ZT)	Possession of a firearm or bringing a firearm to school. This includes, but is not limited to, handguns, rifles and shotguns. As required by state and federal law, any student who brings a weapon to school will be referred to law enforcement.	E	No	Yes
Threats, Class 3	509 (ZT)	Threatens mass violence on school property or a school or district sponsored event. 1. The threat must be verbal or written and, if implemented, would have the potential to cause serious bodily injury. 2. Evidence must support that the threat is a valid threat. 3. A Threat Assessment, building or district level, must be completed within three (3) school days from	E	No	Yes

		when administrators are made aware to determine appropriate safety measures and support. The district level Threat Assessment can be conducted with approval and/or at the discretion of the Chief Officer of Student Support Services.			

Zero Tolerance Offenses

A Zero Tolerance (ZT) Offense requires an expulsion of not less than one calendar year (180 school days) under Tennessee State Law. However, the director of schools or the designee may modify the length of the expulsion on a case-by-case basis through the appeals process or through a request for modification. The following are Zero Tolerance offenses under Tennessee Law.

Behavior Responses

The Rock's commitment to PBIS and Restorative Practices, as well as our overall commitment to fostering belonging, flexibility and relevance in all we do is an attempt, in part, to minimize maladaptive behaviors. In the instances where these strategies do not result in the desired changes, we will utilize the behavior responses outlined by MNPS indicated in the discipline chart above

LEVEL A: TEACHER, STUDENT, PARENT, SCHOOL STAFF

1. All relevant stakeholders (the teacher, student(s), or any other adult) involved in the behavior incident share their perspectives on what happened and how they were impacted. The intent is to achieve resolution through mutual understanding and respect. Classroom expectations should be discussed and reiterated at this time.
2. The teacher will check-in with the student periodically to ensure the relationship has been restored and to encourage continual relationship building
3. Parent(s) should be notified to:
    a. Alert them of the infraction
    b. Get parental perspective on solutions (parent voice)
    c. Share the outcome of the restorative intervention
    d. To encourage at home support for the identified classroom expectation
    e. To discuss, if necessary, the need for additional supports for the student (ex: social worker, S-Team, 504 Team, restorative assistant, counselor, psychologist or cluster support team). Additional support may also be needed to support the classroom environment and/or teacher.
4. Interventions will be documented.

LEVEL B: ADMINISTRATIVE REFERRAL

1. The administrator will hear the student's side of the story and provide an opportunity to write a statement.
2. The administrator will provide the student an opportunity to right the wrong and repair the harm.
3. A plan will be created to support the student's needs through providing interventions and support. Staff determines whether to involve a school social worker, nurse, school guidance counselor, psychologist, behavioral analyst, S-Team, 504 Team, IEP Team, or cluster support team. If school-based resources are unable to address the student's needs, a collaborative referral is created.
4. All interventions should be documented and provided to the parent or guardian.
5. If necessary, the administrator will have a conversation with the parent or guardian to discuss the student's needs and how to best support the student.

LEVEL C: SUSPENSION OPTION

1. Steps one through five are repeated from Level B.
2. If necessary, administrators may send high school students ISS or comparable services for one to three days OR one to three days of Out-of-School Suspensions (OSS), not to exceed a total of three days.
3. A formal restorative conference must occur upon return from suspension with all necessary parties to establish or modify the student's Plan of Support. Restorative conferences/re-entry meetings must be documented in Support & Intervention (S&I). Parents/guardians, student, teacher(s), relevant support staff and community support must be invited.

LEVEL D: SUSPENSION OPTION

1. Same as Level C, except that administrator may:
2. …give ISS or comparable services for one to three days and/or OSS for one to five days if necessary. The combination of ISS and OSS may not exceed a total of five days for high school students.

   Code 414 ONLY - Group Fight violations, up to a 10 day suspension option may be used in lieu of expulsion for high school students.
3. When choosing a higher-level response within the range of possible responses, an administrator must consider:
   a. The student's age, health, disability, decision-making ability and prior intervention history.
   b. The student's willingness to repair the harm.
   c. The seriousness of the act.
   d. The harm caused or the potential to cause harm, including any injuries caused.
   e. The extent of actual disruption to the learning environment.
4. Upon return from suspension, a restorative conference must occur and a collaborative referral must be made. A plan of support for the student must be created.

LEVEL E: EXPULSION OPTION

1. Same as level D.
2. Expulsion Documentation: All interventions utilized prior to expulsion must be clearly documented. All reasons for expelling a student rather than using a lower level of response must be clearly detailed.
3. Upon return from expulsion, a formal restorative conference must be held with appropriate individuals including parent/guardian, student, teacher(s), relevant support staff and community supports.

   Expulsion is a measure of last resort. Prior to expulsion, all of the following factors must be considered:

   - the student's age, health, disability, decision-making ability and prior intervention history
   - the student's willingness to repair the harm
   - the seriousness of the act
   - the harm caused or the potential to cause harm, including any injuries caused
   - the extent of actual disruption to the learning environment
   - whether the act was intentional.

   Zero Tolerance Offenses as defined by state law require a level E response. All Zero Tolerance offenses require a mandatory expulsion of 180 school days.

Disciplinary Due Process for Suspensions and Expulsions*

The Rock Academy shall maintain compliance with LEA policies and procedures for due process when a student is suspended or expelled as a result of a student discipline policy/code of conduct violation.

Students with Disabilities

If a student who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) violates school rules or district policies outlined in this handbook, he or she will be disciplined in accordance with district policy and state and federal laws that govern Special Education, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). If a student is suspended for an accumulated 10 days, the student's Individualized Educational Program team (IEP-team) will convene to determine if the behavior displayed is a manifestation of the student's disability. For more information contact your student's school or review Tennessee's Notice of Procedural Safeguards.

If a student has not been determined eligible for special education and related services and violates a code of student conduct, but the school district had knowledge (as determined below) before the behavior that brought about the disciplinary action occurred that the student was a child with a disability, then the student may assert any of the protections described in this notice.

Basis of knowledge for disciplinary matters: a school district must be deemed to have knowledge that a student is a student with a disability if, before the behavior that brought about the disciplinary action occurred:

- The parent of the student expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the appropriate educational agency, or a teacher of the student that the student is in need of special education and related services; or
- The parent requested an evaluation related to eligibility for special education and related services under Part B of the IDEA; or
- The student's teacher, or other school district personnel, expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the student directly to the school district's director of special education or to other supervisory personnel of the school district.
- A school district would not be deemed to have such knowledge if:
- The student's parent has not allowed an evaluation of the student or refused special education services; or
- The student has been evaluated and determined to not be a student with disability under Part B of the IDEA.

Safe Harbor Provision

A student may approach a school official and voluntarily surrender an object, the possession of which is prohibited by these rules, provided the object is one that the student could lawfully possess off school grounds (such as a pocket knife) and is not a firearm. This safe harbor provision does not apply if a search is in progress at the school.

If a student approaches a school official and voluntarily surrenders such an object, then the student will not be subject to any disciplinary action under these rules. The principal will make arrangements to return the object to the student's parents or legal guardian, when applicable.

If a student discovers an illegal item such as drugs, a weapon or other contraband (e.g. tobacco, alcohol) on school property, or a school bus, or at a school bus stop, the student may approach a school official and report the discovery. A student will not automatically be in violation of school codes by solely making such a report.

School officials will use discretion in determining whether the circumstances surrounding the report warrant further investigation of the reporting student.

Searches and Seizures

Searches and seizures are conducted in accordance with Tennessee Code as part of the School Security Act of 1981.

1. Lockers and Other Storage Areas
    - Lockers and other storage areas are the property of MNPS and are subject to search.

- The search will be conducted by the principal or his/her designee in the presence of an adult witness.
- There should be reasonable suspicion for school authorities to investigate that the student(s) or visitor(s) possess(es) an item, the possession of which constitutes a crime or school rule violation. Reasonable suspicion is defined as circumstances based on statements or facts that would lead a person of ordinary care and prudence to believe and consciously entertain an honest and strong suspicion that a person or persons have done a specific act.
- If circumstances in a particular school dictate, either a general or random search of lockers or other school property accessible to students may be conducted.
- A notice will be posted at all schools that lockers and other storage areas, containers and packages brought into the school by students or visitors are subject to search for drugs, drug paraphernalia and weapons.

2. Students' and Visitors' Vehicles
   The following procedures apply to the search of students' or visitors' vehicles located or parked on school property. The search will be conducted by the school principal or his/her designee in the presence of an adult witness.
   - There should be reasonable suspicion for school authorities to investigate that the vehicle contains weapons, drugs, drug paraphernalia or other illicit items. Reasonable suspicion is defined as circumstances based on statements or facts that would lead a person of ordinary care and prudence to believe and consciously entertain an honest and strong suspicion that a person or persons have done a specific act.
   - If circumstances dictate, either a general or random search of vehicles may be conducted.
   - A notice will be posted at all school properties indicating that vehicles located or parked on school property are subject to search.

3. Search of a Student
   The following procedures apply to the search of a student for items in the student's immediate possession. The search will be conducted by the principal or his/her designee in the presence of an adult witness.
   The search will be conducted in private and in the presence of an adult witness. In situations where there is an immediate threat to the safety and welfare of students and staff, and in the school official's judgment the immediate control of the student and item(s) that are subject of the search is necessary, a search may be conducted in a non-private setting and without an adult witness, provided all of the requirements of reasonableness above are met.

4. Item(s) Discovered and/or Seized in the Course of Searches Conducted on School Facilities

The following procedures apply to item(s) discovered and/or seized in the course of searches conducted on school facilities. Any item reasonably felt to necessitate criminal prosecution will be turned over to the appropriate law enforcement officials.
School authorities may seize any item reasonably felt to be a threat to the safety of others or is used to disrupt or interfere with the educational process.
NOTE: State law permits school officials to make use of metal detectors or other devices, as well as dogs trained to detect drugs or weapons, to assist in the discovery of weapons and drugs on school properties. Any contraband (such as knives, night sticks, gang-related paraphernalia, etc.) confiscated during searches or turned into school staff will be stored at MNPS' Security Office for 60 days. After 60 days, unclaimed items will be discarded or destroyed.

Threat Assessment

There may be times when a student makes a written, verbal or electronic threat that might involve a specific, credible plan to cause harm to students, staff or school. In these instances, a Threat Assessment team may convene and proceed to:

- Assess threats of potentially harmful or lethal behavior
- Determine the level of concern and action required
- Organize school and community resources and strategies
- Manage situations involving students that pose threats to others
- Help to maintain a sense of psychological safety within the climate of the school community

Due Process Rights

Disciplinary action will be initiated at the school level. The principal/designee will investigate a student's alleged misconduct and determine whether disciplinary action is necessary. The principal/designee will provide due process by explaining the school's view of the offense, the information gathered during the investigation, and the length of the suspension/expulsion or other behavioral intervention as determined by the principal. The principal/designee will allow the student to explain his/her side or view of the offense.

If the principal/designee has knowledge of any serious student misconduct, the principal/designee may immediately remove the student to restore order, to further investigate the misconduct or to protect persons on the school grounds. The principal/designee may suspend the student immediately for a maximum of two days (summary suspension). If it is determined that disciplinary action is not warranted, the incident will be deleted and the suspension days will be changed to excused absences. Upon suspension of any student other than for in-school suspension of one day or less, the principal/designee will, within 24 hours, notify the parent or guardian. If the parents are unable to come for their student, the student must remain on school property until the close of the school day. Parents should be provided written notice of the suspension or expulsion.

If a suspension is for five or more days, the principal will develop and implement a plan for improving the behavior which will be made available for review by the director of schools upon request. The student will be provided the opportunity to make up missed work at the discretion of the principal/designee. An expulsion is defined as a suspension of more than 10 days. On the same date the principal/designee makes the decision to expel a student, the principal/designee must immediately give written or actual notice to the student, the student's parents and the Discipline Office of Support Services of the expulsion and the parent or guardian of their right to appeal the expulsion. In the event actual notice is given, a written notice of the alleged misconduct will be provided in a timely manner and will include the rule allegedly violated and a brief description of the misconduct. Parents and students must also receive the information related to their right to appeal an expulsion.

A written notice will also include the name and contact information for the discipline director as well as the requirement to contact the discipline director within five days of actual or written notice of expulsion to request an appeal of the expulsion. Translation and Interpretation services are available for families during the appeal process.

If a student has received an expulsion (suspension of more than 10 days), the parent or legal guardian may contact the Executive Director for further questions. Prior to any appeal hearing, but at no time later than 15 minutes before the appeal hearing begins, the parent/ guardian will provide copies of all written evidence that the parent or guardian will introduce at the hearing. Requests on behalf of students for copies of evidence prior to the date of the appeal hearing must be made to the Executive Director and will be granted if practical. Any records provided prior to the date of the hearing may be supplemented on the day of the appeal hearing. Evidence that is protected by FERPA, such as the identity of third party student witnesses, cannot be released by the school.

Suspended or expelled students are not allowed to be on any school property or participate in any MNPS school-sponsored activity/event (for example, graduations, athletic events, etc.). If a student is suspended on an instructional day that is cancelled because of inclement weather, any scheduled suspension days must be made up on the days following the inclement weather days.

If school is dismissed for inclement weather or extenuating circumstances during a student's suspension, any days beyond 10 consecutive days of dismissal from school will count as part of the student's suspension. If school is dismissed for inclement weather or extenuating circumstances during a student's expulsion/remandment, any dismissed days of school will count toward satisfying the student's expulsion/remandment.

See more: TCA 49-6-3401 (b)

Process for Expulsions and Appeals

For a suspension of more than 10 days there are three levels of appeals:

- Level 1 is to the Hearing Authority
- Level 2 is to the executive director of Student Support Services/designee
- Level 3 is to the Board of Directors

Upon making a decision to expel a student, the principal/ assistant principal or dean will immediately give written or actual notice to the parent/guardian and the student of the right to appeal the decision to expel (suspend for more than 10 days). The decision from the Level 1 or Level 2 appeals may affirm the decision of the principal, order removal of the suspension unconditionally or upon such terms and conditions as it deems reasonable, assign the student to an alternative program or suspend/expel the student for a specified period of time. Expulsions for Zero Tolerance (ZT) offenses may only be modified by the executive director on a case-by-case basis.

All appeals of disciplinary decisions associated with expulsion (suspension of more than 10 days) must be filed, orally or in writing, within five days of written or actual notice of the decision to expel. If the appeal is not filed within five days, the right to appeal is waived. Notice of the parent or guardian's intent to have legal representation must be given to the at the time the appeal is requested, to allow for the school to also have legal representation. Each appeal hearing is recorded.

LEVEL 1 - Appeal to the Executive Director

The appeal from this decision will be to a disciplinary hearing authority and the director of discipline appointed by the Board of Education. The hearing will be held no later than 10 days after the beginning of the expulsion (suspension of more than 10 days). The Executive Director will give written notice to the time and place of the hearing to the person requesting the appeal and the principal or principal designee who ordered the expulsion. Failure to attend this appeal may constitute a waiver of the student's/parent's right to appeal. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the discipline director.

A written record of the proceedings, including a summary of the facts and the reasons supporting the decision, will be made by the disciplinary hearing authority.

LEVEL 2 - Appeal to the Director of Student Support Services/Designee

A Level 2 appeal may be requested based on the following reasons:

- Parent/student believes due process rights have been violated.
- New evidence will be presented that was not presented at the Level 1 appeal hearing.

A request for a Level II appeal must be submitted in writing with the reason for the request and the evidence to support the request to the Discipline Office. Once received, the Director of Student Support Services/Designee will review the evidence provided and may grant or deny the request.
The Director of Student Support Services/Designee will respond to the request with his/her decision within a reasonable time, which will not exceed ten (10) calendar days from receipt of the request. The Director of Student Support Services is not required to explain the decision.

LEVEL 3 - Appeal to the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors may grant or deny a request for a board hearing and may affirm or overturn the decision with or without a hearing before the board.
See more: TCA 49-6-3401(4) (B-D)

Appeal process for Zero Tolerance offenses

The appeal from this decision will be to the Executive Director. The hearing will be held no later than 10 days after the beginning of the expulsion (suspension of more than 10 days). The Executive Director will give written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the person requesting the appeal and the principal or designee who ordered the expulsion. Failure to attend this appeal may constitute a waiver of the student's/parent's right to appeal.
If the parent or guardian, or student, wishes to appeal an expulsion of more than ten (10) days for a zero-tolerance offense, a written request for an appeal must be made within five (5) days of receipt of the "Notice of Expulsion of More Than Ten (10) School Days." (TCA 49-6-3401 (C)). The suspending school is represented by the principal or designee. This representative explains the incident, including the facts discovered and the terms of the expulsion. Attendance, cumulative file (grades and transcripts), records, and any special information shall be brought to the appeal to address questions that may be asked by the discipline director or designee. The student has the right to explain his/her account of the behavior that led to the expulsion.
The Executive Director may affirm the decision of the principal or order removal of the expulsion. A written notification of the decision shall be sent within ten (10) school days via certified mail.

Handbook Acknowledgement Agreement

Student Handbook Signature of Receipt

I, _____, acknowledge receipt of The Rock Academy Student Handbook. I have read and understand The Rock Academy Student Handbook and Discipline Policy. I understand that I have the right to keep a copy of this document for my records and adhere to the policies and procedures outlined within. As a student, I agree to uphold the mission and values of The Rock Academy, govern myself in accordance with the policies in the student handbook, and to contribute to its supportive and empowering environment. As a parent, I agree to abide by and hold my child accountable to the mission and values of The Rock Academy and to contribute to its supportive and empowering environment.

Students Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parents Signature: _____ Date: _____

Media Release Consent

I, _____, grant permission to The Rock Academy to use my name, image, and likeness in photographs, videos, and other media for educational and promotional purposes. I understand that these materials may be used in publications, presentations, websites, and social media platforms associated with The Rock Academy.

I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product or the use to which it may be applied. I release The Rock Academy, its staff, and affiliates from any liability arising from the use of these materials.

Check One:

[ ] I give my consent. [ ] I do not give my consent.

Students Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parents Signature: _____ Date: _____

Attachment F Cover Page

Student Discipline Policy

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

See Attachment E; our student discipline policy is contained in our Student Handbook.

Attachment G Cover Page

Articles of Incorporation

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Tre Hargett
Secretary of State

Division of Business Services
Department of State
State of Tennessee
312 Rosa L. Parks AVE, 6th FL
Nashville, TN 37243-1102

The Rock Academy of Nashville
373 SOLITUDE CIRCLE
GOODLETTSVILLE, TN 37072

Karen Johnson Davidson County
Batch# 1053003 CHARTER
09/22/2023 12:30:30 PM 6 pgs
Fees: $7.50 Taxes: $0.00
20230922-0074665

September 21, 2023

Filing Acknowledgment

Please review the filing information below and notify our office immediately of any discrepancies.

SOS Control # :	**001468621**	Formation Locale:	TENNESSEE
Filing Type:	Nonprofit Corporation - Domestic	Date Formed:	09/21/2023
Filing Date:	09/21/2023 1:39 PM	Fiscal Year Close:	12
Status:	Active	Annual Report Due:	04/01/2024
Duration Term:	Perpetual	Image # :	B1452-5063
Public/Mutual Benefit:	Public		
Business County:	DAVIDSON COUNTY		

Document Receipt

Receipt # : 008375227	Filing Fee:	$100.00
Payment-Check/MO - CFS-2, NASHVILLE, TN		$100.00

Registered Agent Address:
AHMED WHITE
373 SOLITUDE CIRCLE
GOODLETTSVILLE, TN 37072

Principal Address:
373 SOLITUDE CIRCLE
GOODLETTSVILLE, TN 37072

Congratulations on the successful filing of your **Charter** for **The Rock Academy of Nashville** in the State of Tennessee which is effective on the date shown above. You must also file this document in the office of the Register of Deeds in the county where the entity has its principal office if such principal office is in Tennessee. Please visit the Tennessee Department of Revenue website (www.tn.gov/revenue) to determine your online tax registration requirements. If you need to obtain a Certificate of Existence for this entity, you can request, pay for, and receive it from our website.

You must file an Annual Report with this office on or before the Annual Report Due Date noted above and maintain a Registered Office and Registered Agent. Failure to do so will subject the business to Administrative Dissolution/Revocation.

Tre Hargett
Secretary of State

Processed By: Cassandra Bowman

Articles of Incorporation of

The Rock Academy of Nashville

FILED

The undersigned, acting as incorporator under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, adopts the following Articles of Incorporation:

Article I: Name of Corporation and Duration

The name of this corporation is The Rock Academy of Nashville (hereinafter referred to as the "Corporation") and its duration shall be perpetual.

Article II: Organization of Nonprofit

This Corporation is a nonprofit public benefit corporation organized under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Article III: Purpose

a) The Corporation is formed as a public charity, within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, (hereinafter referred to as the "Code"). All references to the Code contained herein are deemed to include corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law or Regulation.

b) In furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Article III, the Corporation may exercise all the rights and powers conferred on nonprofit public benefit corporations under the laws of the State of Tennessee.

c) The Corporation is organized and shall be operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, including for such purposes is to provide an educational opportunity for the most marginalized and underserved children in the Goodlettsville, Tennessee area by transforming their lives through building both their skills and self-confidence as they work toward success in school, work, and beyond all as contemplated and permitted by Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, and, in connection therewith, and to do and engage in any and all activities that may be necessary or incidental to any or all of the foregoing purposes.

d) For such purposes and not otherwise, and subject always to the further provision of these Articles, the Corporation shall have and exercise only such powers as are required by and are consistent with the foregoing purposes, including the power to acquire and receive funds and property of every kind and nature whatsoever, whether by purchase, conveyance, lease, gift, grant, bequest, legacy, devise, in trust, or otherwise, and to own, hold, manage, administer, and to make gifts, grants, and contributions of, and to expend, convey, transfer, and dispose of, any and all funds and property and the income therefrom in furtherance of the purposes of the Corporation hereinabove set forth, or any of them, and to lease, mortgage, encumber, and use the same, and such other powers which are consistent with the foregoing purposes and which are afforded to the Corporation by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act. Provided, however, that all such powers

of the Corporation shall be exercised only so that it is exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(a) of the Code as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

Article IV: Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall manage and direct the business and affairs of the Corporation. The Board of Directors shall be self-perpetuating and shall have sole authority to nominate and elect its Directors. The number, qualifications, term of office, method of appointment or election, powers, authority, and duties of the Directors of the Corporation, the time and place of their meetings, and such other provisions with respect to them as are not inconsistent with the express provisions of the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation shall be as specified in the Bylaws of the Corporation.
The initial officers and directors shall be:

- Ahmed White, President and Director
- Greg Lipman, Director
- Amy Huffman, Secretary and Director

Article V: No Pecuniary Gain

The Corporation shall not, incidentally or otherwise, afford or pay any pecuniary gain or remuneration to its members, directors, or officers as such, and no part of the net income or net earnings of the Corporation shall, directly or indirectly, be distributable to or otherwise inure to the benefit of any member, director, or officer of, or any other person having a personal and private interest in the activities of, the Corporation; provided, however, that the Corporation may pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and property and supplies furnished to the Corporation in furtherance of its purposes described in Article III hereof.

Article VI: Registered Office and Agent

The name and address of the initial agent for service of process is:

Ahmed White
373 Solitude Circle
Goodlettsville, TN 37072

Article VII: Incorporator

The name and address of the incorporator is:

Todd C. McKee
T. McKee Law, PLLC
4235 Hillsboro Pike, Suite 300

Nashville, Davidson County, TN 37215

Article VIII: Principal Office

The principal office of the Corporation is:

373 Solitude Circle
Goodlettsville, TN 37072
Email: rockacademy828@gmail.com

Article IX: Members

The Corporation shall not have members.

Article X: Religious Corporation

The Corporation is not a religious corporation.

Article XI: Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of all the remaining assets of the Corporation exclusively for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code or to one or more governmental units described in Section 170(c)(1) of the Code as the Board of Directors shall determine, to be used exclusively for charitable purposes. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of Davidson County, Tennessee, exclusively for charitable purposes to one or more such organizations, as said court shall determine. Under no circumstances shall any assets be distributed, upon dissolution, upon sale of substantially all of the assets, or otherwise, to directors, officers, or employees of the corporation.

Article XII: Limitation of Liability

To the fullest extent not prohibited by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, as it exists on the date hereof or is hereafter amended, no person who is a director and/or officer of the Corporation shall be liable to the Corporation or its members for any monetary damages for conduct as a director and/or officer. Any amendment to or repeal of the Article XI or amendment to the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act shall not adversely affect any right or protection of a director and/or officer of the Corporation for or with respect to any acts or omissions of such director occurring prior to such amendment or repeal. This provision, however, shall not eliminate or limit the liability of a director or officer for:

a) Any breach of the director's or officer's duty of loyalty to the Corporation or its

members;

b) Acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law;

c) Any unlawful distribution

d) Any transaction from which the director or officer derived an improper personal benefit; or

e) Any act or omission in violation of the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Article XIII: Indemnification

To the maximum extent permitted by the provisions of Sections 48-58-501, et seq., of the Act, as amended from time to time (provided, however, that if an amendment to the Act in any way limits or restricts the indemnification rights permitted by law as of the date hereof, such amendment shall apply only to the extent mandated by law and only to activities of persons subject to indemnification under this Section which occur subsequent to the effective date of such amendment), the Company shall indemnify and advance expenses to any person who is or was a Director, officer, employee, agent, volunteer, or board committee member of the Company, or to such person's heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives, for the defense of any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, and whether formal or informal (any such action, suit or proceeding being hereinafter referred to as the "Proceeding"), to which such person was, is or is threatened to be made, a named defendant or respondent, which indemnification and advancement of expenses shall include counsel fees actually incurred as a result of the Proceeding or any appeal thereof, reasonable expenses actually incurred with respect to the Proceeding, all fines, judgments, penalties and amounts paid in settlement thereof, subject *to* the following conditions:

a) The Proceeding was instituted by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Director, officer, employee, agent, volunteer, or board committee member of the Company; and

(b) The Proceeding did not result from their (i) receipt of a financial benefit to which they are not entitled; (ii) intentional infliction of harm; (iii) approval of an unlawful distribution; or (iv) intentional violation of a criminal law. The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent is not, of itself, determinative that the Director, officer, employee, agent, volunteer, or board committee member did not meet the standard of conduct herein described.

Signed and submitted this 21st day of September, 2023.

Todd C. McKee, Incorporator

Tennessee Certification of Electronic Document

I, Jerry Lowe, do hereby make oath that I am a licensed attorney and/or the custodian of the original version of the electronic document tendered for registration herewith and that this electronic document is a true and exact copy of the original document executed and authenticated according to law on 09/21/2023 (date of document).

Affiant Signature

09/22/2023
Date

State of Tennessee

County of Davidson

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 22 day of September, 2023.

Aubrey D. Burns
Notary's Signature

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES: September 7, 2026

NOTARY'S SEAL

AUBREY D. BURNS
STATE OF TENNESSEE NOTARY PUBLIC
DAVIDSON COUNTY
My Commission Expires 09-07-2026

Tre Hargett
Secretary of State

Division of Business Services
Department of State
State of Tennessee
312 Rosa L. Parks AVE, 6th FL
Nashville, TN 37243-1102

The Rock Academy of Nashville
373 SOLITUDE CIRCLE
GOODLETTSVILLE, TN 37072

September 21, 2023

Filing Acknowledgment

Please review the filing information below and notify our office immediately of any discrepancies.

SOS Control # :	**001468621**	Formation Locale:	TENNESSEE
Filing Type:	Nonprofit Corporation - Domestic	Date Formed:	09/21/2023
Filing Date:	09/21/2023 1:39 PM	Fiscal Year Close:	12
Status:	Active	Annual Report Due:	04/01/2024
Duration Term:	Perpetual	Image # :	B1452-5063
Public/Mutual Benefit:	Public		
Business County:	DAVIDSON COUNTY		

Document Receipt

Receipt # : 008375227 Filing Fee: $100.00

Payment-Check/MO - CFS-2, NASHVILLE, TN $100.00

Registered Agent Address:
AHMED WHITE
373 SOLITUDE CIRCLE
GOODLETTSVILLE, TN 37072

Principal Address:
373 SOLITUDE CIRCLE
GOODLETTSVILLE, TN 37072

Congratulations on the successful filing of your **Charter** for **The Rock Academy of Nashville** in the State of Tennessee which is effective on the date shown above. You must also file this document in the office of the Register of Deeds in the county where the entity has its principal office if such principal office is in Tennessee. Please visit the Tennessee Department of Revenue website (www.tn.gov/revenue) to determine your online tax registration requirements. If you need to obtain a Certificate of Existence for this entity, you can request, pay for, and receive it from our website.

You must file an Annual Report with this office on or before the Annual Report Due Date noted above and maintain a Registered Office and Registered Agent. Failure to do so will subject the business to Administrative Dissolution/Revocation.

Tre Hargett
Secretary of State

Processed By: Cassandra Bowman

2

Articles of Incorporation of

The Rock Academy of Nashville

FILED

The undersigned, acting as incorporator under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, adopts the following Articles of Incorporation:

Article I: Name of Corporation and Duration

The name of this corporation is The Rock Academy of Nashville (hereinafter referred to as the "Corporation") and its duration shall be perpetual.

Article II: Organization of Nonprofit

This Corporation is a nonprofit public benefit corporation organized under the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Article III: Purpose

a) The Corporation is formed as a public charity, within the meaning of section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986, (hereinafter referred to as the "Code"). All references to the Code contained herein are deemed to include corresponding provisions of any future United States Internal Revenue Law or Regulation.

b) In furtherance of the purposes set forth in this Article III, the Corporation may exercise all the rights and powers conferred on nonprofit public benefit corporations under the laws of the State of Tennessee.

c) The Corporation is organized and shall be operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes, including for such purposes is to provide an educational opportunity for the most marginalized and underserved children in the Goodlettsville, Tennessee area by transforming their lives through building both their skills and self-confidence as they work toward success in school, work, and beyond all as contemplated and permitted by Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, and, in connection therewith, and to do and engage in any and all activities that may be necessary or incidental to any or all of the foregoing purposes.

d) For such purposes and not otherwise, and subject always to the further provision of these Articles, the Corporation shall have and exercise only such powers as are required by and are consistent with the foregoing purposes, including the power to acquire and receive funds and property of every kind and nature whatsoever, whether by purchase, conveyance, lease, gift, grant, bequest, legacy, devise, in trust, or otherwise, and to own, hold, manage, administer, and to make gifts, grants, and contributions of, and to expend, convey, transfer, and dispose of, any and all funds and property and the income therefrom in furtherance of the purposes of the Corporation hereinabove set forth, or any of them, and to lease, mortgage, encumber, and use the same, and such other powers which are consistent with the foregoing purposes and which are afforded to the Corporation by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act. Provided, however, that all such powers

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of the Corporation shall be exercised only so that it is exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(a) of the Code as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

Article IV: Board of Directors

The Board of Directors shall manage and direct the business and affairs of the Corporation. The Board of Directors shall be self-perpetuating and shall have sole authority to nominate and elect its Directors. The number, qualifications, term of office, method of appointment or election, powers, authority, and duties of the Directors of the Corporation, the time and place of their meetings, and such other provisions with respect to them as are not inconsistent with the express provisions of the Corporation's Articles of Incorporation shall be as specified in the Bylaws of the Corporation.
The initial officers and directors shall be:

- Ahmed White, President and Director
- Greg Lipman, Director
- Amy Huffman, Secretary and Director

Article V: No Pecuniary Gain

The Corporation shall not, incidentally or otherwise, afford or pay any pecuniary gain or remuneration to its members, directors, or officers as such, and no part of the net income or net earnings of the Corporation shall, directly or indirectly, be distributable to or otherwise inure to the benefit of any member, director, or officer of, or any other person having a personal and private interest in the activities of, the Corporation; provided, however, that the Corporation may pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and property and supplies furnished to the Corporation in furtherance of its purposes described in Article III hereof.

Article VI: Registered Office and Agent

The name and address of the initial agent for service of process is:

Ahmed White
373 Solitude Circle
Goodlettsville, TN 37072

Article VII: Incorporator

The name and address of the incorporator is:

Todd C. McKee
T. McKee Law, PLLC
4235 Hillsboro Pike, Suite 300

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Nashville, Davidson County, TN 37215

Article VIII: Principal Office

The principal office of the Corporation is:

373 Solitude Circle
Goodlettsville, TN 37072
Email: rockacademy828@gmail.com

Article IX: Members

The Corporation shall not have members.

Article X: Religious Corporation

The Corporation is not a religious corporation.

Article XI: Dissolution

Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, the Board of Directors shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all of the liabilities of the Corporation, dispose of all the remaining assets of the Corporation exclusively for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code or to one or more governmental units described in Section 170(c)(1) of the Code as the Board of Directors shall determine, to be used exclusively for charitable purposes. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of Davidson County, Tennessee, exclusively for charitable purposes to one or more such organizations, as said court shall determine. Under no circumstances shall any assets be distributed, upon dissolution, upon sale of substantially all of the assets, or otherwise, to directors, officers, or employees of the corporation.

Article XII: Limitation of Liability

To the fullest extent not prohibited by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, as it exists on the date hereof or is hereafter amended, no person who is a director and/or officer of the Corporation shall be liable to the Corporation or its members for any monetary damages for conduct as a director and/or officer. Any amendment to or repeal of the Article XI or amendment to the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act shall not adversely affect any right or protection of a director and/or officer of the Corporation for or with respect to any acts or omissions of such director occurring prior to such amendment or repeal. This provision, however, shall not eliminate or limit the liability of a director or officer for:

a) Any breach of the director's or officer's duty of loyalty to the Corporation or its

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members;

b) Acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law;

c) Any unlawful distribution

d) Any transaction from which the director or officer derived an improper personal benefit; or

e) Any act or omission in violation of the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

Article XIII: Indemnification

To the maximum extent permitted by the provisions of Sections 48-58-501, et seq., of the Act, as amended from time to time (provided, however, that if an amendment to the Act in any way limits or restricts the indemnification rights permitted by law as of the date hereof, such amendment shall apply only to the extent mandated by law and only to activities of persons subject to indemnification under this Section which occur subsequent to the effective date of such amendment), the Company shall indemnify and advance expenses to any person who is or was a Director, officer, employee, agent, volunteer, or board committee member of the Company, or to such person's heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives, for the defense of any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, and whether formal or informal (any such action, suit or proceeding being hereinafter referred to as the "Proceeding"), to which such person was, is or is threatened to be made, a named defendant or respondent, which indemnification and advancement of expenses shall include counsel fees actually incurred as a result of the Proceeding or any appeal thereof, reasonable expenses actually incurred with respect to the Proceeding, all fines, judgments, penalties and amounts paid in settlement thereof, subject *to* the following conditions:

a) The Proceeding was instituted by reason of the fact that such person is or was a Director, officer, employee, agent, volunteer, or board committee member of the Company; and

(b) The Proceeding did not result from their (i) receipt of a financial benefit to which they are not entitled; (ii) intentional infliction of harm; (iii) approval of an unlawful distribution; or (iv) intentional violation of a criminal law. The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent is not, of itself, determinative that the Director, officer, employee, agent, volunteer, or board committee member did not meet the standard of conduct herein described.

Signed and submitted this 21st day of September, 2023.

Todd C. McKee, Incorporator

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Attachment H Cover Page

Proof of Non-Profit and Tax-Exempt Status

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service
Tax Exempt and Government Entities
P.O. Box 2508
Cincinnati, OH 45201

THE ROCK ACADEMY OF NASHVILLE
C/O AHMED WHITE
373 SOLITUDE CIRCLE
GOODLETTSVILLE, TN 37072

Date:
07/08/2024
Employer ID number:
93-3525471
Person to contact:
Name: Derek Schroder
ID number: 32887
Telephone: 877-829-5500
Accounting period ending:
December 31
Public charity status:
170(b)(1)(A)(ii)
Form 990 / 990-EZ / 990-N required:
Yes
Effective date of exemption:
September 21, 2023
Contribution deductibility:
Yes
Addendum applies:
No
DLN:
26053724005093

Dear Applicant:

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

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

Information for Charter Schools
You're not subject to the specific publishing requirements of Revenue Procedure 75-50, 1975-2 C.B., page 587, as long as you operate under a contract with the local government. If your method of operation changes to the extent that your charter is not approved, terminated, cancelled or not renewed, you should notify us. You'll also be required to comply with Revenue Procedure 75-50.

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

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

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

We sent a copy of this letter to your representative as indicated in your power of attorney.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Martin
Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements

Attachment I Cover Page

By-laws

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment I – Page 355

BYLAWS OF

THE ROCK ACADEMY
A TENNESSEE NONPROFIT CORPORATION

ARTICLE I
NAMES

Section 1 Name

The name of the corporation is *The Rock Academy* (the "Corporation").

ARTICLE II
MEMBERS

Section 2 Members

The Corporation shall have no members.

ARTICLE III
PURPOSES

Section 3.1 Purpose

The Corporation is organized exclusively for religious, charitable, educational, literary and/or scientific purposes within the meaning of Sections 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, including as follows:

A. the establishment and administration of a charter school, seeking to provide whole-child development and individualized instruction to students; and
B. to contract with other organizations, for profit or nonprofit, with individuals and the government in furtherance of such purposes; and
C. to engage in such other activities, exercise such other powers and privileges, take such other actions and carry out such other purposes as may be authorized by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act. Notwithstanding any other provision of the Charter or these Bylaws, the Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by any of the following: (a) a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the code, or any corresponding provision of any future federal tax laws; (b) a corporation contributions to which are deductible under Sections 170(c)(2), 2055(a), and 2522(a) of the Code, or any corresponding provisions of any future federal tax laws; or (c) a nonprofit corporation organized under the

laws of the State of Tennessee pursuant to the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

ARTICLE IV
OFFICE

The principal office of the Corporation shall be located in Tennessee. The Corporation may also have offices at such other places as the Board of Directors of the corporation (the "**Board of Directors**") may from time to time designate or as the purposes of the Corporation may require.

4.1 Registered Agent. The initial registered agent of *The Rock Academy* (the "Corporation") shall be **Dr. Ahmed White**.

4.2 Registered Office. The initial registered office of the Corporation shall be 301 Northcreek Blvd #164, Goodletsville, TN 37070.

4.3 Other Offices. The Corporation may have offices at such place or places within or without the State of Tennessee as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint or the business of the corporation may require or make desirable. The mailing address of the initial principal office of the corporation is 301 Northcreek Blvd #164, Goodletsville, TN 37070.

ARTICLE V
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 5.1 General Powers

The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be supervised by its Board of Directors (sometimes referred to herein as the Board), which shall exercise in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation all of the rights and privileges legally exercisable by the Corporation as a corporate entity, except as may otherwise be provided by law, the Charter, or these Bylaws. The Board of Directors, as the governing body of the Corporation, shall have the authority to receive, administer, invest and distribute property on behalf of the Corporation in accordance with the provisions set forth in these Bylaws.

Section 5.2 Composition and Term

The number of Directors of the Corporation shall be between 3 and 11. The exact number of Directors shall be determined by the Board pursuant to current needs. Within 120 days following application approval and inaugural student body enrollment, at least one parent of a current student of the school shall be elected to serve as a Director. Starting on July 1, 2025, Directors shall serve staggered terms of 3 years and until successors are elected and qualify. Directors may serve up to three consecutive terms.

Section 5.3 Election
The Directors of the Corporation shall elect their successors by a majority vote. Election procedures for Board members shall be established by the Board, and the process shall be transparent and open to all eligible candidates.

Section 5.4 Removal
A Director may be removed with or without cause by the affirmative vote of a ⅔ majority of all Directors present and voting.

Section 5.5 Resignation
A Director may resign at any time by providing written notice to the Board. Resignation shall be effective upon the delivery of notice unless the notice provides that it will be effective at a later time or upon the occurrence of an event.

Section 5.6 Vacancies
The Directors may fill any vacancy on the Board by following the Board-approved nomination and selection process.

Section 5.7 Action of the Board
Pursuant to T.C.A. § 8-44-101 et seq., the minutes of the Board meetings must be recorded and open to public inspection and at a minimum must contain a record of the persons present, all motions, proposals and resolutions offered, the results of any votes taken, and a record of individual votes in the event of a roll call. All votes must be by public vote, public ballot, or public roll call; secret votes are prohibited.

Section 5.8 Compensation and Reimbursement
Directors will not receive compensation for their service as Directors. Directors may receive reimbursement for expenses actually and reasonably incurred (a) on behalf of the Corporation or (b) in the course of performing Director duties.

Section 5.9 Responsibilities.
Each director shall attend a majority of regular Board of Directors meetings in each fiscal year. The Board's primary duties shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Ensuring compliance with the Charter and all relevant laws and regulations.
2. Hiring, evaluating, and supporting the Executive Director.
3. Approving the annual budget and overseeing financial matters.
4. Approving annual goals for the school.
5. Completing an annual Conflict of Interest statement.
6. Engaging with the school community and promoting transparency.

ARTICLE VI
BOARD MEETINGS

Section 6.1 Regular Meetings
The Board shall hold regular meetings (at least 10 times annually), at times and dates determined by the Board as set forth in an annual meeting calendar.

Section 6.2 Special Meetings
The Chair or any two (2) Directors may call a special meeting of the Board.

Section 6.3 Meeting Format
All meetings will be held in compliance with T.C. A. § 8-44-102 et. seq., which states that all meetings of any governing body are declared to be public meetings and must be open to the public at all times. Rock Academy will ensure that meeting locations and times are as accommodating as possible to its school community, and will encourage and welcome parents, staff, and community stakeholders to attend.

Section 6.4 Notice
Notice of the date, time, location, of both regular and special meetings shall be delivered to each Director and posted on the school's website at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. Notice must include the agenda and relevant meeting details including the purpose of our business to be transacted at the meeting.

Section 6.5 Quorum
In the provisional bylaws, the presence of all Directors serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting. Once charter authority is granted, the presence of half of all of the Directors shall constitute a quorum.

Section 6.6 Voting
Each Director shall have one vote. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the vote of a majority (more than 50%) of Directors participating in a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the action of the Board.

A Director is deemed to consent to action taken at a meeting unless (a) the Director promptly objects to the holding or transacting business at the meeting; (b) the Director's dissent or abstention is entered into the minutes of the meeting; or (c) the Director delivers notice of dissent or abstention to the presiding officer before adjournment or to the Corporation immediately after the meeting.

Section 6.7 Committees
The Board may establish committees to address specific areas or tasks related to the Charter School's operations. Standing committees shall include, but not be limited to: Board recruitment and Nominations, Executive Committee, Finance, Governance, and Academic. Ad-hoc committees may be created from time-to-time as specific needs arise. Each

committee shall be chaired by a Board member and may include other individuals with relevant expertise. The Board Chair shall appoint committee members and define their roles and responsibilities.

ARTICLE VII
OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

Section 7.1 General
The officers of the Board shall consist of a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

Section 7.2 Election
The initial slate of officers shall be elected from among the Directors by a plurality vote. After one year, the officer slate shall be presented by the Governance Committee and voted on by the full Board, with a majority vote approving the new slate.

Section 7.3 Term
An officer shall serve for a term of three (3) years, and until a successor is elected and qualifies.

Section 7.4 Executive Director.
The Executive Director, an employee of the Corporation, shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation, and subject to the direction of the Board of Directors, shall have general supervision over the business and affairs of the Corporation. The Executive Director shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board of Directors and in conjunction with the Board Chair shall help plan and execute meetings of the Board of Directors. The Executive Director shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Board of Directors are carried out and shall perform all other duties as the Board of Directors shall assign. The initial Executive Director of the Corporation shall be Dr. Ahmed White.

Section 7.5 Chair
The Chair shall preside at and conduct all meetings of the Board. The Chair and Treasurer are the only legal authorized officers who shall have authority to sign and execute, in the name of the Corporation, deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other documents to be executed on the Corporation's behalf.

Section 7.6 Vice Chair.
The Vice Chair shall:

A. Stand ready to act as the Chair in the Chair's absence;
B. Perform any duties of the Chair as delegated by the Chair.

Section 7.7 Secretary

The Secretary shall (a) keep accurate records and minutes of all meetings, proceedings, and actions of the Board and Board Committees; (b) make available minutes of the previous Board meeting and distribute them in advance of each Board meeting; (c) deliver all notices of meetings to those persons entitled to vote at such meetings; (d) maintain the minutes and a current listing, with contact information, of the Directors at the principal office of the Corporation; and (e) authenticate records of the Corporation. The Secretary shall generally perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as may be assigned by the President or the Board.

Section 7.8 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept complete and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements of the School and shall deposit all moneys and other valuable effects of the School in the name and to the credit of the Corporation in such banks or depositories as the School may designate. Such accounts are to be separate and isolated from the general Corporate receipts and revenues. The Treasurer shall keep proper books of accounts and other books showing at all times the amount of the funds and other property of the School; books shall be open at all times to the inspection of the Board of Directors and school members. The Treasurer shall present an operating statement and report, since the last preceding regular council meeting, to the School at all regular meetings. He or she, in collaboration with the Corporation's Chief Operating Officer, shall also present the monthly statements and other financial information to the Corporation's Finance Committee. Annual financial information, such as the school audit shall also be submitted to both the School's members and the Corporation's Finance Committee. He or she shall perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer, and such other duties shall from time to time be assigned by the School. If required by the school council, the Treasurer shall give such security for the faithful performance of his or her duties as the committee may require.

Section 7.9 Executive Committee

The officers named in sections 7.5-7.8 shall serve as the Executive Committee of the Board. This committee will be empowered to conduct nominal (non-voting) business and provide support to the Executive Director on behalf of the board in-between regular board meetings.

Section 7.10 Compensation

Officers will not receive compensation.

Section 7.11 Removal

The Board may remove any officer with or without cause after a ⅔ majority of all Directors present and voting.

Section 7.12 Resignation

An officer may resign at any time by providing written notice to the Board. Resignation shall be effective upon the delivery of notice unless the notice provides that it will be effective at a later time or upon the occurrence of an event.

Section 7.13 Vacancies

The Board may fill a vacancy of an officer role pursuant to the stated nomination and selection process.

ARTICLE VIII
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND STAFF

Section 8.1 Executive Director

The Board shall hold responsibility for hiring and evaluating an Executive Director. The Board may delegate duties and customary authorities to the Executive Director, including the appointment of other staff. The Executive Director shall be subject to hire and termination by the Board. Other staff appointed by the executive director shall be subject to hire and termination by the Executive Director.

Section 8.2 *Ex Officio* Status

The Executive Director shall be an officer and an *ex officio*, non-voting Director of the Corporation. The Executive Director shall have the right to attend all Board meetings but may not vote on Board matters in his or her capacity as Executive Director. As an *ex officio* officer of the Corporation, the Executive Director is bound by the same fiduciary obligations and afforded the same rights under Tennessee law and these Bylaws as officers of the Board.

ARTICLE IX
CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

A quorum for the Board's approval of a conflicted interest transaction must consist of at least two (2) disinterested Directors and interested Directors must be precluded from participation in deliberation and voting on conflicted interest transactions.

ARTICLE X
MISCELLANEOUS

Section 10.1 Books and Records

The Board of Directors shall have power to determine which accounts and books of the Corporation, if any, shall be open to the inspection, except such as may, by law, be specifically open to inspection, and shall have power to fix reasonable rules and regulations not in conflict with the applicable law for the inspection of accounts and books, which by law or by determination of the Board of Directors shall be open to inspection. Any

records maintained by the Corporation in the regular course of its business, including but not limited to, its books of account and minute books, may be maintained on any information storage device or method that can be converted into clearly legible paper form within a reasonable time.

Section 10.2 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on July 1 – June 30 of the following year, unless otherwise fixed by resolution of the Board of Directors.

Section 10.3 Corporate Seal

The Corporation shall not have a corporate seal.

Section 10.4 Checks

Checks, notes, drafts and demands for money shall be signed by the Executive Director, the Chair or the Treasurer; or other officers or agents that are designated by the Board of Directors from time to time.

Section 10.5 Annual Statements

Not later than three months after the close of each fiscal year, and in any case prior to the next annual meeting of the Board of Directors, the Corporation shall prepare:

A. A balance sheet showing in reasonable detail the financial condition of the Corporation as of the close of its fiscal year, and
B. A profit and loss statement showing the results of its operation during its fiscal year.

Section 10.6 Audit

The accounts of the Corporation shall be examined annually by a certified public accountant in accordance with applicable law and authorizer requirements.

Section 10.7 Electronic Signatures

Wherever a written instrument is required to be executed hereunder, an electronic signature, to the extent permitted by applicable law, shall be deemed to be a written signature.

Section 10.8 Gifts

The Board or its designee may accept on behalf of the Corporation any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the charitable purposes of the Corporation. The Board shall use and distribute all such contributions according to the specific purposes and conditions that were agreed to by the donor when the contribution was received, except where the express written permission of the donor or the donor's heirs or assigns has been obtained to do otherwise.

Section 10.9 Anti-Discrimination Policy

The Corporation is committed to providing a working and learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, age, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, religion, color or mental or physical disability or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation.

Section 10.10 Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the Charter School, all assets shall be distributed in accordance with applicable state laws and regulations governing charter schools.

ARTICLE XI
AMENDMENTS TO GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Section 11.1 Amendments to Charter

The Charter may be altered, amended, or restated and new Charter may be adopted by a ⅔ majority of all Directors present and voting, prior to submission of amendment.

Section 11.2 Amendments to Bylaws

These Bylaws may be altered or amended, and new Bylaws adopted, ⅔ majority of all Directors present and voting.

Attachment J Cover Page

Board Member Code of Conduct

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Code of Conduct Agreement for The Rock Academy

The sustainability and success of The Rock Academy depends upon a committed, informed, engaged, strategic, diverse, and high-functioning board. The Rock Academy Board asks all board members to affirm their personal commitment to the following responsibilities:

I will support the mission and vision of The Rock Academy.

- Clearly understand and embrace The Rock Academy' mission, vision, and strategy
- Understand academic performance across the organization
- Review relevant data, ask appropriate questions, and monitor progress towards ambitious goals for students regularly

I will support the Executive Director and hold her, and this board, accountable for The Rock Academy' success.

- Partner with the Executive Director in developing an annual set of goals and a plan to achieve those goals, consistent with and in support of the mission
- Develop board goals and monitor progress towards those goals regularly
- Maintain an updated job description for the Executive Director, and encourage her to develop a succession plan that involves building a strong leadership team and talent pipeline
- Provide regular, direct, substantive feedback to the Executive Director, offering guidance and support readily and regularly, and acting as a governing body that does not act as management
- Conduct a professional, transparent, substantive annual performance review of the Executive Director that is based on her goals, the goals of The Rock Academy' strategic plan, and a self-evaluation
- Obtain input from the Executive Director's direct reports and key external stakeholders, not to be used in an evaluative capacity, but to ensure that she has the opportunity to receive relevant and helpful feedback
- Hold myself and the entire Rock Academy Board accountable; readily own any failure to live up to these expectations, and respectfully note when board colleagues might need to do so

I commit to and use the highest ethical standard in serving as a board member of The Rock Academy.

- Understand and comply with the board bylaws, conflict of interest policy, and other board policies
- Ensure the legal and ethical integrity of The Rock Academy and its board, in compliance with the requirements of the law, professional ethics, and professional and organizational norms

I will exercise strict financial, operational, and academic oversight.

- Regularly review relevant data, ask responsible questions, follow up with ongoing issues, note improvement and success, and track progress towards goals
- Ensure an annual audit of the schools' financial records is completed and review audit results
- Conduct an annual audit of the schools' financial records

I commit to participating actively in the work of the board, and helping ensure that The Rock Academy has the high-functioning, diverse, engaged board it needs to succeed.

- Proactively take on substantive work that will help the board achieve its goals
- Serve on at least one committee and attend meetings to achieve committee goals
- Complete all tasks I agree to take on
- Communicate regularly with board colleagues and The Rock Academy staff, answer emails within 1-2 days, keep communications direct and succinct
- Attend all board meetings, missing a maximum of one meeting annually, understanding having all members present to discuss and act on the business of The Rock Academy is core to board service.
    - If I am unable to attend a board meeting, I will inform the board chair and Executive Director a minimum of 24 hours prior to the meeting
    - After three consecutive board meeting absences, even if I have informed the Chair and Executive Director, it will be assumed I have resigned my seat
    - Come to board meetings prepared, having read materials sent in advance
- Attend the annual board retreat
- Be on time for board and committee meetings
- Allocate an average of 8-10 hours/month to The Rock Academy board work

I commit to ensuring that The Rock Academy has the resources it needs to achieve its goals and execute its strategy by participating actively and to my full capacity in fundraising and friendraising efforts.

- Commit to making The Rock Academy among my most significant annual philanthropic contributions and, if possible, increasing my giving level each year, acknowledging the increased fundraising lift facing the organization in order to achieve its ambitious goals
- Make connections/introductions to external parties/stakeholders for The Rock Academy towards specific goals/outcomes each year
- Speak routinely and positively in as many different contexts and settings as possible about my connection to The Rock Academy and my support for its mission

The Rock Academy Conflict of Interest Policy

The Rock Academy ("TRA") is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and transparency in all its decision-making processes. To this end, all members of the Board of Directors ("Board Members") are required to avoid conflicts of interest, including actual, potential, and perceived conflicts, to ensure the integrity of TRA's operations and reputation.

Purpose

The purpose of this Conflict of Interest Policy is to:

- Protect the integrity of TRA's decision-making processes.
- Enable stakeholders and the community to have confidence in the Board's leadership.
- Safeguard the integrity and reputation of Board Members.

Policy Requirements

1. **Disclosure of Conflicts**:
    - Board Members must disclose any known or potential conflicts of interest prior to joining the Board and as periodically required by TRA.
    - Board Members must provide written updates within five (5) business days if any new conflicts arise during their tenure.
    - Disclosures shall include all relationships, interests, or holdings that may result in a conflict or the perception of a conflict.
2. **Abstention from Decision-Making**:
    - If a conflict arises during the course of Board meetings or related activities, the Board Member must:
        - Disclose the conflict to the Board.
        - Refrain from participating in discussions or deliberations related to the conflict.
        - Abstain from voting on matters involving the conflict.
        - Leave the meeting room during discussions and voting.
3. **Definition of Affiliates**:
   For the purposes of this policy, "Affiliates" include:
    - Individuals related to the Board Member by blood or marriage.
    - Significant others and their relatives by blood or marriage.
    - Businesses or entities where the Board Member or their Affiliates have a direct or indirect financial interest, including employment, consulting, or board service.
    - Individuals or entities with financial interests in the businesses or entities described above.
4. **Confidentiality**:
    - All disclosed conflicts will be documented and kept confidential in TRA's records.
5. **Good Judgment**:
    - This policy supplements but does not replace good judgment. Board Members are expected to act in the spirit of the policy as well as adhere to its specific provisions.

Annual Giving & Estimated Date of Receipt

Our expectation is that each Board Member will make an annual contribution to The Rock Academy that is personally meaningful and reflects their commitment to supporting the school's mission and vision.

*Note the specific amount you will personally give to **The Rock Academy** annually along with the date The Rock Academy should expect your contribution.*

Amount:	**Expected Receipt:**

Notes:

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Attachment K Cover Page

Conflict of Interest Policy

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Conflict of Interest Agreement for The Rock Academy

I. Purpose of a Conflict of Interest Agreement

The purpose of this **Conflict of Interest Agreement** is to ensure that the members of The Rock Academy Board of Directors conduct themselves with integrity and transparency in all matters affecting the organization. It is essential that board members avoid conflicts, whether real or perceived, that may compromise or appear to compromise their judgment or the interests of the academy.

II. DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

All board members must fully disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest upon:

A. **Appointment** to the board.
B. **Annually**, through a conflict of interest disclosure statement.
C. **Whenever a new conflict arises**, as soon as it becomes known.

Board members must provide full details of any conflict to the Board Chair in writing. The Board Chair will determine whether the conflict requires further action or recusal from decision-making.

III. VIOLATION OF THE POLICY

If a board member fails to disclose a conflict of interest or is found to have violated this policy:

A. The Board may take **corrective action**, including but not limited to censure, removal from a particular decision-making role, or removal from the board.
B. The board member may be required to **rectify any improper gains** received as a result of the conflict.

IV. Conflict of Interest Policy

A quorum for the Board's approval of a conflicted interest transaction must consist of at least two (2) disinterested Directors and interested Directors must be precluded from participation in deliberation and voting on conflicted interest transactions.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AGREEMENT

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand The Rock Academy's Conflict of Interest Policy. I agree to disclose any actual or potential conflicts and comply with the policies and procedures outlined above.

Board Member Name: _____

Board Member Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

This agreement shall be reviewed and renewed annually, or as necessary, by the Board of Directors of The Rock Academy.

Attachment L Cover Page

Board Member Resumes or Biographies

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Guadalupe Davalos Meyers
805.340.8844 | cazareslupe@g.ucla.edu

EDUCATION

University of California | Los Angeles, California 2018-2020 Master of Arts, Latin American Studies.

- Labor Studies Department Teaching Assistant; Immigrant Rights, Nonviolence and Social Movement courses.
- Global Hilton Summer Fellow; placed in the Government of Mexico City Claudia Sheinbaum's office and co-authored Mexico City's 2019 Sustainable Development Goals 2020 presented at the UN conference.

Mills College | Oakland, California 2006 - 2010 Bachelor of Arts, 2010
Major in International Relations; Minor in Latin American Studies

EXPERIENCE(Selected) 2012-Present

Fund Development Consultant – PIQE | September 2022- Present

- Create a series of databases using spreadsheets to monitor deadlines for new and ongoing grants, reports, renewals.
- Plan and participate in staff meetings regarding grants and tracking of deliverables.
- Attend meetings with funders and webinars.
- Collaborate with key team members to design project proposals and budgets.
- Draft, assemble, and submit grants and reports.
- Perform duties as assigned including organizing files in drives.

Minds Matter National | September 2021- August 2022 *National Office Remote Program Manager*

- Led 20+ summer program directors to place hundreds of first-gen students in college immersion experiences.
- Updated and maintain listservs, databases, digital file storage, internal rosters, input Salesforce data.
- Served as liaison between 30 national college summer partnerships with universities across the country.
- Managed and updated internal Google Site used as a point of reference for chapters.
- Worked closely with the CEO to update and implement processes that support the 14 local chapters.

Office of Mayor Libby Schaaf | Oakland, California 2017 - 2018 *Director of Kindergarten to College (K2C)*

- Lead member on one of the Mayor's senior staff projects initiative teams.
- Supervised and trained Kindergarten to College AmeriCorps associates and K2C team.
- Managed Salesforce database to ensure K2C college saving accounts and evaluation of the program.
- Supported K2C schools with the implementation of the program by providing and developing teacher training, parent workshops, organized Oakland Unified School District K2C convenings, and conducted school visits to build relationships with principals, school staff and parents.
- Designed and implemented outreach strategies (K2C playbook, newsletter, parent toolkits, flyers, trainings).
- Supported the organizing of immigration Know Your Rights/ DACA workshops for families in 18 schools by partnering with Centro Legal de la Raza.
- Developed trainings and coached associates in developing their own community presentations.
- Measured outreach metrics for serving undocumented families in 18 Oakland schools and tracked on Salesforce.
- Served on the Equity committee that planned Race and Equity staff development once a month.
- Organized Cal Day, a campus visit for families, for 24 Oakland Unified School District schools and provided schools with transportation funds, distributed press releases, and created materials for campus visit.

Voices College Bound | San Jose and Morgan Hill, and Richmond, California 2016- 2017 *Manager of Community Engagement*

- Developed a vision for community engagement in the Voices College Bound Network by supporting the development of the leadership program for staff and parents.
- Supported and trained Latino parents in leading their own meetings with elected officials to advocate for school choice, immigration services, and other issues affecting their communities.

● Built an active core group of 30-35 parent advocates in three different cities by training and supporting their development.
● Co-led the planning and implementation of a parent led forum with 1500 attendees. Public officials from different levels of government were asked questions on a range of issues affecting low-income communities in San Jose, managed press, developed talking points and prepped interviewees.
● Collected and organized data gathered from canvassing, outreach, and voter engagement.
● Met monthly with office managers and developed plans for community engagement and trainings.

Innovate Public Schools │San Jose, Redwood City, East Palo Alto, California 2015-2016 *Senior Lead Organizer*
● Served as supporting developer for community organizer team and trained community organizers.
● Co-led the planning of a community forum with public officials ranging on issues of education, immigration, and public safety. Managed press developed talking points and prepped interviewees.
● Partnered with school leaders to develop an active parent involvement strategy through organizing, this entailed developing a playbook for their school and training staff.
● Supported the planning and training the first volunteer leadership 3-day retreat.

People Acting in Community Together │Silicon Valley, California 2012-2015 *Senior Community Organizer*
● Built a strong, active, and successful low-income, Latino community group of 30 members in south Santa Clara County dedicated to education, immigration legal services, and expanding public social services.
● Organized immigration forums with public officials, attorneys and non-profits in Santa Clara South County to build a network of support for undocumented community members.
● Communicated with press, developed talking points and prepped interviewees.
● Supervised and trained novice community organizers and built a curriculum of training.
● Surveyed communities to understand concerns and priorities; used results to research policies and developed data to demonstrate the need for action.
● Co-represented PACT in the San Jose Immigration Coalition to expand DACA and other immigration resources.
● Trained and developed community members to take action effectively in the public arena in order to win national, state, and local policy victories that resulted in direct services.
● Co-developed, planned, and executed the first overnight leadership retreats for community leaders.

Leadership, Services, Awards 2006-2021
● Inequality and Democracy Fellowship, UCLA 2020
● Global Hilton Summer Fellow, UCLA 2019
● Member of the planning committee for the 6th annual Going Global Graduate Conference 2019.
● UCLA Latin American Studies, Salinas Summer Grant, 2019
● Graduate Opportunity Fellow, UCLA 2018
● President and cabinet member of Mujeres Unidas (3 Years)
● Class vice president in Associated Students of Mills College (1 Year)
● Cross-Country Captain (3 Seasons) and qualified for NCAA Nationals (2 Seasons)
● Resident Adviser (3 Years)
● Professor's Assistant (1-year Ethnic Studies, Mills College)
● Mills College Student of Color Award for graduating seniors and Mills College Athlete Scholar Award.

Lectures/Conferences
● "Indocumentado y Sin Miedo; el movimiento estudiantil de los Dreamers." Guest Lecture in Spanish at ITESO Universidad Jesuita de Guadalajara; July 2021.
● Latinx Geographies in the Deep South. Annual conference of Hispanic Studies, University of California, Riverside; November 2021.

Skills
Language; Spanish fluent in writing, reading, and speaking.
Software; Microsoft Office Suite (Word, PowerPoint) Adobe Acrobat PDF.

JONATHAN L. RYBKA

202.431.3123 2022A Greenwood Circle • Nashville, TN 37206 JonLRybka@gmail.com

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- Strategic Initiatives
- Program Officer
- Education Innovation
- Education and Training Advocate
- Deal Sourcing
- External Relations
- Academic Modeling
- Grantee and Stakeholder Partner
- International Educator
- Funding Advisor
- Branding and Growth
- Student Achievement Driver

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Apuro Advisory, Nashville, TN
Consulting and advisory firm specializing in strategic planning and executive support to social impact organizations and leaders.

Founder and Managing Director September 2024-current

- Supports clients in developing multi-year strategic plans for their organization and sector
- Augments CEOs and Executive Directors in management plans and division of responsibility for their senior leadership teams
- Conducts Board of Directors assessments to align board leadership and governance with the vision and management of CEOs and Executive Directors
- Provides executive coaching for seniors leaders of organizations

Equitable Facilities Fund, New York City, NY
$1B+ Fund to create affordable and sustainable facilities funding for highest quality charter schools nationwide.

Chief Program Officer September 2023-August 2024

- Created a new division focused on business development of potential borrowers, direct technical assistance to schools, and analyzing data for additional services and tools needed in the market
- Led the initial launch of the School Success division that annually achieved 160+ early stage intake and diligence
- Working with the underwriting team, completed nearly $400M of loans to over 20 organizations with $100M of those loans to early stage schools and networks

RePublic Schools, Nashville, TN and Jackson, MS
Public charter school network committed to reimagining public education in the South through high quality academics and computer science education.

CEO Jan 2017 – June 2024

- Improved academic performance by implementing shared curriculum and aligned professional development. All schools performed above their respective city averages by end of tenure and among the highest performing open enrollment schools in their respective Cities.
- Doubled the size of enrollment from 1,600 to 3,000+ students while adding two additional schools to the network
- Reduced reliance on philanthropy for operational expenses from 30%+ to less than 2% annually.
- Expanded and supported K-12 computer science education nationally through creation of computer science curriculum and expanded implementation supports to over 50,000 K-12 students nationally.

Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF), Austin, TX
Foundation committed to helping underserved students improve academic performance and increasing access to quality education.

Program Officer, Quality School Options June 2014 – December 2016

- Develop, maintain, and expand a useful network of contacts and colleagues, establishing and maintaining the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation in the center of the "deal flow" that has led to the increase of 100% of sourcing opportunities
- Provide strategic advice to potential/current grantees and related stakeholders to develop and advance initiatives at the organizational and city level to identify and influence critical stakeholders within the organization and/or city that has led to the creation of approximately 400,000 new high quality seats and at least 10 cities pursuing a portfolio strategy
- Effectively and objectively assess potential grantee's organizational leadership, growth plan, past performance, and their operational, financial, and academic models with their respective markets to make funding recommendations with the successful new approvals of 50% of the current portfolio
- Consultant and partner with grantees and related stakeholders in the cities to deliver program outcomes that are in support of the MSDF's mission contribute across 30 organizations nationally, managing approximately $30 million in grants annually.

Scholar Academies, Washington, DC
Organization transforming low-performing schools so that every child has the knowledge and character to pursue the path to college and opportunities beyond.

Managing Director, External Relations and Strategic Initiatives May 2012 – May 2014

- Led Scholar Academies' national growth strategy through the successful application to operate 12 schools in the Memphis Achievement School District which will triple the size of Scholar Academy over a five years
- Oversees Scholar Academies' contract with the DCPS to turnaround Stanton Elementary, the formerly lowest preforming elementary school in the district. Under Scholar Academies' management the school is now considered a model for turnaround in the District of Columbia
- Supported Scholar Academies' CEO in securing the organization's largest single grant and individual donation to date, a $1.8 million grant from the Philadelphia School Partnership and a four year $1 million pledge from a current board member, which enabled Scholar Academies

to open a new turnaround school in Philadelphia and support internal capacity building
- Drove the strategic alignment of Scholar Academies' outreach and branding with the organization's growth objectives by leading a rebranding effort which included logo development, website re-launch and development of targeted online content
- To support the rapid growth of the organization and create more streamlined and effective internal and program-specific communications, advised and consulted with program teams and developed tailored marketing tools resulting in more targeted communications to internal and external stakeholders
- Entered the organization in a newly created role and within the first year in the position grew the team to four members, overseeing the hiring process, developing a staffing plan and managing five work streams, resulting in improved relationship management and professionalized marketing
- Drove the implementation of a data driven marketing and relationship management systems to better track Scholar Academies' current network and expand to target supporters resulting in increased online giving, social media presence and standardized and improved knowledge management system

District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Washington, DC
The local, traditional public school system of Washington, D.C. in the United States.

Manager, Office of School Innovation September 2009 – May 2012
- Managed a three-year initiative to convert 13 elementary and middle schools into integrated theme based schools (*e.g.* STEM, World Cultures, and Arts Integration) to drive student achievement and enrollment. Program resulted in enrollment rates in of Catalyst schools growing by a factor of five
- Built strong working relationships with school leadership and facilitated a collaborative process with participating principals and coordinators to develop theory of change and program models for each theme resulting in whole school models for arts integration, world cultures, and STEM for the district
- Oversaw the hiring and management of 13 school-based Catalyst Administrators and central office team members resulting in more integrated team and sharing of best practices between schools, ensuring that Catalyst methodology was successfully streamlined into school environments
- Managed an annual budget of approximately $3 million and oversaw the allocation process for school-level funding based in collaboration with school leadership, Catalyst program coordinators and in line with district priorities
- Developed and maintained relationships with key partners such as Apple, Battelle, National Geographic, Peace Corps, Kennedy Center, Carnegie Academy for Science Education, and the Smithsonian resulting in sustainable long-term partnerships that provide theme-specific resources and funding sources

Children's Defense Fund, Washington, DC
A nonprofit child advocacy organization.

Advocacy Training Coordinator May 2006 – Sept. 2008
- Developed and aligned youth advocacy training initiatives to the strategic priorities of the organization and the Healthy Child Campaign while incorporating a model for expansion and replication
- Coordinated the outreach for the Healthy Child Campaign yielding over 100,000 new contacts and1,400 organizational endorsements
- Coordinated the Beat the Odds scholarship activities of four state offices for underprivileged youth while reestablishing the program in the D.C. area, raising approximately $800,000 annually and tracked 500 former Beat the Odds scholarship recipients for leadership development opportunities through various CDF youth initiatives

Teaching Experience:
- **New York Paramount International Education**, Seoul, *South Korea – Head/Founding Teacher (*2008-2009)
- **SEED Public Charter School**, Washington, DC – *Secondary Social Studies Teacher* (2004-2005)
- **Carver High School,** Winston-Salem, NC – *Secondary Social Studies Teacher* (2003-2004)

EDUCATION

Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC June 2002 – Aug. 2003
Master of Education in Secondary Social Studies, Magna cum Laude
- Recipient of full fellowship for academic achievement and potential for impact
- Publication: Rybka, J. (2002). Secondary Social Studies Textbook Selection. In Leah P. McCoy (Ed.), Studies in Teaching: 2002 Research Digest. Winston-Salem, NC: Wake Forest University

Denison University, Granville, OH
Bachelor of Arts in History, Magna cum Laude Aug. 1998 – May 2002
- Student Body President, Recipient of the Valedictorian, Trustee, and Shepardson Scholarship

Jennifer N. Wade

Mt. Juliet, TN 37122
(615) 500- 7952
Jmayberry04@yahoo.com

EDUCATION

Western Michigan University-Thomas M. Cooley School of Law, Lansing, MI, Juris Doctor Degree received January 2011.

Cooley Law Review, 2009-2010

Tennessee State University**,** Nashville, Tennessee, Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice Degree received May 2004.

3.98 G.P.A., Graduated Summa Cum Laude

LICENSURE

Licensed to practice law in the State of Tennessee, Supreme Court of Tennessee (November 2011 to present).

EMPLOYMENT

Court Administrator, Davidson County Juvenile Court, Nashville, Tennessee (September 2022 to present).

- Oversee all aspects of court operations and program partners.
- Manage all teams of 120+ employees.

Magistrate, Davidson County Juvenile Court, Nashville, Tennessee (September 2015 to September 2022).

Magistrate 1/Director of Metro Student Attendance Center, September 2015- September 2021.

- Operationalized programs of the Juvenile Court Metro Student Attendance Center.
- Analyzed, developed, and implemented operating procedures, rules, and regulations for office personnel.
- Managed building and security issues of the Metro Student Attendance Center.
- Directed staff of approximately 20 court employees and collaborated with Metro Nashville Police Department and Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Magistrate 2, September 2021 to Present.

- Presides over court hearings and trials involving delinquency, abuse, and neglect.
- Reviews emergency pleadings and requests for arrest order and determines whether removal or issuance of warrant is appropriate.

- Studies and interprets laws, court decisions, and other legal authority to prepare legal decisions.
- Establishes and maintains a cooperative relationship with other agencies, including Metro Nashville public Schools, Metro Nashville Police Department, and the Tennessee Department of Children's Services.

Employee Relations Manager, Nashville General Hospital, Nashville, Tennessee (September 2014 to September 2015).

- Oversaw employee relations for the entire Metro Nashville Hospital Authority comprised of over 500 employees.
- Conducted new hire orientation and onboarding. Trained staff on customer service protocols, cultural sensitivity, and workplace harassment and discrimination.
- Collaborated with and coached management teams and staff to improve workplace relations, increase morale, and productivity.
- Investigated claims of harassment, discrimination, and disparate treatment. Issued official response to the complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.
- Investigated and mediated conflicts between management, employees and their union representative. Resolved employee grievances.
- Conducted objective employee disciplinary hearings and created notices of discipline when appropriate.
- Conducted research into HR policy, employee satisfaction, and patient satisfaction. Tailored organization-wide employee relations plan that aligned with the reported needs of the organization.

Managing Attorney, Law Office of Jennifer Wade, Nashville, Tennessee (2012 to 2015).

- Advised and represented clients as guardian ad litem,
- Advised and represented students charged with truancy and parents alleged to be the perpetrators of abuse or neglect.
- Conducted legal research and managed paralegal and support staff.
- Communicated with clients and opposing counsel in preparation for trials and court hearings.
- Engaged in business development efforts.

Assistant General Counsel, Tennessee Department of Children's Services, Nashville, Tennessee (2010-2011).

- Investigated circumstances of employment harassment and discrimination and employment lawsuits. Represented the state in employment hearings.

- Advised business units on employment matters.

Family Treatment Court Program Coordinator/ Case Manager, Ninth Judicial Circuit Court, Kalamazoo, MI (2008-2010).

- Identified appropriate participants for Family Treatment Court.
- Created treatment plans for all enrolled participants.
- Provided verbal and written reports to the court regarding client progress and made recommendations about sanctions and rewards for clients.
- Conducted case management services, including conducting random drug screens, making service referrals, conducting home visits, and assisting clients obtain housing and employment.

Probation Officer I, Davidson County Juvenile Court, Nashville, Tennessee (2004-2007).

Supervised Probation Officer Intern, January 2004- January 2005.

- Monitored youth probation progress and documented all case occurrences in JIMS.
- Referred youth to appropriate program depending on their needs.
- Engaged with families to ensure compliance with probation requirements.
- Conducted room searches with probation officer and metro police officer.

Family Service Probation Officer I, January 2005- May 2007.

- Maintained a caseload of 200+ family service cases, ensuring proper documentation of all case occurrences.
- Determined whether parties had reached an agreement at appearance and settlement hearings. Appointed attorneys to indigent parents, when appropriate.
- Facilitated court dockets and foster care review boards.
- Conducted home studies and random drug screens.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, COMMITTEES, AND AWARDS

- Tennessee Bar Association
  - Juvenile and Children's Law Committee, 2020-Present

- Nashville Bar Association
  - Nashville Foundation Leadership Law Program Member

- Napier-Looby Bar Association
  - Historian, 2020
  - Fellow, 2018

- Co-Chairperson of the Alignment Nashville Action Team on Attendance (2019 to present).

- Member of Positive and Safe Schools Achieving Greater Equity (PASSAGE) Committee to reduce minority overrepresentation in student discipline in Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (2016-Present).

- Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center Board Member, 2014- 2020.
    - Board Chair, 2019
    - Finance Committee, Fundraising Committee, Nominations Committee

- Tennessee State Early Head Start Board Member, Legal Representative, 2014- 2022

- Communities in Schools, Board Member, 2022

- PENCIL, Board Member, 2022

PRESENTATIONS, ARTICLES, AND LECTURES

- Presenter at the *Groundswell Network National Convening*. Belmont University. May 8th and 9th, 2024.

- Panelist at the American Institutes for Research Equity *Pathways to Peace: Reimagining the Future of Public Safety for Youth and Communities, October 12, 2023.* https://www.air.org/event/pathways-peace-reimagining-future-public-safety-youth-and-communities

- Presenter at the Tennessee Bar Association Juvenile and Children's Law 2021: *The Effects COVID -19 had on Education, America's Youth, and the Courts that Protect Them* (2021).

- Moderator at the Tennessee Bar Association Juvenile and Children's Law Forum (2021).

- Presenter at the 2019 Metro Nashville Public Schools Equity & Diversity Summit, *Through the Cracks: Saving Youth from the School to Prison Pipeline* (February 2019).

- WKRN News Channel 2, *Newsmaker* series (August 2018)

- The Tennessean, *Juvenile Court Magistrate's Childhood Helps Her Relate*. (October 23, 2016)

REFERENCES Available upon request.

Nathan G. D. Garrett

108 Strassle Dr. White House, TN 37188. (217) 218-3825
ngarrett8535@gmail.com

Education

Eastern Illinois University

M.A., International Relations — ***Charleston, IL*** May 2010

B.A., Political Science — December 2008

Experience and Duties

Tennessee College of Applied Technology—Nashville — ***Nashville, TN***
President — January 2022-Current

- Exercise broad delegated authority with responsibility for all aspects of campus administration;
- Manage three satellite locations throughout the college's service area;
- Lead approximately 100 employees;
- Responsible for institutional budget;
- Manage capital outlay projects;
- Collaborate with secondary education partners to include Metropolitan Nashville School System, Sumner County Schools, Robertson County Schools, and Cheatham County Schools;
- Increase contributions to college foundation;
- Responsible for institutional accreditation
- Collaborate with other state agencies to attract, retain, and grow the industry in Northern Middle Tennessee;
- Serve as the middle Tennessee TCAT presidential representative on the Tennessee Board of Regents Academic Affairs Council and Sub-Council;

Tennessee Board of Regents — ***Nashville, TN***
Assistant Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs — September 2021-December 2022

- Coordinate the alignment between TBR academic programs and future industry needs;
- Lead 40 colleges in the management and growth of United States Department of Labor (US DOL) Apprenticeship programs;
- Implement a $1.6 million US DOL Scaling Apprenticeship Grant in partnership with Pennsylvania College of Technology in partnership with 25 TBR colleges;
- Collaborate with the Tennessee Department of Labor to grow US DOL apprenticeships: Secured $400,000 in additional training support from this agency;
- Serve as the main point of contact with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in the management of the Governors Investment in Vocational Education Grant;
- Manage special projects for the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs to include process mapping of current academic programs and system strategy to manage TCAT waitlist.

Tennessee College of Applied Technology—McMinnville ***McMinnville, TN***
Interim President July 2020- September 2021

- Exercised broad delegated authority with responsibility for all aspects of campus administration;
- Supervised 43 full and part-time employees;
- Responsible for an institutional budget of $2.7 million;
- Managed $1,208,942 of Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds to offset impact of COVID-19;
- Strategic budget management increased renewal and replacement funds by 72%;
- Grew institutional headcount by approximately 25%;
- Added two additional full-time programs;
- Increased dual enrollment partnerships to include three additional county high schools leading to a 150% increase of dual enrollment;
- Represented college in regional economic development efforts to recruit and expand existing industry;
- Developed, managed and implemented COVID-19 safety protocol and procedures;
- Established correctional training program serving approximately 50 justice involved participants in partnership with local workforce board;
- Developed strategic mission to support Achieving the Dream (ATD)

Tennessee College of Applied Technology—Murfreesboro/Tennessee Board of Regents. ***Nashville, TN***
Assistant Vice Chancellor, Community and Economic Development. September 2017- June 2020
Vice President, TCAT Murfreesboro

- Oversaw Tennessee Board of Regents development of United States Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship programs give number to include 18 college sponsors and approximately 300 apprentices;
- Provided training and support to municipalities throughout TN to recruit/ expand workforce
- Collaborated with external organizations such as Chambers of Commerce, Industrial Development Boards, and City leadership in the effort to grow economic activities;
- Assisted 40 community and technical colleges develop workforce curriculum;
- Implemented TN Trained system approach to workforce development;
- Supervised 11 full-time faculty members;
- Assisted with student disciplinary process;
- Assisted TCAT Murfreesboro President successfully earn Council on Occupaiton Education reaffirmation.

Tennessee College of Applied Technology—Memphis ***Memphis, TN***
Vice President November 2015-September 2017

- Hired, supervised, and evaluated faculty and staff members: supervision included direct oversight of all college departments, including student services, records, and facilities;
- Assisted in the management of a college budget of approximately $7 million;
- Responsible for all campus operations in the absence of the President;
- Oversaw 2 satellite campuses, evening school programs, and other related off-site training;
- Oversaw the disciplinary system and hearing process for a student body of approximately 1,500;
- Responsible for dual enrollment and growth strategies: 200% increase in dual enrollment
- Responsible for overall institutional growth: Increased certificate/diploma awards by 30% and Full Time Enrollment by 25%;

- Responsible for maintaining and increasing articulation agreements throughout service area: completed dual enrollment articulation agreements with all 8 public-school districts in Shelby County made up of over 60,000 students;
- Responsible for achieving/maintaining institutional accreditation and up to 12 programmatic accreditations;
- Secured and managed four state and federal grants totaling $20 million in private and public grants;
- Responsible for maintaining approximately 400,000 square feet of under roof facilities;
- Supervised institutional improvement projects: Projects included $14 million of renovation and $17.5 million in new capital construction;
- Sold, developed, and supervised business and industry training programs with Delta Airlines, Carrier Corporation, ConAgra Food, WM Barr, Blues City Brewery, FedEx, JM Smucker Company, Smith & Nephew, Mitsubishi Electric & Electrolux.

Greater Memphis Alliance for a Competitive Workforce ***Memphis, TN***
Director of Workforce Innovations June 2015- November 2015

- Supervised, evaluated, and managed two program staff;
- Managed approximately $900,000 Labor Education Alignment Program (LEAP) budget: responsible for monthly activities and budget reporting;
- Facilitated design and program development for guided education pathways that included articulated programs from K-12 through a baccalaureate degree;
- Coordinated with K-12 and post-secondary institutions to develop concurrent credit and industry recognized credentials for technical educations programs in alignment with employer requirements;
- Created innovative workforce training programs aimed at aligning the private industry demand with educational supply;
- Organized the partnership with the Greater Memphis Chamber's Manufacturing and Logistics Councils and the Bartlett Chambers Medical Device Council to identify employer skill requirements and employment career pathways, and to develop corresponding educational pathways and programs to support employer requirements;
- Coordinated the design and implementation of the Employer-Education Alignment Plan (EEAP);
- Worked with post-secondary institutions and K-12 districts to ensure that education and career pathways support maximum articulation of prior academic and/or work experience.

Tennessee College of Applied Technology—Memphis ***Memphis, TN***
Special Industry Coordinator March 2012-May 2015

- Hired, supervised, and evaluated adjunct faculty;
- Oversaw facilities department with three employees;
- Developed/negotiated training contracts with industry and other community-based agencies to meet their requested training needs: increased training revenue by $600,000 in first 24 months of employment;
- Worked in collaboration with student services department for enrollment, financial aid, and scheduling activities;
- Collaborated with Southwest Tennessee Community College to build articulated credit between colleges;
- Created and fostered partnerships with Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, and other civic based groups;
- Created non-registered apprenticeship models for manufacturers including Carrier Corporation, Blues City Brewery, and The J.M. Smucker Company;

- Developed state-wide workforce development action plan in advanced manufacturing and logistics;
- Secured approximately $2.8 million in state and federal funds;
- Managed institutional improvement projects, special industry classes, and grant writing opportunities;
- Responsible for programmatic standards of 26 programs.

Southwest Tennessee Development District (SWTDD) ***Jackson, TN***
Regional Economic Development Initiative College Access Program May 2011-March 2012
College Transition Coach

- Provided vision, innovation, and leadership marketing the mission and goals of Southwest Tennessee Development District in 11 counties throughout West Tennessee;
- Worked within Dyersburg State Community College to build retention programs aimed at first- generation college going students;
- Created data tracking model that was adopted as the main tool for quantitative results;
- Developed, implemented, and managed persistence and retention strategies targeting low-income and first-generation college students attending Dyersburg State Community College;
- Collected and analyzed data using SPSS to identify significant variables that effects retention and persistence;
- Responsible for academic advising and career counseling support for Dyersburg State Community College- approximately 700 students served;
- Directed and organized college access events in 11 counties throughout West Tennessee-assisted approximately 1,500 families.

Professional Development

- Complete Tennessee Leadership Institute, Cohort 6, (November 2021-May 2022)
- Council on Occupational Education Summer Conference (July 2019)
    - Reporting Completion, Placement, and Licensure Certificate
    - Self-Study Certificate
    - Team Member Training Certificate
- Tennessee College of Applied Technology Leadership Academy Graduate (2014)

TERA T. HAMBRICK

PO Box 330524, Nashville, TN 37203
Telephone: (615) 400-0626 E-mail: t2hambrick@comcast.net

SUMMARY

Innovative, decisive, and savvy General Counsel and senior executive with comprehensive litigation and healthcare regulatory and operational experience delivering favorable outcomes aligned with operational and legal objectives. Proven ability to manage litigation as well as directly render litigation services as in-house counsel, build and manage in-house legal functions, and supervise outside counsel. Adept at conducting directly and coordinating third-party efforts in connection with internal investigations; proactive resolution of legal and compliance issues; and responding to government inquiries. Trusted leader and advisor possessing commendable and reliable judgment.

CORE COMPETENCIES

- Litigation and Arbitration
- Negotiation and Dispute Resolution
- Corporate Governance/Board Advisement
- Contracts Negotiation and Execution
- Regulatory Affairs
- Compliance
- Accreditation Oversight and Management
- Risk Management

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Legal Experience

Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center, Inc. **Nashville, TN**
Director of Regulatory Affairs & Legal Counsel **Aug. 2010 - Present**

General Counsel and key executive selected to develop in-house Legal Department and Office of Regulatory Affairs for non-profit FQHC with $10 - 15M annual budget and more than 140 employees across multiple healthcare sites and additional service delivery points.

- Strategically minimizing outsourced litigation and legal counseling activities, which reduced costs by 55% within first year of departmental operation and realized improved cost-control year-over-year;
- Representing the organization before federal and state courts and state administrative agencies in connection with a diverse array of actions, including employment, commercial, real estate and healthcare litigation;
- Managing outside counsel and outsourced legal and regulatory matters;
- Developing, reviewing, approving, and monitoring departmental and legal/regulatory project budgets;
- Coordinating and managing investigative and other inquiries from government agencies, including developing responsive strategies and reports;
- Drafting, reviewing, revising, and negotiating vendor contracts, provider employment agreements, clinical affiliation agreements, sub-grant contracts, financing agreements, and other instruments;
- Advising the board of directors on governance and legal matters and development of corporate documents;
- Advising senior and middle management regarding legal considerations and risk management in connection with AKS, Stark Law, anti-inducement laws, state and federal False Claims Act statutes, and other healthcare fraud and abuse laws; employment; and other operational matters organization-wide;
- Providing early resolution of vendor, payor, and other disputes mitigating litigation or other claim costs and creating operational efficiencies;
- Assessing, developing, revising and counseling regarding policies and procedures in collaboration with senior management to identify and minimize areas of compliance and other legal vulnerabilities;
- Providing guidance and legal support in connection with assessment, development and enhancement of Continuous Quality Improvement Program and other activities addressing quality of care;
- Developing and monitoring internal procedures consistent with the FTCA deeming process/coverage requirements related to threatened and actual claims of medical malpractice, including serving as the responsible party for collaboration with the DHHS Office of General Counsel representatives;
- Conducting directly and managing third-party led internal investigations;
- Investigating and resolving certain classes of patient, employee, and other complaints or reports involving allegations of policy or legal violations or compliance, regulatory, or legal risk;

- Supervised Compliance Manager and served as legal support in connection with assessment, planning, and implementation of the Compliance Program prior to corporate downsizing; thereafter, performing directly compliance functions assumed as a result of corporate downsizing; and
- Providing internal oversight and management of (i) procedures and compliance to maintain The Joint Commission accreditations under multiple accreditation programs and (ii) implementation and operation of a medical-legal partnership in collaboration with a non-profit legal services provider

Bradley Arant Boult Cummings LLP **Nashville, TN**
(Prior to Jan. 2009 merger: Boult, Cummings, Conners & Berry, PLC)
Special Counsel **Nov. 2008 – Aug. 2010**
Associate **Sept. 2004 - Nov. 2008**
Summer Associate **May 2003 - June 2003**

Represented commercial and individual clients in health care, general business, financial services, real estate, and intellectual property litigation, including development of litigation and project budgets, direct examination and defense representation in depositions, drafting and argument of pre-trial motions and trial of actions in Tennessee state and federal courts, advisement during mediation and settlement conferences, and negotiation and drafting of settlement agreements. Representative experience includes:

- Representation of start-up health care company and negotiation of a favorable settlement in a suit filed by a large competitor claiming misappropriation of trade secrets, violation of confidentiality and non-competition agreements and intentional interference with business relations;
- Advisement of non-profit hospital system and multiple for-profit health care organizations in defense of medical malpractice actions frequently resulting in dismissal of actions by motion for summary judgment; claims pursuing governmental payment for medical services provided to inmates; actions involving breach of acquisition, emergency services, and employment agreements; conservatorship proceedings; matters regarding HIPAA Privacy Rule and compliance measures;
- Representation of multiple clients in actions involving claims of negligent credentialing, negligent extension of staff privileges under health care contract and failure to train and adequately staff emergency medical facility;
- Representation of TennCare beneficiaries in administrative proceedings and court actions against the Bureau of TennCare and Tennessee Department of Human Services (1) to secure and maintain benefits and services and (2) for noncompliance with federal and state statutes, regulations and special terms and conditions; and
- Obtained judgment for compensatory damages and an injunction in favor of talent agency client at trial of action involving claims for misappropriation of trade secrets and breach of duty of loyalty against former employee

Business Owner Support and Advisement Experience

Entrepreneur Guidance and Training (EGT), Inc. **Nashville, TN**
Loan Manager **May 1999 - May 2004**

Developed and implemented micro-loan management system that increased repayment rate by 50% within first 6 months. Conducted business monitoring and consulting for program participant entrepreneurs. Assisted with drafting and research for grant proposals. Conducted grant fund monitoring, program budgeting, and accounts payable/receivable tasks.

Program Assistant **Jul. 1997 - May 1999**

Recruited participants for micro-enterprise training program. Instituted accounting system and produced financial reports.

EDUCATION

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL, Nashville, TN
Doctor of Jurisprudence, 2004
Honors and Activities: Lightfoot, Franklin & White Best Oralist Award; Moot Court Competition; Recipient of Vanderbilt University Law School Honor Scholarship; Phi Alpha Delta, Treasurer

FISK UNIVERSITY, Nashville, TN
Bachelor of Arts, Political Science and Psychology, *summa cum laude*, Valedictorian, 1999
Honors and Activities: Phi Beta Kappa Society; Pi Sigma Alpha; Psi Chi; BISA Scholarship Recipient; Mortar Board, President; Judicial Council Representative; Political Science Pre-Law Club, Vice-President

PUBLICATIONS

Hambrick, T.T., Rosenblatt, R.R., Stevenson, J.A. (February 2016) "Treat Me Equitably and As I See Myself, Part 1" and "Treat Me Equitably and As I See Myself, Part 2" *Executive Insight*

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Presenter, "Basic Legal Considerations and Hot Topics in Health Center Human Resources Management" Tennessee Primary Care Association Annual Conference (Pre-Conference HR Boot Camp), September 28, 2016, Murfreesboro, TN

Presenter, "Before and After: Data Breach Prevention and Response Preparedness Considerations for Health Center Leadership" Tennessee Primary Care Association Annual Conference, September 30, 2016, Murfreesboro, TN

Co-presenter, "The New Protected Class? What You Should Know About New Protections for LGBT Workers and Accommodations for Transgender Employees" Littler Mendelson, PC Breakfast Briefing, November 10, 2015, Nashville, TN

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

My Rock Academy, Board of Directors (2024 – Present)
The Ballantyne Foundation, Inc., Board of Directors, Secretary (2023 – Present)
Itavia's House of Care (IHOC), Advisory Board, Vice President (2021 – Present)
Council on Aging of Greater Nashville (now, AgeWell Middle Tennessee), Board of Directors (2014 – 2016)
Entrepreneur Guidance and Training, Inc., Board of Directors, Treasurer (2010 – 2013)
Lawyers' Association for Women, Minorities Outreach Committee, Co-Chair (2008 - 2011)
Tennessee Justice Center, Advisory/Fundraising Board (2010 – 2012), Volunteer (2008 - 2010)
Tennessee Bar Association, Member
Nashville Bar Association, Bench and Bar Retreat Committee Member (2016)
Nashville Bar Foundation, Fellow

BAR ADMISSIONS

State Bar of Tennessee (2004)
U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee (2005)
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Tennessee (2008)
U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee (2008)
Supreme Court of the United States (2022)

Attachment M Cover Page

Board Policies

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

The Rock Academy of Nashville
Board Policies

Founded November 2024
Dr. Ahmed White, Founder
Lekita Sims, Co-Founder

Website: *www.therockacademynashville.org*
Email: *help@therockacademynashville.org*
Address:

Rock ACADEMY

Board Policies Overview

This document is designed specifically for The Rock Academy Board of Directors to serve as a comprehensive guide for effective governance and decision-making. Policies are the foundational rules and guidelines established by an organization to support its long-term objectives. The board policies outlined here aim to guide The Rock Academy as a whole, ensuring strong and effective charter school governance.

Unlike operational school policies—such as those addressing procurement or discipline, which focus on specific school activities and are typically developed by school officers—board policies concentrate on overarching governance and strategic direction.

Board policies complement—and must not conflict with—the organization's articles of incorporation and bylaws, which form the legal and structural foundation of The Rock Academy. Once approved by a formal vote of the board, these policies carry the same authority as the bylaws and contracts.

In addition to approving policies, The Rock Academy Board of Directors is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the school's adherence to them. This fiduciary duty requires board members to oversee and support the proper functioning of the school in alignment with its mission, vision, and governance framework.

Board Member Agreement

The Board Member Agreement for The Rock Academy outlines the responsibilities, commitments, and expectations of each member of the Board of Directors. This agreement serves to ensure clarity and alignment among board members, fostering a collaborative and effective governance environment. A well-structured agreement minimizes the risks of confusion, disengagement, or disruption and provides a clear framework for individual and collective accountability.

The Rock Academy Board Member Agreement includes the following key areas:

1. ***Meeting and Event Attendance*** - Board members are expected to actively participate in all board meetings, committee sessions, and key school events, demonstrating a consistent commitment to the school's mission and governance.
2. **Behavioral Norms -** Board members are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism, respect, and integrity, upholding the values of The Rock Academy. This includes fostering a collaborative atmosphere and maintaining confidentiality regarding board discussions and decisions.
3. **Financial Commitments -** Each board member is expected to support The Rock

Academy through personal financial contributions or securing external resources, as appropriate. This commitment reinforces the shared responsibility of board members in ensuring the school's financial sustainability.

By signing the Board Member Agreement, each director affirms their commitment to these principles and their dedication to supporting The Rock Academy's mission, vision, and long-term success.

For additional guidance and resources, refer to the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws.

Code of Conduct

The Rock Academy Board of Directors is committed to the highest standards of ethical and professional behavior. This Code of Conduct serves as a guide for all board members, officers, and employees, ensuring their actions reflect the mission and vision of The Rock Academy.

1. **Ethical Standards**
    - Act with integrity, honesty, and transparency in all board-related activities.
    - Avoid actions that could harm the school's reputation or trust within the community.
2. **Confidentiality**
    - Protect all confidential information obtained through board service, including student data, personnel matters, and sensitive organizational discussions.
3. **Reporting Unethical Behavior**
    - Adhere to established procedures for reporting unethical or unlawful conduct, ensuring compliance with legal and organizational standards.

This Code of Conduct establishes a framework to foster professionalism and ethical decision-making, promoting accountability and trust within the school community.

Conflicts of Interest

The Rock Academy's Conflict of Interest Policy ensures the board operates in an impartial and ethical manner, free from personal interests that could compromise decision-making.

1. **Annual Disclosure**
    - Each board member and officer must annually disclose any potential or actual conflicts of interest.
2. **Conflict Identification**
    - Board members are required to disclose any personal, financial, or professional interests that may conflict with the organization's interests.
3. **Voting Restrictions**

- Board members with a conflict of interest must abstain from participating in discussions or voting on related matters.

This policy upholds the integrity and accountability of The Rock Academy by maintaining a clear and transparent decision-making process.

Document Retention and Destruction

To ensure compliance with state and federal laws, The Rock Academy maintains a robust Document Retention and Destruction Policy.

1. Retention Guidelines
   - Establish timelines for retaining key documents, such as financial records, meeting minutes, and student data, in accordance with legal requirements.
2. Secure Destruction
   - Implement secure methods for document destruction to prevent unauthorized access to sensitive information.

This policy safeguards the organization's records and reduces risks associated with inappropriate document disposal.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Policy

The Rock Academy is dedicated to protecting the privacy of its students by complying fully with FERPA regulations.

1. Protection of Student Records
   - Ensure that all records directly related to students—such as grades, transcripts, attendance, and disciplinary records—are securely maintained.
2. Limitations on Information Sharing
   - Prohibit the release of personal information to third parties without prior authorization, unless permitted under FERPA exceptions.

This policy reinforces The Rock Academy's commitment to the privacy and rights of its students and their families.

Gift Acceptance Policy

The Rock Academy encourages charitable contributions while maintaining a clear Gift Acceptance Policy to ensure all donations align with its mission.

1. **Acceptable Gifts**
    - Accept gifts in the form of cash, publicly traded securities, and other assets that can directly benefit the organization.
2. **Review of Complex Gifts**
    - Require board approval for gifts of real property, in-kind donations, or other assets that may involve additional costs or liabilities.

This policy ensures that all contributions are utilized effectively to support the mission of The Rock Academy.

Nondiscrimination Policy

The Rock Academy is firmly committed to fostering an inclusive environment where discrimination is not tolerated.

1. **Commitment to Equality**
    - Prohibit discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, or any other protected class.
2. **Community Values**
    - Promote a culture of equity and respect within the school and the broader community.

This policy reflects The Rock Academy's dedication to creating a safe and welcoming environment for all.

Whistleblower Policy

The Rock Academy values transparency and accountability, encouraging individuals to report unethical or illegal practices without fear of retaliation.

1. **Protected Reporting**
    - Board members, staff, and volunteers are encouraged to report credible concerns regarding illegal activities or policy violations.
2. **Protection from Retaliation**
    - Protect whistleblowers from any form of retaliation or adverse action.

3. **Reporting Mechanisms**
    - Provide clear procedures for reporting concerns to designated board members, staff, or external parties.

This policy fosters a culture of integrity and compliance, ensuring The Rock Academy operates in accordance with all applicable laws and ethical standards.

The Rock Academy of Nashville
Board Member Code of Conduct Agreement

The sustainability and success of The Rock Academy depends upon a committed, informed, engaged, strategic, diverse, and high-functioning board. The Rock Academy Board asks all board members to affirm their personal commitment to the following responsibilities:

I will support the mission and vision of The Rock Academy.

- Clearly understand and embrace The Rock Academy' mission, vision, and strategy
- Understand academic performance across the organization
- Review relevant data, ask appropriate questions, and monitor progress towards ambitious goals for students regularly

I will support the Executive Director and hold her, and this board, accountable for The Rock Academy' success.

- Partner with the Executive Director in developing an annual set of goals and a plan to achieve those goals, consistent with and in support of the mission
- Develop board goals and monitor progress towards those goals regularly
- Maintain an updated job description for the Executive Director, and encourage her to develop a succession plan that involves building a strong leadership team and talent pipeline
- Provide regular, direct, substantive feedback to the Executive Director, offering guidance and support readily and regularly, and acting as a governing body that does not act as management
- Conduct a professional, transparent, substantive annual performance review of the Executive Director that is based on her goals, the goals of The Rock Academy' strategic plan, and a self-evaluation
- Obtain input from the Executive Director's direct reports and key external stakeholders, not to be used in an evaluative capacity, but to ensure that she has the opportunity to receive relevant and helpful feedback
- Hold myself and the entire Rock Academy Board accountable; readily own any failure to live up to these expectations, and respectfully note when board colleagues might need to do so

I commit to and use the highest ethical standard in serving as a board member of The Rock Academy.

- Understand and comply with the board bylaws, conflict of interest policy, and other board policies
- Ensure the legal and ethical integrity of The Rock Academy and its board, in compliance with the requirements of the law, professional ethics, and professional and organizational norms

I will exercise strict financial, operational, and academic oversight.

- Regularly review relevant data, ask responsible questions, follow up with ongoing issues, note improvement and success, and track progress towards goals
- Ensure an annual audit of the schools' financial records is completed and review audit results
- Conduct an annual audit of the schools' financial records

I commit to participating actively in the work of the board, and helping ensure that The Rock Academy has the high-functioning, diverse, engaged board it needs to succeed.

- Proactively take on substantive work that will help the board achieve its goals
- Serve on at least one committee and attend meetings to achieve committee goals
- Complete all tasks I agree to take on
- Communicate regularly with board colleagues and The Rock Academy staff, answer emails within 1-2 days, keep communications direct and succinct
- Attend all board meetings, missing a maximum of one meeting annually, understanding having all members present to discuss and act on the business of The Rock Academy is core to board service.
    - If I am unable to attend a board meeting, I will inform the board chair and Executive Director a minimum of 24 hours prior to the meeting
    - After three consecutive board meeting absences, even if I have informed the Chair and Executive Director, it will be assumed I have resigned my seat
    - Come to board meetings prepared, having read materials sent in advance
- Attend the annual board retreat
- Be on time for board and committee meetings
- Allocate an average of 8-10 hours/month to The Rock Academy board work

I commit to ensuring that The Rock Academy has the resources it needs to achieve its goals and execute its strategy by participating actively and to my full capacity in fundraising and friendraising efforts.

- Commit to making The Rock Academy among my most significant annual philanthropic contributions and, if possible, increasing my giving level each year, acknowledging the increased fundraising lift facing the organization in order to achieve its ambitious goals
- Make connections/introductions to external parties/stakeholders for The Rock Academy towards specific goals/outcomes each year
- Speak routinely and positively in as many different contexts and settings as possible about my connection to The Rock Academy and my support for its mission

The Rock Academy Conflict of Interest Policy

The Rock Academy ("TRA") is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and transparency in all its decision-making processes. To this end, all members of the Board of Directors ("Board Members") are required to avoid conflicts of interest, including actual, potential, and perceived conflicts, to ensure the integrity of TRA's operations and reputation.

Purpose

The purpose of this Conflict of Interest Policy is to:

- Protect the integrity of TRA's decision-making processes.
- Enable stakeholders and the community to have confidence in the Board's leadership.
- Safeguard the integrity and reputation of Board Members.

Policy Requirements

1. **Disclosure of Conflicts**:
    - Board Members must disclose any known or potential conflicts of interest prior to joining the Board and as periodically required by TRA.
    - Board Members must provide written updates within five (5) business days if any new conflicts arise during their tenure.
    - Disclosures shall include all relationships, interests, or holdings that may result in a conflict or the perception of a conflict.
2. **Abstention from Decision-Making**:
    - If a conflict arises during the course of Board meetings or related activities, the Board Member must:
        - Disclose the conflict to the Board.
        - Refrain from participating in discussions or deliberations related to the conflict.
        - Abstain from voting on matters involving the conflict.
        - Leave the meeting room during discussions and voting.
3. **Definition of Affiliates**:
   For the purposes of this policy, "Affiliates" include:
    - Individuals related to the Board Member by blood or marriage.
    - Significant others and their relatives by blood or marriage.
    - Businesses or entities where the Board Member or their Affiliates have a direct or indirect financial interest, including employment, consulting, or board service.
    - Individuals or entities with financial interests in the businesses or entities described above.
4. **Confidentiality**:
    - All disclosed conflicts will be documented and kept confidential in TRA's records.
5. **Good Judgment**:

- This policy supplements but does not replace good judgment. Board Members are expected to act in the spirit of the policy as well as adhere to its specific provisions.

Annual Giving & Estimated Date of Receipt

Our expectation is that each Board Member will make an annual contribution to The Rock Academy that is personally meaningful and reflects their commitment to supporting the school's mission and vision.

*Note the specific amount you will personally give to **The Rock Academy** annually along with the date The Rock Academy should expect your contribution.*

Amount:	**Expected Receipt:**

Notes:

Printed Name _____

Signature _____ **Date** _____

Conflict of Interest Policy for Rock Academy of Nashville

This shall be known as the "Conflict of Interest Policy" for Rock Academy of Nashville. It is subject to amendment by vote of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE I
NAMES

Section 1 Name

The name of the corporation is *The Rock Academy* (the "Corporation").

ARTICLE II
MEMBERS

Section 2 Members

The Corporation shall have no members.

ARTICLE III
PURPOSES

Section 3.1 Purpose

The Corporation is organized exclusively for religious, charitable, educational, literary and/or scientific purposes within the meaning of Sections 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, including as follows:

A. the establishment and administration of a charter school, seeking to provide whole-child development and individualized instruction to students; and
B. to contract with other organizations, for profit or nonprofit, with individuals and the government in furtherance of such purposes; and
C. to engage in such other activities, exercise such other powers and privileges, take such other actions and carry out such other purposes as may be authorized by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act. Notwithstanding any other provision of the Charter or these Bylaws, the Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by any of the following: (a) a corporation exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the code, or any corresponding provision of any future federal tax laws; (b) a corporation contributions to which are deductible under Sections 170(c)(2), 2055(a), and 2522(a) of the Code, or any corresponding provisions of any future federal tax laws; or (c) a nonprofit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Tennessee pursuant to the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act.

ARTICLE IV
OFFICE

The principal office of the Corporation shall be located in Tennessee. The Corporation may also have offices at such other places as the Board of Directors of the corporation (the "**Board of Directors**") may from time to time designate or as the purposes of the Corporation may require.

4.1 Registered Agent. The initial registered agent of *The Rock Academy* (the "Corporation") shall be **Dr. Ahmed White**.

4.2 Registered Office. The initial registered office of the Corporation shall be 301 Northcreek Blvd #164, Goodletsville, TN 37070.

4.3 Other Offices. The Corporation may have offices at such place or places within or without the State of Tennessee as the Board of Directors may from time to time appoint or the business of the corporation may require or make desirable. The mailing address of the initial principal office of the corporation is 301 Northcreek Blvd #164, Goodletsville, TN 37070.

ARTICLE V
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 5.1 General Powers

The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be supervised by its Board of Directors (sometimes referred to herein as the Board), which shall exercise in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation all of the rights and privileges legally exercisable by the Corporation as a corporate entity, except as may otherwise be provided by law, the Charter, or these Bylaws. The Board of Directors, as the governing body of the Corporation, shall have the authority to receive, administer, invest and distribute property on behalf of the Corporation in accordance with the provisions set forth in these Bylaws.

Section 5.2 Composition and Term

The number of Directors of the Corporation shall be between 3 and 11. The exact number of Directors shall be determined by the Board pursuant to current needs. Within 120 days following application approval and inaugural student body enrollment, at least one parent of a current student of the school shall be elected to serve as a Director. Starting on July 1, 2025, Directors shall serve staggered terms of 3 years and until successors are elected and qualify. Directors may serve up to three consecutive terms.

Section 5.3 Election

The Directors of the Corporation shall elect their successors by a majority vote. Election procedures for Board members shall be established by the Board, and the process shall be transparent and open to all eligible candidates.

Section 5.4 Removal

A Director may be removed with or without cause by the affirmative vote of a ⅔ majority of all Directors present and voting.

Section 5.5 Resignation

A Director may resign at any time by providing written notice to the Board. Resignation shall be effective upon the delivery of notice unless the notice provides that it will be effective at a later time or upon the occurrence of an event.

Section 5.6 Vacancies

The Directors may fill any vacancy on the Board by following the Board-approved nomination and selection process.

Section 5.7 Action of the Board

Pursuant to T.C.A. § 8-44-101 et seq., the minutes of the Board meetings must be recorded and open to public inspection and at a minimum must contain a record of the persons present, all motions, proposals and resolutions offered, the results of any votes taken, and a record of individual votes in the event of a roll call. All votes must be by public vote, public ballot, or public roll call; secret votes are prohibited.

Section 5.8 Compensation and Reimbursement

Directors will not receive compensation for their service as Directors. Directors may receive reimbursement for expenses actually and reasonably incurred (a) on behalf of the Corporation or (b) in the course of performing Director duties.

Section 5.9 Responsibilities.

Each director shall attend a majority of regular Board of Directors meetings in each fiscal year. The Board's primary duties shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Ensuring compliance with the Charter and all relevant laws and regulations.
2. Hiring, evaluating, and supporting the Executive Director.
3. Approving the annual budget and overseeing financial matters.
4. Approving annual goals for the school.
5. Completing an annual Conflict of Interest statement.
6. Engaging with the school community and promoting transparency.

ARTICLE VI
BOARD MEETINGS

Section 6.1 Regular Meetings

The Board shall hold regular meetings (at least 10 times annually), at times and dates determined by the Board as set forth in an annual meeting calendar.

Section 6.2 Special Meetings

The Chair or any two (2) Directors may call a special meeting of the Board.

Section 6.3 Meeting Format

All meetings will be held in compliance with T.C. A. § 8-44-102 et. seq., which states that all meetings of any governing body are declared to be public meetings and must be open to the public at all times. Rock Academy will ensure that meeting locations and times are as accommodating as possible to its school community, and will encourage and welcome parents, staff, and community stakeholders to attend.

Section 6.4 Notice

Notice of the date, time, location, of both regular and special meetings shall be delivered to each Director and posted on the school's website at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. Notice must include the agenda and relevant meeting details including the purpose of our business to be transacted at the meeting.

Section 6.5 Quorum

In the provisional bylaws, the presence of all Directors serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting. Once charter authority is granted, the presence of half of all of the Directors shall constitute a quorum.

Section 6.6 Voting

Each Director shall have one vote. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the vote of a majority (more than 50%) of Directors participating in a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the action of the Board.

A Director is deemed to consent to action taken at a meeting unless (a) the Director promptly objects to the holding or transacting business at the meeting; (b) the Director's dissent or abstention is entered into the minutes of the meeting; or (c) the Director delivers notice of dissent or abstention to the presiding officer before adjournment or to the Corporation immediately after the meeting.

Section 6.7 Committees

The Board may establish committees to address specific areas or tasks related to the Charter School's operations. Standing committees shall include, but not be limited to: Board recruitment and Nominations, Executive Committee, Finance, Governance, and Academic. Ad-hoc committees may be created from time-to-time as specific needs arise. Each committee shall be chaired by a Board member and may include other individuals with relevant expertise. The Board Chair shall appoint committee members and define their roles and responsibilities.

ARTICLE VII
OFFICERS OF THE BOARD

Section 7.1 General
The officers of the Board shall consist of a Chair, a Vice Chair, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.

Section 7.2 Election
The initial slate of officers shall be elected from among the Directors by a plurality vote. After one year, the officer slate shall be presented by the Governance Committee and voted on by the full Board, with a majority vote approving the new slate.

Section 7.3 Term
An officer shall serve for a term of three (3) years, and until a successor is elected and qualifies.

Section 7.4 Executive Director.
The Executive Director, an employee of the Corporation, shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation, and subject to the direction of the Board of Directors, shall have general supervision over the business and affairs of the Corporation. The Executive Director shall be a non-voting, ex-officio member of the Board of Directors and in conjunction with the Board Chair shall help plan and execute meetings of the Board of Directors. The Executive Director shall see that all orders and resolutions of the Board of Directors are carried out and shall perform all other duties as the Board of Directors shall assign. The initial Executive Director of the Corporation shall be Dr. Ahmed White.

Section 7.5 Chair
The Chair shall preside at and conduct all meetings of the Board. The Chair and Treasurer are the only legal authorized officers who shall have authority to sign and execute, in the name of the Corporation, deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts, and other documents to be executed on the Corporation's behalf.

Section 7.6 Vice Chair.
The Vice Chair shall:

A. Stand ready to act as the Chair in the Chair's absence;
B. Perform any duties of the Chair as delegated by the Chair.

Section 7.7 Secretary
The Secretary shall (a) keep accurate records and minutes of all meetings, proceedings, and actions of the Board and Board Committees; (b) make available minutes of the previous Board meeting and distribute them in advance of each Board meeting; (c) deliver all notices of meetings to those persons entitled to vote at such meetings; (d) maintain the minutes and a current listing, with contact information, of the Directors at the principal office of the Corporation; and (e) authenticate records of

the Corporation. The Secretary shall generally perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as may be assigned by the President or the Board.

Section 7.8 Treasurer

The Treasurer shall keep or cause to be kept complete and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements of the School and shall deposit all moneys and other valuable effects of the School in the name and to the credit of the Corporation in such banks or depositories as the School may designate. Such accounts are to be separate and isolated from the general Corporate receipts and revenues. The Treasurer shall keep proper books of accounts and other books showing at all times the amount of the funds and other property of the School; books shall be open at all times to the inspection of the Board of Directors and school members. The Treasurer shall present an operating statement and report, since the last preceding regular council meeting, to the School at all regular meetings. He or she, in collaboration with the Corporation's Chief Operating Officer, shall also present the monthly statements and other financial information to the Corporation's Finance Committee. Annual financial information, such as the school audit shall also be submitted to both the School's members and the Corporation's Finance Committee. He or she shall perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer, and such other duties shall from time to time be assigned by the School. If required by the school council, the Treasurer shall give such security for the faithful performance of his or her duties as the committee may require.

Section 7.9 Executive Committee

The officers named in sections 7.5-7.8 shall serve as the Executive Committee of the Board. This committee will be empowered to conduct nominal (non-voting) business and provide support to the Executive Director on behalf of the board in-between regular board meetings.

Section 7.10 Compensation

Officers will not receive compensation.

Section 7.11 Removal

The Board may remove any officer with or without cause after a ⅔ majority of all Directors present and voting.

Section 7.12 Resignation

An officer may resign at any time by providing written notice to the Board. Resignation shall be effective upon the delivery of notice unless the notice provides that it will be effective at a later time or upon the occurrence of an event.

Section 7.13 Vacancies

The Board may fill a vacancy of an officer role pursuant to the stated nomination and selection process.

ARTICLE VIII

Section 8.1 Executive Director

The Board shall hold responsibility for hiring and evaluating an Executive Director. The Board may delegate duties and customary authorities to the Executive Director, including the appointment of other staff. The Executive Director shall be subject to hire and termination by the Board. Other staff appointed by the executive director shall be subject to hire and termination by the Executive Director.

Section 8.2 *Ex Officio* Status

The Executive Director shall be an officer and an *ex officio*, non-voting Director of the Corporation. The Executive Director shall have the right to attend all Board meetings but may not vote on Board matters in his or her capacity as Executive Director. As an *ex officio* officer of the Corporation, the Executive Director is bound by the same fiduciary obligations and afforded the same rights under Tennessee law and these Bylaws as officers of the Board.

ARTICLE IX
CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

A quorum for the Board's approval of a conflicted interest transaction must consist of at least two (2) disinterested Directors and interested Directors must be precluded from participation in deliberation and voting on conflicted interest transactions.

ARTICLE X
MISCELLANEOUS

Section 10.1 Books and Records

The Board of Directors shall have power to determine which accounts and books of the Corporation, if any, shall be open to the inspection, except such as may, by law, be specifically open to inspection, and shall have power to fix reasonable rules and regulations not in conflict with the applicable law for the inspection of accounts and books, which by law or by determination of the Board of Directors shall be open to inspection. Any records maintained by the Corporation in the regular course of its business, including but not limited to, its books of account and minute books, may be maintained on any information storage device or method that can be converted into clearly legible paper form within a reasonable time.

Section 10.2 Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on July 1 – June 30 of the following year, unless otherwise fixed by resolution of the Board of Directors.

Section 10.3 Corporate Seal

The Corporation shall not have a corporate seal.

Section 10.4 Checks

Checks, notes, drafts and demands for money shall be signed by the Executive Director, the Chair or the Treasurer; or other officers or agents that are designated by the Board of Directors from time to time.

Section 10.5 Annual Statements

Not later than three months after the close of each fiscal year, and in any case prior to the next annual meeting of the Board of Directors, the Corporation shall prepare:

A. A balance sheet showing in reasonable detail the financial condition of the Corporation as of the close of its fiscal year, and
B. A profit and loss statement showing the results of its operation during its fiscal year.

Section 10.6 Audit

The accounts of the Corporation shall be examined annually by a certified public accountant in accordance with applicable law and authorizer requirements.

Section 10.7 Electronic Signatures

Wherever a written instrument is required to be executed hereunder, an electronic signature, to the extent permitted by applicable law, shall be deemed to be a written signature.

Section 10.8 Gifts

The Board or its designee may accept on behalf of the Corporation any contribution, gift, bequest, or devise for the charitable purposes of the Corporation. The Board shall use and distribute all such contributions according to the specific purposes and conditions that were agreed to by the donor when the contribution was received, except where the express written permission of the donor or the donor's heirs or assigns has been obtained to do otherwise.

Section 10.9 Anti-Discrimination Policy

The Corporation is committed to providing a working and learning environment that is free from discrimination and harassment based on an individual's sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, age, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, immigration status, religion, color or mental or physical disability or any other basis protected by federal, state, local law, ordinance or regulation.

Section 10.10 Dissolution

In the event of the dissolution of the Charter School, all assets shall be distributed in accordance with applicable state laws and regulations governing charter schools.

ARTICLE XI

AMENDMENTS TO GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

Section 11.1 Amendments to Charter

The Charter may be altered, amended, or restated and new Charter may be adopted by a ⅔ majority of all Directors present and voting, prior to submission of amendment.

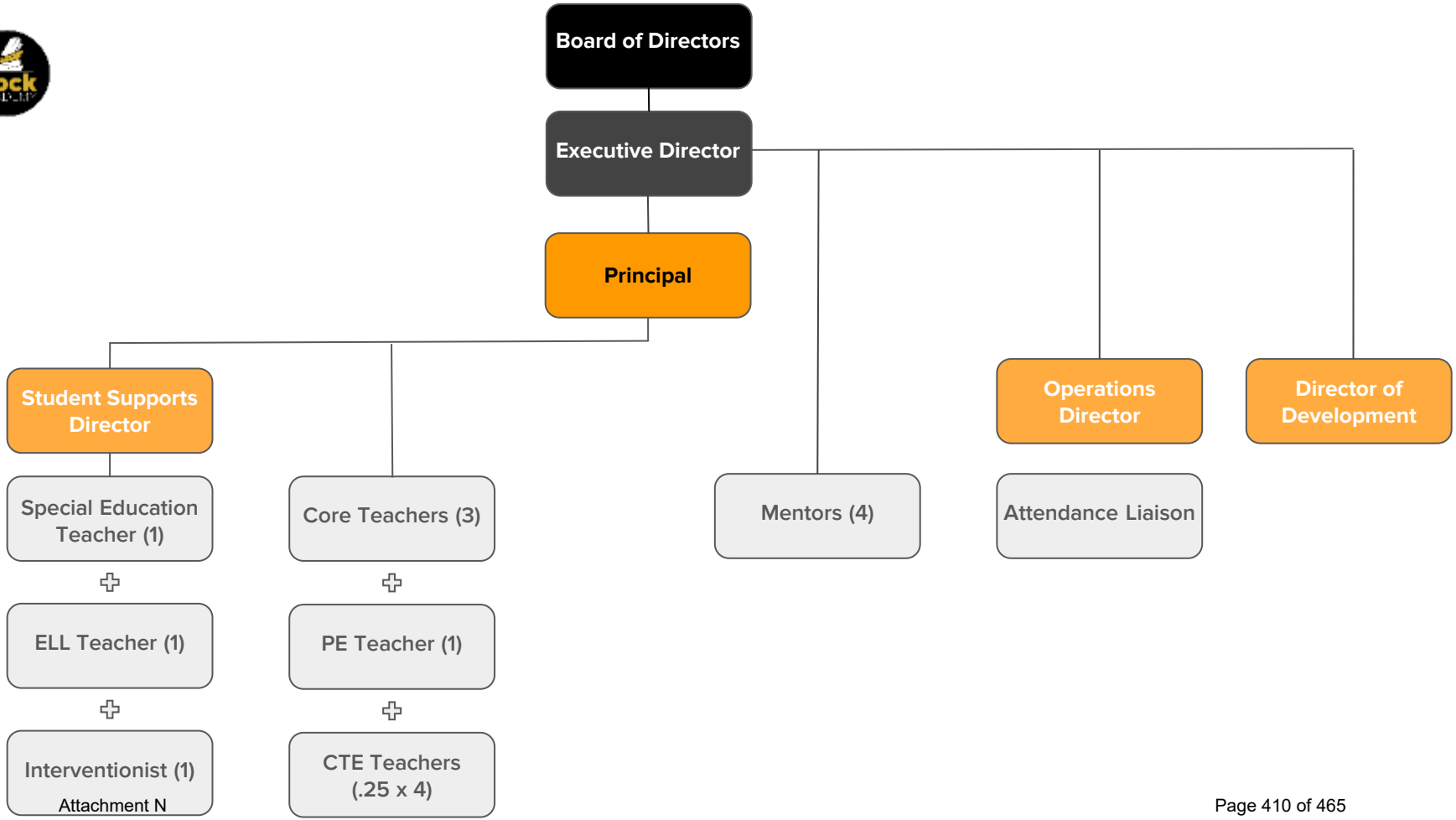
Section 11.2 Amendments to Bylaws

These Bylaws may be altered or amended, and new Bylaws adopted, ⅔ majority of all Directors present and voting.

Attachment N Cover Page

Organizational Chart: Year 1

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

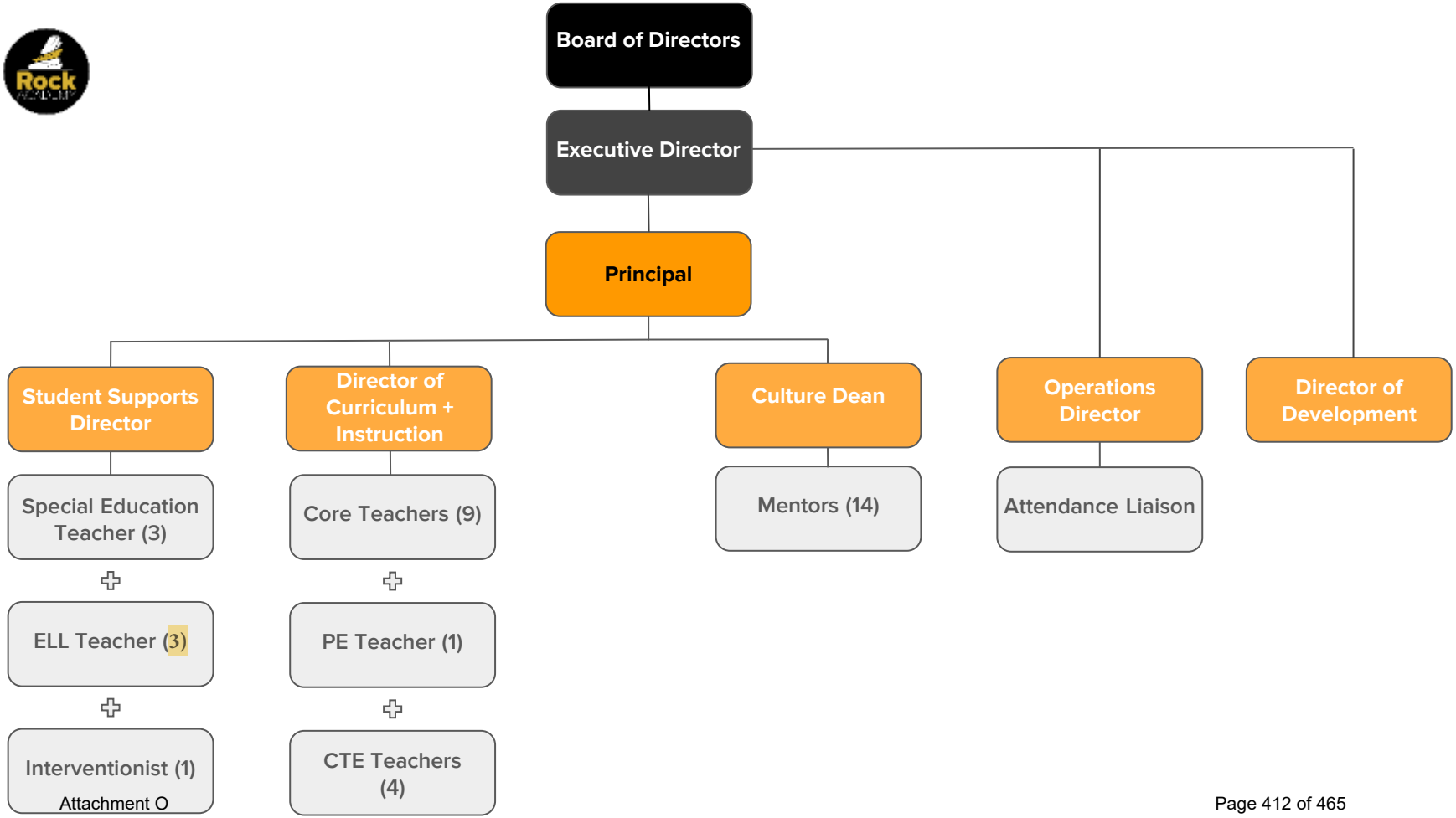

Board of Directors
Executive Director
Principal
Student Supports Director
Special Education Teacher (1)
ELL Teacher (1)
Interventionist (1)
Core Teachers (3)
PE Teacher (1)
CTE Teachers (.25 x 4)
Mentors (4)
Operations Director
Attendance Liaison
Director of Development

Attachment O Cover Page

Organizational Chart: Full Capacity

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment O – Page 411


Board of Directors
Executive Director
Principal
Student Supports Director
Director of Curriculum + Instruction
Culture Dean
Operations Director
Director of Development
Special Education Teacher (3)
ELL Teacher (3)
Interventionist (1)
Core Teachers (9)
PE Teacher (1)
CTE Teachers (4)
Mentors (14)
Attendance Liaison

Attachment P Cover Page

School Leader Resume *(if hired)*

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Dr. Ahmed White

373 Solitude Circle
Goodlettsville, TN 37072
(615) 596-1082
awhite1906@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Ed.D Curriculum & Instruction, Union University, 2024
Ed.S. Curriculum & Instruction, Union University, 2014
M.Ed. Administration & Supervision, Tennessee State University, 2002
B.A. Political Science, Fisk University, 1997

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Rock Academy Nashville **2023 - present**
Founder & CEO

- Design and launch an innovative Opportunity Charter School to serve diverse learners in Nashville, TN.
- Develop a rigorous, student-centered curriculum and integrated programs to support academic success, workforce readiness, and social-emotional development.
- Establish foundational organizational infrastructure, including strategic planning, budgeting, and operational systems.
- Build and foster relationships with community partners, funders, and stakeholders to secure resources and support.
- Advocate for equitable access to education and challenged stigmas associated with alternative schools to redefine them as choice schools focused on opportunity and achievement.
- Spearhead efforts to recruit and retain a mission-driven team, ensuring alignment with the school's vision and values.
- Navigate startup challenges, including facilities planning, board development, and compliance with state charter school legislation.
- Identify and secure grants, and develop a sustainable budget to fund programs, operations, and wraparound services.

Project Reflect / Smithson Craighead Academy **2017 – 2024**
Executive Director & Principal

I seek to continue the mission of the organization and Middle Tennessee's first charter school. I report directly to the Board of Directors. My responsibilities include 75 employees, 340 students, and all other aspects of Project Reflect / Smithson Craighead Academy.

- Consult to ensure a seamless leadership transition while preserving core values
- Develop wraparound services for families
- Develop and implement GED classes for the community
- Develop and implement ESL classes for the community
- Develop academic direction for school to achieve student success
- Responsible for maintaining and increasing the student body enrollment

- Hire and maintain a highly qualified & highly motivated staff
- Recruit students from all backgrounds
- Incorporate best teaching practices with staff through professional development
- Develop and maintain a balanced budget
- Conduct school and organization business within the budget
- Incorporate community based programs to fully utilize 23 acres
- Maintain after school program that engages students academically, socially, and in the arts
- Teach character education
- Develop a parenting academy
- Meet w/ Charter board for compliance
- Develop testing schedule
- Meet with community officials
- Find grant opportunities and apply
- Seek and maintain alternate funding sources
- Report to and attends the Board of Directors Meetings

Sumner County Schools **2009 - 2017**
Executive Principal, Thomas William Hunter Middle School

I served as chief instructional leader and reported to the Superintendent of Schools and collaborated with district principals to provide excellent education experiences for students. I supervised over 70 employees, 700 students, and implemented district mandates and initiatives with fidelity. While at T. W. Hunter I accomplished:

- Implemented reading and writing workshops to increase student literacy and support school reading programs.
- WordGen program to combat the word gap for underachieving students
- **Increased student literacy achievement to 73.5%; nearly 10% growth**
- **Increased student numeracy achievement by 19.8% to 72%**
- Successfully improved student participation in the classroom through integration of cross-curricular activities.
- Developed a strong relationship with PTO to meet academic, intellectual, and social needs of students.
- Collaborated with the central office and FBLA to develop a before/ after-school tutorial program for students in need of extra help.
- Mentor to current and aspiring school leaders.
- Principal mentoring district trainer
- Lead staff and faculty through standard changes through professional development
- Master Schedule development to maximize student performance.
- Implementing Operation Domination Math emphasis to increase math scores
- **100% Algebra I students passed EOC for 3 consecutive years**
- **Implemented Olweus Bully Prevention program to decrease bullying**
- Successfully added three pre-school classes for autistic students and typical peers in a middle school
- Opened 2nd Therapeutic Intervention Program
- **Increased technology by $200,000 in first 3 years**
- District Disciplinary Hearing Board
- Lead school in Hattie's Visible Learning training
- State of Tennessee TEAM Administrator Evaluation Trainer
- Level 5 school for growth

- Implemented RTI2 program to drill down to help close the achievement gap for students
- District presenter on best hiring practices
- Consistently recruit level 5 teachers
- Facilitated Homeland Security training for parents to combat cyber bullying and cyber safety
- Ranked 31 out of 558 middle schools by Niche

Boys Preparatory Nashville Charter School 2011
Consultant

- Development of single gender focused curriculum.
- Advised on Positive Behavior Support as part of school-wide code of conduct
- Conduct interviews for highly motivated, well accomplished teachers for school
- Designed academic goals for the school
- Calendar development to maximize learning opportunities
- Master schedule development

Sumner County Schools 2007 - 2009
Assistant Principal, White House Middle School

- Successfully improved student participation in the classroom through integration of creative role-playing exercises
- Assisted in developing school reading programs
- Developed interesting course plans to meet academic, intellectual and social needs of students
- Instituted school-wide PBIS program
- Developed school schedule and class lists
- Mentor to aspiring school leaders
- Teacher recruitment
- Master scheduling

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools 2004 - 2007
Whites Creek Comprehensive High School – Special Education Teacher

- Moderate Intervention Program for Behavior
- Routinely met with students' parents regarding in-class issues and learning interruptions to discuss solutions.
- Performed student background reviews to develop tailored lessons based on student needs.
- Taught English Literature to grades 9-12.
-
- Instructed 10-11th grade levels of Algebra I and Algebra II to a class of 22 students.
- Developed IEP for each student to enable success after high school.
- Taught all core subjects.
- 70+ percent of students successfully graduated from the program into regular education classes successfully.
- Faculty advisory committee chair.
- Head track coach
- Head cross-country coach (boys & girls)
- Assistant football coach

Genesis Academy **2003 - 2004**
Genesis Academy, Teacher Counselor

- Teach and counsel students with severe behavior deficiencies
- 90% of the students graduated from the program
- Plan education field trips bi-weekly as a reward
- Implement a level system for student personal behavioral goals
- Conduct IEP meetings

Monroe Harding Children's Home **2000 - 2003**
MHCH, Education Liaison

- Developed an educational curriculum for students to earn GED.
- Build relationships with local high school for students to receive regular education diplomas
- Supervise education staff
- Develop programs for summer that were fun and educational
- Supervise cottages and cottage leaders for program development
- Dispense medication to students
- Teach life-skills for students that were ready to move out on their own.

CERTIFICATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- Nashville Charter Collaborative Steering Committee
- Member of ASCD
- SCS Disciplinary Hearing Board
- IEP Procedures and Assessments
- Member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

TRAINING

- Olweus Bully Prevention
- John Hattie Visible Learning Model
- Why Try for behavior modification
- Tennessee LEAD Conference
- TEAM Evaluation trainer
- Handle with Care trainer
- Crisis Prevention Intervention
- Master Schedule Training
- Drug Free and Safe Schools
- Presenter Sumner County Principal's Retreat, Summer 2017
- State of Tennessee, Administrator Evaluation Trainer, Summer 2012

References Available Upon Request

Attachment Q Cover Page

Insurance Coverage

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment Q – Page 418

Brown & Brown

January 6, 2025

Director of Charter Schools
2601 Bransford Ave.
Nashville, TN 37204

RE: The Rock Academy

To whom it concerns:

The Rock Academy School has begun the process of fulfilling the insurance requirements with The Hartford Insurance Company as required by the charter agreement. As stated by MNPS guidelines, the General Liability/Automobile Liability Policy must equal or exceed $5,000,000. This insurance will be primary insurance and the first $1,000,000 will be with a company licensed in Tennessee with an AM Best rating of at least A. The following $4,000,000 layer will be covered under an excess liability or umbrella policy. This policy will name MNPS as an additional insured and will include contractual liability. The automobile coverage will cover all owned, hired, and non-owned vehicles in the amount of $1,000,000 with the additional $4,000,000 excess layer.

The Professional Liability policy for the Directors and Officers of The Rock Academy will be equal to or greater than $5,000,000, and the Teacher Professional Liability cover will be equal to or greater than $1,000,000. Workers Compensation and Employers Liability policy will be equal to or greater than $1,000,000 for each accident, $1,000,000 for each employee, and a $1,000,000 policy limit. Property and Boiler insurance policy will be provided if the Charter school purchases or leases the property being occupied. Insurance shall be for the full replacement cost of the property and contents with no coinsurance penalty provision.

The Hartford Insurance Company shall provide the Chartering Authority with Certificates of Insurance in a form satisfactory to the Chartering Authority prior to the commencement of performance of this Charter Agreement. Throughout this Charter Agreement, the sponsor will provide updated Certificates of Insurance forms upon expiration of the current certificates, including a 10-day notice of cancellation and additional insured status.

If you have any questions regarding coverage requirements, don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

Sincerely,

Sam L. Cook III, Senior VP
Brown & Brown Insurance Services

Attachment R Cover Page

CMO Agreement

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT QUESTION 6

Not applicable; we will not contract with a CMO

Attachment S Cover Page

Network Annual Progress Report

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT QUESTION 3

Attachment T Cover Page

Organizational Chart: Year 1

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT QUESTION 3

Attachment U Cover Page

Organizational Chart: Year 5

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT QUESTION 3

Attachment V Cover Page

Previously Approved and Authorized Application for School Being Replicated

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT QUESTION 4

Not applicable

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 throughout the template.

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

The Rock Academy

Charter School Creation Application Operating Budget Template

Proposed School Information

Proposed School Name	**The Rock Academy**
Lead Sponsor Name	**Dr. Ahmed White**
Lead Sponsor E-mail Address	awhite@therockacademynashville.org
Lead Sponsor Phone Number	**(615) 596-1082**
CMO/EMO Affiliation	**NA**

Proposed Authorizer	**Davidson County**
Geographic District*	**Davidson County**
Proposed Opening Grade Level(s)	**9**
Proposed Final Grade Level(s)	**12**
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	0	0	0	0	0
7th Grade	0	0	0	0	0
8th Grade	0	0	0	0	0
9th Grade	88	88	88	88	88
10th Grade	0	85	85	85	85
11th Grade	0	0	82	82	82
12th Grade	0	0	0	78	78
Total Enrollment	88	173	255	333	333
Change in Net Enrollment	88	85	82	78	0

**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, sponsors 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 - Principal(s)	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	2.00
105 - Supervisor / Director	1.25	2.00	2.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
113 - Internal Audit Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
116 - Teachers - Classroom Teachers (core subjects)	0.00	3.00	6.00	8.00	9.00	9.00
116 - Teachers - Classroom Teachers (electives, world languages)	0.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
116 - Teachers - Special Education Teachers	0.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	4.00
116 - Teachers - English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers	0.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00
116 - Teachers - Other Teachers (must add assumption notes)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
116 - Teachers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
118 - Secretary to Board	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
119 - Accountants/Bookkeepers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
120 - Computer Programmer(s)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
121 - Data Processing Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
122 - Purchasing Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
123 - Guidance Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
124 - Psychological Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
128 - Homebound Teachers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
129 - Librarian(s)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
130 - Social Workers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
131 - Medical Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
132 - Material Supervisor(s)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
135 - Assessment Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
136 - Audiovisual Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
137 - Education Media Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
138 - Instructional Computer Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
139 - Assistant Principal(s)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
142 - Mechanic(s)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
146 - Bus Drivers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
160 - Guards	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
161 - Secretary(s)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
162 - Clerical Personnel	0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
163 - Educational Assistants	0.00	4.00	8.00	11.00	14.00	14.00
164 - Attendants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
165 - Cafeteria Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
166 - Custodial Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
167 - Maintenance Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

169 - Part-time Personnel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
170 - School Resource Officer	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
171 - Speech Pathologist	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
189 - Other Salaries & Wages	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
195 - Certified Substitute Teachers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
198 - Non-certified Substitute Teachers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTALS	**4.75**	**18.00**	**26.00**	**35.00**	**41.00**	**41.00**

***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:	***$15,593.67***
	$17,000.00

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		$ 1,372,242.75	$ 2,697,704.49	$ 3,976,385.23	$ 5,192,691.30	$ 5,192,691.30

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**
Title I	$ -	$ 44,000.00	$ 86,500.00	$ 127,500.00	$ 166,500.00	$ 166,500.00	In-planning	$500 per student
Title II	$ -	$ 4,400.00	$ 8,650.00	$ 12,750.00	$ 16,650.00	$ 16,650.00	In-planning	$50 per student
IDEA	$ -	$ 11,000.00	$ 21,625.00	$ 31,875.00	$ 41,625.00	$ 41,625.00	In-planning	$500 per SPED student (assumes 25% SPED population).
eRate	$ -	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00		Assumes 20K/year
Philanthropy	$ 1,400,000.00	$ 1,000,000.00	$1,000,000.00	$1,000,000.00	$800,000.00	$800,000.00	In-planning	
CSP	$ 500,000.00	$ 200,000.00	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	In-planning	
USDA Breakfast	$ -	$ 47,203.20	$ 92,797.20	$ 136,782.00	$ 178,621.20	$ 178,621.20	In-planning	Assumes $2.98/student/day
USDA Lunch	$ -	$ 82,684.80	$ 162,550.80	$ 239,598.00	$ 312,886.80	$ 312,886.80	In-planning	Assumes $5.22/day/student
TISA CORRECTION	$ -	$ -	$119,538.26	$234,857.51	$344,551.44	$344,551.44	In-planning	TISA Correction for Opportunity Youth
TOTAL	$ 1,900,000.00	$ 1,409,288.00	$ 1,511,661.26	$ 1,803,362.51	$ 1,880,834.44	$ 1,880,834.44		

	Year 0 2025-26	**Year 1 2026-27**	**Year 2 2027-28**	**Year 3 2028-29**	**Year 4 2029-30**	**Year 5 2030-31**
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS	$ 1,900,000.00	$ 2,781,530.75	$ 4,209,365.75	$ 5,779,747.75	$ 7,073,525.75	$ 7,073,525.75

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 **1. Personal Services**	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
EXAMPLE: 116 Teachers	***$ -***	***$ 251,566.00***	***$ 375,896.00***	***$ 450,356.00***	***$ 651,232.00***	***$ 750,155.00***	***71100, 71200, 71300, 73400***
104 Principal(s)	$ 260,000.00	$ 260,000.00	$ 267,800.00	$ 275,834.00	$ 284,109.02	$ 292,632.29	
105 Supervisor / Director	$ 106,250.00	$ 170,000.00	$ 175,100.00	$ 360,706.00	$ 371,527.18	$ 382,673.00	Includes director of Stud Supports in year 1
113 Internal Audit Personnel							
116 Teachers	$ -	$ 517,000.00	$ 807,220.00	$ 1,094,848.80	$ 1,339,683.30	$ 1,379,873.80	71100, 71200
118 Secretary to Board							
119 Accountants/Bookkeepers							
120 Computer Programmer(s)							
121 Data Processing Personnel							
122 Purchasing Personnel							
123 Guidance Personnel	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
124 Psychological Personnel							
128 Homebound Teachers							
129 Librarian(s)							
130 Social Workers							
131 Medical Personnel							
132 Material Supervisor(s)							
135 Assessment Personnel							
136 Audiovisual Personnel							
137 Education Media Personnel							
138 Instructional Computer Personnel							
139 Assistant Principal(s)							
142 Mechanic(s)							
146 Bus Drivers							
160 Guards							
161 Secretary(s)							
162 Clerical Personnel	$ 37,500.00	$ 75,000.00	$ 77,250.00	$ 79,567.50	$ 81,954.53	$ 84,413.16	
163 Educational Assistants	$ -	$ 200,000.00	$ 412,000.00	$ 583,495.00	$ 764,908.90	$ 787,856.17	
164 Attendants							
165 Cafeteria Personnel							
166 Custodial Personnel							
167 Maintenance Personnel							
169 Part-time Personnel							
170 School Resource Officer		$ 70,875.00	$ 70,875.00	$ 70,875.00	$ 70,875.00	$ 70,875.00	Assumes hiring a private firm: $45/hour x 175 10 hour Days
171 Speech Pathologist							
189 Other Salaries & Wages	$ 135,000.00	$ 135,000.00	$ 139,050.00	$ 143,221.50	$ 147,518.15	$ 151,943.69	
195 Certified Substitute Teachers		$ 3,000.00	$ 6,000.00	$ 9,000.00	$ 12,000.00	$ 12,000.00	$150/day, 20 days per grade per year
196 In-Service Training							
198 Non-certified Substitute Teachers							
TOTAL	**$ 538,750.00**	**$ 1,430,875.00**	**$ 1,955,295.00**	**$ 2,617,547.80**	**$ 3,072,576.07**	**$ 3,162,267.10**	

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions **2. Employee Benefits**	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

201 Social Security	$ 33,402.50	$ 88,714.25	$ 121,228.29	$ 162,287.96	$ 190,499.72	$ 196,060.56	6.2% of wages
204 Pensions							
206 Life Insurance	$ 2,693.75	$ 7,154.38	$ 9,776.48	$ 13,087.74	$ 15,362.88	$ 15,811.34	.5% of wages
207 Medical Insurance	$ 38,000.00	$ 144,000.00	$ 214,240.00	$ 297,052.00	$ 358,414.46	$ 369,166.89	$8,000 per FTE per year for employer contribution. Assumes 3% inflation year
208 Dental Insurance	$ 1,425.00	$ 5,400.00	$ 8,034.00	$ 11,139.45	$ 13,440.54	$ 13,843.76	$300 per FTE per year for employer contribution. Assumes 3% inflation year over year.
210 Unemployment Compensation	$ 897.75	$ 3,402.00	$ 4,914.00	$ 6,615.00	$ 7,749.00	$ 7,749.00	2.7% of first $7,000 in wages for each FTE
211 Local Retirement	$ 6,712.83	$ 17,828.70	$ 24,362.98	$ 32,614.65	$ 38,284.30	$ 39,401.85	Assumes 12.46% of wages for participation in local retirement plan. Estimating that 10% of staff will be in this category.
212 Employer Medicare	$ 7,811.88	$ 20,747.69	$ 28,351.78	$ 37,954.44	$ 44,552.35	$ 45,852.87	1.45% of wages
215 On-behalf Payments to OPEB							
217 Retirement Hybrid Stabilization	$ 43,638.75	$ 115,900.88	$ 158,378.90	$ 212,021.37	$ 248,878.66	$ 256,143.64	Assumes 9% of wages for participation in State Retirement System. Estimating that 90% of staff will be in this category.
TOTAL	**$ 134,582.45**	**$ 403,147.89**	**$ 569,286.41**	**$ 772,772.61**	**$ 917,181.91**	**$ 944,029.90**	
	24.98%	28.17%	29.12%	29.52%	29.85%	29.85%	

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
3. Contracted Services							
302 Advertising	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	Assumes $20K per year for student recruitment/community engagement + staff recruitment
304 Architects							
305 Audit Services	$ -	$ 3,000.00	$ 28,000.00	$ 28,000.00	$ 28,000.00	$ 28,000.00	Assumes $3K for 990 each year and $25K for audit starting in year 2
307 Communication							
308 Consultants		$ 22,000.00	$ 43,250.00	$ 63,750.00	$ 83,250.00	$ 83,250.00	Contracted Sped Services: Assumes $1,000/SWD and 25% SWD population
309 Contracts With Government Agencies							
310 Contracts With Other Public Agencies							
311 Contracts With Other School Systems							
312 Contracts With Private Agencies		$ 245,000.00	$ 330,000.00	$ 415,000.00	$ 500,000.00	$ 500,000.00	Student transportation. Assumes 90% of students will need transportation. Each bus can accomodate 60 students and would cost approximately $85K per year.
313 Contracts With Parents							
314 Contracts With Public Carriers							
315 Contracts With Vehicle Owners							
317 Data Processing Services							
320 Dues & Memberships	$ -	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$10K per year; Chamber, TCSC, Sports, etc.
321 Engineering Services							
322 Evaluation & Testing							
328 Janitorial Services	$ -	$ 24,000.00	$ 34,600.00	$ 51,000.00	$ 66,600.00	$ 66,600.00	$2 per sq. ft. of leased space
329 Laundry Service							
330 Lease/SBITA Payments		$ 300,000.00	$ 432,500.00	$ 637,500.00	$ 832,500.00	$ 832,500.00	$25 per sq. ft. in lease costs; assumes 12K sq. ft. in year 1 and 100 sq.. ft. per student in years 2-5
331 Legal Services	$ -	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	
335 Maintenance & Repair Services Building	$ -	$ 15,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 30,000.00	$ 30,000.00	Tenant funded repairs (plumbing issues, paint updates, etc.), increasing by year based on increasing square footage
336 Maintenance & Repair Services Equipment							
338 Maintenance & Repair Services Vehicles							
340 Medical and Dental Services							
342 Payments to Schools-Breakfast	$ -	$ 47,203.20	$ 89,683.20	$ 136,782.00	$ 178,621.20	$ 178,621.20	Assumes $2.98/day/student
343 Payments to Schools-Lunch	$ -	$ 82,684.80	$ 162,550.80	$ 239,598.00	$ 312,886.80	$ 312,886.80	Assumes $5.22/day/student
344 Payments to Schools-Other							
345 Payments to Schools-Other USDA							
348 Postal Charges	$ -	$ 440.00	$ 865.00	$ 1,275.00	$ 1,665.00	$ 1,665.00	Assumes $5/student
350 Internet Connectivity	$ 7,800.00	$ 15,600.00	$ 15,600.00	$ 15,600.00	$ 15,600.00	$ 15,600.00	Assumes $1,300/month - and half a year for year 0
351 Rentals	$ 3,750.00	$ 9,000.00	$ 18,000.00	$ 18,000.00	$ 18,000.00	$ 18,000.00	Copier rental and usage: assumes $750/copier/month; 1 copier year1; 2 copiers years 2-5
354 Transportation Other Than Students							
355 Travel							Staff Travel and Meetings, Mileage Reimbursement
356 Tuition							
359 Disposal Fees	$ -	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$ 10,000.00	$10K; assumes annual fees for trash pickup
367 Maintenance & Repair Services Records							

369 Contracts for Substitute Teachers Certified	$ -	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	$ 20,000.00	Summer School Stipends: 2 teachers @ $6,700 each + transportation + supplies
370 Contracts for Substitute Teachers Non-certified							
399 Other Contracted Services	$ 29,800.00	$ 100,300.00	$ 106,300.00	$ 109,300.00	$ 112,300.00	$ 112,300.00	Back office, Payroll Services, Erate Consultant, Tech Support
TOTAL	**$ 61,350.00**	**$ 934,228.00**	**$ 1,351,349.00**	**$ 1,810,805.00**	**$ 2,249,423.00**	**$ 2,249,423.00**	

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions **4. Supplies and Materials**	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
410 Custodial Supplies	$ -	$ 12,000.00	$ 12,000.00	$ 12,000.00	$ 12,000.00	$ 12,000.00	$1,000 / month for cleaning supplies (toilet paper)
412 Diesel Fuel							
411 Data Processing Supplies							
413 Drugs & Medical Supplies	$ -	$ 440.00	$ 865.00	$ 1,275.00	$ 1,665.00	$ 1,665.00	$5/student
415 Electricity	$ -	$ 24,000.00	$ 34,600.00	$ 51,000.00	$ 66,600.00	$ 66,600.00	$2 per sq. ft. for all utilities (electric, water, etc) for leased space
418 Equipment & Machinery Parts							
422 Food Supplies							
423 Fuel Oil							
424 Garage Supplies							
425 Gasoline							
426 General Construction Materials							
429 Instructional Supplies & Materials		$ 28,600.00	$ 54,495.00	$ 80,325.00	$ 104,895.00	$ 104,895.00	Assumes $270 student for instructional supplies and printing paper + an additional $200/SWD@25% of enrollment.
430 Textbooks Electronic		$ 75,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	Assumes $75,000 for year 1 and $40,000/year moving forward for curriculum materials - including core curriculum, curriculum consultants, and remedial curriculum products
432 Library Books/Media							
433 Lubricants							
434 Natural Gas							
435 Office Supplies		$ 12,000.00	$ 12,000.00	$ 12,000.00	$ 12,000.00	$ 12,000.00	Assumes $1,000 per month
437 Periodicals							
448 T & I Construction Materials							
449 Textbooks Bound							Assumes $100/book/course x 90copies; 1 set per year + replacements starting in year 5
450 Tires & Tubes							
451 Uniforms		$ 3,520.00	$ 6,920.00	$ 10,200.00	$ 13,320.00	$ 13,320.00	$40/pupil
453 Vehicle Parts							
454 Water & Sewer							
470 Cabling							
471 Software		$ 22,000.00	$ 22,000.00	$ 22,000.00	$ 22,000.00	$ 22,000.00	Assumes an $10,000/year for an SIS and lottery software + 12,000/year for other software such as ren star, aimswebplus, school pass, etc.
499 Other Supplies and Materials		$ 10,700.00	$ 18,825.00	$ 27,125.00	$ 44,575.00	$ 44,575.00	Student Events: $500*2 per grade + 10,000 for graduation Staff Events and Awar
TOTAL	**$ -**	**$ 188,260.00**	**$ 201,705.00**	**$ 255,925.00**	**$ 317,055.00**	**$ 317,055.00**	

Object Codes/Line Item Descriptions **5. Other Charges**	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
501 Boiler Insurance							
502 Building & Content Insurance		$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$25K per year for building and content insurance
504 Indirect Cost							
505 Judgments							
506 Liability Insurance		$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	$ 25,000.00	General Liability, Umbrella, Auto, Cyber, D&O, Worker's Comp, Surety Bond, Legal Liability. $25K per year
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	$ 50,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	$ 40,000.00	Assumes $40,000/year
533 Criminal Investigation of Applicants TBI	$ 237.50	$ 662.50	$ 400.00	$ 450.00	$ 300.00	$ 300.00	Assumes $50/new staff for background checks
534 Refund to Applicant for Criminal Investigation							
535 Fee Waivers							
590 Transfers Out							
595 TISA On-behalf Payments							
599 Other Charges		$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00	Authorizer fee: Assumes $35K Max
TOTAL	**$ 50,237.50**	**$ 125,662.50**	**$ 125,400.00**	**$ 125,450.00**	**$ 125,300.00**	**$ 125,300.00**	

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
6. Debt Service							
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							
TOTAL	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$ -**	

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
7. Capital Outlay							
701 Administration Equipment	$ 4,750.00	$ 13,250.00	$ 8,000.00	$ 9,000.00	$ 6,000.00	$ 5,000.00	Assumes $1,000/new staff + $5,000 for replacements in year 5
704 Attendance Equipment							
706 Building Construction							
707 Building Improvements	$ 300,000.00						Includes data setup
709 Data Processing Equipment							
710 Food Service Equipment	$ 10,000.00	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00	$ 6,000.00	10K in year 0 and $500/month moving forward for purchase and/or lease of
711 Furniture & Fixtures	$ -	$ 53,500.00	$ 48,000.00	$ 38,750.00	$ 36,500.00	$ 2,000.00	Student Furniture: $10,000 per classroom + $1,000 per year for replacements
715 Land							
717 Maintenance Equipment							
720 Plant Operation Equipment							
722 Regular Instruction Equipment		$ 30,800.00	$ 29,750.00	$ 28,700.00	$ 27,300.00	$ 30,800.00	Assumes $350/chromebook/student (refresh after 4 years)
724 Site Development							
725 Special Education Equipment							
729 Transportation Equipment							
730 Vocational Instruction Equipment							Didn't include anything here - b/c we assume fundraising
735 Health Equipment	$ -	$ 1,500.00	$ 1,500.00	$ 1,500.00	$ 1,500.00	$ 1,500.00	$150 per month August - May
790 Other Equipment	$ -	$ 8,000.00	$ 8,000.00	$ 8,000.00	$ 8,000.00	$ 8,000.00	Doc Cams + Screens: $2,000 per classroom, replacements beginning in year 5
799 Other Capital Outlay	$ -	$ 5,000.00	$ 2,000.00	$ 2,000.00	$ 2,000.00	$ 2,000.00	Building Decorum: $5,000 for year 1, $2,000 per year moving forward
TOTAL	**$ 314,750.00**	**$ 118,050.00**	**$ 103,250.00**	**$ 93,950.00**	**$ 87,300.00**	**$ 55,300.00**	

	Year 0 2025-26	Year 1 2026-27	Year 2 2027-28	Year 3 2028-29	Year 4 2029-30	Year 5 2030-31
TOTAL EXPENSES	$1,099,669.95	$ 3,200,223.39	$ 4,306,285.41	$ 5,676,450.41	$ 6,768,835.98	$ 6,853,375.00
	Per Pupil	**$36,366.17**	**$24,891.82**	**$22,260.59**	**$20,326.83**	**$20,580.71**

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	**$ -**	**$ 800,330.05**	**$ 381,637.41**	**$ 284,717.74**	**$ 388,015.07**	**$ 692,704.84**

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		$ 1,372,242.75	$ 2,697,704.49	$ 3,976,385.23	$ 5,192,691.30	$ 5,192,691.30
Grants / Fundraising / Philanthropy	$ 1,900,000.00	$ 1,409,288.00	$ 1,511,661.26	$ 1,803,362.51	$ 1,880,834.44	$ 1,880,834.44
Total Revenues	$ 1,900,000.00	**$ 2,781,530.75**	**$ 4,209,365.75**	**$ 5,779,747.75**	**$ 7,073,525.75**	**$ 7,073,525.75**

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	$ 538,750.00	$ 1,430,875.00	$ 1,955,295.00	$ 2,617,547.80	$ 3,072,576.07	$ 3,162,267.10
Employee Benefits	$ 134,582.45	$ 403,147.89	$ 569,286.41	$ 772,772.61	$ 917,181.91	$ 944,029.90
Contracted Services	$ 61,350.00	$ 934,228.00	$ 1,351,349.00	$ 1,810,805.00	$ 2,249,423.00	$ 2,249,423.00
Supplies and Materials	$ -	$ 188,260.00	$ 201,705.00	$ 255,925.00	$ 317,055.00	$ 317,055.00
Other Charges	$ 50,237.50	$ 125,662.50	$ 125,400.00	$ 125,450.00	$ 125,300.00	$ 125,300.00
Debt Service	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Capital Outlay	$ 314,750.00	$ 118,050.00	$ 103,250.00	$ 93,950.00	$ 87,300.00	$ 55,300.00
Total Expenses	**$ 1,099,669.95**	**$ 3,200,223.39**	**$ 4,306,285.41**	**$ 5,676,450.41**	**$ 6,768,835.98**	**$ 6,853,375.00**

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	**$ -**	**$ 800,330.05**	**$ 381,637.41**	**$ 284,717.74**	**$ 388,015.07**	**$ 692,704.84**
Total Revenue	**$ 1,900,000.00**	**$ 2,781,530.75**	**$ 4,209,365.75**	**$ 5,779,747.75**	**$ 7,073,525.75**	**$ 7,073,525.75**
Total Available Funds (Starting Fund Balance + Total	**$ 1,900,000.00**	**$ 3,581,860.80**	**$ 4,591,003.15**	**$ 6,064,465.49**	**$ 7,461,540.82**	**$ 7,766,230.59**
Total Expenses	**$ 1,099,669.95**	**$ 3,200,223.39**	**$ 4,306,285.41**	**$ 5,676,450.41**	**$ 6,768,835.98**	**$ 6,853,375.00**
Ending Fund Balance	**$ 800,330.05**	**$ 381,637.41**	**$ 284,717.74**	**$ 388,015.07**	**$ 692,704.84**	**$ 912,855.58**

Annual Balance	$ 800,330.05	$ (418,692.64)	$ (96,919.67)	$ 103,297.33	$ 304,689.77	$ 220,150.74

Attachment X Cover Page

Operating Budget Narrative

REQUIRED FOR ALL SPONSORS

Attachment X: Budget Narrative

a. Explain how the operating budget is adequate to support full implementation of the school model and academic plan. Within the explanation, detail the minimum number of students that the school must enroll to sustainably operate and articulate the impact that the minimum enrollment would have on the budget.

Throughout this application, we have referred back to our three key design elements and their connection to our mission and goals. The budget reflects these commitments as well.

Staffing

Our staffing model reflects our commitment to belonging, flexibility and relevance. To provide students with the experiences we have outlined in this application, staffing is critical. Namely:

- We will hire a Principal and an Executive Director in year one to ensure that the Principal can focus on the complexities of the academic model and the Executive Director can tend to culture and organizational development. As the student population grows, we add a Dean of Culture and a Director of Curriculum and Instruction to support the growing faculty. This robust staffing around senior leadership allows for the Principal to serve as the CTE Coordinator, which is critical to achieve our College and Career Readiness Goals.
- A full-time Director of Operations in year zero is a critical hire. This person will be responsible for managing the complex enrollment and onboarding process and coordinating partnerships to ensure students' needs are met.
- In year zero, we will also hire a full time Director of Development who is charged with achieving our ambitious development goals.
- Knowing our student population is likely to have robust learning needs, our year one budget includes:
    - 2 Certified Special Educators (a Director of Student Supports and a teacher)
    - 1 EL teacher with a plan to incent additional dual certified teaching staff
    - 1 Interventionist who will focus on remedial instruction for students who arrive at TRA below middle school reading and/or numeracy levels.
- In terms of our commitment to belonging, there are several key staff hires:
    - Mentors are a critical element of our overall strategy. These non-instructional, full-time roles serve as students' "Primary Person" during their time at Rock. They lead House, push in to provide paraprofessional and social emotional support in classes creating a dual adult classroom ratio, and act as a critical touch point between the school and families/caretakers.
    - We also will have a full time Attendance Liaison who is a key connector between families and the school. They are responsible for monitoring attendance patterns, connecting with mentors to strategize around how to increase attendance, and liaising with community partnerships to ensure barriers to attendance (transportation, housing, etc.) are tended to.

- In terms of Relevance and Flexibility, our teaching team reflects our strategy:
    - Each year, we add additional core teaching faculty in Math, ELA, Science and Social Studies to focus on their own grade level content and provide flexible support to students. A PE teacher is also on staff beginning in year one.
    - Additionally, we will share staffing costs with CTE partners so that we can employ 1 FTE equivalent each year (.25 FTEs x 4 areas of concentration).

Not included in the budget are our after-school program which includes guidance counseling. We will be working in partnership with Martha O'Bryan to replicate their Academic Student Union model which is covered by local and federal grant dollars and provides universal aftercare combined with guidance counseling to Rock students.

Universally, our salary scale is competitive with local trends, our development budget is generous, and our staffing allows for an attractive job structure, which heightens our likelihood of attracting and retaining high quality faculty.

Slow Growth and Small Model

To ensure safety and belonging, a slow growth model is critical. We will begin with a cohort of 88 freshmen and add a grade/cohort each year until we achieve a full enrollment of 9-12th graders. We do this for several reasons. First, our culture is a critical element of our model. Great care must be taken to establish a shared commitment and sense of safety and belonging - focusing on one grade level at a time allows us to build this foundation. Additionally, our instructional model is complex. Growing slowly allows us to ensure high-quality implementation of the model and time to adjust to input and experiences as we scale. Our budget assumes attrition with minimal backfilling.

Transportation

Transportation is a critical element of our school model. We know that creating a sense of belonging and providing a flexible and relevant curriculum are mission critical. But if kids can't physically get to school, we can't provide them with those experiences. In our robust outreach and research, we heard the same message from Bordeaux to Antioch: one of the biggest barriers to keeping kids engaged in school is getting them there. Providing robust transportation to and from school is critical to eliminating this barrier. As such, we assume and budget for 90% participation in transportation to and from school. Additionally, we have set aside additional funds for transportation to and from CTE sites and to account for specialized transportation for students with disabilities if necessary.

While the Rock is confident it could maintain its program at 95% of planned enrollment, the school plans to recruit up to 5%-10% above its enrollment targets to account for any attrition that happens during the school year. TRA understands that its enrollment targets are critical not only for the integrity of the academic program, but also for financial sustainability. Should the school have fewer enrolled students than expected, it would address reduced revenue with strategic cost reductions in staffing and variable programmatic expenses (materials, supplies, equipment, field trips, contracted services).

b. Outline all revenue assumptions and explain specifically how these assumptions were determined. If the operating budget includes grants, fundraising, or philanthropic revenue, provide a detailed explanation for how the revenue amounts were determined, and whether the funds have been awarded or are estimates. If the funds have not been awarded, the narrative should disclose where they are in the process, the timing of when these funds will be awarded, and a contingency plan should the funds not be realized.

c. If applicable, list all donations of private funding, including, but not limited to, gifts received from foreign governments, foreign legal entities and, when reasonably known, domestic entities affiliated with either foreign governments or foreign legal entities

Overall Financial Health and Strategy

To put it simply: Our model is expensive. And meeting revenue targets requires a strong enrollment plan, an intentional approach to per pupil funding, and philanthropy to supplement student-based funding.

As with many sections of this application, our status as an Opportunity School requires a different approach to thinking about the budget and financial sustainability. We hope that readers of this application, in internalizing the target student population, expect and appreciate seeing an innovative approach to instruction that meets the nuanced needs of our target students. Furthermore, we imagine that they would easily have turned away an application that ignored these needs and suggested that a traditional approach to instruction would simply work if we "did it better" than others. This would not only have been an insult to our peers in this work, but it would have gone against every evidence-based practice we encountered. It would seem foolhardy to purport to meet the needs of our students with the same approach used for students with dramatically different needs.

In the same vein, we would argue that - in order to meet our mission and goals we cannot possibly do what we have outlined relying only on the same resources provided to a significantly lower risk student population. It would be both intellectually dishonest and bound to fail. What we have outlined below is an intellectually honest, fiscally conservative approach to budget and sustainability for Opportunity Schools in Tennessee. We hope that readers of this application will consider these nuances in evaluating our alignment to the application prompts.

Financial Management

First and foremost, regardless of what we spend per pupil or how we take in those dollars, we are committed to ensuring that TRA meets the financial management standards specified in the Model Charter School Performance Framework[1], specifically:

Near Term Indicators

- Current Ratio is greater than or equal to 1.1
- Days Cash is 30 days or greater in the first two years of operation

[1] Tennessee Department of Education. Model Charter School Performance Framework. (2018) https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/nonpublic/chtr_sch/Charter_School_Model_Performance_Framework.pdf

- Enrollment variance equals or exceeds 95%
- Remain in compliance with all contracts and any debt agreements

Sustainability Measures

- Maintains a positive cumulative total margin
- Debt to asset ratio is less than 0.9
- Multi-year cumulative cash flow is positive
- Debt service coverage ratio is equal to or exceeds 1.1

The proposed operating budget meets these standards, but how we get there looks a little bit different than a traditional public charter school.

Enrollment Targets

The vast majority of our revenue, like all schools, will come from a mix of federal, state and local funding. The primary driver of those funds is strong enrollment. As outlined in the **Recruitment and Enrollment** and **Parent and Community Engagement and Support** sections, our team has established a strong community outreach plan and robust early support. This support is not only an indicator of the need for our model, but an indicator of demand. The leadership and the Board understand that we must maintain enrollment in order to meet our mission, as well as our bottom line.

As such, we have made strategic financial and tactical investments to support meeting enrollment targets. These include:

1. A budget based on conservative enrollment targets, assuming we slightly under-enroll and therefore do not over count revenue;
2. A robust staffing model to support recruitment and enrollment knowing that not only is enrollment critical to meeting revenue targets, but that we are mission bound to serve a highly mobile and disconnected student population. These investments include:
    a. A dual leader model (Executive Director and Principal) to allow robust investment in partnerships as well as instruction;
    b. A full-time attendance liaison to work closely with families to secure and maintain enrollment;
    c. A Director of Operations to support enrollment work; and,
    d. Mentors who serve as primary contact points for families to encourage sustained enrollment.
3. A wide-ranging suite of wrap-around services to meet the needs of students and families, and an innovative and responsive academic program to invest in and retain student enrollment;
4. A leader and board reporting structure that requires frequent reporting on application and enrollment target to ensure adjustments in strategy are made proactively;
5. A budget of $20,000 to support enrollment efforts; and,
6. An incredibly robust network of community partnerships to support our enrollment efforts.

These strategies are all critical to achieving our revenue targets and our leadership team has a long history of delivering on these outcomes.

Enrollment drives both our estimated TISA revenue, as well as some projected federal funding.

TISA:

The charter application requires that applicants use a predetermined TISA estimate for funding projections that remains flat over 5 years. The rate is determined using the projected geographic location of the school as well as its grade band. For the current application cycle, High Schools in Nashville are projected to receive $15,593.67 per student.

In the first year of a student's enrollment at our school, this projected TISA amount is reasonable - as a student's first year at a school is funded using the geographic average. However, in their second year of enrollment, student-based budgeting is applied, and TISA rates are more variable. We are statutorily required to enroll a student population that will disproportionately qualify for several ULN categories, CTE dollars, as well as economically disadvantaged and concentrated poverty allocations. As a result, we anticipate that our TISA rate will be meaningfully higher than the geographic average. Specifically, using the state's TISA calculator, we estimate that the TISA rate for TRA students will be closer to $17,000 per student. We have reflected this adjustment in our budget beginning in year two of a student's enrollment (see Row 42 of the Revenue Tab "TISA Correction").

Federal Funding Streams:

Outlined in the table below are our estimated federal revenue sources.

Federal Revenue Sources

Revenue	Rate	Driver	Source of Rate Assumption
Title I	$500	Per student	Average rate experienced by other local operating charter organizations.
Title II	$50	Per student	Average rate experienced by other local operating charter organizations.
IDEA	$500	Per SPED student	Conservative estimated based on current paid rate
Erate	$20,000	Annually	Average rate experienced by other local operating charter organizations.
NSLP	$5.22 lunch $2.98 breakfast	Per student	Based on update federal guidance[2].

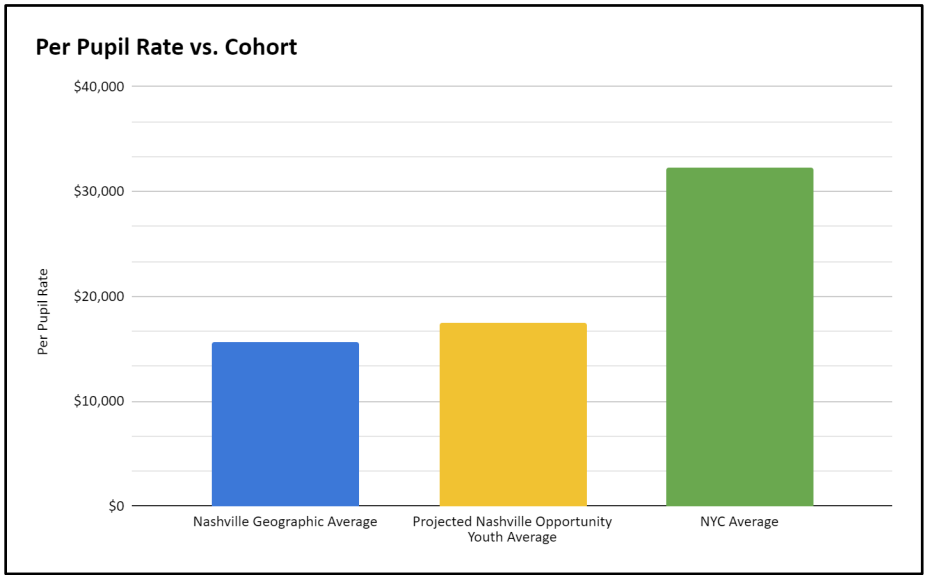
[2] https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/fr-011924

Per Pupil Funding Targets

Again, the vast majority of TRA's funding will come from TISA and federal funding streams. However, when we think about our revenue goals and how to both meet our mission while also maintaining a balanced budget, we have to think differently about what financial sustainability looks like.

By all accounts, per pupil funding in Nashville is generous when compared to other state municipalities. We appreciate the efforts of local and state leaders in continuing to advocate full and adequate funding for Tennessee's young people. However, despite their hard work, Tennessee school funding is still some of the lowest in the country. As we mention above, current TISA projections for Nashville are around $15,500 per student and estimate that with student-based budgeting, Rock Academy and other Opportunity Public Charter schools who enroll an intentionally disproportionate number of high risk student populations will receive closer to $17,000 per student using the most recent TISA calculator. This amount is inclusive of state facilities funds for charter schools.

By comparison, the schools we studied and partnered with during our design phase were achieving transformative outcomes for at-risk youth operated programs with significantly higher per pupil funding. As an example, we visited several schools located in New York City Public Schools Transfer School District - a subdistrict made up entirely of Opportunity-Like Public Charter Schools serving students who are disconnected from school and/or who are over-age and under-credited. The base funding for NYC Public Schools is estimated to be $32,284 per student in SY2025[3]. This is nearly double the rate of per pupil funding for Nashville Opportunity Youth. These rates are reflected in the table below.

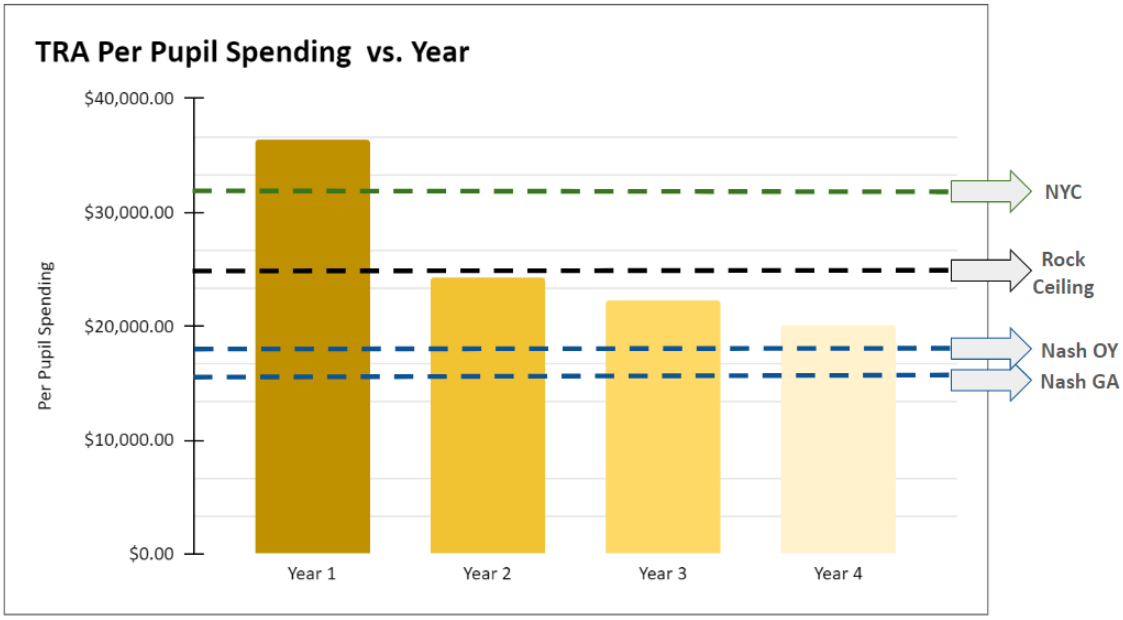


Now, we understand that New York City to Nashville is not an apples-to-apples comparison. However, even when we account for regional funding and cost of living differences, Nashville remains at a significant disadvantage. For example, the NYC per pupil funding estimates EXCLUDE debt service, transportation and food costs. Geographic TISA averages in Nashville exclude coverage of food costs as well, however

[3] https://www.schools.nyc.gov/about-us/funding/funding-our-schools

they are meant to be inclusive of transportation and facilities costs. Depending on the year, facilities account for about 15% of our annual budget, and transportation is about 8% - for a total of 23% of our overall budget. Conversely, salaries in NYC Public Schools are higher by about 20%. So, when accounting for these regional variabilities, peer schools in New York (and in most other places we studied) are operating Opportunity Public Charter Schools at significantly higher rates per student than what is currently available in Tennessee.

If we consider those variances in geographic context, Opportunity Schools in Nashville would require roughly 80% of the funding allotted to our peers in New York to run a similar program for Nashville youth. That amounts to roughly $25,000 per pupil. In designing our budget, our goal has been to remain - at scale - at or below $25,000 in per pupil spending. We believe this is a reasonable goal that reflects a commitment to programmatic excellence and fiscal stewardship. As illustrated in the chart below, as we grow our student enrollment, our per pupil spending gradually decreases, beginning at around $35,000 in year 1 and reaching about $20,000 per student in year 4 of operation. Our year 1 totals are obviously much higher, which is typical for a slow growth charter model. But our full-growth average is well below our ceiling of $25,000 per student and only marginally higher than projected state funding averages for Opportunity Youth.



All of that is to say: when we asked ourselves what it takes to run our program and achieve our mission, we defined that number not by TISA funding, but by a geographically contextualized comparison to peer schools.

Defining our Funding Goals

Now, obviously, $21,000 is more than $17,000 - and our team thought long and hard about the implications of this difference.

Rock staff, board, and advisors have been involved with other traditional public charter schools in Tennessee (and elsewhere). In that work, we have each embodied a commitment to - at full growth - operate public charter schools on the same per pupil funding as peer schools. We believe that this is aligned to the spirit and the responsibility of running traditional public charter schools: providing high quality, public education options to our local communities leveraging the same funding structure as our peers.

However, in designing Rock Academy, we are taking on a different task and - we would argue - this task requires a different strategy and different resources. At Rock Academy - we are aiming to serve an intentionally disproportionate number of at-risk youth. Youth who require additional support and care in order to achieve their fullest potential. And we know this is possible – we have watched dozens of peer schools do the same thing across the county. But, plainly, doing this well costs more than the TISA formula can currently provide to schools. Now - overtime, we hope that the state's commitment to providing Opportunity Youth with expanded schooling options will be met with an aligned increase in funding. But that, as they say, is for the politicians to negotiate.

In the meantime, we at the Rock were faced with a choice. As we saw it, we could:

1. Strip away our model for parts to make the bottom line of $17,000 per student;
2. Wait for the political wheels to turn and adjust funding in alignment with the newly passed legislation; or,
3. Find a way to fund the gap between a reasonable model design and the TISA allocation.

Our team rigorously considered all three pathways.

Regarding option one:

We do not think that the work we are proposing is rocket science - but it is incredibly difficult. And the best models in the country - the ones that are truly delivering trajectory-changing outcomes for at-risk youth - do what we've articulated in our model. To argue otherwise to achieve a balanced budget would be intellectually dishonest. And so, we couldn't in good conscience strip away the model for parts to make the model fit the regional math.

Regarding options two and three:

While we hope and believe that funding will eventually match the charge of the Opportunity Public Charter Schools, it's not there yet. And we were tempted to bide our time to await this shift. Alternatively, we could support the momentum by helping to define what's possible and what it takes to achieve that. Morally, we only felt comfortable doing that if we could answer the following questions affirmatively:

1. Is the program we are proposing going to achieve our mission and does our budget cover the program in full?
2. Is that budget a reasonable analog of peer models?
3. Can Rock Academy fundraise the difference between TISA funding and their program design?

Humbly, we believe the answer to all three questions is a resounding yes. To expound:

Is the program we're proposing going to achieve our mission and does our budget cover the program in full?

We believe that this application outlines an ambitious yet feasible approach to supporting our proposed student population. Our focus on Belonging, Flexibility and Relevance meets the needs of our students in alignment with our mission. Our staffing model is robust, our partnership work is comprehensive, our academic, CTE and SEL programming is intentional and expansive. The design team has leveraged their decades of experience working with Opportunity Youth, along with years of planning and collaboration with regional and national experts to design a program and a budget that aligns to best practices in the field and TRA's mission.

Is that budget a reasonable analog of peer models?

As we outlined above, our goal was to build a dependable model for the cost of a hypothetical Toyota Camry, not a Maserati. We're interested in dependable, replicable results - not an irresponsibly expensive and experimental model. We're not proposing $1,000,000 or to match NYC or to operate on double the state average. We've set a goal of $25,000 per student at growth and we've exceeded that bar.

Can Rock Academy fundraise the difference between TISA funding and their program design?

Working closely with the design team, our back-office firm and the board, we engaged the support of a Sustainability Planner to support us in answering this question. After a competitive RFP process, our team elected to partner with Angi Beland, Founder of Infused Education, to support our sustainability planning.

Ms. Beland has supported dozens of schools and networks across the country in building and fueling sustainable budgets through strategic grant writing strategies. Angi brings significant experience in understanding the philanthropic landscape and effectively training and developing fundraising boards. In addition to Ms. Beland, the planning team consulted with other current and former non-profit and charter leaders in and outside of Nashville to support our work.

In our work together, we aimed to codify the cost per year it would require to cover the difference in TISA funding and program needs. Additionally, we conducted a landscape analysis to determine if we believed those goals were achievable, and if so, what resources it would take to achieve them. Outlined below is a summary of the sustainability plan this team created. Through the work of creating this plan and our initial fundraising success, we believe we can achieve our stated fundraising goal.

In affirming these statements, we are committed to and confident in our ability to fundraising the difference between per local pupil funding and program costs that represent a contextualized geographic average to peer schools.

Sustainability Plan

Below, we share more about how we have planned to and established confidence in our ability to raise the necessary funds to support our model.

Strategic Focus

To cover the difference between program design and allocated funding, Rock Academy leaders will need to raise $800,000 - $1,000,000 per year. This goal will be achieved by focusing on fundraising from four main sources: foundations, individuals, corporations, and events funding.

- By foundations we mean both family foundations and foundations created by businesses to support their philanthropic giving.
- By individual focus we mean donations that come from individuals/families directly to TRA.
- By corporate we mean corporate giving.
- By events we mean sponsorships and fees from attending TRA events.

Not included here are what we would consider "stretch" opportunities - such as applying for federal funds, expanding fee-for-service options, and/or support from national corporations. These additional funding pathways will be pursued, but as sources of funding to expand program offerings and/or contingencies.

The Rock Categorical Fundraising Targets

Thinking about fundraising by categorical giving targets helps direct strategy and reflect landscape trends. As a first of its kind school in Tennessee, serving a high-risk student population and working to meet hyperlocal business demands, we believe that TRA can raise the majority of their fundraising dollars (60%) through foundations, another 15% respectively through individual and corporate donations, and final 10% from events.

Fundraising Goals by Categorical Target

Foundation Focus (60%)			**Individual (15%)**		
Large: 100+ K	2	$400,000	Large: 25+ K	3	$50,000
Medium: 25-99K	2	$150,000	Medium: 5-25K	4	$60,000
Small: 1-24K	5	$50,000	Small: < 5K	10	$40,000
Total	**7**	**$600,000**	**Total**	**17**	**$150,000**
Corporate (15%)			**Events (10%)**		
Large: 40+ K	2	80,000	Large: $75K+		
Medium: 20-39K	2	40,000	Medium: $25-75K	2	$75,000
Small: < 19K	5	30,000	Small: < $25K	4	$25,000
Total	**9**	**$150,000**	**Total**	**6**	**$100,000**

In testing the voracity of these goals, TRA created a Year 0 fundraising plan. To support our planning work, we applied for and received approximately $750,000 in grants from New Schools Venture Fund and the Nashville Incubator. These dollars predate the application and so are not included in the charter budget tool. However, as we anticipate ongoing support from these organizations, their early commitment is a positive indicator of future planning.

For year 0, as reflected in our current budget, we are anticipating raising $1,900,000 through a combination of foundation grants, individual giving and the first phase of the federal CSP grant. The amounts of status of those funding streams are and their current status are outlined in the table below.

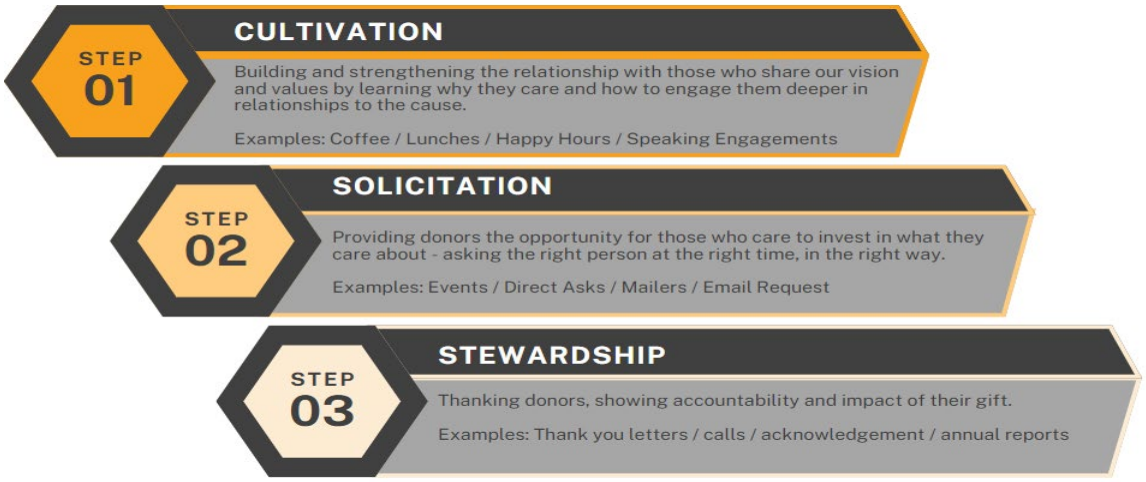
Year 0 Fundraising Plan

Source	Grant Amount	Status	Timeline
New Schools Venture Fund	$250,000	Submitted	Notification Spring 2025
Charter School Growth Fund	$300,000	Submitted	Notification Spring 2025
Incubator Facilities Fund	$250,000	Approved	Released Upon Authorization
Incubator Fellow Support	$150,000	Approved	Release Upon Authorization
City Fund	$100,000	Approved	Released Upon Authorization
Louis Calder Foundation	$200,000	n/a	Eligible to Apply upon Authorization
State Facilities Grant	$150,000	n/a	Eligible to Apply upon Authorization
CSP	$500,000	n/a	Eligible to Apply upon Authorization
Total	**$1,900,000**		

Moving into Year 1, our fundraising goal is $1,000,000. Our sustainability team has identified more than $2,000,000 in eligible foundation and corporate grants TRA would be eligible to apply for upon authorization. Each opportunity has been ranked by grant size, complexity and likelihood of award. Conservatively, we feel confident that we can raise the allocated goal of a combined $750,000 for foundations and corporate giving outlined in our categorical targets. Additionally, if awarded CSP, a portion of these dollars would cover our year 1 targets. The $2,000,000 in eligible grants does not yet include individual giving or event dollars, which would be kickstarted upon hiring the Director of Development; nor does it include opportunities to apply for additional federal funds that would align to the school's design but require partnership with an LEA. As a result, we feel confident that achieving our year 1 (and future) fundraising goals is absolutely feasible.

Fundraising Strategy

Fundraising can be, broadly, bucketed into three main categories - each of which builds on one another; Cultivation, Solicitation and Stewardship.



Each quarter, the Director of Development in collaboration with the Executive Director, sets goals around cultivation, solicitation and stewardship for each category of giving. For example, in Q2 which coincides with the end of the tax year for individual giving, the goal may be to solicit 85% of individual gifts, and so in Q1 there would be a heightened emphasis on cultivation for individual donors. This kind of nuanced strategy aligns to best practices in the field and allows our Executive Director and our Board to remain abreast of progress to goals. And, again, this strategy has been designed in partnership with current and former nonprofit leaders in Nashville who have executed on and achieved similar goals.

Time and Financial Allocation

Maintaining our goals will require significant staff and board resources. Outlined below, and reflected in our budget, are the staff time allocations devoted to sustainability planning.

Who	Role	Weekly Hours	% of Time	Yearly Hours
TBD	Dir of Develop	40	100%	2,000
Ahmed	ED	5	13%	250
Lekita	DOO	5	13%	250
Board	Volunteer	2	5%	100
Volunteers	Event Chairs	2	5%	100
Total		**54**	**136%**	**2,700**

Contingency Planning

There are various contingencies the team has considered and/or built into the budget. First, our projected enrollment is reflected conservatively in the budget. Our model can work with up to 100 students per grade level - but we've intentionally budgeted assuming a starting cohort of 88 students and built in yearly attrition as opposed to assuming back filling. Financially, this provides a meaningful contingency for both TISA and federal revenue streams.

In terms of philanthropy, there are a few ways we have created contingencies. First, in our initial planning, we have identified eligible grant funding well in excess of our budgetary needs. However, we only project raising exactly what we need to meet a balanced budget. Therefore, should we not be awarded a given grant, we will leverage that list to solicit other funding opportunities. Additionally, our Sustainability Plan outlines four main sources of giving: foundations, individuals, corporations, and events funding. However, we have made our budgetary assumptions only on corporations and foundations. As we build our Development team and invest in individual and events giving, we further expand our pool of potential giving.

In the event of a revenue short fall and/or falling short of enrollment targets, the team is prepared to consider staffing and spending adjustments that would not compromise the overall model such as a more staged roll out of CTE programs, fewer cohorts to allow for reduced staffing and/or other miscellaneous program cost reductions.

Finally, while an option of last resort, were we to fall short of fundraising targets, we could consider delaying opening. It is never our intention to play fast and loose with kids' futures nor tax payer dollars. As such our Executive Director, Director of Development and our Board leverage leader and board reporting and accountability structures to monitor progress, drive towards goals and practice fiscal conservatism.

d. Specify the amount and sources of funds, property or other resources expected to be available through banks, lending institutions, corporations, foundations, grants, etc. Please note which are already secured and which are anticipated. Include evidence of firm commitments where applicable.

As noted above, our team is prepared to leverage multiple contingencies if needed. Among these would be establishing a line of credit with a financial institution. Similar schools have been able to secure lines of credit in excess of $150,000 before entering their first year of operation; to negotiate extended payment terms with vendors, and obtain short-term private loans from philanthropic individuals.

e. Provide an explanation of the methodology used to determine the anticipated expenditures included in Section 3.1 of this application.

Staffing

We will have staffing positions as detailed in the table below.

		Year of Operation					
Position	Average Salary	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Executive Director	$150,000	1	1	1	1	1	1
Principal	$110,000	1	1	1	1	1	1
Director of Operations	$85,000	1	1	1	1	1	1
Student Supports Coordinator	$85,000	.25	1	1	1	1	1
Culture Dean	$85,000	-	-	-	1	1	1
Director of Curriculum and Instruction	$85,000	-	-	-	1	1	1
Attendance Liaison	$75,000	.5	1	1	1	1	1
Mentors (Paraprofessionals)	$50,000	-	4	8	11	14	14
Director of Development	$135,000	1	1	1	1	1	1
Classroom Teachers (core subjects)	$64,000	-	3	6	8	9	9
PE Teacher	$65,000	-	1	1	1	1	1
Special Education Teachers	$65,000	-	1	1	2	3	3
English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers	$65,000	-	1	2	2	3	3
CTE Teachers	$65,000	-	1	1	2	2	2
Interventionist	$65,000	-	1	1	1	1	1
Total FTEs		4.75	18	26	35	41	41

We have budgeted the following for employee payroll taxes and benefits:

- 6.2% and 1.45% on all wages each year for Social Security and Medicare employer contributions
- 0.5% of wages for life insurance
- 2.7% of first $7,000 in wages for each FTE for unemployment insurance
- Employer contributions to TCRS for certified teachers (assumes 9% on average for each certified position; and 12.5% for classified staff who would participate in Metro Nashville Plan)
- For health insurance, the school has budgeted for an average employer cost of $8,000 per employee for medical and $300 for dental

General Operating Expenses

General Operating Expenses are based on the operating history of other charter school organizations as well as the particular operating and programmatic needs of our school. The assumptions driving expenses in this category are detailed below.

Contracted Services	**Cost Driver**	**Assumptions**
302 Advertising	Per year	Assumes $20K per year for student recruitment/community engagement + $5K per year for staff recruitment
305 Audit Services	Per year	Assumes $3K for 990 each year and $25K for audit starting in year 2
308 Consultants	Per sped student	Contracted Sped Services: Assumes $1,000/SWD and 25% SWD population
312 Contracts With Private Agencies	Per bus	Student transportation. Assumes 90% of students will need transportation. Each bus can accommodate 60 students and would cost approximately $85K per year.
320 Dues & Memberships	Per year	$10K per year; Chamber, TCSC, Sports, etc.
328 Janitorial Services	Per sq. ft.	$2 per sq. ft. of leased space
330 Lease/SBITA Payments	Per sq. ft.	$25 per sq. ft. in lease costs; assumes 12K sq. ft. in year 1 and 100 sq. ft. per student in years 2-5
335 Maintenance & Repair Services Building	Per year	Tenant funded repairs (plumbing issues, paint updates, etc.), increasing by year based on increasing square footage
342 Payments to Schools-Breakfast	Per pupil per meal	Assumes $2.98/day/student
343 Payments to Schools-Lunch	Per pupil per	Assumes $5.22/day/student

	meal	
348 Postal Charges	Per pupil per meal	Assumes $5/student
350 Internet Connectivity	Per month	Assumes $1,300/month - and half a year for year 0
351 Rentals	Per month per copier	Copier rental and usage: assumes $750/copier/month; 1 copier year 1; 2 copiers years 2-5
359 Disposal Fees	Per year	$10K; assumes annual fees for trash pickup
369 Contracts for Substitute Teachers Certified	Per year	Summer School Stipends: 2 teachers @ $6,700 each + transportation + supplies
399 Other Contracted Services	Per year (per contract)	Back office, Payroll Services, Erate Consultant, Tech Support
Supplies and Materials	**Cost Driver**	**Assumptions**
410 Custodial Supplies	Per month	$1,000 / month for cleaning supplies (toilet paper)
413 Drugs & Medical Supplies	Per student	$5/student
415 Electricity	Per sq. ft.	$2 per sq. ft. for all utilities (electric, water, etc) for leased space
429 Instructional Supplies & Materials	Per student	Assumes $270 student for instructional supplies and printing paper + an additional $200/SWD@25% of enrollment.
430 Textbooks Electronic	Per year	Assumes $75,000 for year 1 and $40,000/year moving forward for curriculum materials - including core curriculum, curriculum consultants, and remedial curriculum products
435 Office Supplies	Per month	Assumes $1,000 per month
451 Uniforms	Per pupil	$40/pupil
471 Software	Per year	Assumes an $10,000/year for an SIS and lottery software + 12,000/year for other software such as ren star, aimswebplus, school pass, etc.

499 Other Supplies and Materials	Per student/grade	Student Events: $500*2 per grade + $10,000 for graduation Staff Events and Awards: $250/FTE Student Gifts and awards: $25/student Field Trips: $1,500/grade Family Events: $1,500/grade
Other Charges	**Cost Driver**	**Assumptions**
502 Building & Content Insurance	Per year	$25K per year for building and content insurance
506 Liability Insurance	Per year	General Liability, Umbrella, Auto, Cyber, D&O, Worker's Comp, Surety Bond, Legal Liability. $25K per year
524 In-Service / Staff Development	Per year	Assumes $40,000/year
533 Criminal Investigation of Applicants TBI	Per staff member	Assumes $50/new staff for background checks
599 Other Charges	Per year	Authorizer fee: Assumes $35K Max
Capital Outlay	**Cost Driver**	**Assumptions**
701 Administration Equipment	Per new staff member	Assumes $1,000/new staff + $5,000 for replacements in year 5
707 Building Improvements	One-time costs	Facility improvements (includes data setup)
710 Food Service Equipment	Startup costs; per month	$10K in year 0 and $500/month moving forward for purchase and/or lease of warming and refrigeration equipment
711 Furniture & Fixtures	Per classroom; per staff member	Student Furniture: $10,000 per classroom + $1,000 per year for replacements Faculty Furniture: $750/new FTE + $1,000/year for replacements
722 Regular Instruction Equipment	Per student	Assumes $350/chromebook/student (refresh after 4 years)
735 Health Equipment	Per month	$150 per month August - May
790 Other Equipment	Per classroom	Doc Cams + Screens: $2,000 per classroom, replacements beginning in year 5
799 Other Capital Outlay	Per year	Building Decorum: $5,000 for year 1, $2,000 per year moving forward

f. Explain how one or more high-needs students with disabilities may affect the operating budget and your plan to meet student needs that might be more than anticipated.

Rock Academy is committed to serving all students and has designed a school that is built with special populations at the center.

Our budget assumes 25% special education enrollment and generous special education staffing as outlined in the table below. In addition to these internal staffing positions, TRA has budgeted $1,000 per student with special education needs for contracted services.

Special Education Staffing by Year

	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31
Student Supports Director (sped certified)	0.25	1	1	1	1	1
SPED Teachers	0	1	1	2	3	3
ESL Teachers	0	1	2	2	3	3
Interventionist	0	1	1	1	1	1

All of these assumptions provide TRA with flexible resources to support diverse student needs. Should a need arise for a student(s) with disabilities that cannot be met by the already budgeted SPED staff and additional contracted SPED services, the school will adjust resources in order to meet that need. The school budgeted an extra $25,000 per year for special transportation or, if not needed, to use for other student support needs. The school will reduce costs and shift staffing resources to fulfill additional needs. Additionally, the school will seek additional external funding/grants to support the SPED program. As mentioned earlier in this application, we will activate our contingency plan to problem solve and collaborate on solutions to ensure all services as outlined by an IEP.

g. Describe the systems, processes, and policies by which the proposed school will manage accounting, purchasing, payroll, and audits. Include any policies on financial controls.

We are planning to secure back-office services from GT3 Group to help the school manage accounting, purchasing, and payroll. GT3 Group has a strong track record and significant experience working with charter school organizations on finance and accounting systems and processes and is Tennessee-based. We are seeking to have GT3 Group in place during the planning year, which is reflected in the budget.

The Executive Director, Principal, and Director of Operations will work with GT3 Group – as well as with the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors – to develop and adopt financial policies for the school to ensure proper controls and that the school is being an excellent steward of public resources.

Financial policies will include, but will not be limited to, the following areas:

- Development and approval of The Rock's annual budget (including protocol for any material budget changes during the fiscal year by the management team).

- Purchasing (required procedures, approvals, and signatures for various expenditure amounts and types).
- Internal controls (including invoice processing and documentation, proper segregation of duties).
- Cash flow management.
- Entering into contracts or debt financing.
- Bank reconciliations.
- Annual audit.

With GT3 Group – in combination with the Executive Director, Principal, and Director of Operations, we believe we will have the capacity to establish strong checks and balances, and policies, processes, systems, and segregation of duties to manage its financial resources effectively and efficiently. The proposed Executive Director and Director of Operations are already on the planning team, and both bring a wealth of experience in finance. Dr. Ahmed White is a long-time education leader and has been the Executive Director of another local charter school where he was instrumental in helping them achieve financial stability. Ms. Lekita Sims has also served as a Director of Operations at a local charter school for nearly a decade. In that role, she was responsible for supporting finance operations. Additionally, she has technical training in accounting.

In terms of an annual audit, which is required by state statute, we will conduct an RFP process during the planning year to select an auditing firm. Criteria will include, but not be limited to:

- Experience working with charter school organizations.
- Client references.
- Contract Costs
- Geographic location of the auditing firm.

h. Describe how the proposed school will provide an independent annual audit and comply with other federal or state accounting and/or reporting requirements.

As mentioned in the previous prompt, we will conduct an RFP process in the planning year to select an auditing firm. The Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, the Director of Operations, and GT3 Group (back-office services partner) will work with the auditing firm to ensure all information is provided in a timely manner, that the audit is completed accurately and on time, and that the school responds and makes changes based on any deficiencies pointed out by the auditors.

Compliance with federal or state accounting and reporting requirements.

To ensure we have and maintain a robust plan for compliance with state and federal accounting and reporting requirements, the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, the Director of Operations, and GT3 Group (back-office services partner) will be dedicated to maintaining strong financial and operating systems at the school level.

- **Finance Committee** – The Finance Committee of the Board of Directors will be responsible for the governing oversight of the financial operations of our school and will hold the leadership team accountable for strong financial operations. The Finance Committee will meet monthly to review the

financial efficiency and health of the school and to ensure the school is in compliance with state and federal accounting and reporting requirements.

- **Director of Operations –** The Director of Operations and GT3 Group (back-office services partner) are responsible for ensuring strong finance and accounting systems at The Rock and that the school is in compliance with all state and federal reporting requirements. In addition, the Executive Director and Director of Operations will oversee the school's other non-academic functions, such as human resources; vendor relations and contract oversight; and the facilities, custodial, security, and food service functions of the school. These positions ensure efficient and effective systems across all areas of The Rock.
- **Executive Director –** The Executive Director manages the leadership team (and back-office services partner) and serves as another check and balance to ensure The Rock is in compliance with state and federal accounting and reporting requirements.

i. Describe the different financial roles and responsibilities of the proposed school's administration and governing board.

The role of the Board of Directors (working primarily through the Finance Committee of the Board) is responsible for:

- Overseeing the preparation of the annual budget and financial statements.
- Overseeing the administration, collection, and disbursement of the financial resources of the school.
- Monitoring actuals to budget on a monthly basis.
- Overseeing systems of internal control, including overseeing compliance by management with applicable policies and procedures and risk management.
- Overseeing the annual independent audit process, including the recommended engagement of and receiving reports from the independent certified public accountants.
- Support the school by sponsoring events and outreach to community members.
- Advising the Board with respect to making significant financial decisions.

Our leadership team (with support from GT3 Group) is responsible for the day-to-day financial management of the school:

- Development of the annual budget and preparation of monthly financial statements.
- Ensuring the school manages the board-approved budget (both revenues and expenditures).
- Cash flow management.
- Implementing and adhering to internal controls, financial processes and procedures, including risk management, and ensuring the school is in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal requirements.
- Development of fundraising strategy and reporting out progress to the board on set goals.
- Providing recommendations to the Board with respect to significant financial decisions.

j. If applicable, describe the plan to outsource any financial management areas such as payroll, benefits, audits, fundraising, accounting, etc. Detail how the financial leadership will select and oversee the contractors.

As mentioned in prompt g.), we will be working with GT3 Group to help the school manage accounting, purchasing, payroll, and the audit. We will have GT3 Group in place during the planning year, which is reflected in the budget.

The Executive Director and Director of Operations will – in collaboration with the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors – structure a contract with GT3 Group that specifically outlines the roles and responsibilities of the school's administration and GT3 Group. The relationship and performance of GT3 Group will be continuously monitored to ensure the school maintains strong financial and operating systems and procedures. The Finance Committee will also have oversight responsibility of the relationship through its role of monitoring the financial and operating systems of the organization.

In terms of the audit, The Rock will conduct an RFP process during the planning year to select an auditing firm with the relevant expertise and experience to conduct the audit of a charter school organization.

Criteria will include, but not be limited to:

- Experience working with charter school organizations.
- Client references.
- Contract Costs.
- Geographic location of the auditing firm.

The Finance Committee of the Board of Directors, the Director of Operations, and GT3 Group will work with the auditing firm to ensure all information is provided in a timely manner, that the audit is completed accurately and on time, and that the organization responds and makes changes based on any deficiencies pointed out by the auditors.

k. Describe the level of financial expertise of the proposed school's internal and external team members.

The Rock has an experienced group of professionals to help develop and implement a continued, successful financial plan:

- **Executive Director (Dr. Ahmed White):** As mentioned above, Dr. White is a long-time education leader and has been the Executive Director of another local charter school where he was instrumental in helping them achieve financial stability.
- **Director of Operations (Lekita Sims)** As mentioned above, Ms. Sims has also served as a Director of Operations at a local charter school for nearly a decade. In that role, she was responsible for supporting finance operations. Additionally, she has technical training in accounting.
- **Board of Directors:** The Board of Directors will be responsible for the governing oversight of the financial operations of the organization and for holding the leadership team accountable for strong financial operations. The Finance Committee will meet monthly to review the financial efficiency and health of the organization. The Board includes several members with strong financial and business

backgrounds. In particular, as the President of TCAT, Nate Garrett has deep experience in directly managing an education budget and, so, will bring an important perspective to the governance team.

- **GT3 Group:** GT3 Group has a strong track record and significant experience working with charter school organizations on finance and accounting systems and processes and is based in Tennessee. The organization is currently providing back-office services to over 20 charter school organizations operating 30 schools across multiple states, and its founder, Greg Thompson, has been working with Tennessee-based charter startups since 2006.

Collectively, these professionals have the experience and knowledge to ensure that The Rock has the capacity to maintain a sound and successful financial plan.

l. Describe the proposed school's contingency plans to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than expected.

As mentioned above, we have several contingency plans in the event that revenue targets are not achieved. And, again, we understand that our fundraising plan is ambitious, our careful planning and the precedence of giving to other Nashville Incubator supported schools gives us confidence that we will be able to secure the needed philanthropic funding.

Once operational, TISA funding will be the primary source of revenue (driven by enrollment as well as funding components of the TISA formula). Should TISA decrease in future years from its current level, or the school has lower enrollment than expected, The Rock would utilize several contingency strategies:

- Make Staffing Reductions - Lower enrollment would allow the school to make reductions in the needed Core Academic Teachers as well as reduce some non-classroom positions (i.e. counselors, office staff, and some administrative positions).
- Make Strategic Operation Expense Reductions – The school would make reductions in variable costs including professional services contracts, consulting services, materials and supplies, marketing/promotional items, field trips, computer and equipment.

We cannot necessarily predict the potential level of under-enrollment or revenue decreases, but it is confident that it can identify staffing decreases and other cost reductions utilizing the strategies listed above to address financial shortfalls.

Additionally, the school will secure a line of credit with its banking institution to provide an emergency source of cash should it experience short-term needs while it is addressing expense reductions.

m. Detail the cash flow contingency plan if revenue projections are not met or expenditures exceed anticipated amounts. The plan should include an explanation of sources, including financing terms, if the contingency plan includes loans, commitments, funds from an outside donor, or an alternative funding source.

As discussed in prompt l), The Rock will be seeking public grants from the Tennessee Department of Education and private funding from philanthropic organizations. Year 0 and Year 1 applications are in process at the time of the application. We will also secure a line of credit with its banking institution to provide an emergency source of cash should it experience short-term needs. Should these sources of capital be lower than expected, the school will utilize expense reduction strategies outlined above.

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

Not applicable; we do not have any litigation documents.

Attachment EE Cover Page

Audited Financial Statements

REQUIRED IF ANSWERED "YES" TO SPONSOR HISTORY AND INTENT QUESTION 1