

Alabama Charter Application for a 2021 Opening

New Charter Application #000563

Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School

Submitted To:

Alabama Public Charter School Commission
Alabama Charter School Commission
50 North Ripley St.
P.O. Box 302101
Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone: 334-694-4908

Submitted By:

Jeanisha Whetstone

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GENERAL

A. School Information

Open Date: **July 1, 2020**
 Proposed Name: **Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School**
 School Type: **Elementary**
 Grade Levels: **[K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5]**
 School District: **Bessemer City**
 Neighborhood / Community: **Bessemer, Alabama**
 Organization Type: **Non-profit Corporation**
 Sponsoring Entity: **Non-profit Organization**
 Address: **null**
 Phone:
 Fax:
 Web Site:
 Calendar Type: **Extended School Year - 187 instructional days**
 Educational Service Provider: **(None)**

B. Primary Contact Person

Name: **Jeanisha Whetstone**
 Mailing Address:
 Mobile Phone:
 Alternate Phone:
 Email: **j.whetstone@knowledgeunltd.org**
 Current Employer:

C. Attendance Projections

Grade Level	2020-21 Enrollment		2021-22 Enrollment		2022-23 Enrollment		2023-24 Enrollment		2024-25 Enrollment		At Capacity 2024-25	
	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.								
K		83		83		83		83		83		83
1		83		83		83		83		83		83
2		83		83		83		83		83		83
3				83		83		83		83		83
4						83		83		83		83
5								83		83		83
Total		249		332		415		498		498		498

D. Board Members

Name	Title	Contact Information	Current Employer
		P:	

Anthony, Tonya	Board Member	M: E: tonyaant@gmail.com	
Bright, Bruce	Board Member	P: M: E: bruce@ontargetleading.com	
Burns, Joseph	Board Member	P: M: E: jburns1333@gmail.com	
Kirk, Hattie	Board Member	P: M: E: hkirk15@yahoo.com	
Mitchell, Debra	Board Member	P: M: E: dmitchell0612@gmail.com	
Nalls, Martez	Parent Representative	P: M: E: marte.nalls@yahoo.com	
Whetstone, Jeanisha	Executive Director	P: M: E: j.whetstone@knowledgeunltd.org	

E. Start-up Team Members

Name	Title	Contact Information	Current Employer
Pitts, Damita	Director of Operations	P: M: E: ddpitts007@gmail.com	
Whetstone, Jeanisha	Proposed Principal Candidate	P: M: E: j.whetstone@knowledgeunltd.org	

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Executive Summary

"Focusing on the whole child is changing the world. It changes the world one student, one classroom, one school, and one community at a time"^[1]. Once we realize that transitioning from focusing narrowly on academic achievement in students to a focus on educating the whole child, we can then prepare children for the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow. The mission of Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School is to prepare every student for college, a career, and life through a holistic educational experience. Through our hands-on, highly-structured, and challenging approach to teaching and learning, we provide a holistic educational experience with an emphasis on academics and social, emotional, and psychological development to foster a love of learning as well as mental stability and wellness that produces successful individuals who possess a balance of education and character.

Vision

Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School (Knowledge U) provides an academically challenging, disciplined, and safe K-5 elementary school that sets students on a path to become successful, contributing members of society to the Ensley community. Knowledge Unlimited seeks to partner with Bessemer City Schools in providing an academically rigorous and highly structured elementary school that sets the most underserved children in Birmingham on the path to college. Our mission, design, and academic and organizational priorities are structured to eradicate the academic gaps plaguing underserved children starting in kindergarten and position them on a trajectory of success throughout middle school, high school, and on to college and the work force.

The Educational Need and Anticipated Student Population

We are open to all students within the Bessemer area and encourage diversity; however, we know that diversity will be a challenge. We look to locate and concentrate recruitment in communities of Bessemer where academic disparities are chronic. Currently, the seven schools that house the students within our proposed communities are not on track to accomplishing the state and district's goal where every student graduates and is academically prepared for college, a career, and beyond. We have respectfully provided the 2018-2019 Report Card data for schools within the Bessemer City School District. These scores represent the percentage of students who are proficient in reading, math and science, the school's overall score, and percentage of college and career readiness.

Bessemer City Schools 2018-2019 Report Card Data Data^[2]

School	Reading Proficiency	Math Proficiency	Science Proficiency	Report Card Letter Grade	College and Career Ready

Abrams Elementary	15.75%	16.33%	4.55%	60/D	NA
Charles F. Hard Elementary	18.56%	26.35%	14.55%	71/C	NA
Greenwood Elementary	31.88%	30.43%	12.96%	74/C	NA
Jonesboro Elementary	18.52%	18.79%	14.43%	62/D	NA
Westhill Elementary	35.53%	41.72%	27.78%	77/C	NA
Bessemer Middle	24.27%	20.4%	17.0%	67/D	NA
Bessemer High	7.28%	7.77%	10.68%	57/F	37.8%

According to the data, Westhills Elementary outperformed the listed schools in reading by as many as 28 points. In math, Westhills Elementary outperformed some of the listed schools by as many as 34 points. However, all seven schools struggled to meet district and state goals. The scores of most schools were significantly lower than the state’s math (47%), reading (46%), and science (37%) proficiency percentages [3]. From this data, we have determined that there is a need to address the learning gaps of the most underserved students in Bessemer City Schools.

Knowledge U serves those students within underserved areas in order to narrow the achievement gap. Like Bessemer, we are committed to the success of our students as lifelong learners and critical thinkers, therefore we ensure that all students are proficient in reading, math, and other subjects. Each year of testing beginning in 2022, Knowledge U students outperform neighborhood schools by five percentage points in each tested subject. For example, in 2022 Westhills Elementary will improve the percentage of third grade students meeting annual growth targets in reading to 50% and math 56%. With gap closing, high quality instruction, a rigorous curriculum, and timely intervention, Knowledge U students are expected to reach 61% proficiency in math and 55% proficiency reading by 2022, our first year of standardized testing. Year after year, Knowledge U assists in narrowing the achievement gap and outperforming the national average. Additionally, our academic model positions our students to grow a year and a half in reading and math each year. The chart below illustrates the annual academic growth in reading and math at Knowledge U and Bessemer City Schools beginning in 2022.

Annual Grade 3 Reading and Math Proficiency Rates

	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Knowledge U	Math 61%	Math 66%	Math 71%	Math 76%
	Reading 55%	Reading 60%	Reading 65%	Reading 70%
Westhills Elementary	Math 56%	Math 61%	Math 66%	Math 71%
	Reading 50%	Reading 55%	Reading 60%	Reading 65%

Our mission requires that all students be equipped with the critical areas of early childhood development. These critical areas include literacy, number sense, oral language and social and emotional development. We ensure that the students grasp and master the foundational critical areas that are essential to success in future grades and beyond. Developing a solid reading foundation is critical in the early grades. According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, children who have not developed some basic literacy skills by the time they enter school are 3 to 4 times more likely to drop out in later years. Knowledge U equips students with the necessary foundational skills at each grade level to remain on track year after year. We accomplish our mission by providing our students academically with 1) a balanced instructional practice approach of effective, direct instruction, supportive, guided practice, and sustained independent practice, 2) multisensory learning tasks, and 3) implementing a rigorous, standards based curricula. Along with preparing students academically, Knowledge U students are educated in a safe, caring, and trauma-sensitive environment.

The Needs of The Community and Community Engagement

Bessemer City is home to over 26,000 citizens. Currently, the population within our proposed community is 71% African American, and the highest percentage of educational attainment amongst its citizens is high school (38%)^[4]. Those earning a high school diploma on average earn \$23,430 yearly. Although Bessemer is known for its diverse blend of industries and companies, many of its citizens are unable to take advantage of jobs that provide livable wages and security. Knowledge U is dedicated to ensuring that the future of Bessemer is prepared for college, a career, and life and are exposed to unlimited opportunities to experience success.

To ensure that families and community members within our target population for which Knowledge U was designed were aware of our proposal, we have engaged in expansive and intensive outreach efforts throughout Bessemer. We have connected with residents and families of Bessemer, engaging in conversations about what families want for their children and how that aligned with our proposal. As a part of our community outreach, we conducted townhall meetings as well as surveys. Our outreach results determined that Bessemer residents desire high-quality school options for their children. More specifically, families desired a high-quality school where the unique cultures and values of all students and their families are embraced.

Leadership and Governance

Knowledge Unlimited’s Board of Directors and Leadership Team are comprised of educators, engineers, former administrators, and business men and women who are distinguished,

successful contributing members to the city of Birmingham and surrounding areas. We are aware that we cannot accomplish our vision without meaningful partnerships with parents and the community, therefore we propose an opportunity to work with the Bessemer City School District to provide an academically rigorous and highly-structured elementary school that sets the most underserved children in Bessemer on the path to college or a career. **Attachment 1**, lists the members of the school’s proposed leadership team and governing board.

Student Enrollment

To combat the achievement gap at its roots, Knowledge U proposes to open with 250 kindergarten through second grade students (up to 30 students in 3 classrooms) in our first operational year (2021-2022). The school adds one grade with 83 students each year, eventually reaching full K-5 enrollment of 498 students by 2024. The slow growth model of adding one grade per year allows us to strategically develop systems, instructional programs, and new curricular materials, while building a strong foundation of culture and achievement. Researchers agree that the most critical stage at which to close the achievement gap is in the youngest grades. If left unaddressed, this gap steadily widens each year from kindergarten. Notably, vocabulary size in kindergarten predicts reading comprehension in the middle elementary years and orally tested vocabulary at the end of first grade predicts reading comprehension ten (10) years later %[\[5\]](#).

Attachments

Section 1: Executive Summary

1.1	Attachment 1: Knowledge U Board and Leadership Team	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 3:01 AM	DOCX / 125.072 KB
1.2	Attachment 1: Leadership Team Member Resume/Pitts	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/4/20 6:52 PM	PDF / 207.376 KB
1.3	Attachment 1: Board Resumes	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/4/20 6:50 PM	PDF / 3.195 MB

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

1. Program Overview

Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School (Knowledge U) prepares all students for college and life through a holistic educational experience. We accomplish our mission by providing students academically with 1) a balanced instructional practice approach of effective, direct instruction, supportive, guided practice, and sustained independent practice, 2) multisensory learning tasks, and 3) implementing a rigorous, standards based curricula. Along with preparing students academically, Knowledge U students are educated in a safe, caring, and trauma-sensitive environment where we build character development through the enforcement of our core values, iTREE: Integrity, Teamwork, Respect, Excellence, and Empowerment.

Our mission and vision require that students have a solid foundation in early childhood development skills such as number sense, literacy, oral language development and social and emotional development. We tailor our instruction to the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards to ensure that students continuously progress, remain on track, and are proficient in reading, math and other subjects prior to graduation. We utilize research-based programs in all core subjects and implement instruction utilizing practice-proven, effective instructional strategies that complement our population of student learners. Mastery is the key to our students' success in every subject, on every level. There is a strong emphasis on developing students' literacy skills because we believe in Fredrick Douglass's profound idea that literacy is freedom. When students learn to read, and are able to read to learn, they have the capacity to experience unlimited success. We have a strong phonics-based program that is used along with our high-quality reading program to teach students all of the skills that are a necessary foundation to proficient reading.

We also prepare students for an ever-changing society through the implementation of our high-quality STEM program. STEM is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in science, technology, engineering and mathematics in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. In our K-5 setting, STEM education focuses on the introductory level STEM courses, and awareness of the STEM fields and occupations. This initial step provides standards-based structured, inquiry-based, and real-world problem-based learning, connecting all four of the STEM subjects. The goal is to pique students' interest into them wanting to pursue the courses. More specifically, our STEM program exposes students to careers in aviation and aerospace to increase minority participation in the aerospace field, and help to shape the industry to be as diverse as the people that it serves.

The following objectives describe the components that will lead to success of our students:

Preparing for Proficiency of Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards

In 2012, Alabama began implementing the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards in math. The following year, English/Language Arts was implemented. The purpose of this initiative is to prepare students to be college or career ready through the implementation of standards that require students to meet certain academic goals or expectations at each level. Since the adoption of these standards, teachers have been given the responsibility of developing curricula at each level in math and English to ensure that students are proficient. At Knowledge Unlimited, we close achievement gaps, move students to proficiency, increase graduation rates, and prepare students

for college and a career without remediation. We are able to accomplish this through our adoption of research-based programs that are rigorous, systematic, and effective as well as instructional practices that are highly effective.

Implementing High Quality Instruction Through Authentic Learning Experiences

We believe that all students have a right to receive a quality education regardless of race, religion, gender or ethnic background. At Knowledge Unlimited, students receive high quality instruction from high quality educators daily. We recruit, hire, develop, and retain educators of the highest caliber. Our educators promote a culture of achievement and use research-based, practice-proven instructional strategies. Educators tailor instruction to the make-up of his/her classroom by developing relationships with each student to decipher how each student learns best. We are aware that our students have unique and differing backgrounds, learning styles, perspectives, and life experiences, so we plan to utilize an integrative, authentic whole-child learning approach that is tailored to meet the needs of our students. Students are actively engaged in meaningful discussions and activities on relative topics with endless opportunities to connect directly with the real world.

Developing the Whole Child

Education is necessary for students to experience success in life. However, education alone is not enough. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, "intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate"[1]. To ensure that our students acquire a holistic educational experience, students develop habits of success that will ultimately develop them in to self-directed, lifelong learners. The development of these principles also place our students on a trajectory towards becoming successful, contributing members of society.

Unveiling Each Student's Sense of Purpose

We are aware that the students within our proposed community have unique life experiences, interests, and values. Although every student will ultimately take different paths upon completion of school, every student will have to make important life decisions that will either negatively or positively impact their lives. To provide all students with the tools to make meaningful decisions, we guide our students on a journey to understanding his or her identity, interests, values, and culture through culturally relevant curricula[2]. Students develop goals, create a viable plan, and acquire a mindset that cause them to be committed to continually progressing towards meeting their goals.

"If a school is truly committed to ensuring that every student mastered the intended outcome of the core curriculum, it would be vigilant in its effort to assess each student's learning on a timely, ongoing basis"(DuFour 2004). In order to determine the effectiveness of our program, we must assess, collect and analyze student data, and adjust instruction to the needs of our students on a consistent basis. Our goal is to become a data-driven culture in order to meet and outperform state and national norms. Our staff participates in professional development sessions where we dive into the book, *Driven by Data* by Paul Bambrick-Santoyo to develop a data-driven culture.

Our staff will learn about the eight pitfalls that prevent effective assessment, analysis, and data action and the creation of a truly data-driven culture. Through this book study, we expect to gain insight to ensure that our students are constantly making progress towards proficiency.

Along with the mandatory state assessments, Knowledge Unlimited utilizes the STEP reading assessment and NWEA’s MAP Growth assessment as forms of ongoing assessment to develop and maintain a high-performing educational institution.

Attachments

Section 1: Program Overview

1.1	No Title	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/14/20 8:35 PM	PDF / 286.476 KB
1.2	Formative Assessments	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/8/20 3:52 AM	DOCX / 99.918 KB

2. Curriculum and Instructional Design

All curriculum selections are based on quality and alignment to the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards. Edreports.org was used as a guide to identify high-quality curriculum options that assist our teachers in developing and implementing high-quality lessons. Knowledge U has adopted the following high-quality, researched based curricula programs:

English Language Arts

ReadyGen

Pearson

Our core reading program, *ReadyGen* by Pearson, is unlike any other core reading program. With *ReadyGen*, students at each grade level learn through the use of engaging, authentic, and culturally relevant texts^[4] instead of the traditional basal anthology reader. Students are also able to read texts of a variety of genres and cultures. We want to empower our students as readers by making sure that the texts that they read are relatable, interesting and inspire them to write about themselves. In kindergarten, students will read stories such as *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle. Third grade students will read stories such as *Storm in the Night* by Mary Stolz, and fifth graders will read *The Great Migration*, a picture book by African American painter, Jacob Lawrence. Through these texts, students use the skills that they gain through our intensive phonics program to practice fluency, develop vocabulary, and comprehend what they are reading. The scope and sequence chart for K-5 is provided as **Attachment 2**.

Phonics First

Orton-Gillingham

Phonics First is a multi-sensory scientific research-based phonics program that can be used as a supplement during reading instruction, an intervention program for struggling readers and a Dyslexia program. “The scope and sequence of the program teaches students skills in

phonological awareness, matching sounds to letters, and then proceeds to systematically and explicitly teach students more advanced patterns of spelling-sound relationships contributing to increased sight word knowledge”[\[5\]](#), which is a foundational prerequisite to proficient reading. The program also includes fluency instruction, vocabulary and comprehension components for students to practice decoding skills once they began reading. This program is accredited by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC) and the International Dyslexia Association (IDA).

Mathematics

Ready Mathematics

Curriculum Associates

We provide a comprehensive mathematics program through which our students acquire a strong foundation in basic skills, procedural computation, and conceptual understanding within each of the domains, including Number Sense and Operations in Base Ten, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Measurement and Data, and Geometry, for each grade level as outlined by the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards. We believe that mathematical understanding and procedural skill are equally important; therefore, we will utilize *Ready* by Curriculum Associates. *Ready* is aligned with Alabama’s College and Career Ready Standards and provides the rigor needed to equip students with a solid mathematical foundation.

Science

Interactive Science

Pearson

We implement a rigorous, standards-based science curriculum where the lessons engage students in science inquiry, STEM activities, and problem-based, hands-on learning. *Interactive Science* is a K-5 inquiry-based science curriculum by Pearson that supports the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). In order to accomplish our mission, we must provide endless opportunities to connect directly with the real world. Through this program, students are able to develop key science vocabulary, decipher and understand content knowledge around scientific and technological literacy, and investigate and experiment with science concepts.

Civil Air Patrol (CAP)[\[6\]](#)

ACE Program (supplemental program)

The Aerospace Connections in Education (ACE) Program is an aerospace-themed program for educators in grades K-6 that provides engaging and meaningful cross-curricular aerospace-themed lessons that support STEM initiatives and enrich the school curricula. Many lessons promote good character and physical fitness, which are components of Civil Air Patrol (CAP) Cadets Program[\[7\]](#). This program benefits Knowledge U’s students who may be interested in learning more about General Aviation and possibly becoming members of CAP’s Cadet Program for youth, ages 12-18.

Social Studies

IMPACT Social Studies: Our Place in the World

McGraw-Hill

Through the engaging, relevant content geared towards today's youth, students gain building blocks for critical thinking, develop a strong reading and writing foundation, and learn what it means to be responsible, active citizens.

Oral Language[\[8\]](#)

Developed by Knowledge U Head of School, Jeanisha Whetstone

A strong focus on oral language development in the early years is imperative for future academic success. Our unique oral language program draws from the work of the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards for Speaking and Listening to engage students in the development of speaking, listening, and public presentation skills. State and national standards require students to develop a range of oral communication and interpersonal skills that facilitate various types of discussion and oral exchange. Socioeconomic status has an effect on language development, especially for students who live in underserved areas. Within underserved communities there is a decline in the components that make up oral language. "The average child from a professional family hears 215,000 words per week; a child from a family receiving welfare benefits hears 62,000 words per week"[\[9\]](#). Students with poor language skills tend to struggle when they enter school. These students possess lower reading and writing skills. On average, they score two years behind on standardized language development tests [\[10\]](#).

At Knowledge U, we are aware that the population of students in our targeted community consists of students in low income households and English Language Learners (ELLs), therefore we prepare our students by assisting each of them in acquiring the oral language components to its entirety. We ensure that students acquire all necessary components of oral language development in order to be great listeners, eloquent and articulate speakers, read fluently, and produce quality writing pieces.

Primary Instructional Strategies

In order to accomplish the mission of Knowledge U, teachers provide effective, rigorous instruction in a safe and challenging environment. Our educators understand that there is no one way to teach students, therefore a personalized learning path is provided for each student to be successful. Through our balanced instructional practice approach, students are pushed to and beyond mastery. Students are required to master concepts and skills before progressing to the next level. The following objectives describe the components that will lead to success of our students:

Providing a Balanced Instructional Practice Approach to Teaching and Learning

Every student has a preferred way in which they absorb, process, comprehend, and retain information. As educators it is important to implement best practice strategies into our daily activities, curriculum, and assessments. Our instructional practice approach allows us to provide a

balance of practice proven instructional strategies to ensure the needs of each individual student are addressed and their outcomes soar.

Direct Instruction

Direct instruction is a teacher directed approach where a concept or skill is explicitly taught and modeled step by step while students observe, but are allowed to interact. Direct instruction usually sets the stage for learning. Students are informed of the expected learning outcomes, then they are modeled with clear explanations and examples. Although the instructional strategy involves more direction from the teacher, the amount of teacher talk time is limited. In order to ensure optimal student engagement, our K-5 teachers will spend no more than ten minutes of talk time to ensure that students have ample amount of time to practice the concept or skill to mastery.

Guided Practice

“Guided practice is the transition phase, where children take more control of their learning and the teacher slowly steps back.”^[11] Following direct instruction where the teacher has all or most of the responsibility, students are now able to practice the skill or concept with guidance from the teacher and peers. Early elementary grades are the most critical years; therefore, we use a two-teacher model to decrease class size to ensure intensive, small group, differentiated instruction^[12] takes place to move all students towards mastery. While the students practice the skill or concept, the teacher supports students as needed clarifying any misconceptions and pushing them beyond mastery. Students also have the opportunity to work collaboratively to compare notes, clarify misconceptions, and problem solve.

Independent Practice

Independent practice is the part of the lesson cycle where students are able to practice the modeled skill or concept while working towards mastery and beyond. Teachers provide practice that is beyond worksheets in order to ensure that students have not only obtained a surface level of knowledge, but a deep beyond the surface understanding that can be applied and connected to new concepts and skills. Students are able to practice their new skills through real world applications in order to better assist them in retaining the information, seeing the value in what they are learning, and retaining the skills over a long period of time.

Each step in our balanced instructional practice approach ensures that students receive the adequate amount of instruction, support, and practice in English Language Arts and Math in order to obtain mastery. In order to obtain mastery of any concepts or skills, students must be focused and engaged in the lesson. We are aware that active student engagement is important in moving students towards mastery, so adequate, grade appropriate time to introduce, practice, and master the skills or concepts is critical to accomplishing our mission. The chart below describes the amount of time given, within a forty-five minute block of time, to implement direct instruction, guided practice, and independent practice in classrooms at Knowledge U.

Time Intervals for Instruction

Grade Levels	K-2	3-5
Direct Instruction	10 minutes	10 minutes

Guided Practice	20 minutes	15 minutes
Independent Practice	15 minutes	20 minutes

In grades K-2 and 3-5, direct instruction is limited to no more than ten minutes of teacher led instruction to avoid a decline in student engagement. After the initial lesson, students in K-2 are provided more time for supported practice since students are learning the foundational skills that are critical to success in future grades. By grades 3-5, students have been equipped with the basic foundational skills in grades K-2, and need less time to practice with guidance from the teacher. Students in grade 3-5 spend a larger amount of time during independent practice working towards mastery and beyond. Ensuring that students receive a balanced instructional approach to learning guarantees that our students are on track year after year and are ultimately prepared for college and beyond.

Providing Multisensory Learning Tasks

Multisensory learning involves the use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile pathways simultaneously to enhance memory and learning[13]. Multisensory learning is not limited to reading and listening. In Knowledge U classrooms, teachers implement science and social studies instruction using multi-sensory tasks and methods. This includes STEM instruction that is built into the daily schedule. Along with the allotted 50 minutes of science/social studies[14] instruction, students receive an additional 35 minutes of instruction during the STEM Innovation stations each day. Students are able to use their hands, bodies, ears, and even taste buds to explore the world around them instead of just reading from a text. This approach is best practice for ensuring that students develop a deeper understanding of the information or skill. Students are able to engage material in more than one way. Since teaching strategies are not a “one size fits all”, multisensory learning ensures that all students can learn. A 2018 study using fMRI technology, which measures brain activity by detecting changes in blood flow, found that children with the strongest literacy skills had more interactivity between different regions in their brain.[15] This suggests that multisensory learning has a direct correlation with higher levels of achievement, especially in reading. When children are small, they instinctively learn about our world through their senses. Children are most commonly called “sponges” because they “soak up” all that they hear, see, taste, smell, and touch in their environments. As students enter grade school, they must not be made to rely solely on hearing and seeing as a means of acquiring new information. At Knowledge U, we are committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure that our students are prepared academically for college and beyond.

Implementing a Rigorous, Standards Based Curricula

Knowledge U bases its entire curriculum around the state academic content standards. Our students receive the knowledge, concepts, and skills at each grade level that the state has determined to be essential. Not only are students expected to master all areas of the standards, the school expects to accelerate learning so that the mastery of the standards is achieved at the faster pace necessary for students to be ready for middle and high school honors and Advanced Placement programs. In 2010, Alabama adopted the Common Core State Standards[16] along with some selected Alabama state standards. The Alabama College and Career Ready Standards detail what K–12 students in Alabama should know in English language arts and mathematics at the conclusion of each school grade. With students mastering the standards at each grade level, they are prepared to succeed in post-high school education and the workforce without

remediation. Therefore, according to Alabama’s Plan 2020[17]those students are considered college and career ready[18]Our mission at Knowledge U aligns with Alabama’s Plan 2020 to ensure that all students are prepared for college, a career, and beyond.

[4] Culturally relevant texts refer to texts that highlight the students’ cultural backgrounds, interests, and experiences that are familiar to them.

[6] Civil Air Patrol (CAP). ACE is a free aerospace themed program that our teachers will use in order to provide opportunities for students to learn about aviation and aerospace through hands-on, engaging activities. Mrs. Whetstone is an Aerospace Education Member who has access to a variety of curriculum materials .

<https://www.gocivilairpatrol.com/programs/aerospace-education/programs/ace#:~:text=The%20ACE>

[8] The unique oral language program was developed by Founder and Head of School, Jeanisha Whetstone. Mrs. Whetstone’s experience as a Reading Interventionist, classroom teacher, and parent has led her to develop a deeper understanding of the relationship between oral language and academic success. Resources from

<file:///G:/Knowledge%20Unlimited%20Public%20Charter%20School/Oral%20Language%20Booklet>

[14] Science and social studies instruction will be implemented interchangeably. Students will spend several weeks (3-4 weeks) engaging in a unit of study on one subject. After the completion of the unit a switch to the other subject will take place.

Attachments

Section 2: Curriculum and Instructional Design

2.1	Attachment 2: Scope and Sequence Chart	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/4/20 7:28 PM	PDF / 1.313 MB
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3. Student Performance Standards

Knowledge U bases its entire curriculum around the state academic content standards. No additional academic content standards will be implemented. We ensure that our students are receiving the knowledge, concepts, and skills at each grade level that the state has determined to be essential. Not only are students expected to master all areas of the standards, the school expects to accelerate learning so that the mastery of the standards is achieved at the faster pace necessary for students to be ready for middle and high school honors and Advanced Placement programs. In 2010, Alabama adopted the Common Core State Standards[19]along with some selected Alabama state standards. The Alabama College and Career Ready Standards detail what K–12 students in Alabama should know in English language arts and mathematics at the conclusion of each school grade. With students mastering the standards at each grade level, they are prepared to succeed in post-high school education and the workforce without remediation.

Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a significant milestone in a student's educational trajectory because it signifies a time when the focus is placed on reading to learn instead of learning to read. With the creation of the Alabama Literacy Act (HB388), students in grade three

who do not demonstrate sufficient reading skills are retained unless they meet a good cause exemption[20]. Educators at Knowledge U utilize the Alabama Course of Study Standards to guide instruction, and ensure mastery of each standard. Students who have difficulty mastering standards are provided with intensive interventions until the standards are mastered. In **Attachment 4**, a complete set of grade three standards are attached to describe the standards that students must master in order to be promoted to fourth grade. To ensure a solid foundation for college and career readiness, students must read a broad range of high-quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts widely and deeply. Speaking and listening skills continue to develop through collaboration, discussion, and reports. Writing is integrated within all subjects to develop skills so that students are able to develop quality opinion, narrative, and informative pieces. In math, students focus on four critical areas: 1) developing understanding of multiplication and division within 100; 2) developing an understanding of fractions; 3) developing understanding of the structure of rectangular arrays and of area; and 4) describing and analyzing two dimensional shapes. The curriculum is intentionally and coherently structured to develop rich content knowledge within and across grades. At Knowledge U, we prepare students at each grade level to meet and exceed grade level standards in order to remain on track year after year.

The result of our students meeting and exceeding proficiency in all subjects yields increased graduation rates, and more students are prepared to succeed in college, a career and beyond. With an academically challenging, disciplined, and safe K-5 elementary school in the city of Bessemer, Knowledge U can assist Bessemer City Schools with narrowing the achievement gap in reading, math, and all other subjects. Narrowing the achievement gap would not only benefit Bessemer City, but the state of Alabama. Our school model is specifically designed to position children in the city of Bessemer on a path to become successful, contributing, and productive citizens.

Promotion Policy

The Board of Directors/Head of School shall develop (1) proposed promotion standards and (2) a process to be used in determining a student's readiness to progress to the next level of study and shall submit the standards and process to the Board of Directors for approval. The standards are based, in part, upon proficiency in reading. The guidelines of the Alabama Literacy Act (HB388) are used to determine promotion or retention of students. The standards and process must provide multiple criteria for assessing a student's readiness to progress to the next level of study, such as standardized test scores, formative and diagnostic assessments, standards-based grades, a portfolio or anthology of the student's work and, when appropriate, accepted standards for assessing developmental growth. A further breakdown of the guidelines for promotion are below:

Grades K through 2

a) To be promoted to the next grade level, students must score proficient (on grade level) in reading and writing on the End-of-Year Progress Report or show significant progress (documented by literacy assessments and work samples) toward meeting current grade level standards.

b) Students also must score proficient on the quarterly math assessments or show significant progress (documented by objective assessments and work samples) toward meeting current grade level standards.

Grade 3

a) To be promoted to the next grade level, students must demonstrate proficiency in reading of current grade level standards.

b) To be promoted to the next grade level, students should also demonstrate grade level proficiency and make adequate academic growth for the year in mathematics.

c) Students who do not meet the promotion standards will be given remediation and retesting in compliance with HB388, Alabama's Literacy Act.

d) In addition, students must pass language arts and mathematics and one other core subject (science or social studies). Students must demonstrate proficiency or adequate progress toward proficiency in writing as documented by work samples maintained in the student's writing portfolio.

Additionally, a sample third grade standards-based report card is **attached** in order to provide specific information about the level of proficiency on the learning targets that are taught each quarter. Knowledge U utilizes this format for K-5 students for progress reports and report cards to provide teachers, students, and parents specific progress of grade level standards throughout the school year.

Grades 4 through 5

a) To be promoted to the next grade level, students in grades 4-5 should demonstrate grade level proficiency of the grade level standards and make adequate academic growth for the year in reading and mathematics.

b) In addition, students must pass language arts and mathematics and one other core subject (science or social studies). Students must demonstrate proficiency or adequate progress toward proficiency in writing as documented by work samples maintained in the student's writing portfolio.

Good Cause Exemptions

The following students qualify for a "good cause exemption" and are exempt from mandatory retention, per HB388:

a) Students with disabilities whose Individual Education Plan (IEP) indicated that participation in the statewide assessment program is not appropriate, consistent with state law.

b) Students identified as English language learners who have had less than two years of

instruction in English as a second language.

c) Students who participate in the statewide English language arts reading assessment and who have an Individual Education Plan or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the student has received intensive reading intervention for more than two years and who still demonstrates a deficiency in reading and was previously retained in kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade.

Attachments

Section 3: Student Performance Standards

3.1	Attachment 4: Grade 3 Math COS Part 2	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 6:45 PM	PDF / 10.545 MB
3.2	Attachment 4: Grade 3 Math COS Part 1	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 6:44 PM	PDF / 16.243 MB
3.3	Attachment 4: Grade 3 Social Studies COS	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 3:30 AM	PDF / 13.182 MB
3.4	Attachment 4: Grade 3 Science COS	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 12:50 AM	PDF / 14.364 MB
3.5	Grade 3 Sample Standards Based Report Card	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/8/20 3:43 AM	PDF / 59.282 KB
3.6	Attachment 4: Grade 3 ELA COS	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/7/20 11:46 PM	PDF / 218.93 KB

4. High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only)

Attachments

Section 4: High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only)

– No Attachments –

5. School Calendar and Schedule

The annual school calendar (**Attachment 6**) is designed to implement and sustain an achievement-oriented culture and to support a challenging, rigorous curriculum for our target population. We provide an extended school year that begins August 2, 2021 and ends May 31, 2022. During this time, we provide students with 187 instructional days for 8.10 hours each day. Each Wednesday, students dismiss early in order for Knowledge U staff to attend professional development meetings. With the many barriers that restrict optimal learning environments, an extended school day and year can assist in ensuring that students have the opportunity to take

advantage of quality educational experiences. The table below provides a visual comparison of our extended day and year schedule.

	Knowledge U	Traditional Public Schools
Number of Student Instructional Days	187 days	180 days
Hours in Each Day	8.10 hours	6.5 hours
Total Hours Each School Year	1,515 hours	1,170 hours

The calendar has been designed so that it coordinates as much as possible with the Bessemer City Schools' calendar. The intention is to help parents coordinate their schedules with children whom they have in other schools. The calendar includes a full week of Thanksgiving and Spring Break and two weeks of Christmas Break.

Structure of the School Day

"Demanding that students learn more in the same amount of time is especially counterproductive for students who are behind in grade level, have limited English proficiency, or have special needs"^[19]. Student and teacher schedules reflect commitment to our mission in length, organization, and content. We obsessively protect instructional time; therefore, our schedule minimizes transitions and maximizes time in the core content areas of literacy, mathematics, science, and social sciences. Our school day begins at 7:50 am and ends at 4:00 pm, with the exception of every Wednesday, which operates from 7:50 am to 2:00 pm to provide teachers with on-going, targeted professional development. The extended instructional day ensures that students benefit from 180 minutes of literacy instruction and 60 minutes of math instruction daily. Monthly, students rotate between 50 minutes of daily science or social studies instruction. Daily, teachers benefit from our extended day, receiving 65 minutes of daily planning on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, during which they collaborate with grade level colleagues and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction to develop, refine, and reflect upon their lesson and unit plans. Sample daily schedules are provided as **Attachment 7**.

Attachments

Section 5: School Calendar and Schedule

5.1	Attachment 7: Knowledge U Schedule Drafts	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/4/20 7:39 PM	PDF / 132.006 KB
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6. School Culture

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, “intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate”^[21]. In order to ensure that our students acquire a holistic educational experience, students must be developed academically, socially and emotionally. We are aware that students within our proposed community may not have all of the support needed due to unfortunate circumstances within their homes and communities. We believe that all students should receive the best educational care to address and target their specific needs regardless of their socioeconomic status. We create a trauma-sensitive environment^[22] where we will serve as a support system to students and their families in order to help them to realize that their voices are heard, they are cared for, and able to attain success regardless of their circumstances.

Knowledge U students are held to high standards, and are expected to perform at a high level academically and behaviorally daily. We model our expectations in order for students to understand how they must conduct themselves while in school. Students and their families know our non-negotiables, expectations, and penalties for non-compliance. Samuel Casey Carter author of *No Excuses: Lesson from 21 High-Performing, High Poverty Schools* stated, “when a school clearly teaches by example that self-control, self-reliance, and self-esteem anchored in achievement are the means to success, that school’s own success inspires confidence, order, and discipline in its students”. We are unapologetically firm, but loving as we are building students of distinction that will become men and women of distinction.

Knowledge Unlimited is dedicated to providing an equitable educational experience to all students and developing a cohesive community between the school, students and parents regardless of his/her race, religion, cultural background, gender, socioeconomic status or disability. No student will be denied the right to a quality education. We will ensure that students receive the resources, accommodations and modifications needed in order to be successful. We will still maintain high behavioral and academic expectations for students who speak English as a Second Language and students who receive special education services. The implementation of our ongoing staff book studies using *A Framework for Understanding Poverty: A Cognitive Approach, Leader in Me, and Excellence through Equity* models will further establish opportunities for students, families, faculty and staff to support one another.

A Typical Day at Knowledge U

Teachers and staff arrive eagerly every morning to serve the bright students and families of Knowledge U. Before students arrive, a morning huddle takes place. These huddles serve as one of the many ways that Knowledge U develops and maintains relationships between its faculty and staff. We firmly believe that we are a team and need every willing and skillful laborer to achieve our mission and vision.

Teachers and staff are able to share thoughts, ideas, announcements whether personal or school related, and/or words of encouragement. At the conclusion of the huddle, teachers report to their designated areas to ensure safe and speedy transitions by the students to their designated locations.

Peyton, a kindergarten student, walks anxiously and excitedly up the pathway to Knowledge Unlimited pulling his mother along. They live minutes from the school. “Hurry up, Mom I don’t want to be late!” Peyton and his mother approach the front entrance of the school and stand directly

behind the couple of students that precede him. When it is their turn, they approach the Head of School. Peyton has his head up high, a smile on his face, and an outstretched hand. Peyton proceeds to tell his mother to do the same.

“Good morning, Peyton. Are you ready to learn today?” asks the Head of School shaking his hand and smiling at Peyton.

Peyton, looking the school leader right in the eyes as he has been taught, smiles back and states, “Yes, Mrs. Whetstone. I am ready to learn today.”

“Good morning, Mrs. Thomas. How are you doing this morning?” asks Mrs. Whetstone. Mrs. Thomas answers, “I’m doing well, Mrs. Whetstone, how are you?” Mrs. Whetstone replies, “I am doing well. I am so glad to hear that your mother is recovering well from her surgery. Keep us informed on how she is progressing.” Mrs. Thomas smiles warmly and gives a wave as she walks away.

Peyton enters the building and is ushered through the hallway by Mr. Brown, a Knowledge Unlimited teacher, who is monitoring students to ensure speedy and safe transitions to the cafeteria. Peyton enters the cafeteria, then gets in line to receive his breakfast. Peyton is greeted by the cafeteria servers, Mrs. Pat and Ms. Terry.

Morning Meeting 8:00

At 8:00 am, each classroom will file out of the cafeteria and down the halls with silent voices. Once Peyton has arrived in class, he must unpack his things. Students report to the mat for “morning meeting” time. Peyton knows that he must sit up straight, his legs are crossed, his hands are together and in his lap, and he is listening and looking at the speaker. Peyton’s teacher, Mrs. Young, will greet the students. “Good morning, students.” The students will reply, “Good morning, Mrs. Young”. Peyton remembered to observe the weather on his walk to school this morning because he enjoys providing the weather news to his class. Mrs. Young begins by asking students today’s date. Peyton and his classmates have learned to speak in complete sentences when answering a question that has been asked. Kelly replies, “Today is Tuesday, September 5, 2019.” Next, Mrs. Young asks about the weather. Peyton is anxious and excited, but he calmly raises his hand and waits to speak. Mrs. Young asks, “Peyton, can you tell us what today’s weather is?” Peyton ensures that he is sitting up straight, he looks at his teacher and projects his voice loud enough where everyone can hear his response. “Today’s weather is sunny and warm” he replies. Mrs. Young is especially proud of Peyton because he is usually quite shy. Peyton is allowed to come to the white board and graph the day’s weather. Mrs. Young continues “morning meeting” by reviewing skills across the subject areas that students have been taught. The students count aloud, identify shapes and colors, read and spell words, discuss vocabulary, recall details from texts and share their ideas.

School-Wide Intervention 8:15

Students who are not meeting with Mrs. Young are completing journals and various math problems from the board on math skills that have been previously taught. Kelsey, Nathan and Jamari are being pulled by the coach, Mr. Adams, for intervention. These students are working on mastering letters sounds each morning during schoolwide intervention time. The kids love when they work with Mr. Adams because he make learning fun and exciting early in the morning. He dances, sings, and sometimes raps to some of the students' favorite songs to help them remember letter sounds. Coach Adams lives within the Bessemer community and coaches little league baseball. He does not have children of his own, but is dedicated to putting his all into ensuring that the students academically, physically, socially, and emotionally.

Once invention time is over, the students know to return to class, and get ready for phonics instruction.

Reading Block Part I (Phonics Instruction) 8:45

Three-Part Drill

While on the mat, Mrs. Young begins the “three part drill” where students review letter sounds and practice blending. These exercises are done chorally, then monitored when students return to desks. Peyton enjoys the “drill” because he likes the concept of writing in the air when Mrs. Young says a word for the class to spell. Mrs. Young dictates the word, “bat”. Peyton and his peers respond in unison while writing in the air, “bat, b-a-t, bat”.

Introduction of New Concept

After the “drill”, students quickly and quietly return to desks to complete next phonics phase. Each student takes out his/her bag of sand. The sand is used when students are practicing words that they have already learned, and also to practice new sounds. After practicing some review sight words, Mrs. Young states that this week’s sound is /h/. Peyton is extremely excited because he knows that sound is the letter h. He had just recently learned this letter at home with his mother. Peyton writes the letter h in the sand while saying its correct sound out loud. Peyton practices saying the sound aloud, then writing the letter in the sand. He begins to think about things that begin with the letter h and he is excited to learn how to spell them.

Reading Block Part II (Reading Comprehension) 9:30

Peyton moves to the right corner of the room with his second teacher, Mr. Legg. Mr. Legg is working with students to compare and contrast objects, which is a foundational lesson aligned to reading standard RI.K.9, which states that with prompting and support, students must be able to identify basic similarities in and differences between two texts on the same topic (e.g., in illustrations, descriptions, or procedures). Providing the foundation for students on what it means to compare and contrast, by defining words, such as similarities and differences, and discussing the characteristics that separate various objects builds prerequisite skills that will enable students to apply this background knowledge to texts that they are reading. Today, Mr. Legg is leading students to compare and contrast living things that can fly with living things that can swim. For their exit ticket, students must properly categorize nonliving things that can be found in the sky with nonliving things that can be found in the sea.

Snack and Restroom Break 10:05

At the conclusion of the second reading rotation, students transition to their seats to prepare for snack and a restroom break. The teacher directs the class to divide into two lines for the restroom. Students are taken in groups, by gender, to the restroom by Mrs. Young. Mr. Legg makes this time fun through his teacher-created sight word game where students gain points for spelling sight words correctly.

Reading Block Part III (Technology) 10:20

Upon hearing the transition music, Peyton moves to the third reading block where he independently practices essential literacy skills on the computer through the program of Reading Eggs. The program is tailored to meet students’ at their appropriate reading level, and Peyton feels challenged and engaged as he practices identifying sounds in isolation, a core skill in the

development of strong phonemic awareness. Today, he is working on identifying the pictures of items that begin with the letter 'm'. He loves to hear the chime of the computer through his headphones, signaling a correct response, as he builds strong literacy skills.

Lunch 11:05

Students are dismissed for lunch. Peyton lines up silently with his class, and his teacher walks him to the restroom. Afterwards, the class walks into the lunchroom where each student is greeted by the Head of School and directed to his or her lunch seat. Students spend ten minutes eating without talking. Each table has red, yellow and green cups as visual cues to signal when they can talk.

Read aloud 11:35

Students proceed directly to the carpet for a read aloud. Peyton loves to hear stories read aloud to him, and his teacher reads every story with animated expression, which engages students and models fluent, expressive reading. Peyton also enjoys learning college vocabulary words, and every week, students learn tier two words from the story. This week, they are reading a story called *A Pocket for Corduroy*.

Math 12:00

Students move through their math activity, counting to one hundred and beginning addition activities. The teacher, Mr. Legg, models addition problems, explicitly detailing the steps necessary to solve them, and then transitions students into guided practice, where, with a partner, Peyton works on five additional problems.

Writing and Oral Language 1:00

Peyton and his peers prepare for writing by taking out their writing journals. Peyton begins writing a complete sentence with the date. Peyton writes, "Today is Tuesday, September 21, 2021. Mrs. Young has written a stem for students to complete in their writing journal. Today's topic: What is your favorite fruit? A stem is provided to support students in developing a complete sentence that answers the question. The following stem is written on the board, "My favorite fruit is _____. I like _____ because _____."

1:30 Social Studies

The class silently transitions into their Social Studies lesson. Students rotate between social studies and science units every month, and currently are involved in a Social Studies unit. Peyton and his class have learned geography and map concepts, as well as information about the city of Birmingham and the state of Alabama.

2:20 Physical Education

After Social Studies, students head to the gymnasium for physical education which occurs during their daily enrichment block. They walk to the gymnasium and with their fitness instructor, students participate in a variety of activities that get them moving. Today students are practicing basketball drills, including passing and dribbling the ball, which support their development of strong hand-eye coordination.

3:10 Choice Time

Choice time provides students with the opportunity to interact collaboratively in centers-based

activities. Peyton has chosen dramatic play and goes to the kitchen center. He and two other students work together to create a pizza for their movie and pizza slumber party. Dramatic play is important in kindergarten because it helps students develop socially and emotionally, physically, cognitively, and to also develop language skills(holistic education).

Closing Circle and Dismissal 3:45

At the end of the enrichment block, Peyton's classmates are brought back together for closing circle. Closing circle is a cooperative way to end the day. The teachers provide highlights of particular concepts learned from the day and how this learning connects with their lifework assignments. Students have the opportunity to provide each other with shout-outs. Additionally, students are chosen to discuss particular learning insights from the day, which they are excited to tell their family members when they get home. Both teachers thank the class for a wonderful, productive day. The class then lines up for dismissal.

Attachments

Section 6: School Culture

– No Attachments –

7. Supplemental Programming

Arts

In our efforts to achieve our mission to prepare students for college and life through a holistic educational experience, we provide students with opportunities to participate in music and art activities throughout the year. Students learn about the significant history of music and art in within their city, surrounding cities and the state of Alabama and how to create their own masterpieces. Through a fully-funded grant, Knowledge Unlimited partners with the Greater Birmingham Arts Education Collaborative to provide students with high quality education where the arts are infused within the core subjects.

Students take field trips throughout the year to museums, science centers, and other facilities that will expose our students to the outside world and allow them to engage the world as a platform for learning. We desire for all students to embrace each and every opportunity to learn and grow.

Cub Scouts

By Year Three of operation, Knowledge Unlimited partners with cub scouts for our male and female students. This program will assist in making sure the students have unlimited opportunities to learn, grow and succeed in society. Our students will be able to continue to develop social skills as well as build their character. Our students will also be able to benefit from developing the following attributes:

Goal Orientation: Students will be able to establish and achieve measurable goals. Students learn what it means to persevere and how to not only apply these exercises to school, but also to

life.

Leadership: This program provides countless opportunities for students to practice leadership skills. As the students mature in rank, they are given more opportunities to lead.

Preparedness: Equipping students with life skills helps them to be prepared when challenges arise.

Aviation and Aerospace

Knowledge U also partners with the Bessemer Civil Air Patrol to provide students with real-world opportunities to engage the field of aviation and aerospace. Along with the implementation of the Aerospace Connections in Education (ACE) curricula that will be used to provide STEM based activities for our students to learn about the field of aviation and aerospace, members of the Civil Air Patrol will provide students who have a special interest in aviation the opportunity to learn more about the field, and in time become cadets with the Civil Air Patrol.

Knowledge U has developed many connections within the aviation field including the Bessemer Airport Authority, Bessemer Civil Air Patrol, and Birmingham Flight Center. We will continue to develop connections in order to ensure a quality aviation and aerospace program for our students.

Summer School

At this time, Knowledge Unlimited will not offer summer school. Eventually we will provide summer school in order to ensure that students continue to grow physically, socially, emotionally and academically.

Social and Emotional Health and Education

Knowledge U emphasizes teaching children the skills for positive relationships, so social and emotional learning is a key strategy for schools in their efforts to reduce bullying and improve caring, respect and responsibility at school. When children are taught specific strategies for recognizing and responding to emotions, thinking through challenging situations and communicating effectively, they are less likely to act out frustrations at school and elsewhere. Knowledge Unlimited also recognizes that social and emotional skills develop over time, and that they may develop differently for different children. Parents and schools working together to help children develop social and emotional skills can really make a positive difference for children's mental health. Knowledge U partners with the Aspire Movement, a life on life mentoring program for students beginning in grade 4 and extending until after high school graduation. Mentors will visit with mentees every Wednesday in whole group, small groups, and/or individually. In addition, our staff participates in book studies such as Ruby Payne's A Framework for Understanding Poverty to ensure each teacher and staff member is prepared to assist our students as they develop socially and emotionally.

Knowledge Unlimited teachers and staff will:

- Model behaviors expected of students at all times; be a positive role model
- Always listen to students; students have a voice and is important
- Establish meaningful relationships with students
- Provide positive affirmations

Knowledge U is dedicated to producing successful individuals who possess a balance of

education and character.

Attachments

Section 7: Supplemental Programming

– No Attachments –

8. Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School is responsible for compliance with federal and state laws regarding serving special populations and special education students, including the Individuals with Disabilities ACT (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Americans with Disabilities (ADA). Knowledge U is committed to identifying and meeting the learning needs of all students, including students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans; English Language Learners (ELL); students identified as intellectually gifted, and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out. No students will be denied admission due to special needs or disabilities.

Identification Process

Currently, Bessemer City Schools' data indicates that 11%[\[23\]](#) of children are receiving special education services, and about 6% are receiving EL services. The data study also indicates a high number of economically disadvantaged students (69%) which Knowledge U recognizes as a factor to consider when determining the potential for serving at-risk students. Knowledge U is committed to providing the necessary resources for all special populations of students.

All students who will be receiving Special Education (SPED) services, will have Individualized Education Plans (IEP), and all students receiving 504 services, will have Section 504 plans. These plans are developed and monitored by teachers with proper certifications including SPED certification. The special education department determines appropriate placement of SPED students and 504 students. These meetings will allow time for students/teachers/administrators/parents to set mutually agreed upon goals for individual student learning. The school also employs a diagnostician, as needed, who works alongside teachers to determine if identified students qualify for services. A strong Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtII) program is implemented for struggling students. Students who are not experiencing success in the classroom have access to three levels of support, each increasing in the level of intensity and frequency before requesting SPED testing. Only after a student has progressed through Tiers 1-3, which is at least eight weeks of intense intervention, will he/she be considered for special education testing. All other reasons for lack of success are investigated, including but not limited to, attendance, lack of specific interventions, frequency of interventions, hearing and/or vision difficulties, etc.

Scope and Sequence, Daily Schedule, Staffing Support Strategies and Resources

Knowledge U believes that all students deserve the opportunity to experience success in the context of their peers, and that the best learning environment for the student is in the classroom. Knowledge U has a teaching and learning environment that meets the needs of every child so that he/she is provided the support needed to be successful within the least restrictive environment

(LRE). A scope and sequence is developed to provide teachers with a guide to ensure coverage and pacing of state standards through lessons and hands-on learning experiences. Teachers serve as learning facilitators and provide support for students based on their Individualized Education Program plan (IEP). Assessment will be integrated into all aspects of the teaching and learning process. Teachers will assess students on specific state standards based on specific IEP goals and objectives. A wide variety of instruction and assessment methods will ensure that all types of learners can experience success in the classroom. For the students who do not reach mastery, targeted intervention sessions will be provided. Special education students will follow the daily schedule, as much as possible, with the rest of the school; however, when appropriate, their daily schedule will be adapted to accommodate special classes, programs or other services.

Once a student is tested and qualifies for special education services or 504 and a plan for individual learning is developed, the special education teacher will address the student's needs, including but not limited to, classroom accommodations, tutoring, monitoring, inclusion support, resource support and more. This is also for new students who enter into Knowledge Unlimited who have already been tested and were receiving services at his/her previous school. The special education teacher will also work with all of the students' regular education teachers to ensure the students' needs are met at all times and that each student is in the least restrictive environment as often as possible. Numerous opportunities for remediation will be available through online educational platforms, assistive technologies, Orton-Gillingham methodology for dyslexia, etc.

The bilingual and/or English as a second language (ESL) program will be incorporated into daily instruction by providing an emphasis on reading and writing instruction across all subject areas and providing opportunities for listening and speaking skills through a multi-sensory approach. Similar to the special education inclusion setting, we will provide a multi-sensory environment in every classroom allowing students to remain in the same room with their peers as often as possible. Students may be pulled out of the classroom by ESL teachers for additional support as needed.

Knowledge U offers a Gifted and Talented (GT) program in which students are identified as gifted and/or talented through a series of designated assessments and surveys. Teachers who have GT certification are employed to not only help identify these students, but also to monitor progress on grade level assessments and acceleration of study. These students have a multitude of opportunities for accelerated instruction through protocols such as an individualized online curriculum, as well as, independent study topics, outside enrichment programs, and specialized field experiences.

In accordance with state requirements, Knowledge U arranges for evaluations for three to five year olds and school-aged children with suspected learning disabilities through Alabama's Early Intervention System, Child Find. Upon enrollment we conduct intake activities including home visits, during which we discuss whether or not the enrolling student has an existing IEP. Though we do not anticipate receiving many children with a special education classification at such early grades of their schooling, we do not want to misidentify any incoming students with an IEP. Students who could possibly be misidentified for special education services are students that attended private schools, students who are highly mobile, students who have been suspended or expelled from school, home-schooled students, and those who are advancing from grade to grade with borderline failing grades in multiple subjects. At Knowledge U, we avoid misidentification of students who may need services by ensuring that teachers receive proper, on-going training on how to identify possible signs of learning disabilities through analyzing students' performance on weekly assessments, daily assignments and behaviors that may be impeding his/her learning. Assessment data and the aforementioned are discussed at weekly faculty and grade level meetings to monitor progress or continued decline in students' performance. The teacher's update of students' progression or lack thereof determines the actions of the team.

Knowledge U employs, trains, and retains educators of the highest caliber, therefore we ensure that each student receives a quality, equitable education from high quality educators. All members of the Special Education Department provide exemplary services to the students requiring special education needs within our targeted community. The Special Education Department works collaboratively with the Problem Solving Team (PST) to identify teaching strategies, best practices, and interventions to meet the needs of all students. Knowledge U's Special Education Department strives to offer services in the least restrictive environment - to the maximum extent appropriate, providing an education in the same manner as it is provided to every other child, alongside peers in a general education environment. General education teachers and special education teachers collaborate to ensure that students receiving special education services master the goals specified in his/her IEP and continue making progress in the general education classroom as well.

Students receiving special education services will receive accommodations and modifications to ensure academic success. Accommodations and modifications are made on assignments, quizzes, tests, and during instruction as needed. We want to provide support as needed, however we believe that all students are capable of attaining success, so students are challenged. Students are given assignments on his/her functional level, however we will ensure that each student is introduced to the skill or concept that is being taught in the general education classroom. We want to empower all of our students to ask for help, but we want to empower students to be self-guided learners as well. Below are some accommodations and modifications that will be utilized to ensure student success:

- Small group instruction
- Visual aids (classroom charts, movies)
- Manipulatives
- Larger texts
- Texts read aloud
- Small group testing
- Extended time on assignments
- Shortened assignments
- Peer helpers

Students with IEP plans are continuously monitored to ensure that they are successful. During weekly data meetings, teachers, both special education and general education, analyze data and determine whether students are continuously making progress. If continuous progress is not being made by a student(s), the teacher may call a reevaluation meeting to discuss the lack and determine with the IEP Team, a new set of measurable goals and objectives that are better tailored to the needs of the student. The intervention programs within our reading and math programs and other resources are used to remediate students' deficits.

Section 504 requires schools to provide students with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Knowledge Unlimited adheres to all obligations under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Section 504. We immediately evaluate and identify any students protected under Section 504. This includes any student determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, (2) have a record of such impairment, or (3) be regarded as having such impairment. Our Special Education Department will ensure that students' legal rights are met and that their special needs are effectively served.

Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners (ELLs)

Knowledge Unlimited complies with all applicable federal laws related to the education of

language minority students as stated under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974. We are also in compliance with the Alabama Department of Education's EL Policies and Procedures Manual. English Language Learner (ELL) students are provided with equal access to and full participation in school activities. ELL students study the same content and are held to the same standards as other students. While all classes are taught in English, the level of English used for instruction, verbal and written, is modified as needed to facilitate ELL students' acquisition of English. For students identified as English Language Learners (ELL), we use Structured English language immersion to accelerate academic progress. We eliminate or limit the separation of English Language Learners from the mainstream classroom, acknowledging the immersion method of language acquisition as the most expedited effective manner to educate ELL students. If a student's English language proficiency is so severely limited as to render the student incapable of following the activities in a regular classroom, the school will provide instruction in English to speakers of other languages for a certain period of time every school day by highly-qualified, fully bilingual teachers. Because the objective is for the student to fully transition to English classes, the ELL student is expected to participate in part of the regular classroom schedule, where all students have the opportunity to hear and use English.

We use Home Language Surveys to screen all new enrollees for potential limited English proficiency within the first thirty days of the school year. Students who enroll after the beginning of the school year will receive the survey within the first ten days after+ enrollment. If the home language is other than English or the student's language is other than English, appropriate Knowledge Unlimited staff or a hired interpreter will conduct an informal review in the student's native language and English. If the student speaks a language other than English and/or speaks little or no English, we will administer the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) as a screener and placement. The ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners), is designed to satisfy the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, No Child Left Behind, requirements for Title III. Results from these assessments are used to provide identification of and avoid misidentification of ELL students, inform instruction, and ensure all students can access academic content and master performance and content standards. Teachers are responsible for observing each student throughout the class day with an eye toward detecting limited English proficiency. All teachers will receive professional development training in techniques for detecting whether a student has English language deficiencies and in communicating with students designated as ELL students. Any student suspected of having limited English proficiency is tested to determine what level of services, if any, is necessary.

Below is the Home Language Survey that will be given to all enrollees at Knowledge Unlimited:

1. Does your child speak a language other than English?
2. What is the first language your child learned to speak?
3. What language does your child speak most often?
4. What language is most often spoken in your home?

If all responses on the Home Language Survey indicate that English is the only language used by the student and by individuals in the home, the student is considered an English-only speaker. Procedures established by Knowledge U for placement in the general student population will be followed. If any response on the Home Language Survey indicates the use of a language other than English by the student or an individual in the home or other person during the registration process, then additional assessment may need to be conducted to determine the student's English-language proficiency level. School office personnel will be responsible for notifying the

Title III contact when a Home Language Survey indicates a language other than English. The presence of a language other than English does not automatically signify that the student is not a competent and proficient speaker of English, but if the Home Language Survey indicates that the primary language in the home is not English, then the Title III contact person or designee will be contacted and an initial assessment of the student's English language proficiency level will be conducted.

To ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for ELL students, Knowledge U utilizes a sheltered instruction model^[24], which calls for instruction to be implemented in English, but teachers use strategies to help meet students' linguistic needs, such as the explicit teaching of vocabulary and the use of visual representations. Although we want to keep students in the mainstream classroom as often as possible, a pull out program will be available as needed. Students are allowed to receive additional support in their native language, if necessary. Our supplemental reading program, Phonics First, is designed to provide a systematic, explicit instructional sequence that minimizes confusion for children who are not familiar with the structure of the English language and provides a multisensory approach to maximize the instructional impact and minimize confusion. Our educators will receive ongoing professional development in order to ensure proper training on how to effectively instruct, monitor, and assess ELL students. The following principles drive our instructional methods at Knowledge U:

1. ELLs require comprehensible input as they move through different stages of language acquisition and acquire English proficiency. Therefore, teachers will scaffold their instruction; use multiple methods for conveying information, particularly nonlinguistic methods; and promote student interaction that is structured and supported.

2. Academic language—the more formal, complex English needed to learn advanced academic content—is distinct from conversational language. Teachers will provide explicit instruction in academic language, as well as multifaceted and intensive vocabulary instruction.

3. ELLs need instruction that will allow them to meet state content standards. Teachers will become comfortable implementing the school's ELL program model to convey course content to ELLs. They will also incorporate primary language supports to help students understand the content, when appropriate.

4. ELLs have background knowledge and home cultures that differ from the U.S. mainstream. Teachers will use culturally compatible instruction to build a bridge between home and school. They will make the norms and expectations of the classroom clear and explicit.

5. Assessments measure English language proficiency as well as content knowledge. Teachers will use testing accommodations when appropriate.

Identifying and Meeting the Needs of All Learners

Given our target population, we expect that students will arrive below grade level, particularly with extreme literacy gaps. Our school design, specifically our academic program is designed to target these academic gaps quickly and strategically through rigorous curriculum and high quality

instruction, which provide differentiated, intensive support to all students. We also have an intervention approach, which specifically targeted students that need additional supports in addition to what we provide through classroom instruction. These students will be identified through universal screeners such as the MAP Growth computer-based assessment and the Strategic Teaching and Learning Program (STEP). Students who score below benchmark levels in reading and math will be provided small group intervention with evidence-based reading intervention programs. We will implement an intervention approach based on the Response to Instruction and Intervention (RTII) Framework which serves as additional, targeted support for students performing below grade level.

The following model describes the strategies that our teachers will implement in the classroom when conducting intervention. These same strategies will be discussed with the Problem Solving Team (PST) during RTII meetings. Proper documentation from student portfolios, assessment data and teacher observations will be used to determine each step of closing the achievement gaps that are impeding students' academic success.

Research indicates that Intellectually Gifted students require challenge and support to further develop their interests and capacities, and that these should be provided in a systematical and targeted manner. Entering students who score above-grade level proficiencies on the MAP Growth and STEP assessment are placed on a list of students considered Intellectually Gifted. Identified students will receive an Advanced Learning Plan developed by the grade level team and highly-qualified gifted specialist. The plan will focus on challenging the student in his/her core subjects. All teachers will include advanced assignments and work creatively to identify strategies to differentiate lesson plans for more advanced students. Each lesson plan includes a section on acceleration strategies in daily enrichment activities. Enrichment activities may change regularly and allow for a variety of experiences - music, theater, dance, art, sports, etc. Students are also allowed to visit classrooms that are a grade level above his/her current grade level for instruction, as necessary.

In order to ensure continued growth of gifted students, the MAP Growth assessment, STEP assessment, weekly quizzes, and tests are analyzed at data meetings to monitor progress. Gifted students receive the services needed to continue to excel from a highly-qualified gifted specialist who will be hired to service these students alongside the classroom teacher.

Attachments

Section 8: Special Populations and At-Risk Students

– No Attachments –

9. Unique/Innovative Program Offering

The mission of Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School is to prepare students for college, a career, and life through a holistic educational experience. Holistic education is a "philosophy of education based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace"learning^[1]. For several years now, the achievement gap has attributed to African American students and students in underserved areas from being academically successful. In 2017, The Nation's Report Card data revealed that eighth grade black students had

an average reading score that was 27 points lower than white students. Furthermore, the data revealed that this data was not significantly different from the 1998 data where black students' average reading score was 28 points lower than white students.

In 2018 in the city of Bessemer, when compared with other local schools that border the city of Bessemer, Bessemer City Schools' eighth grade students fell significantly short of meeting proficiency goals. When compared with a local, non-poverty school district that borders the city of Bessemer, Hoover City, we concluded that Bessemer's students have not only struggled to meet district and state goals, but are unable to compete with their local peers.

Local School System Proficiency Comparison [\[1\]](#)

	Reading	Math
Economically Disadvantaged (Bessemer)	15.3	12.7
Non-Poverty (Hoover)	62.8	73.5

From this data, we have determined that there is a need to address the learning gaps of the most underserved students in Bessemer City Schools. In Bessemer City Schools, 69.2% [\[1\]](#) of the student population is considered economically disadvantaged. Of that percentage of economically disadvantaged students, 89% of those students are African American. Compared to their non-poverty peers in Hoover City, the students of Bessemer are at a 48 point achievement gap in reading, and a 61 point achievement gap in math.

David J. Johns stated, "like all children, African American children are born with the ability to learn, but require experiences to bring their potential to fruition". The missing ingredient to the success of students within underserved areas is exposure. The students within underserved areas are not provided with the many opportunities as the students in high performing schools. At Knowledge U, students have the opportunity to engage the outside world as a platform for learning. Students are exposed to unlimited opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed, hence the name of the school Knowledge Unlimited is appropriate in establishing who we are. Along with our adopted science program that provides STEM-based instruction, Pearson's Interactive Science, we partner with Bessemer Civil Air Patrol for additional access to STEM based projects and curricula (e.g, ACE, Aerospace Connections in Education) for aviation and aeronautical career pathways. Our STEM program will expose students to careers in aviation and aerospace in order to increase minority participation in the aerospace field and help to shape the industry to be as diverse as the people that it serves. According to the International Civil Aviation Organization, by 2026 480,000 technicians will be needed to maintain the 25,000 new aircrafts that will be added to the commercial fleet[\[1\]](#). Boeing has projected that by 2037, there will be a need for 790,000 new pilots to meet the growing demand. This opportunity opens the door for students to no longer be limited by their circumstances, it provides them an opportunity to discover their purpose, interests, and desires, and provides the confidence needed to succeed in a world where the educational requirements for successful and fulfilling careers continues to rise.

Attachments

Section 9: Unique/Innovative Program Offering

– No Attachments –

10. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School (Knowledge U) is committed to building a culturally inclusive student population at all age/grade levels. Recruitment and marketing plans are intentional and varied to reach a wide range of families looking for an exemplary choice in a charter school. The community can learn about Knowledge U in a wide variety of communications. These include: public press releases to local tv, door to door neighborhood visits, small business visits, community cookout family events, radio, newspapers, social media, public notices at the branch library in Bessemer, flyers distributed in locations that children and their parents frequent such as , the Recreation Center, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, jump parks, dance and karate studios, etc.

Our purpose for placing a quality charter school in our targeted community is to assist Bessemer City Schools with narrowing the achievement gap of its students. The students within this community are deserving of a fair and equitable opportunity to compete with peers within surrounding communities, the state, and nation. Along with Bessemer's continuous improvements, we provide a high-quality curricula, high-quality educators, and practice-proven instructional strategies that are proven to change the trajectory of student success. Knowledge U ensures that students regardless of race, gender, religion and socioeconomic status have the opportunity to an equitable education.

Recruiting and publicity will begin upon announcement that the charter status has been awarded in September 2020.

Registration for Fall 2021 will open on October 15, 2020 and end on December 15, 2020.

If the number of applications received by the deadline exceed the number of available seats at any grade level, a lottery is used to determine students who are enrolled. All applicants are provided with a random number that is entered into the lottery for a random drawing. The lottery drawing process continues after the lottery slots are filled to determine the order of students on the wait list. A charter school lottery is a random selection process by which applicants are admitted to a charter school to ensure that all applicants that do not have an enrollment priority have an equal chance of being admitted.

The Wait List

The wait list is separate from those admitted through the lottery, and each family is made aware of the position of its student(s) on the wait list at the conclusion of the lottery process.

Knowledge U frequently updates the wait list throughout the year. At the end of the year, wait list numbers are cleared, and students are progressed to the next grade level lottery for the following year. The enrollment lottery is public, and held on the school campus. Only students meeting appropriate age requirements and who submit the applications before the deadline will be eligible for the lottery. Offers of enrollment, scholarship, or waitlist placement are made via phone, email, or mail.

Knowledge U reserves the right to determine its capacity at each grade level, and to reserve spaces within a grade level for, students who have been retained or students who may be returning in a subsequent year.

If an insufficient amount of applications are received during the open-enrollment window, offers of

admission will be awarded to qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. Another enrollment window will be established and advertised through multiple sources.

Enrollment Timelines for 2021-2022

Open Enrollment	October 15,2020- December 15,2020
Post Open Enrollment Begins	December 16, 2020-January 20,2021
Lottery	February 10,2021

Attachments

Section 10: Student Recruitment and Enrollment

10.1	Attachment 8: Knowledge U Enrollment Policy	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/4/20 7:41 PM	PDF / 150.598 KB
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11. Student Discipline Policy and Plan

To ensure we achieve our mission, Knowledge U is unwaveringly committed to providing a safe and orderly environment where students maximize each and every learning opportunity offered within the school, and as a result are able to academically excel. Students and families have the right to attend and choose a safe and orderly school. With a clearly defined, firm, and consistent discipline policy, Knowledge Unlimited is able to realize the rigorous accountability measures for student achievement and parent satisfaction for which we exist. We believe in teaching students that good choices warrant positive consequences and that bad choices warrant negative consequences – just like in the real world. We hold students accountable for the decisions that they choose to make. Our approach to fostering excellent school-wide behavior is rooted in our core values, iTREE, Integrity, Teamwork, Respect, Excellence, and Empowerment and the actions of the following:

- Teachers Are Trained on How to Execute Our Disciplinary Approach
- We Institute a Culture of Achievement and Excellence
- We Set Clearly Defined Rules with Consistently Applied Consequences
- We Build Strong, Transformative Relationships with Students

Behavior Plan and Offenses

All offenses committed by students are categorized as Level 1, Level 2, or Level 3 offenses. Each leveled offense has an appropriate consequence and process for notifying parents of offenses. Level 1 offenses are considered minor offenses and are handled in class by the teacher. All teachers have classroom expectations, behaviors, and processes on how discipline is handled. Examples of Level 1 offenses include dress code violation, non-compliance, and horse playing.

Once a student commits a Level 1 offense, the teacher may choose to have a conference with student, have student complete an academic assignment, or contact parent. Once a student accumulates three Level 1 offenses, the teacher schedules a parent conference where student, teacher, and parent are present to discuss solutions to student's behavioral concerns. Level 2 offenses are more severe than Level 1 offenses. Level 2 offenses may include, but are not limited to fighting, major disrespect toward staff member, or major classroom disruptions or tantrums. If a student commits a Level 2 offense, they are immediately referred to the office with proper documentation of the offense. At this point a parent conference is required as soon as possible. If a conference has already taken place, student will serve an out-of-school suspension, or in-school suspension. At this point, behavioral supports are also put into place to ensure the behaviors do not continue. Level 3 offenses such as possession of drugs, weapons, or threats call for an immediate office referral. A parent conference is required, and out of school suspension or expulsion follows. Knowledge U creates and maintains an orderly, safe, and academically challenging learning environment that provides all students with unlimited opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed.

Positive Behavior Incentives

On a daily basis, students are encouraged to do and be the very best that they can be. Our core values, iTREE (Integrity, Teamwork, Respect, Excellence, Empowerment). We ensure that they are recognized and honor their efforts towards excellent citizenship, exemplary semester attendance, academic excellence and improvements, and much more. They are honored and rewarded daily, weekly, and monthly with individual and/or class rewards in order to ensure that each and every person is not only working to gain something for themselves, but also working together as a team to achieve great things.

Suspension and Expulsion

In the event of suspension and/or expulsion, proper protocol must be followed in order to ensure due process. If a student commits multiple Level 2 minor offenses and is a continuous disruption to themselves and others, a suspension is necessary. On the other hand, students who commit Level 3 offenses require definite suspension, and possible expulsion if the student's presence is detrimental to the safety and security of the class or school as a whole.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Discipline of students with disabilities who commit specific infractions that require immediate suspension or expulsion (i.e. possession of a firearm, drugs, alcohol, physical harm of a person) will be determined on a case-by-case basis to ensure that disciplinary actions is in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Level 2 Behavior Offenses Include:

Fighting

Major disrespect/insubordination

Major classroom disruption/tantrum

Major verbal altercations between students

Theft

Habitual discipline (Multiple Level I offenses)

Level 3 Behavior Offenses Include:

Threats

Alcohol/drugs

Weapons

Arson

Immoral conduct

Vandalism

Due Process

In a situation where an infraction has occurred, all students involved are innocent until all information regarding the infraction has been presented whether the offense is minor, or one that requires suspension or expulsion. Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School (Knowledge U) ensures that all students receive due process and have the right to defend themselves during disciplinary procedures.

For short term suspensions (less than 10 days), Knowledge Unlimited will provide:

1. Oral or written notice of the offenses or charges against the student
2. If the student denies the allegations against him or her, the student will be allowed to present his or her side of the story

When a student or students have allegedly committed an offense, all students involved are provided with an oral or written notice of the allegations or charges against him or her. After the students have been made aware of the accusations, an opportunity to present his or her side of the story in a fair hearing (formally or informally) is provided. An explanation may be necessary if the student denies the allegations against him. Administration will use the student's account in the overall decision.

For long term suspension (more than 10 days) and expulsions Knowledge Unlimited will provide:

1. Oral or written notice in advance of the allegations against the student
2. An opportunity for student to present his or her side of the story

Students who have been determined to have brought a firearm to school or have possession of a firearm on school grounds, in a school building, on a school bus, or school sponsored function require expulsion for a period of one year. Within this time period, a student cannot attend regular school classes, but can attend alternative school designed to provide educational services.

Students with disabilities can be suspended or expelled for the same reasons as students without disabilities. Discipline of students with disabilities will be determined on a case- by-case basis to ensure that disciplinary actions is in accordance with the requirements of the Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

It is important for us to set the tone of a culture of achievement and excellence before school begins in order to change, improve, or enhance the students' perceptions of themselves and their communities before optimal learning can take place. Prior to the beginning of school, we host a retreat where students and their families are invited to come and interact with other students, teachers, and community mentors in order to begin building relationships and establishing our school culture of achievement and excellence. We model our expectations in order for students to understand how they must conduct themselves while in school. Students and their families know our non-negotiables, expectations, and penalties for non-compliance.

A follow-up meeting is held between each Knowledge U student, parent, teacher, and administrator in order to discuss academic and behavioral expectations, and a contract is provided for student and parents to review and sign. The students is signing the contract promising that they will do his or her best to ensure that the school remains a safe and caring place. The parent is signing as a witness and a support to hold the student responsible to the expectations and support the student, teachers, and school as needed. Our school-wide expectations, contract, and discipline policy are provided as **Attachment 9**.

Attachments

Section 11: Student Discipline Policy and Plan

11.1	Attachment 9: Knowledge U Progressive Discipline Chart	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/4/20 8:04 PM	PDF / 31.803 KB
11.2	Attachment 9: Knowledge U School Wide Discipline Policy	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/4/20 7:43 PM	PDF / 252.771 KB

12. Family and Community Involvement

Carrying out our mission requires a strong partnership between our school and the families whose children we serve. Research has shown that parental engagement raises student academic performance, graduation rates, decreases chronic absenteeism, and promotes self-confidence in students needs.^[1] "There are many challenges to successfully involving families in their children's academic lives. Families may have competing demands on their time and attention. Some may not have positive feelings about schools or teachers based on their own school experiences. Some avoid involvement in their children's schoolwork because their own academic skill deficits make them feel unable to help. Moreover, many school-parent relationships suffer because the first time that the parent hears from the school is when there is a problem to discuss. We provide a clear plan to support meaningful involvement of parents and community members in the life of the school and specifically in its governance. Despite potential challenges, active family involvement in school and learning is essential to accomplishing our mission of preparing students to succeed while at Knowledge U, in college, and beyond. We build relationships with our parents by conducting comprehensive information sessions during the application process, conducting summer visits for all enrolled students before the beginning of the school year, holding public Board meetings, providing documents that inform families of the school's commitments to them, and clarifying the school's expectations of students and families. Additionally, we send home daily (K-2) and weekly (3-5) behavioral and reading logs to parents which they review, sign, and return

to the school. We also provide periodic evening or weekend workshops known as Knowledge Nights, that are designed to help families hone the skills they need to be effective teachers for their children; these nights coincide with report card conferences to reduce the potential burden of multiple events on families where parents work evenings or multiple jobs. Attached are our **School and Family Partnership** guidelines that govern our interactions with our families and community members.

Townhall Meetings and Social Media

Beginning in June 2018, Knowledge U hosted town hall meetings in local Birmingham coffee shops and libraries to discuss concerns within education. Concerned parents and youth leaders from Bessemer and surrounding cities attended the meetings to discuss concerns and inquire about how they could help their children succeed. Through our meetings, we compiled a list of things that parents and youth leaders desired to see in an ideal school for their children. We also acquired one of our Board members, Martez Nalls, while hosting the meetings. Martez Nalls is a graduate of Bessemer Academy, an above-average private school located in the city of Bessemer. Martez is a dedicated parent of two young children, whom he and his wife, who is also a graduate of Bessemer City Schools, are homeschooling because of the limited school options near their home. He and his wife agree with our key principles and core beliefs, and decided to join our team in order to ensure that their children have the opportunity to attend an academically challenging, high-quality school.

Knowledge U is connected to parents in the city of Bessemer and surrounding communities through social media. Parents are able to follow us Facebook and Instagram for tips, strategies, and videos to gain insight on how to confidently contribute to the academic success of their children. The attached link provides access to our Facebook account^[1].

Community Events, Surveys, and Petition

On February 25, 2020, Knowledge Unlimited (Knowledge U) hosted a public education forum at the Bessemer Recreation Center for the residents of Bessemer and surrounding communities. Founder and Head of School, Jeanisha Whetstone, discussed the unique offerings of the school and held a question and answer session for residents to ask questions and comment. Residents in attendance had school aged children that were currently attending Bessemer City Schools. Hispanic parents in attendance were excited about Knowledge U's emphasis on embracing diversity and culturally relevant instruction. One parent stated, "It is important that we (individuals from varying backgrounds and cultures) learn about each other and come together". Due to COVID-19, our April 4 event at the Bessemer Recreation Center was cancelled.

In an attempt to connect with community members in a variety of ways, Knowledge U created a survey through Google Forms for community members to complete. The survey was placed on our Facebook page for members of the community who follow our page to complete. Martez Nalls, our Parent Representative Board Member, also created several multimedia ads that allowed us to specifically target residents of the Bessemer community. Our results determined that 100% of the those who completed the survey believe that a STEM aviation program would be beneficial to Bessemer City students. These people are stated that they would like their children to participate in such program.

Knowledge U also created a petition to gain the support of the community members in which we will serve. Several dedicated community members of Bessemer who believe in our mission and vision helped us to promote the petition through social media and text messages. To date, Knowledge U has gained 143 supporters through its petition. The petition has circultaed about the

Bessemer community and surrounding areas. Although our focus is to serve students in the Bessemer community, we welcome supporters from surrounding communities. The link to our ongoing petition is attached.[\[1\]](#)

Walk to School Thursdays

Walk to School Thursday is a unique program designed to bring the school and community together. Once a month, Knowledge U teachers, staff, students, parents, and community members meet at designated hubs within the 35020 and 35022 areas in Bessemer, and walk to school together. Once on the Knowledge U campus, breakfast is served to students, parents, and community members and the latest important dates and information is provided. Parents are informed of the great things that are happening on campus and ways in which they can get involved if they are not already.

The purpose of this program is only one of the many avenues we employ to develop a true community school and promote health and wellness amongst the community. Our mission is to prepare students for college, a career, and life through a holistic educational experience. A holistic educational experience involves students finding their identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace needs.[\[1\]](#)". A growing body of research confirms the benefits of building a sense of community in school. Students in schools with a strong sense of community are more likely to be academically motivated, act ethically and altruistically, develop social and emotional competencies, and avoid a number of problem behaviors, including drug use and violence[\[1\]](#)".

Additionally, implementing walk to school days provides mental and emotional support to students that is crucial to each student's ability to take advantage of the learning opportunities while in school. Children who walk to school have been found to have higher academic performance in terms of attention/alertness, verbal, numeric, and reasoning abilities; higher degree of pleasantness and lower levels of stress during the school day; and higher levels of happiness, excitement, and relaxation on the journey to school needs.[\[1\]](#)". While at Knowledge U, we are intentional in ensuring that we set students on a path to become successful, contributing members of society, and we firmly believe that bringing the school and community together for the success of our students is the key.

Attachments

Section 12: Family and Community Involvement

12.1	Petition Signatures	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 7:26 PM	PDF / 52.999 KB
12.2	Knowledge U School and Family Effective Partnerships	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/4/20 8:10 PM	PDF / 185.088 KB

13. Partnership or Contractual Relationships

Knowledge U has collaborated with and will continue to speak with several organizations to determine what community resources are available to students and parents. We ensure that our students have unlimited opportunities to learn, grow, and succeed. Upon approval, Knowledge U will continue these conversations and develop additional partnerships with community

organizations, businesses, and other educational institutions. To date, Knowledge U has formed a formal partnership with Greater Birmingham Arts Education Collaborative, Aspire Movement, and Bessemer's Civil Air Patrol.

Greater Birmingham Arts Education Collaborative

In our efforts to achieve our mission to prepare students for college and life through a holistic educational experience, we provide students with opportunities to participate in music and art activities throughout the year. Students learn about the significant history of music and art in Birmingham and the state of Alabama and how to create their own masterpieces. Knowledge Unlimited partners with the Greater Birmingham Arts Education Collaborative to provide students with high quality education where the arts are infused within the core subjects. Over these multi-week programs, Greater Birmingham Arts Education Collaborative provides arts integration resources that aim to increase college and career-readiness through development of academic and artistic skills. This program will be fully funded through grants from the Greater Birmingham Arts Collaborative. Deanna Sirkot is the Executive Director and can be contacted at dsirkot@birminghamartsed.org.

Aspire Movement[\[1\]](#)

Aspire intentionally engages in mutually-transforming relationships with urban youth, working with them to bring hope and healing to the community. The male and female mentors will begin building relationships with our third grade students, and in grade four, will implement an 8-week curriculum, with 40 topics on character development. Knowledge U and Aspire will work together to align the curriculum with Knowledge U's "Habits of Success". The curriculum outline developed by Executive Director of The Aspire Movement, Jason Williams, is attached. Upon approval, Knowledge U and The Aspire Movement will collaborate to develop a unique program for the fourth grade students at Knowledge U.

Bessemer Civil Air Patrol

Knowledge U partners with the Bessemer Civil Air Patrol to provide students with real-world opportunities to engage the field of aviation and aerospace. Along with the implementation of the Aerospace Connections in Education (ACE) curricula that will be used to provide STEM based activities for our students to learn about the field of aviation and aerospace, members of the Civil Air Patrol will provide students who have a special interest in aviation the opportunity to learn more about the field, and in time become cadets with the Civil Air Patrol.

Knowledge U has developed many connections within the aviation field including the Bessemer Airport Authority and Birmingham Flight Center, and we will continue to develop connections to ensure a quality aviation and aerospace program for our students.

Letters of support are provided as **Attachment 10** from multiple organizations.

Attachments

Section 13: Partnership or Contractual Relationships

Attachment 10: Tuskegee		
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13.1	Airport Letter of Support	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 3:33 AM	PDF / 429.772 KB
13.2	Attachment 10: Bessemer Airport Letter of Support	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 3:28 AM	PDF / 5.628 MB
13.3	Attachment 10: CAP Letter of Support	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 3:27 AM	PDF / 200.428 KB
13.4	Attachment 10: Greater Birmingham Arts Letter of Support	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 3:23 AM	PDF / 128.387 KB
13.5	Attachment 10: EAA Letter of Support	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 3:17 AM	PDF / 24.659 KB
13.6	Attachment 10: ALBAA Letter of Support	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 3:12 AM	PDF / 114.882 KB
13.7	Attachment 10: Letters of Support	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 3:10 AM	PDF / 270.847 KB

14. Educational Service Providers (ESP) and Other Partnerships

At this time, Knowledge U will not partner with any Educational Service Providers.

Attachments

Section 14: Educational Service Providers (ESP) and Other Partnerships

14.1	Attachment 11: ESP and Other Partnerships	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 6:37 PM	DOCX / 11.202 KB
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15. Educational Program Capacity

The members of Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School's Governing Board and Leadership Team are listed below:

Jeanisha L. Whetstone (Ex Officio)

Knowledge Unlimited Founder, Jeanisha Whetstone, is a passionate elementary school teacher and scholar who has been serving children of the Jefferson County school system for eight (8) years. She has served in Title 1 schools that are situated in underserved communities. Not only has she taught in underserved schools, she has lived in the very type of community she intends to help. She is aware of the injustices that the students and parents face each and every day, and is a witness to the lack of access to quality resources, opportunities to learn from the outside world, and in many cases support. Mrs. Whetstone currently leads her grade level at Midfield Elementary. Each day she collaborates with the teachers on her team, the administrators, and parents to ensure that the students receive the best education possible. She also provides supports for other teachers in order to create lasting improvements to the school's educational process. Mrs. Whetstone will serve as the academic leader and Head of School at Knowledge Unlimited. Jeanisha is a Bessemer native who graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University

of Alabama at Birmingham in 2012, earning her B.S. in Early Childhood and Elementary Education along with several of other honors and awards. Mrs. Whetstone has also served as a reading interventionist in the classroom and is passionate about enriching the minds of young children to ensure that they become successful, contributing members of society.

Dr. Damita Pitts (Director of Operations)

Dr. Damita Pitts is a former teacher and Principal of Birmingham City Schools from 1991 to 2017 who has an extensive knowledge in the field of elementary and curriculum education, instructional, and educational leadership. She is currently serving as an Elementary Education Professor at Stillman College and a Reading Instructor at Miles College. She holds a Doctorate in Educational Leadership from Nova Southeastern University. Dr. Pitts will serve as the Director of Operations alongside Mrs. Whetstone, Head of School, in order to ensure that our level of success is balanced academically and organizationally.

Mrs. Debra Mitchell (Board Member)

Debra Mitchell is a retired high school teacher and Principal who served Birmingham City Schools from 1971-2011. She earned her B.S. in English at Paul Quinn College, holds a Master's in English Education from Alabama State University and a Master's in Educational Leadership from University of Alabama in Birmingham.

Dr. Tonya Anthony (Board Member)

Tonya Anthony is a former teacher who has served in several leadership positions from 1990 until current. She began her career as a mathematics teacher in Broward County Schools. She worked as a math, science, and reading teacher for 12 years in Birmingham City Schools. After working with the Alabama State Department of Education for 5 years as an Education Specialist, she began working at AMSTI-UAB where she held the title as Professional Development Specialist. She supervised all grades 6-8 math and science teachers in the Birmingham City School District and Jefferson County School District. She worked closely with teachers to model best practices in mathematics and provide support as needed to ensure effective implementation of math and science standards. Ms. Anthony earned her B.S. in Mathematics from Talladega College, a Master's in School Counseling and Guidance from the University of West Alabama, and her Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Dr. Joseph C. Burns (Proposed Board Chair)

Dr. Burns is Associate Professor Emeritus in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, a department for which he served as Chair from 1994-2002. He is a lifelong and multiple award-winning educator who holds an Ed.D. in Science Education from the University of Georgia. Dr. Burns taught Ms. Whetstone as well as many other teachers in the Birmingham metro area in UAB's School of Education.

Mrs. Hattie Kirk (Board Member)

Hattie Kirk is a retired middle and high school teacher and counselor who served in Birmingham metro area schools from 1989-2013. She earned her B.S. in Special Education at Indiana University and holds a M.Ed. in Guidance and Counseling from Tuskegee University.

Dr. Bruce Bright (Board Member)

Bruce Bright is the Founder and CEO (Chief Energy Office) of On Target Leading, where he motivates others with his speeches, seminars, and trainings using the experiences and lessons he has learned in business and life. After a stellar 28-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Marine F/A-18 Fighter Pilot, Bruce joined the civilian workforce as Director of Business Development for The Sanders Trust Fund, a real estate investment trust in Birmingham, AL. His personal decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal; the Air Medal with 1 strike/flight award, the Joint Commendation Medal, five Navy Commendation Medals (one with the Combat Distinguishing Device) and the Aerial Achievement Medal.

Martez Nalls (Parent Representative Board Member)

Martez Nalls works as a Project Engineer with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). He is also an accomplished videographer and co-owner of Bold as a Lion Studios. Mr. Nalls will serve as a representative parent board member and will lend his creativity for marketing to the school’s student recruitment efforts, social media, and community outreach events. Mr. Nalls is an alumni of Bessemer Academy, an above average private school in Bessemer, and has strong ties to the Bessemer community. Mr. Nalls earned his B.S. degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2011.

Resumes are provided as **Attachment 14** for all members of the Governing Board and Leadership Team.

Attachments

Section 15: Educational Program Capacity

15.1	Attachment 14: Director of Operations Qualifications and Biography	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/10/20 10:24 PM	PDF / 124.924 KB
15.2	Attachment 14: Director of Operations Resume	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/8/20 3:10 AM	PDF / 207.376 KB
15.3	Attachment 13: Qualification and Resume Head of School	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 4:10 AM	PDF / 136.624 KB

OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

18. Legal Status and Governing Documents

Knowledge Unlimited has filed the 501(c)(3) application with the IRS as a tax-exempt organization for the sole purpose of organizing and operating as an Alabama Charter School. Knowledge Unlimited is a non-profit corporation (Knowledge Unlimited Foundation) formed and organized under the applicable laws of the State of Alabama. Knowledge Unlimited shall file as an educational organization under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Knowledge Unlimited has been granted tax-exempt status by the IRS as of April 23,2020. Documentation of tax exempt status and governing documents are provided in **Attachment 15**.The completed and signed Statement of Assurances is provided as **Attachment 16**.

Attachments

Section 18: Legal Status and Governing Documents

18.1	Attachment 16: Statement of Assurances Part 2	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 6:50 PM	PDF / 12.217 MB
18.2	Attachment 16: Statement of Assurances Part 1	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 6:48 PM	PDF / 13.543 MB
18.3	Attachment 15: Articles of Incorporation	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 4:23 AM	PDF / 90.398 KB
18.4	Attachment 15: IRS Exemption Letter	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 4:15 AM	PDF / 13.206 MB

19. Organization Structure and Relationships

The Organization Chart, **Attachment 17**, shows the initial structure of Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School and the anticipated positions to be filled as grades are added and enrollment increases.

Instructional staff and the Director of Operations report to the Head of School. Non- instructional staff report to the Director of Operations. This allows the Head of School to manage the day-to-day instructional leadership, while still being involved with oversight of all employees of Knowledge U. One Board of Director serves on the advisory board to ensure direct communication between the advisory board, Board of Directors, and Head of School.

Attachments

Section 19: Organization Structure and Relationships

19.1	Attachment 17: Organization Chart	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 4:26 AM	PDF / 315.047 KB
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20. Governing Board

The governance philosophy of Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School is consistent with governance best practices for nonprofit organizations in general as well as public charter schools, more specifically. The sound and sustainable governance of the school will be predicated upon a balance of leadership powers, inclusion of a diverse group of key stakeholders, fiduciary responsibility, academic excellence, and transparency. Board members will represent a wide range of stakeholder groups, professional backgrounds, experience and supportive skill sets. In addition to educators and parents, members with expertise in law, finance, fundraising, organizational management, community engagement, health and human services, marketing, and information technology will be recruited. The board will also seek to remain diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, age, and socioeconomic status. All decisions made by the school’s board and administration will be made with the school’s mission, its charter contract responsibilities, and students’ best interests in mind.

The **attached** bylaws and Conflict of Interest Policy, discuss terms that may be served by Directors as well as policies and procedures for membership requirements, holding elections, organizing meetings, etc. Upon approval of the charter, the Board will develop the Code of Ethics.

On an annual basis, the board and Head of School will work together to set appropriate goals for the academic program and operational and financial success of the school. A set of reports including management dashboards, financial statements, and other tools will be developed for the Head of School to keep the board informed of progress toward these goals in a timely manner. Board members will assist the Head of School in translating academic goals and other results for the school’s other stakeholders (its authorizing body, parents, students, other community members, and funders). It will ultimately be the responsibility of the Head of School to develop and implement the academic programs and general operations of the school. The Board will be accountable for understanding the academic assessments and student outcomes as well as the operational and financial results of the school.

Officers of the board will include Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary and will be elected annually in August. Officers will serve three (3) year terms and may serve up to two (2) consecutive terms.

Board Officers and Responsibilities

Board Officer	Responsibilities
President	<p>Presides over and develops agendas, in partnership with Executive Director, for all board meetings; ex officio member of all committees; oversees development and implementation of board policies and procedures; works with committee chairs to ensure committee agendas are established and resources available; Chair of Executive Committee</p>
Vice President	<p>Presides over board meetings in President’s absence; other duties as assigned by President; succeeds President in the event that the office is vacated without due election process</p>

<p>Treasurer</p>	<p>Provides direction for the oversight of the school’s financial recordkeeping and development and board review of its financial policies; ensures presentation of timely and informative financial reports to the board; leads board interaction for financial compliance and regulatory matters; Chair of Finance Committee</p>
<p>Secretary</p>	<p>Provides direction on keeping legal documents including board meeting minutes; presents meeting minutes to board for approval; serves as protocol oversight including requirements of posting meeting minutes, adherence to open meeting laws, and other procedural elements are followed legally and ethically</p>
<p>Personnel</p>	<p>Hires Executive Director, establishes and periodically reviews compensation and evaluates performance; approves personnel policies</p>
<p>Resource Development</p>	<p>Ensures long range commitment of resources; establishes fundraising and development plans; approves major grant proposals</p>

Founding Board members have been identified and appointed by the school’s founder. The current Board of Directors consists of 7 Directors. It is anticipated the Board will expand to a maximum number of 10 Directors to reflect enrollment increases within the first five years of existence. At the time of transition from Founding Board to Governing Board, the Founding Board will serve as a temporary Governance Committee to duly nominate and elect all Governing Board members as further explained below.

The overwhelming priority in recruiting new Directors is locating the best, most talented Director to fit the needs of the Board of Directors with attention given to diversity in perspective and impact. The identification, recruitment, nominations, orientation, training, and evaluation of board members will be the ultimate responsibility of the Governance Committee. Attention will be given to educational background, work experiences, areas of expertise, community involvement, and parental participation. All new Directors will receive orientation/training no later than their second Board of Directors meeting. Topics covered during orientation will include, at a minimum, Alabama Ethics Laws, Conflicts of Interest, Alabama Open Meetings Act, and familiarity with Knowledge Unlimited's model and its curriculum. Current Directors will receive ongoing training and development on topics covered during orientation, as well as topics dealing with strategic planning, school administration, finance, facilities, etc. It is anticipated this continued training and professional development would occur in the summer months and will be conducted by external sources. Participation in such training will be mandatory. That having been said, any board member, school leader, parent or other interested party may present the committee with a potential board member candidate at any time and the committee will take such potential

candidate under advisement. The committee will, on an annual basis, produce nominations for new board members and/or renewal of board member terms, as well as officer positions, for consideration and election by the board.

Board meetings will be held monthly during planning years for the school and not less frequently than every two months once the school is in operation. These meetings will serve as the venue for the school's leadership to provide periodic progress reports of the school to the board and for overall school governing decisions to be made by the board.

A committee structure will be used for smaller groups of board members to work in partnership with the school's leadership to review and compose recommendations for board approval on specific matters. These committees will include: Executive Committee, Governance Committee, Finance Committee, and, from time to time, Ad Hoc Committee(s). The Executive Committee will be composed of, and only of, all elected officers on the board. Each board member will be required to serve on at least one committee during their term. All committees will be chaired by a designated board member, but may include parents, community members, or others with interest in the committee's work in addition to other board members.

Knowledge U's governing board will provide evidence of compliance and adherence to the Alabama State Ethics Law. Knowledge U shall abide by all State Ethics Laws and Public Record Regulations as outline in the Code of Alabama and as enforced by the Alabama State Ethics Commission. Knowledge U shall provide items required by law by the completion of State forms onsite for public inspection. All members of the governing board will receive professional development training regarding what is expected of them as public officials according to the Alabama State Ethics Law. Knowledge U shall hold monthly public meetings and advertise those meetings. Students, parents, media, and the public shall be notified by email, mail, text, or school website. The school website shall contain dates, times, agendas, locations, and minutes of the meeting. The Board will comply with all aspects of the Open Meeting Act and will not hold special meetings of the Board.

The original board members of the school are profiled below. Complete resumes for each board member are also included within this application. Board member information sheets are provided as Attachment 19.

Jeanisha L. Whetstone (Ex Officio)

Knowledge Unlimited Founder, Jeanisha Whetstone, is a passionate elementary school teacher and scholar who has been serving children of the Jefferson County school system for eight (8) years. She has served in Title 1 schools that are situated in underserved communities. Not only has she taught in underserved schools, she has lived in the very type of community she intends to help. She is aware of the injustices that the students and parents face each and every day, and is a witness to the lack of access to quality resources, opportunities to learn from the outside world, and in many cases support. Mrs. Whetstone currently leads her grade level at Midfield Elementary. Each day she collaborates with the teachers on her team, the administrators, and parents to ensure that the students receive the best education possible. She also provides supports for other teachers in order to create lasting improvements to the school's educational process. Mrs. Whetstone will serve as the academic leader and Head of School at Knowledge Unlimited. Jeanisha is a Bessemer native who graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2012, earning her B.S. in Early Childhood and Elementary Education along with several of other honors and awards. Mrs. Whetstone has also served as a reading interventionist in the classroom and is passionate about enriching the minds of young children to ensure that they become successful, contributing members of society.

Dr. Joseph C. Burns

Dr. Burns is Associate Professor Emeritus in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, a department for which he served as Chair from 1994-2002. He is a lifelong and multiple award-winning educator who holds an Ed.D. in Science Education from the University of Georgia. Dr. Burns taught Mrs. Whetstone as well as many other teachers in the Birmingham metro area in UAB's School of Education. Dr. Burns is also the Proposed Board Chair.

Dr. Tonya Anthony

Tonya Anthony is a former teacher who has served in several leadership positions from 1990 until current. She began her career as a mathematics teacher in Broward County Schools. She worked as a math, science, and reading teacher for 12 years in Birmingham City Schools. After working with the Alabama State Department of Education for 5 years as an Education Specialist, she began working at AMSTI-UAB where she held the title as Professional Development Specialist. She supervised all grades 6-8 math and science teachers in the Birmingham City School District and Jefferson County School District. She worked closely with teachers to model best practices in mathematics and provide support as needed to ensure effective implementation of math and science standards. Ms. Anthony earned her B.S. in Mathematics from Talladega College, a Master's in School Counseling and Guidance from the University of West Alabama, and her Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Dr. Bruce Bright

Bruce Bright is the Founder and CEO (Chief Energy Office) of On Target Leading, where he motivates others with his speeches, seminars, and trainings using the experiences and lessons he has learned in business and life. After a stellar 28-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Marine F/A-18 Fighter Pilot, Bruce joined the civilian workforce as Director of Business Development for The Sanders Trust Fund, a real estate investment trust in Birmingham, AL. His personal decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal; the Air Medal with 1 strike/flight award, the Joint Commendation Medal, five Navy Commendation Medals (one with the Combat Distinguishing Device) and the Aerial Achievement Medal.

Mrs. Hattie Kirk

Hattie Kirk is a retired middle and high school teacher and counselor who served in Jefferson County Schools from 1989-2013. She earned her B.S. in Special Education at Indiana University and holds a M.Ed. in Guidance and Counseling from Tuskegee University.

Mr. Martez Nalls

Martez Nalls works as a Project Engineer with the Alabama Department of Transportation. He is also an accomplished videographer and co-owner of Bold as a Lion Studios. Mr. Nalls will serve as a representative parent board member and will lend his creativity for marketing to the school's student recruitment efforts, social media, and community outreach events. Mr. Nalls earned his B.S. degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2011.

Mrs. Debra Mitchell

Debra Mitchell is a retired high school teacher and Principal who served Birmingham City Schools from 1971-2011. She earned her B.S. in English at Paul Quinn College, holds a Master's in English Education from Alabama State University and a Master's in Educational Leadership from University of Alabama in Birmingham.

Attachments

Section 20: Governing Board

20.1	Attachment 18: Bylaws Part 2	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 7:52 PM	PDF / 7.985 MB
20.2	Attachment 18: Bylaws Part 1	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 7:50 PM	PDF / 13.336 MB
20.3	Attachment 20: Conflict of Interest Policy	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 4:21 PM	DOCX / 410.428 KB

21. Advisory Bodies

Knowledge U understands the importance of shared power leadership. The school advisory board is a way to encourage strong parent participation involvement within every student's education at Knowledge U. The advisory board is the voice of the parents and community. The advisory board has eight members. It consists of students, parents, faculty, administration, and one community member to work together to provide advice regarding school mission, safety, student achievement, and the future of the school.

In addition, the advisory board will serve the school community through its community outreach programs, parent education, festivals, school fundraisers, school gatherings, and oversight of multiple school-based committees. The advisory board will review and approve Knowledge U's Family Handbook. The school advisory board will meet quarterly and be chaired by a parent representative.

Attachments

Section 21: Advisory Bodies

– No Attachments –

22. Grievance/Complaint Process

Accountability for the school's success rests on strategic decisions made by the Board, and on the execution of academic and operational programs by the school leader and the school's staff. Parent representation on the Advisory Board will be a primary means of assuring that our student families have influence and a path of recourse on matters of importance or concern. Parent representatives will be selected from at-large nominations from the students, parents, and stakeholders for the Board. In the event a parent and/or student has an objection to a Board policy, administrative procedure, or practice at the school, a written communication will be required defining the concern, along with a description of the circumstances surrounding the concern, and the impacts of the identified policy, procedure, or practice. Twenty minutes of each monthly board meeting will also be reserved for public comment to allow an opportunity for grievances to be discussed publicly. Concerns about a Board policy will be directed to the Board President; concerns about administrative procedures or practices will be directed to the Board President, executive director, and the school leader. Consideration of the concern by the Board President, executive director, and/or school leader will involve, but not be limited to, careful review and investigation of the complaint; discussion among members of the leadership team; communication with the originator of the grievance to seek more information or clarity, as needed; and a decision rendered to the complainant, which will be communicated in writing. The grievance may or may not result in a change of policy, procedure, or practice by the Board. The grievance process will be communicated to parents through the Advisory Board Committee, Parent Teacher Organization, the Parent/Student Handbook and the school's website. The Board President will develop a mechanism for tracking grievances to ensure a decision is rendered to the complainant in a timely fashion.

Attachments

Section 22: Grievance/Complaint Process

– No Attachments –

23. Staff Structure

The Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School board understands and is committed to the appropriate distinction between school governance and the day-to-day management of the school's operations. Board governance will address major policy decisions, set the overall direction of the school, and hold the school's senior leadership accountable for the continued successful operation and financial condition of the school and for the academic performance of its student body. It will formally evaluate the Head of School's performance annually.

The Head of School will be responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the school, supporting the board's policy and oversight function by providing accurate and timely information and resources to the board, and assisting the board in planning for the school's future through a strategic planning process to identify and measure the school's major objectives and performance over time.

Knowledge U has a strong support structure that gives teachers more than enough coaching and support to be effective. In addition to the Head of School/ Executive Director, Director of

Operations, Director of Curriculum, Director of Student Support, and grade level lead teachers, each classroom will have lead and co-teachers to support a 15:1 student to teacher ratio (30 students total) and a student-staff ratio of approximately 11:1.

A complete Staffing Chart is provided in **Attachment 21** to show employees for Year 1 through Year 5.

Attachments

Section 23: Staff Structure

23.1	Attachment 21: Staffing Chart	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/12/20 6:53 PM	PDF / 413.614 KB
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24. Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

Staffing Plans

The nature of our employment is “at-will”. This means that at the sole discretion of either the Employer or employee, the relationship may be terminated with or without cause and with or without notice. The school will draft and execute an at--will agreement with employees. Continued employment under at--will agreement is within the sole discretion of the school/Employer, and the Employer may terminate the employment of the Employee at any time, for any reason or for no reason, so long as the reason is not an illegal one. The Employee shall have no expectation of continued employment, either during or after the term of the at--will agreement, and no expectation of a property interest in his or her employment with the Employer under the Agreement. The Employee shall have the right to resign his or her employment at any time.

Proposed Salary Schedule

Position	Salary Range	Benefits
Head of School/Principal	\$85,000-\$105,000	Full
Director of Operations	\$70,000-\$85,000	Full
Director of Curriculum	\$60,000-\$75,000	Full
Director of Student Support	\$50,000-\$70,000	Full
Director of Development	\$40,000-\$65,000	Full

Teacher(General, SPED,ESL, Librarian)	\$40,000-\$65,000	Full
Office Manager	\$25,000-\$35,000	Full
Counselor	\$45,000-\$65,000	Full
Nurse	\$45,000-\$50,000	Full
Cafeteria Manager	\$25,000-\$35,000	Full
Custodian	\$25,000-\$35,000	Full

There are many factors that influence the rate of pay for Knowledge U. For example, years of experience, educational level, etc. Some of the items considered are the nature and scope of the job, and what other employers pay their employees for comparable jobs. Full benefits are provided to all full-time employees. Compensation shall include, but not limited to base pay, wages, bonuses, stipends, and benefits. Knowledge Unlimited Board of Directors shall have clearly defined policies, processes, and procedures that will allow the school leaders the ability to hire and retain effective employees. Knowledge Unlimited Board of Directors will monitor all employees' salaries and benefits levels annually to ensure all employees are receiving competitive pay and salaries and benefits reflect their work.

Recruiting

Knowledge U understands the importance of a talented, driven, and high capacity teaching staff, and we employ proactive and effective recruitment practices to ensure we reach the best and brightest teachers. Knowledge Unlimited will conduct a nationwide search to find the best candidates that fit Knowledge Unlimited's model. This search will be conducted by using the following: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Indeed, other social media networks, local newspapers, radio, and local T.V. stations. We believe networking with local and out of state universities will also help recruit highly qualified teachers. We will strategically target universities, such as University of Alabama in Birmingham(UAB), University of Montevallo, Miles College, Spelman College, and Morehouse College. These institutes have proven to effectively develop teachers to produce significant achievement results for students, as well as individuals across the nation with proven track records of success. In accordance with Act 2015-3, Section 9. (e)(1), Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School shall comply with applicable federal laws, rules, and regulations regarding the qualification of teachers and other instructional staff. The school timeline for recruiting will November 2020- March 2021. All hiring shall be selected in February 2021 – April 2021. We will primarily recruit from institutions regarded as having achieved statistically significant positive rating for driving student academic outcomes. We will recruit and hire staff who possess the qualifications to work successfully with the target student population, deliver the education program effectively, and support and sustain the school's college-going culture. To ensure selection of the highest quality staff, we will implement the following selection process:

- Posting of job openings (career and education websites, newspapers, Schools of Education,

referrals, and email)

- Request of a resume, cover letter, and short essay responses
- Brief screening interview (in-person or by phone)
- Sample teaching lesson followed by debrief with Head of School (for instructional positions) • Extensive in-person interview with members of the school's current staff
- Verification of credential and previous employment, State and Federal background checks, and professional and personal reference checks
- The Head of School will make offers of employment to the strongest candidate

Knowledge Unlimited Hiring Procedures:

1. Recruit candidates from November 2020- March 2021.
2. Follow the interview process as stated above.
3. Select most qualified applicant(s) and make offer of employment.
4. Enter into employment contract and provide orientation to new employee.

Knowledge Unlimited will implement a progressive discipline policy while attempting to educate the employee simultaneously. Our policy has been incorporated into the employee policy manual. Our **Employee Policy Manual** is in the process of final review by the Board, therefore it is not provided. However, in regards to employee disciplinary action, our policy mentions the following discipline procedures:

1. Verbal Warning: A verbal warning will be used in situations involving minor infractions or early signs of poor work performance. Multiple verbal warnings may be used in situations where the conduct is of a minor nature. For major issues/infractions, verbal warnings may not be appropriate.

Leadership Evaluation

The Head of School is an instructional leader and is present in classrooms, observing teachers, and the curriculum-in-action. We believe that providing feedback to teachers, analyzing trends across classrooms and any curricular gaps, and coordinating professional development for teachers will address the instructional or curricular gaps observed. Knowledge U has also prioritized a Director of Curriculum, hired in Y1. This position will provide the school a role dedicated to observing teachers and providing support and guidance throughout the school year.

Knowledge U Board of Directors will annually review the effectiveness of the Head of School and Director of Operations. This review will evaluate the Head of School's and Director of Operation's performance as a measure of his/her efficiency at moving the school towards the academic and operational goals set by the Board. The Knowledge U Board has adopted a leadership evaluation tool to help monitor the performance of the administration.

The proposed Head of School, Mrs. Whetstone, will apply for fellowships and participate in networks for school leaders that support her continued development as an effective school leader during Y0. Also, Dr. Pitts, the Proposed Director of Operations will also attend fellowships and network with other school leaders that support her continued development as an effective leader.

2. **Written Warning:** A written warning will be used in situations involving repeated minor infractions following the use of verbal warnings, or for more serious infractions. For major issues/infractions, written warnings may not be appropriate.

3. **Performance Failure / Final Warning:** This procedure may be used in situations of repeated minor infractions or for more serious and major infractions. This step will incorporate the Head of School or Director of Operations in determining a course of action to improve the employee's work performance by a date certain. If proper improvement has not been made by a certain date, termination may be recommended. Final warning may not be appropriate for major issues/infractions.

4. **Suspension** may be used for repeated minor infractions or for more serious and major infractions. Suspensions may be in length of up to 14 days.

5. **Termination** may be used in situations of repeated minor infractions or for more serious and major infractions. The Head of School will make the decision on termination of the employee after consulting with the employee, supervisors, and other interested parties. An employee terminated will have the right to appeal to Knowledge Unlimited Board of Directors to have the termination overturned.

Teacher Evaluation

Knowledge Unlimited intends to handle unsatisfactory instructional leaders based heavily upon results of student performance. Continuation as an instructional leader is tied inextricably to academic performance and not to tenure, advancement of professional degrees, or other considerations. Each instructional leader is hired exclusively because of his/her demonstrated capacity to participate in meaningful, measurable ways to the ongoing academic success of the school and every student. We are deeply committed to acting decisively when a staff member demonstrates unsatisfactory performance and to celebrating the success of the team. When the staff member demonstrates unsatisfactory performance, the Head of School provides immediate, direct, and written feedback, informing the staff member about his/her underperformance and setting up an immediate meeting to discuss next steps. The result of the meeting is a highly specific action plan whose targets are measured and time-oriented and aligned to any aspect of underperformance. Should the staff member fail to meet the outlined goals, the Head of School explores other options including, but not limited to, the creation of a further action plan, and/or dismissal.

Unsatisfactory Performance:

Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School students deserve a high-quality education to prepare them to be successful in college and careers. To achieve this goal requires a collective effort and

commitment of all educators, including the Head of School, teachers, operations staff members, families, and community members.

Knowledge U will act in the best interests of the students and understands that, unfortunately, there will be occasions where there is unsatisfactory instructional leadership/administration or educator performance. In such situations where there is unsatisfactory performance, a performance improvement plan will be created. Head of School/Instructional leader is responsible for implementing a corrective plan. The plan will be based on the needs of the data. Plans could include school-wide plans, grade level corrective plans, and subject area and/or individual teacher corrective plans. Each plan will be prescriptive based on the needs.

Examples:

- Targeted on-going professional development
- Additional support provided by a mentor
- Teacher and Administrator coaching sessions
- Termination

Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School understands there will be changes and turnover with educators and administrators. To address this concern, Knowledge U builds strong leaders and administrators from within its educator ranks. Knowledge U ensures decision making is shared throughout the educator ranks with the use of a School Leadership Team. Additionally, Knowledge U will focus on hiring from within and creating additional leadership roles, when possible, to promote deserving and promising educators. Promising educators will be given opportunities to observe, participate and lead activities to prepare them for an administrative position. Knowledge U will also constantly work with its educators in professional development and career building exercises to address the educator’s goals and needs to provide the educator self-fulfillment and growth.

Attachments

Section 24: Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

24.1	Attachment 23: Leader Evaluation Tool	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 5:46 PM	PDF / 358.061 KB
24.2	Attachment 24: Teacher Evaluation Tool	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 5:43 PM	PDF / 1.877 MB

25. Professional Development

Knowledge U’s Head of School is an instructional leader and is present in classrooms, observing teachers and the curriculum-in-action, providing feedback to teachers, analyzing trends across classrooms and any curricular gaps, and coordinating professional development for teachers that address the instructional or curricular gaps observed. Knowledge U will hire a Director of Curriculum in Y1 to observe teachers and provide feedback and resources, as well as support our data analyses processes around student achievement.

Quality teacher development is vital to attracting and retaining talented individuals and the lever to raising student achievement levels. Knowledge U understands that the children of Bessemer deserve the highest quality educators, and it is our responsibility to support our teachers to execute remarkable student results. We understand the importance of classroom instruction and

acknowledge that when it improves, student achievement increases. Throughout the school year, we view videos of Knowledge U teachers in real-time. Utilizing video gives us the opportunity to highlight the teaching standard in our school building and to facilitate a learning community amongst our teachers enabling them to learn and grow their skillset from the support and expertise of their colleagues.

Professional Development Opportunities

<p>Classroom Observations and Feedback Debriefs</p>	<p>The Head of School and/or Director of Curriculum conduct regular classroom observations. Teachers receive feedback through written follow-ups and debrief conversations around strengths and areas for growth within observed lessons. Achievement data from the lesson’s objective is discussed, and both teacher and students’ actions are correlated to the data to determine trends. Next steps are derived from these debrief conversations and follow-up observations are conducted to ensure a frequent observation-feedback loop. Observations range from 5 minutes to 30 minutes. The Head of School and/or Director of Curriculum identify teachers demonstrating strong instructional practices in specific areas and provide coverage for teachers to observe these practices in action.</p>
<p>Data Analysis and Action Plan Meetings</p>	<p>During Data Days, teachers gather with the Head of School and/or Director of Curriculum to analyze data and determine instructional adjustments. Teachers conduct item analyses, where they correlate each question to a standards-based objective, assess student mastery per the objectives, and determine specific misunderstandings that may exist with groups of students or individual students to guide re-teaching plans. Noting how students fared with specific objectives provide the platform for the action plans teachers create. Teachers break the mastery of objectives into groups, which correlate with the following circumstances: (1) objectives mastered by 80% of students and require additional challenge, which may involve increasing the rigor through word and logic problems or advancing vertically to the next grade level’s objective within that same strand; (2) objectives mastered by 20% of students receive small group and 1 on 1 intervention in order to achieve mastery. The proficiency of a teacher’s lesson is based on student mastery of the objective, and action plans are based on which objectives need to be retaught, reviewed, or retaught in a way that addresses misunderstandings per the mistakes from groups of students. Action plans are determined based upon each individual student’s data needs.</p>

<p>Curriculum Development and Review</p>	<p>Curriculum development is prioritized heavily throughout the summer and consists of standards alignment and the development of a scope and sequence, which prioritizes the order by which objectives should be taught throughout the year. Adjustments are made to these on an ongoing basis throughout the year based on achievement data and student progress to ensure we are meeting the needs of every student.</p>
<p>Lesson Review and Analysis</p>	<p>The Head of School and/or Director of Curriculum conduct a thorough review of lesson plan drafts and provide feedback to teachers before the submission of the final version. During Professional Learning Community meetings, teachers gather to discuss upcoming lesson plans and changes to be made based on current student achievement trends</p>
<p>Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)</p>	<p>PLCs provide the opportunity for teachers to problem-solve and develop an action plan around ways to enhance instruction. The format may vary per the specific outcome needing to be achieved, but may involve teachers (a) gathering within and across grade levels to discuss, plan, and analyze lessons, (b) creating exemplars for writing instruction per student ability group, (c) collaboratively grading writing samples and other qualitative assignments, and (d) reviewing the progress of instructional action plans.</p>
<p>Classroom Observation Video Debriefs</p>	<p>Teacher lessons are video recorded at least every 90 days, and instructional leaders and teachers gather to watch the video. Areas of strength and growth are discussed during the debriefing.</p>
<p>Instructional Rounds</p>	<p>The instructional leadership team regularly conducts a whole-school analysis of instruction by observing every classroom. Following a discussion, notes are calibrated, trends are determined, and instructional gaps are prioritized in a subsequent professional development session with teachers.</p>
<p>Leadership Opportunities</p>	<p>There are structured opportunities available to teachers ready to take on more leadership responsibilities. These opportunities include mentoring a teacher, curriculum development, or planning a school-wide event, such as our math and literacy night.</p>

<p>Excellent Classrooms and School Visits</p>	<p>We continue to improve and refine our practices by observing the practices of the highest performing schools in and out state. We take regular trips to high performing schools to study best practices. Additionally, during Y0, the Head of School continues to refine her leadership by conducting extended residencies in highly performing charter schools to prepare Knowledge Unlimited with strong academic and operational integrity.</p>
<p>Professional Development Sessions</p>	<p>These sessions, or workshops - led by instructional leadership team members, lead teachers, or consultants - provide information to teachers about specific areas of focus. Sessions mainly focus on enhancing either teachers' classroom management strategies or instructional techniques.</p>
<p>Individual Check-Ins</p>	<p>The Head of School conducts weekly check-ins with each staff member to: 1) discuss how each staff member is feeling and approaching the work associated with their role; 2) outline and discuss professional growth goals and the progress made to date; 3) address specific questions and concerns; and 4) provide support, advice, or insight with any challenges.</p>

The following schedule outlines the professional development that takes place prior to the beginning of the academic school year in order to maintain consistency to our culture and develop a common language for instruction amongst all instructional staff members. During this training phase, instructional leaders, teachers and staff will collaboratively determine common language, common practices and incentives for success. We will become a true learning community that works together, grows together and succeeds together.

Proposed Professional Development Schedule

July (Prior to Day 1) and August (1 month of School)

Instructional Practices

- Bloom's Mastery Learning and Backwards Planning
- Teacher Development Rubric

Curricular Planning and Development

Literacy Instruction: Balanced Instructional Approach

- Math Instruction
- Science: STEM Overview
- Social Studies: Unit Planning
- Oral Language Program
- Character Development

Assessments

- MAP Growth and STEP Training

School Culture Development Series – Introduction

- Habits of Success-character habits, specific actions
- Classroom Culture

- Behavioral Taxonomies

School Routines and Structures

- Walkthrough and discussion of school-wide routines

- Consistency

School Culture Development Series – Intro (follow up)

- Culture of achievement

- Trauma-sensitivity

In Y1, teachers engage in 15 summer PD days, on School Culture, Assessment and Data, and Curriculum and Instruction. In many ways, this summer combines both a basic orientation to the school with a basic training on the skillsets Knowledge U needs.

Attachments

Section 25: Professional Development

– No Attachments –

26. Performance Management

The mission of Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School is to prepare students for college, a career, and life through a holistic educational experience. Our mission requires that all students be equipped with the critical areas of early childhood development. These critical areas include literacy, number sense, oral language and social and emotional development. We will ensure that the students grasp and master the foundational critical areas that are essential to success in future grades and beyond. Developing a solid reading foundation is critical in the early grades. According to the National Adult Literacy Survey, children who have not developed some basic literacy skills by the time they enter school are 3 to 4 times more likely to drop out in later years.

Knowledge Unlimited will ensure that students are equipped with the necessary foundational skills at each grade level to remain on track year after year.

The following objectives describe the components that will lead to success of our students:

Preparing for Proficiency of Alabama's College and Career Ready Standards

In 2012, Alabama began implementing the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards in math. The following year, English/Language Arts was implemented. The purpose of this initiative is to prepare students to be college or career ready through the implementation of standards that require students to meet certain academic goals or expectations at each level. Since the adoption of these standards, teachers have been given the responsibility of developing curricula at each level in math and English to ensure that students are proficient. At Knowledge Unlimited, we will close achievement gaps, move students to proficiency, increase graduation rates and prepare students for college and a career without remediation. We will be able to accomplish this through our adoption of research-based programs that are rigorous, systematic and effective as well as instructional practices that are highly effective.

Implementing High Quality Instruction Through Authentic Learning Experiences

We believe that all students have a right to receive a quality education regardless of race, religion, gender or ethnic background. At Knowledge Unlimited, students will receive high quality instruction from high quality educators daily. We will recruit, hire, develop, and retain educators of the highest caliber. Our educators will promote a culture of achievement and use research-based, practice-proven instructional strategies. Educators will tailor instruction to the make-up of his/her classroom by developing relationships with each student in order to decipher how each student learns best. We are aware that our students have unique and differing backgrounds, learning styles, perspectives and life experiences, so we plan to utilize an integrative, authentic whole-child learning approach that is tailored to meet the needs of our students. Students will be actively engaged in meaningful discussions and activities on relative topics with endless opportunities to connect directly with the real world.

Developing the Whole Child

Education is necessary in order for students to experience success in life. However, education alone is not enough. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated, "intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate"[\[1\]](#). In order to ensure that our students acquire a holistic educational experience, students will develop habits of success that will ultimately develop them in to self-directed, lifelong learners. The development of these principles will also place our students on a trajectory towards becoming successful, contributing members of society.

Unveiling Each Student's Sense of Purpose

We are aware that the students within our proposed community have unique life experiences, interests and values. Although every student will ultimately take different paths upon completion of school, every student will have to make important life decisions that will either negatively or positively impact their lives. In order to provide all students with the tools to make meaningful

decisions, we will guide our students on a journey to understanding his or her identity, interests, values and culture through culturally relevant curricula[2]. Students will develop goals, create a viable plan and acquire a mindset that causes them to be committed to continually progressing towards meeting their goals.

"If a school is truly committed to ensuring that every student mastered the intended outcome of the core curriculum, it would be vigilant in its effort to assess each student's learning on a timely, ongoing basis"(DuFour 2004). In order to determine the effectiveness of our program, we must assess, collect and analyze student data, and adjust instruction to the needs of our students on a consistent basis. Our goal is to become a data-driven culture in order to meet and outperform state and national norms. Our staff will participate in professional development sessions where we dive into the book, Driven by Data by Paul Bambrick- Santoyo to develop a data- driven culture. Our staff will learn about the eight pitfalls that prevent effective assessment, analysis, and data action and the creation of a truly data-driven culture. One specific "pitfall" described in the book is infrequent assessments. Some schools give assessments only once every three to four months. This is not frequent enough to provide the data needed to improve instruction. Through this book study, we expect to gain insight on how to ensure that our students are constantly making progress towards proficiency.

Along with the mandatory state mandated assessments, Knowledge Unlimited will utilize the STEP reading assessment and NWEA’s MAP Growth assessment as forms of ongoing assessment to ensure that will develop and maintain a high-performing educational institution.

Attachments

Section 26: Performance Management

– No Attachments –

27. Facilities

Knowledge Unlimited is currently in the process of securing a campus suitable for our students. We are currently working with the Bessemer Airport Authority to secure our school on an identified site at the Bessemer Municipal Airport. This site will allow our students to not only learn about aviation and aerospace, but explore the field in real time in a hands-on, engaging way. We believe that exposure is everything, and will ensure that we provide unlimited opportunities for our students to learn, grow, and succeed. **Attached** is a letter of commitment and details regarding the facility from the Bessemer Airport Authority. The area highlighted in yellow (with hangars labeled PB4) is the proposed site for Knowledge U.

Attachments

Section 27: Facilities

27.1	Attachment 26: EKY Terminal Drawing	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 6:16 PM	PDF / 2.767 MB
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28. Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

Knowledge Unlimited Transportation Plan

Several parents in the Bessemer community have raised the concern that there is a need for free transportation to and from school for their children. Given this need, Knowledge U intends to provide free transportation to students who live outside of two miles of the school location. We have made the necessary financial provisions to ensure that families who enroll their children in Knowledge U will be afforded this opportunity. Without having an exact location for our school building, we are not able to produce specific estimates around routes, costs, and bus times. For year one, we have budgeted to spend up to \$100,000 for transportation. We assume that 50% of our families may need transportation; however, in Y1 we have positioned ourselves to be able to supply transportation to approximately 80% of students. We plan to modify our adjustments in Y2 and beyond based on the specific circumstances of Knowledge U families. The current estimated financial model is based from School Transportation Systems (STS).

Knowledge U will partner with an established school transportation company such as School Transportation Solutions (STS) to provide bussing services to the school. We have done our due diligence with STS and have examined their experiences of other schools, training, and up-to-date safe vehicles. STS drivers are all drug tested, receive thorough background checks, and are not only trained, but *continuously* re-trained. We will submit the necessary information to Alabama State Commission for inspection and approval prior to implementation. We have made provisions for transportation during every weekday between our family's homes and the school location per the appropriate distance to ensure transportation needs are addressed. Bus transportation will not be needed for after school activities nor will Knowledge U have Saturday school. Families have the option to drive or walk their children to school each day. Special transportation will be provided when necessary for students with disabilities. As per state and federal laws and regulations, all personnel directly involved in providing transportation of students with disabilities will have training regarding the needs of students with disabilities. If Knowledge U determines the need to purchase or lease vehicles, all vehicles will be covered by auto liability insurance of the following minimum amounts:

- \$1,000,000 per person
- \$5,000,000 each accident
- \$50,000 property damage
- \$5,000 medical/death payment

School Safety Plan

School safety is a top priority for Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School. In accordance with Alabama law [AL Code § 16-144 (2013)], Knowledge U adopts a comprehensive school safety and security plan that includes health, safety and security, risk management policies and procedures, necessary security personnel, and the associated technology and equipment needed to implement this plan effectively. Background checks, health policies and procedures, emergency preparedness plans, and facility safety and security procedures are necessary safety and security measures Knowledge U implements.

Knowledge Unlimited is located inside of Jefferson County and within the City of Bessemer. Knowledge U has contacted the Jefferson County Sherriff's Department and Bessemer Police Department to develop a proposed School Safety Plan. The police department strives to create a

safe and secure learning environment to the students and citizens of Jefferson County by proactive enforcement of the city laws and regulations and in doing so promotes Knowledge U's mission to provide students with opportunities to pursue a quality education in a safe environment.

Goals of the Safety Plan:

- Provide Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School with a safe and secure school campus environment that allows the school to perform its mission.
- Promote and enhance community partnerships and policing activities.
- Promote the use of proven technology for policing and safety.
- Understand and promote an environment in which all personnel are committed to a professional code of ethics, accountability, and personal responsibility. Knowledge U School's Safety Plan will determine hazards to student and staff safety and propose solutions that promote the prevention of dangerous problems and circumstances. The plan will specifically include:
 - A protocol for addressing serious threats to the safety of school property, students, employees, or administrators including, but not limited to, a specific code red school safety plan.
 - A protocol for responding to emergency events that compromise the safety of school property, students, and employees, including such action as notification of appropriate law enforcement and emergency response personnel for assistance, and informing parents of affected students.

Knowledge U and the Bessemer Police Department or Jefferson County Sherriff's Department performs an assessment of our facilities to ensure that the building and property meet appropriate safety codes.

Knowledge U's safety plan also includes:

- A copy of the developed safety plan to law enforcement and safety officials; and,
 - Access to the school to law enforcement and fire department personnel that enables them to be prepared for responding to threats and emergency events that may affect the school

Below are specific security measures addressed in the Knowledge U Safety Plan:

- Police Officers and Security Personnel Sworn personnel with full arrest powers
- Provide full police and safety services
- Investigate crimes
- Provide educational presentations
- Assist faculty staff and students
- Secure and perform building checks

- Security personnel

- Non-sworn personnel with no arrest powers

- Patrol inside and outside of campus

- Enforcement of the parking rules and regulations

- Help phones aka Code Blue Phones

- Provides safety and security to those who work, learn, and visit our campus

- Notification System

- State-of-the-art emergency notification system

- Timely Notifications

- Alerts via email, text message, land-line, cell phone and voicemail

- Policies

Background Checks: Employees and contractors at Knowledge U will be required to complete a fingerprint and criminal background check.

Health: Knowledge U follows all laws required for health testing, immunization, and students with specific medical conditions. All employees will be CPR/First Aid trained.

Emergency Alertness: Knowledge U will develop and comply with an Emergency Alertness Plan designed specifically to the needs of the school site and in conjunction with law enforcement and the Fire Marshal. This plan includes but is not be limited to the following emergency situations: fire, tornado, weapon on campus, and active shooter. The plan also includes emergency contact numbers, procedures for various types of emergencies, roles and responsibilities, emergency response teams, and evacuation maps. All of Knowledge U's faculty and staff are trained on this site-based safety plan.

Facility Safety: Knowledge U's school site is fully compliant with the International Building Code. Sprinkler systems, fire extinguishers, and fire alarms are checked annually by the Birmingham Fire Department. Knowledge U conducts fire and storm drills at least twice per year.

Security: The building will have an alarm system, and the school leaders will have keys to the building and ensure it is locked and armed each night. All Knowledge U staff will help ensure the building is safe for students.

Insurance Coverage

Attachment 29 details the insurance coverage Knowledge U will secure upon approval.

Knowing and understanding school safety is Knowledge Unlimited's top priority. Knowledge Unlimited shall adopt a comprehensive safe schools plan that includes health, safety and security, risk management policies and procedures, necessary security personnel, and the associated technology and equipment needed to implement this plan effectively. Other necessary safety and security measures include background checks, health policies and procedures, emergency preparedness plans, and facility safety and security procedures.

Upon approval Knowledge Unlimited will be located inside Jefferson County. Knowledge Unlimited will hire the Jefferson County Sherriff's Department, or a full-time professionally trained and armed security guard at the location of the school. The police officer or security guard will help us execute a safe and secure learning environment to all our students, teachers, and staff. This environment will allow our students the opportunity to pursue a quality education while feeling safe.

Attachments

Section 28: Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

28.1	Attachment 28 Financial Workbook	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 11:47 PM	XLSX / 1.29 MB
28.2	Attachment 30: Food Service Plan	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 6:26 PM	PDF / 137.028 KB
28.3	Attachment 29: Insurance Coverage	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 6:24 PM	PDF / 537.781 KB
28.4	Attachment 27: Start Up Plan	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/5/20 6:21 PM	PDF / 146.303 KB

29. Operations Capacity

Our Founding Board Members include a diverse array of Birmingham's civic leadership. Their skills include school leadership, curriculum, instruction, assessment, operations, education policy, human resources, engineering, business development, and aviation.

Capacity

Exemplary leadership that is able to execute on every detail is a critical component of a high performing school. Knowledge U will be founded, governed, and operated by an extraordinary team of Birmingham's educational, civic, and business leaders. With a combined 158 years of serving in the field of Education, the Founding Board and Leadership Team is more than capable of governing and managing the school in alignment with the mission and vision and establishing policies that protect the school's academic and financial success. The proposed school leader, Jeanisha Whetstone, brings experience of working in Title 1 schools situated in underserved communities. She has an extensive background in scientifically based educational best practices and a plethora of knowledge and experience with strategies that have been proven to improve student learning. She will continue to engage in on-going professional development and cutting edge research to stay abreast of trends and current developments in education. This will enable Knowledge U to develop relationships and collaborate with other high performing, gap-closing schools across the country. The proposed leader has had training in managing problematic behavior which has led to her becoming a Teacher Leader. As a Teacher Leader, she has modeled, coached, and helped to develop proactive skills and strategies that focus on prevention

and respect with her fellow colleagues and students that have created lasting improvements to the school's educational environment and culture. To further strengthen its leadership team, Knowledge U has sought and located a Director of Operations to work alongside the proposed school leader to ensure that our level of success is balanced academically and organizationally. Holding a shared belief that all students are entitled to high quality public education, every member of the Founding Board will ensure Knowledge U delivers on its mission of building a strong academic foundation to set every K-5 student on the path to a career or college.

Dr. Damita Pitts (Proposed Director of Operations)

Dr. Damita Pitts is a former teacher and Principal of Birmingham City Schools from 1991 to 2017. She has an extensive knowledge in the field of elementary and curriculum education, instructional, and educational leadership. She is also adept in the administrative and financial oversight that is necessary to develop and maintain successful educational institutions. She is currently serving as an Elementary Education Professor at Stillman College and a Reading Instructor at Miles College. Dr. Pitts has experience as Chair of the AdvancEd School Improvement Committee, and has been recognized for her ability to consistently meet and exceed the yearly progress necessary to remove schools from the targeted assistance schools list. She has coached teachers, support staff, and school administrators on how to provide a continuum of best practices relative to their professional learning communities. Dr. Pitts' extensive experience as an educational leader as well as her operational experience justifies her capacity to fulfill the role of Director of Operations at Knowledge U.

Dr. Joseph Burns (Proposed Board Chair)

Dr. Burns is Associate Professor Emeritus in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, a department for which he served as Chair from 1994-2002. He is a lifelong and multiple award-winning educator who holds an Ed.D. in Science Education from the University of Georgia. Dr. Burns's experience in preparing and supervising aspiring educators justifies his capacity to oversee and ensure that Knowledge Unlimited hires and maintains a quality educational program.

Dr. Tonya Anthony

Tonya Anthony is a former teacher who has served in several leadership positions from 1990 until current. She began her career as a mathematics teacher in Broward County Schools. She worked as a math, science, and reading teacher for 12 years in Birmingham City Schools. After working with the Alabama State Department of Education for 5 years as an Education Specialist, she began working at AMSTI-UAB where she held the title as Professional Development Specialist. She supervised all grades 6-8 math and science teachers in the Birmingham City School District and Jefferson County School District. She worked closely with teachers to model best practices in mathematics and provide support as needed to ensure effective implementation of math and science standards. Dr. Anthony's experience in training and professional development of teachers justifies her capacity to oversee and ensure that Knowledge Unlimited hires and maintains a quality educational program.

Mrs. Debra Mitchell

Debra Mitchell is a retired high school teacher and Principal who served Birmingham City Schools from 1971-2011. From 1995-2011, she served as Principal at several Birmingham City Schools including Gate City Elementary and Woodlawn High. Mrs. Mitchell's operational experience justifies her capacity to oversee and ensure that Knowledge Unlimited hires and maintains a quality educational program.

Financial Advisor

The Knowledge Unlimited Board does not currently have a member that specializes in finance, however we do have a Financial Advisor that has been an essential part of the formation of our Financial Plan and Capacity. Mission 1st Advisors Founder, Steve Siple, brings nearly 30 years of commercial and investment banking experience with a public finance concentration. He has also served as a volunteer Board Chairman for multiple local and national nonprofit boards throughout most of his professional career. Having led teams at both Regions Bank and BBVA since 2006, Steve formed Mission 1st in early 2019. His firm is a mission-driven advisory practice committed to enabling smaller nonprofits to leverage their resources for greater social impact through financial and organizational strategy consulting.

Martez Nalls

Mr. Martez Nalls works as a Project Engineer with the Alabama Department of Transportation (ALDOT). Mr. Nalls oversees numerous contractors on single and multiple projects. As a project engineer, he works on specific projects that have schedules, timelines, and budgets that need to be met. As a project engineer there are many things that he must do, such as:

Planning and Defining the Project:

- build a comprehensive work plan to ensure every step is done correctly
- schedule who's going to do the work and when
- assess all risks involved, avoid or manage them ahead of time

Executing and Managing:

- ensure all work meets code
- manage and keep the budget at the forefront throughout the project
- ensure project is on schedule
- motivate team members
- assess obstacles and remove items that slow productivity
- coordinate work done by different groups
- be adaptable to change
- manage all teams involved and maintain a constant level of commitment

Delivering and Closing

- manage the project on budget
- manage and deliver expectations to stakeholders
- communicate project status to stakeholders and resolve unexpected difficulties update management on project

Bruce Bright

Mr. Bright has served a stellar 28-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps as a Marine F/A-18 Fighter Pilot. Bruce joined the civilian workforce as Director of Business Development for The Sanders Trust Fund, a real estate investment trust in Birmingham, AL. His personal decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal; the Air Medal with 1 strike/flight award, the Joint Commendation Medal, five Navy Commendation Medals (one with the Combat Distinguishing Device) and the Aerial Achievement Medal. Mr. Bright's numerous achievements and connections in aviation justify his capacity to assist in developing a quality aviation and aerospace program for the students of Knowledge U.

Attachments

Section 29: Operations Capacity

– No Attachments –

30. Unique/Innovative Operational Aspects

In order to ensure that Knowledge U operates with maximum efficiency, best practices in the following categories set us apart from other educational organizations in the Bessemer City School District: financial planning, fundraising, accountability to the community, and our investment in teacher quality.

Financial Planning

Without proper funding, schools cannot keep its doors open. With assistance from the Governing Board, Knowledge U's Leadership Team is equipped with sound financial planning and budgeting skills. Knowledge U's Governing Board has significant experience and expertise in operations and financial matters. Also, fiscal responsibility will be shared amongst the administration to ensure best practice and transparency.

Fundraising

Knowledge Unlimited Board of Directors has created a fundraising plan that targets small group gatherings and one-on-one meetings with industry leaders. Future philanthropic efforts for Knowledge Unlimited will include an annual fund and a capital campaign. The annual fund will build upon retaining founders' fund contributors and expanding our donor base to families and students of employees in the school. A culture of philanthropy will be expected and built from the moment children are registered at school. Every family will be expected to participate in some way (i.e. donating, raising money, volunteering time) to the fundraising efforts of the school. Director of Development will provide expert advice and guidance on best practices in fund development.

Knowledge U will utilize its current partnership with the Bessemer Civil Air Patrol to host fun day activities at the Bessemer Airport, our proposed school site, in order to build fund contributors for the development of our educational program.

Accountability in the Community

Carrying out our mission requires a strong partnership between our school and the families whose

children we serve. A key component in monitoring the continuous improvement of our school is asking for direct evaluation from the students and families of Knowledge U. Satisfaction surveys are distributed regularly with a target response rate of at least 80% by students and at least 75% by parents and caregivers. We immediately address any response rates significantly lower than the above mentioned percentages as those ratings represent indication of disengagement of those who have the largest stake within our school.

Along with satisfaction surveys, Knowledge U partners with community organizations to relieve burdens of the families it serves and boosts the confidence of our students. Our collaboration with Groom Room Barbershop (591 Bessemer Super Hwy, Midfield, AL) provides free haircuts to students every first and third Monday of each month.

Investment in Teacher Quality

At Knowledge U, we believe that high quality teachers create high quality students. Therefore, we recruit, hire, and retain teachers of the highest caliber. We strongly believe that quality teachers attract parents and motivate involvement and commitment to the school and their children's success.

Attachments

Section 30: Unique/Innovative Operational Aspects

– No Attachments –

FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

31. Financial Plan

The Head of School, Director of Operations, and Finance Director shall create annual budgets along with all supporting financial information and forecasts, with the support and guidance of the Knowledge U Board of Directors Finance Committee. Once developed and approved by the Board of Director Finance Committee, it shall be submitted to and approved by the Knowledge U Board of Directors at a regularly scheduled annual meeting of the corporation. The Board of Directors shall adopt an annual budget and maintain an operating budget as required by their fiduciary responsibilities. In addition to the annual budget, the Head of School shall present a yearly model for context and planning.

The Board of Directors and finance committee shall have the responsibility to monitor and review the financial condition, statements, and supporting information monthly, reporting to the board at regularly scheduled meetings of the board of directors. Financial and internal controls of the school will be developed and adopted by the Board of Directors, while the Head of School, Director of Operations, and Finance Director will be responsible for the implementation.

A thorough financial management process shall be developed and implemented. This process will cover all aspects of the organization, including but not limited to processes for purchasing, bank account authorizations and oversight, contract review and approval, accounts receivable and payables, payroll processing selection of bank institutions, retention of records, cash receipts, oversight payroll, and all other financial management elements.

Mission 1st Advisors, a mission-driven advisory practice committed to enabling smaller nonprofits to leverage out their resources for greater social impact through financial and organizational strategy consulting, will provide guidance, training and technical support to the Head of School, Finance Officer and Board of Directors in the areas of budgeting, budget analysis and forecasting, financial management, financial systems development and accounting and reporting procedures. This training will continue until the leadership and staff of Knowledge U have successfully implemented a complete finance and accounting system, approved by the Board of Directors. Transparency is top priority for Knowledge U, so it is important that the school produce a timely and effective financial management system. All financials will be open to the public.

Audit and Accounting:

Employment and retention of services from an independent, certified public accountant or auditor for an annual external audit of the corporation shall be approved by the Board of Directors. The Head of School, in coordination with the Board of Directors and Finance Director, will complete and review the annual audit and financial review in a timely manner to meet all requirements and regulations of the Alabama State Board of Education, Alabama Charter School Commission, and IRS 501c3 rules. Within a designated period as set by the corporation's Board of Directors, appropriate systems for accounting, financial management, reporting, technical support, and other related procedures and processes will be developed and implemented.

Purchasing:

Purchase orders and contracts within the approved budget will be required for all expenditures

and will be reviewed and pre-approved by the Head of School, Director of Operations, and/or Finance Director and presented to the Treasurer of the Board for final review and approval. A complete monthly report of these expenditures shall be made available to the finance committee and Board of Directors as directed. Purchase orders and contracts will be duplicated, with one going to the vendor and the other remaining on file in the offices of the school. Purchases that exceed the order limits set by the Board of Directors will be required to receive board approval. Checks will be signed by two individuals designated and approved by the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will be responsible for compliance with all applicable state and federal competitive bid laws.

Payroll:

The Finance Officer will prepare timely monthly payroll reports that will include all salaries and wages, withholding summaries and any other required payroll information. The Finance Director will issue monthly checks and process federal, state, and local payroll taxes as approved from the Head of School or Director of Operations. The Finance Director will prepare the state and federal quarterly and annual tax forms, review the forms with the Head of School, and submit forms to the required and appropriate agencies in a timely manner.

Financial Reporting:

In coordination with the Head of School, Finance Director, and Treasurer, all regular financial reports shall be provided to the Board of Directors, including budget comparisons, balance sheets, ongoing financial forecasts, statement of income expenditures, and other pertinent information. The Finance Committee and Board of Directors may review the reports monthly or as needed. The review of financial reports should be related to the annual goals and strategic objectives as approved by the Board of Directors. All school financial statements are available to the public through the school's website.

Knowledge U's Board of Directors will take responsibility of the financial oversight of the school and will hold management accountable for sound financial management and adherence to set policies. The Board will select a Treasurer with professional experience in finance or accounting and will convene a standing Finance Committee. The Treasurer and the Finance Committee will ensure that the Board monitors the school's finances closely and on a monthly basis. The Finance Committee will work with the Head of School to develop the annual budget and present it to the Board for review and approval during the last month of the fiscal year. The Finance Committee will also ensure that quarterly financial reports with analyses of actual spending versus budgeted amounts are submitted to the Board, and will work with the Head of School to ensure that an annual audit is completed. The following described responsibilities is not intended to be a comprehensive list. Upon approval of the charter, a complete plan will be developed.

Financial Responsibilities of the Board include:

- Establish and approve financial policies
- Approve annual budget
- Review monthly financial performance
- Appoint auditor
- Accept/approve audit/direct action needed
- Review and approve annual budget
- Approve all contracts, agreements, etc.
- Establishes budget and internal controls
- Finance committee/treasurer reviews monthly financial statements, balance sheet, income

- and expenditures per budget
- Board approves all compensation
- Treasurer reviews monthly expenditures, account receivables and payables, and all transactions.
- Approves grants
- Develops long-range resource development strategies.

While the Board is responsible for financial oversight, the Head of School and/or Director of Operations is responsible for the day-today financial management of the school.

Responsibilities include:

- Monitor budgets and expenditures daily
- Implement board approved controls
- Identify grants and apply as approved
- Ensure transparency and openness of finances
- Authorize purchasing
- Oversee financial management
- Financial goals and budget development

Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School Board of Directors will implement effective, transparent and strict financial policies and administrative operational guidelines for the school in compliance with the adopted mission, objectives and strategies of Knowledge U and in compliance with standard and required operating procedures of an IRS 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation and any state and federal agency requirements.

An annual audit report will be performed by the independent auditor in accordance with Governmental Auditing Standards at the end of each fiscal year and furnished to the Board. The auditing firm shall be selected by request for proposal (RFP) process and only those firms experienced in audits of charter schools will be considered. The audit will be of assistance to the Board in carrying out its responsibility to assure that its financial resources are properly managed and to insure implementation and management of approved policies and procedures, effective use of all resources, and stewardship at the highest level to support the mission of Knowledge U. Its top priority is to ensure that all funds are budgeted, expended, accounted for and maintained appropriately.

The Head of School and/or Director of Operations will have the responsibilities for all day-to-day operations and financial management of Knowledge U. Financial duties and responsibilities, however, must and will be separated to meet appropriate fiscal management guidelines; and will be separated so that no one employee has sole control over cash receipts, disbursements, payroll, bank deposits, bank reconciliations or other matter requiring appropriate division of responsibilities.

Knowledge U believes that transparency is the key to building trust, community support, parental involvement, and community engagement. Each element is key to building a healthy community school for the city of Bessemer. Therefore, Knowledge U will hold an annual budget meeting publicly. We will also post electronic copies of its annual budget, budget amendments, annual audit, and Board meeting minutes online for public transparency. The School will prepare an annual financial report for the Alabama Public Charter School Commission.

The Head of School will contract a high-quality financial service provider to ensure proper financial management, coordination of payroll services and benefits packages, cash-flow management, and accounts payable, and monitoring of the budget and development of initial budgets and cash

flow systems.

BUDGETING	ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND RECEIVABLE	FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL REPORTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual and Multi-Year Budgets w/ Cash Flow • Budget Revisions • Updated Monthly Budget Forecasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue Verification • Revenue Collection • Accounts Payable Processing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Year-To Date Financial Statements • Cash Flow Projections – Monthly • Financial Statement Analysis – Monthly • Customized Financial Analysis • Support Resolving Financial Issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preliminary and Final Budget • Audited Financial Reports
ACCOUNTING	AUDIT SUPPORT	FINANCIAL STATEMENTS CONTINUED	PAYROLL PROCESSING AND REPORTING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual and Multi-Year Budgets w/ Cash Flow • Budget Revisions • Updated Monthly Budget Forecast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue Verification • Revenue Collection • Accounts Payable Processing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly Year-To-Date Financial Statements • Cash Flow Projections – Monthly • Financial Statement Analysis – Monthly • Customized Financial Analysis • Support Resolving Financial Issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaried and Hourly • Federal and State Agency Reporting • Payroll Tax Reporting and Tax Deposits • W-2 and 1099 Processing • IRS, SDI, WC Support • Retirement Plan Support/Reporting

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY	BOARD SUPPORT	FOURTH SECTOR SOLUTIONS	SCHOOL AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE SOLUTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual and Multi-Year Budgets w/ Cash Flow • Budget Revisions • Updated Monthly Budget Forecast 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting Attendance • Present Financials • Present Analysis of School’s Financial Condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Budget Development • Facilities Needs Assessments, Planning, Cost Modeling • Financial Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formative assessment creation, grading, reporting • Standards-aligned item bank of test questions

Insurance

Knowledge Unlimited Public Charter School shall obtain and maintain insurance on the Officers and Trustees, general liability, worker's compensation, real and personal property, fidelity bonds, and automobile liability in the following amounts:

- Officers and Directors/ Errors and omissions: \$1,000,000 per claim;
- General liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence;
- Fidelity bonds: no less than two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000);
- Automobile liability: one million dollars (\$1,000,000) per occurrence.

Budget

See Attachments: The Financial Workbook and Budget Narrative

a. Per-Student State Revenue.

Funding for Knowledge U will be generated from 3 primary sources: 45% state, 40% Local and 15% federal. It is projected that this combination of funding will result in approximately \$12,165 per student in per student funding. This figure will vary depending on the number of students enrolled with disabilities (funded through the Individual with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA]). Knowledge U will apply for and is expected to receive several grants to supplement the funding model. These grants include both state and federal applicable grants.

b. Anticipated Funding Sources.

Upon approval receiving national and local funds are anticipated given.

c. Contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or are lower than estimated.

Partnering with financial management company will help the Board establish a contingency plan and help receive national funding.

d. Year one cash flow contingency in the event that revenue projections are not met in advance of opening.

The Budget Attachment reflects the start-up budget that is supplemented with grants and foundation. That, along with per pupil funding from State, Local, and Federal sources, ensures a positive cash flow for Knowledge U.

Attachments

Section 31: Financial Plan

31.1	Attachment 30: Financial Workbook	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 11:49 PM	XLSX / 1.29 MB
31.2	Attachment 31: Budget Narrative	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/8/20 3:06 AM	PDF / 200.151 KB

32. Financial Management Capacity

As stewards of the public trust, Knowledge U will maintain sound fiscal responsibility. As a publically supported entity, Knowledge U is responsible for ensuring the public’s confidence and integrity of school’s activities. Therefore, we have outlined school processes and procedures that ensure accountability at every level of financial management.

a. Financial Management

Mrs. Debra Mitchell has experience managing finances at the school level, as she worked as a Principal at G.W Carver High School until 2011.

Dr. Damita Pitts has experience managing finances at the school level, as she worked as Principal at several schools in Birmingham City such as Putnam Middle School and Sun Valley Elementary.

Dr. Bruce Bright is a Certified Commercial Investment Member (CCIM) and is recognized as an expert in the disciplines of commercial and investment Real Estate.

b. Fundraising and Development

As the Founder and Director of an afterschool enrichment program, Ms. Anthony has experience in fundraising and development that she will bring to Knowledge U. She has also written and been awarded grants for materials for the afterschool enrichment program.

Dr. Bruce Bright is the Founder and Chief Energy Officer (CEO) of On Target Leading, a for-profit organization, and has experience in development.

Dr. Damita Pitts has experience with acquiring funds for educational institutions as well as development of programs. She has acquired a two-year \$90,000.00 (KEA) Kindergarten Early Assessment Grant for Kindergarten teachers within the Birmingham City School District as well as a \$60,000 Kaboom grant for an elementary school playground. She has also developed parental engagement groups, professional learning communities for educators, summer literacy programs, Spanish classes, and technology academies for elementary and middle school students.

c. Accounting and Internal Controls

Mr. Steve Siple, who is a Financial Advisor for Knowledge Unlimited, has nearly 30 years of commercial and investment banking experience with a public finance concentration. He has served as a volunteer Board Chairman for multiple local and national nonprofit boards throughout most of his professional career. He also is the Founder of a nonprofit organization, Mission 1st Advisors, where he enables smaller nonprofits to leverage their resources for greater social impact through financial and organizational strategy consulting.

Attachments

Section 32: Financial Management Capacity

– No Attachments –

EXISTING OPERATORS

33. Existing Operators

Attachments

Section 33: Existing Operators

33.1	Attachment 32: Existing Operators	Whetstone, Jeanisha, 7/13/20 11:57 PM	DOCX / 11.18 KB
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