

Alabama Charter Application 2018

New Charter Application #000375

Capstone 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:

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GENERAL

A. School Information

Open Date: **August 6, 2020**
 Proposed Name: **Capstone Charter School**
 School Type: **Elementary / Middle / High**
 Grade Levels: **[K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]**
 School District: **Tuscaloosa City**
 Neighborhood / Community: **West Tuscaloosa**
 Organization Type: **Non-profit Corporation**
 Sponsoring Entity: **Non-profit Organization**
 Address: **2811 Sixth Street Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401**
 Phone: **205-886-1786**
 Fax:
 Web Site:
 Calendar Type: **Standard - 180 instructional days**
 Educational Service Provider: **(None)**

B. Primary Contact Person

Name: **Barbara Starnes Rountree**
 Mailing Address: **2811 Sixth Street, P. O. Box 1582, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403**
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401
 Mobile Phone: 
 Alternate Phone: 
 Email:
 Current Employer: **retired professor, The University of Alabama and current**

Director, The Capitol School, Alabama's International School

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.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
K	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
1	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
2	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
3	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
4	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
5	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
6	18	18	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
7	18	18	18	18	36	36	36	36	36	36	36	36
8	18	18	18	18	18	18	36	36	36	36	36	36

9	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	36	36	36	36
10	9	9	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
11	9	9	9	9	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
12	9	9	9	9	16	16	18	18	18	18	18	18
Total	315	315	342	342	376	376	396	396	414	414	414	414

D. Board Members

Name	Title	Contact Information	Current Employer
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
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[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
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[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
		P:	

[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
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[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]maryharmon.com	

E. Start-up Team Members

Name	Title	Contact Information	Current Employer
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] (private international PK school)
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Executive Summary

Applicant's Team

An educator is indeed fortunate if in his/her career, an opportunity arises to work with such an exemplary team of educational leaders. Our educational backgrounds, experiences and shared philosophy of education have forged our friendship and dedication to apply for a K-12 start-up charter school. We come from different states (New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Alabama) and have taught in a wide variety of schools. We graduated from different colleges and universities yet read much of the same educational research and attended Model School Conferences and many other national conferences to learn about Best Practices.

When the charter law was passed in 2015 by the Alabama Legislature, Capstone Charter School was legally formed with legal representation by Balch and Bingham LLP (Birmingham) with a 3 member Board of Directors and with officers. In the past 3 years, one of the directors moved away, and one did not choose to serve now in 2018 due to pressing duties at his work. Thus, only one member remains from the original Board of Directors. Capstone Charter School's legal status was filed with the Secretary of State on July 2, 2015.

In 2018, the IRS 501 (c)(3) application was submitted to the United States Treasury by attorney Blake Madison of Rosen Harwood (Tuscaloosa). When we are notified of approval, we will inform the Alabama Commission on Charter Schools.

We are so impressed with the incredible leadership of the Mobile Area Foundation for their creation of ACCEL to address a long-standing problem with high school students not making progress toward graduation or dropping out. They truly have been a leader for this state. UWA's leadership as an institute of higher education has provided a wonderful role model for how a university can partner with an LEA and bring their powerful resources to address K-12 education. However, our effort is probably more typical of how a charter school might grow and develop over a three-year period with teachers forming a leadership team and then, one by one, diverse community members joining as School Board members. In 2018, several of the Leadership Team members were then listed as Board of Directors Officers (see resumes in Attachment 12)

In addition to the Leadership Team, a School Board has been proposed for the purposes of creating the new charter school. This 15 member School Board consists of volunteers to serve that reflects the diversity of our community...

- public educators and college professors
- German, Japanese, Chinese, and local folks from North of the River, across the River and West Tuscaloosa
- people in finance, banking and grant writers
- business owners of local companies and a CFO and HR Director of two international companies
- all are parents and some are grandparents
- a scientist, a physician and a veterinarian, IT specialist to support STEM

- a pastor and civic leader
- two realtors
- a leader in service learning (Junior League of Tuscaloosa)
- a law professor and
- many, many leaders from our city.

If the charter school is approved, several School Board members remarked that they would serve only for the first few years to get the new charter school started and then resign as they recommend that the School Board reduce in size. They might also serve staggered terms. They will need to participate in Board training – either online or in workshops. It may be that the two groups of Board of Directors and School Board are merged to be more efficient. At this time, it seemed the best course of action to allow everyone to work together for the opportunity to create the Capstone Charter School.

Geographic and Population School Environment

ASPIRE test results from the past few years show that 10th graders in Tuscaloosa were seriously behind in reading, math and science. 7th graders also have lower scores in reading, math and science. Special Education students' scores reflect deficits in all grade levels in reading and at most grade levels for math. Scores for black and Hispanic students show deficits in many subjects at all grade levels. Third graders show deficits in reading, and poverty deficits begin at 5th grade in both reading and science.

The Tuscaloosa City Report Card describes a wide gap of achievement between races/subgroups in the "Academic Achievement" section of overall scores from 94.43 for White to 42.87 for black students.

Student engagement shows some schools reporting lower numbers with an average of 83% of students engaged in clubs, sports, arts, volunteerism, and extra-curricular activities.

While the graduation rate averages 87.4% for all students, fewer black students graduate (86.2%), and fewer students with disabilities (85.6%) with 14.4% of economically disadvantaged students dropping out prior to graduation.

Of great concern to the Tuscaloosa business community is that the College and Career Readiness pass rate is only 52% of all students. Black students score at 43%, economically disadvantaged students at 40% and students with disabilities only 13%.

Attendance rates are also much lower for black students, student with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students.

Capstone Charter School will increase opportunities for at-risk students to include:

- Multiple opportunities in all classes
- Small group, personalized instruction
- Advisory, Positive Mindset, counseling, leadership experiences, team building activities, co-curricular activities
- Emphasis on clear pathways college and career readiness

The Leadership Team is committed to NACSA's Principles and Standards for Quality Charter

School Authorizing. The 2015 Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act is an opportunity for a quality charter school to be established in downtown Tuscaloosa.

Families in the city limits of Tuscaloosa reflect our city's diversity. The University of Alabama brings international graduate students with children, as well as the 17 international businesses operating in our county who bring their children to live in Tuscaloosa. Low-income students often live in West Tuscaloosa where two bus routes run to the Intermodal Bus Facility or Capitol Park (one block from the proposed school site). The school has been designed for students in grades K-12 but fewer classes are planned for high school due to the enrollment experience at University Charter School where fewer 8th graders chose to attend in the first year of their program. However, more classes will be open for grades K-5 in hopes to build the program across the five-year charter.

Proposed Plan for the School

CCS will admit students during enrollment from Oct.15 – Dec. 15, 2019 in hopes that we are not forced into a lottery situation that would disappoint students whose families enrolled. However, if we do need to use a transparent, random selection, we will make sure it is open to all students, giving first priority to those students who reside in the city of Tuscaloosa. While we do ask parents to volunteer during the school year, it cannot be mandatory for their child to attend.

We will offer parent education seminars to help all parents feel comfortable in this school setting and to find volunteer activities to help support their child's learning. We are seeking to include students from any socioeconomic, family, and language backgrounds, special education status and prior academic performance. We see **parents as partners** with teachers in their child's education.

CCS will provide access and services to students with disabilities as required by applicable federal and state law, including compliance with student individualized education programs and Section 504 plans, facilities access and educational opportunities. Teachers will work hard to gain parents' trust as we clarify the responsibilities of all parties who serve students with disabilities.

CCS agrees to provide accurate performance data for our students and to be audited annually for the duration of the charter. CCS shall be subject to all federal laws and the Alabama Commission on Charter Schools.

The proposed K-12 charter school is based upon the summary of neurological research about the multiple capacities of the human brain. The work of Dr. Howard Gardner, Harvard Graduate School of Education, compiled extensive research from the medical field to delineate the multiple intelligences within the brain. Most of us were tested only for verbal intelligence and mathematical intelligence as it was widely believed that the two lobes of the brain each housed one of those intelligences. A wide array of medical equipment such as CAT scans and MRI have disproven that view of the brain.

We have public school models such as Key School in Indianapolis; San Jose Elementary in Jacksonville, FL; Country Elementary School, CA; Edwin Rhodes Elementary, CA; and Sharon Elementary, NC. Notable private schools include New City in St. Louis and New School of Northern Virginia. Also, recent interest in STEM, STEAM and STREAM could be considered as an outgrowth of the various components of Multiple Intelligences.

For this time and place, downtown Tuscaloosa sits on the dividing line for white housing and business and African American housing and business in West Tuscaloosa. Businesses (local

and international) have urged educators to create a high school program that will bring them qualified employees. Two companies, Premier Service Company and Phifer, Inc. assured the planning team that they would hire every single graduate that completes the ***Ready to Work*** Program. If that graduate could also speak Spanish, he/she would be the first one hired!

Thank you for taking time to review the Leadership Team and School Board's proposal to create a new K-12 charter school in downtown Tuscaloosa.

Attachments

Section 1: Executive Summary

1.1			

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM DESIGN AND CAPACITY

1. Program Overview

Section 1. Educational Program Design & Capacity

Education Program Overview

Summarize the education program, including primary instructional methods and assessment strategies, and any non-negotiable elements of the school model. Briefly describe the research-based evidence that has demonstrated success for this education program with the anticipated student population.

The Capstone Charter School is committed to providing opportunities for the whole child and to creating a safe environment where students can reach their full potential on the path to being successful and fulfilled their college, career, and personal lives.

Primary Instructional methods

The primary instructional methods utilized by Capstone Charter School will place students at the center of the teaching and learning process. Learner-centered teaching is at the heart of producing engaged students. Educators who evaluate schools across the country look for learner-centered experiences in every classroom because these approaches have proven effective. Capstone will strive to instruct learners of all socio-economic backgrounds and needs, and especially to reach the underserved in our community. The school is designed for students so that they can reap the benefits of this enriched learning environment designed for Multiple Intelligences.

The Capstone Charter School will use 4 primary methods to model learner-centered instruction.

1. Howard Gardner's **Theory of Multiple Intelligences** was developed to help teachers understand that there are many ways to reach students beyond traditional classroom tools, and this approach can help learners increase their intelligences across the 8 intelligences he described as existing in all human beings' brains. The MI are listed as: **verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalist, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences**. At the Capstone Charter School, expert teachers and core classroom teachers will offer students experiences that help grow the multiple intelligences in their brains. It is not our view that children are born with fixed, General Intelligence, For example, an art teacher or geography teacher will give students the knowledge and skills to explore the visual-spatial intelligence. The PE teacher will help learners understand the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence they possess in order to promote healthy bodies and minds. Researchers outline the importance of this approach to learner engagement. Edutopia.org reports these supporting statements by current researchers:
 - Providing students with multiple ways to access content improves learning (Hattie, 2011).
 - Providing students with multiple ways to demonstrate knowledge and skills increases engagement and learning, and provides teachers with more accurate understanding of students' knowledge and skills (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

- Instruction should be informed as much as possible by detailed knowledge about students' specific strengths, needs, and areas for growth (Tomlinson, 2014).

References

- Darling-Hammond, L. (2010). [*Performance Counts: Assessment Systems that Support High-Quality Learning*](#). Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.
- Hattie, J. (2011). [*Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximizing Impact on Learning*](#). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Tomlinson, C. A. (2014). [*The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*](#). Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- <https://www.edutopia.org/multiple-intelligences-research>

1. **Learner Engagement** – Putting students at the center of the learning will naturally promotes their engagement. This finding is so important that school accrediting bodies such as AdvancED use it as a standard to observe Student Engagement in each classroom to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and instruction. Capstone Charter School will promote high levels of learner engagement through the MI experiences and through small-group instruction and personalized learning. Students will be active in their learning and grow their interpersonal intelligence skills when working in pairs or teams. The schedule of each day for the elementary students is designed to allow half a class to work with one teacher so that small-group and independent-learning activities can be facilitated with ease. Interns from local colleges enable the small class sizes of 12 (or 18 in Middle and High) to having even smaller teacher: child ratios. Having a wide variety of subjects throughout the school day allows the learners to develop deeper understandings of themselves, the MI, and skills and content.

CEO, Mark Elgart, Ed.D., of AdvancED wrote in the fall of 2017 that “Student engagement is the willingness of a student to fully participate in the learning process or instructional activity. AdvancED spends more time in more classrooms than any other organization in the world. As the leading expert in school improvement and accreditation services, we know firsthand that engagement is a major indicator of learning and development, and is correlated to improved attendance, reduced disciplinary incidents, school climate, and more.”

<https://www.advanc-ed.org/source/ceo-message-student-engagement>

1. **Learning is competency-based.** When students are at the center of learning, it is natural that they will move ahead when skills are mastered, rather than when they reach a certain age or have spent a set number of hours in a classroom. This means that at Capstone Charter School, teachers will monitor individual student mastery of skills so that learners can move on or further develop relevant skills when they are ready to do so. Elementary students will stay with a Lead Teacher in a multi-age classroom for two years –one year as the younger novice and the next year as an older leader. However, they will not be constrained to grade level in any subject but can move to the next grade level while remaining with peers of their own ages. Capstone Charter School is committed to guiding students toward mastery of all the skills of the Alabama State Standards at a minimum, with the urgent hope that many will go well beyond those as they become high school students getting ready for their next steps. “Students at the Center,” a Jobs for the Future Initiative,

specifically points out that this element of competency is crucial to the success of the learner-centered classroom.

<https://www.ewa.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/satc-one-pager-050817.pdf>

2. **Students will be Career and College Ready.** Capstone Charter School is committed to preparing learners to be in charge of their paths toward the future. Through access to two paths, Early College at UA or Career and Technical Programs at Shelton State Community College and/or *Ready to Work*, students will have experience with higher education while at the secondary level. With the help of teachers and the counselor, students will explore a broad range of career and academic options. As part of the 10th-12th grade curriculum, learners will choose a pathway that is suited to their interests and skills. As the primary drivers of their learning, students will be leading their own journeys toward competent, productive, responsible citizenship. Upon graduation, each student will have credits over and above the high school requirements of the State of Alabama, and will be prepared to continue with college or career training.

Assessment Strategies

Capstone Charter School will measure success with practical, specific data. For evaluating the **Multiple Intelligences approach**, school leaders will develop a team of educators that will work in the various areas of MI. There will be a music teacher, art instructor, Spanish, Mandarin, and German teachers, a PE instructor, librarian, counselor, core teachers for mathematics, science, social studies, English and Literacy, and character education. Portfolios at the Elementary Level will be used to highlight the work practiced in each area of the intelligences each quarter of the year. The daily schedule will show evidence of the MI being employed throughout the school days. Traditional Report Cards/Progress Reports will also be used to communicate effectively with parents and will show the grade levels mastered for core subjects. For example, a child might be working on 3rd grade level in math and 6th grade level in reading.

Learner engagement will be evaluated using student surveys, parent surveys, observations made by faculty, supervisors and outside evaluators. Upon walking into a classroom, observers should expect to see learners actively involved in their own learning projects. They may see students working in small groups, meeting with a teacher one-on-one, using a laptop or iPad for research or projects, practicing skills, reading and discussing texts, making art work, playing music, etc. AdvancED offers Student Surveys to help schools see how engaged students perceive themselves. Such tools can be used to obtain this type of data.

Capstone Charter School will measure **learning that is competency-based** element through multiple assessments. Informal and formal assessments will inform teachers and students know when they have mastered skills and concepts. Software programs can monitor both mastery and the speed that the learner is moving through the curriculum. Teacher-made tests, quizzes, project rubrics will provide specific data for each child regularly. Standardized tests will be used quarterly or annually, based on the specific test. Renaissance Learning Computerized STAR Reading and Math Tests can be taken individually each quarter to help teachers monitor progress in those areas. CCS Students will take the State of Alabama standardized test when it is ready to be implemented. Middle and High School students will be required to show 70% mastery of Alabama State Standards course of study to progress in addition to taking the ACT or Work Keys and/or other assessments. Details of those are in the High School Graduation Requirements section.

Capstone Charter School will gather significant data to show successful students who are **College and Career Ready**. To graduate, Capstone Charter School students must complete 24 units of high school credit, at least three hours of dual enrollment or *Right to Work* credit, and at least 40 hours of community service. Students will earn credits for college or technical programs through mastery of the class content. Data on these course grades will be used to monitor progress for

each student and the High School as a whole. The counselor will work closely with students to help them self-monitor their college or career readiness so that students may adjust their actions and goals as appropriate. Student surveys can be used to measure student satisfaction with their preparedness. In the High School Graduation Requirements section, there are more examples of benchmarks and assessments that will be used to guide students forward.

Capstone Charter School believes that students who experience this learning environment will be skilled, agile, life-long learners who will be able to adapt to the demands of an ever-changing employment and civic landscape.

Attachments

Section 1: Program Overview

1.1	Overview of Planned Curriculum	Rountree, Barbara, 12/18/18 10:41 PM	PDF / 2.862 MB
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2. Curriculum and Instructional Design

Curriculum and Instructional Design

Propose a framework for instructional design that both reflects the needs of the anticipated population and ensures all students will meet or exceed applicable standards of academic proficiency.

1. Describe the basic learning environment (e.g., classroom-based, independent study), including class size and structure.

2. Provide an overview of the planned curriculum, including, as an attachment (Attachment 1), a sample course scope and sequence for one subject for each division (elementary, middle, high school) the school would serve. In an attachment (Attachment 2) explain the school's curriculum; its correlation to the Alabama standards; the specific instructional materials to be used to

implement the curriculum; and the process your school will follow to evaluate, review, and revise its curriculum on an annual basis.

3. Describe the primary instructional strategies that the school will expect educators to use and why they are well suited for the anticipated student population. Describe the methods and systems that educators will utilize to provide differentiated instruction to meet the needs of all students.

Capstone Charter School

English Language Arts

Scope and Sequence

A keystone of the Capstone Charter School will be the ability of the teachers to plan and present a differentiated curriculum that meets the needs of the various students. Emphasis will be placed on working in small groups so that the needs of each student can be met. The teachers will be enabled to learn and grow as they work with students to develop new techniques. Teachers will be given leeway to meet the needs of students as needed.

The overarching goal of the English Language Arts Curriculum at Capstone Charter School will be to encourage and develop a love of reading, literature, and writing among the students with a developed competency in the varied uses of technologies to integrate reading, research, literature, and writing. Lessons involving the Verbal-Linguistic area of Multiple Intelligences will be presented.

Linguistic Intelligence is defined as:

“An ability to analyze information and create products involving oral and written language such as speeches, books, and memos.”

From: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences, Davis, Katie; Christodoulou, Joanna; Seider, Scott; Gardner, Howard

<https://howardgardner01.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/443-davis-christodoulou-seider-mi-article.pdf>, page 6.

Another definition:

Linguistic intelligence involves sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and the capacity to use language to accomplish certain goals. This intelligence includes the ability to effectively use language to express oneself rhetorically or poetically; and language as a means to remember information. Writers, poets, lawyers and speakers are among those that Howard Gardner sees as having high linguistic intelligence.

From: <http://infed.org/mobi/howard-gardner-multiple-intelligences-and-education/>

First Grade Age Students

Students entering first grade might have very different needs. To accommodate a variety of needs, class groupings will be structured to allow the teacher to work with small groups. Some scenarios include:

- Classroom teacher works with half the class/Expert MI (multiple intelligences) teacher works with half the class
- Classroom teacher with half/Reading Specialist with half
- Classroom teacher works with small group/Parent volunteers listen to individual students practice
- Classroom teacher sets up stations or centers and works with a small group
- Classroom Teacher works with small groups/Students use online resources to practice reading
- Classroom Teacher works with small groups/Students work with reading buddies from the class
- Classroom Teacher works with small groups/Older students listen to first grade students practice reading
- Use a combination of the above scenarios

In the enrollment projections for Capstone Charter School, it is anticipated that the classroom teachers or other teachers will work with 12 students at a time.

Here are some hypothetical examples of the types of needs various students might have:

Mary is able to read many types of literature independently. She recently enjoyed reading a series

of books about Helen Keller, including a biography. Mary is able to decode or sound out words in books on a 7th grade level. She reads books on a fourth grade level with excellent comprehension. On the Star Reading Test that she took on the computer, her Instructional Reading Level was 4th grade, 1st month. Her grade equivalent score was 4th grade, fourth month. She scored in the 99th percentile, so she can read better than 99% of the students her age in the nation.

Mary needs to read books that will help broaden her vocabulary, which is already very extensive. She benefits from participating in Literature Circle Groups with students who are on a similar reading level. Literature Circle is a time when a group of students can read books that expand their vocabularies. For instance, while the class was studying Maps, Globes, the Continents, and Landforms, Mary's Literature Circle Group read, "The Magic School Bus Inside the Earth." They learned words and their meaning, such as "metamorphic," "mantle," or "stalagmite." There are three other students in the class that have needs similar to Mary's.

Mary has completed all of the standards on the First Grade Course of Study. The teacher has now started to work on the Second Grade Standards with Mary.

George was diagnosed with autism before enrolling in the Capstone Charter School. He is advanced in many areas of the curriculum, including reading. The Special Education teacher is providing ideas to the classroom teacher who leads the classroom. The Special Education teacher will also come to the classroom to observe and assist with teaching. The teacher will use Literature Circle Groups as one technique to help George develop more social skills. He has bonded with another student in the class, Dante. They like sitting together during Literature Circle to share books. George's parents are so happy. This is the first time that George has become friends with someone. There are three other students in their Literature Circle Group.

Jose entered first grade reading books on a first grade level. He needs to read books that will allow him to use his knowledge of phonics to decode words and to practice high frequency words. He currently knows about 25 high frequency words. The teacher has introduced Jose to a series of books by the author, Margaret Hillert. These books are on Jose's instructional level. The teacher can use these to introduce the words Jose needs to learn and practice. He can use his knowledge of sounds to practice sounding, stretching, and blending words in the books. There are ten other students in the classroom who have the same needs as Jose. The teachers can help them select books on their instructional levels and present books during Literature Circle Groups or Guided Reading Groups that highlight sounds, high frequency words, and reading strategies.

Lexi entered the first grade knowing the letter names and some of the sounds. However, when being assessed on the letter names, Lexi looked at the letter "d" and first said that it was a "b." She then changed her answer and said, "d." While taking the Fry Oral Criterion Test, instead of saying "dog," Lexi said "big." When the teacher asked Lexi to name some words that rhyme with the word "sit," Lexi said, "brick, table, and frog." The teacher has notified the Reading Specialist about her observations of Lexi. The Reading Specialist plans to do some assessments and help

the teacher formulate some lessons to help Lexi with letter reversals and rhyming words. Lexi might be identified through assessment as having dyslexia. If that diagnosis is positive, the Reading Specialist will utilize the school's dyslexia intervention program.

Liam wanders around the room and hums to himself. He does not make eye contact with the teacher or other children. He cannot sit still with the group when the teacher reads books aloud to the class. When he sits near the teacher during group time on the rug, he tries to rub his face on her leg. The teacher wondered if this was an indicator that he needed compression therapy. After getting feedback from the Special Education teacher and the classroom teacher, the parents have tried dressing Liam in shirts that provide compression, which is part of a multi-tiered intervention approach for this child. The teacher also purchased a weighted stuffed dog. When she works with Liam, he holds the dog on his lap. The compression helps him focus on his work. He talks with the teacher more. Liam's fine motor skills need developing. The Special Education Teacher and the classroom teacher have planned reading conferences with Liam to work on learning the letters, sounds, and high frequency words. They are using the multi-sensory *Handwriting Without Tears* program to help him develop his motor skills. Liam's parents have taken him to a play therapy group in Birmingham for assessment and intervention. This was a suggestion made by the teachers.

D'Atra entered first grade not knowing the names of the letters of the alphabet, the sounds, or any high frequency words. There are three other students on a similar level. The teachers need to work with her on developing phonemic awareness, learning the sounds, and learning to combine these sounds to read words. The Reading Specialist works with D'Atra as well and will help the teachers with ideas to assist with D'Atra's development. She needs to learn the 100 words that are used the most in English. D'Atra comes from a low socioeconomic background. Her family does not read for pleasure nor do they have books in their home. D'Atra and her peers also need to learn "about" reading. They need many books read to them in order to learn:

- That print has meaning
- That print can be used for different purposes
- The relationship between print and speech
- There is a difference between letters and words
- That words are separated by spaces
- There is a difference between words and sentences
- That there are (punctuation) marks that signal the end of a sentence
- That books have parts such as a front and back cover, title page, and spine
- That stories have a beginning, middle, and end
- That text is read from left to right and from top to bottom

From: <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/concepts-print-assessment>

There are additional concepts of reading that the teachers of the Capstone Charter School will include in the English Language Arts curriculum.

In her book, *Wiring the Brain for Reading*, Marilee Sprenger explains the five components of reading. These are: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension.

Sprenger (2013) explains the components this way:

Phonemic Awareness: Ability to recognize the individual sounds of spoken language and how they can be blended together, segmented, and manipulated.

Phonics, A Visual Skill: An instructional approach that links the sounds of spoken language to printed letters.

Vocabulary: We have two types, receptive and expressive. We add to both vocabularies by learning new words through listening to others, reading, and direct instruction.

Fluency: The process by which the ability to decode words is bridged to comprehension. Without fluency, the words on the page do not come to life and become meaningful to readers.

Reading Comprehension: We derive meaning based on our own prior and background knowledge.

The Alabama Course of Study will be very important to the teachers at Capstone Charter School, but obviously from the examples of the students described previously, it will serve as a guide and a set of minimum standards. Many students will continue on through the sequential skills of a standard, perhaps to the next grade level or beyond. In some cases, the minimum standard will be met and the student will delve deeper into a subject.

Using the Alabama Course of Study as a guide, teachers at Capstone Charter School will ensure that these objectives will be met as they use a variety of literature and standards-specific lessons that fit the needs of individual students. The Course of Study will serve as a checklist of skills to include during Large Group Instruction, Small Group Instruction, Reading Conferences, Guided Reading Groups, and Literature Circle Groups.

After Capstone Charter School has been open for one complete school year, the kindergarten age students will return to the same classroom teacher. Therefore, the teacher of this multi-age class will already know each of those students very well. Instead of having to take the time to do a great amount of assessment, the teacher will know where to start with them for their first grade age year immediately. The student will know the teacher and the classroom well. This will eliminate the stress of knowing what to expect. The first grade age students who were kindergarten age the previous year will be there to help the new kindergarten students who are new to enrollment. This

structure will also be of great benefit to families. They will already know their child's teachers very well.

The teachers at Capstone Charter School will use the Alabama Course Study for Reading as a checklist of skills. The Course of Study is included in the attachments of this application. The link can be viewed at:

<https://alex.state.al.us/standardAll.php?grade=1&subject=ELA2015&summary=2>

Writing

Just as in the examples of the students with varying reading needs, it is easy to see how students in the first grade will have varying writing needs. Knowing that the Verbal-Linguistic Intelligence is the most widely used area of Multiple Intelligences in most schools, the teachers will work with the students in small groups to teach effective writing. Writing expert educator, Lucy Calkins states, "Teach the writer, not the writing." Capstone Charter School teachers will again need to be fluid and nimble to help the students develop their writing skills, at whatever stage they are currently.

Educators at the University of Toronto remind us that:

In the process:

"As adults and 'expert writers' it is easy to forget how complex writing is. It involves thinking about and doing many different things at once, like forming letters, spelling, choosing words, and generating ideas. Teachers need to help students as they learn to juggle just a few writing skills at first, and then slowly add others. With practice, writers will be able to do all of this simultaneously."

In teaching:

"Modeling is a powerful tool in writing instruction. It lets students inside the mind of a writer by explaining thought processes. Modeling can be used to teach aspects of writing like editing and word choice, or to teach strategies like using a graphic organizer. Students then write, applying what they learned in the lesson. Teachers can conference with students, providing feedback to support writing development."

In assessing:

“Students need to know what good writing looks like and what the success criteria for a writing task are. It is important to have reasonable expectations based on the task, grade level, and individual student. For example, young students write more when they use inventive spelling. Teachers can gather work samples across the year in portfolios to document the development of students’ writing.”

https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/balancedliteracydiet/Writing_Processes_Strategies.html

Teachers will need to rely on a variety of resources to assist them in fitting the needs of small groups at Capstone Charter School. Some samples are listed in the Methods and Instructional Strategies below, including Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Writing.

Spelling

The area of spelling is again, another aspect of the curriculum that the teachers at Capstone Charter School will assess each student and prepare activities that meets that individual’s needs in small group lessons.

One such method is based on the work of Expert Spelling educator, Richard Gentry. Gentry believes that the brain is a pattern-seeking device. Therefore, students in first grade should study the words in patterns or word families.

Each student will be assessed according to a group of words including in a word family. For instance, “at” words such as “bat, cat, hat, mat, pat, rat, or sat.” If the student knows the words, he or she will proceed to the next set. If the student does not the words, he or she might practice by using a multisensory movable alphabet, letter stamps, writing the words three times, and then taking the test again to see if he or she has obtained mastery. If further practice is needed, the teacher will devise a plan. If the student has mastered those words, he or she will proceed to the next set.

Handwriting

First grade students at Capstone Charter School will practice handwriting using the Handwriting Without Tears program developed by Occupational Therapist, Jan Olsen. This is a multi-sensory and developmentally appropriate approach to developing handwriting. It was developed after years of research and design.

<https://www.lwtears.com/hwt>

Methods or Instructional Strategies

Teachers at the Capstone Charter School need to remain fluid and nimble in lesson planning to meet the needs of the students of multiple abilities during instruction. Below is a list of methods that the teachers will employ to teach English Language Arts.

Reading:

Extensive Classroom Library – containing varied levels of books representing many genres, and numerous book series containing multiple copies of important, specifically chosen books for use with small groups. Some of those books may focus on rhyming patterns, others may present high-frequency words, while others may have non-fiction content to be studied in the small groups.

Reading Conferences – teachers will sit with students to listen to them read. Lessons and books presented will fit individual needs of the multi-age, multi-ability class. Beginning students will read books that introduce early high frequency words and sounds. Teachers or students who are able will keep a reading log of books read.

Guided Reading – teachers will have multiple copies of the same book that feature high frequency words and sounds. The teachers will use these books to teach beginning readers how to read.

Literature Circle Groups – teachers will have multiple copies of the same book that feature words to help develop vocabulary and reading skills. The students in the group will become a community of readers. It is like participating in a Book Club to help learners get excited about reading and to develop a love of literature.

Beanie Baby Reading Strategies – a set of reading strategies using stuffed animals to explain how

to read. This bodily-kinesthetic approach is quite motivating for the students to help them determine unknown words. These are:

Eagle Eye – look at the picture

Lips the Fish – say the first sound

Stretchy Snake – stretch the word out (say and blend all the sounds)

Chunky Monkey – look for word chunks you know such as at, an, it.

Flippy Dolphin – flip the vowel sound. For instance, does the “a” have a short or long sound

Skippy Frog – skip the word you don’t know and come back

Tryin’ Lion – try a word that makes sense

RAZ-Kids – online individualized reading program that includes comprehension quizzes, incorporates technology into the classroom in a meaningful way.

More Starfall – online phonics and reading program

Keyboarding Without Tears – included phonics and technology skills

Writing:

Lucy Calkins Units of Study – developed with a group formed by writing researcher, author, and educator Lucy Calkins who formed the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, a New York City based organization.

Kidwriting in the 21st Century: A Systematic Approach to Phonics, Spelling, and Writing Workshop – book by Eileen G. Feldgus, Isabell Cardonick, and J. Richard Gentry

The Balanced Literary Diet – The University of Toronto -
<https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/balancedliteracydiet/Home/index.html>

Spelling:

Personalized spelling units developed based on the research of Dr. J. Richard Gentry, Spelling researcher, author, and educator.

Handwriting:

Handwriting Without Tears – program developed by Occupational Therapist, Jan Z. Olsen.

Handwriting Without Tears is a multi-sensory approach to handwriting.

Wet-Dry-Try iPad App – supplement to Handwriting Without Tears

Some Assessments for ELA in 1st Grade:

Letter Name Test

Sounds Test

High Frequency Words Test

Fry Oral Criterion Test for Decoding Words

Renaissance Learning Computerized Early Literacy Test

Renaissance Learning Computerized Star Reading Test

Handwriting Without Tears Assessment

Writing Development Rubric

Middle School - Sixth Grade Age Students

Students at this level are likely to present a range of skills and mastery levels of English language arts. Teachers working with sixth-grade age students may find students with similar descriptions to these hypothetical students below:

Jermaine is a student who performs well below grade level and would likely qualify for IEP goals. Teachers will do baseline assessments with STAR Reading testing and refer him to the special education teacher with parent input. Over time, classroom teachers would coordinate with the Reading Specialist and special education staff to develop appropriate multi-tiered accommodations and interventions for Jermaine. Some of these modifications would likely include one-on-one and small-group instruction, use of laptop with speech enabled software for writing, extra time on projects and reduced work load.

Shana is a student who works far above grade level in reading skills but is slightly below grade level in writing. She will benefit from increased practice with relevant, varied purposes of writing tasks, daily journaling, and direct instruction in cohesive paragraph and essay writing. Her interests and strengths in other Multiple Intelligences would be examined to help find motivating topics for her to use for writing projects during the year. Her love of reading would be tapped to give her ample practice with responding to text through connections, making predictions and summarizing chapters of approved books.

Donna is an excellent reader and an average writer. She will benefit from reviewing basic components of strong writing with her teachers. Teachers will use the 6th and 7th grade standards from the Alabama Course of Study for English Language Arts to guide her progress. She will practice writing cohesive 5-paragraph essays, attempt writing multiple forms of poetry following poetry study to expand her understanding of word use and authors' techniques related to imagery, figurative and descriptive language, and tone. She will research an approved topic of interest and create a detailed presentation to present orally to her classmates that will expand her vocabulary inventory and allow her to demonstrate clear informational writing. Technology will be incorporated throughout her research and in her presentation.

Juan shows average skills in reading and writing but appears to be easily distracted and can look unmotivated. He is from Central America and Spanish is his first language. He will benefit from preferential seating, small group instruction, and a quiet reading and writing environment. Teachers will survey him to determine what really excites him in the world. Because of her awareness of his multi-cultural needs, the Spanish teacher will be consulted to help identify culturally relevant topics that may appeal to him for research. These topics will be used to develop projects that will motivate him and keep him engaged. He will need close monitoring and support; the Reading Specialist would be consulted as to other ways to assist him as part of the multi-tiered interventions. A laptop would be used for most or all of his writing, depending on what suits him best. He will benefit from journal writing that is non-graded but used for collaborating with peers and teachers. Grammar in context would be presented to him when reviewing his writing progress. The Alabama Course of Study would be used to monitor his progress in skill development, as with the other students.

The Alabama Course of Study will be very important to the teachers at Capstone Charter School, but obviously from the examples of the students described previously, it will serve as a guide and a set of minimum standards. Many students will continue on through the sequential skills of a standard, perhaps to the next grade level or beyond. In some cases, the minimum standard will be met and the student will delve deeper into a subject.

Using the Alabama Course of Study as a guide, teachers at Capstone Charter School will ensure that these objectives will be met as they use a variety of literature and standards-specific lessons that fit the needs of individual students. The Course of Study will serve as a checklist of skills to include during Large Group Instruction, Small Group Instruction, and Individual Conferences.

Link to ELA Course of Study: (also see attachment 1)

<https://www.alsde.edu/sec/sct/COS/2016%20Revised%20Alabama%20English%20Language%20A>

Methods or Instructional Strategies

In the enrollment projections for Capstone Charter School, it is anticipated that the middle school and high school classroom teachers or expert teachers will work with 18 students at a time. Within the group of 18, students will typically work in pairs, small groups or independently as determined by the activity.

Teachers at the Capstone Charter School need to remain fluid and nimble in lesson planning to meet the needs of the students of multiple abilities during instruction. Below is a list of methods that the teachers will employ to teach English Language Arts.

Reading

Literature Circle Groups – learners will engage in common teacher-selected texts from a variety of genres that may integrate various subject areas and with consideration of the students' interest and reading levels. Overall comprehension of texts is a critical goal. Students will read and discuss the texts with particular literacy goals in mind as they move through each selection. The Alabama Course of Study ELA reading goals for grades 6-8 will be used to set objectives.

Research – learners will develop their awareness and abilities to recognize reliable sources online and in print. Students will be given choices that appeal to their personal interests and curricular

goals for the target of their research. Throughout this process, learners will have opportunities to distinguish biased, single-sourced material from objective, multiple-sourced resources. Learners will eventually explain how they can analyze critically a variety of research sources, including websites, books, magazines, and social-media platforms.

Vocabulary – learners will be finished with the developmental levels of spellers outlined by the *Words Their Way* program in the upper elementary classes.

- Bear, D. R. (2000). *Words their way: Word study for phonics, vocabulary, and spelling instruction*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Merrill.

In middle school, learners will move on to derivational roots and focus on frequently used Greek and Latin roots in order to build their vocabulary capacity for reading and writing. Learners will be able to study a group of related roots to learn the many words developed from those. Learners will define a group of words and use them in well-developed sentences to show comprehension of definitions. Teachers will look for use of the new words in student writing during the year.

Independent Reading – each learner will select texts of their choice of varied genres from classroom and/or school libraries. The texts can be at multiple reading levels and should be able to be read on an independent reading level for the student. Teachers will help students select appropriately leveled texts. Students will log time spent reading independently and will be expected to log minimum times as determined by the teachers. Students may be asked to journal about the readings informally to promote the connection of reading to one's writing.

Writing

Response Packets – in Literature Circles – as part of the Literature Circle Groups, students will complete a variety of Response Packets over the course of a novel or biography. Writing skills practiced in the Response Packets will include:

- Making predictions, based on evidence in text
- Making connections to text: text-text, text-self, text-world
- Summarizing a chapter or book
- Responding to a text with an observation or question or an opinion
- Answering questions and citing pages and evidence in the text to support the answer
- Building vocabulary of new or unfamiliar words in context

Journal Writing – students will have journals that they will write in given relevant topics by teachers, and for Mindfulness reflections of the Mindfulness Program “Inner Explorer,” as well as personal entries as desired. In general, students will be expected to write in sentences to express their ideas. Journals will not be graded but used to assist in the following areas of writing:

- Clear communication of ideas
- Rules of grammar taught through “grammar in context”
- Putting thoughts into words
- State opinions with reasoning

Creative Writing - Learners will engage in practicing narrative story-telling with particular points of view, in developing original forms of poetry, and creating plays or monologues. Following the study of the various genres above, students will be given choices within each genre for developing short- and long-term projects. Technology will be integrated and students will develop digital stories as part of the work.

Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis involves identifying and discussing the relationships between the author, audience, purpose, and context of various texts—literary, academic, popular, political, personal, and so on. The ability to identify the elements of the rhetorical situation is fundamentally important for English class, and across the curriculum, because it structures our thinking, talking, and writing about the world. Students are introduced to the practice of rhetorical analysis in the process of writing, but also in discussions concerning literature and current events.

Oral Presentation

Project-based Learning – learners will develop a series of projects that will have oral presentation as a key component. These may be original scripts, digital stories, blogs, Power Point presentations, book reports, poems, or short stories. Students will learn the essential skills needed for effectively presenting material in an oral presentation. Students will use eye contact with the audience (if able), they will project their voice to be audible for the audience, they will employ visual aids effectively, and they will keep the audience engaged.

Gifted Readers

Learners who excel at the 6-8th grade Standards for ELA will be given permission to read higher level texts and respond to them in ways designed in cooperation with the teacher and student. The goal in this situation will be to take the student farther in a meaningful, learner-centered manner.

Assessments

Teachers will use a variety of tools to measure success in the ELA areas. Some of those to be used will include:

- Renaissance Learning Computerized Star Reading Test
- Informal assessments such as observation, anecdotal records
- Rubrics for projects
- Unit tests for texts
- Quizzes
- Standardized tests provided by the State of Alabama

Tenth Grade Age Students

Students entering the tenth grade might have very different needs. The following hypothetical

narratives provide examples of the types of needs students might present in an English classroom and how a teacher at Capstone Charter School might respond to them.

Jackson doesn't like to read and has a hard time sitting still. It takes him a long time to write things by hand, but when he types on his computer he is more focused and productive, particularly if he is allowed to listen to music on his headphones – a multi-sensory intervention. Jackson doesn't like working in groups and has difficulty getting things done when the students around him are working together. He needs help in working with others, so as a multi-tiered intervention, when collaboration is required, the classroom teacher makes a point to create groups with very specific, differentiated roles and tasks for each member. And, because Jackson needs more time to work on tests, the teacher coordinates with other teachers to provide more time or allows him to finish his work after school.

Samantha is dyslexic and gets headaches when she has to read for an extended period of time. She also has great difficulty with writing. When Samantha takes the STAR Reading test on her own, the questions often time-out before she can complete them. Independently, she scores on a sixth grade level on the test. When she retakes the test with the teacher reading the prompts, she scores on a tenth grade level. Using a technology-based intervention, Samantha listens to audio books and works with the teacher's aide to complete her tests. The teacher has designated note-takers in the classroom to write down essential information from lessons or group activities. The teacher also works with the Reading Specialist and the Special Education teacher to create a plan for other multi-tiered accommodations and interventions.

Langston is a tenth grade student who has already mastered most of the content in the language arts course of study for high school. He reads and writes with the skill of a junior or senior in college, and yet, he is still a kid. It is easy for the teacher to pair him with struggling students or to rely on him to explain concepts to one small group while she is working with another, but Langston is one of those students who constantly wants to learn and try new things. Thus, the teacher recommends more ambitious literary works – both in length and complexity – for his book list and adds more analytical dimensions to his book tests. When Langston has extra time he works on the novel he's writing for his creative writing project or does exercises from the college style manual provided by the teacher.

Each student represents a different set of skills and needs when it comes to classroom instruction. Teachers at the Capstone Charter School are committed to meeting students where they are, both personally and academically, and working with them to achieve their individual best.

The Alabama Course of Study will be very important to the teachers at Capstone Charter School, but obviously from the examples of the students described previously, it will serve as a guide and a set of minimum standards. Many students will continue on through the sequential skills of a standard, perhaps to the next grade level or beyond. In some cases, the minimum standard will be met and the student will delve deeper into a subject.

Using the Alabama Course of Study as a guide, teachers at Capstone Charter School will ensure that these objectives will be met as they use a variety of literature and standards-specific lessons that fit the needs of individual students. The Course of Study will serve as a checklist of skills to include during Large Group Instruction, Small Group Instruction, and Individual Conferences.

Link to ELA Course of Study: (also see attachment 1)

<https://www.alsde.edu/sec/sct/COS/2016%20Revised%20Alabama%20English%20Language%20A>

Methods and Strategies

Literature

Over the course of the year students will read, analyze, and write about a number of literary works of various genres by British and American authors.

With some of the texts, such as Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* or Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, students will work in groups to create dramatic performances for their peers. For example, students collaborate to compose and perform modern pilgrimage narratives modeled after *The Canterbury Tales* and written in rhymed iambic pentameter. Students also select scenes from *Macbeth*, translate them into contemporary English, and present them in character to the class.

Academic Writing

Over the course of the year, students will learn and practice the fundamental principles of academic writing. Great emphasis is put on writing strong sentences, cohesive paragraphs, and well-organized essays.

Using the principles and techniques presented in Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein's *They Say, I Say* (2016), students will practice the sort of writing that will prepare them for success in college courses and in their future careers. Graff and Birkenstein's text:

- *Shows that writing well means entering a conversation*, summarizing others ("they say") to set up one's own argument ("I say").
- *Demystifies academic writing*, showing students "the moves that matter" in language they can readily apply.

- *Provides user-friendly templates* to help writers make those moves in their own writing.
- *Shows that reading is a way of entering a conversation*—not just of passively absorbing information but of understanding and actively entering dialogues and debates. (xvii)

In scope and sequence, the academic writing portion of the high school English classes takes as its model the EN 101 course at the University of Alabama and draws from *The Norton Field Guide to Writing* (2016) for instruction concerning academic literacies, rhetorical situations, genres of writing, writing processes and strategies, research and documentation, and media and design.

Students will be guided through the processes of generating ideas and text, drafting, organizing, revising and rewriting, editing, and assessing. They will apply these processes to a series of essay projects, including genres such as narrative, analysis, evaluation, exposition, and argumentation.

Reading

At the first of the year, students will create a list of ten challenging literary works that they plan to read over the course of two semesters. These works are selected according to a set of criteria that requires the students to broaden their personal reading range. The lists must include serious books from several genres (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama), by women and men from around the world. At least half of the books must be selected from a level-appropriate list provided by the teacher. When students complete each book, they will take a test that asks them to analyze the setting, plot, themes, and other essential aspects of the text in order to think more deeply about the content and what they can learn from it. Accommodations and adaptations of the assignment are made for students with different abilities and needs. For example, students may be permitted to listen to audio books or may be given more time to complete selections that are more challenging for them. The average student is tested every three weeks.

Grammar

Grammar is taught both in individual lessons and in the context of the writing and revision process. At least once a week, the students and teacher collaboratively edit a paragraph of text and discuss the complicated decisions writers make concerning mechanic, usage, and grammar. The students will all have an account on [GrammarFlip.com](https://www.grammarflip.com) that they use to review and to target specific concepts that need more work.

Vocabulary

Students will collaborate to develop lists of vocabulary words at least twice a month. Each student selects and teaches a word to the class by writing it on the board, giving its definition and part of speech, pronouncing it correctly, and using it in a sentence. Significant class time is dedicated to conversations about the etymology of words and word families, which helps students develop linguistic skills and practice for upcoming standardized tests.

Creative Writing

Each student will develop a major creative writing project over the course of the year that may continue into the subsequent years of school. Students have the option to write a novel, a collection of short stories or poems, an autobiography, a graphic novel, or a play. Each month they submit a minimum of two pages toward this project and receive feedback from the teacher. This project provides the basis for a series of exercises and conversations about literary terms, and it allows students to more fully appreciate the intricacies of the literature that they read.

Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis involves identifying and discussing the relationships between the author, audience, purpose, and context of various texts—literary, academic, popular, political, personal, and so on. The ability to identify the elements of the rhetorical situation is fundamentally important for English class, and across the curriculum, because it structures our thinking, talking, and writing about the world. Students practice rhetorical analysis in the process of writing, but also in discussions concerning literature and current events.

Assessments

Teachers will use a variety of tools to measure success in the ELA areas. Some of those to be used will include:

- Renaissance Learning Computerized Star Reading Test
- Informal assessments such as observation, anecdotal records
- Rubric-based essays and projects
- Self-assessments of essays and projects using teacher rubric
- Reading tests for texts
- Quizzes
- Standardized tests provided by the State of Alabama

Attachments

Section 2: Curriculum and Instructional Design

2.1	Attachment 2 Part Three	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 11:50 PM	PDF / 5.372 MB
2.2	Attachment 2 Part Two	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 11:50 PM	PDF / 9.794 MB
2.3	Attachment 2 Part One	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 11:48 PM	PDF / 9.948 MB

3. Student Performance Standards

Capstone Charter School's Performance Standards will be based on the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards for Grades K-12. These standards are aligned with the Common Core State Standards. Teachers will use the State of Alabama Courses of Study to develop and teach all courses. Students will be allowed to progress through the continuum of standards according to their own development, pace, and learning needs. In some cases, this progress will be sequential. In some cases, students may delve deeply into the subject matter in a type of enrichment environment. Teachers will ensure that students have met the learning goals in their age group grade before allowing the student to work on advanced material. As always, the keystone of the Capstone Charter School will be to work with students in small groups according to personalized needs. Students will have many opportunities to display their growth and development through the use of the Multiple Intelligences. It is important that teachers remain flexible, fluid, and nimble in developing lessons for all students.

The Teacher Council shall develop proposed promotion standards and a process to be used to determine a student's readiness to progress to the next level of study. The criteria will include the student's academic, social, emotional, and physical growth and development. Multi-age groups will allow the teachers the flexibility to present lessons over several grade levels within one multi-age group. Students will not be identified by their grade level, but by the multi-age cluster in which they are enrolled. For instance, a student might be enrolled in one of the 5-7 year old clusters.

To graduate, students must complete 24 units of high school credit, at least three hours of dual enrollment or Right to Work credit, and at least 40 hours of community service. Capstone Charter School offers the two pathways to college and career-readiness. One requires the ACT and dual enrollment with The University of Alabama's Early College. The other pathway requires dual enrollment with Shelton State Community College and benchmark level on the ACT WorkKeys Assessment or completion of the Ready-to-Work program. Students will also meet at least three of the six college and career readiness indicators or targets, as outlined by Alabama's Plan 2020:

1. a benchmark score on any section of the ACT test;
2. a qualifying score on an AP or IB exam;
3. approved college or postsecondary credit while in high school;
4. a benchmark level on the ACT WorkKeys;
5. an approved industry credential; or
6. documented acceptance for enlistment into the military.

Attachments

Section 3: Student Performance Standards

3.1	Performance Standards, part 2	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:27 AM	PDF / 5.378 MB
3.2	Performance Standards, part 2	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:27 AM	PDF / 9.794 MB
3.3	Performance Standards, part 1	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:26 AM	PDF / 9.948 MB

4. High School Graduation Requirements (High Schools Only)

High School Graduation Requirements

High schools will be expected to meet the applicable state and authorizer graduation requirements.

1. **Describe how the school will meet these requirements. Explain how students will earn credit hours, how grade point averages will be calculated, what information will be on transcripts, and what elective courses will be offered. If graduation requirements for the school will exceed applicable state and authorizer standards, explain the additional requirements.**

To graduate, students must complete 24 units of high school credit, at least three hours of dual enrollment or *Right to Work* credit, present a Senior Media Project, and complete at least 40 hours of community service.

Capstone Charter School offers the two **PATHWAYS** to college and career-readiness. One requires dual enrollment with The University of Alabama's Early College and the ACT test. There is one exception if the senior has successfully completed 17 hours at UA, he/she will receive an "automatic admission" without ACT, SAT, or TOEFL scores required. Families must pay in-state college tuition to UA for each class but Early College does offer a half-scholarship to public school students with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

The other pathway requires Dual Enrollment with Shelton State Community College and benchmark level on the ACT WorkKeys Assessment or completion of the *Ready-to-Work* program. Shelton offers a scholarship for their technical programs so that is no tuition at all (books included) for their college classes. Either pathway allows students to meet at least two of the six college and career readiness indicators or targets, as outlined by Alabama's Plan 2020:

1. benchmark score on any section of the ACT test;
2. qualifying score on transfer credits of AP or IB exam;
3. approved college or postsecondary credit while in high school;
4. benchmark level on the ACT WorkKeys;
5. an approved industry credential; or
6. documented acceptance for enlistment into the military.

Students at the Capstone Charter School will take traditional courses, per the Alabama Course of Study, delivered in a nontraditional schedule with best-practices instruction. Students also have a range of opportunities to explore their personal interests through extensive elective options offered at: CCS, The University of Alabama, and Shelton State Community College. Electives include courses such as drama, robotics, Mandarin Chinese, women's health, baking, auto mechanics, and photography, as well as introductory courses representing various academic

disciplines and trades. Students have access to a robust selection of elective education opportunities through our diverse faculty and larger higher-education community.

For university, college, and technical classes students will meet the requirements set forth on the syllabus. For the high school classes, students will be assessed according to the standards set forth in the Alabama Course of Study.

In order to earn course credit, Capstone Charter School requires that students demonstrate at least 70% mastery of course objectives. To this end, students are given extensive support and tutorials in the learning process, lessons adapted to their individual needs, and numerous opportunities to practice targeted skills and objectives in preparation for assessment.

For high school students, Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated using a weighted 4-point scale with college credit being weighted with an additional quality point.

Grade Calculations			
A+ 97 – 100 (4.33)	B+ 87 – 89 (3.33)	C+ 77 – 79 (2.33)	0 – 69 No Credit
A 93 – 96 (4.0)	B 83 – 86 (3.0)	C 73 – 76 (2.0)	
A- 90 – 92 (3.67)	B- 80 – 82 (2.67)	C- 70 – 72 (1.67)	

High school transcripts will include a list of courses taken, organized by semester; annotations about courses counted for dual credit; the student's grade, GPA, and Carnegie Unit (CU) earned for each course; cumulative totals for each of these grade categories; and anticipated graduation date.

- 1. Explain how the graduation requirements will ensure students' college or career readiness, and/or both, or other postsecondary opportunities (e.g., postsecondary education, career/technical training, military service, or workplace readiness).**

At Capstone Charter School the high school schedule is organized so that students may attend college and technical classes in the morning and high school classes in the afternoon. Students are required to choose either the Early College path through the University of Alabama or the Career/Technical path through Shelton State in order to fulfill their graduation requirements. These pathways are designed to give students the opportunity to learn and succeed in college and/or career objectives while surrounded by a supportive community of faculty who are invested in their success.

The curriculum at CCS is characterized by rigor and relevance in order to give students preparation for the hard work involved in planning and bringing tasks to completion, as well as an understanding of how the skills they acquire in the classroom have real-world applications and value. This is accomplished through regular collaborative and project-based learning,

opportunities for mentorship and experience in our school-to-career program, and extensive elective options that allow students to explore and apply their strengths to fields of interest.

1. Explain what systems and structures the school will implement for students at risk of dropping out and/or not meeting the proposed graduation requirements.

The faculty at CCS will be invested in the success of each of its students. Teachers interact with each student daily and keep track of student progress in numerous ways.

Conferences

Before the first day of school each fall, the faculty team will meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each individual student. Parents prepare for the meeting by filling out an extensive questionnaire about their child and submitting it beforehand. This meeting is an opportunity for the faculty to listen and learn about the student and family, and it provides a space for parents to talk about their expectations, concerns, and desires related to their child's education and well-being.

Following these intake conferences, teachers collaborate to make adjustments to class configurations and plans in order to best meet the needs of the incoming student population. The faculty team is regularly available for appointments with parents and students, but has two more mandatory meetings during the school year – one halfway through the fall semester and one halfway through the spring semester. Students are present at these mid-semester meetings and talk with the parents and teachers about their progress and goals for the coming months.

On Friday of each week, the upper school principal will email the faculty team and request an update on all classes. Teachers write a brief report highlighting any students who have the following:

1. two or more unexcused absences
2. two or more notable tardies
3. two or more missing assignments
4. two or more incidents of behavior that is either inappropriate or out-of-character
5. examples of outstanding work or service/citizenship to be communicated to their parents

The administrator or a faculty representative will follow up with parents and/or students in response to the weekly reports by teachers, making every effort to get ahead of potential difficulties before they have the opportunity to become problems.

Plans to launch the second PATHWAY Program for high school students

Four sectors of the business community in Tuscaloosa came together to develop the **Ready to Work** program: Manufacturing/Automotive, Health Care, Construction and Hospitality. Since 2016, several public high schools have joined the Ready to Work program: Central High School, Greensboro High, Hale County High, TCTA (serving Bryant, Northridge and Hillcrest High Schools). In 2019, the following schools will offer this program to seniors: Autaga, Holt, Northside, Opelika City, LeMar County and Berry County.

While the *Ready to Work* program has only been utilized in 12th grades, an accelerated plan has been proposed by Russel DuBose, CCS School Board member and member of the Alabama State Workforce Innovation Group. With the curriculum already developed and FREE to all public schools, DuBose proposes that juniors take the TABE locator pre-test and that teachers furnish test scores to show that the student scores at 8.0 grade level in reading and math and maintains a GPA of at least 2.0. If successful, the student takes the 17-week curriculum as an elective during their junior year. After enrolling and studying the curriculum, the student takes the TABE test again and must score at Level D to continue. The four modules can be offered by CCS high school across the four 9 weeks of the 11th grade. These are:

#1 Safety in the Workplace

#2 Production in Manufacturing and Automotive Industries

#3 Maintenance Awareness

#4 Quality

Every Junior who completes the *Ready to Work* program (and passes the required drug test) by May, 2021 will be offered a place in Phifer's YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM during the summer prior to his/her senior year with pay of \$15 an hour. This is an incredible opportunity for our students who come from low-income families!

In addition, Shelton offers the following Technical programs through their Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit program:

Salon & Spa Management	Logistics and Supply Chain
Megatronics	Air Conditioning & Refrigeration
Welding	Machine Tool Technology
Culinary Arts	Computer Science Technology
Automotive Technology	Business Office Management & Technology
Nursing Assistant	Engineering Graphics & Design
Child Development	Computer Numerical Control
Electrical Technology	Health Information Technology
Computer Numerical Control	Diesel Mechanics

ALL of these programs are FREE with the students paying no tuition to Shelton State Community College. Required books and manuals are included in the scholarship. As a unique way to pursue both an academic goal of college graduation and a Students may even take one academic class and one technical class and still receive the full scholarship!

Specific Shelton classes will lead to students earning two credentials: AIDT Certified Alabama Worker Credential and ACT Work Keys NCRC (National Career Readiness Certificate at the Metallic Level). Three School Board members guarantee that they will hire 100% of Capstone Charter School students who have earned those two certifications. They will hold a special Job Fair during Shelton's World of Work 2.0 with more than 2 dozen employers offering 300+ jobs in 2019 and expect this to give seniors who have completed *Ready to Work* or AIDT or NCRC first chance at the open jobs. This is in addition to the companies represented by our School Board members.

Through our investment in small group instruction; differentiated, forward-focused learning paths; and extensive parent and student communication, the CCS faculty will create an environment that supports at-risk students in strategic, individualized ways. Our faculty and support team will work alongside students who are struggling in order to give them every opportunity to succeed.

Attachments

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

4.1	Alabama High Graduation Requirements	Rountree, Barbara, 12/18/18 3:55 AM	PDF / 599.274 KB
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5. School Calendar and Schedule

The Capstone Charter School proposed calendar was developed using the State of Alabama General Provisions/Definitions/School Calendar/School Day Requirements. Thought and consideration was given to meet the needs of families enrolled. The calendar was developed with the calendars of local institutions in mind such as The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa City Schools, and Tuscaloosa County Schools.

Schedules were designed to allow teachers to work with one half or less of the class at a time for small group instruction. Grade level or same age group teachers were given common planning time.

Attachments

Section 5: School Calendar and Schedule

5.1	State of AL Required Days and Hours of Instruction	Rountree, Barbara, 12/18/18 4:06 AM	PNG / 50.896 KB
5.2	10th-12th Grade Schedule Capstone Charter School	Rountree, Barbara, 12/18/18 3:39 AM	DOCX / 119.491 KB
5.3	8th-9th Grade Schedule Capstone Charter School	Rountree, Barbara, 12/18/18 3:38 AM	DOCX / 128.589 KB
5.4	6th-7th Grade Schedule Capstone Charter School	Rountree, Barbara, 12/18/18 3:37 AM	DOCX / 130.272 KB
5.5	Sample Elementary Schedules Capstone Charter School	Rountree, Barbara, 12/18/18 3:32 AM	DOCX / 32.595 KB
5.6	2020-21 Capstone Charter School Calendar	Rountree, Barbara, 12/17/18 5:56 PM	Unknow File Type / 268.516 KB

6. School Culture

Capstone Charter School

School Culture

- 1. Describe the culture of the proposed school. Explain how it will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce student intellectual and social development.**
- 2. Explain plans for creating and implementing this culture for students, educators, instructional leaders, and parents starting with the first day of school. Describe the plan for transitioning students who enter school mid-year into the school's culture.**

Capstone Charter School will utilize and integrate Dr. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences into the curriculum, while creating a classroom community campus-wide. This is a founding principle that Capstone Charter School will use as the basis for hiring, scheduling and curriculum planning. Capstone Charter School believes it is extremely important to give learners various experiences to develop all intelligences, as not one person learns in the same way. This will help the learner discover the intelligences that may be their greatest strengths. Being exposed to the eight multiple intelligences can also give the learner a better sense of self. It is also important that learners develop self-reflection skills to know when an intelligence requires more effort to master.

According to, <http://www.institute4learning.com/resources/articles/multiple-intelligences/>, "The theory of multiple intelligences proposes a major transformation in the way our schools are run. It suggests that teachers be trained to present their lessons in a wide variety of ways using music, cooperative learning, art activities, role play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, and much more." Capstone Charter School will provide the opportunity for students to work in all of Dr.

Gardner's areas of intelligence. This will allow students to experience many ways of learning and find those that meet their own personal best. These will be evaluated and presented to students and parents in their portfolios that will be provided each quarter. As students grow, they and their teachers will find the areas of intelligence that they prefer and will capitalize on those skills.

The following includes an example of how students will utilize the Multiple Intelligences: the 9-11-year-old cluster would be responsible for learning about each of the Intelligences so that each learner can create a narrative for parents about the intelligences and how he or she worked on those areas each quarter. As the students progress to the next cluster, the middle school cluster, grades 6-8, they will identify their strengths and use those to choose their future academic and professional paths. As they enter into their high school years, grades 9-12, the students will have explored the multiple areas of intelligence and will truly begin to understand not only how to capitalize on their areas of strength, but also how to accommodate for the areas that may not be as strong. By the time the students are ready to graduate, they will have a good idea of who they are and how they can use their intellectual strengths to make a difference in the world.

Capstone Charter School plans to utilize a program called Inner Explorer. Inner Explorer helps create mindfulness within the student. <https://innerexplorer.org> states, "Inner Explorer program is a series of daily 5-10-minute audio-guided mindfulness practices. The program focuses on key areas of development, bringing mindfulness to education and helping students prepare for learning. Daily practice teaches kids practical techniques to appropriately handle negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, anger and more." Statistics read as follows: 28% higher grades in reading, math, and science, a 43% decrease in teacher stress, a 60% decrease in behavioral issues, and a 15% increase in average G.P.A. Inner Explorer offers programs for all age-groups (PreK-12) that help students with following themes:

- Discovering Breathing and Relaxation Exercises
- Learning Awareness of Senses
- Using Thought and Emotional Regulation
- Developing Compassion and Connection
- Promoting Social Emotional Learning

<https://innerexplorer.org/#ourPrograms>

The Capstone Charter School will encourage rigor and academic excellence in a joyful learning environment. This will include everything from the detailed lessons of a possible month-long study of ladybugs in the 5-7-year-old cluster, the engaging field experiences that could happen in Williamsburg, Dauphin Island, and Space Camp for older students, to the Robotics Competitions, Geography Bee, German and Spanish Day Competitions, and the Mercedes Marathon points to the wide range of possible opportunities for students to learn so much more than most children, and at a higher level of understanding. Rigor and academic excellence will be seen in the large number of college courses upper school students will complete before graduation. Shelton State's Dual Enrollment Program and the University of Alabama Early College program will make it possible for Capstone Charter students to graduate with more than thirty hours of college coursework.

The Elementary school teachers and Expert Teachers will compile comprehensive portfolios to show parents examples of the work completed in each nine-week period. These portfolios will be divided into the eight Multiple Intelligences. Within each section will include newsletters that will communicate curriculum and special activities for each quarter. Examples of student work and personal comments will be included by the learner and the teacher and the more formal progress report will provide parents a snapshot of his/her child's learning progress. At the end of the first and third quarter, parent/teacher conferences will be held in all grade levels to establish goals and review progress. Middle and High School learners and parents will meet with the instructors at the beginning of each year and plan each learner's learning path and goals. These goals will be revisited at each subsequent parent-teacher-student meeting that will occur mid-semester of each term. The teachers will encourage parents and students to push beyond what they think they can do and will set goals that are short-term and long-term. This "growth mindset" will provide students with endless possibilities and opportunities.

Our proposed buildings will be an interesting blend of old and new. The daily walks between each building will give students time to socialize a bit and to get some exercise and fresh air between classes. Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are two of Gardner's intelligences that we will work to develop in all classes. The positive, encouraging attitude of the faculty and staff will promote happiness for everyone. Frequent contact with parents will foster the personal relationships that build confidence. Teachers will have what they need to make lessons exciting; collaboration will spark new ideas and support projects and programs, and administrative encouragement and site-based planning will develop consensus.

Learners will feel safe and supported in each classroom learning environment. Developing a healthy culture will always be an important goal and aspect of Capstone Charter School. Capstone Charter School believes the work of Susan Kovalik and Associates (Highly Effective Teaching or HET) who advocated creating an "absence of threat" environment so that the students would be able to focus on learning. If the brain is focused on any type of "threat" in the environment, then the body goes into flight or fight response. In this case, the student cannot possibly concentrate on learning. Capstone Charter School will also use the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills from HET to help promote a positive learning environment. The goal is to help learners feel safe and supported in their learning environment.

Learners will have supportive and healthy relationships with their peers. Capstone Charter School will focus on understanding how the ability of a student understanding oneself and interacting effectively with others. The teachers will understand that they needed to build programs and strategies that attend to the social and non-cognitive needs of each student so that they can feel comfortable and supported by their peers and as a result, they will build healthy relationships. We will also conduct "Intake Conferences" that will consist of meeting with parents in August prior to the opening of school to learn from the parents about their child. This will include a meeting with the parents to discuss primarily the learner. The parents will come to the meeting prepared with a completed Intake Questioner that will be supplied by the classroom teacher. The questioner will have questions pertaining to the learner's personality and academic interests.

Built into the curriculum will be an emphasis on developing Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Intelligences. In the student portfolios that the Elementary age group teachers will create, these

two personal intelligences will be featured. Instructional staff will be provided relevant, targeted support and training to reach high standards. Teachers will read common texts for professional development as an ongoing effort to ensure faculty are receiving relevant and targeted training for programs that can help our learners meet high standards. Teachers will be encouraged to attend professional development workshops that highlight best practices in schools each year.

Learners will participate in structures, programs and/or initiatives that attend to their social-emotional/non-cognitive learning. Instructional staff will have relationships with learners that are supportive, caring and congenial. The teachers will read books and teach lessons about the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills. The use of these will give everyone at Capstone Charter School a common vocabulary which can use to reinforce positive behaviors and interactions amongst the students. Learning these at ages 5-7 will lay a foundation encouraging students to use the skills in later years as they progress through the multi-age-group clusters.

Our Advisory or Guidance Counselor will also deliver lessons to teach the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills and other activities to develop Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Intelligence such as teaching the *Seven Habits of Happy Kids* by Sean Covey. Providing students with these skills will be helpful with the integration of new learners who enter the school mid-year. As new learners are integrated into the school mid-year they will be immersed in the same practices that the current students are involved in. The classroom environment will be inviting, and the new learner will be given the tools to acclimate accordingly.

Instructional staff will collaborate with each other through structures and schedules that maximize collaboration and collegial learning. This focus on the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills will also influence the way in which the faculty interacts with each other. The teachers will be role models for the students as they also utilize the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills as a faculty.

Parents, families and legal guardians will be welcomed into the institution through structures that encourage and facilitate their presence. One of the greatest factors in school success is how involved parents are in their child's school. Therefore, we will require parents to contribute 36 volunteer hours or one hour a week per year, to the school. Parents will keep track of their hours, record them, and provide them to the classroom teacher when complete. Parents will also create a relationship with each teacher during pick-up and drop-off each day. Teachers will get to know the parents to utilize their expertise and talents to enhance and optimize the educational environment for the learners. Some will be given the opportunity to help teach classes, become guest speakers on their areas of expertise, go on field trips, help with special events, fundraise, improve the buildings and grounds of the school, help manage our website or online management system, help in the development of materials and lessons, work with Capstone Charter School sports teams, and extracurricular groups such as Girl Scouts, Robotics, and Key Club. The Parent/Student Handbook will describe opportunities for parents and guardians to visit classrooms and volunteer time in meaningful ways. This handbook will be given to each new family. Parents will be invited to programs throughout the year for each cluster and for the entire school community. Each fall, all families will be encouraged to attend a Parent Council Get Acquainted Picnic, Scavenger Curriculum Hunt, Thanksgiving Feast, and Wax Museum; Parent Night, STEM Night and in the spring, each family will plan to attend the Parent Council Festival.

Community involvement will be an integral part of the institution's culture. The Capstone Charter School will have many significant connections to the community that will support the school's culture. Two of the proposed buildings will be rented from historical preservation groups in Tuscaloosa. A gym will be rented at the local YMCA for basketball, the pool at The University of Alabama, and the gym at Bama Bounders for gymnastics lessons. The 5-7-Year-Old Clusters will take lessons with a local swim school, Swim Kids. The high school sports teams will practice in the Tuscaloosa Parks and Recreation Areas (PARA) facilities for volleyball and soccer. The tennis team will use the Tuscaloosa Tennis Club courts for practice. The Bowling Team will practice and compete at the two local bowling alleys, Bama Lanes and Leland Lanes. The Golf team will use Old Colony Golf Course and The Links Golf course for practice and competition. We will travel to the Bama Theater and Shelton State for theater performances supporting Tuscaloosa Children's Theater. As stated earlier, High school students will attend The University of Alabama's Early College program or Shelton State Community College for Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment. Some students can earn up to 30 college credit hours upon High School graduation. "Family and community involvements foster partnerships among schools, family and community groups, and individuals. These partnerships result in sharing and maximizing resources. And they help children and youth develop healthy behaviors and promote healthy families."

https://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/school_health/health_coord_family.htm

At Capstone Charter School, we will have high expectations for not only the students but also for parents, faculty, staff. It will be part of Capstone Charter School's culture to encourage everyone to be his or her best and to push beyond satisfactory to reach excellence. For the teachers, this will be done by encouraging them to not only participate in a variety of continuing education opportunities but to also accept leadership roles in areas that help other educators and student educators. For the parents, we will expect full participation in the education of their child and also require them to volunteer 36 hours or more a year at the school. "In 2016, the percentages of students whose parents reported attending a general meeting at their child's school, a parent-teacher conference, or a school or class event reached their highest recorded levels (89, 78, and 79 percent, respectively)."

<https://www.childtrends.org/indicators/parental-involvement-in-schools>

Each of the staff members will have either degrees or years of experience in their particular field and are also encouraged to gain continuing education to stay abreast of research and best practice. The students will be consistently, but gently encouraged to strive beyond what they believe they are capable of doing. In essence, each student will have their own individual learning path that is developed with the student, the parents, and teachers. One of the Capstone Charter school's top priorities will be to encourage all who work and learn to truly become responsible citizens of the world.

Learners will experience rigorous and challenging tasks, activities, and projects that will focus on developing higher order thinking and problem-solving skills. Whether a student will enroll in Capstone Charter School as a kindergartener or as a high schooler, they will immediately be involved in rigorous learning throughout the day. The elementary students K-5 will be given opportunities for collaborative group learning, individual progress, and technological research and writing. There will also be many hands-on learning opportunities involved in science, math, and

language arts. The elementary clusters will be taught German, Spanish, art, music, and technology every week. While half of the cluster attends a Spanish, German, art, music or technology class, the other half will remain in the classroom for a small group lesson. The groups will be organized in a way the learners will benefit. For example, the more advanced Spanish learners will be grouped together for Spanish class while the stronger math students are grouped together for a math lesson.

Small group violin and piano classes will begin when a child reaches age 7. The middle school and high school students' core classes will be tailored to the students' learning abilities with a growth mindset in place to push the students to new academic heights. During these classes, they will experience a wide variety of learning opportunities including, group collaboration, independent learning, project-based learning, STEM activities, presentations, and online research and writing.

Instructional staff will be held to high standards for pedagogy and content knowledge as well as actions, words, and attitudes to demonstrate their belief that all learners can meet high standards. In addition, an academic rigor and joyful learning environment will promote interest in learning, encourage collaboration, build skills and knowledge of a very wide range of topics and afford students to reach higher goals with confidence.

Capstone Charter School would also like to integrate the philosophy of Hope Institute into their charters education program. Character education is recognized as one of the most pressing needs among schools. According to The Hope Institute, "virtually everyone acknowledges that the nation's most pressing social problems such as crime, school dropouts, poor work ethic, incivility, and broken families have at their core the absence of good character. Yet all too many of our schools, public and private, have strayed from a traditional focus to help students develop good character as well as to be smart". Best practice suggests that in order to shape student character, schools must first develop a strong moral environment or culture conducive to good student character. Because of this widespread, well-recognized problem, a group from Samford University's Mann Center in Birmingham, Alabama have piloted a professional development program in character education among eight (8) K-12 public and private schools in Alabama. The results produced what is now known as The Hope Institute – a 501(c)(3) institution which partners with Samford University's Frances Marlin Mann Center for Ethics and Leadership and the Orlean Beeson School of Education to help bring to schools in Alabama the best practices for developing good character in students – and Hope Academy.

The Academy's curriculum has included six (6) day-long workshops with about 100 participants. Workshops and the curriculum enable participants to learn from national leaders in character education. They design a character development implementation plan for their schools, visit schools with character programs already implemented, and network with other school leaders. Between workshops, participants study books authored by the presenters, reflect on current school practices, create and implement a strategic school-wide plan for character formation, and receive on-site consulting from Hope Institute staff. According to the Hope Institute, an emphasis is placed on the importance of forming an effective leadership team and determining a school's core values, mission, and vision. Additional emphasis is placed on understanding the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components of character development, and on assessing and establishing a caring school environment. This past year in 2018, the Academy brought together

educational leaders from 19 North and Central Alabama K-12 schools (9 Elementary Schools, 7 Middle Schools, 3 High Schools) for the study of character development through education and has plans to soon do another introductory first-year course for an additional 25 new schools in Alabama.

The mission of Capstone Charter School will seek to ensure that each student develops academic competence, responsible character, and social confidence in a safe, caring environment of a strong community. With good character being at the core of these outcomes, it is important to identify an evidence-based strategic initiative for cultivating good character into our early planning phase. The Hope Institute and Hope Academy have been designed to assist schools in Alabama develop, implement, and evaluate effective strategies for cultivating character development. Therefore, Capstone Charter School teachers and administrators will plan to form a character development leadership team and participate in the Hope Institute Leadership Academy in order to utilize their proven strategies and connect with other teachers and administrators for best practices in character development among students in Alabama.

3. Explain how the school culture will take account of and serve students with disabilities, students who are English learners (EL), and any students who are academically below grade level.

At Capstone Charter School, we will embrace the belief that **ALL** children are smart, and we realize that not everyone learns in the same fashion. As such, the theory of multiple intelligences will be ingrained in our very essence and we will value all students regardless of ability or language barriers. Teachers will provide learning experiences beyond the more traditional linguistic or logical ways of instruction for any student that is experiencing a barrier to learning. Capstone Charter School will emphasize the life skills identified by Susan Kovalik in Highly Effective Teaching, the growth mindset and strategies from the Hope Institute Leadership Academy to create a safe environment that will ensure that each student develops academic competence, responsible character, and social confidence.

Typical School Day for an Elementary Student and Teacher

On a typical school day in November, Liam, a first grade age student arrives at school with his mother. She comes into the classroom to drop him off and speaks with the teacher. The teacher tells Liam's mother that he knew all of the "ice" family words on his test yesterday and that he will be progressing to the next section. The teacher also says that she could tell that Liam and his mother had been playing the "Number Bonds" game at home that he learned at school. He talked about it and his knowledge of all the numerical combinations of 10 had increased.

Liam enters the classroom and greets his closest friends, David and Mary. Liam's mother and his teacher smile at each other. They have discussed the close relationship he has formed with his friends. He chooses to work on *Splash Math* on the computer for a few minutes while everyone

else arrives.

At 8:20, the group meets together to work on *Mindfulness* using the *Inner Explorer* program. The students follow the instructions on the online recording to breathe deeply and follow the meditation. The teacher notices that Liam is able to sit more still than he did the day before and that he kept his eyes closed the whole time.

The teacher then helps the various groups in the classroom proceed to their groups. One is the blue group and one is the green group. Liam is in the green group.

Liam works with the classroom teacher on reading in a small group while another half of the class (the blue group) goes with the Music teacher to work in the music room. Liam's group is reading *The Magic School Bus Inside the Earth*. Liam was a beginning reader last year in kindergarten. Due to small-group instruction, he is now reading books on a third-grade level. He learned what the word "erosion" meant yesterday. He is having fun reading the reports on various subjects relating to earth science and the speech bubbles containing the dialog of the characters. Liam's teacher noticed how he couldn't wait to begin reading again today. She was so pleased by his last score on the Renaissance Learning online Star Reading Test. He scored 2nd grade, eighth-month instructional level.

After reading, the music teacher comes back to the room to drop off his first group and takes Liam's group of 12 to the music room. They are listening to the *Nutcracker*. The music teacher has been writing music featuring whole notes, quarter notes, quarter rests, and triplets on the board. The students have been clapping out the rhythms. At the end of class, they played the rhythms on the Orf percussion instruments.

It is Liam's day to work on his spelling words. When he returns to the classroom, he gets out his spelling folder. He takes a test on the "ot" family words. He knows how to spell "dot, got, hot, pot, and not." He completes the test and places it in his folder for the teacher to evaluate. The teacher looks at it and places the next set of word families in the folder. He will try the "ip" words next time.

Since Liam had time remaining to work during his Language Arts period, he moved to the station to work on his Handwriting Without Tears workbook. He practices a few minutes with the multi-sensory materials and then did a page in his workbook. The teacher checks his work and tells him that he did very well.

The green group is now going to the library. The librarian comes to pick them up. The teacher praises Liam because he remembered by himself to get his library book out of his bag to return it. Liam's teacher will now work with the blue group in the classroom. Liam enjoys getting out in the fresh air as they move to the library. It is a sunny day in fall. His classmates cheerfully walk

together. The library teacher smiles as she watches Mary skip up to Liam to hold his hand. He turns to smile at her.

At the library, Liam asks the librarian to help him find a book about rocks. He is interested in various types of rocks since his class began studying about Maps, Globes, the Continents, and Landforms. His Literature Circle group book about rocks has motivated him to want to learn more.

When he returns to the classroom, he shows the teacher the book he found in the library. She asks if she can plan to read it tomorrow during Read Aloud Time during science to the class. Liam smiles, happy that he found something useful. The teacher wants to bring some samples of igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rocks that she has to share. She starts thinking about presenting the Moh's Scale of Hardness Test that she would like to use later in the week.

The teacher moves to set up today's science lesson. She is going to teach the students how to use a compass. She begins with the green group while the blue group works with the counselor. She shows them how they all point to magnetic North or the North Pole. They take their map of the continents and turn it so that north on the map is the same as north on the compass. The teacher asks them to point to real north and then real south, then east and west. She talks about how our part of the Earth turns towards the Sun, so it looks like it is coming up in the east and then sets in the west. All of the students hold a compass in their hand. She teaches them how to hold it steadily. She then has everyone spread out in the room. She asks them to take 3 steps north, 2 steps east, 1 step west, 4 steps south, etc. Liam and David start making up stories about hunting for treasure.

Liam's green group then goes to work with the counselor. Today's Life Skill focus is "Perseverance." The counselor is beginning this focus by reading the book, "Katy and the Big Snow" by Virginia Lee Burton. It is about a snowplow that "keeps at it" to dig a city out after a big snowstorm. After hearing the book aloud, the class makes a chart of ways to use perseverance at school.

Liam returns to the classroom to eat lunch. He knows exactly how to follow the procedures. He gets his lunch out and places it on a table near his friends. He washes his hands and starts eating. After lunch, he gets out a broom and dustpan to sweep up. At the end of lunch, everyone helps clean up and wipe the tables. Everyone takes turns using the restroom. They then head outside to the playground. The teacher praises everyone for cleaning up and remembering the procedures. The teacher sat next to a student who needs a little more hands-on help during lunch.

After recess, the green group has math with the teacher. The green group is divided into 3 subgroups of 4 students each. They got to name their group. Liam's smaller group decided to call themselves the "Ninjas." Mary is the appointed supply helper. She gets the tray containing the work the Ninjas should do for math and brings it to their table. They get the supplies out together. They are using the dominoes. They have to place the dominoes under the number that is created

by the two sets of dots on the domino. For instance, a domino might go under 10, because it has 5 dots + 5 dots.

The teacher is rotating between all the groups on this day. Sometimes she works with one specific group, sometimes she rotates, and sometimes she teaches a group lesson to everyone. The group might utilize the computers or iPads as well. Today, one group is working on *Splash Math*, an online math program and the other is working with a parent volunteer to play a card game to learn to subitize, or instantly recognize a quantity of a number.

The blue group is working with the Reading Specialist. She is working with a group who needed help with letter sounds. When the green group switches to work with her, she will work with Liam to understand contractions.

The students all use the restroom. It is time for PE. Today, the class is loading the bus to go to gymnastics with the PE teacher. Liam is excited. He can't wait to get to use the trampoline. The classroom teacher uses this time to plan lessons. She is going to work on next week's lessons about building a model city.

When the students return, the blue group goes with the Technology teacher to the Tech Lab. The green group stays to work with the teacher on Landforms. They are learning about various land and water forms. The teacher has provided play dough for them to form the landform in a tray with high sides. They pour blue colored water around the landforms to show where the water forms go. They have a sheet created by the teacher to draw the various landforms and color. This sheet will go in Liam's portfolio in the Naturalist Intelligence area.

Afterward, Liam's group goes to Technology. He will work on the Osmo iPads today.

At 3:30, all the students return to the classroom. They help stack the chairs and clean up. They leave the classroom ready for the janitor to come to clean and mop. They gather their things together. The teacher speaks to each parent as they come to pick up. She tells each parent something about his or her child's day. Mary's mother tells the teacher that they will arrive a little bit late tomorrow. Mary has to go to the dentist for a checkup.

Attachments

Section 6: School Culture

6.1	CCS Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:49 AM	PDF / 1.227 MB
6.2	CCS Multiple Intelligences Curriculum Chart	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:45 AM	PDF / 224.26 KB

7. Supplemental Programming

7. Supplemental Programming

7.1 Extra – and/or Co-curricular Activities

Elementary students will have the opportunity to participate in the Student Council with a girl and boy representative per multi-age class. All elementary students will participate in International Story Times each week to hear familiar or traditional stories read aloud in a different language each week. Please see the proposed weekly schedule for two lessons per week drawn from the Multiple Intelligences such as: Art, Music, Technology, Character Education/Advisory, German, Spanish, Mandarin OR needed tutoring in place of multiple languages.

All students will get to attend up to four performances at the Bama Theatre to see live theater from three local children's theater groups. They will attend performances of the Tuscaloosa Children's, Girls and Boy Choir. P.E. plans to offer seasonal physical activities at community sites such as Stillman College tennis courts, Bama Bounder's gym, Swim Kids and PARA facilities.

Communication regarding all supplemental programming will be adapted both in language and in format to clearly inform parents and families from all student populations about opportunities.

7.2 Afterschool Program

The planned Afterschool Program for students in 4th grade and older include a wide-range of extra-curricular activities and clubs such as: Science Olympiad, *MathCounts*, Archery, Spanish, Music, Girls Who Code, Swimming, GeoBee, Word Club/Spelling Bee, Robotics, Adaptive Physical Education, Art & Illustrators, Reading & Yoga, Outdoor Education, Mandarin Club, and Watercolor Art. The afterschool program fees paid by the parents will cover all participation fees for these programs.

Middle and High School students have more choices of clubs and sports team practices. It is important that teacher sponsors provide guidance to promote the school's goal of service learning. Possible clubs include Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H Club, Key Club, Chess Club, Film Club, *MathCounts*, Art Club, Drama Club, Crew Club (rowing on the Black Warrior River 1 block from the proposed school location), etc.

Sports teams are limited to those sanctioned by the Alabama Athletic High School Association. A strict seasonal schedule is published for each sport at <http://www.ahsaa.com/Sports> click on tabs for individual sports.

Without knowledge of how many older students will leave their current school to enroll in the proposed charter school, it is difficult to predict how many students will choose to participate in a sports team. Possibly the first sports to be chosen will include those with smaller teams such as Cross Country, Tennis, Golf as the school builds toward the AHSAA requirement of 5 women's sports teams and 5 men's sports teams. Capstone Charter School's Afterschool Program will be paid for by parents at \$10 a day. Other outings, such as theatre trips will be supplemented by the Parent Council for those who cannot pay.

7.3 Programs and Strategies

Capstone Charter School will embrace various programs and strategies that will address students' mental emotional, and social development and health. Capstone Charter School will recognize the social and emotional needs of each learner and accommodate them accordingly. These programs will consist of, but are not limited to, Multiple Intelligences, life skills identified by Susan Kovalik, *Seven Habits of Happy Kids* by Sean Covey, integrating strategies from Hope Institute Leadership Academy, Inner Explorer, and Parent/Teacher Conferences.

Utilizing the Theory of Multiple Intelligences will allow the learner to discover their strengths and weaknesses as well as helping them find a sense of self. Capstone Charter School will provide the opportunity for students to work in all of Dr. Gardner's areas of intelligence each week by hiring Expert Teachers in these areas. This will allow students to experience many ways of learning and find those that meet their own personal best. As students grow, they and their teachers will find the areas of intelligence that are strengths and weakness and move forward as competencies are learned and remediate any gaps in learning at earlier grade levels.

Capstone Charter School plans to utilize a program called *Inner Explorer*. *Inner Explorer* helps create mindfulness within the student. <https://innerexplorer.org> states, "Inner Explorer program is a series of daily 5-10-minute audio-guided mindfulness practices. The program focuses on key areas of development, bringing mindfulness to education and helping students prepare for learning. Daily practice teaches kids the practical techniques to appropriately handle negative emotions such as stress, anxiety, anger and more." Statistics read as follows: 28% higher grades in reading, math and science, a 43% decrease in teacher stress, a 60% decrease in behavioral issues, and a 15% increase in average G.P.A. Inner Explorer offers programs for all age-groups (PreK-12) that help students with following themes:

- Discovering Breathing and Relaxation Exercises
- Learning Awareness of Senses
- Using Thought and Emotional Regulation
- Developing Compassion and Connection
- Promoting Social Emotional Learning

<https://innerexplorer.org/#ourPrograms>

According to, <https://innerexplorer.org/compass/faq>, “The practice of mindfulness has gained much popularity, especially in recent years, as its application proved valuable in fields ranging from the medical community to education and the military. This mainstream popularity has fueled even more research into mindfulness practices. Scientific research clearly supports and documents the benefits of mindfulness to improve not only health and well-being, but also the brain in particular. Brain science tells us that the brain actually has a ‘plastic’ quality called neuroplasticity that allows the brain matter to change under certain conditions. What is significant about this is that whereas we previously thought the brain was fixed, especially by a certain age, we now know that, with mindfulness practice, the grey matter in the brain changes to foster improved function in the areas of the brain that regulate learning, memory, compassion, empathy and stress.”

In addition to *Inner Explorer*, our Guidance Counselor will also teach lessons twice a week to small groups of 12 to teach the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills and other activities to develop Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Intelligence such as teaching the *Seven Habits of Happy Kids* by Sean Covey. Providing students with these skills will be helpful with the integration of new learners who enter the school mid-year. Learners will feel safe and supported in each classroom learning environment. Developing a healthy culture will always be an important goal and aspect of Capstone Charter School.

Capstone Charter School believes the work of Susan Kovalik and Associates (Highly Effective Teaching or HET) who advocated creating an “absence of threat” environment so that the students would be able to focus on learning. If the brain is focused on any type of “threat” in the environment, then the body goes into flight or fight response. In this case, the student cannot possibly concentrate on learning. Capstone Charter School will also use the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills from HET to help promote a positive learning environment. The goal is to help learners feel safe and supported in their learning environment. Further professional development from Hope Academy at Samford University will provide additional tools for our faculty to support student emotional growth and development. Learners will participate in structures, programs and/or initiatives that attend to their social emotional/non-cognitive learning. Instructional staff will have relationships with learners that are supportive, caring and congenial. The teachers will read books and teach lessons about the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills. The use of these will give everyone at Capstone Charter School a common vocabulary which can be used to reinforce positive behaviors and interactions amongst the students. Learning these at ages 5-7 will lay a foundation encouraging students to use the skills in later years as they progress through the multi-age-group clusters.

Instructional staff will collaborate with each other through structures and schedules that maximize collaboration and collegial learning. This focus on the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills will also influence the way in which the faculty interacts with each other. The teachers will be role models for the students as they also utilize the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills as a faculty.

Learners will have supportive and healthy relationships with their peers. Capstone Charter School will focus on understanding how the ability of a student understanding oneself and interacting effectively with others. These are identified in MI at Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Intelligence.

We understand that we needed to build programs and strategies that attend to the social and non-cognitive needs of each student so that they can feel comfortable and supported by their peers, and as a result they will build healthy relationships. We will also conduct “Before School Conferences” that will consist of meeting with parents in August prior to the opening of school to learn from the parents about their child. This will include a meeting with the parents to discuss their child. The parents will come to the meeting prepared with a completed Questionnaire named “My Child” with questions about the learner’s personality, habits, and academic interests. Also, at the end of the first and third quarter, parent/teacher conferences will be held in all grade levels to establish goals and review student progress. Middle and High School learners and parents will meet with the instructors at the beginning of each year and plan each learner’s learning path and goals. These goals will be revisited at each subsequent parent-teacher-student meeting that will occur mid-semester of each term. The teachers will encourage parents and students to push beyond what they think they can do and will set goals that are short-term and long-term. This “growth mindset” will provide students with endless possibilities and opportunities.

Capstone Charter School would also like to integrate the philosophy of Hope Institute into their charters education program. Character education is recognized as one of the most pressing needs among schools. According to The Hope Institute, “virtually everyone acknowledges that the nation’s most pressing social problems such as crime, school drop outs, poor work ethic, incivility, and broken families have at their core the absence of good character. Yet all too many of our schools, public and private, have strayed from a traditional focus to help students develop good character as well as to be smart”. Best practice suggests that in order to shape student character, schools must first develop a strong moral environment or culture conducive to good student character. Because of this widespread, well-recognized problem, a group from Samford University’s Mann Center in Birmingham, Alabama have piloted a professional development program in character education among eight (8) K-12 public and private schools in Alabama. The results produced what is now known as The Hope Institute – a 501(c)(3) institution which partners with Samford University’s Frances Marlin Mann Center for Ethics and Leadership and the Orlean Beeson School of Education to help bring to schools in Alabama the best practices for developing good character in students.

The Academy’s curriculum has included six (6) day-long workshops with about 100 participants. Workshops and the curriculum enable participants to learn from national leaders in character education. They design a character development implementation plan for their schools, visit schools with character programs already implemented, and network with other school leaders. Between workshops, participants study books authored by the presenters, reflect on current school practices, create and implement a strategic school-wide plan for character formation, and receive on-site consulting from Hope Institute staff. According to the Hope Institute, emphasis is placed on the importance of forming an effective leadership team and determining a school’s core values, mission, and vision. Additional emphasis is placed on understanding the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components of character development, and on assessing and establishing a caring school environment. This past year in 2018, the Academy brought together educational leaders from 19 North and Central Alabama K-12 schools (9 Elementary Schools, 7 Middle Schools, 3 High Schools) for the study of character development through education and has plans to soon do another introductory first year course for an additional 25 new schools in Alabama.

The mission of Capstone Charter School will seek to ensure that each student develops academic

competence, responsible character, and social confidence in a safe, caring environment of strong community. With good character being at the core of these outcomes, it is important to identify an evidence-based strategic initiative for cultivating good character into our early planning phase. The Hope Institute and Hope Academy has been designed to assist schools in Alabama develop, implement, and evaluate effective strategies for cultivating character development. Therefore, Capstone Charter School teachers and administrators will plan to form a character development leadership team and participate in the Hope Institute Leadership Academy in order to utilize their proven strategies and connect with other teachers and administrators for best practices in character development among students in Alabama.

By utilizing these programs and strategies, Capstone Charter School will provide each learner with a resource they can benefit from emotionally, socially, and mentally. Along with faculty and staff support, the programs and strategies will play a huge role in the learner's emotional, social and mental foundation. This foundation will follow the learner as they navigate through their educational career at Capstone Charter School. As a result of these programs and strategies, a safe environment will be created that will ensure that each student develops academic competence, responsible character and social confidence.

Attachments

Section 7: Supplemental Programming

– No Attachments –

8. Special Populations and At-Risk Students

Special Populations and At-Risk Students 1. Describe the overall plan to serve students with special needs, including, but not limited to, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans; English Learners (EL); students identified as intellectually gifted; and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out. Identify the special populations and at-risk groups that the school expects to serve, whether through data related to a specifically targeted school or neighborhood or more generalized analysis of the population to be served. Discuss how the course scope and sequence, daily schedule, staffing plans, and support strategies and resources will meet or be adjusted for the diverse needs of students. Overall Plan to Serve Students with Special Needs Capstone Charter School will be 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). CCS 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 CCS has identified Tuscaloosa County as its primary catchment area. Currently, Tuscaloosa City Schools data indicates a high number of

economically disadvantaged students (77.81%) and students with disabilities (64.94%) are not showing the same rate of growth as the group “all students” (87.15%). CCS recognizes these needs as a factor to consider when determining the potential for serving at-risk students. CCS is committed to providing the necessary resources for all special populations of students and understands that the aforementioned data will be areas of concern for the charter school due to surrounding student populations. All students currently receiving Special Education (SPED) services, will have Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and all students receiving 504 services, will have Section 504 Plans. These plans will be developed and monitored by teachers with proper certifications including SPED certification. Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committees will determine appropriate placement of SPED students while 504 committees will determine appropriate placement of 504 students. These committee meetings will allow time for students/teachers/administrators/parents to set mutually agreed upon goals for individual student learning. The school will also employ a diagnostician, as needed, who will work alongside teachers to determine if identified students qualify for services. A strong Response to Intervention (Rtl) program will be implemented for struggling students. Students who are not experiencing success in the classroom will 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 Tier 1-3 of Rtl will they be tested for learning disabilities. All other reasons for lack of success will be 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 CCS 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. CCS will develop 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) possible. The educational program for special needs students will be modeled after the place-based and project-based curriculum being used at CCS. The collaborative nature of place- and project-based learning will provide all students, including those below grade-level or those with special needs, with a strong foundation in 21st Century Skills, as well as, College and Career Readiness Standards due to cross-disciplinary Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, and Math focused projects. The concept of Multiple Intelligences will provide the framework for curriculum, instruction, and assessment of state standards. A scope and sequence will be developed to provide teachers with a guide to ensure coverage and pacing of state standards through projects and other hands-on learning experiences. Teachers will serve as learning facilitators and provide support for students based on their 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, tutoring and/or targeted intervention sessions will be provided during the charter school day. Additionally, Multiple Intelligences will provide a research based framework for guiding educational practice that: a) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and b) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient. The inclusion setting has proven to be very successful for students with special needs. We believe that students who are removed from the learning environment for remediation only fall further behind. In response, we will provide in class inclusion support allowing students to be accelerated instead of remediated. Once a student is tested and qualifies for SPED or 504 and a plan for individual learning is developed, the SPED/504 teacher will address the student’s needs, including but not limited to, classroom accommodations, tutoring, monitoring, inclusion support, resource support and more. The SPED teacher will also work with all of the student’s regular education teachers to ensure the students’ needs are met at all times and the student is in the least restrictive environment. Numerous opportunities for remediation will be available through online educational platforms, assistive

technologies, STEM technologies, Orton Gillingham methodology for dyslexia, etc. The bilingual (BE) 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 project presentations. Many schools find the need to remove students from the standard classroom setting in order to provide a multi-sensory environment to help students grasp linguistic concepts. Similar to the special education inclusion setting, we will provide a multisensory environment in every classroom allowing students to remain in the same room with their peers. Project-based learning (PBL) lends itself to this multisensory environment by its very nature. In PBL, students are constantly moving from visual cues, to verbal cues, to non-verbal cues, etc. Every learning situation involves oral and written communication as well as interaction with other students and media rich information through technology. Since the school does not anticipate a high number of English language learners (ELL) based on surrounding school district data, the school will seek out teachers who are already EL certified or who are willing to become certified on an as needed basis. CCS will offer Gifted and Talented services in which students are identified as gifted and/or talented through a series of designated assessments and surveys. Teachers who have GT certification will be employed to not only help identify these students but also to monitor progress on grade level assessments and acceleration of study. These students will 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. Collaboration with higher education is a unique aspect of CCS as well as partnerships with other local school districts and community organizations. These connections all create a shared support system for CCS students. CCS will also be eligible for federal and state resources to support special needs programs to serve its students accordingly.

2. Explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students who are performing below grade level and monitor their progress. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports the school will provide for these students. Capstone Charter School's curriculum will be based on individualized learning plans for each student. The individualized learning plans will be based on each student's academic level. Additionally, CCS will utilize acceleration when understanding of a skill or objective is mastered. Carefully utilizing data, CCS will craft the unique learning plans while emphasizing individual learning styles. The school counselor and teacher, working collaboratively with the Student Success Teams (SST), will be responsible for identifying struggling students and providing appropriate support for their academic success. CCS will implement a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework and SST to provide the appropriate levels of assistance and continued monitoring. 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. CCS will place students in the least restrictive environment to ensure the learning needs of each student are met. The Orton-Gillingham Program for dyslexia will be provided to students in need of specialized instruction. The Orton-Gillingham approach is intended primarily for students who have difficulty with reading, spelling, and writing. This approach is most often associated with a one-on-one teacher-student instructional model. Its use in small group instruction is not uncommon. Additionally, this approach is focused on the learning needs of the individual student. Students with dyslexia need to master the same basic knowledge about language and its relationship to our writing system as any who seek to become competent readers and writers. However, because of their dyslexia, they need more help in sorting, recognizing, and organizing the raw materials of language for thinking and use. Other strategies to be implemented to ensure the needs of all learners are met will include:

- o Maintain organized classrooms and limit distractions
- o Use music and voice inflection
- o Break down instruction into smaller, manageable tasks
- o Use multi-sensory strategies
- o Give all students opportunities for success
- o Offer inclusive classrooms

3. Explain more specifically how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports the school will provide, including the following:

a. Methods for "identifying, locating, and evaluating" students with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services;

(and avoiding misidentification). b. Plans for hiring and evaluating certified special education teachers and licensed related service providers, including projecting adequate staffing for the anticipated population of students. c. Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure students with disabilities are provided a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. d. Plans regarding continuum of placements, access to the general education curriculum, and the opportunity for students with disabilities to be

e. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of students with disabilities. f. Plans for promoting college- and career-readiness for students with disabilities, including high school graduation and post-school indicators. g. Plans regarding self-monitoring of disproportionality in the areas of identification, least restrictive environment, and disciplinary actions, including suspension/expulsion of students with disabilities. Self-monitoring of disproportionality should include an understanding of the coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) requirements when significant disproportionality has been determined by the Alabama State Department of Education/Special Education Services. h. Self-monitoring methods to evaluate procedural and substantive compliance with special education rules and regulations.

Special Education addresses the educational needs of children within the school who have identifiable disabilities, from ages three through twenty-one years, or until they receive their high school diplomas. Capstone Charter School believes every child is entitled to a high quality public education, regardless of disability. Children with disabilities may go without services because families are not fully aware of their options; therefore, the CCS Special Education staff members will be dedicated and committed to supporting instructional outcomes for all students. In accordance with state requirements, CCS will arrange for evaluations for school-aged children with suspected learning disabilities (Child Find). The Special Education Department will work collaboratively with the Problem Solving Team (PST) in local schools to identify teaching strategies, best practices, and interventions to meet the needs of all students. CCS's Special Education Department will strive 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. The identification, location and evaluation of students suspected of having a disability includes students attending private schools, students who are highly mobile, students who have been suspended or expelled from school, home-schooled students, students who have not graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma and those who may be in need of special education and related services even though they are advancing from grade to grade, and regardless of the severity of the disability. CCS's special education services will serve students who have been identified as eligible for special education services. Students identified as eligible for special education services must meet the following two requirements: 1) Federal and state eligibility requirements as having a disability; and 2) Need specially designed instruction

Table 1.3 Areas of Eligibility Disability Description

AUTISM A developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction evident before age three that adversely affects educational performance

DEAF-BLINDNESS A combination of both hearing and visual impairments causing severe communication and other developmental and educational needs

DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY A significant delay in one or more of the following areas may identify a child for this area of the disability on his or her third birthday: 1. Adaptive development 2. Cognitive development 3. Communication development 4. Social and emotional development 5. Physical development

EMOTIONAL DISABILITY A disability in which one or more of the following characteristics are exhibited over a long period of time and to a marked degree, adversely affecting educational performance: 1. An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors; 2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships; 3. Inappropriate type of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; 4. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; 5. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problem

HEARING IMPAIRMENT An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance; includes both deaf and hard of hearing

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY Significantly below average general intellectual functioning existing along with deficits in adaptive

behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects the child's educational performance

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES The combination of impairments such as mental retardation and blindness or mental retardation and orthopedic impairment which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments; does not include fearfulness

ORTHOPEdic IMPAIRMENT A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance; includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease, and impairments from other causes

OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT Having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, this is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette Syndrome. The impairment must adversely affect the educational performance of the child.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY A disorder in one or more basic psychological process involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT A communication disorder such as articulation, voice, language, or fluency, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY An acquired injury to the brain caused by external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment or both, that adversely affects educational performance.

VISUAL IMPAIRMENT A visual impairment that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Figure 1.9 Process for the IEP Team Meeting to Develop the IEP

4. Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of intellectually gifted learners, including the following:

- a. Approach to defining gifted, methods for ensuring equity and comparability in identification of Students in need of gifted services, and methods for monitoring and ensuring racial equity in the gifted program.
- b. Certification requirements for gifted specialists and professional development targets for general education teachers who teach gifted learners.
- c. Methods for ensuring the needs of gifted learners are met and continuum of service delivery options that will be offered (e.g., pull-out classes, advanced classes, interest clusters, cluster grouping with differentiated curriculum for gifted learner, acceleration procedures, field studies, mentors, all of the above).
- d. Methods for determining cognitive and affective growth among gifted learners.
- e. Procedures related to the monitoring of achievement data for gifted learners, including plans for disaggregation and distribution of results to parents.
- f. Self-monitoring methods for the gifted program, including what, when, and by whom.

Capstone Charter School will meet the learning needs of all students, including gifted students. CCS will use the definition of gifted as articulated in the Alabama Administrative Code (AAC), "Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor." CCS is committed to preparing all students for personal and professional success through the discovery of individual learning pathways in a rigorous and integrated Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STREAM) focused, project-based and place-based curriculum. Capstone Charter School will provide a safe and interactive learning environment where students feel they belong, are encouraged to participate and take ownership in their future, and are a catalyst for rekindling an agrarian spirit that will bring real opportunities to our rural community. USC will follow a systematic, multi-phased process for identifying gifted students to find students who need services beyond the general education program:

- 1) Nomination or identification phase;
- 2) Screening or selection phase;
- 3) Placement phase.

In the nomination and screening phase, various objective and subjective identification tools will be used to eliminate bias. Sample Identification Instruments: Subjective Nominations: Self, Peer, Teacher, Administrator, Parent. Nominations help cast a wide net for identifying as many students as possible who might qualify for gifted services. Gifted characteristic checklists,

inventory, and students, parents, teachers, and administrators to provide an informal perspective may complete nomination forms. Teacher Observations & Ratings: Learning & Motivation Scales. Teachers may make observations and use rating scales or checklists for students who exhibit a certain trait or characteristic during instruction. Sample rating scales include Scales for Rating Behavioral Characteristics of Superior Students (Renzulli & Smith, 1977), Purdue Academic Rating Scales (PARS), Whitmore or Rimm Underachievement Scales, and Cultural Characteristics Scales. Portfolios & Performances: Portfolios or work that is collected over time should include student reflections of their products and/or performances. Portfolios may be developed for both academic (language arts, math) and creative (speech, arts, music) pursuits. Student Educational Profiles: While many forms may be used to identify gifted children, an academic or artistic case study approach can offer a more comprehensive process. Case studies may include data, observations, and growth demonstrated in various settings. Objective Tests & Assessments: Individual intelligence and achievement tests will be used to assess giftedness. However, relying on IQ or performance results alone may overlook certain gifted populations. Student Cumulative Records: Grades, state and standardized tests will be used as data points during the gifted identification process. U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights. (2014). Civil Rights Data Collection: Data Snapshot (College and Career Readiness) Purcell, J. & Eckert, R. (2006). Designing services and programs for high-ability learners. National Association for Gifted Children. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. CCS will offer opportunities to take advanced coursework and provide authentic, challenging, and hands-on learning environments ideal for gifted students. Students will work on relevant projects that will be integrated with the core academic areas while providing opportunities to learn in a real world setting. Differentiating Instruction offers teachers a variety of strategies and resources for providing different levels of content and activities that will challenge all students, including gifted learners. A variety of achievement data of gifted students will be collected and analyzed each nine-week term. Achievement data will include: course final grade, state assessment results, formative and summative data. The school will have a culminating event each nine-week period to share place-based and project-based learning with parents and the community. Projects will be scored based on a rubric. Rubric scores will become part of each gifted student's portfolio of data. To ensure continuous improvement of the gifted education program, the administration will review the accomplishments and the data of the gifted students and talk with a group of gifted students and interested teachers to discuss ways CCS can better serve the needs of the gifted students. CCS will hire the best and the brightest educators for all its students, especially gifted students. To better prepare teachers to educate gifted students, teachers will participate in ongoing professional development and with professional learning communities to ensure differentiated, place-based and project-based learning is integrated with the core academic areas.

5. Explain how the school will meet the needs of English Learner (EL) students, including the following:

a. Methods for notifying parents/caregivers in a language they understand about the procedures that the school will use to identify EL students for possible language acquisition support. Capstone Charter School will serve English Learners (ELs) in compliance with the Alabama Department of Education's EL Policies and Procedures Manual. English language learners (ELs) benefit just as much from their parents' involvement in their education as other students. CCS will designate a qualified EL coordinator to ensure all EL students are provided services and supports. Some Hispanic parents may feel apprehensive about getting involved because of their limited English skills, lack of familiarity with mainstream culture and the public school system in the United States. Below are some ways CCS will reach out to parents of ELs and increase the likelihood of their participation:

- * Use their preferred language – This is an essential place to start. Without a common language, very little communication can take place.
- * Find a fully bilingual interpreter- Whether a school employee, parent liaison, family member, friend, or community member, this person can translate for parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school nights, PTA meetings, and regular communication. It is best to find an adult and not rely on the student as the translator, as this practice can disempower the parent.
- * Translate the written communications that is sent home- CCS will send home personal notes and materials in Spanish (or primary language). This will keep parents in the loop on issues such as report cards, school events, and homework. Put

parents in touch with bilingual staff- CCS will give parents a list of names and phone numbers of bilingual staff in the school who they can contact to deal with educational concerns. We will also encourage them to REACH out to other parents who are bilingual or monolingual so they can share experiences and help one another.

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/how-reach-out-parents-ells> b. Methods for identifying and evaluating EL students with disabilities in a timely manner by administering special education evaluations in the child's native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so (ensuring that a student's language needs can be distinguished from a student's disability related needs).

Educational decision making for EL students requires procedures for identification, assessment, and proper program placement. While the State of Alabama does not have statutes in place regulating specific language instruction educational programs and services for EL students, in conjunction with federal guidelines regarding EL students, provides the guidance LEAs need to identify, assess, and place students into an appropriate language instruction educational program. The completed survey becomes part of the student's permanent record. The identification and placement of EL students in an appropriate language program that assures them of an equitable, quality education is a four-step process. Step 1 – Home Language Survey Step 2 – Initial Assessment of Language Proficiency Step 3 – Parental Notification Step 4 – Program Placement Step 1 – Home Language Survey (HLS) The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, Language Minority Compliance Procedure requires LEAs to identify Limited English Proficient (LEP) students .CCS has selected the Home Language Survey (HLS) as the tool to identify LEP students. The purpose of this survey is to determine if there is a primary language other than English spoken in the home. Schools have a responsibility under federal law to serve students who are LEP and in need of ESL or bilingual instruction in order to be successful in core academic subjects. Given this responsibility, CCS has the right to ask for the information they need to identify these students.

The Home Language Survey (HLS) will be a part of the registration process. The parent or guardian of all students must complete the HLS at the time of initial enrollment into CCS, and the HLS will remain in the student's permanent record through the student's graduation. CCS will conduct an interview with the student and/or parents during the enrollment process. Information from the interview may be helpful to the ELcommittee when considering appropriate placement for the student. The assistance of a translator may be required to complete the survey. The Home Language Survey will contain, at a minimum, these four questions: 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 HLS 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 CCS for placement in the general student population will be followed. If any response on the HLS 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 HLS 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. If the HLS indicates that the primary language in the home is not English, then the CCS's Title III contact person or designee will be contacted and an initial assessment of the student's English language proficiency level will be conducted.

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/student-assessment/ell-guidelines-january-2011-final.pdf> Step 2 – Initial Assessment of Language Proficiency Conduct an initial assessment of English language proficiency to determine the level of English proficiency and to facilitate appropriate instructional and program placement decisions. A student whose' H L S indicates the presence of a language other than English must be assessed for English-language proficiency within thirty (30) days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year. Assess students who register after the beginning of the school year within two (2) weeks of enrollment. CCS will utilize the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)- ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) to help determine eligibility for placement in an English Language development program. The W-APT assesses English

language proficiency in all four domains of language development; listening, speaking, reading, and writing—as well as comprehension to ensure that student ' language needs are properly identified and addressed through the educational program. Step 3 – Parental Notification Prior to the initial placement of a student in a language instruction educational program, CCS will notify the student's parent s or guardians. Parents are not required to respond to the notification in order for the student to participate in the language instructional program; parents do have the right to waive EL services and remove their child from the district's English Language Instructional Program. Step 4 – ESL Program Placement ELLs Come to school not only to learn how to communicate socially, but to become academically proficient in English. Learning social English is just the tip of the iceberg. Just because they can speak on the playground, talk to peers, and use every day English does not mean that they are up to speed i n academic English. To the contrary, these ELLs are not yet proficient enough to handle the standards-based curriculum. They lack the academic vocabulary needed to develop the content knowledge in English that they will need to succeed in future schooling.

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/student-assessment/ell-guidelines-january-2011-final.pdf> c.

Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for these students.

Instructional Strategies for EL Students: Checking students' comprehension of the content: • Use Sentence strips • Set up dialogue journals between teacher and student • Plan activities using role play and drama • Use student reading log • Use Cloze exercises • Write summaries • Encourage students to write headlines • Write character diaries • Have students present information with illustrations, comic strips, or other visual representation • Allow students to provide answers and explain processes instead of you telling them Helping EL students adjust to the classroom: • State /display language, content and metacognitive objectives • List instructions/process steps and review orally • Present information in varied way (oral, written, demonstrations, with tangible objects) • Frequently summarize key points • Repeat and paraphrase important terms • Provide Word Wall with vocabulary for unit/chapter • Have students maintain notebook • Have student maintain learning log for metacognitive strategies •Allow sufficient response time Adjusting Teaching style: • Develop a student-centered approach • Speak a little more slowly (not louder), use shorter sentences, and avoid idioms • Increase the percentage of inferential and higher order thinking questions • Provide correction for language errors by modeling, not overt correction Teaching a multi-level/multiple intelligences class: • Use Cooperative learning • Incorporate Peer tutoring • Use the Writing Process • Explicitly connect learning to students' • Knowledge and experience • Take time to preview and explain new concepts and vocabulary before starting instruction • Use Questionnaires/Interviews motivating students and providing background knowledge: • Use Semantic Webbing and graphic organizers • Use Anticipation Reaction Guides • Have students brainstorm, then record responses on overhead before starting lessons • Use KWL charts • Use maps, photos, and manipulatives • Do activities where students can interact and move around adapting EL techniques to the content classroom: • Have students do hands-on activities • Do demonstrations • Use CDs, Cassettes and DVD's with books • Use a variety of groupings so that EL Students can interact with different classmates (not Only the Spanish speaking ones!) • Provide Students with outline of lesson and • Questions that will be asked beforehand so they have an opportunity to process information and participate more readily • The overhead projector is your best friend, Use it every day to model highlighting text, identifying main ideas or new vocabulary or to show pictures. d. Plans for monitoring and periodic evaluation of the progress and success of EL students, including using a reliable English language proficiency (ELP) assessment that tests in the four language domains, identifying benchmarks for exiting students from EL services, and defining plans for providing follow-up support for at least two years after students exit the program; EL students will be monitored on an ongoing basis to assess their progress toward English proficiency/fluency. EL students will remain in the EL program until they demonstrate their English proficiency/fluency. They will be monitored no less than once each nine weeks during the first year and at least one each semester during the second year. Figure 1.10

demonstrates the EL process continuum. Figure 1.10 EL Process Continuum. e. Means for providing qualified staffing for EL students. Qualified staff will be hired to serve EL students, as needed.

Special Populations and At-Risk Students

1. Describe the overall plan to serve students with special needs, including, but not limited to, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 plans; English Learners (EL); students identified as intellectually gifted; and students at risk of academic failure or dropping out. Identify the special populations and at-risk groups that the school expects to serve, whether through data related to a specifically targeted school or neighborhood or more generalized analysis of the population to be served. Discuss how the course scope and sequence, daily schedule, staffing plans, and support strategies and resources will meet or be adjusted for the diverse needs of students.

Overall Plan to Serve Students with Special Needs

Capstone Charter School will be 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). CCS 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

CCS has identified Tuscaloosa County as its primary catchment area. Currently, Tuscaloosa City Schools data indicates a high number of economically disadvantaged students (77.81%) and students with disabilities (64.94%) are not showing the same rate of growth as the group “all students” (87.15%). CCS recognizes these needs as a factor to consider when determining the potential for serving at-risk students. CCS is committed to providing the necessary resources for all special populations of students and understands that the aforementioned data will be areas of concern for the charter school due to surrounding student populations. All students currently receiving Special Education (SPED) services, will have Individualized Education Plans (IEP) and all students receiving 504 services, will have Section 504 Plans. These plans will be developed and monitored by teachers with proper certifications including SPED certification. Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) committees will determine appropriate placement of SPED students while 504 committees will determine appropriate placement of 504 students. These committee meetings will allow time for students/teachers/administrators/parents to set mutually agreed upon goals for individual student learning. The school will also employ a diagnostician, as needed, who will work alongside teachers to determine if identified students qualify for services. A strong Response to Intervention (RtI) program will be implemented for struggling students. Students who are not experiencing success in the classroom will 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 Tier 1-3 of RtI will they be tested for learning disabilities. All other reasons for lack of success will be 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 CCS 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. CCS will develop 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) possible. The educational program for special needs students will be modeled after the place-based and project-based curriculum being used at CCS. The collaborative nature of place- and project-based learning will provide all students, including those below grade-level or those with special needs, with a strong foundation in 21st Century Skills, as well as, College and Career Readiness Standards due to cross-disciplinary Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, and Math focused projects. The concept of Multiple Intelligences will provide the framework for curriculum, instruction, and assessment of state standards. A scope and sequence will be developed to provide teachers with a guide to ensure coverage and pacing of state standards through projects and other hands-on learning experiences. Teachers will serve as learning facilitators and provide support for students based on their 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, tutoring and/or targeted intervention sessions will be provided during the charter school day. Additionally, Multiple Intelligences will provide a research based framework for guiding educational practice that:

- a) provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and
- b) reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.

The inclusion setting has proven to be very successful for students with special needs. We believe that students who are removed from the learning environment for remediation only fall further behind. In response, we will provide in class inclusion support allowing students to be accelerated instead of remediated. Once a student is tested and qualifies for SPED or 504 and a plan for individual learning is developed, the SPED/504 teacher will address the student's needs, including but not limited to, classroom accommodations, tutoring, monitoring, inclusion support, resource support and more. The SPED teacher will also work with all of the student's regular education teachers to ensure the students' needs are met at all times and the student is in the least restrictive environment. Numerous opportunities for remediation will be available through online educational platforms, assistive technologies, STEM technologies, Orton Gillingham methodology for dyslexia, etc. The bilingual (BE) 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 project presentations. Many schools find the need to remove students from the standard classroom setting in order to provide a multi-sensory environment to help students grasp linguistic concepts. Similar to the special education inclusion setting, we will provide a multisensory environment in every classroom allowing students to remain in the same room with their peers. Project-based learning (PBL) lends itself to this multisensory environment by its very nature. In

PBL, students are constantly moving from visual cues, to verbal cues, to non-verbal cues, etc. Every learning situation involves oral and written communication as well as interaction with other students and media rich information through technology. Since the school does not anticipate a high number of English language learners (ELL) based on surrounding school district data, the school will seek out teachers who are already EL certified or who are willing to become certified on an as needed basis.

CCS will offer Gifted and Talented services in which students are identified as gifted and/or talented through a series of designated assessments and surveys. Teachers who have GT certification will be employed to not only help identify these students but also to monitor progress on grade level assessments and acceleration of study. These students will 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. Collaboration with higher education is a unique aspect of CCS as well as partnerships with other local school districts and community organizations. These connections all create a shared support system for CCS students. CCS will also be eligible for federal and state resources to support special needs programs to serve its students accordingly.

2. Explain how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students who are performing below grade level and monitor their progress. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports the school will provide for these students.

Capstone Charter School's curriculum will be based on individualized learning plans for each student. The individualized learning plans will be based on each student's academic level. Additionally, CCS will utilize acceleration when understanding of a skill or objective is mastered. Carefully utilizing data, CCS will craft the unique learning plans while emphasizing individual learning styles. The school counselor and teacher, working collaboratively with the Student Success Teams (SST), will be responsible for identifying struggling students and providing appropriate support for their academic success. CCS will implement a Response to Intervention (RTI) framework and SST to provide the appropriate levels of assistance and continued monitoring. 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. CCS will place students in the least restrictive environment to ensure the learning needs of each student are met.

The Orton-Gillingham Program for dyslexia will be provided to students in need of specialized instruction. The Orton-Gillingham approach is intended primarily for students who have difficulty with reading, spelling, and writing. This approach is most often associated with a one-on-one teacher-student instructional model. Its use in small group instruction is not uncommon. Additionally, this approach is focused on the learning needs of the individual student. Students with dyslexia need to master the same basic knowledge about language and its relationship to our writing system as any who seek to become competent readers and writers. However, because of their dyslexia, they need more help in sorting, recognizing, and organizing the raw materials of language for thinking and use.

Other strategies to be implemented to ensure the needs of all learners are met will include:

- Maintain organized classrooms and limit distractions
- Use music and voice inflection
- Break down instruction into smaller, manageable tasks
- Use multi-sensory strategies
- Give all students opportunities for success
- Offer inclusive classrooms

3. Explain more specifically how the school will identify and meet the learning needs of students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities. Specify the programs, strategies, and supports the school will provide, including the following:

- a. Methods for “identifying, locating, and evaluating” students with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services; (and avoiding misidentification).**
- b. Plans for hiring and evaluating certified special education teachers and licensed related service providers, including projecting adequate staffing for the anticipated population of students.**
- c. Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure students with disabilities are provided a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment.**
- d. Plans regarding continuum of placements, access to the general education curriculum, and the opportunity for students with disabilities to be**
- e. Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of students with disabilities.**
- f. Plans for promoting college- and career-readiness for students with disabilities, including high school graduation and post-school indicators.**
- g. Plans regarding self-monitoring of disproportionality in the areas of identification, least restrictive environment, and disciplinary actions, including suspension/expulsion of students with disabilities. Self-monitoring of disproportionality should include an understanding of the coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) requirements when significant disproportionality has been determined by the Alabama State Department of Education/Special Education Services.**
- h. Self-monitoring methods to evaluate procedural and substantive compliance with special education rules and regulations.**

Special Education addresses the educational needs of children within the school who have identifiable disabilities, from ages three through twenty-one years, or until they receive their high school diplomas. Capstone Charter School believes every child is entitled to a high quality public education, regardless of disability. Children with disabilities may go without services because families are not fully aware of their options; therefore, the CCS Special Education staff members will be dedicated and committed to supporting instructional outcomes for all students.

In accordance with state requirements, CCS will arrange for evaluations for school-aged children with suspected learning disabilities (Child Find). The Special Education Department will work collaboratively with the Problem Solving Team (PST) in local schools to identify teaching strategies, best practices, and interventions to meet the needs of all students. CCS's Special Education Department will strive 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.

The identification, location and evaluation of students suspected of having a disability includes students attending private schools, students who are highly mobile, students who have been suspended or expelled from school, home-schooled students, students who have not graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma and those who may be in need of special education and related services even though they are advancing from grade to grade, and regardless of the severity of the disability. CCS's special education services will serve students who have been identified as eligible for special education services. Students identified as eligible for special education services must meet the following two requirements:

1. Federal and state eligibility requirements as having a disability; and
2. Need specially designed instruction

Table 1.3 Areas of Eligibility

Disability	Description
AUTISM	A developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction evident before age three that adversely affects educational performance
DEAF-BLINDNESS	A combination of both hearing and visual impairments causing severe communication and other developmental and educational needs
DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY	<p>A significant delay in one or more of the following areas may identify a child for this area of the disability on his or her third birthday:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adaptive development 2. Cognitive development 3. Communication development 4. Social and emotional development 5. Physical development

EMOTIONAL DISABILITY	<p>A disability in which one or more of the following characteristics are exhibited over a long period of time and to a marked degree, adversely affecting educational performance:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors; 2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships; 3. Inappropriate type of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; 4. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; 5. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problem
HEARING IMPAIRMENT	<p>An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance; includes both deaf and hard of hearing</p>
INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY	<p>Significantly below average general intellectual functioning existing along</p> <p>with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects the child's educational performance</p>
MULTIPLE DISABILITIES	<p>The combination of impairments such as mental retardation and blindness or mental retardation and orthopedic impairment which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments; does not include fearfulness</p>
ORTHOPEDIC IMPAIRMENT	<p>A severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance; includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease, and impairments from other causes</p>
OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT	<p>Having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, this is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition,</p>

	hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette Syndrome. The impairment must adversely affect the educational performance of the child.
SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY	A disorder in one or more basic psychological process involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations.
SPEECH AND LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT	A communication disorder such as articulation, voice, language, or fluency, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.
TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY	An acquired injury to the brain caused by external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment or both, that adversely affects educational performance.
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT	A visual impairment that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Figure 1.9 Process for the IEP Team Meeting to Develop the IEP

4.

Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of intellectually gifted learners, including the following:

- a. Approach to defining gifted, methods for ensuring equity and comparability in identification of Students in need of gifted services, and methods for monitoring and ensuring racial equity in the gifted program.
- b. Certification requirements for gifted specialists and professional development targets for general education teachers who teach gifted learners.
- c. Methods for ensuring the needs of gifted learners are met and continuum of service delivery options that will be offered (e.g., pull-out classes, advanced classes, interest clusters, cluster grouping with differentiated curriculum for gifted learner, acceleration procedures, field studies, mentors, all of the above).
- d. Methods for determining cognitive and affective growth among gifted learners.
- e. Procedures related to the monitoring of achievement data for gifted learners, including plans for disaggregation and distribution of results to parents.
- f. Self-monitoring methods for the gifted program, including what, when, and by whom.

Capstone Charter School will meet the learning needs of all students, including gifted students. CCS will use the definition of gifted as articulated in the Alabama Administrative Code (AAC), "Intellectually gifted children and youth are those who perform or who have demonstrated the potential to perform at high levels in academic or creative fields when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment. These children and youth require services not ordinarily provided by the regular school program. Children and youth possessing these abilities can be found in all populations, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor." CCS is committed to preparing all students for personal and professional success through the discovery

of individual learning pathways in a rigorous and integrated Science, Technology, Reading, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STREAM) focused, project-based and place-based curriculum. Capstone Charter School will provide a safe and interactive learning environment where students feel they belong, are encouraged to participate and take ownership in their future, and are a catalyst for rekindling an agrarian spirit that will bring real opportunities to our rural community. USC will follow a systematic, multi-phased process for identifying gifted students to find students who need services beyond the general education program:

1) Nomination or identification phase;

2) Screening or selection phase;

3) Placement phase. In the nomination and screening phase, various objective and subjective identification tools will be used to eliminate bias. Sample Identification Instruments:

Subjective

Nominations: Self, Peer, Teacher, Administrator, Parent. Nominations help cast a wide net for identifying as many students as possible who might qualify for gifted services. Gifted characteristic checklists, inventory, and students, parents, teachers, and administrators to provide an informal perspective may complete nomination forms.

Teacher Observations & Ratings: Learning & Motivation Scales. Teachers may make observations and use rating scales or checklists for students who exhibit a certain trait or characteristic during instruction.

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Student Educational Profiles: While many forms may be used to identify gifted children, an academic or artistic case study approach can offer a more comprehensive process. Case studies may include data, observations, and growth demonstrated in various settings.

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gifted populations.

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(College and Career Readiness)

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Hispanic parents may feel apprehensive about getting involved because of their limited English skills, lack of familiarity with mainstream culture and the public school system in the United States. Below are some ways CCS will reach out to parents of ELs and increase the likelihood of their participation:

- * Use their preferred language – This is an essential place to start. Without a common language, very little communication can take place.

- * Find a fully bilingual interpreter- Whether a school employee, parent liaison, family member, friend, or community member, this person can translate for parent-teacher conferences, back-to-school nights, PTA meetings, and regular communication. It is best to find an adult and not rely on the student as the translator, as this practice can disempower the parent.

- *Translate the written communications that is sent home-CCS will send home personal notes and materials in Spanish (or primary language). This will keep parents in the loop on issues such as report cards, school events, and homework. Put parents in touch with bilingual staff- CCS will give parents a list of names and phone numbers of bilingual staff in the school who they can contact to deal with educational concerns. We will also encourage them to REACH out to other parents who are bilingual or monolingual so they can share experiences and help one another.

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/how-reach-out-parents-ells>

b. Methods for identifying and evaluating EL students with disabilities in a timely manner by administering special education evaluations in the child's native language, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so (ensuring that a student's language needs can be distinguished from a student's disability related needs). Educational decision making for EL students requires procedures for identification, assessment, and proper program placement. While the State of Alabama does not have statutes in place regulating specific language instruction educational programs and services for EL students, in conjunction with federal guidelines regarding EL students, provides the guidance LEAs need to identify, assess, and place students into an appropriate language instruction educational program. The completed survey becomes part of the student's permanent record. The identification and placement of EL students in an appropriate language program that assures them of an equitable, quality education is a four-step process.

Step 1 – Home Language Survey

Step 2 – Initial Assessment of Language Proficiency

Step 3 – Parental Notification

Step 4 – Program Placement

Step 1 – Home Language Survey (HLS) The Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, Language Minority Compliance Procedure requires LEAs to identify Limited English Proficient (LEP) students .CCS has selected the Home Language Survey (HLS) as the tool to identify LEP students. The purpose of this survey is to determine if there is a primary language other than English spoken in the home. Schools have a responsibility under federal law to serve students who are LEP and in need of ESL or bilingual instruction in order to be successful in core academic subjects. Given this responsibility, CCS has the right to ask for the information they need to identify these students. The Home Language Survey (HLS) will be a part of the registration process. The parent or guardian of all students must complete the HLS at the time of initial enrollment into CCS, and the HLS will remain in the student's permanent record through the student's graduation. CCS will conduct an interview with the student and/or parents during the enrollment process. Information from the interview may be helpful to the ELcommittee when considering appropriate placement for the student. The assistance of a translator may be required to complete the survey.

The Home Language Survey will contain, at a minimum, these four questions:

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 HLS 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 CCS for placement in the general student population will be followed. If any response on the HLS 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 HLS 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. If the HLS indicates that the primary language in the home is not English, then the CCS's Title III contact person or designee will be contacted and an initial assessment of the student's English language proficiency level will be conducted.

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/student-assessment/ell-guidelines-january-2011-final.pdf>

Step 2 – Initial Assessment of Language Proficiency Conduct an initial assessment of

English language proficiency to determine the level of English proficiency and to facilitate appropriate instructional and program placement decisions. A student whose H L S indicates the presence of a language other than English must be assessed for English-language proficiency within thirty (30) days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year. Assess students who register after the beginning of the school year within two (2) weeks of enrollment.

CCS will utilize the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)- ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) to help determine eligibility for placement in an English Language development program. The W-APT assesses English language proficiency in all four domains of language development; listening, speaking, reading, and writing—as well as comprehension to ensure that student ' language needs are properly identified and addressed through the educational program.

Step 3 – Parental Notification Prior to the initial placement of a student in a language instruction educational program, CCS will notify the student's parent s or guardians. Parents are not required to respond to the notification in order for the student to participate in the language instructional program; parents do have the right to waive EL services and remove their child from the district's English Language Instructional Program.

Step 4 – ESL Program Placement ELLs Come to school not only to learn how to communicate socially, but to become academically proficient in English. Learning social English is just the tip of the iceberg. Just because they can speak on the playground, talk to peers, and use every day English does not mean that they are up to speed i n academic English. To the contrary, these ELLs are not yet proficient enough to handle the standards-based curriculum. They lack the academic vocabulary needed to develop the content knowledge in English that they will need to succeed in future schooling.

<http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/docs/student-assessment/ell-guidelines-january-2011-final.pdf>

c. Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for these students.

Instructional Strategies for EL Students:

Checking students' comprehension of the content:

- Use Sentence strips
- Set up dialogue journals between teacher and student
- Plan activities using role play and drama
- Use student reading log

- Use Cloze exercises
- Write summaries
- Encourage students to write headlines
- Write character diaries
- Have students present information with illustrations, comic strips, or other visual representation
- Allow students to provide answers and explain processes instead of you telling them

Helping EL students adjust to the classroom:

- State /display language, content and metacognitive objectives
- List instructions/process steps and review orally
- Present information in varied way (oral, written, demonstrations, with tangible objects)
- Frequently summarize key points
- Repeat and paraphrase important terms
- Provide Word Wall with vocabulary for unit/chapter
- Have students maintain notebook
- Have student maintain learning log for metacognitive strategies
- Allow sufficient response time

Adjusting Teaching style:

- Develop a student-centered approach
- Speak a little more slowly (not louder), use shorter sentences, and avoid idioms
- Increase the percentage of inferential and higher order thinking questions
- Provide correction for language errors by modeling, not overt correction

Teaching a multi-level/multiple intelligences class:

- Use Cooperative learning
- Incorporate Peer tutoring
- Use the Writing Process

- Explicitly connect learning to students'
- Knowledge and experience
- Take time to preview and explain new concepts and vocabulary before starting instruction
- Use Questionnaires/Interviews motivating students and providing background knowledge:
- Use Semantic Webbing and graphic organizers
- Use Anticipation Reaction Guides
- Have students brainstorm, then record responses on overhead before starting lessons
- Use KWL charts
- Use maps, photos, and manipulatives
- Do activities where students can interact and move around adapting EL techniques to the content classroom:
- Have students do hands-on activities
- Do demonstrations
- Use CDs, Cassettes and DVD's with books
- Use a variety of groupings so that EL Students can interact with different classmates (not Only the Spanish speaking ones!)
- Provide Students with outline of lesson and
- Questions that will be asked beforehand so they have an opportunity to process information and participate more readily
- The overhead projector is your best friend, Use it every day to model highlighting text, identifying main ideas or new vocabulary or to show pictures.

d. Plans for monitoring and periodic evaluation of the progress and success of EL students, including using a reliable English language proficiency (ELP) assessment that tests in the four language domains, identifying benchmarks for exiting students from EL services, and defining plans for providing follow-up support for at least two years after students exit the program; EL students will be monitored on an ongoing basis to assess their progress toward English proficiency/fluency. EL students will remain in the EL program until they demonstrate their English proficiency/fluency. They will be monitored no less than once each nine weeks during the first year and at least one each semester during the second year. Figure 1.10 demonstrates the EL process continuum.

Figure 1.10

EL Process Continuum.

e. Means for providing qualified staffing for EL students. Qualified staff will be hired to serve EL students, as needed.

Attachments

Section 8: Special Populations and At-Risk Students

8.1	Special Populations and At-Risk Students -- with graphics	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:43 AM	PDF / 2.219 MB
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9. Unique/Innovative Program Offering

Capstone Charter School aims to set itself apart from the current offerings of the local school system by creating a unique environment that provides benefits to each student at any ability. There are many innovative aspects to allow Capstone Charter School to rise above local area schools.

1. Capstone Charter School will utilize the Theory of Multiple Intelligences devised by Dr. Howard Gardner of Harvard University to create a unique learning environment. Capstone Charter School will personalize educational strategies and lessons according to the needs of individual students. The school will provide a daily emphasis on Character Education or Interpersonal and Intrapersonal Intelligence, which will be accomplished through various programs referenced in Section 6. The school's classrooms will be divided into multi-age groups to provide opportunities for leadership and cooperation. Capstone Charter School will introduce foreign language education beginning in Kindergarten and continuing until 12th grade. Capstone Charter School will provide an opportunity for secure futures for high school seniors through career initiatives and/or college education. Through the use of STEM and Project-Based learning, the school will prepare students for advancement in science and mathematics. Capstone Charter School will have strong parental involvement that will be accomplished through participation incentives,

communication, and conferences. Community outreach will be an important part of the school that will be cultivated through various community programs and the use of outside building throughout the community to increase student exposure and engagement. To provide reprieve from the dependency on technology, Capstone Charter School will integrate No Tech Tuesday and Board-Game Break to encourage students' creativity through other outlets. The school will also provide opportunity for daily health and mental wellness through the usage of Inner Explorer.

2. All of these features will be integral in the development of students' whole learning. Each aspect of the curriculum design provides opportunities for students beyond the academic stipulations to provide engagement in vital areas of whole child learning. The aspects above are included in daily activity and learning modules and will be integrated and available for every student.

3. All state standards will be adhered to through academic curriculum, character education, extra-curricular activities, and special education. The program will go above the minimum standards required for each grade to provide opportunities for increased engagement and challenges for each student.

4. The unique aspects of this school are research based and referenced in many best practice teachings and have also been utilized in other exemplary schools around the world.

Attachments

Section 9: Unique/Innovative Program Offering

– No Attachments –

10. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

Capstone Charter School is committed to building a culturally inclusive student population at all age/grade levels. Recruitment and marketing plans will be intentional and varied to reach a wide range of families looking for an exemplary choice in a charter school. The community will learn about Capstone Charter schools in a wide range of communications. These include:

- public press releases to local tv, radio and newspapers in Tuscaloosa and Northport
- public notices in branch libraries in neighborhoods in Tuscaloosa
- flyers distributed in locations that children and their parents frequent such as Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, Boy and Girl Scouts troupes, dance and karate studios, etc.
- press releases to the Chamber of Commerce and businesses where parents work in the downtown area

Recruiting and publicity will begin upon announcement that the Charter status has been awarded in February, 2019.

Registration for Fall 2020 will open on October 15, 2019 and end on December 15, 2020.

If a lottery is needed those procedures will begin on January 15, 2020.

The Capstone Charter School will adopt Board policies that relate to managing and communicating enrollment procedures, waiting lists, lottery requirements, withdrawals, re-enrollment and transfers.

Attachments

Section 10: Student Recruitment and Enrollment

10.1	Attachment 8 Enrollment	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 11:59 PM	DOCX / 124.76 KB
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11. Student Discipline Policy and Plan

Discipline policies and procedures will be adopted by the Capstone Charter School Board. *The Tuscaloosa City Schools Parent/Student Code of Conduct* will serve as a model. This continuity of rules and procedures will ensure a fair and equitable approach to school safety and student success for all students.

Students arriving at the new school will be familiar with the rules and will be pleased to learn of many exciting ways that learning in their areas of Multiple Intelligences can reduce stress, encourage communications, develop team-building skills, and build leadership experiences that change attitudes and make a significance for all students, especially those considered at-risk. Building resilience among all students will be a goal of the faculty. An emphasis on Mindfulness and regularly scheduled Advisory classes, building relationships with caring adults and peers, will contribute to a calm learning environment. Specific lessons to learn about so many different world cultures will also improve a student's outlook.

Parents and students will be provided a copy of the Code of Conduct and will have access online to the text. Close communication with parents about student behavior and the encouragement of positive reinforcement Should the need arise, parents and students will be included in the due process hearings and will be advised of rights and responsibilities

This plan is culturally responsive, is based on research that encourages best practices in managing student behavior in the school setting. The Code of Conduct adheres to all federal, state and local laws, has provisions for students with special needs, promotes good discipline with incentives for positive behavior and reasonable penalties for infractions. Students rights are protected and hearings are scheduled to provide due process.

Attachments

Section 11: Student Discipline Policy and Plan

– No Attachments –

12. Family and Community Involvement

Family and Community Involvement

1. Describe the role of any parents and community members involved to date in developing the proposed school.

The Capstone Charter School is still working with parents and community members throughout this short application process and will continue in the winter and spring of 2019 with public meetings and information newsletters in print and online.

In the past months, leadership team members have meet with local parents and educators to discuss the possible charter school plans. The meetings have shown strong support from those in attendance and this has prompted the leadership team to move forward with detailed planning, as needed for this application, to ensure a successful process.

Leadership team members have reached out to academic and business leaders in Tuscaloosa and beyond and have begun developing partnerships with several businesses with the long-term goal of partnering to bring secondary students to local industry and business, thereby elevating the importance of the charter school in the community for years to come.

Parents, business leaders and educators have been asked to serve on the Board of Directors and the School Board. The variety of expertise on the Board is strong and will serve the Capstone Charter School and its community well.

2. Describe what you have done to assess and build parent and community support for your school and how you will engage parents and community members from the time that the school is approved through opening.

For two decades there have been discussions of establishing a downtown charter school in Tuscaloosa. There are many, many families in this area that long to have choices for quality educational experiences for their children but who cannot afford private schools and, unfortunately, do not live in a neighborhood with a strong public school program or don't qualify for magnet programs.

Therefore, concerted effort has now been leveraged toward community and business leaders to determine their level of interest and possible support. To date, the interest level is strong among key community leaders and this work is already resulting in important planning that will have positive impact on students and the School as a whole.

If the application is approved, the Capstone leadership team will hold open houses to provide information to the public about the timeline for steps toward opening in the fall of 2020. Outreach to business and community leaders will continue in the hope of forming more relationships that can benefit each party for the long-term success of the School and its community. CCS will develop informational flyers, newsletters, and an online website. Additionally, CCS will use social media platforms to update community members throughout the processes of enrollment, registration, and beyond.

Parent Surveys will be developed to allow for specific ideas to be shared from families regarding elements of the School they feel will be important. The Leadership team will meet with parents regularly to discuss progress and planning, along with parent involvement in the life of the School.

3. Describe how you will engage parents in the life of the school (including any proposed governance roles described in Act 2015-3). Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen support for learning and encourage parental involvement. Describe any commitments or volunteer activities the school will seek from, offer to, or require of parents.

Upon approval, CCS will move forward with development of a parent-teacher association and will include potential future parents on the Board of Directors. Key components of parent engagement include the Parent-Teacher Association, Parent Volunteerism, and School to Family Communication/Outreach.

Parents will be considered each child's first teacher, and as such parent involvement will be viewed as critical to the success of CCS. The partnership of parents and teachers is a well-regarded fundamental element of student success in any culture.

Parent-Teacher Association: Parents and teachers will be encouraged to join this group for planning school-wide celebrations, possible fundraisers, and social and educational gatherings throughout the school year.

Parent Volunteerism: Each family will be asked to commit to volunteering in some way for CCS each year. The number of hours per family will be 36. It is understood that the volunteer hours cannot be required; however, this participation will be encouraged for those who are able and willing. CCS will inform parents regularly of volunteer opportunities through email and newsletters. Parents will be surveyed regarding their interests, home culture and skills that they may wish to share with CCS.

Family Communication and Outreach: CCS will hold meetings for teachers and parents before school begins to allow parents to introduce important information about their children to the teachers. Twice a year, during the year, conferences will be held so that parents and teachers can sit down to review student progress. Teachers will send home regular updates via email or newsletter for elementary students. Teachers will seek out parents with various areas of expertise to invite them to present the career or skill to students to bring the world of work into the classroom. Parents may also request a meeting at any time to discuss a child's needs or concerns.

4. Discuss the community resources that will be available to students and parents. Describe any partnerships the school will have with community organizations, businesses, or other educational institutions. Specify the nature, purposes, terms, and scope of services of any such partnerships, including any fee-based or in-kind commitments.

The following people and organizations that have expressed interest in joining this Community Advisory Council. Some have expressed interest in curriculum areas, others as Mentors for the planned **School to Career** internships, others have discussed monetary support. Some groups

want to coordinate programs or use the school's facilities for clubs or programs.

Outside of the School to Career program, explained previously, CCS has not established any partnerships that include fee-based or in-kind commitments.

Proposed Community Partners (to date):

Chinese Sisterhood of Tuscaloosa (weekend Mandarin classes on campus)

Girls Scouts of Central Northern Alabama

Black Warrior Council of Boys Scouts of America

Stillman College's request for CCS to be Professional Development School

Shelton State Community College's Dual Enrollment Program/Technical

Early College, The University of Alabama's Dual Enrollment Program

Phifer, Inc.

Premier Service Col.

Jackson Security Co.

Adcox Construction Company

Chamber of West Alabama's Adopt a School program

4-H Clubs

Clinical Experiences Office Univ. of West Alabama to place counselor interns

Clinical Experiences Office UA to place K-12 interns

Huang Kuang University, Taiwan to place Early Childhood K – 2 interns

Central University of Science & Technology, Taiwan for interns

Tuscaloosa County Heritage Commission

Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society

McKelvey Mechanical Inc.

Turner Plumbing Inc.

John Wayne Plumbing & Drain Services

Attachments

Section 12: Family and Community Involvement

– No Attachments –

13. Partnership or Contractual Relationships

While the Capstone Charter School has not yet entered into any partnerships or agreements, there are several educational opportunities that have been explored for our high school students once they reach the 10th grade. The Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Technical Program at Shelton State Community College is open to our prospective students once they reach 10th grade and have a 2.0 GPA. The Dual Enrollment/Dual Credit Program through Early College at The University of Alabama will be open to our students with a 3.0 GPA. Also, Stillman College has expressed interest in the new K-12 public school serving as their PDS, Professional Development School.

We will start a new Community Advisory Council in order to match community resources that will be available to students and parents. We already have interest in serving from the following agencies and businesses in Tuscaloosa.

Community Advisory Council

See attached list of people and organizations that have expressed interest in joining this Community Advisory Council: Some expressed interest in curriculum areas, others as Mentors for the planned **School to Career** internships, others have discussed monetary support. Some groups want to coordinate programs or use the school's facilities for clubs or programs.

Proposed Members (to date):

Chinese Sisterhood of Tuscaloosa (weekend Mandarin classes on campus)

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Clinical Experiences Office Univ. of West Alabama to place counselor interns

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Central University of Science & Technology, Taiwan for interns

Tuscaloosa County Heritage Commission

Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society

McKelvey Mechanical Inc.

Turner Plumbing Inc.

John Wayne Plumbing & Drain Services

Attachments

Section 13: Partnership or Contractual Relationships

– No Attachments –

14. Educational Service Providers (ESP) and Other Partnerships

Education Service Providers and Partnerships

One example of a fabulous education service provider that will partner with Capstone Charter is the University of Alabama Early College Program. UA offers our students a wonderful path to college and career by allowing them to enroll in college courses, online or on campus, year round. Capstone Charter students who hold a 3.0 grade average in grades 10-12 may take as many as 30 hours of college coursework.

Academic scholarships of 1/2 tuition are offered to all students who maintain the 3.0 average. Parents will pay the remaining cost. This learning pathway will open many doors for learning and a very bright future. if a student successfully completes 17 hours they are granted automatic admission to the University and will not have to pass the ACT for entrance. This is terrific for the student who may experience test anxiety.

The UA Early College program provides student with a wide range of academic support, including a team of academic advisors and peer mentors. Parents have an opportunity to serve on a Parent Leadership Council. They have free access to the UA Writing Center, the UA libraries and the Center for Academic Success tutors.

Our faculty encourages students to consider this path for success. They counsel students, meet with parents to introduce the program and bring in students who have been successful to collaborate with eager new students.

As students complete courses they continue to complete up to 30 hours of coursework. All assignments and grades are given by college professors.

Attachments

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

– No Attachments –

15. Educational Program Capacity

Educational Program Capacity for Capstone Charter School

The Leadership Team's initial plan is to open a K-12 charter school in downtown Tuscaloosa in August, 2020. The philosophy of the school will be based upon the summary of brain research compiled by Dr. Howard Gardner of Harvard University.

If approved in February, the School Board will convene for the first time in March, 2019. They will use the guidelines provided by the Alabama Open Meetings Act. At that time, they will elect officers and establish Board policies. While online Board training is now available, a schedule will be checked to determine if some Board members can attend the workshop in order to meet other public school board members. Terms of office will be determined and rotations of terms established for the School Board. The School Board will approve the Leadership Team of Dr. Barbara Rountree as Supt./Principal (1.0); Dr. Elizabeth McKnight, Secondary Principal (2.5); and Mrs. Margaret Hill, Elementary Principal (2.5); and Mrs. Tonya Price, Counselor (1.0). They will then have 17 months to plan for the new charter K-12 school.

This is a strong team of leaders with over 100 years of collective but quite different experiences that span the K-12 spectrum and post-secondary experiences of teaching at the college level. Their experience, formal education and years of using evaluation measures make them an even stronger team.

Performance management entails the process of creating a work environment when teachers and students are enabled to perform to the best of their abilities. It will be the responsibility of the Leadership Team to plan and includes activities that ensure that goals are consistently being met. Forbes provides data that 79% of workers who leave their jobs report that the reason was that they felt unappreciated for their efforts and work. Considering the large number of teachers who report sharing these feelings, it will be necessary for the Team to do team building among the faculty they select and many hours of professional development. Shared experiences, book clubs and attending conferences together will help build trust and help teachers. They will need to plan, then implement the programs, monitor and evaluate for teacher participation and engagement.

All of the members of the Management team have lived in this community for 6 – 42 years. Some have tutored in the nearby schools of West End or run SES Afterschool programs for the city schools. For years, these teachers have taught in summer programs that have built trust with downtown families. The School Board represents almost all aspects of the Tuscaloosa Community. The Community Advisory Board allows many more community members, businesses and agencies work with Capstone School and many will serve as mentors for the high school students in the *School to Career Program*.

As sites for the school are evaluated and teachers hired, the School Board will approve decisions and faculty members. They will sign Dual Enrollment/Dual Agreements with Shelton State Community College and The University of Alabama's Early College program.

While many agencies will contribute and collaborate with the Capstone Charter School, none are now partners.

Please reference the Leadership Team to view the resume of Dr. Barbara S. Rountree. It details her role and achievements in the Tuscaloosa community and as a faculty member at The University of Alabama. Attachment 13 includes her resume while Attachment 14 includes the part-time principals for elementary and secondary programs and for the Counselor.

All employees will comply with the Code of Ethics will comply with all requirements and participate in any online training classes.

Attachments

Section 15: Educational Program Capacity

15.1	Attachment 13	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:26 AM	DOC / 41 KB
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OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY

18. Legal Status and Governing Documents

In December, 2019, we filed Form 1023, Application for Recognition of Exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. We will notify the Alabama Public Commission on Charter Schools as soon as we hear that our status is updated for Capstone Charter School.

Attachments

Section 18: Legal Status and Governing Documents

18.1	Bio of School Board	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:45 AM	PDF / 4.19 MB
18.2	Secretary of State, Filing of Name	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:44 AM	PDF / 151.922 KB
18.3	Letter to Commissioners	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:43 AM	PDF / 80.308 KB
18.4	Leadership Team, Resumes	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:41 AM	PDF / 1.801 MB
18.5	Articles of Incorporation	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:38 AM	PDF / 97.84 KB
18.6	Statement of Assurances	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:38 AM	PDF / 200.689 KB

19. Organization Structure and Relationships

The organization structure for governance and staffing of Capstone Charter School starts with the Foundation Board members, followed by the School Board. The Superintendent reports to the School Board. The Superintendent oversees the Elementary and Secondary principals. Together, they oversee the Parent Council, Teacher Council, Student Council, and the Community Advisory Council.

The Superintendent oversees the Chief Operating Officer, who oversees the Administrative Assistant, Custodians, Federal Programs Director, and the Bookkeeper.

The Principals oversee the Lead Classroom Teachers, Instructional Assistants, General Education Teachers, and Expert Teachers.

In their always innovative way, the people involved in the Capstone Charter School will not have a top-down model of administration. Instead, everyone will work together to make the best decisions for our students. Everyone's contribution will be seen as valuable and equal to creating the best possible educational environment.

For example, the Teacher Council will meet together to discuss needs, problems, and concerns. Because they make decisions together, everyone will feel a sense of ownership and belonging. This creates a sense of community among the faculty. Due to the utilization of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, all the teachers will feel valued, no matter what area of the curriculum they represent. The PE teacher should feel just as valued as the math teacher.

Attachments

Section 19: Organization Structure and Relationships

19.1	Staffing Structure	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 3:23 AM	DOCX / 76.989 KB
19.2	Organization Chart	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 3:20 AM	Unknow File Type / 667.846 KB

20. Governing Board

The Capstone Charter School will be led by an effective Board that utilizes ethical practices and a governing philosophy that guides our Board. The aim of the Capstone Charter School Board will be educational and operational success. The Board will represent key school stakeholders, including parents, in an effective manner.

The attached bylaws outline the governing rules for Capstone Charter School.

Once the school charter is approved the Board will transition quickly to action.

Attachments

Section 20: Governing Board

– No Attachments –

21. Advisory Bodies

Advisory Bodies for Capstone Charter School

Parent Council

Parents can choose to join the Parent Council. Hours spent in PC meetings or projects count toward the 36 parent volunteer hours for the academic school year. The proposed school website will encourage parents to join and will advertise their meetings and plans. REMIND text notices will be sent to parents who join that notification app. The Parent Council will elect its own officers which may be drawn from different grade levels in K-12. They probably won't choose to join PTA due to their policy statement against charter schools! They will be expected to plan fundraising events to help support the school's curricular programs, sports, and music programs (purchases of keyboards and violins).

Student Council

Our Student Council will meet monthly during the lunch period. Elementary ages will be represented by two students (a boy and a girl) from grades K-5th. Middle and High School students may vote on their representatives. When the Council convenes for business, it will have a prepared Agenda by the elected officers. At some point in the meeting, the representatives from grades 6 – 12 will go to the younger students' classes and bring them to the meeting as a "buddy". The remainder of the meeting will be spent on a review of what the older students have planned and then including the younger students with business that may concern them. This is seen as an important introductory learning experience for civics and democracy. A Faculty Advisor will volunteer to work with this group for the 2020-21 school year.

Teacher Council

All employed teachers will be members of this Council. Full-time faculty will have one vote and be fully certified teachers in the state of Alabama. Part time and Expert faculty will each have .5 vote for curriculum and program decisions. The group will meet monthly at a time that fits during all teachers' planning time. They may meet at 7:30 a.m. or 3:30 p.m. Call meetings will be set up as needed to consult faculty on school issues and student welfare.

Community Advisory Council

See attached list of people and organizations that have expressed interest in joining this Community Advisory Council: Some expressed interest in curriculum areas, others as Mentors for the planned ***School to Career*** internships, others have discussed monetary support. Some groups want to coordinate programs or use the school's facilities for clubs or programs.

Proposed Members (to date):

Chinese Sisterhood of Tuscaloosa (weekend Mandarin classes on campus)

Girls Scouts of Central Northern Alabama

Black Warrior Council of Boys Scouts of America

Stillman College's request for CCS to be Professional Development School

Shelton State Community College's Dual Enrollment Program/Technical

Early College, The University of Alabama's Dual Enrollment Program

Phifer, Inc.

Premier Service Col.

Jackson Security Co.

Adcox Construction Company

Chamber of West Alabama's Adopt a School program

4-H Clubs

Clinical Experiences Office Univ. of West Alabama to place counselor interns

Clinical Experiences Office UA to place K-12 interns

Huang Kuang University, Taiwan to place Early Childhood K – 2 interns

Central University of Science & Technology, Taiwan for interns

Tuscaloosa County Heritage Commission

Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society

McKelvey Mechanical Inc.

Turner Plumbing Inc.

John Wayne Plumbing & Drain Services

Attachments

Section 21: Advisory Bodies

– No Attachments –

22. Grievance/Complaint Process

The new school Board will adopt policies and a plan for parents or students who have an objection to a governing board policy or decision, administrative procedure, or practice at the school.

Attachments

Section 22: Grievance/Complaint Process

– No Attachments –

23. Staff Structure

The Capstone Charter School will enjoy a positive, supportive relationship among the school leadership team and the rest of the staff. A warm, collaborative environment supporting student success and creative teaching will be evident at all levels.

The Teacher Council, including all full and part time teachers will met regularly and have a significant voice in major and minor decisions made to best meet the needs of the students we serve. Encouragement and support among teams, grade levels, and subject areas will be needed as the school is established.

One unique feature of the staff structure is the low pupil/teacher ratio. In grades k-5 class sizes for instruction are 1 teacher to 12 students, in grades 6-12 the class size will be a low 1 teacher to 18 or less students. This allows for very personalized instruction.

Attachments

Section 23: Staff Structure

23.1	CCS Staffing Structure	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 2:15 AM	DOCX / 79.071 KB
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24. Staffing Plans, Hiring, Management, and Evaluation

Teacher Evaluation

The purpose of an educator is to be an effective facilitator for all students on the journey to becoming lifelong learners. To accomplish this, an educator must strive to be innovative in the process of reaching every student, purposefully plan engaging instruction, and provide meaningful educational experiences that make connections between community and future career success.

To ensure that all employed teachers are providing effective instruction to every student, Capstone Charter School will implement the evaluation tools established by EDUCATE Alabama. This evaluation tool promotes communication between administration and teachers, both classroom and expert; provides feedback to enhance the quality and growth of instruction; and protects the integrity of the principles Capstone Charter School aims to achieve. Through the use of self-assessments, classroom observations, student and parent surveys, and professional development and training, Capstone Charter School will strive to maintain the employment of highly effective teachers.

Administrator Evaluation

Being an effective leader means providing inspiration, support, motivation, and innovation to those in your care. Effective leaders understand the complexities of being an advocate of growth and change while maintaining the integrity of the mission of the school and the value of those they are charged with protecting and educating.

To evaluate the effectiveness of leadership provided by administration, Capstone Charter School will implement the assessment tools established by LEAD Alabama. This assessment tool promotes collaborative dialogue between administration and state officials, provides an opportunity for advancement through self-reflection, and encourages innovative design for professional learning plans. By using the assessment guidelines provided by LEAD Alabama, Capstone Charter School will secure the effectiveness of administration in leading the school in all future endeavors.

Faculty and Staff at the Capstone Charter School will sign comprehensive contracts that outline duties, responsibilities, expectations, salaries and a description of benefits.

A policy manual has not yet been developed. The Board will complete this task and make clear the duties and policies relating to the school and teaching for all employees prior to hiring.

All academic teachers will hold Alabama teaching certificates. All employees will undergo a state required background check prior to hiring.

The salary plan for teachers at the Capstone Charter is the same as that outlined for teachers in Alabama as presented by the Alabama State Board of Education.

Attachments

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

– No Attachments –

25. Professional Development

Question 1

The person/position responsible for professional development will be the superintendent and/or principal or an appointed representative.

Superintendent – Dr. Barbara S. Rountree

Secondary Principal – Dr. Elizabeth McKnight

Elementary Principal – Mrs. Margaret Hill

Counselor/Student Services – Mrs. Tonya Price

Question 2

The Professional Development Plan for 2020-2021 will include the following: Initial Employee Training, Hope Institute Academy, and Individualized Professional Learning Plans. The plan will be adjusted as needed in order to meet the needs of students, teachers, and other stakeholders.

Name of Component: Initial Employee Training

Description of Component: The initial training for employees will offer introductory, awareness training related to, but not limited to, the following: Standard Precautions, Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), Response to Instruction (RtI), English as a Second Language (ESL), Special Education, Bullying Prevention, Suicide Prevention, Mandatory Reporting, Students who are homeless, Technology Policies, Data Management, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Social Media, Ethics, Policy Manual, Effects of Heavy Backpacks, Students with Diabetes, Anaphylaxis, etc.

How the Component Supports Effective Implementation of Educational Program:

Maintaining a Safe and Orderly Learning Environment is a high indicator of effective learning environments. For this reason, the faculty must be well-informed of laws and policies. Furthermore, knowledge of these policies will impact our daily practices as we work to develop a positive school culture and maintain a safe, orderly learning environment.

Facilitator (Internally or Externally Facilitated): This professional development will be facilitated internally through an online module. The professional learning will be reinforced during the initial faculty meeting on August 3, 2020 and during each monthly faculty meeting.

Format (Uniform or Individualized): The online module will offer a uniform learning experience to all participants.

Name of Component: Multiple Intelligences Training

Description of Component: Teachers will enroll in and complete the Differentiating Instruction to Accommodate Learning Styles course offered through ALSDE eLearning at http://elearning-atim.cc/Registration/course_schedule.htm.

The objectives of the course are listed as follows: 1. Understand the principles of addressing individual learning styles and multiple intelligences; 2. Understand strategies for assessing learning styles and multiple intelligences of students; 3. Identify characteristics of the eight multiple intelligences described by Howard Gardner; 4. Identify strategies to use in lesson design to address students' multiple intelligences; 5. Identify characteristics of a variety of learning styles; 6. Identify techniques to use in lesson design to address a variety of learning styles; 7. Identify and use a variety of assessment techniques to provide for students' learning styles and intelligences; 8. Develop a technology-rich, standards-based lesson plan which provides for students' learning styles and multiple intelligences. Care will be taken to look at the myths around Multiple Intelligences to be sure faculty understands these are capacities within the brain for learning and have been identified by neuroscientists using MRI, CAT scans, autopsy studies, and other brain scans.

How the Component Supports Effective Implementation of Educational Program: The educational program of our school is based on utilizing the research of Dr. Howard Gardner to differentiate and personalize instruction for students based on their learning needs and multiple

intelligences. The ALSDE eLearning course listing describes the course as follows: This is an introductory course for teachers, technology specialists, curriculum specialists, professional development specialists, or other school personnel. The description on the ALSDE website reads: Every classroom is made up of individuals with diverse strengths, backgrounds, and approaches to learning. Understanding and responding to students' individual learning styles and needs can be a challenge for teachers. The World Wide Web contains a vast number of resources to assist teachers both in understanding the differences in their students' learning styles and in differentiating their instruction accordingly. Participants in this workshop, Differentiating Instruction to Accommodate Learning Styles, will be introduced to learning theory related to learning styles and multiple intelligences, as well as web-based resources to assist teachers in both identifying students' learning styles and intelligences and engaging students in activities which best suit those styles and intelligences. Participants will become familiar with teaching strategies and tools targeted for each learning style and intelligence and develop a preliminary lesson plan using those strategies and tools.

Facilitator (Internally or Externally Facilitated): This professional learning will be conducted externally, but continued learning will be supported internally through follow-up sessions with collaborative teams.

Format (Uniform or Individualized): The online module will offer a uniform learning experience to all participants during Summer 2020 (June-July 2020, 6-week course) or during Fall 2020 (October -November 2020, 6-week course).

Name of Component: The Academy at Hope Institute

Description of Component: This component of professional learning provides a place for teachers and administrators to collaborate, learn how to support students' character development, and understand why good character is essential to their success in life. The Hope Institute provides off-site learning sessions with follow-up support through onsite support. Supports include: starter library of books by national and local authors, peer networking with leaders from public and private schools, series of monthly full-day workshops led by recognized experts, time for school teams to collaborate on a school plan for implementation, site visit to national award winning schools and presentations by those principals, and state PLU awarded for completion of the six sessions. The following topics will be addressed and explored: creating a foundation (core values, norms, mission, vision, create common language), understanding character development (cognitive, emotional, and behavioral), creating a caring school community (student voice and student engagement), and assessment of school culture.

How the Component Supports Effective Implementation of Educational Program: The work of The Academy at Hope Institute supports the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. This focus will deepen the faculty's knowledge of how to cater to the individual learning needs of students as one of the highlights of the school's educational program.

Facilitator (Internally or Externally Facilitated): The school's representatives will be selected by the school's faculty to attend the professional learning sessions hosted by the Academy at the Hope Institute in October 2020, January 2021, February 2021, March 2021, May 2021, and July 2021 for a fee of \$500. These representatives will return and facilitate turn-around professional development to the entire faculty at monthly faculty meetings.

Format (Uniform or Individualized): This professional learning will be uniform in its initial delivery from the Hope Institute to the selected school representatives. However, during the professional learning turn-around, the school representatives will customize the professional learning experience with attention to the needs of the school's students, teachers, and other stakeholders.

Name of Component: Individualized Professional Learning Plan

Description of Component: Based on initial feedback from the administration and the teachers' self-assessments, each teacher will develop a professional learning plan. Based on teachers' professional learning plans, the teachers will collaborate in professional learning communities in order to increase their individual and collective efficacy. Teachers will provide evidence of learning quarterly.

How the Component Supports Effective Implementation of Educational Program: The ALSDE website describes the Professional Learning Plan as follows:

This collaboratively developed plan must be completed to include professional learning goals tied to Alabama Quality Teaching Standard Indicators needing improvement. When data are available, the PLP should reflect concerns over student growth data. All PLPs should focus on goals and activities that will improve educator practice. Numerous online professional development opportunities are attached to every indicator to support teacher professional growth. These online opportunities include modules from the IRIS Center at Vanderbilt University (online and interactive).

This component will work to increase teacher efficacy with an attention on teacher practice, not only their knowledge base. With the use of best practices, the faculty can personalize instruction for learning to ensure academic success for each student.

Facilitator (Internally or Externally Facilitated): Our representatives selected by the school's faculty will attend the professional learning sessions hosted by the Academy at the Hope Institute in October 2020, January 2021, February 2021, March 2021, May 2021, and July 2021. These representatives will return and turn-around this professional learning to the entire faculty at the monthly faculty meeting.

Format (Uniform or Individualized): This professional learning will be uniform in its initial delivery from the Hope Institute to the selected school representatives. . However, during the professional learning turn-around, the school representatives will customize the professional learning experience for the school's students, teachers, and other stakeholders.

Question 3

The induction period will be from August 3, 2020 to August 5, 2020 and will prepare teachers with the skills needed in order to address the major learning needs of students with regards to the multiple intelligences. The faculty will receive follow-up support/professional development) for each topic addressed during this induction period.

Schedule and Plan for Professional Development Scheduled Prior to the Start of School**August 3, 2020: AM Session-**

Objective(s): Participants will attain an awareness of significant policies and be able to explain how these policies impact their daily practices.

Description: During this initial training, the focus of the professional development sessions will be related to the Initial Employee Training online module components including, but not limited to, standard precautions, positive behavior supports (PBS), Response to Instruction (RtI), English as a Second Language (ESL), Special Education, Bullying Prevention, Suicide Prevention, Mandatory Reporting, Students, who are homeless, Technology Policies, Data Management,

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Social Media, Ethics, Policy Manual, Effects of Heavy Backpacks, Students with Diabetes, Anaphylaxis, etc.

Continuing Learning: Policy highlight at each faculty meeting, during which the meeting's facilitator will provide a review or an update on policy.

August 3, 2020: PM Session-

Objective(s): Participants will be able to describe examples and non-examples of professional learning community culture. Participants will be able to explain the faculty's collective commitments to students and stakeholders.

Description: The faculty will begin the development of a collaborative culture by increasing the faculty's awareness of professional learning communities. (What are professional learning communities? Why professional learning communities? How do Professional Learning Communities Focus on Learning? How does a PLC support a Collaborative Culture with a focus on learning for all? How do we collectively inquire into best practices and current reality? How do we learn by doing? What are our meeting norms? What can we all commit to doing? How do PLCs maintain a commitment to continuous commitment?)

Continuing Learning: The faculty will continue to develop professional learning communities based on age cluster teams, departments, and/or interest.

August 4, 2020: AM Session-

Objective(s): Participants will be able to implement knowledge of the Multiple Intelligences in order to differentiate and personalize instruction for students based on the research by Dr. Howard Gardner.

Description: Faculty will complete training on Multiple Intelligences and differentiated instruction. During this training on the multiple intelligences, they will discuss examples and non-examples of acceptable forms of evidence of student learning within each of the intelligences.

- words (linguistic intelligence)
- numbers or logic (logical-mathematical intelligence)
- pictures (spatial intelligence)
- music (musical intelligence)
- self-reflection (intrapersonal intelligence)
- a physical experience (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence)
- a social experience (interpersonal intelligence), and/or
- an experience in the natural world (naturalist intelligence)

Teachers will explore ways to present their lessons in a wide variety of ways using music, cooperative learning, art activities, role play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, and much more. Faculty will meet in small groups (by age cluster or department) to develop an outline of potential components of the students' multiple intelligences portfolios.

Continuing Learning: The entire faculty will enroll in the ALSDE eLearning course on Learning Styles. (See details in Section 2.)

August 5, 2020: ALL DAY-

Objective(s): Participants will reflect on their practices in order to begin development of a professional learning plan.

Description: Fall 2020 semester: in order to produce an outline of learning objectives,

teachers will use the Teacher Work Day to collaboratively outline the learning objectives for the Fall 2020 semester. Teachers also complete the initial self-assessment. Following completion of the self-assessment, the teacher and school leadership participate in collaborative dialogue to begin developing professional learning plans.

Continuing Learning: Teams will maintain a common planning time to support the development of professional learning communities, which reflect on the following: 1) What skills/concepts do we want students to learn? 2) How will we know if our students have learned it? 3) What will we do if the students have not learned it yet? 4) What will when do if the students have learned it? Teachers will utilize faculty-wide meeting norms during their common planning times.

Question 4

Describe the expected number and days of PD throughout the school year

August 3, 2020- See details in Section 3

August 4, 2020- See details in Section 3

August 5, 2020- See details in Section 3

January 4, 2021- TBD: Based on collected data from multiples data sources (e.g. achievement data, perceptions data, teacher evaluations, and formative assessment data)

January 5, 2021-TBD: Based on collected data from multiples data sources (e.g. achievement data, perceptions data, teacher evaluations, and formative assessment data)

February 16, 2021-TBD: TBD: Based on collected data from multiples data sources (e.g. achievement data, perceptions data, teacher evaluations, and formative assessment data)

Explain how the school's calendar accommodates the PD plan

The school's calendar accommodates the PD Plan by providing times for collective calibration at the beginning of each semester (August and January/February). These shared times of professional development will ensure that all members of the faculty actively participate in the same learning experiences that can inform and enhance the smaller professional learning communities within the faculty.

Explain how the daily schedule accommodates the PD plan

The daily schedule provides for the time each morning and afternoon for teachers to collaborate, plan, meet with parents or have PD sessions and professional learning communities. 30 minutes prior to and following the students' regular academic day is set aside for these purposes. During the day, core teachers who teach children of the same multi-age groups will be able to meet to complete planning or PD activities. 60 minutes daily is set aside when the classes combine for PE, allowing core teachers to meet. PD can easily be scheduled on a regular basis as needed or planned.

Explain how the Staffing structure accommodates the PD plan

The school will practice site-management to promote collective investment and ownership of the

decisions within the school. Through collective investment in and ownership of decision-making, the faculty will be able to determine the needs of the faculty in regards to the professional learning opportunities offered during the January and February 2021 sessions as well as the job-embedded sessions.

Explain how Common planning and collaboration time accommodates the PD plan. Describe how such time will be used.

Common planning time will make it possible for professional learning communities to take place during the school day. This time will be used to reflect on the following questions: 1) What skills/concepts do we want students to learn? 2) How will we know if our students have learned it? 3) What will we do if the students have not learned it yet? 4) What will when do if the students have learned it?

Attachments

Section 25: Professional Development

– No Attachments –

26. Performance Management

High quality and sustainable performance standards are available to the Capstone Charter school as part of the Alabama Courses o. Capstone Charter will utilize these standards in planning and instruction and will assess status, growth and comparative performance by using all required state assessments. We will fulfill all legal requirements as required in the Alabama Code.

Attachments

Section 26: Performance Management

– No Attachments –

27. Facilities

Capstone Charter School is in the process of searching for an appropriate facility that meets the needs of the students we serve. We are working diligently with a team of experts who can assist us in making the best choice. Considerations include: square footage, included facilities, downtown location, sprinkler systems, safe space in the event of tornadoes, adequate and natural lighting, level yards for sports and play, restrooms, storage, meets ADA requirements, etc.

Volunteers who are assisting in our search:

Perry Taylor, Alabama State Architect

Bob O' Reilley, Architect with the Alabama Building Commission

Pritchett-Moore Realty

West Alabama Chamber of Commerce

Tuscaloosa Preservation Society

Tuscaloosa County Preservation Society

Attachments

Section 27: Facilities

27.1	Possible Sites for Capstone Charter School	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:02 AM	DOCX / 200.38 KB
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28. Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

Safety and Security

Capstone Charter School will develop and adopt Safety and Security Policies and Procedures including:

- a school safety plan modeled after Tuscaloosa City Schools
- a code of conduct (Discipline Plan) based on Tuscaloosa City Schools
- Incorporate Professional Development for all faculty and staff (blood born pathogens, first aid, CPR, use of AED, etc.)
- will conduct regular safety, weather, and intruder drills
- will abide by all laws and instructions provided by Tuscaloosa Fire, Police, The University of Alabama Police Department, Shelton State Community College Security, and other State of Alabama or Federal agencies
- will install and use *Secure Volunteer* for all parents and volunteers to provide a background check
- will utilize the *Lobby Guard* security system to create visitor badges
- all entrances will be controlled with electronic security keypads
- security lighting will be installed indoors and outdoors
- the school nurse will oversee the health care of the students

Capstone Charter School plans to emulate the plans and procedures of the Tuscaloosa City Schools to promote equity and fairness among students enrolled in schools in the Tuscaloosa City

area. This will provide continuity for service providers.

We have been unable to access the Workbook.

We will not provide any transportation, except to special events such as theater presentations.

Attachments

Section 28: Start-Up and Ongoing Operations

– No Attachments –

29. Operations Capacity

The compelling evidence of the effective capacity of the School Board, the Superintendent, and the Administrators abilities to implement the school's operation plan in a quality and effective manner lies in their diverse education, experience, and backgrounds.

1. The Capstone Charter School Board is an incredible group of people who demonstrate skills in the following areas:

STAFFING

Mr. Russell DuBose, Human Resources Director, Phifer, Inc.

Dr. Justin Bevel, M.D. with strong interest in hiring quality faculty

Mrs. Lolanda Davis, retired public school teacher

Rev. Tyshawn Gardner, pastor

Dr. Qiaoli Liang, scientist and interest in MathCounts

Dr. Lucy Roberts, veterinarian and advocate of STEM

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr. James E. McLean, grants person and former Dean of College of Education

Ms. Sandra Hall Ray, former member State Board of Education

Mrs. Karen Thompson, with expertise in "Service Learning"

GENERAL OPERATIONS

Ms. Shelby Schenck Ancrum, Mortgage, Operations, Compliance, Smart Bank

Mr. Alan Durham, attorney

Mr. Bernhard Mader, CFO Mercedes-Benz International LLC

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

Mr. Garrin Daniels, IT management for facility

Mr. Gary Phillips, President of Premier Service and Jackson Security

Mrs. Mary Harmon Young, realtor with Pritchett-Moore

2. The School Board's capacity and experience in facilities acquisition and management will be helpful in determining how many buildings in downtown Tuscaloosa can be rented as there is no one building for rent or sale that can house the entire K-12 school population. While 6 of the buildings have already been through the Zoning Board to change their status to a SCHOOL ZONE, one building at 315 28th Avenue is still zoned ML. Mr. Phillips owns the largest electrical, heating and cooling company and security company in Tuscaloosa so he will be very helpful in working with the City and Inspections.

Attachments

Section 29: Operations Capacity

29.1	CCS Insurance Coverage	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 5:30 AM	DOCX / 15.911 KB
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30. Unique/Innovative Operational Aspects

Capstone Charter School aims to set itself apart from the current offerings of the local school system by creating a unique environment that provides benefits to each student at every ability. There are many innovative aspects to allow Capstone Charter School to rise above local area schools.

1. Capstone Charter School will utilize the Theory of Multiple Intelligences as devised by Dr. Howard Gardner of Harvard University to create a unique learning environment. Capstone Charter School will personalize educational strategies and lessons according to the needs of

individual students. The school will provide a daily emphasis on Character Education or Interpersonal and Intrapersonal intelligence, that will be accomplished through various programs referenced in Section 6. The school's classrooms will be divided into multi-age groups to provide opportunities for leadership and cooperation. Capstone Charter School will introduce foreign language education beginning in Kindergarten, continuing until 12th grade. Capstone Charter School will provide an opportunity for secure futures for high school seniors through career initiatives and/or college education. Through the use of STEM and Project-Based learning, the school will prepare students for advancement in science and mathematics. Capstone Charter School will have strong parental involvement that will be accomplished through participation incentives, communication, and conferences. Community outreach will be achieved through various community programs and also the use of various buildings throughout the community to increase student exposure and engagement. To provide reprieve from our dependency on technology, Capstone Charter School will integrate No Tech Tuesday and Board-Game Break to allow students to think creatively in other forms. The school will also provide opportunity for daily health and mental wellness through the usage of Inner Explorer.

2. All of these features will be integral in the development of students in whole learning. Each aspect of the curriculum design provides opportunities for students beyond the academic stipulations to provide engagement in vital areas of whole child learning. The aspects above are included in daily activity and learning modules and will be integrated and available for every student.

3. All state standards will be adhered to through academic curriculum, character education, extra-curricular activities, and special education. The program will go above the minimum standards required for each grade to provide opportunities for increased engagement and challenges for each student.

4. The unique aspects of this school are research based and referenced in many best practice teachings and also have been utilized in other exemplary schools around the world.

Attachments

Section 30: Unique/Innovative Operational Aspects

– No Attachments –

FINANCIAL PLAN AND CAPACITY

31. Financial Plan

The Capstone Charter School Financial Plan & Capacity

1. Describe the systems, policies, and processes the school will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing and payroll, including a description of how it will establish and maintain strong internal controls and ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements.

The Capstone Charter School's financial health will be monitored and governed by its Board of Directors/Leadership Team and School Board. Administrative responsibility for the finances within the school will be the responsibility of the Chief Operating/Financial Officer.

The Board will ensure that an appropriate recruitment will be undertaken that will yield a department head that has the skillset, background and experiences to lead the department, serving as an advisor to the school community and working collaboratively with all stakeholders as necessary. CCS shall use the Job Board from AASBO, Alabama Association of School Business Officers and hopefully, hire someone who is a member. A retired public school CFO would be an ideal candidate since they would already possess the needed skills.

Traditional responsibilities such as budget development, monitoring and financial accounting and reporting will be addressed by the COO/CFO on a routine basis. Upon establishment of the Board's Finance Committee, periodic reports and other financial information will be submitted through the school leadership to the Board as per stated guidelines.

Working collaboratively, a group of financial professionals with input from the school's administration and external auditor consultants will develop a comprehensive financial model that will encompass all elements of business operations.

It is anticipated that the school will use Harris software as the primary accounting/business software. It is also anticipated that the school will process payroll, payables, receivables and checks using the software. Contract documents will be managed through DocuSign and travel expenses will be processed through Concur.

Care will be taken to ensure that duties will be properly segregated and that there is a chain of custody for securing assets.

2. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the school's administration and governing board for the school finances and distinguish between each party.

The administrative leadership team will consist of the Principal/COO, Assistant Principal and CFO, with the CFO having primary responsibility for the daily operation of the business function. This includes, but is not limited to:

Preparing financial statements, monitoring budgets and making adjustments as necessary, preparing forecasts, strategic planning.

The Superintendent/Principal/COO and Assistant Principal will have, among other duties, responsibility of reviewing documents that speak to financial performance, approving expenses

beyond set thresholds and approving changes in certain policies and procedures prior to submittal to the Board.

The Board of Directors will have overall signatory authority regarding financial matters and will approve the annual budget and budget adjustments as well as by-laws and the formation of special committees.

3. Describe the school's plans and procedures for conducting an annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the school.

Annual Audit

An annual audit will be performed by an external certified public accounting firm selected by the School Board. An audit estimate was submitted by Way Ray Shelton & Co. The CFO and school leadership will cooperate with the firm's representatives, providing requested information as expeditiously as possible. Specific guidelines that govern both financial and operational audits will be developed by the Board of Trustees.

4. Describe how the school will ensure financial transparency to the authorizer and the public, including its plans for public adoption of its budget and public dissemination of its annual audit, annual financial report, monthly check register, and monthly financial reports.

The budget along with all supplemental schedules and notes will be discussed and voted on during an annual Board of Trustees meeting where the public will be invited to attend. Sufficient notice will be given to the public. Additionally, the budget will be posted on the school's website in an area designated for open records.

5. Describe any services to be contracted, such as business services, payroll, and auditing services including the anticipated costs and criteria for selecting such services.

The Capstone Charter School anticipates contracting for auditing, legal and cafeteria services. The criteria for selecting the services will be developed by the school's administration and submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval. It is anticipated that the annual cost for auditing, legal and cafeteria services will be \$25,000, 5000 and an average of \$130,000 respectively.

6. Describe the school's plans for obtaining liability insurance to indemnify the school, its board, staff and educators against tort claims.

The Capstone Charter School has obtained estimates for liability insurance to indemnify the school, its board, staff and educators against tort claims. The estimates have been included in the projected budget and upon approval of the school's charter school application, the estimates will be sent through the administrative leadership to the Board for review and approval.

7. Budget Narrative: See attached budget narrative Financial Management Capacity

Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Financial Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as the following:

- Financial Management
- Fundraising and Development
- Accounting and Internal Controls

The School Board for the Capstone Charter School is a diverse group with academic, business and research skills that are complimentary of each other. While there are members with analytical skills in traditional CFO roles, there are also members from the academic community that apply these skills in a different set of relevant environments.

Bernhard Mader is a CFO and Vice President with Mercedes-Benz International LLC and offers to the Board, 32 years of experience working with finance operations at many different and progressively responsible positions.

Ms. Shelby Schenck Ancrum is a local banker with more than 18 years of experience in mortgage lending, real estate and financial services.

Dr. James McLean is a former Dean of the College Education at The University of Alabama, with more than 45 years of experience as an educator, is an experienced grant writer and has administered more than 100 externally funded research, assessment and evaluation projects.

Dr. Qiaoli Liang is a chemist at The University of Alabama and has written and administered many grants over the past 15 years.

Gary Phillips is a local business owner of Premier Service Company, Inc., and Jackson Security, Inc. and has more than 38 years working with financials and business operations.

The Capstone Charter School's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or lower than estimated relies heavily on community support through development efforts. In this case, the school's leadership team would engage in a focused effort to obtain the resources needed. With a strong School Board with financial expertise and our Principal/Director who raised the funds 25 years ago in this same community for the Children's Hands-on Museum (CHOM), we feel confident that our community will respond. We also have strong grant writers within the School Board, and we certainly hope that some of the teams we will form will be successful in obtaining external funding.

Year 1 cash flow contingency in the event that revenue projections are not met in advance of opening include a short-term loan from local bankers that is secured by anticipated revenue streams. Pledge forms were distributed within the business community two weeks ago and almost \$20,000 has been pledged before the new Board members have made their commitments.

Attachments

Section 31: Financial Plan

31.1	Start-Up Budget	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:24 AM	PDF / 69.177 KB
31.2	Five-Year Projected Budget	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:23 AM	PDF / 60.969 KB
31.3	Expenses	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:22 AM	PDF / 46.013 KB
31.4	Classroom Instructional Support	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:21 AM	PDF / 46.394 KB
31.5	Enrollment Projections	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 4:19 AM	PDF / 52.486 KB
	Schedule for Salary and		

31.6	Fringe Benefits	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 3:50 AM	PDF / 60.179 KB
31.7	Fundraising Goal	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 2:02 AM	PDF / 44.513 KB
31.8	2024-2025 Proposed Budget	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 2:00 AM	PDF / 32.801 KB
31.9	2023-2024 Proposed Budget	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 2:00 AM	PDF / 32.893 KB
31.10	2022-2023 Proposed Budget	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:59 AM	PDF / 32.531 KB
31.11	2021-2022 Proposed Budget	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:59 AM	PDF / 32.86 KB
31.12	2020-2021 Proposed Budget	Rountree, Barbara, 12/19/18 1:56 AM	PDF / 32.63 KB

32. Financial Management Capacity

1. The Capstone Charter School Financial Plan & Capacity

Describe the systems, policies, and processes the school will use for financial planning, accounting, purchasing and payroll, including a description of how it will establish and maintain strong internal controls and ensure compliance with all financial reporting requirements.

The Capstone Charter School's financial health will be monitored and governed by its Board of Directors/Leadership Team and School Board. Administrative responsibility for the finances within the school will be the responsibility of the Chief Operating/Financial Officer.

The Board will ensure that an appropriate recruitment will be undertaken that will yield a department head that has the skillset, background and experiences to lead the department, serving as an advisor to the school community and working collaboratively with all stakeholders as necessary. CCS shall use the Job Board from AASBO, Alabama Association of School Business Officers and hopefully, hire someone who is a member. A retired public school CFO would be an ideal candidate since they would already possess the needed skills.

Traditional responsibilities such as budget development, monitoring and financial accounting and reporting will be addressed by the COO/CFO on a routine basis. Upon establishment of the Board's Finance Committee, periodic reports and other financial information will be submitted through the school leadership to the Board as per stated guidelines.

Working collaboratively, a group of financial professionals with input from the school's administration and external auditor consultants will develop a comprehensive financial model that will encompass all elements of business operations.

It is anticipated that the school will use Harris software as the primary accounting/business software. It is also anticipated that the school will process payroll, payables, receivables and checks using the software. Contract documents will be managed through DocuSign and travel expenses will be processed through Concur.

Care will be taken to ensure that duties will be properly segregated and that there is a chain of custody for securing assets.

2. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the school's administration and governing board for the school finances and distinguish between each party.

The administrative leadership team will consist of the Principal/COO, Assistant Principal and CFO, with the CFO having primary responsibility for the daily operation of the business function. This includes, but is not limited to:

Preparing financial statements, monitoring budgets and making adjustments as necessary, preparing forecasts, strategic planning.

The Superintendent/Principal/COO and Assistant Principal will have, among other duties, responsibility of reviewing documents that speak to financial performance, approving expenses beyond set thresholds and approving changes in certain policies and procedures prior to submittal to the Board.

The Board of Directors will have overall signatory authority regarding financial matters and will approve the annual budget and budget adjustments as well as by-laws and the formation of special committees.

3. Describe the school's plans and procedures for conducting an annual audit of the financial and administrative operations of the school.

Annual Audit

An annual audit will be performed by an external certified public accounting firm selected by the School Board. An audit estimate was submitted by Way Ray Shelton & Co. The CFO and school leadership will cooperate with the firm's representatives, providing requested information as expeditiously as possible. Specific guidelines that govern both financial and operational audits will be developed by the Board of Trustees.

4. Describe how the school will ensure financial transparency to the authorizer and the public, including its plans for public adoption of its budget and public dissemination of its annual audit, annual financial report, monthly check register, and monthly financial reports.

The budget along with all supplemental schedules and notes will be discussed and voted on during an annual Board of Trustees meeting where the public will be invited to attend. Sufficient notice will be given to the public. Additionally, the budget will be posted on the school's website in an area designated for open records.

5. Describe any services to be contracted, such as business services, payroll, and auditing services including the anticipated costs and criteria for selecting such services.

The Capstone Charter School anticipates contracting for auditing, legal and cafeteria services. The criteria for selecting the services will be developed by the school's administration and submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval. It is anticipated that the annual cost for auditing, legal and cafeteria services will be \$25,000, 5000 and an average of \$130,000 respectively.

6. Describe the school's plans for obtaining liability insurance to indemnify the school, its board, staff and educators against tort claims.

The Capstone Charter School has obtained estimates for liability insurance to indemnify the school, its board, staff and educators against tort claims. The estimates have been included in the projected budget and upon approval of the school's charter school application, the estimates will be sent through the administrative leadership to the Board for review and approval.

7. Budget Narrative: See attached budget narrative Financial Management Capacity

Describe the applicant team's individual and collective qualifications for implementing the Financial Plan successfully, including capacity in areas such as the following:

- Financial Management
- Fundraising and Development
- Accounting and Internal Controls

The School Board for the Capstone Charter School is a diverse group with academic, business and research skills that are complimentary of each other. While there are members with analytical skills in traditional CFO roles, there are also members from the academic community that apply these skills in a different set of relevant environments.

Bernhard Mader is a CFO and Vice President with Mercedes-Benz International LLC and offers to the Board, 32 years of experience working with finance operations at many different and progressively responsible positions.

Ms. Shelby Schenck Ancrum is a local banker with more than 18 years of experience in mortgage lending, real estate and financial services.

Dr. James McLean is a former Dean of the College Education at The University of Alabama, with more than 45 years of experience as an educator, is an experienced grant writer and has administered more than 100 externally funded research, assessment and evaluation projects.

Dr. Qiaoli Liang is a chemist at The University of Alabama and has written and administered many grants over the past 15 years.

Gary Phillips is a local business owner of Premier Service Company, Inc., and Jackson Security, Inc. and has more than 38 years working with financials and business operations.

The Capstone Charter School's contingency plan to meet financial needs if anticipated revenues are not received or lower than estimated relies heavily on community support through development efforts. In this case, the school's leadership team would engage in a focused effort to obtain the resources needed. With a strong School Board with financial expertise and our Principal/Director who raised the funds 25 years ago in this same community for the Children's Hands-on Museum (CHOM), we feel confident that our community will respond. We also have strong grant writers within the School Board

and we certainly hope that some of the teams we will form will be successful in obtaining external funding.

Year 1 cash flow contingency in the event that revenue projections are not met in advance of opening include a short-term loan from local bankers that is secured by anticipated revenue streams. Pledge forms were distributed within the business community two weeks ago and almost \$20,000 has been pledged before the new Board members have made their commitments.

Attachments

Section 32: Financial Management Capacity

– No Attachments –

EXISTING OPERATORS

33. Existing Operators

No other charters operating.

Attachments

Section 33: Existing Operators

– No Attachments –

Recommendation

School Name:	Capstone Charter School
Primary Contact:	Barbara Rountree
Submission Date:	December 19, 2018
Recommendation Date:	February 5, 2019
Recommended By:	Logan Searcy
Charter Status:	Granted

The application was approved by the Alabama Public Charter School Commission on 2/4/2019.