

General Information

Description Area

* The form will close at 5:00 PM ET on Wednesday, February 1, 2023, and no submissions will be accepted after that time.*In 1996, the South Carolina Legislature passed the Charter Schools Act, allowing citizens to apply to operate a public school. The focus of charter schools is to provide quality educational choices for parents and students. This application outlines the necessary components to propose, receive approval for, and implement a high-quality charter school. Based on the provided guidance and SCDE template, this application form must be used to develop a complete application for charter schools that plan to open for the 2024–25 school year or later. Applicants who do not use this form will not be eligible to apply for federal Planning and Implementation Grant funding under awards currently held by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE). All charter school applications must comply fully with the South Carolina Charter Schools Act, S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-10 et seq., and the Procedures and Standards for Review of Charter School Applications (2 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-601 (2013)). Application sections must be presented as outlined in this form and labeled accordingly with appropriate questions/headings. It is important to remember that each of the sections relates to one another. For instance, educational program components should align with the proposed budget. Thus, a completed application should readily reflect that all of its sections, irrespective of their individual focus, link together to form a comprehensive and viable plan to open and sustain a high-quality charter school. The application form has multiple pages (9) broken into: Application Cover Page, Executive Summary, Educational Plan and Capacity (part 1 and 2), Organizational Plan and Capacity (part 1 and 2), Business Plan and Capacity, Appendices, and Signature Certification Page. You may begin working on the form, save and return to the form at a later time using the unique link generated at the time the form is saved. Please use the Submission Guide to help you navigate the application.

Application Cover Page

Proposed Sponsor Charter Institute at Erskine

Applicant Information

Name of Proposed Charter School Ashley River Academy

Name of Applicant Group South Carolina Classical Academy

Street Address for Proposed Charter School (if known) N/A
N/A

City and Zip Code for Proposed Charter School Charleston 29466

FEIN Application Submitted - EIN pending

Contact Information

Name of Committee Chair Mr Tom Drummond

Title/Position Planning Committee Chair

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Additional Information about Proposed Charter School

Is the proposed school a virtual charter school? No

Does the proposed school intend to partner with a charter and/or education management organization (CMO/EMO)? No

Proposed Grade Levels

Kindergarten = First Year of Operation
First Grade = First Year of Operation
Second Grade = First Year of Operation
Third Grade = First Year of Operation
Fourth Grade = First Year of Operation
Fifth Grade = First Year of Operation
Sixth Grade = Full Matriculation
Seventh Grade = Full Matriculation
Eighth Grade = Full Matriculation
Ninth Grade = Full Matriculation
Tenth Grade = Full Matriculation
Eleventh Grade = Full Matriculation
Twelfth Grade = Full Matriculation

Executive Summary

Executive Summary Upload

<https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370365>

Response to Evidence of Need and Support

The Planning Committee of Ashley River Academy (ARA) has worked to establish and formalize interest in the school through the dissemination of an Interest Form survey. These are distributed and collected at community events, interest meetings, as well as online through social media platforms hosted by the Committee. The survey collects contact information, zip code and current school if applicable, as well as the number and ages of the children in each interested family. Responses to this survey informed initial enrollment targets and serve to substantiate the matriculation plan of the school. Location information is also being used to augment outreach strategies and focus the Committee's facility work.

As the first public classical school in Charleston County, prospective family interest has been significant. A grade-level breakdown that corresponds to projected Year 1 enrollment for 2024-2025 is below:

- ? Kindergarten students from interested families: 68
- ? First grade students from interested families: 66
- ? Second grade students from interested families: 62
- ? Third grade students from interested families: 71
- ? Fourth grade students from interested families: 71
- ? Fifth grade students from interested families: 75

Nearly 1/3 of families with students eligible to attend the school in Year 1 of operation represent siblings. Many of these families also have older children who may not align with the buildout plan of ARA, but will still serve as important family ambassadors of the school, naturally facilitating outreach with other families who may have students eligible to attend in the initial years of operation.

Of those in preschool and primary grades currently enrolled in school, more than 80% are attending schools in the Charleston County School District (CCSD) Constituent District 2 (Mt. Pleasant schools). The largest proportions represent enrollees of Carolina Park Elementary (21.1%), Jennie Moore Elementary (15.9%), Mt. Pleasant Academy (13.4%), and Laurel Hill Primary School (10.9%). Nearly 10% of eligible Year 1 interest is being generated from area private schools as well, including Porter-Gaud (\$26,000/year in tuition), Holy City Christian Academy (\$9,750/year in tuition), and Crown Leadership Academy (\$9,250/year in tuition). Other interested groups include students who are currently homeschooled, as well as those currently attending schools in other Charleston constituent districts.

It is important to highlight that Hillsdale member schools have consistently seen significant demand and fast growth. The three most recently opened Hillsdale schools served more than 400 students in their first year of operation, all exceeding initial enrollment targets. In fact, all Hillsdale member schools are operating at their full capacity, with average waiting list ranges of 28-80 students per grade level in elementary grades, 25-32 for middle schools grades, and 6-20 for high school grades. (BCSI.

"Enrollment and Waitlist Data." 2021. Hillsdale College).

Marketing and communication will be essential to attracting sufficient enrollment from a diverse student population, and it will be essential for the school to maximize efficiencies as it pioneers an approach that is new to this environment. Initial efforts will focus on building relationships within the community the Ashley River Academy (ARA) will serve. The school's planning committee will engage the members of the ARA community in several important ways beginning in the planning year, continuing through the opening, and sustaining the relationship as the school grows. Hillsdale member schools utilize a planned approach involving a representative group of interested and important local stakeholders referred to as ambassadors. Along with fostering important community relationships, the ambassadors will help promote the school to the community and collaborate with ARA to ensure that initial school development plans recognize and honor unique local needs and desires.

During the planning year, the committee will work with its educational partners and local ambassadors to identify opportunities to reach potential students and families through local pre-schools, as well as summer camps and community resource programs. ARA will take advantage of every opportunity to speak and distribute school promotional materials at various community events. Just as important, those associated with the school will begin to engage as good community members in a sincere and honest manner by being present, helping out where and when needed, and listening to families and students as they interact.

Informational sessions and other events will be hosted to provide opportunities for members of the community to learn about ARA and the exemplary track record of the Hillsdale classical education model. Information about ARA's expectations of students and parents, and details about the school's classical academic program and planned extra-curricular activities and clubs will be provided in a number of venues utilizing a variety of strategies. It will be critical that information is presented in a clear and compelling manner at local events and celebrations and ARA's principal will have resources available to him or her to ensure these events provide the community with a clear description and understanding of the Hillsdale classical education model.

ARA's recruitment plan will use traditional strategies including signage (both yard signs and billboards) placed throughout the community, paid advertising (both online and in various local print publications), earned media (including Spread the Positive), participation in various community activities and meetings, door-to-door canvassing and, once a facility is secured, open house/building tours.

A strong Internet and social media presence (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok and LinkedIn) will be essential, highlighting the benefits and successes of Hillsdale member schools and promoting the benefits of the

classical academy model. The school's website and social media presence will be featured in all print and online materials where members of the community can learn more about the school -- especially its mission and vision -- and how to enroll. ARA will report its progress to the community as it moves toward achievement of its enrollment targets.

The school's planning committee members and local ambassadors will manage public relations and marketing responsibilities beginning February 2023, prior to a principal being hired. Working with its partner, American Classical Education (ACE) Foundation, and a marketing consultant, the committee has already launched its website and developed a general brochure about the school, its unique educational model, and its plans to serve the Mt. Pleasant region of Charleston County. The brochure and recruitment and marketing materials will be complete and ready for distribution in early 2023. ARA has also already held multiple community information and parent information nights within the community, as well as coordinated meetings with elected officials, key community members, business leaders, and most importantly, parents. ACE Foundation has also developed a robust community awareness plan, the Parent Info Packet (PIP). The PIP is a whole-school multilingual lead-generation campaign that drives interest from families within a 30-minute drive of ARA's anticipated location and connects with prospective families through Google Ads, social media ads, and search engines. This initial campaign will be followed by Age- and-Stage campaigns to speak directly to the challenges families face in specific seasons of their children's growth and development.

The Charleston County population aligns with ARA's goal to serve a diverse student body representative of the rapidly changing community. As mentioned in the Executive Summary, the current student composition in Charleston includes more than 48% of students from low-income families, nearly 50% of enrollees identify as students of color, 28% of students are served in gifted and talented programs, nearly 10% are students with disabilities, and more than 8% are categorized as multi-lingual learners.

Evidence from over 20 Hillsdale member schools across the country shows that the classical model is appropriate and successful with all student demographics and student populations. In order to expand its reach to prospective students and families, ARA will provide recruitment materials translated into multiple languages. Additionally, outreach to various local organizations dedicated to providing support to economically- and other disadvantaged members of the community will be important: food banks (such as East Cooper Community Outreach and Our Lady of Mercy Neighborhood House), support agencies (including the Dee Norton Child Advocacy Center, CASA, and Goodwill; and, youth groups (including the Coastal Carolina Scouts Council, the Girl Scouts Eastern Carolina Council, and the Girls & Boys Club) will all be key components of the information campaign.

More than 50 letters of support have been gathered by the Planning Committee of ARA. These are contained in Appendix C. These include support from prospective families, community members and local business owners, and even support local legislative representatives and commissioners. In addition to the attached letters, the Committee has also had positive interactions with members of the Charleston County School Board, with the Chair of the Board expressing support for the proposed school and indicating interest in exploring ways the district could assist the school's development and start-up efforts.

It will be important, and is an authentic goal, that members of the planning committee, the principal and any others associated with the school -- if they are not already from the area -- integrate into the communities. This effort will be recognized and appreciated by the school stakeholders, community business partners, families, and most importantly the students of Charleston County. Just as ARA will expect its students to serve as community leaders, so too, must the leadership team of ARA.

Monthly town hall meetings will be held in communities where families can provide input and feedback to inform the school's development. Beginning in January 2023, ARA will offer several information sessions throughout the 2023-2024 planning year allowing parents and students to learn and ask questions about the school's mission, vision, and philosophy, the benefits of the classical education model offered, and learn of successes experienced at other Hillsdale member schools across the country. Families will have the opportunity to learn about expectations of students and parents, details about the school's classical academic program, planned extra-curricular activities and clubs, and visit the facility once it is secured. Most importantly will be the need to form relationships through its efforts to foster communication that will inform the committee and school representatives of where they need to go to meet with families - from local churches, youth activity centers, summer fairs or gatherings at the library.

Beyond development, parent involvement is critical to the sustainability of the school. ARA will adopt a parent engagement policy and implement a number of Hillsdale-recommended parent engagement strategies as are in place at many other Hillsdale member schools across the country. Hillsdale member schools have extensive involvement and support from parents, which, beyond recruitment, is proven to be beneficial for the students and their continued success. Some offerings at ARA to encourage continued parent involvement will be coffee with the principal, an open door policy for parents to engage with school leadership and teachers, parent teacher conferences, a PTO, parent tutoring, and parent volunteer programs. In addition to providing vital training and curriculum support, ARA will be assisted in its outreach efforts through its affiliation with Hillsdale K-12 Education Office. Hillsdale has a large network of donors and friends across the United States, including more than seven million people who receive the college's monthly *Imprimis* publication. The Hillsdale College affiliation will assist the school in reaching greater numbers of families

within the community, thereby increasing enrollment year one and beyond.

Depending on the student body, concerted efforts will be made to address the needs or limitations of parents including, but in no way limited to: securing translation services; providing alternate times and/or settings for parent meetings; using technology when appropriate and welcomed; etc. Parent expectations are stated in the policy and in enrollment documentation so clear lines of expectations for parent/guardian participation are communicated from the time of enrollment. Teachers will also communicate regularly with parents on student performance, upcoming events, and invitations to presentations and activities. Parent involvement is a critical piece of the ARA model.

ARA seeks to partner with like-minded individuals and organizations that have the drive to empower community members, families, and children through access to quality educational programs and services. ARA will emphasize the importance of volunteering and will partner with organizations allowing students to offer support at non-profit fundraising walks, community clean-ups, and food pantry/shelters. The committee will work to establish partnerships with community organizations that can provide in-kind, wrap-around services, behavior and mental health programs, enrichment programs, food service, and mentoring opportunities. Included as part of Appendix C are more than 50 Letters of Support from prospective families, partners, and community leaders.

As detailed throughout the application, the two primary educational partners for ARA are Hillsdale College and American Classical Education (ACE) Foundation. The foundation for ARA's plan to provide a high-quality classical American education option for students and families throughout Rutherford County is built on its partnership with Hillsdale College K-12 Education (Hillsdale) and its Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI). Established in 2010, BCSI offers a well-rounded liberal arts curriculum developed in partnership with scholars at Hillsdale College and feedback from a growing network of over 20 schools in 10 states. The Hillsdale College K-12 curriculum, published as *The K-12 Program Guide: An American Classical Education*, was developed from several strong and proven academic programs, including *The Core Knowledge Sequence*, *Singapore Math*, and *Literacy Essentials*, but includes significant modification and continuous improvement from the experience of Hillsdale staff, faculty, and teachers from across its network of schools (with detailed curriculum and performance information provided in Appendix G). The Hillsdale College K-12 Education Office will provide consulting and training to administration and teachers at no cost to ARA. All Hillsdale assistance to charter schools is provided through private donations to Hillsdale College.

The second primary partner, American Classical Education (ACE) Foundation, is a nonprofit organization independent of Hillsdale College established to support member charter school development activities that span many areas of charter school start-up, including but not limited to,

marketing and community engagement, committee planning efforts, facilities coordination, policy development, and even in-kind contributions such as access to soft funding (detailed in Appendix AA). ACE Foundation board members bring significant charter expertise, with multiple members serving on the founding boards or current boards of classical charter academies in several states. The organization's Executive Director is providing in-state support to the efforts of the ARA Planning Committee with a role that has included committee meeting facilitation, ambassador recruitment, interest survey dissemination and analysis, and working with local realtors to refine the prospective facilities list in response to area demand. Upon its transition from a Planning Committee to a founding board, the ACE Foundation Executive Director and the ACE Foundation Board will continue to serve as an advisory body to the ARA Board of Directors throughout Year 0 and Year 1 initiatives. All ACE Foundation supports are at no cost to the school.

Response to Instructional Model

Thomas Jefferson's 1779 Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge states that the object of education in primary schools is, "to instruct citizens in their rights, interests and duties, as men and citizens." Jefferson and other members of the founding fathers of the United States considered this necessary to make the people the guardians of their liberty. According to Jefferson, in grammar schools, students should be taught "Latin, English grammar, reading, writing, arithmetic, and the outlines of geography and history. Furthermore, the books for instructing children to read shall at the same time make them acquainted with Greek, Roman, English, and American history." Jefferson continued, "by apprising them of the past we will enable them to judge the future." The school's very specific educational philosophy and curricular approach were selected to provide the caliber of education Jefferson envisioned. Ashley River Academy (ARA) will use Hillsdale's K-12 Program Guide: An American Education-developed by Hillsdale College originally based on the Core Knowledge Sequence, supplemented by Literacy Essentials and Singapore Math, offering Latin has been improved, and enhanced by master teachers, its K-12 educators, and expert faculty of Hillsdale College to provide the basic curricular framework for teaching history, geography, literature, visual arts, music and science, with an emphasis on cultural literacy.

The school will provide students with a proven classical education model that will challenge them to excel both in learning and in character. This classical educational program is content-rich, balanced, strong and has emphasis on four core disciplines of math, science, literature, and history with attention to music, art, physical education and foreign languages. The classical model is a sound and time-tested means of leading students toward intellectual, moral and civic virtue.

Classical education upholds a standard of excellence and has proven itself over the course of time. ARA's high standards and research-based classical curriculum will provide students with a traditional education on which to build. At ARA, high academic achievement, personal discipline, ethics, and accountability will be consistently reinforced through the study of subjects in the classical tradition. Students will graduate from ARA as highly literate and ethical citizens who are well-prepared to advance into any life endeavor and to inspire others.

ARA will execute the Hillsdale K-12 model of education which is currently being successfully implemented in 20 other Hillsdale member schools that are improving educational outcomes with a wide variety of student populations in diverse school environments across the country. The mission of the school is to train the minds and improve the hearts of students through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences with instruction in the principals of moral character and civic virtue. This is the mission of the Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI) and was the foundation on which the Hillsdale College K-12 Office (Hillsdale) built its curriculum model. The goal of ARA is to graduate students who are highly literate, prepared to continue academic

achievement, and ready to become responsible members of their community.

Vital to the academic plan is the teaching of all content to mastery using time-proven instructional methods by highly trained and competent teachers. Augmenting the four core subjects of math, science, history, and literature is the study of art, music, physical education, and, beginning in 4th grade, Latin (as it pertains to the etymology of English vocabulary). As students enter middle and high school grades, Latin, as a foreign language, takes on greater importance and various elective options are afforded to each student. Throughout a student's K-12 experience at ARA, the incorporation of the importance of virtues is an underlying current along with increasingly sophisticated study skills. The school's virtues include courage, moderation, justice, responsibility, friendship, prudence, wisdom. The school's academic plan consistently stresses the importance of a Socratic learning experience tailored to fit the student's age and level of readiness.

In the earliest grades, the curriculum focuses primarily on language, with the bulk of the school day given to teaching literacy and numeracy. Both subjects are foundational to a student's education, so the resources and methods utilized in each case must be consistent and exemplary. To help achieve this, ARA will use Literacy Essentials to teach literacy and related skills and orthography in grades K-3, and the Singapore Math Program to teach numeracy. It is understandable that the students enrolling in the school, especially in the lower grade bands, may have deficits in these foundational content areas. Anticipating this, ARA will be poised to implement a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)² with fidelity as outlined by The Charter Institute at Erskine MTSS policies and procedures (<https://erskinecharters.org/special-education/mtss/>). As further proof of being ready to address the individual needs of incoming students, ARA has specifically chosen supplemental programs proven to fill deficits and lesson achievement gaps.

Literacy Essentials is an "Orton-based" program. It contains the elements common to programs from this heritage. Instruction is multi-sensory, explicit, and direct. Teachers will instruct using question and answer analysis and graphic organization of the content. The program begins with writing and spelling to teach reading-wiring children's brains to think deeply. Literacy Essentials features day-by-day organization of instructional information. The curriculum covers the areas of phonemic awareness, the alphabetic code which includes 72 common English spelling patterns or phonograms (first Basic Code then advanced code), orthography, vocabulary, writing and grammar, reading from accuracy to automaticity, and reading comprehension. Additionally, the program provides instruction in both manuscript and cursive handwriting.

The Singapore Math Program provides students with a strong conceptual foundation in basic mathematics. From the earliest grades, this program

emphasizes concepts, mental math, and number sense while employing physical and graphical illustrations of underlying mathematical rules and phenomena. The program presents mathematical skill-building and problem-solving such that students have a better understanding of not simply when to use a particular equation-but why. Moving students on to higher levels of skills before they're ready is not an option, so the program is employed at each student's ability level. Guidance in the effective use of this curriculum requires that ability-level groups be determined at the beginning of each school year, with adjustments being made on an as-needed basis in order to best equip each student with the language of numeracy. As with the literacy program, faculty and staff will be provided with specific training to help students with learning deficiencies close those gaps before moving on to more sophisticated concepts or applications. Again, without negative stigmas or emotional distress, ARA will use proven materials and ability level grouping to ensure all students have the opportunity to achieve mastery of these vital foundational skills and content.

The central position of language in the curriculum continues throughout the elementary and middle school grades. In grades 4 and 5, students will learn Latin and Greek roots of English words. In 6th grade, students will begin learning formal Latin, and continue with Latin through 9th grade. Latin will be introduced and taught alongside English so that students learn the structural underpinnings of their own language, expand their vocabulary, and improve their reading comprehension.

As students mature in their facility with language, the curriculum directs their time and intellectual energy into more content-based (as opposed to skill-based) aspects of the curriculum. The Core Knowledge Sequence was first published in 1988 and has been successfully employed and tested in hundreds of schools throughout the United States. Hillsdale College used the Core Knowledge Sequence as the original foundation for developing its K-12 Program Guide. Hillsdale has made various changes, improvements, and enhancements over recent years-including identifying teacher and student resources for each subject and grade-with input from master teachers, its K-12 educators, and expert faculty of Hillsdale College. The Hillsdale College K-12 Program Guide has been aligned with South Carolina State Standards.

Although the rhetoric surrounding a classical school often emphasizes the humanities, the sciences are no less important than the humanistic disciplines and will not play a secondary role at ARA. The Hillsdale K-12 science program focuses on thematically linked science topics and biographies of great scientists and the order of instruction allowing for regular repetition of the most important topics, such that students are well-versed in the fundamentals of all science disciplines by the time they reach high school. The science program is supported by Pearson's Science Explorer series, complete with integrated lab manuals and demonstrations and Delta Science Content Readers. (Barney Charter School Initiative of

Hillsdale College. "Model Application Elements, v3." Hillsdale College, 2020.)

As ARA grows to include high school grades, it will follow the Hillsdale College K-12 Program Guide for upper grades detailed in a subsequent section of the application. This includes four years of history; four years of literature; four years of math; four years of science; three years of foreign language; one year of government and moral philosophy; one credit of fine arts; and a semester of economics. In addition to the requisite courses, students will have opportunities each year to choose electives that fulfill South Carolina's electives requirement. As planned, students enrolled in ARA will exceed the coursework and credits required by South Carolina for a regular high school diploma.

All students of ARA will be challenged to meet their academic potential. Because an emphasis will be on mastery of content and development of the skills needed to show evidence of that knowledge, all students who choose to enroll and apply themselves with diligence and perseverance will succeed at ARA. Highly motivated and trained professional educators will guide the learning by using a classical education model and time-proven instructional methods. ARA's student population will be diverse in every way- but the quest for knowledge and the ability to see beauty in the world will unite and fortify the learning community's mission to "train the minds and improve the hearts of students through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue."

ARA's curriculum also provides a strong emphasis on civics and classical virtues and will provide students with a robust education that challenges them to excel both in learning and in character. ARA agrees with Aristotle that one becomes good only by observing and practicing the right behavior. ARA will instruct students in the classical virtues, both inside and outside of the classroom. Discipline, ethics, and personal responsibility will be modeled and expected. Students will be introduced to the virtuous behavior of timeless heroes and heroines of literature and history. Moreover, the school will define a standard of behavior expected throughout the school using designated classical virtues (courage, moderation, justice, responsibility, friendship, prudence and wisdom). Emphasis upon these standards of excellence will help students learn and develop virtuous behavior alongside patterns of thought and conduct based on high moral standards. (Barney Charter School Initiative of Hillsdale College. "A Brief Introduction to the Barney Charter School Initiative for Prospective School Founders." Hillsdale College, 2020.)

The classical model of education values the teacher as the possessor of knowledge; consequently, the educator will remain the focus of the classroom without giving way to extraneous use of technology, the use of media, or other strategies not proven to warrant deep learning. Socratic discussion is the ideal mode of instruction for classical instruction, but the

founders of ARA are under no illusion that young and inexperienced students can immediately partake in or profit from such a discussion. Rather, the guiding principle for most K-12 instruction will be that instruction is "teacher-directed." Teacher-directed instruction will generally take the form of a lecture, story, read-aloud discussion. Teacher-led discussion will help to model inquiry and analysis for students as a way of preparing them to engage in more open Socratic discussions in high school. Projects, student-led discussion, student-led inquiry, and other modern modes of instruction will have a limited place at ARA, and only within the broader context of the mission, curriculum, and school culture. Teachers will receive training and feedback about when best to employ each instructional method, with an emphasis placed on teacher-led, content-rich instruction in all subjects. This emphasis is consistent with the tradition of classical education and with the content-rich curriculum from Hillsdale (and other sources) that the school will employ. Anecdotal evidence from existing Hillsdale member schools shows that, while unfamiliar at first as students adjust to the highly structured school environment, most families experience positive results as students show more responsibility for their learning, exhibit a genuine excitement toward learning, and are generally happier in and out of school. To be able to achieve these types of results, ARA is certain similar student growth will be seen.

ARA is poised to become one of the highest-achieving schools in South Carolina. Hard work and diligence have paved the way on all levels for students to reap the benefits. ARA's robust classical academic program, carefully selected instructional methods, and training in the virtues will be supported by a well-regulated campus that fosters positive relationships among students, parents, and teachers. Teachers and volunteers will receive training before implementing the curriculum or assisting in the classroom. Teaching methods will include only those proven to be successful for students in the past and yet may be modified and differentiated to meet student needs. The success of every student will depend upon his or her consistent effort and perseverance. Each will receive the support of every staff member whose focus is academic achievement, individual student growth, and a commitment to personal excellence. The K-12 Program Guide has been aligned to South Carolina State Standards. In each content area and at all grade levels, the curriculum meets or exceeds the South Carolina academic state standards.

The founders of the United States believed the purpose of education is to prepare students to become good people and good citizens. In alignment with that vision, ARA will provide students with a content-rich education in the classical tradition and a clear understanding of actions and their consequences that will prepare them to become excellent, highly literate individuals and active, responsible members of their community prepared to articulate and uphold our nation's founding principles.

Because expectations remain high for all students and support is provided

only when truly needed in appropriate ways, students enrolled in schools using the Hillsdale K-12 curriculum and being taught by educators trained by Hillsdale outperform their public school peers on state-mandated tests.

ARA will use the curriculum and program employed in more than 20 Hillsdale member schools across the country. While this program has not yet been implemented in Charleston County, it has shown substantial results in other states. For the 2018-19 school year, the last year with proficiency data from all states, Hillsdale member schools cumulatively performed more than 10% better than their state averages in ELA proficiency test results and more than 5% better than their state averages in math proficiency test results. High school graduates from these schools in the 2020-21 graduating class scored an average of 1172 on the SAT (70th percentile) and 24.5 on the ACT (75th percentile), and over 75% of graduates matriculated to 4-year colleges.

Because of suspended testing requirements due to the COVID-19 pandemic, performance data has been inconsistent over the past two academic years; however, Hillsdale member schools in Florida make for an excellent case study because of their number (seven currently operating schools), longevity (the first school opened in 2015), and the availability of proficiency data for the 2020-21 school year. The charts included in Appendix G include a comparison of average ELA and Math proficiency scores in these schools against the average scores of the counties in which they are located and the average scores from across the state. The charts include all member schools that tested in a given year, regardless of the maturity of that school-so there's only one school indicated by the first year's scores, but six schools in the final year reported.

Focusing on the level of a single county with multiple years of proficiency scores across two schools, Hillsdale member schools perform even better when compared to district and state averages. Below is a comparison of the scores at Pineapple Cove Classical Academy of Palm Bay and West Melbourne (two unique campuses) against Brevard County (the district/county where the schools are located) and state averages. Of particular note, these two schools did not experience the considerable proficiency losses between the 2018-19 and 2020-21 school years that were seen at both the district and state levels.

Student performance at Hillsdale member schools is consistent across sub-populations of students, with students from both white and non-white populations performing considerably better than their peers in Brevard County, as well as students from economically disadvantaged families performing 15- 20% better than the average of their peers in Brevard County.

Classical education is time-proven with a history of over 2500 years in the West. It began in ancient Greece, was adopted wholesale by the Romans, faltered after the fall of Rome, made a slow but steady recovery during the

Middle Ages, and was renewed in the Renaissance. The classical inheritance was passed to England, and from England to America through colonial settlement. At the time of this nation's founding, classical education was thriving. Jefferson heartily recommended Greek and Latin as the languages of study for early adolescence. Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* was often recommended by men like Jefferson and Franklin, and Hamilton seems to have given it special attention during his military encampment at Valley Forge. Eighteenth-century Americans venerated and trusted George Washington in large part because he reminded them of the Roman patriot Cincinnatus. So important has classical education been in the history of the West that it would only be a slight exaggeration to say that the march of civilization has paralleled the vibrancy of classical schools. Such a long tradition of education continues to be relevant today.

Classical education, from a research base, is most closely aligned with cognitivist learning theories. These theories postulate that children generate knowledge and meaning through sequential development of an individual's cognitive abilities, such as the mental processes of recognize, recall, analyze, reflect, apply, create, understand, and evaluate. The cognitivists' (e.g. Piaget, Bruner, Vygotsky) learning process is adaptive learning of techniques, procedures, organization, and structure to develop internal cognitive structure that strengthens synapses in the brain. The learner requires assistance to develop prior knowledge and integrate new knowledge. The purpose in education is to develop conceptual knowledge, techniques, procedures, and algorithmic problem solving using verbal/linguistic and logical/mathematical intelligence. The learner requires scaffolding to develop schema and adopt knowledge from both people and the environment. The educator's role is pedagogical in that the instructor must develop conceptual knowledge by managing the content of learning activities.

A classical education is more than simply a pattern of learning. Classical education is language-focused; learning is accomplished through words, written and spoken, rather than through images (pictures, videos, and television). This is important to understand because language learning and image learning require very different habits of thought. Language requires the mind to work harder; in reading, the brain is forced to translate a symbol (words on the page) into a concept. Images, such as those on videos and television, allow the mind to be passive. In front of a video screen, the brain can "sit back" and relax; faced with the written page, the mind is required to roll its sleeves up and get back to work.

A classical education, then, has two important aspects. It is language-focused and it follows a specific three-part pattern: the mind must be first supplied with facts and images, then given the logical tools for organization of facts, and finally equipped to express conclusions.

Beyond research that supports a classical approach to education, surveys

of attendance rates and retention numbers also show the positive effects of the BSCI classical education program and, among other factors, direct instruction in virtues. (Hillsdale College K-12 Education Department. "Useful Numbers to Share." Hillsdale College, 2021.) Increased mastery of core literacy and numeracy standards, increased school attendance, and a positive perception of a supportive school environment all have been shown to close achievement gaps in relation to gender, race, and socio-economic grouping. Additionally, using research-based programs to support sound teaching and a strong curriculum contribute to the closing of achievement gaps, and increased academic achievement and growth for all students. The following section describes research associated with ARA's program and curricular choices:

Literacy Essentials is based on the work of Dr. Samuel Orton, a neuroscientist who researched the functioning of the human brain in learning language skills. In collaboration with teachers, he combined his multisensory techniques with classical and Socratic instructional approaches to teaching. Literacy Essentials embraces the early work of Dr. Orton, and likewise, takes an "explicit" phonics approach as defined and recommended in a Federal Compilation of Reading Research: Becoming a Nation of Readers, 1985.

For grades K-7, math will be taught using the Dimensions edition of Singapore Math, an English equivalent to the national mathematics curriculum used in Singapore. Singapore is the world leader in mathematics achievement, according to at least two major longitudinal studies. According to the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), an international comparative study designed to measure achievement at the fourth and eighth grades, Singapore ranked in the top three countries in grades 4 and 8 in every year the study was conducted (1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2015). The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a triennial international survey that evaluates OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old-students, has also consistently ranked Singapore highest in mathematics. The PISA survey has ranked Singapore in the top two countries for mathematics in 2009, 2012, and 2015.

Singapore Math was developed in 1981 by the Curriculum Planning and Development Institute of Singapore. Educators in the United States began implementing Singapore Math in 2000. Topics are taught to a mastery level with detail and consistency, and the textbooks are designed to build a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts as opposed to simply offering definitions and formulas.

Professional development from Hillsdale accompanies Singapore programs so teachers are better prepared to facilitate lessons. Singapore Math has a consistent emphasis on problem-solving and model drawing, with a focus on an in-depth understanding of the essential math skills recommended in

the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Curriculum Focal Points and the National Mathematics Advisory Panel. Students using Singapore Math learn math concepts thoroughly, but they also master essential math skills more quickly, and it has been reported that by the end of sixth grade, students have mastered multiplication and division of fractions and are able to complete difficult multi-step word problems comfortably, ensuring they are well prepared to complete Algebra I in middle school (Hoven, John and Barry Garelick, "Singapore Math: Simple or Complex?" Educational Leadership 65:3, November 2007). As with literacy, providing the support students need to master numeracy standards will provide the basis for continued progress in math achievement for all ARA students.

The foundation for ARA's curriculum is the Hillsdale College K-12 Program Guide. The K-12 Program Guide provides a grade-by-grade sequence of specific topics to be taught and comprehensive recommendations for teacher and student texts and other resources. Topics taught include history, geography, literature, visual arts, music, language arts, science, and math. The content of the topics is based upon basic principles that are lasting and solid; for example, important events of world history, essential elements of math, and essential elements of written expression. This curriculum, adapted by Hillsdale member schools over several years of use and with the input of teachers, Hillsdale K-12 Education staff, and Hillsdale College faculty will prepare ARA's students for all South Carolina state assessments. All South Carolina State Academic Standards will be taught thoroughly through the use of the fully aligned K-12 Program Guide and supplemental curricula.

Since learning becomes more meaningful if knowledge is built on prior knowledge, the Program Guide provides a specific outline of the skills and content to be learned grade by grade. Thus, all children are exposed to the knowledge required in a shared, literate culture. Teachers and parents are all on the same page, and the chance of unhelpful repetition and/or gaps as children move from grade to grade are eliminated.

The Program Guide provides content and skill guidelines for all core content areas, recommending coherent, cumulative, and content-specific topics to be taught at each grade level, from kindergarten through eighth grade. It addresses skills-based and content-rich topics in language arts (decoding, handwriting, spelling, and written composition), geography (spatial sense), history, and science. The Guide is designed so that, whenever possible, related topics in literature, history, science, music, and art are covered together. In this way, students can create connections and see the rich and varied perspectives provided by each discipline. ARA has taken great care in selecting specific instructional materials and curriculum resources that are aligned with South Carolina's State Standards and that adhere to the framework of a classical educational model.

Equally as important, ARA will adhere to all of South Carolina's state laws, rules, and initiatives. From kindergarten readiness to meeting graduation

requirements, ARA is ready to incorporate all requirements of the state.

All founding members of ARA, in line with the South Carolina Department of Education and the Charter Institute at Erskine, believe fervently that all students can learn and should be held to high, yet attainable standards. This is evident in every state initiative and will be true in all aspects of the operation of ARA. Too often students who are identified as Multi-lingual Learners or with a learning disability are dismissed by a system originally set up to support them, but in turn ends up lowering expectations, making excuses for failure, providing the erroneous message that they are not capable of learning what or how in comparison to their peers. Regardless of the challenges a student may face, ARA is committed to using all resources - human, material, and financial - to be certain that all students are reaching their full academic and civic potential.

The instructional methods and structure of the environment provide the opportunity for highly motivated students to truly understand the excitement that comes with learning new and meaningful information. Students in this environment will engage in Socratic explorations and make impactful discoveries, all while using every minute of instructional time to its fullest. These students will be led by highly knowledgeable and skilled teachers who are equally excited to teach as they are to learn. ARA believes all students, regardless of their gender, race, or socioeconomic makeup should have this opportunity. ALL families in South Carolina deserve the opportunity to choose the best educational option for their students and this environment will offer a proven educational model.

In order to address the skill, content knowledge, and work ethic deficits that may affect some incoming students, the school will automatically provide differentiated instruction in at least two main areas, with the possibility of providing supports in other areas on a case-by-case basis. In math, the first of these areas, the school will group students by ability. This will require a common math period for all K-6 students and possible extra help/study halls for 7-12 students. Students will be assessed after several weeks of math instruction, and this assessment will provide teachers with both a baseline of student learning and a significant metric for placing students into ability groups. As with math, literacy assessments and tools will be used to determine the specific needs and aptitudes of all students.

ARA's curriculum has proven to be successful for all types of learners, including those with unique abilities and English learners. The Hillsdale College K-12 curriculum developed for Hillsdale member schools was developed specifically to meet the needs of a student body from diverse backgrounds and with diverse learning abilities. The Hillsdale K-12 curriculum, published as the Hillsdale College K-12 Program Guide: An American Education, is time-tested, innovative, and research-based, and has been successfully implemented for students from academically, socially, and economically varied backgrounds. As an example of a high-performing classical school using a similar curriculum, at South Bronx

Classical, where 86% of students are economically disadvantaged, the school's performance on New York's 2017-2018 state tests was among the best in the city, with over twice the proficiency rate as district schools and about five times the proficiency rate of District 12 and District 7, where South Bronx Classical Charter Schools I and II are located, respectively. (Barney Charter School Initiative of Hillsdale College. "Model Application Elements, v3." Hillsdale College, 2020.) While not "shiny and new" the unique features of ARA will be revisiting what has been proven in the past to foster in students the love of learning lost by the large majority of current students. Once ARA students are trained to approach learning through the classical model, they will experience academic achievement and, perhaps more importantly, personal growth in all aspects of their life.

Students With Disabilities: All federal and state rules, laws, and policies will be strictly followed; the school's processes and procedures that will guide this work are detailed in Section 1.3b of the application. ARA will use a full-inclusion model; however, in keeping with a student's least restrictive environment, pull-out interventions or multi-tiered courses may be utilized. By design, ARA will use curricula, instructional practices, instructional strategies, and organizational structures that align with individual and differentiated instruction. Highly trained classroom teachers will work with the student services director, intervention specialist(s) and other support staff to ensure students with disabilities have the opportunity to reach their full academic and personal growth. Students with disabilities will participate in all state and local testing, using accommodations, modifications and alternate tests as is deemed appropriate and allowable.

Intervention specialists will provide specially designed instruction to students with disabilities in addition to their regular coursework. This specially designed instruction will be a method of teaching students with disabilities to use necessary accommodations. Intervention specialists will be an integral part of the general education team to guide and train teachers in methodologies, accommodations and interventions that will support students with disabilities in the classroom.

Differentiation by the general education teacher is sometimes not enough to support students with disabilities in the general education classroom. In a full inclusion model, intervention specialists will become co-teachers with the general education teachers to support their students with disabilities. Students with the most severe disabilities or needs may require pull-out services to provide the necessary environment to ensure student success. Related service providers will participate in the full inclusion model if the student can be successful and make progress on their IEP goals. Related service providers will provide support based on a continuum of full inclusion, general education small group setting, pull-out small group setting and 1:1 service in a pull-out setting.

Gifted Students: All federal and state rules, laws, and policies will be strictly followed as outlined in Section 1.3b of the application. In working with gifted

students, it is critical that all faculty and staff recognize South Carolina's definition: "Gifted and talented students are those who are identified in grades 1-12 as demonstrating high performance ability or potential in academic and/or artistic areas and therefore require educational programming beyond that normally provided by the general school programming in order to achieve their potential" (Gifted and Talented, 2013, 43-220.I.A.1). ARA will adhere to the state mission in serving students identified as gifted and talented to 'realize the potential of gifted and talented students through the design, delivery, and assessment of academic and/or arts curricula that match these students' unique intellectual and/or artistic potential while maintaining support for their social and emotional development.'

ARA will use a full-inclusion model; however, guidance from the Student Services Department will be considered when determining the least restrictive environment and, therefore, may include push-in or pull-out models. By design, ARA will use curricula, instructional practices, instructional strategies, and organizational structures that align with individual and differentiated instruction. The faculty will be trained annually in incorporating Socratic discussion and questioning with the expressed goal of engaging students who are intellectually and emotionally ready for such intellectually rigorous work. It is worth noting that often gifted students have affective (social and personal) needs distinct from their peer group. Highly trained classroom teachers will work with support staff to address these needs in the attempt to help all students reach their academic and personal growth potential.

Multi-Lingual Learners: All federal and state rules, laws, and policies will be strictly followed in identifying and providing support for multi-lingual learners as outlined in Section 1.3b of the application. The school will utilize the state-approved enrollment application for all new and transferring students. This will allow ARA to gather Home Language Survey information, as well as needed family translation services information, and any information on the migrant, foster care, or homeless status of enrolled students (<https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/school-district-memoranda-archive/enrollment-survey/enrollment-survey-attachment/>). For programmatic support, ARA will use a full-inclusion model, however, screener and ACCESS assessment results will guide decisions regarding student participation in content area classrooms, as well as their need for English as a Second Language (ESL) services. By design, ARA will use curricula, instructional practices, instructional strategies, and organizational structures that align with individual and differentiated instruction. Highly trained classroom teachers will work with qualified English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers and other support staff to ensure Multi-Lingual Learners have the opportunity to reach their full academic and personal growth potential. MLs will participate in all state mandated testing using accommodations in keeping with state policy and as deemed appropriate.

Students At Risk of Dropping Out: Using strong, research-based teaching materials directly aligned to South Carolina's academic state standards is a first step in ensuring that all students have the opportunity to reach full academic potential. However, ARA knows that some students will enroll with deficits in their academic achievement abilities -- there will be gaps.

ARA will provide differentiated instruction in its literacy and reading curriculum. The Literacy Essentials program is quite similar to the Orton-Gillingham and Spalding programs employed by many schools for reading remediation. By using this program with all students, the school expects to meet many student literacy problems before they develop. And students who are reading and writing at a slower pace than their grade cohort will be automatically trained in the language of instruction used in reading remediation-and they will receive remediation as problems are identified. ARA will develop a program to provide struggling students with additional literacy instruction in alignment with its Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework, likely through flexible scheduling blocks or classroom pull-outs. Additionally, students will receive differentiated instruction in the course of reading practice, wherein students will be grouped by ability and/or led through a reading practice regimen designed to meet each student at his or her ability level. Likewise, appropriate formative assessments will be used to evaluate the math and numeracy skills and content knowledge of all students. These assessments and the teaching materials will be used to provide direct instruction, practice, and extension content for all students.

Outside of mathematics and literacy, ARA will use differentiated instruction on a case-by-case basis. The K-12 Program Guide allows for a significant amount of latitude with regard to particular topics and works of literature. The curricular emphasis on literary classics is particularly helpful in this regard as most works are available in various adaptations that can be used for struggling readers, and the Hillsdale K-12 curriculum has identified many such versions. In all cases where differentiated instruction is offered to students performing below grade level, the intent of the differentiated instruction will be to bring student performance up to grade-level standards.

Highly effective teachers will intentionally use all these strategies to engage students including those performing below grade level in maximizing their benefit from the curriculum. Of particular concern with at-risk students is the high correlation of underperformance to chronic absenteeism. Knowing this, care will be given to track and address attendance issues as well as other social/emotional components of the student's life. At-risk students will participate in all state mandated testing using accommodations in keeping with state policy and as deemed appropriate.

By believing in the ability of all students to learn and providing a safe and respectful environment in which to learn, ARA is committed to becoming a highly successful asset to Charleston County. ARA's targeted student

population deserves the opportunity to explore and flourish as scholars and citizens through the use of a demanding, yet highly rewarding classical American education.

As ARA grows to include high school grades, it will follow the Hillsdale K-12 Program Guide for upper grades in alignment with the state's graduation requirements. This includes four years of history; four years of literature; four years of math; four years of science; three years of foreign language; one credit of fine arts; composition; and government, economics, and moral philosophy as classes that are integral complements to the four core areas of study. In addition to the requisite courses, students will have opportunities each year to choose electives to fulfill South Carolina's graduation requirements. As outlined, students enrolled in ARA will exceed the coursework and 24 credits required by South Carolina for a regular high school diploma. All students will have, within their planned schedule, time that can be used for additional support in any of their core or elective courses. Highly qualified and certified teachers will be available during students' extra help time to provide re-teaching, additional practice opportunities, or enrichment lessons. In this way, instruction will still focus on mastery and Socratic methods to ensure optimal learning opportunities for all students.

Upon graduation, it is ARA's goal that all students will read well, enjoy it, and understand its importance throughout their lives. Reading is at the very heart of ARA's curriculum. Students will read the classics for pure enjoyment and for the lessons learned. They'll find out about "The Emperor's New Clothes," laugh with "The Bremen Town Musicians," and sail with Odysseus in the Iliad and Odyssey. The core curriculum choices ensure that students know about world geography: where the Straits of Gibraltar are, and the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, and why they're important. They'll explore events in history from the cradle of civilization in the Euphrates Valley to European, African, and eastern development over the centuries. They'll learn the tragic history of wars in Europe and the U.S. involvement in them. They'll learn why Columbus claimed he sailed to the "new world" and about the conquest and settlement of the American continent including the "little settlement" at Plymouth Massachusetts. Prominent throughout the study of history will be the explanation of what is and isn't meant by the term "American Exceptionalism." Students will learn of the "shot heard 'round the world" at Lexington Green and what prompted that event. They'll learn about the "Great Wars" of the 20th century and what the "Iron Curtain" was and the "Berlin Airlift"-including its infamous "Berlin Candy Bomber." During their study of history in high school, they'll confront the dilemma of using "the bomb" to end WWII in Japan. The fundamentals of economics will be part of the curriculum and will introduce students to the differences in controlled and free-market economies. They'll learn about "The Invisible Hand" and understand what Milton Freedman meant by saying, "there's no such thing as a free lunch."

Graduation requirements (a comprehensive list of alternate courses -

approved in June 2020 - can be found here) and offerings in the high school years will include the following:

Social Studies: In history classes, students begin with Western Civilization I & II in 9th and 10th grade, learn American History and the Constitution in 11th grade, and finish with a year of Modern European History (1789-2000) and American Government in grade 12. Students will earn a minimum of 4 credits that surpasses South Carolina's requirements for graduation.

Literature: In literature, students read great works, usually in their entirety, with an emphasis on ancient literature in grade 9, British literature in grade 10, American literature in grade 11, and modern literature in grade 12. Writing standards are taught and honed through all courses, including literature. Students will earn one credit per academic school year to fulfill the state's four-credit requirement for graduation.

Science: The required track for science is Biology and Chemistry. After these two foundational courses, options such as Physics, Earth Science, Astronomy, or a more advanced course in Biology or Chemistry

in the last two years are available to students. To fulfill South Carolina's graduation requirement, students will earn credits for Biology, either Chemistry or Physics, and one additional lab science.

Mathematics: In studying mathematics, students complete Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II, and are then able to take additional courses such as Trigonometry and Pre-Calculus to complete the four-year math requirement. Students must earn four credits of math to meet graduation requirements.

Music and Visual Arts: The fine arts are a fundamental part of classical education. Music and visual arts will be taught in studio, historical, and cultural contexts at all levels of the curriculum.

Foreign Languages: ARA's foreign language curriculum will continue with the formal study of Latin for all students in grade 9. In order to fulfill South Carolina graduation requirements, students will be encouraged to continue with Latin in grade 10 and beyond. If they choose to earn the requisite credits of foreign language in a different way, other modern languages will be offered including Spanish. For college entrance, it is advisable that students take three years of a foreign language and students will be encouraged and guided toward this goal. In this way, the language requirements of the school will meet or exceed South Carolina standards and be in line with college expectations.

Health: A graduation requirement for high school students is 1.0 credits for physical education and wellness. This aligns with state requirements that ensure credit in physical education or Career and Technology Education.

Additional High School Courses: In high school, ARA will also include government (1.0 credit required), economics (.5 credit required), and moral philosophy (1.0 credit required) as classes that are essential complements to the core areas of study.

High School Testing: ARA acknowledges that one means of identifying readiness for postsecondary success is using various metrics of national, state, and local tests. Therefore, one measure of high school progress and performance will include student performance on End of Course Examinations in Algebra, English 2, Biology, and US History. In addition to these examinations, eligible high school students will have the option to take the ACT or SAT.

Historically, since opening its first school in 2010, Hillsdale member schools have far outperformed local public schools at all school levels. Results from the most recent study represent data from almost 15,000 students attending 24 different schools. The demographics of these students include 23% economically disadvantaged, 7.7% IEP, 7.24% EL population, and 38% students of color. Hillsdale's member schools reported a 4-year graduation rate of 99% outperforming Charleston's rate of 84.6%. Along with the success of the BCSI schools as a group of Hillsdale member schools, student data shows parallel accomplishments. BCSI's students' average ACT score was 24.4 outperforming Charleston County (20.1), the state of South Carolina (18.5) and the nation (20.6). BCSI student's SAT average score was 1191 (well above the CCSD district average of 1063 and state average of 1023).

In addition to properly preparing students to excel on state assessments, ARA is committed to utilizing all resources available to help in the postsecondary transition. ARA is committed to working with staff, faculty, students and families to take full advantage of all opportunities and resources afforded them. These resources, coupled with the strong moral and virtues and content-rich classical education model, will result in citizens who will contribute and serve as role- models in whatever role they choose.

Response to Educational Structure

Several unique innovations characterize ARA:

1. All students in grades four and five will be informally introduced to Latin roots which have been demonstrated to improve reading comprehension and vocabulary and bolster performance in all subjects. The formal study of Latin will begin in grade six.
2. Upper-level students will study history mainly through primary source documents to foster analytical skills and essential insight to be able to think critically about elements that impact their culture and heritage.
3. All students will be trained in study skills such as time management, organization, and note-taking, arming them with the essentials for building stamina for further academic pursuits.
4. The program will introduce and seek to instill virtues of character in the lower grade students. Instruction in the classical virtues will be introduced in the upper grades as a continuance of the elementary character program and necessary support of the classical curriculum (Barney Charter School Initiative of Hillsdale College. "A Brief Introduction to the Barney Charter School Initiative for Prospective School Founders." Hillsdale College, 2020.)

The Student Enrollment Projection Form provided as Appendix V outlines the matriculation plan from Year 1 through buildout. The Ashley River Academy (ARA) expects to open with modest enrollment in year one with projected class sizes averaging 20 students in K-3 and no more than 25 students per class in grades 4-5.

Once fully matriculated out, ARA will have a capacity of roughly 690 students. This would max out at 60 students per grade level in K-3, which would be three classes of 20 students each. Grades 4-8 would have a maximum of 50 students per grade, which is a maximum of 25 students per grade. 9-12 would also have a maximum of 50 students per grade level, and there would be a maximum of 25 students per class (this would include all core high school courses and standard electives which will be available to a student in high school).

Only time-tested, research-based instructional methods and strategies will be used by teachers. ARA will not be inclined to jump on the bandwagon with the "new and shiny" use of technology, media, or experimental teaching methods or strategies often seen in public schools. In keeping with this belief, the following list comprises the primary instructional methods that will be utilized and refined by the teachers and staff of ARA:

Teacher-led Discussion or Lecture - These methods of instruction allow the teacher to impart his or her knowledge to the students. Students will be taught how to take outline notes beginning in the early grades, which helps to engage them during the lecture. Teacher-led discussion and lecture in the form of storytelling or read-alouds will be used most frequently in the

lower grades.

The Socratic Method - This method includes the use of direct, intentional questions to guide students' understanding of problems and their solutions. This will be a fundamental part of instruction, particularly in literature and history courses. The Socratic method is appropriate for the anticipated student population since it assumes more discussion and less independent reading without guidance.

Explicit and Systematic Phonics Instruction - Through the direct teaching of letter-sound relationships through a specified sequence, the foundation for literacy is established and provides students the ability to decode the printed word. Scientific research supports this method (Source: K.K. Stuebing, A.E. Barth, P.T. Cirino, D.J. Francis, and J.M. Fletcher, "A response to recent re-analyses of the National Reading Panel report: Effects of systematic phonics instruction are practically significant," *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(1), 2008: 123-134).

Explicit English Grammar Instruction - Using tools such as diagramming and the study of root words, students will be equipped to speak and write with a high degree of communicative competence. As students learn to identify parts of speech and seek to develop syntax, they are able to communicate more clearly on all levels. The more they learn about the English language and its structure, the greater their ability to express more complex thoughts easily and fluently.

Ability Groupings - Instructional supports and strategies are most effective through the use of flexible ability groupings in the core subjects of reading, writing, and math. Ability groupings will allow ARA to tailor instructional techniques and class time to meet the needs of all types of learners. ARA will provide individualized supports for all learners while maintaining the same expectations and outcomes ensuring that all students are held to the high standards set by South Carolina. Students will be placed into ability groupings upon admission using initial assessments that indicate strengths and weaknesses. Those students with IEPs will receive accommodations as required on an individual basis. Students will be moved across groupings as additional assessments suggest. IEP verbiage will be evaluated regularly against the progress of the student to ensure the student is continually challenged in an appropriate and developmentally sound manner. All students will be responsible for mastery of the same skills and concepts and will be required to take the same assessments regardless of grouping (using accommodations as required by the IEP, as applicable). Teachers will use differentiated instructional strategies to optimize the learning of all students.

Utilization of Primary Source Documents - Primary sources are materials that were created by those who participated in or witnessed the events of the past. They can include letters, reports, photographs, drawings, sound recordings, motion pictures, and artifacts, as well as books. Although

sometimes life lessons (e.g., motives, ethics, and "cause and effect") are not necessarily obvious or easy to define, primary sources can bring them to life. They reflect events and experiences that actually occurred and introduce students to the individuals who lived them. Especially in the upper grades, history instruction at ARA will depend upon primary source documents- for example, teachers of American history will introduce students to historical works that contributed to the formation of American society and culture such as George Washington's "Farewell Address" and Martin Luther King Jr.'s "Letter from Birmingham Jail."

Teaching of Study Skills - Time management, organizing, memory techniques, note-taking, and outlining will be emphasized throughout ARA and integrated throughout the curriculum to equip students for higher learning. These skills serve various purposes for students, teachers, administrators and families. Note-taking by hand, for example, improves retention of information and provides the student information from which to study for assessments. Additionally, reviewing students' notes can inform the teacher or parents about a student's attentiveness or ability to make sense of the teacher's lesson. Ultimately, developing the skill of note-taking leads to the development of stamina for challenging and complex work which is imperative for the promotion of a strong work ethic. Each of the study skills introduced to and used by the students serves multiple and long-term goals.

The judicious use of these teaching methods will set the tone for the day-to-day school and class environment which is that instructional time is important and school is a place to learn. All courses will utilize a classroom-based model and while basic configurations may vary slightly from year to year based on content area and the age of students, all will support the concept that the teacher is the authority figure and content expert. Daily homework will constitute the majority of independent study for students and will increase in complexity and time requirements commensurate with students' grade levels. Class sizes will be kept reasonably small to ensure the teacher-to-student ratio is most effective. Supporting the instructional practices and structural decorum of the school will be the daily inclusion of character education via the explicit study of virtue, beauty, and truth. Students and their families will understand the high expectations the school has set and all members of the school administration, faculty, and staff will model appropriate and authentic behavior.

The mission of Ashley River Academy (ARA) is to train the minds and improve the hearts of students through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue. The goal is to develop within its students the intellectual and personal habits, virtues, and skills upon which responsible, independent, and successful lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis of a free and just society. ARA will prepare its students to be leaders in their homes and communities, entrepreneurs in business, and

statesmen in government. Through its content-rich curriculum with a strong emphasis on civics, ARA will provide a classical education with a constant view towards developing exceptional American citizens.

See Attachment F - Annual Academic Calendar as proposed for the 2024-2025 school year. The Ashley River Academy (ARA) draft school calendar was designed to closely mirror that of the district in which it will reside. It was developed based on the proposed Charleston County School District 2023-2024 calendar and includes the start date, end date, holiday breaks, parent conferences, teacher in-service and professional development days, and more. The calendar can be amended based on consideration of inclement weather, state testing dates or legislative actions. In alignment with Section 59-1-425 of the South Carolina Code of Laws, the school calendar consists of at least 190 days, with a minimum of 180 days of instruction covering at least 9 months, with at least 3 days to be used as make-up days, and at least 3 days that are scheduled for professional development. Calendars are issued to new families during the new student orientation at the start of the school year. The calendar is also available to stakeholders and the community as it will be posted on the school's website.

ARA's classical education program is designed to be rigorous and challenging. Each day will consist of six and a half (6 ½) instructional hours which totals 1,196 hours a year. ARA's instructional time allotted for literacy/reading exceeds the 90-minute minimum for the Tier I foundation recommended by ESSA as a best practice.

Students will receive the following minutes each day of the core subjects:

- 120 minutes of ELA/literacy/literature/ vocabulary/handwriting (total of 600 minutes a week)
- 80 Minutes of math (total of 400 minutes a week)
- 40 minutes each of science and social studies (total of 400 minutes a week)

ARA's calendar and schedule will be optimal for student learning in two ways. First, both are developed and designed for efficiency and effectiveness; they were developed and designed based on scientifically research-based strategies that have proven to be effective at schools implementing the Hillsdale College's Barney Charter School Initiative classical education model around the country. A well-thought out and organized day increases the school's effectiveness and efficiency to maximize the instructional time that will be provided throughout the year.

The daily schedule allows for differentiated support throughout the school day, including, as necessary, through flexible scheduling. The literacy and reading curriculum have differentiated instruction tools built into the Literacy Essentials program. Remediation in math occurs naturally through differentiated instructional strategies when necessary. Assessments and tools will be used to determine the specific needs and aptitudes of all

students and to match supports needed throughout the school day.

Students with special needs will have access to highly qualified student services director, intervention specialists, contracted behavior and mental health experts, a school psychologist, and assistive technology devices if needed. Specialized services may include speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, early identification and assessment of any disabilities, counseling services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes.

The goal of ARA's educational plan and bell schedule is to introduce and integrate grade-level Hillsdale K-12 curriculum in an interdisciplinary manner. In this way, the mission, vision and inclusion of the study of the virtues will extend into the "specials" classes such as music, art, and physical education. Structuring the plan in this way will expand and enrich students' academic and personal growth. It will also allow for strong collaboration among administration and teachers which can and will cultivate a strong professional learning community within the school. Specials will consist of at least 60 minutes a day with a total of at least 300 minutes a week

A typical day at Ashley River Academy would start between 8:00 am and 8:10 am with arrival at the school. The school day begins with 60 minutes of Literacy, where the students will focus on Vocabulary, Spelling, and Handwriting. The next 60 minutes, depending on the grade, will consist of Math, Recess, and one of the specials (Library, Art, PE). This is followed by 60 minutes of Math.

This is followed by Science class, while the older students (5th grade and up) might have History and Geography. This would also be the time of day when lunch is served; the time is dependent on the class so as not to overwhelm the cafeteria staff. After lunch, the students in grades k-5 would have access to a second recess.

ELA: Literature occurs after lunch, along with another section of Literacy, a second round of Specials, History and Geography, and final section of Literacy to focus on reading. These are all shorter than morning classes, usually ranging from 20 to 30 minutes. The very youngest students would be afforded a third recess.

Middle school and high school is more structured, with a 7 period day, 50 minutes per period. This would consist of 6 classes, with the 7th and final period dedicated to Study Hall/Tutoring/Electives (Choir, Band, etc.)

Teachers will develop lesson plans through a software called PlanBook, an online lesson platform and repository that will support ARA teachers in developing, refining, and sharing lessons plans throughout the year. This tool allows teachers to explicitly connect lessons to specific state academic

standards, list source resources, and incorporate homework and notes in a single location for easy recall and distribution.

In addition to lesson plan development, review of these documents will be a component of teacher coaching and the grade level meetings and meetings with assistant principal and principal. Lesson plans can serve as artifacts that support the effectiveness of teacher Student Learning Objectives and evaluation objectives.

Full-time faculty members are expected to be at school no later than 7:45 am, unless they have a morning duty that begins earlier. Faculty should expect to stay at school until at least 4:00 pm. Part-time faculty should arrive at least 15 minutes before their class so they may review any special plans for the day.

During the school day, a K-5 teacher will begin the day at 8:00 am with homeroom, and then proceed through the subjects in a fashion according to the outline in Appendix F. Every teacher will have an opportunity for a planning period while their students are at the special for the day; lunch and recess duties will be assigned based on teacher obligations (class size, number of classes, etc.).

Planning periods may be taken up by meetings with the principal, assistant principal, mentor teacher, or teacher team, in order to ensure that each teacher has the proper support throughout the school year.

Response to Professional Development The principal is primarily responsible for creating, managing, and overseeing a professional development plan and all professional development activities for staff and faculty. The school benefits from the direction and assistance of Hillsdale professional development and the school operations/business manager works to assist in coordinating professional development activities. Additionally, the operations/business manager is responsible for creating, managing, and overseeing professional and technical development activities for administrative and student enrollment personnel.

Hillsdale College K-12 Curriculum / Core Knowledge Sequence Training
All staff and K-5 teachers will receive Hillsdale and Core Knowledge (CK) professional development during the school's first year. All staff members will participate in the "Getting Started with the Sequence" program for Grades K-8. The school administration and teachers will participate in CK Coordinator and Leadership Institute workshops, which can be scheduled during the school's allotted professional development days throughout the school year. The first three days of this training will occur prior to the school's opening.

Literacy Training

Consultants/trainers from Literacy Essentials may be used, and the school will develop in-house expertise in order to conduct ongoing internal training. Hillsdale support and instruction will also take place in school-wide and grade-specific training. Professional development opportunities may occur on-site or by attending local, state and/or national conferences.

Singapore Mathematics Training

The school will provide ongoing training to build staff expertise in Singapore Mathematics to increase capacity and provide models that will utilize the curriculum resources effectively. Singapore Math contains various elements which comprise daily lessons (mental math, teacher-directed, guided practice, activity, and independent practice) that align with the conceptual and skill-building framework to teach math. This framework presents a logical sequence addressing lesson content, how the lesson is introduced and presented, how it progresses from the concrete to the abstract, and how to differentiate such for students.

Hillsdale College / Barney Charter School Initiative

The school will benefit from an intense 10-day new school start-up training for all teachers and administrators in year one and will benefit from teacher and leader training at Hillsdale annually thereafter.

Socratic Seminar Training

The Socratic Seminar is a method of teaching designed to engage students in intellectual discussion by responding to questions using questions instead of answers. Students read a text item and are then asked open-ended questions. Hillsdale will provide training on the Socratic Seminar and NCA may engage with other trainers as needed. Training will

cover the following:

- ? Formulating questions to encourage critical thinking, analyzing meaning, expression of ideas with clarity and confidence.
- ? Group norms;
- ? How to train students in Socratic Seminar discussions.

Virtue Instruction Training

The school will provide training to staff in virtue Instruction to include:

- ? Pillars of virtue
- ? Discipline and classroom management
- ? Mediation and conflict resolution
- ? Bullying prevention
- ? Effective communication
- ? Integrating character education into the curriculum
- ? Discussion techniques to teach ethical reasoning
- ? Student culture and inclusion

With a new school, new teachers, and a new educational model, one would expect the majority of professional development to focus on curriculum and instruction; however, other essential topics that will also be covered in the school's professional development. Of primary concern are classroom management, good discipline and decorum, special education needs, Multi-lingual language learners, differentiated instruction, and implementing the multi-tiered system of support framework. Student culture, trauma-informed care, conflict resolution, effective communication with students, parents, school policies, and operations expectations for grading, reporting, etc., will all be covered in the school's professional development plans.

The school principal will have access to information and resources and will engage additional service providers and experts to provide professional development as needed to ensure each component of the curriculum and educational model is met. The principal will use teacher feedback to determine other areas of professional development to be provided during regular sessions throughout the year.

The Hillsdale College Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI) summer training program is comprehensive and addresses required topics and topics of interest for new and returning school leaders, board members and teachers. The following is a sample agenda from last year's training that depicts session and subject matter information for the New School Summer Training program:

Day 1 - Philosophy of American Classical Education

8:30a-3:30p

Presenters: Dr. Benjamin Beier or Dr. Kathleen O'Toole

Outline:

8:30-8:40: Introductions
8:40-10:10 What is classical education?
10:30-11:15 Assigned reading and discussion on Classical Education
12:15-1:15 Charter schools and American Classical Education - the mission
1:15-2:00 Hillsdale College's work with member schools

Day 2 - General Pedagogy

8:30a-4:00p

Presenters: Becky Lincoln and Julie Apel

Outline:

8:30-10:00 Intro to HC K-12/BCSI/our team/general pedagogy
10:10-12:00 Tracks by Teacher Area:
K-6 Literature; 3-6 Well-Ordered Language (grammar)
P.E., Art, Music, Spanish, Rhetoric
Upper School History
Upper School Science (separate tracks)
12:00-1:00 Lunch by Upper School Subject
1:00-3:10 Tracks by Teacher Area
K-6 Science; K-6 History
Upper School History; Upper School Science
Latin
Upper School ELA
3:15-3:45 Grades 2-8 Composition

Day 3 - Classroom Management

8:30a-2:00p

Presenters: Becky Lincoln and Julie Apel

Outline:

8:30-10:00 The Role of Classroom Management in Classical Education
10:00-11:30 Coffee with New Teachers
12:30-1:50 Upper School Teachers' Procedures Practicum
2:00-3:30 Elementary Teachers' Procedures Practicum

Day 4 - Singapore Math

8:30a-3:30p

Presenters: Nicholis Wagner

Outline:

8:30-9:30 Philosophy of Elementary Math
9:40-10:15 Why Singapore Math?
10:30-11:30 Introduction to Number Bonds
11:40-12:30 Practice with Number Bonds & Mental Math Strategies
1:30-2:30 Intro to Place Value & Manipulatives
2:40-3:30 Intro to Bar Modeling

Day 5 - Singapore Math, Day 2

8:30a-3:30p
Presenters: Nicholis Wagner

Outline:

8:30-9:30 Overview of Dimensions Curriculum
9:40-11:20 Bar Modeling Practice (5 minutes break sometime near the middle)
11:30-12:30 Math Facts & Number Talks
12:30-1:30 Lunch and Ribbon-Cutting
1:30-2:30 Ability Grouping & Q&A

Day 6 - Literacy Essentials, Day 1

8:30a-3:30p
Presenters: Lyna Heaton, Lyndsey Rariden

Outline:

8:30-9:15 Introduction to the Logic of English; Introduction to the Reading Progression
9:15-11:00 Handwriting Instruction for 26 Lowercase & Uppercase Letters
1:30-2:30 Consonants and Vowels; Beginning Orthography
2:30-3:30 Cursive Handwriting

Day 7 - Literacy Essentials, Day 2

8:30a-3:30p
Presenters: Lyna Heaton, Lyndsey Rariden

Outline:

8:30-9:00 Review of Phonographs; Multi-letter Phonograms
9:00-11:00 Spelling Rules & Markings
11:15-12:15 Suffixes, Rules for Adding Suffixes
1:15-2:00 More Spelling Rules & Markings
2:00-3:30 Teaching the Code of English

Day 8 - Literacy Essentials, Day 3

8:30a-3:30p
Presenters: Lyna Heaton, Lyndsey Rariden

Outline:

8:30-9:30 Two-way Words; Question and Answer Flow with Students
9:30-11:00 Practicing Spelling Words
11:00-12:00 The Logic of Spelling to Read; Beginning of the Year and Daily Routines
1:00-3:00 Teacher Guide Organization (for grades K-3); Using McCall-Harby and McCall-Crabbs
3:00-3:30 Conclusion

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Professional development is an essential component of the school's success. ARA professional development will occur for two weeks before the opening of the school and throughout the school year. Four additional times per year, there is an all-day formal professional development for key topics of interest and a review of data, curriculum, differentiation, and subject matter work. Weekly planning sessions will also occur and include some level of professional/teacher development. This is inclusive of modeling and practice of instructional execution.

Additionally, Hillsdale College K-12 Education (Hillsdale) will host an intensive professional development session for all teachers and school leaders of newly opened schools. Prior to the beginning of each school year, Hillsdale conducts annual training for all Hillsdale member schools. A previous Hillsdale new school summer training agenda is provided below. The school will utilize professional development at regularly scheduled times throughout the year to assure performance and accountability targets are met. Staff development will focus on meeting school accountability goals and the review and analysis of student performance throughout the year.

Professional development is an area of great strength for Hillsdale member schools. Comprehensive annual training is provided free of charge. School leadership provides training, guidance, and oversight of teachers hired mid-year. Those teachers will receive comprehensive training the following year. The school conducts monthly professional development. Additional professional development, teacher training, and data review discussions will occur based on the principal's teacher observations, teacher requests, and principal and SAC recommendations.

The school will have 14-16 days of professional development per year.

Calendar, Daily Schedule, and Common Planning

The following activities will be included in the school calendar and daily schedule:

? 7-10 days of Hillsdale new school training including Gifted, ELL, or ESL training.

? Regular principal-directed professional development sessions

? 7-10 days of professional development composed of common planning with

grade or subject peers. This will allow mentoring and collaboration by the more experienced teachers. Each teacher is expected to be scheduled for five out of eight periods. One of the available periods is dedicated to common planning.

The vision of ARA is to have a citizenry worthy of the legacy of our country's founders and the continuation of our American experiment, through a classical, Great Books curriculum designed to engage students from kindergarten through high school graduation in the highest matters

and the deepest questions of truth, goodness, and beauty.

All professional development will be geared towards this vision. Our goal is that graduates of ARA will read well, enjoy reading, and understand its importance throughout their lives. Reading is at the very heart of ARA's curriculum. Students will read the classics for pure enjoyment and for the lessons learned. They'll find out about "The Emperor's New Clothes," laugh with "The Bremen Town Musicians," and sail with Odysseus in the Iliad and Odyssey.

That is why our professional development focuses so heavily on giving our teachers the tools they need to in order to make this a reality.

Response to Serving Students with Disabilities

Ashley River Academy (ARA) anticipates serving a proportion of students with disabilities and special populations that mirror the local district, Charleston County School District (CCSD). In alignment with the most recently reported figures on the state website (2020-2021 figures located here:

<https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/special-education-services/data-and-technology-d-t/data-collection-and-reporting/sc-data-collection-history/idea-child-count-data/2021-2022-child-count-data/>), ARA anticipates that approximately 10% of its student population will be reflect of students with disabilities or in special education and related services through Individualized Education Programs (IEP) under the coverage of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 2004 (CCSD rate across grades: 9.6%; CCSD rate in grades K-5: 9.4%).

Utilizing data from CCSD, the school estimates that the disaggregation of primary disabilities will likely be represented in the ARA student population through an IEP and/or 504 plan in the following proportions:

- ? 37.7% - Students with a specific learning disability (3.8% of the total CCSD population);
- ? 18.0% - Students with a health impairment (1.8% of all students)
- ? 14.0% - Students with autism (1.5% of all students);
- ? 10.1% - Students who may require speech services (approximately 1% of all students);
- ? 9.2% - Students with a developmental delay (approximately 1% of all students);
- ? 6.0% - Students with an intellectual disability (<1% of all students); and
- ? 2.6% - Students with an emotional disturbance (<1% of all students).

Although not reported in larger proportions in CCSD data, ARA acknowledges that it may also serve students with a primary disability that includes hearing or visual impairment, multiple disabilities, and other classifications that warrant these student services.

Additionally, ARA expects to serve students who are multi-lingual learners and may have limited English proficiency. Similar to the CCSD rate reported in recent years, ARA expects that approximately 8-9% may be categorized as multi-lingual learners. ARA will also take into account students who may have both a disability and demonstrate limited English proficiency in its planning of student services. When referring to CCSD data to inform ARA planning, this cohort of twice exceptional students represents approximately 8.0% of the Charleston students with disabilities population.

Policy Foundation: In serving students with disabilities and special populations, all federal and state rules, laws, policies, and regulations will be strictly followed. Ashley River Academy (ARA) will comply with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504), the Americans with

Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which include appropriately certified personnel, documentation, assessments, adaptations and modifications. ARA will abide by the provision of a FAPE, under the requirements of IDEA and Section 504. ARA will comply with all federal and state laws, per IDEA 613(e) (1) (B), regarding accommodations for students with disabilities and will not discriminate against individuals who are believed to have disabling conditions. ARA will adhere to the criteria for eligibility, reporting, and official records for accommodations under the IDEA and Section 504.

The Charter Institute at Erskine has invested significant time and resources into developing its Special Education Policies and Procedures (<https://www.dropbox.com/s/v54rzf3smkfc8ot/22-23%20SPED%20Policies%20and%20Procedures.pdf?dl=0>). These documents will serve as the policy foundation for teachers and administrators at ARA as they monitor and evaluate the progress and success of ARA's special education programming.

Child Find and Identification: ARA assumes responsibility for the location, identification, and evaluation of all children who are enrolled in ARA, who reside within the state of South Carolina, and who require special education and related services. This includes children who are suspected of having a disability even though they are advancing from grade to grade (34 C.F.R. § 300.111(a)(c)). As part of this process, ARA will publicly post information regarding the Child Find process in its school and on its website.

Students may be identified for evaluation through MTSS procedures, through referrals from teachers or administrators, as well as through requests from parents for an initial evaluation. When there is reason to suspect that a child may have a disability, employees of ARA are obligated to initiate the procedures for an initial evaluation. ARA staff members will be trained in both the identification and reporting of students with disabilities.

When a child has been identified for initial evaluation, ARA will obtain parental consent through an evaluation-planning meeting, or provide the parent written notice on why there is not going to be an evaluation. If written notice is provided, it will provide a process for appeal for the guardian if an evaluation is not deemed necessary. If consent is obtained, the initial evaluation will be conducted within 60 day in alignment with 34 CFR §300.301(c)(1) or within the timeframe established by the State. This evaluation process is deemed complete when all existing data, observations, rating scales, assessments, interviews, forms, and outside evaluations have been gathered, scored, and interpreted. The ARA evaluation team will then have 15 business day to determine eligibility.

The designated evaluation team, comprised of representatives from the school's MTSS team, special education team, classroom teachers, and other qualified professionals as deemed necessary, will develop an

evaluation plan that identifies the information to be assembled in assessment of the identified child. This will include, but not be limited to:

- ? Prior evaluation and information provided by the guardians of the child;
- ? Current classroom data, formative and summative assessment data where available;
- ? Observations by teachers and related service providers;
- ? Data on the child's progress in the general curriculum;
- ? Data from previous interventions or MTSS; and
- ? Input from the child's parents.

The evaluation team will also determine what, if any additional data might be needed to determine:

- ? Whether the child has a disability in alignment with South Carolina Board of Education Regulation 43.243.1;
- ? The educational needs of the child;
- ? Whether the child, as a result of the disability, needs special education and related services;
- ? In the case of re-evaluation, whether the child continues to have a disability; or
- ? Whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed to enable the child to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the IEP.

Appropriately certified and credentialed professionals at ARA will complete and interpret the necessary assessments and other evaluation measures, as needed, to produce the data identified above. ARA will provide prior written notice to the guardians of a child with a disability that describes any evaluation procedures the school proposes to conduct and obtain written consent prior to conduction.

ARA will provide assurances that:

- ? Assessments and other evaluation materials and other evaluation materials used to assess a child:
 - o a. Are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis;
 - o b. Are provided and administered in the child's native language or other mode of communication and in the form that is most likely to yield accurate information about what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer;
 - o c. Are used for the purposes for which the assessments or measures are valid and reliable;
 - o d. Are administered by trained and appropriately credentialed personnel; and
 - o e. Are administered in accordance with any instructions provided by the producer of the assessments.
- ? Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those that are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

? Assessments are selected and administered so as best to ensure that if an assessment is administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the assessment results accurately reflect the child's aptitude or achievement level or whatever other factors the test purports to measure rather than reflecting the child's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills (unless those skills are the factors that the test purports to measure);

? A school age child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities;

? Preschool children are assessed in the following developmental areas: adaptive behavior, cognition, communication, hearing, vision, sensory/motor function, social-emotional functioning and behavioral function.

? Assessments of children with disabilities who transfer from one school district to another school district in the same school year are coordinated with the children's prior and subsequent schools, as necessary and as expeditiously as possible, consistent with South Carolina Board of Education Regulations 43-243, to ensure prompt completion of the full evaluations.

? In evaluating each child with a disability, the evaluation is sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child's special education and related service needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been classified.

? Assessment tools and strategies that provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the child are provided.

The guardian(s) of the student will receive a formal written report of evaluation results including:

? Assessment results and educational implications;

? Procedural safeguards, otherwise known as Parental/Guardian Rights that are provided by the Charter Institute at Erskine;

? A statement of any other factors relevant to the proposed action.

Developing the Individualized Education Plan (IEP): If a determination is made that a child has a disability and needs special education and related services, after seeking the consent for the initial provision of services, ARA will develop an IEP for the child within 30 calendar days of the date eligibility is determined as required by the South Carolina Board of Education Regulations 43-243. ARA will utilize the statewide Enrich system to develop and monitor IEPs. ARA special education staff will monitor the progress of special education students in order to ensure availability of accurate, current information on the levels of performance to determine if the IEP goals are appropriate and achievable. The school will form an IEP team to include:

? The student's parents or guardians;

? The child's teacher (or at least one general education teacher as the

school matriculates to serve middle and high school);
? At least one special education teacher of the child;
? A representative or delegate of the Charter Institute at Erskine, in this case the Student Services Director;
? If needed distinctly, someone who can interpret the instructional implications of the evaluation results; and
? If appropriate, the student.

ARA will ensure multiple attempts are made by the special services director to work with the parent or guardian in scheduling the IEP meeting. This should include multiple methods of outreach, including email, phone, or in writing.

The IEP itself will contain a present levels statement, intended to comprehensively describe a child's abilities, performance, strengths, and needs. This will be based on all of the information and data previously collected and known about the child and include:

? The child's strengths and weaknesses;
? What helps the child learn;
? What limits or interferes with the child's learning;
? Objective data from current evaluations of the child; and
? How the child's disability affects his or her ability to be involved and progress in the general curriculum.

The IEP will also include:

? A statement that discusses the child's future and documents planning information;
? A statement of the child's present levels of academic and functional performance, including a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals if needed and a description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals described in the IEP will be measured;
? A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child;
? An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular classroom and in activities;
? A statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state and districtwide assessments;
? If the IEP team determines that the child must take an alternate assessment instead of a particular regular state or district-wide assessment of student achievement, a statement of why;
? The projected date for the beginning of the services and modifications described in the IEP and the anticipated frequency, location and duration of those services and modification;
? For children age 13 or over as ARA builds out to add services to students in grades 6-12, appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and the

transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.

The student's IEP will specify any special circumstances (equipment, supervision, etc.) that will be provided to meet the student's needs. This may include contracting with service providers that include, but are not limited to, occupational and physical therapy, orientation and mobility, speech therapy, and psychologists for testing in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in school activities. ARA is open to participating in the Shared Services Model offered by the Charter Institute at Erskine for special services needed to fulfill a student's IEP.

Comparable services will be provided by ARA to all children who the school with an IEP in place. Within 30 days, ARA will gather data and have an IEP team meeting to determine if the IEP is appropriate for the ARA environment or if adjustments to the IEP are required.

Re-evaluations will be conducted if the evaluation team determines that the educational or related to service needs of the child warrant a re-evaluation or if the child's parent or teacher requests a re-evaluation. The re-evaluation must occur at least once every 3 years unless the parents and LEA delegate agree that the re-evaluation is unnecessary. A re-evaluation may not occur more than once per year unless the parent and LEA delegate agree otherwise. If the evaluation team determines during a re-evaluation that the child no longer meets eligibility criteria and/or no longer needs specialized instruction, the evaluation team will determine if the student meets the wider definition of disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If not, and student no longer qualify or require services, the student will be exited from special education. If a transition plan is needed, the evaluation team will create one.

Section 504: If a determination is made that a child has a disability that meets the wider definition of disability under Section 504, the student typically receives accommodations in the general education classroom, but may require out-of-class accommodations that do not rise to the level of special education services. Accommodations under Section 504 are required to level the playing field for students who qualify. Students under Section 504 are also afforded procedural safeguards, and while similar to IDEA, are not the same.

Multi-Lingual Learners: The Ashley River Academy (ARA) will follow SCDE regulations and the Charter Institute at Erskine's guidance in meeting the needs of students who may require language acquisition services in order to fulfill requirements outlined in Title III of ESEA. In alignment with the law, instructional supports provided for multi-lingual learning (ML) students will lead to timely acquisition of proficiency in English and provide teaching and learning opportunities that empower each student to become proficient in the state's academic standards.

ARA will utilize the SCDE Common Application (<https://ed.sc.gov/newsroom/school-district-memoranda-archive/enrollment-survey/enrollment-survey-attachment/>). This includes Right to Translation Services notifications and Home Language Survey components. This form will help determine if a language other than English is spoken in the home and initiates eligibility for services available to ML students, immigrant children, and youth who may speak languages other than English. The student services director will track whether any student's enrollment form indicates that a language other than English influences the home and make referrals for screening.

Any student referred for additional screening will be tested within the first 30 days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year, and within two weeks for any mid-year enrollees. Using ACCESS For ELLs through the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium and the W-APT screener, ARA will determine proficiency levels. Students scoring less than a 5 (full English proficient) will receive English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services and continue taking the ACCESS assessment until a Level 5 is attained. Prior to placing a student in the ESOL program, the parent or guardian will be notified in their preferred language of screening and assessment results, as well as their rights, responsibilities, and opportunity for participation in the instructional program.

Each student who qualifies for service will have an ML plan developed that addresses his or her individualized needs. An ESOL committee, comprised of at least 4 members including the student services director, the ESOL teacher, and the student's classroom teacher will meet and determine the proper services for the student. Once developed, the ML plan will be discussed with the parent or guardian during a school conference.

Criteria to exit from the ESOL program and services include:

- ? Scoring at a Level 5 on the ACCESS assessment;
- ? Academic performance;
- ? Teacher recommendation(s); and
- ? Student and guardian input.

Student who satisfy the exit criteria will continue to be monitored for a period of two full school years.

The ESOL staffing model implemented at ARA will depend upon the proportion and depth of student needs. If the population or student needs are larger than anticipated (as projected through current CCSD data), a full-time, certified ESOL teacher will be hired. If the population is smaller in proportion, services will be contracted. Staffing plans will be adjusted and adapted based on the student population and needs each year.

Students who are Gifted and Talented: In alignment with state requirements, ARA will proactively work to identify intellectually gifted

students through ongoing assessments and classroom observations. To be identified, students must:

? Have a composite aptitude (reasoning ability) score at or above the 96th percentile; or

? Meet two out of the three dimensions of eligibility that include aptitude (Dimension A), academic achievement (Dimension B), or intellectual/academic performance (Dimension C).

Each Fall, students in grade 2 will be administered the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) as an assessment of Dimension A, as well as the Iowa Assessment as an assessment of Dimension B. Students may also satisfy criteria for dimension B through their Fall, Winter, and Spring NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) testing (all grades) and SCReady results (grades 3-8). In addition to results on these assessments, students may also be referred for testing based upon classroom observations. Students in grades 2-5 who surpass these Dimension A and B thresholds will take the state's Performance Task Assessment (PTA) in the Spring in order to confirm eligibility through Dimension C. Students in grades 6-10 with a grade point average of 3.75 or higher shall satisfy Dimension C.

The student services director will serve as the school's GT program coordinator, working with classroom teachers and parents to develop individualized plans to meet the needs of students identified as academically and intellectually gifted. The Director will work with GT-endorsed instructors to provide gifted and talented students with accelerated activities that align with their general education curriculum.

State and District Assessments: Students are provided accommodations for all required state and district assessments in alignment with Section 12 of their IEP. The student services director will work with the assistant principal, serving as the school test coordinator (STC), to set up the testing sessions for identified students and ensure all accommodations are provided.

Students will test with the special education teacher(s) during their scheduled time to start and will be provided with headphones as the program speaks and reads for them (as required by the assessment platform and unless their accommodations indicate otherwise). If they require extended time, they will be permitted to remain in the testing space as other students rotate in and out until completion.

Confidentiality of Special Education Documentation: All special education documents will be secured by lock in the special education filing cabinet. The student services director, special education teachers, and intervention specialists will have keys. Each student who has been identified as a student with a disability has their own individual file. When obtaining documents, the student services director will request the documents from the prior district and create a file for the student. Each file must contain their ETR, IEP, Progress Notes, student data and historical documents.

Each file also contains a sign out sheet on the front cover. Each person who reviews the file needs to sign the sheet and provide a reason for reviewing the file. The file will be required to be returned to the locked cabinet before the end of day.

When a student withdraws the file will be moved from active files to withdrawn files. The files will be maintained in the withdrawn filing cabinet, which is also locked for confidentiality purposes.

Special Education and Related Services Staffing: The student services director will lead and oversee the responsibilities and requirements of each program designed to meet the specialized needs of ARA students. This position will oversee the full-time intervention specialists, any certified special education staff, as well as any hired or contracted service providers. This position will attend all school and Charter Institute at Erskine meetings for special education coordinators and all trainings provided by the Charter Institute Erskine, serving as the primary contact between the Institute and/or agencies on all special education matters, including state and federal reporting requirements.

As mentioned in section 1.3b, ARA anticipates serving students who may require services and therapies that cannot be provided by a full-time ARA staff member. ARA will contract with reputable and experienced service providers to administer special related services. These services include:

? Occupational Therapy (OT). This will be schedule twice per week to collaborate with students directly in one-on-one sessions. OT services will be provided in a classroom with no distractions.

? Speech and Language Services (SLP). SLP and Speech will be provided either in a one-on-one environment or in a small group. There will be a location dedicated to provision of these services in the special education room. These services may be provided virtually when needed or beneficial.

? Physical Therapy (PT). PT services are provided within a classroom with no distractions.

All contracting credentials, including licenses, fingerprints, and any required background checks must be maintained by the contractor and provided to the school.

Special Education Related Services

To the maximum extent possible and appropriate, Ashley River Academy (ARA) will ensure that a continuum of services is available to meet the needs of children with disabilities for special education and related services in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

As noted throughout the application, ARA intends to utilize a full-inclusion model, but recognizes this there may be some circumstances where this is not appropriate or conducive to meeting individual students needs. In reviewing special education data from Charleston, nearly 2/3 of students with disabilities spend more than 80% of their day inside the regular

classroom. Less than 10% of students in the district spend less than 40% of their day inside the regular classroom. So although ARA anticipates that in meeting the needs of many of the school's students with disabilities, the special education teachers, intervention specialists, and related services providers can act in a co-teaching role and provide support to their students in the classroom, some students may require the use of a general education small group setting, pull-out small group setting, or 1:1 service in a pull-out setting. Determinations on which environment is best will be:

- ? Based on meaningful evaluation data;
- ? Consider all appropriate placement options;
- ? Determined at least annually;
- ? Reviewed by the student's IEP team each year;
- ? Considerate of any potential harmful effect on the student or on the quality of services that he or she needs, including the medium through which the instruction is delivered.

If the IEP team determines that a FAPE cannot be provided to the student, even with appropriate accommodations and modifications, ARA will work closely with the Charter Institute at Erskine and the local school district to identify a program that can meet the child's needs. Once identified, placement will be coordinated.

The Planning Committee recognizes the importance of hiring and placing a highly educated and experienced individual as the principal of each classical academy with which it is affiliated. This will be the case with the Ashley River Academy (ARA). As part of the recruitment and hiring plan, addressed in more detail in section 1.2 of this application, ARA will work to hire teachers with experience or in-depth training in dealing with students of varying abilities and backgrounds. As the hiring process proceeds, the Leadership Team will be formed and comprised of the principal, assistant principal, student services director, intervention specialist(s), teacher leaders from each grade band and discipline, and special services teachers or providers (speech, occupational therapists, and Title I). This group will take the lead in facilitating the assessment and development of plans for special populations. ARA endorses a shared responsibility model of education which will result in all members of the educational community being involved in helping each student reach their full potential.

Upon opening, ARA will serve students in grades K-5. The school's educational staffing will directly parallel the specific needs of the student body and will, at a minimum, employ staff in the positions listed below. As enrollment grows and additional grade bands are added, staff will increase at a proportional rate.

- Principal- 1
- Assistant Principal - 1
- Student Services Director - 1
- Classroom Teachers- 16
- Intervention Specialists- 2

Co-curricular Teachers - 3

Other support staff (hearing, vision, speech, nurse, etc.) - contracted to ensure on-demand service are available for all students as needed

Goals, Objectives, and Assessment Plan

Response to Goals, Objectives, and Assessment Plan

The Ashley River Academy (ARA) Planning Committee developed its goals in alignment with the accountability standards and measures reported in the South Carolina School Report Card (<https://screportcards.com/>) and the Charter Institute at Erskine Student Success Profile (https://erskinecharters.org/institute_uploads/2019/09/Student-Success-Profile-Guide.pdf). Anchoring to these systems ensures that ARA is able to demonstrate the effectiveness of its mission against state academic standards, the Profile of the SC Graduate, as well as additional measures specific to charter viability and sustainability that are monitored by the authorizer.

Academic Goals

Goal 1, Year 1: Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, ARA will earn a rating of Good in Academic Achievement on the South Carolina School Report Card. In order to accomplish this goal, ARA will satisfy the following objectives:

? At least 55% of students in grades 3-5 will meet or exceed state standards in English Language Arts as measured by the SCReady;

? At least 50% of students in grades 3-5 will meet or exceed state standards in Mathematics as measured by the SCReady.

After Year 1: In subsequent years, ARA elementary students will produce increases in the percentage of students who meet or exceed state standards by at least 5% annually until a rating of Excellent is earned and maintained in Academic Achievement on the School Report card and a rating of 'Significantly Outperforms' is earned on the Institute SSP (by demonstrating proficiency rates at least 15% of the local district and in the top 20% of the state).

2025-2026: ELA - 60%; Math - 55%

2026-2027: ELA - 65%; Math - 60%

2027-2028: ELA - 70%; Math - 65%

2028-2029 and onward: ELA - 75%; Math - 70%

This goal ensures students at ARA surpass state and district standards from inception onward, and reflects aggregate performance of the elementary schools located in the Mt. Pleasant and surrounding areas of Charleston (schools which ARA students would otherwise attend). These elementaries include: Belle Hall, Carolina Park, Charles Pinckney, James B Edwards, Jennie Moore, Mamie Whitesides, Mt. Pleasant Academy, Sullivan's Island). As the school builds out to add middle and high school grades, the targets of ARA will be adapted to incorporate the following middle and high school measures:

? SCReady and SCPASS rates for grades 6-8. Initial targets will be at/above the State's or CCSD's 50th percentile, whichever is higher with increases of 5% in subsequent years until the ratings of Excellent and Significantly Outperforms are met/maintained.

? End of Course Examination Pass Rates in Algebra and English 2 (monitored for all testers, as well as the 9GR cohort for the purposes of the

School Report Card). Initial targets will be at/above the State's or CCSD's 50th percentile, whichever is higher with increases of 5% in subsequent years until the ratings of Exceeds and Significantly Outperforms are met/maintained.

Goal 2, Year 1: Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, ARA will earn a rating of Good in Preparing for Success on the South Carolina School Report Card. In order to accomplish this, ARA will satisfy the following objectives:

? At least 50% of students in grade 4 will meet or exceed state standards in Science as measured by the SCPASS assessment;

? At least 60% of students in Kindergarten will demonstrate readiness to learn as measured by the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

? At least 60% of students in grades 1-2 will be on-track for success in the next grade level as measured by the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment.

After Year 1: In subsequent years, ARA elementary students will produce increases in the percentage of students who surpass the benchmark by at least 5% annually until a rating of Excellent is earned and maintained in Preparing for Success on the School Report Card and a rating of 'Significantly Outperforms' is earned on the Institute SSP (by demonstrating proficiency rates at least 15% of the local district and in the top 20% of the state).

2025-2026: Science - 55%; KRA - 65%; On-Track - 65%

2026-2027: Science - 60%; KRA - 70%; On-Track - 70%

2027-2028: Science - 65%; KRA - 75%; On-Track - 75%

2028-2029: Science - 70%; KRA - ?75%; On-Track - ?75%

Goal 3: Beginning in the 2031-2032 school year, ARA will earn a rating of Good in College and Career Readiness on the South Carolina School Report Card. In order to accomplish this:

? At least 75% of students in the 9GR cohort will demonstrate readiness for college or a career as measured by the ACT or SAT, the state-approved workforce readiness assessment, AP scores ?3, IB scores ?4, earning ?6 credits in a dual credit course, ASVAB score ?31, CTE completer certification, or other state-approved measures of readiness;

? At least 90% of students in the 9GR cohort will graduate on-time.

After the initial year, readiness and graduation rates will increase until a rating of Excellent is earned/maintained on the School Report Card and a rating of Significantly Outperforms is earned on the Student Success Profile in related measures.

Operational Goals

Goal 1: ARA will demonstrate strong levels of near-term financial health, long-term financial sustainability, and financial management by achieving the following objectives:

- ? Maintaining an asset to liabilities ratio greater than 1.1;
- ? Having at least 60 days of cash on hand in Year 1 and at least 90 in subsequent years;
- ? Maintaining actual enrollment levels that exceed projections;
- ? Ensuring the school is not in default on any loan or delinquent with any debt service payments;
- ? Ensuring the most recent year cash flow (and in subsequent years 3-yr cumulative cash flow) is positive;
- ? Ensuring the most recent year's net income divided by the year's total revenue is positive;
- ? Meeting submissions deadlines established by the Institute; and by
- ? Yielding a clean independent financial audit each year.

Goal 2: ARA will demonstrate strong school capacity by achieving the following objectives:

- ? Securing and maintaining a facility that satisfies ADA requirements and producing the relevant Certificate of Occupancy;
- ? Developing and maintaining a school safety plan that is annually reviewed;
- ? Conducting required fire and safety drills;
- ? Staying within 10% of projected enrollment or seek amendment of the charter;
- ? Ensuring the administrator has required certification or experience;
- ? Filling all required positions or duties that span special education, ESOL services, Powerschool and other responsibilities required to fulfill charter school obligations;
- ? Ensuring satisfaction of the "25% rule" for certified teachers; and by
- ? Satisfying planning and reporting requirements for all eligible state and federal program grants including, but not limited to, Title I, Title II, CTE, and others;

Goal 3: ARA will promote equal access to the school and educational programming by achieving the following objectives in student services:

- ? Identifying and serving any multi-lingual learning students;
- ? Satisfying obligations under IDEA and Section 504 to meet the needs of students with disabilities and special needs;
- ? Identifying and serving students who are migrant and homeless;
- ? Ensuring adherence to the enrollment policy;
- ? Maintaining the requirement that the racial composition of the school be within 20% of the resident district, or Charleston County School District;
- ? Abiding by the formative and summative assessment requirements outlined by the State and implemented through the Charter Institute at Erskine.

Goal 4: ARA will demonstrate strong and compliant school governance by achieving the following objectives:

- ? Ensuring board members complete orientation within 1 year of election or appointment;
- ? Maintaining a board of at least 7 members wherein at least 50% must be elected and at least 50% must be individuals with a background in K-12 education or business;
- ? Completing an annual evaluation of the school leader; and
- ? By maintaining adequate board materials and records including, but not limited to, board contact information, timely posting of agendas and minutes, and in alignment with pending statute, record all public meetings.

In order to establish anticipated baseline performance of students in Year 1 at ARA, the Planning Committee did a thorough review of Charleston County School District performance data. Scores on the most recent state assessment reveal that less than 45% of the 94 district schools earned a rating of Good or Excellent on the 2022 State Report Card. Of those, 50 are elementary schools (aligning in grades served to ARA in Year 1), and only 42.0% earned these top rating tiers, with more than 1 in 4 CCSD elementary schools falling below or failing to meet the criteria outlined in the Profile of the SC Graduate.

Scores on the SCReady English Language Arts (ELA) and Math assessments, and scores on the SCPASS Science assessment, demonstrate that CCSD students in grades 3-8 are outperforming the statewide averages in the percentage of students who meet or exceed state academic standards across content areas (ELA: CCSD - 53.3%, State: 46.6%; Math: CCSD - 49.2%, State - 38.9%; Science: CCSD - 52.0%, State - 46.0%). However, nearly 1 in 2 students in the district are not meeting state academic standards across subjects. Additionally, CCSD rates have remained stagnant over time, with minimal to no longitudinal increases from 2018 performance (ELA: 46%; Math: 48%, Science: 52%).

Although these outcomes are certainly mitigated by the global Covid-19 pandemic, and indicate returns to pre-pandemic levels of proficiency in the district, the distribution of student performance across testing tiers has changed. In 2022, nearly 27% of CCSD students produced scores in that place them in the lowest assessment tier, Does Not Meet. This is an increase from prior years, suggesting there is an increased proportion of CCSD students in grades 3-8 who are falling significantly below grade level.

Primary grade data reveal comparable findings. Only half (50.9%) of the CCSD students enrolling in kindergarten demonstrate 'readiness to learn' as measured by the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). Disaggregation by domain suggest even smaller proportions of CCSD students are ready to learn in Language and Literacy (46.2%) or Math (39.8%). On-track rates in grades 1 and 2 reveal declines in longitudinal readiness, with approximately 45% of students in these grades on-track for success in ELA and approximately 59% in Math (a decline in this content area from 71% in 2019).

These levels of decline and stagnation are paired with corresponding decreases in measures of school climate. The school climate score of CCSD in 2022 was a 6/10, falling below the statewide average (6.33/10). The district has seen the highest rates of chronic absenteeism in recent years (17.8%), more than doubling its rate of truancy from 2021 (7.3%). Additionally, the rate of stakeholder satisfaction with the learning, social, and physical environments rests in the bottom half of schools in the state for teachers (<86%) and students (<85%). Further, only 75% of teachers feel that the rules for behavior are enforced in their school, a rate that falls below the prior year (83.7%) and below the statewide average (79%). Discipline incident reporting indicates that CCSD students account for 15% of the state incidents for bullying and harassment, 22% of all arrests and referrals to law enforcement in the state, and 16% of all physical assaults without a weapon.

Measures of teacher quality also indicate changes over time in the CCSD. The percentage of teachers returning between years (80.2%), the percentage of teachers with advanced degrees (59.7%), and teacher attendance rates (93.3%) are all the lowest they have been in the past 5 years of reported data. Additionally, the district is seeing its highest rate of inexperienced teachers in core content classrooms (16.6%).

Combined, these indicators pinpoint some of the academic, climate, and quality challenges facing CCSD that reinforce the need for a strong, proven educational model like Ashely River Academy (ARA). These data points highlighted some of the needs in CCSD, informed the development of the ARA goals and objectives (detailed in section 1.4a) and assessment plan (described in section 1.4d). They also served as crucial data points in development of the student code of conduct, discipline policies, and focus on the key tenants of culture and climate.

One primary strategy for attaining the established goals and objectives is implementing an ongoing system of data gathering and review. Baseline performance will be established through the administration of the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment each Fall. In addition to assessing performance against national norms (which tells you what is typical, but not necessarily what is needed), ARA will also look to grade-level equivalency measures, projected proficiency measures, and relative growth measures to monitor student progress. These results will be used to assess performance at the grade, group, and classroom levels, as well as inform strategies for accelerated learning, instructional coaching, and even referral for MTSS Tiers 2 and 3.

The administrative team will meet weekly to review student progress. These meetings will include individual teachers as needed, intervention specialists, and student services representatives. At the meetings, ARA staff will triangulate more real-time data sources, such as attendance and engagement data, course grades and completion rates where relevant, and

screening data as available to evaluate progress regularly against formative assessments and the overarching goals and objectives. These evaluations will be used, as needed, to inform refinement of the school's goals and objectives, as well as identification of additional strategies to meet or maintain performance objectives.

All data will be disaggregated by student composition and attribute to ensure any segment of the student population is not disproportionately represented in identified academic or behavioral challenges. These analytics include, but are not limited to, disaggregation and analysis of variance in scores and rates by race, income, disability status, language proficiency, enrollment duration, and gender. Results of these student progress reviews will be used to assess effectiveness of student policies and school operations as it pertains to equity in accessing the school's educational program. These assessments will be used, as needed, to inform revisions to school policies and procedures.

The Ashley River Academy (ARA) will comply with the administration of all South Carolina-mandated assessments. The school recognizes the importance of holding both teachers and students accountable in moving toward the South Carolina Department of Education vision that 'all students graduate prepared for success in college, careers, and citizenship' and acknowledges the mandated testing system as one manner in which this goal can be measured.

In further validating the intent of the South Carolina assessment system, ARA intends to use the tools provided by the assessment platforms, as well as Institute and state reporting to:

- ? Provide feedback about students' academic progress and how it aligns with grade-level expectations;
- ? Give parents and teachers a big-picture perspective about how a student is progressing compared to peers across the district and state, including a student's strengths and growth opportunities;
- ? Build confidence and transparency about students' readiness for postsecondary and the workforce among South Carolina colleges, universities, and employers;
- ? Help ARA educators strengthen instruction and reflect on their practice;
- ? Inform continuous improvement efforts of ARA through comparison to Mt. Pleasant schools, district schools, and charter schools using the Student Success Profile indicators and the SCDE State Report Cards and files.

With the SCReady and SCPASS being administered once per year, ARA will use a number of internal assessments to serve as formative assessments and to further guide instructional and curricular choices to ensure student cohort, subgroup and individual growth and achievement. The data gathered from these assessments will be used to evaluate each aspect of the academic program informing content and instructional strategy choices. Because of the research-based, time-proven results of using these assessments and the subsequent data to provide all students

with equal access to quality materials and the supports they may need to grow to their potential, ARA subscribes to the list of assessments below:

ARA's Baseline Assessment Plan: One of the cornerstone teaching strategies of classical education is the use of ability grouping to individualize instruction and strategically move students toward content and skill mastery. In order to achieve this goal, baseline assessments are critical and will be administered at the beginning of each academic school year. Examples of these tests include:

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment - Developed and used in South Carolina as a pre-post assessment of a child's readiness across four domains - Social Foundations, Language/Literacy, Mathematics, and Physical Well-Being. This will be administered to each kindergarten student within the first 45 days of each school year in alignment with state requirements.

Singapore Math Placement Tests - Students who switch to Singapore Math from another curriculum may not have the necessary background to begin at the level corresponding with their grade. Placement tests will be used to determine the appropriate placement based on skill and knowledge ability. A student must master at least 80 percent of the content at any given level before they can move up. In this manner, a strong foundation in mathematical concepts is obtained by all students.

Reading Assessment Tests - To identify where students are in reference to reading fluency and comprehension.

Acadience Assessments (previously called DIBELS) - Administered at the start of the year for Grades 1 through 6. This test has been approved by the South Carolina Department of Education as an alternate universal screener.

Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) - Used to measure each student's normative performance and growth in Reading and Math in the Fall, Winter, and Spring. Systems of measurement that will be utilized include performance against national norms, performance against grade level equivalencies, projected proficiency on the SCReady assessments, as well as growth targets and growth model percentiles.

ARA's Ongoing Comprehensive Assessments

It is important that student growth is continually monitored and students, as needed, are moved to appropriately challenging groups. In order to accomplish this, administering companion assessments throughout the year as well as regularly evaluating the use and success of the ARA MTSS framework will be undertaken. The following assessments will be utilized for this purpose:

Singapore Math Placement Tests - Administered at least twice during the year or as needed.

Literacy Essentials Spelling Assessment Tests - Daily spelling mastery is assessed using a rotating 30-word test for Grades 1 through 6. This is a monthly test using the Orthography Scale which tests mastery of spelling patterns.

Phonics/Spelling - Literacy Essentials - Assessed weekly using a development and sequential matrix until mastery; reviewed regularly.

Comprehension - McCall-Crabbs and McCall-Harby readers and reading comprehension tests.

Cognition - Assessment materials aligned to Literacy Essentials

Composition/Grammar - Portfolios of composition and grammar work are maintained for assessments in those areas and will be evaluated monthly for grade level work.

Acadience Assessments (previously called DIBELS) - Administered twice more during the year for grades 1 through 6.

iReady Diagnostic - Administered up to three times a year to provide a complete picture of student performance relating to their grade level and national norms.

Hillsdale K-12 Program Guide Assessments - Administered throughout the year to evaluate the specific content in the units and lessons being taught. The assessments are formatted to provide teacher flexibility allowing for differentiated instruction. These assessments include ELA, science and social studies content.

Classroom Tests - Administered weekly; developed by teachers and/or ARA staff. These assessments include mathematics, ELA, science and social studies.

Formative Assessments - Classwork, presentations, portfolios, etc. will be evaluated weekly throughout the year as indicators of student progress.

National Latin Exam - All students in grades four and five will be introduced to Latin roots during the study of grammar. Formal study of Latin will begin in Grade 6, continue through Grade 8, and then be offered as a language elective in high school. Performance will be measured with classroom assessments and the National Latin Exam.

Rationale for Selecting Assessments

All assessments have been selected with the intent to measure student progress towards mastery of the South Carolina academic state standards. Each of the above assessments is linked to a content-rich curriculum that uses time-tested instructional approaches with proven track records of success. In concert with the main goal of positively impacting student growth, each of these assessments supports the mission and vision of ARA. By engaging students in the robust, content-rich, and knowledge-based instruction which continually moves toward mastery, the assessments developed to gauge incremental growth encourage the virtues most aligned with classical education: perseverance, responsibility and honesty.

Dedicated time and resources will be scheduled to ensure that all teachers, special education staff, and administrators have sufficient time to collect and analyze student academic data on a regular basis. It will be the responsibility of the Leadership Team to determine a working model which clearly identifies the venues, times, goals and individuals involved in data review. In this manner, student assessment and performance data will be regularly evaluated to guarantee that all students are receiving the support and instruction necessary. Classroom teachers and intervention specialists work together weekly to evaluate performance and determine student needs. This information is shared with the Leadership Team during monthly meetings. These meetings include the classroom teachers, administration, a student services director, intervention specialist(s), ML and Title Teacher as may be needed, and staff or contractors whose role is to address intervention needs of students. Once the Leadership Team or additional faculty and staff as designated by the Leadership Team define parameters for identifying a student as being "not on track" to reach a specific metric, the school's MTSS framework will be used to determine the level (Tier I, Tier II, Tier III) of intervention appropriate. At the elementary level, the curriculum allows for ease in differentiation, so teachers will be able to readily accelerate or reinforce a student's learning once a need has been identified. At middle school levels, through strategic ability grouping and offering accelerated and foundational course work, the school will be able to pace students according to their instructional needs.

It will be important that all staff understand the assessment metrics and how these relate to the content and instructional strategies being utilized in the classroom. If data shows a gap in achievement for a cohort, sub-group, or individual student, the team must be willing to work to find the root cause(s). If a root cause is determined to be linked to the curriculum, teaching materials, or instructional strategies, the team must have the fortitude to make the necessary changes. This may be operational, such as allocating more time within the school day for skill development; foundational, such as realizing that the chosen curriculum does not put enough emphasis on one or more of the State standards; or behavioral, such as needing a shift in instructional strategy to meet the needs of one or more students. In this manner, the close and honest examination of the data will impact the supports presented to all students as well as inform

instructional choices.

The assistant principal will be responsible for managing and documenting performance data. In response to this data, the administrative team will work with teacher leaders to coordinate professional development directly related to increasing student achievement and growth as noted in the mission and vision statements of the school. Hillsdale may also assist with evaluation of summary student performance data and make recommendations to the principal. Meaningful and effective professional development will be relevant, on-going, and provided by highly qualified professionals.

The assistant principal will act as the testing coordinator and will take on the major responsibilities of addressing the assessment process, planning, and determining all procedures. This person will be responsible for determining - with input from the principal and administrative team - all logistics regarding testing schedules and protocols. This will be guided by the requirements outlined annually by the South Carolina Department of Education Office of Assessment (<https://ed.sc.gov/tests/assessment-information/>) and implemented with support and training from the Charter Institute at Erskine. This will include School Test Coordinator overview trainings, Kindergarten Readiness Assessment training, ACCESS for ELL training, training on testing for gifted and talented students including CoGat and Iowa testing and well as performance tasks assessments, and state assessment topics that cover topics such as precoding and test security.

The assistant principal will also be responsible for providing professional development on assessment literacy to multiple stakeholder groups. It is critical that all stakeholders, including building administrators, teachers, parents and students, understand the purpose, protocols and technical make-up (as appropriate) of each test in which they participate. Vital responsibilities of the Leadership Team will include: ensuring teachers are aware of the assessment schedule; engaging students in practice tests; communicating all aspects of the test administration to all stakeholders; and arranging for the technology needs of the school.

Of great importance is the responsibility of the test administrator to see that each student who qualifies for testing accommodations receive them while also ensuring that other students who do not receive accommodations are not affected. In short, the assistant principal's responsibility will include all requirements of test preparation and administration, as well as attending monthly webinars hosted by the Charter Institute at Erskine. Further, the assistant principal will read, respond to, or make note of communications from SCDE regarding testing as they pertain to ARA.

Response to Governing Board

The Ashley River Academy (ARA) Planning Committee is comprised of a diverse mix of parents, educators, and professionals. Together, the Committee represents decades of experience in business and education, with specific expertise in charter school start-up. Each member is committed to bringing an authentic, proven classical model to the students and families in Charleston, South Carolina. The group formed around its interest in classical education, recognizing its absence in the public school landscape of the county. The following provides a brief narrative of each committee member, with more robust bios and/or resumes attached in Appendix K.

Tom Drummond, Committee Chair. Mr. Drummond brings significant business expertise to the Committee, serving as a national sales manager and entrepreneur, running his own business for more than 20 years in manufacturing. Mr. Drummond is also extremely familiar with local governance, serving as the first Mayor of the City of Newcastle, Washington during its founding in 1994. In this role, he oversaw the development of all land use planning, funding of public services, and compliance with all legislation required to incorporate a new city in the state of Washington. Mr. Drummond is a resident of Reidville, South Carolina.

Elizabeth Crocker. Ms. Crocker is a resident of Due West, recently named the Director of Secondary Programs, Testing, and Accountability for the Abbeville County School District. Prior to this, Ms. Crocker was a teacher for 11 years at Dixie High School, where she taught English and Teacher Cadet courses. She has also served on the Erskine College Teacher Education Committee and has been an adjunct professor for the College, leading courses in writing and education. She has also worked at the state level to support development and revision of the state's English Language Arts standards. Her educational experience and philosophical alignment with the educational framework of Erskine College positions her on the Committee to foster and promote implementation of an educational program that aligns with state standards, recognizes accountability requirements in the State, and honors the mission and vision of the authorizer's Institution of Higher Education, Erskine College.

Nan Herron. Ms. Herron is a resident of Mt. Pleasant and brings to the Committee a wealth of knowledge in employee recruitment and retained executive search, spending more than 30 years in the industry where she successfully created a national search firm that completed search assignments for Fortune 200 firms, family-owned businesses, and nonprofit organizations. Ms. Herron has been active in the Charleston community with a passion and focus for education, including direct support for mentoring literacy programs in schools and serving on boards such as the Lowcountry Autism Foundation.

Nicole McCarthy. Ms. McCarthy is a resident of Charleston County with a background in political science and a passion for classical education, currently serving as the Education Chair of the Moms for Liberty Charleston

chapter. As a mother of four, she brings a unique lens to the Committee through her experiences as a homeschooling parent and parent of a student requiring special education accommodations.

Janine Nagrodsky. Ms. Nagrodsky has been a resident of Charleston for 22 years, currently serving as the Treasurer for the Greater Lowcountry Republican Club. Ms. Nagrodsky brings significant financial expertise and community planning to the Committee, previously serving as the President of the Porter-Gaud Parents Guild with a focus on fundraising and community outreach. She is a mother of three and extremely active in the community, holding various positions that have included President of the Charleston Youth Orchestra, head of Hospitality and Service at Porter-Gaud, and has been a key coordinator of volunteer work for more than 10 years at the Charleston Hope Lodge.

Joel Schellhammer. Mr. Schellhammer serves as the Executive Director of American Classical Education (ACE) Foundation. As the representative of ARAs partnership with ACE Foundation, Mr. Schellhammer brings specialized expertise in corporate development and marketing, as well as a background in compliance and legal work. Mr. Schellhammer holds a JD from Harvard Law School, a Master's of Philosophy in Japanese Studies from Cambridge University, and a B.A. in Asian Studies from Hillsdale College. He also brings significant leadership and management skills to the group, with prior roles that include Chief Innovation and Strategy Officer for NSF International, Vice President of Growth for Steelcase, Global Head of Innovation for Kimberly-Clark's B2B business, and even spent multiple years with McKinsey & Company, a global top-tier consulting firm.

Tara Wood. Ms. Wood is a resident of Mt. Pleasant, bringing more than 30 years of marketing and sales experience to the Committee. Her expertise also includes real estate and facility development, having held real estate licenses in both North and South Carolina. Ms. Wood also brings extensive knowledge of local government and grassroots organizing, having formed and currently serving as the Chair of the Charleston Moms for Liberty chapter, a group dedicated to unifying and empowering local families to actively promote parental rights in education at all levels of government.

The ARA Planning Committee formed in response to a desire to bring a classical education model to Charleston County. Many existing options that might be similar in Charleston and neighboring counties are either private and tuition-based or lack many of the key tenants of a true classical model. Recognizing the significant work that school development requires, and building on the desire to implement the best classical educational model available, the Committee sought to expand its membership to include expertise in key areas of school operation, such as curricular implementation, financial expertise, marketing and advertising, employee recruitment, and real estate.

In its formation, the Committee also sought partnership with Hillsdale

College to open its school in Charleston through the Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI) program. This Committee also sought partnership with the American Classical Education (ACE) Foundation. Combined with these partnerships, the Committee has been able to solidify access to the strongest classical curriculum in the country, garner support and ambassadorship throughout Charleston, isolate interest data to focus its development efforts in Mt. Pleasant, and begin the work of developing the policies and programs that will become Ashley River Academy, the area's first tuition-free classical school.

Essential to school success is effective and ethical leadership from a strong board of directors that is fully committed to the school's mission and vision. Beyond fulfilling their statutory responsibilities, not-for-profit charter school boards serve as guardians of the public trust. Composed of individuals with diverse knowledge and expertise, governing boards help ensure that policies and programs bring their mission to life. Boards carry responsibility for oversight of school academic performance, compliance with state and federal laws, school finances, human resources, strategic direction, public relations and advocacy.

A policy governance model, often referred to as the Carver Model, will guide the ARA board philosophy and operations. Using this framework, the board will develop the overarching policies aligned with the stated responsibilities above. This will be in addition to strategic planning, budget, and committee oversight often found in a more traditional governance model.

In turn, the responsibility for implementation of the policies is delegated to the principal, the sole employee of the board. The principal may delegate to other school personnel the exercise of any powers and the discharge of any duties imposed upon the principal by board policies or by vote of the Board. The delegation of powers or duties, however, will not relieve the principal of responsibility for action taken under such delegation. The principal (within the limits of the law and board policy) is the administrative authority of the school.

Ashley River Academy (ARA) is organized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit through the South Carolina Secretary of State's office. The ARA Board of Directors is the governing body of the school and is responsible for overseeing the effective, faithful execution of the mission. The planning committee created the non-profit specifically to implement a traditional, classical, liberal-arts education guided by the following mission:

To train the minds and improve the hearts of young people through a content-rich classical education in the liberal arts and sciences with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue.

As outlined in the bylaws (Appendix L), the initial board will be established as a nine-member body with two-year staggering terms so that

membership will always consist of experienced members and those who are in the process of developing. The board recognizes that there will be changes in membership due to relocations, health issues and changes in employment, so board members will constantly work to ensure that new potential members are identified prior to the time they are needed to serve.

There will initially be three board officers. The Chair will provide leadership to the board, acting as the board spokesperson with the authorizer, leadership, and key stakeholders. He or she will work with school leadership to plan meetings and develop meeting agendas, and will follow parliamentary procedures in leading board meetings. The Secretary will work with school leadership to ensure accuracy and retention of board documentation, reviewing draft minutes to be submitted to the full board for review and approval, and performing other duties as assigned by the board. The Treasurer will work with school leadership to ensure accuracy of financial documents, reviewing budgets and financial reporting to be submitted to the full board for review and approval, and performing other duties as assigned by the board.

There will be three standing board committees:

? The Executive/Governance Committee will initially consist of the board chair, board secretary, and principal once hired. The committee will provide leadership support to the board in the recruitment and orientation of new members, communicating the roles, responsibilities and expectations of individual members. It will also be involved in assessing board effectiveness and will work with school leadership to encourage board development, training and self- assessment.

? The Finance/Audit Committee will initially consist of the board chair, board treasurer, the school's contracted fiscal officer, and the school principal once hired. The committee will be responsible for reviewing and providing input on budget preparation and financial reporting requirements. It will help ensure compliance with financial reporting requirements at the local, state and federal levels, and will work with school leadership to ensure that all board members understand the school's financial reports and overall financial picture.

? The Education Committee will initially consist of the board chair, board secretary, school leaders and representatives from the school's educational partners, ACE Foundation and Hillsdale College. This committee will work to help ensure that all board members fully understand the school's educational model and progress made toward the school's academic goals. Committee members must have knowledge of technology and supplemental enhancements which can benefit the school, and will review and communicate testing results and student achievement.

Consistent with Sections 59-40-50 and 59-40-60 of the S.C. Charter Schools Act, the Board of Directors will assume the following regulatory

responsibilities:

- ? Deciding all matters related to the operation of the charter school, including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures;
- ? Developing pay scales, performance criteria, employee work agreement, and discharging policies for its employees, including the school's principal;
- ? Ensuring all certified personnel, teachers, and non-certified teachers and personnel undergo background checks and other investigations before they are employed in the school;
- ? Contracting for other services including, but not limited to, transportation, accounting, and legal;
- ? Ensuring the charter school will adhere to the same health, safety, civil right, and disability rights requirements applicable to all public schools; and
- ? Adhering to the same financial audits, audit procedures, and audit requirements as are applied to public schools.

In addition to these mandates, key responsibilities of the Board of Directors include the following:

- ? Establishing policies and procedures to uphold national, state, and local laws;
- ? Supporting the mission and goals of the charter school;
- ? Evaluating the achievements of ARA compared to the annual goals established by the Board;
- ? Reviewing financials to ensure stability, financial responsibility, and proper stewardship of the charter school;
- ? Annually evaluating the principal as the employee of the board;
- ? Attending and participating in annual Board training; and
- ? Conducting meetings in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local open meeting laws.

In compliance with the state's Open Meetings Laws, the Board will also:

- ? Establish a set schedule of meetings;
- ? Post meeting dates in a conspicuous location, including the School website
- ? Post agendas at least 24 hours before a meeting;
- ? Post and place 24-hour notice for called and emergency meetings and state the reason
- ? Provide specific agendas for meetings to advise the public of the matters expected to come before the Board. Matters not on the agenda can be addressed if not anticipated before the meeting by amending the agenda.
- ? Keep minutes of all Board Meetings, including members present, description of motions or proposals, and a record of votes.

In accordance with the South Carolina Charter Schools Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50 (B)(9)), fifty percent of the members of the board will be individuals who have a background in K-12 education or in business. Additionally, at least 50 percent of the members of the board will be elected by the employees and the parents or guardians of students enrolled in the charter school. Parents or guardians shall have one vote for each student enrolled in the charter school.

All board members will be residents of the state of South Carolina. A person who has been convicted of a felony must not be elected to a board of directors. If the board of directors consists of an odd number of members, the extra member must be an individual who has a background in K-12 education or in business. Charter boards must comply with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

In alignment with Section 59-40-40(7) of the SC Charter Schools Act, the Planning Committee shall govern the development of the school through the application process and pre-opening conditions work until the election of the Board of Directors is held. Following the initial election, the Board of Directors of the corporation will become the governing body and the Planning Committee will be dissolved. Any Committee members who are not residents of South Carolina or do not reflect the membership requirements outlined in statute and the bylaws will not be eligible for election or appointment. Representation from ACE Foundation will transition into support roles and where needed, will continue to support Board Subcommittee and school start-up work.

In accordance with the South Carolina Charter Schools Act (S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50 (B)(9)), board elections will occur every two years. In order to create the staggering of terms, 50% of elected seats will serve a term of 1 year following the first election.

Recruitment for new board members may be done through professional contacts or referrals of current board members, leadership of the school and/or local business and personal contacts. Physical and electronic postings may also be made when searching for members, and social media - LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram -- may be used for recruitment and to obtain information and gauge interest of potential board candidates.

Prospective board members will receive an overview of the school and the charter contract, as well as financial and academic performance information. Candidates will also receive a statement of expectations, a conflict of interest policy and disclosure statement, a board meeting schedule and informational references to help them determine if they can make the required commitment to the board.

If the candidate wishes to be considered to serve, he or she will provide a resume, bio or CV including current contact information (phone, email and address), and verify that there are no conflicts by completing a conflict of interest annual disclosure statement. The candidate will meet with board members to discuss background and experience, expectations and any other relevant issues. If a candidate is not deemed suitable to serve at the present time, a letter will be sent to him or her expressing thanks for their interest but declining board membership.

If it is determined that a candidate does have the skills, expertise and time

to commit to board service, he or she will be invited to tour the school and attend the next board meeting to observe, ask questions and answer any inquiries board members may have. Candidates will also meet with the school's leader. He or she will be provided with a binder of materials for reference and review and will be asked to complete a state and federal background check.

At its next scheduled meeting, the board will discuss and put to a vote the candidate's application. If a majority of the board votes in favor of the candidate, he or she will be notified and accepted to serve. Upon formal board approval, the new member will sign a Commitment Statement and Code of Ethics/Conflict of Interest Policy.

New board members will receive documents essential to performing board duties: board member roster with contact information; a copy of the school's contract with the authorizer including all attachments (education plan, accountability plan, budget, organizational chart, etc.); a copy of the board's organizational documents including bylaws and meetings schedule; a copy of all adopted governance policies; reference sheets for roles, responsibilities and meeting conduct; required training information and schedule; promotional/informational school brochure(s); school handbook; school and event calendar; and, the current year budget and related financial information.

The ARA governing board members will engage in professional development in compliance with state laws and as needed to fulfill the board's oversight role. Within one year of taking office, all persons elected or appointed as members of the ARA Board of Directors shall complete a mandatory orientation program offered through the South Carolina Department of Education in the powers, duties, and responsibilities of a Board member including, but not limited to, topics on policy development, instructional programs, school finance, school law, ethics, and community relations.

In addition to the required orientation for new board members initial and added members will attend board training at Hillsdale College and have access to options for acquiring training credit hours through reputable training entities such as Board On Track. Courses available to new members will include charter board fundamentals and meeting procedures. Topics available to all board members will include strategic recruitment, developing and structuring the board for success, governing for growth, and LEAN Six Sigma Principles.

Additionally, the board will annually conduct a self-evaluation and, during its annual retreat, will discuss annual training topics, self-evaluation results, consideration of further development activities, and the need or desire for additional committees or work groups to address any identified deficiencies and/or areas of improvement.

Response to Administrative Structure/Building Leadership

The administration of the school is responsible, within the guidelines established by board policies, for the direction and coordination of students and staff in their efforts to attain the educational goals adopted by the Board and espoused through the charter. The Board of Directors will rely on its principal to provide professional administrative leadership. The principal's administrative function is to plan for, control, coordinate, supervise and direct the school in accordance with the purposes, policies, plans, procedures and programs authorized by the Board. The Board will delegate to the principal the authority for the management and execution of day-to-day school activities, including management of personnel and instructional leadership. The principal will serve as the liaison between the Board and the School.

The principal is the sole employee of the Board of Directors and the following positions will report directly to him or her:

- assistant principal
- office manager/registrar;
- operations/ business manager;
- classroom teachers;
- Intervention specialists and specials teachers; and
- student services director
- student special and health services staff

Facilities services will report to the operations/business manager; intervention specialists and student services will report to the student services director; and instructional aides will report to classroom teachers.

A copy of the organizational chart is included as Appendix N.

Arguably the most important characteristic of any successful school is a dynamic and effective school leader. He or she will be responsible and accountable for all aspects of school performance including student academic success, fiscal management, culture and operational compliance. The school leader must fully understand and embrace the school's mission and vision as established by the board of directors. The ideal candidate must have a track record of demonstrated success in leadership and management, strategic decision making based on insightful data analysis, student academics, finance, governance and communications. He or she must be an effective leader, problem-solver and motivator, and determined to pursue and achieve excellence - even when facing significant challenges.

Other key leadership positions include the assistant principal (AP), the business and operations manager, and the student services director. Each of these positions will oversee key areas of school operations and directly supervise additional employees. The duties and responsibilities of each administrative position are detailed in Appendix P - Job Descriptions.

In order to ensure cohesiveness around the school's mission and vision,

several characteristics and aptitudes will be sought in prospective candidates for these leadership roles.

General characteristics of a good candidate include:

? Prudent leadership and the ability to discern the ends that fulfill the nature and purpose of classical learning, and the ability to chart a course to reach those ends. The ability to instruct and inspire people to follow, to commit, assume responsibility, and perform with others in an effective manner. The ability to develop self-governing leaders within the school.

? The leader of an academic institution demonstrates a love of learning by the ongoing personal pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and the desire to share that knowledge with others.

? A commitment to school reform, motivated by courage and governed with discretion.

? High moral character with leadership skills that generate trust and hold the confidence of others. Unwavering personal integrity, honesty, decisiveness, and empathy.

? Well-organized, able to delegate with clear direction, and confidence to assume responsibility for all aspects of school performance and operations.

Knowledge and aptitude required for the position:

- A broad understanding of the classical liberal arts, its roots in the Western tradition, and its historical presence in American education prior to the 20th century.

- Knowledge of the craft of the educator, and the ability to teach well.

- The ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written forms.

- The facility to maintain a high degree of energy and personal productivity, and to effectively manage others. The ability to prioritize and get things done.

- A general understanding of personnel management principles, including recruiting, hiring, supervising, evaluating, and promoting individual and organizational development.

- The intellectual and emotional strength to have difficult conversations, when necessary, and the prudence to know when to do so.

- A general understanding of financial management principles including planning a budget throughout a school year; he or she understands the needs and expectations of regular audits and a proven system of sound fiscal controls and processes.

- An understanding of the school's state accountability and accreditation systems for public charter schools, and laws and administrative rules.

- The fortitude to act with fidelity to the scope and sequence of the Hillsdale College model for classical education.

- The insight to understand and achieve local, state, and federal compliance.

- An aptitude for the business and operational aspects of school leadership and the ability to prioritize and multitask.

- The ability to build an effective administrative team that clearly understands and supports the school's mission.

- An awareness of his or her own strengths and weaknesses, and a

willingness to hire individuals with strengths and weaknesses that offset their own.

- Has a clarity of focus yet open to others' ideas.
- Pleasant, engaging, personable, and empathetic-important traits as he or she interacts in a positive manner with parents, benefactors, community members, teachers, students, and others.
- Knows how to build trust through excellent communication, including strong listening skills; consistent with expectations and follow-through. Firm and kind, prudent and just.
- Understands and communicates with the broader classical movement to promote education that is elevating and high-minded. Aptitude and capacity to engage young men and women in discussion of the nation of our world and humanity, and our ability to evolve into a better society and more noble human beings. Public-spirited, ambitious about the school and its effect on the wider community, state, and, ultimately, the nation. Committed to the local community as an active participant, an enthusiastic advocate for classical education, and a belief that a classical education model is good for all learners of every background.
- Interacts with children in a positive manner and believes that classical education is on the path to true happiness.

As an educational programming partner, Hillsdale provides strong support and leverages its significant experience in interviewing and vetting all candidates for its member schools' leadership position and will do so for ARA. Hillsdale will provide support on principal selection and evaluation to ARA in two important ways. First, as a national network with a significant presence in the world of classical education, principal candidates often approach Hillsdale in search of leadership positions. Where possible, Hillsdale and its BCSI schools will share these connections with ARA. Additionally, members of the school's planning committee are well-positioned to help identify strong candidates who may be interested in the school leader position.

Second, and more importantly, Hillsdale will use its considerable experience of 20 existing Hillsdale member schools and dozens of principal candidate evaluations to help the Board of Directors evaluate potential candidates for ARA. The Hillsdale evaluation process includes two steps. The first step is a one-hour phone interview involving three members of ARA and the Hillsdale team who represent experience in both leadership and the areas of classical curriculum and instruction. Assuming success in the first step, candidates will be interviewed by two panels of the Hillsdale team with 4-6 members on each panel. The first panel focuses on leadership questions, including operations, budgets and boards; the second panel focuses on questions of curriculum and pedagogy, including a candidate's understanding of and support of teachers in a classical school context. Following this process, Hillsdale will issue a formal opinion of the principal candidate to the ARA board and, at that point, it is up to the ARA board to make a decision on the principal selection for the school.

With the startup of a new charter school, there are many moving parts to be addressed, initiated, transitioned implemented, and managed throughout the 18-month planning period. These various tasks, responsibilities and roles are detailed in Appendix Q and will be conducted by either the planning committee members and founding board, the principal, a consultant, or subject matter expert secured by the board. When the principal is hired, many of the startup tasks will become his or her primary responsibility with board oversight and consultant support. When the operations/business manager is hired, the board and principal will have access to expertise in this role, which will be of great assistance in implementing many of the processes and procedures that are developed throughout the start-up plan.

Stakeholder involvement is critical to the viability and sustainability of the school. ARA will adopt a parent engagement policy and implement a number of parent-specific strategies to garner ongoing support and involvement. These will include efforts that encourage relationship building with the principal and the administrative team, such as coffee with the principal and open door policies. Opportunities that consider more direct involvement will include parent tutoring and parent volunteer programs, as well as membership on the PTO.

Parents, educators, and community members can be involved in the governance and operation of ARA through service on the Planning Committee and Board of Directors. The school will also make use of subcommittees as described in Section 1.1d in order to expand involvement and draw upon community expertise in key areas of school operation. Parents, educators, and community members also will be represented in the governance of the school through their vote for board candidates, as well as the opportunity to participate in monthly public board meetings.

As detailed in Section 1.2c of the application, the principal, administrative team, and teachers will participate in many professional development programs, including Hillsdale College K-12 Education training sessions for new school leaders and Hillsdale's annual teacher training conference.

The principal will participate in and arrange professional development sessions for the ARA staff. The budget of ARA has specific funds allocated for professional development (Appendix X) and the master schedule (Appendix F) specifies time each month for these activities to occur.

Approved in April 2022, ARA will adhere to state regulation 43-165.1 that requires all principals to evaluate annually utilizing the evaluation process called the Expanded Program for Assisting, Development, and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP). This system assesses performance against the following nine standards:

- ? Vision
- ? Instructional Leadership

- ? Effective Management
- ? Climate
- ? School/Community Relations
- ? Ethical Behavior
- ? Interpersonal Skills
- ? Staff Development
- ? Principal Professional Development

In alignment with the evaluation process outlined by the South Carolina Department of Education through the Charter Institute at Erskine, the ARA Board of Directors will utilize the rubric and goal-setting template (<https://erskinecharters.org/state-academic-programs/adept/>) to guide its annual review procedures. In addition to the criteria that comprise the nine state standards, the evaluation will also incorporate a review of school performance and progress towards charter goals (including data reported in the CIE Student Success Profile:

https://erskinecharters.org/institute_uploads/2019/09/Student-Success-Profile-Blank.pdf), input of staff, and observation data. The goals, professional development plans, mid-year and summative conference forms will be maintained in the South Carolina Leadership, Effectiveness, Advancement, and Development Effectiveness Data System (SC Lead).

Response to Employees

ARA will ensure all administrators and teachers meet applicable licensure standards. In compliance with Section 59-40-155(B) of the S.C. Charter Schools Act, the principal of ARA or at least one member of the administrative team will hold a current SC certification in administration or have at least one year of experience in the field of school-based administration. Once hired, if the principal is not certified, within ninety days of employment he or she will complete an orientation program in the powers, duties, and responsibilities of a school administrator. The criteria for hiring administrators is detailed in Section 2.3b of the application.

Charter school law provides flexibility in hiring teachers, allowing a newly created charter school to hire noncertified teachers, not to exceed 25 percent of its faculty. A noncertified teacher must be appropriately qualified for the subject matter taught, must have completed at least one year of study at an accredited college or university, and must meet the qualifications outlined in S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25- 115. Elementary certified teachers may teach in any academic area and in any grades allowable by the status of their certification.

Teacher quality is fundamental to student success. In addition to strong fundamental teaching skills, those hired to teach at ARA must have firmly held beliefs that:

- ? All students can and will learn;
- ? All must read at or above grade level by the end of the third grade to be positioned for academic success through graduation;
- ? Assessment data are essential to identifying and addressing individual and class-wide weaknesses in achievement; and,
- ? Strong partnerships between home and school enhances student success.

Like other Hillsdale member schools, ARA will seek the best teachers who are masters of their subject matter, enthusiastic and eager to serve K-12 students. All should have a broad understanding of the classical liberal arts, its roots in the Western tradition, and its historical presence in American education prior to the 20th century.

Job openings will be posted broadly: on career and education websites, at schools of education, and shared with selected individuals and groups via email. ARA will also attend local college career fairs, and utilize social media. Candidates will be instructed to submit a resume and cover letter for consideration. Those who appear to best meet the established criteria will be invited to participate in a brief initial interview by phone. Those who seem to be well-suited to teaching positions will be asked to provide a sample lesson plan for review by the principal. In-person interviews will be scheduled for the best candidates. Before an offer of at-will employment is made, previous employment, verification of credentials, state and federal background checks, and reference checks will occur.

The principal will post job openings for faculty and staff positions beginning

no later than January 2024, offering positions to strong candidates in the following weeks and months. The start date for teachers will be July 2024. Candidates for other key positions that provide needed support to the principal in the months leading up to the school opening - office manager/registrar, operations/business manager and facilities services -- may have earlier start dates as deemed appropriate by the principal and approved by the board.

ARA will cast a wide net to identify the best candidates for employment and membership in the school's leadership team. As an equal opportunity employer, ARA will not discriminate against candidates or employees on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, disability or any other protected class in accordance with all applicable laws. Strategies for developing a pipeline of teachers will include local, state, and national recruitment efforts including participation in local college career fairs, outreach to Teach For America, paid advertising (primarily online, but may also include various print publication), postings on ARA's website as well as various career and education websites, local schools of education, and will be shared with selected individuals and groups via email. Social media postings on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn will also be utilized to communicate open positions and announcements regarding recruitment events and activities.

ARA leadership will pursue appropriately licensed and credentialed teaching staff in alignment with 59-40-50(5) of the SC Charter Schools Act. Throughout the interview process, license and credentialing requirements will be communicated with all applicants. Before any offer of at-will employment is made, previous employment, verification of licensure, state and federal background checks, and reference checks will be addressed.

In addition to requesting proof of required credentials, a condition of employment will include verification and review of each individual's credentials as posted on the South Carolina Department of Education website at <https://ed.sc.gov/educators/public-lookup/>.

ARA will use the Expanded ADEPT Support and Evaluation System for evaluating its teachers consistent with South Carolina Department of Education and Charter Institute at Erskine guidelines. As part of the Expanded ADEPT system, the South Carolina Teaching Standards (SCTS) 4.0 rubric will be used. This rubric outlines 23 indicators for evaluation that fall into four primary domains:

- ? Planning
- ? Instruction
- ? Environment
- ? Professionalism

The evaluation procedures will consist of classroom observations, the collection of evidence (including the teacher Student Learning Objectives

(SLOs) and Professional Growth & Development Plan (PGDP) documents such as these:

<https://ed.sc.gov/educators/educator-effectiveness/expanded-adept-resources/https-ed-sc-gov-educators-educator-effectiveness-expanded-adept-resources-educator-evaluation-guidance-2018-19/professional-growth-development-plan-pgdp-and-student-learning-objective-slo-template-/>), conferences with the teacher, and where applicable, evaluation team consensus meeting documentation. The progress reports and summative performance evaluations will be used as a method to drive ongoing professional growth and development. All required documents and forms will be maintained in the South Carolina Leadership, Effectiveness, Advancement, and Development Effectiveness Data System (SC Lead).

The ARA Board of Directors will approve the terms and conditions of employment for all employees. This includes things such as length of work day and year, salary and payment schedule, paid and unpaid leave, absences, insurance and benefits, travel and reimbursement, discipline and termination procedures, as well as confidentiality. These policies will be detailed in the Employee Handbook. This will be provided to staff upon employment and will be reviewed at least annually, and updated as needed. Employees will sign a statement indicating their receipt of the handbook and willful acceptance of the policies and procedures contained within the handbook.

Any policy changes (material or immaterial) will be made known via internal communications that include email and announcements at meetings, with immediate updates being made to the handbook. Any material changes to the policy will be developed and approved by the ARA Board of Directors in alignment with the bylaws. These changes will be subject to a process of public input and feedback. All policies will comply with state and federal rules, regulations, and laws regarding employment practices.

Evaluation Grievances

ARA will implement grievance procedures to provide a means for teachers and principals to challenge the accuracy of the data used in their evaluations and adherence to evaluation policies adopted by the State Board of Education. Grievances must be filed no later than 15 days from the date teachers and principals receive the results for each evaluation, and decisions must be clearly communicated in writing within 15 days of receipt of the complaint. Teacher evaluation grievances would be directed to the board level if the complaint is related to adherence of evaluation policies. These will be handled in a manner consistent with the procedures for other grievances as described below.

All Other Grievances

All grievances will be handled by the principal before being brought to the board. The board has adopted employee and family handbooks addressing complaint processes and how the school leadership is to address complaints as directly and as effectively as they may occur. Efforts to

resolve complaints should first occur at the lowest level. Complaints should be addressed directly with staff members in a professional manner. If a complaint cannot be resolved at the lowest level, it should be raised to the next supervisor level, or the principal, for resolution.

If there is no resolution at this level, the staff member or parent may submit a letter of complaint to the board. Complaints will be summarized in writing and referred to the board for its information and consideration. If necessary for the issue to rise to the level of board consideration, the board will document receipt of the complaint and will investigate and respond to the complaint in writing.

Requests from complainants to meet with the board must include names of individuals to appear before the board, their spokesperson, and the nature of the complaint. If not included in the board's meeting agenda, those who wish to address the board must submit a request to speak form in advance of the meeting start time. Individuals speaking to the board will address remarks to the chair and may direct questions to individual board members or staff only upon approval of the chair. The board will follow its board meeting public participation policy and each person speaking will be limited to three minutes with no more than three people speaking on any one issue. Individuals may not make personal attacks on board members or staff, and are prohibited from making obscene, profane and vulgar remarks or engaging in disruptive actions.

ARA Board members will consider all relevant evidence and perspectives and may or may not respond to the issues at the meeting. The board may choose to further investigate or consult with legal counsel before making a determination which will be communicated to the complainant(s) in compliance with the school's policy. If deemed appropriate, the board may schedule a time to communicate the decision to the complainant(s) during a face-to-face meeting or phone call.

Termination of Principal

The ARA Board of Directors will closely monitor all aspects of the principal's performance. Any problems will be quickly addressed, improvement plans developed and implemented, and ongoing performance closely monitored. In the event that the principal's performance does not adequately improve, the ARA Board may choose to engage a consultant or an executive coach who may recommend changes to the improvement plan. The principal's progress will be very closely monitored. In the rare case in which termination is ultimately necessary, the process will be initiated by the Board of Directors through the Board Chair. The assistant principal will serve as the interim principal with consideration given to making the position permanent.

Termination of Other Employees

Teachers will participate in regular one-on-one meetings with the principal, assistant principal, and where applicable, teacher mentors. For those new

to the teaching profession or early in their teaching careers, these meetings must occur on a weekly basis. Teachers also participate in weekly meetings to review student data with more in-depth data review on a quarterly basis.

During one-on-one meetings, any unsatisfactory aspect of teacher performance is identified and discussed. Corrective action plans are developed and progress monitored. If significant improvement is not achieved, the teacher and principal/assistant principal will work to design a customized professional development plan including a detailed timeline. Expectations will be made very clear. If adequate ongoing progress does not occur, the teacher will be subject to termination.

Terminations will be initiated by the principal. As is the case for termination of the principal, the following will occur: verification that termination complies with state employment law; notice of termination will be created; an exit interview and close-out meeting will be scheduled with the terminated employee; the principal or designee will ensure that all school property is returned; final pay, benefits termination and COBRA (if applicable), status of payroll deductions (if applicable), exit interview form, and address to which correspondence is to be sent (e.g. W-2 form) will be reviewed with terminated employee; all benefits will be terminated.

Response to Enrollment

Ashley River Academy (ARA) will be tuition free and open to any student in grades kindergarten through 5. The school welcomes all and will not discriminate in its student admission policies or practices on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender identity or appearance, disability, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or any other basis.

As described in the initial sections of the application, the outreach and engagement plan uses a layered approach to building community awareness starting with local leaders and organizations and progressing to gatherings, media and signage, and ultimately door to door canvassing and one on one conversations. Once the school is authorized and a location is finalized, outreach plans will be adjusted to build from the school location outward.

APPLICATION

Upon approval and annually thereafter, the school will release an Enrollment/Re-enrollment Application Form which asks only for basic contact information and verifies the anticipated grade of the student. A specific description of the school program will accompany the Enrollment Application. The Enrollment Application Form will be mailed to parents who completed letters of intent to enroll, distributed throughout the community, and posted on the school's website.

Applications to Enroll will be received by the school and all information will be collected in the school's online enrollment system. Date of receipt will be tracked and verification of that information will be sent to applicants.

All eligible students who submit a timely Enrollment Application shall be enrolled in the school unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the school. Should there be more applicants than seats available by the closure of the enrollment window, the school will hold a lottery.

LOTTERY

The lottery will be held in an open meeting and comply with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50(B)(7). Any such lottery shall be conducted within seven (7) calendar days of the close of the initial student application period. ARA will utilize an independent firm, such as the Public Charter School Alliance of South Carolina, to ensure the lottery is conducted in compliance with state and federal requirements.

APPEAL

In alignment with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50(C)(1), students denied admission to ARA for reasons other than lottery results may appeal to the sponsor, the Charter Institute at Erskine (CIE). The decision of the CIE Board of Directors is binding on the student and ARA. The parent or guardian of any student denied admission for a reason(s) other than lottery results must adhere to the following appeal guidelines:

Within five (5) days of being denied admission, provide to the ARA Board of Directors in writing, a notice of appeal citing the reason(s) for the appeal. The ARA Board will read and respond to the appeal, in writing, within five (5) days and notify the Charter Institute at Erskine. The ARA Board of Directors reserves the right to conduct a hearing with the parent or guardian of the denied student. The Board of Directors may make a recommendation to uphold or revoke admission based on the appeal, and any subsequent hearing, and provide that documentation to the sponsor for its determination.

Benefitting from the lessons of previously launched Hillsdale Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI) schools, ARA's school principal will be hired no later than September 2023. Bringing the school principal on early in the planning year to spearhead a strong local outreach, marketing, and enrollment campaign has proven beneficial in establishing confident and committed relationships with prospective families and community members.

As described in Section 1.1 of the application, a marketing and community outreach campaign is currently under development to create relationships with local district and community members, parents, businesses and organizations to increase awareness of ARA's mission and vision. Informational sessions and other events are ongoing to provide opportunities for members of the community to learn about ARA and the exemplary track record of the Hillsdale classical education model. Additionally, a strong Internet and social media presence will be employed as a method to communicate information about the school's progress and enrollment timelines.

In addition to these campaign efforts, ARA will maintain communication with prospective and interested families through hosting monthly open houses, conducting parent information nights, coordinating walk-throughs of the facility, and hosting enrollment orientations that specifically aim to disseminate information on the enrollment process and timelines. The timelines and personnel responsible for these activities are detailed in the pre-opening recruitment activities described in the Start-Up Plan in Appendix Q.

NOTIFICATION

Following the lottery, ARA will notify each family of the results including whether the student has been enrolled or added to the waitlist. Families must accept the seat assignment by a stated deadline or the seat will be vacated and offered to the next student on the waitlist. The school will communicate next steps and a timeline in which families must complete the enrollment process.

If, at the end of the student application period, the number of eligible students seeking to be enrolled does not exceed the school's capacity or the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building, then the

enrollment of eligible students may proceed on a first come, first served basis.

WAITLIST

After all seats have been assigned, a waiting list will be established for the remaining students who have registered in the event that a seat should open up. Families will be notified of the waitlist and the number the student is on the list. As seats become available, the school will contact families to determine if they wish to accept the seat. If so, the family must complete the Enrollment Application documentation. If the family cannot be reached for the next student on the list, three attempts are made prior to the school moving on to the next student on the list.

If there are still seats available after the Enrollment Application deadline, Applications shall be accepted on an ongoing basis until all grade levels, classes and seats are filled. All other students will be admitted to the school on a first come-first served basis until all seats are filled.

Pupils enrolled in the school the previously year will be provided priority re-enrollment status. Consistent with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-40-50(B)(8), the following enrollment priorities will be utilized during the application process for students in the initial year and new students in subsequent years:

- ? The sibling(s) of a currently attending student (after the first year of operation);
- ? The sibling(s) of an accepted applicant applying for the same academic year;
- ? Children of ARA employees;
- ? Children of the ARA Planning Committee members so long as this applicant group does not exceed 20% of total enrollment.

As described in Section 1.1 of the application, ARA will target its information campaign in ways that reach prospective students and families from diverse backgrounds. This includes having materials translated into multiple languages, identifying ambassadors that represent area neighborhoods and churches, as well as outreaching through local organizations dedicated to providing support to economically- and other disadvantaged members of the community including food banks, support agencies, and youth groups.

Should the final enrollment of SCPA not reflect the required demographic makeup, ARA will take all legal steps, if necessary, to inform and attract sufficient numbers of students in accordance with S.C. Code Ann. Section 59-40-50(B)(7). These strategies are outlined in Section 1 of the application, as well as the Racial Composition addendum.

Response to Student Conduct, Rights, and Responsibilities

Upon charter approval, ARA will work in alignment with the CIE pre-opening conditions process and timeline to review, modify, and finalize the Family Handbook (https://erskinecharters.org/institute_uploads/2020/10/Year-Zero-POC-Image-Base-A-to-Z.pdf). The handbook will comply with applicable law, including the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. § 1232) (FERPA). The Ashley River Academy Family Handbook is in draft form and although, not required as an Appendix of the application, would be made available upon request by the Institute.

Although the milestones and deadlines that form the pre-opening conditions utilized by the Charter Institute at Erskine vary by attributes such as school model and facility status, an anticipated timeline for finalizing the Handbook is as follows:

- ? June 2023 - First Reading of the Draft Handbook
- ? July 2023 - Second Reading to Include Review Notes and Proposed Edits
- ? August 2023 - Final Handbook is Presented to the Board for Approval
- ? September 2023 - Final Handbook is available electronically
- ? Summer 2024 - Handbook is presented to families at open houses, enrollment sessions, and orientations
- ? August - 2024 - Handbook is disseminated to all enrolled students and families.

ARA will utilize the Hillsdale College K-12 classical education model to develop within its students the intellectual skills and character upon which responsible, independent, and flourishing lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis of a free and just society. The classical content of the curriculum refers to those traditional works of literature, history, and philosophy that embody perennial truths of human existence and remain compelling today because they present these truths in memorable, or beautiful, ways.

ARA will aim to cultivate and orient its learners by instilling within them a desire for truth and wisdom, a love of virtue and beauty, and the moral character that are requisite for personal self-government, for vigilant, responsible citizenship, and for the good life. In so doing, the school will invoke the same eternal questions, truths, and means enshrined in the Greco-Roman, American, and Western Traditions of which it regards itself as the inheritor and guardian; these include the classical, liberal arts, the natural and moral sciences, the practice of dialectic, and the perennial considerations of classical philosophy.

Classical education upholds a standard of excellence. ARA's high standards and research-based curriculum will provide students with a traditional education that will challenge them to excel in learning and character. At ARA, high academic achievement, personal discipline, ethics, and responsibility will be consistently reinforced through the study of

subjects in the classical tradition.

ARA will implement a discipline policy that helps to develop a moral culture that leads to great citizenship. Too often, expectations of students with respect to their behavior are considered distinct from a school's curriculum. ARA will instill good character in its students by maintaining order and decorum in the classrooms, holding students accountable for their assignments and personal conduct, and explicitly teaching them the fundamentals of good character. The school will adopt a set of core virtues that will build students' moral vocabulary and point them to the character traits necessary to live a good and happy life. This process will be implemented by introducing pillars of character and virtues including courage, moderation, justice, responsibility, friendship, prudence, and wisdom. ARA will explain the virtues to students in detail and will base citizenship marks, its discipline policy, and the decorum of the school on the practice of those virtues through daily activities. In addition to cultivating a moral culture that will pervade the classrooms and the halls and thereby create an environment of "positive peer pressure," the school will teach character through the curriculum.

ARA will implement the discipline policy and code of conduct as outlined in the school's Family Handbook and policy manual. Students are expected to model and reinforce the school's expectations at every opportunity. With the support, motivation, and resolve of students, teachers, parents, and the community, ARA will develop students who choose to exercise maturity and respect for each other, for staff, and property. Students will learn to take full responsibility for their actions and to make morally sound decisions. To support this goal, students receive explicit instruction in these expectations and feedback on their conduct through citizenship marks on their progress reports. The school discipline policies will support the education of students and the overall vision of ARA. Through age-appropriate expectations and discipline procedures, an environment where all students can learn without distraction will be created. Staff will act as role models for students, and through open discussions between students, teachers, principal, and family members, students may use the disciplinary time to learn more about themselves and about others and learn the value of making ethical decisions. ARA also enforces the dress code policy to reinforce a structured school culture and to prevent potential distractions from the academic endeavors of students. The goal of ARA is to provide students with a classical education, leading them to have exceptional academic skills and personal character.

ARA believes in the importance of a virtuous staff, who display behaviors students can model. Staff will be trained and have a solid understanding of the expectations and will be able to provide appropriate guidance for students regardless of the time of year that the student enrolls in the program. In line with these goals, the school's policies for student behavior are practical and will be effective in building good character. Teachers will be the first to recognize poor behavior and may note the need for

disciplinary action. If the child's poor behavior continues or disrupts the learning environment in the classroom, the student may be referred to the assistant principal or the principal.

When a student acts in violation of school rules, directions given by a teacher or administrator, or the ARA Honor Code, the school has implemented three levels of consequences:

1. In-class behavior protocols: These include the various mechanisms that teachers use for correcting and habituating student behavior, and they vary considerably based upon the class (e.g. PE vs. History class) and the age of the students.
2. Poor Behavior Slip (PBS): When student misbehavior rises to the level where parents should be notified, a student will receive a PBS from a teacher or administrator. The consequences of a PBS can include, but are not limited to, lunch detention or afterschool detention. PBSs are accumulative, and are treated as equal to a Pink Slip.
3. Pink Slip: Pink Slips are reserved for serious offenses for which parents should be notified and which if repeated or allowed to continue, will result in the suspension or expulsion of the student. Pink Slips are usually given out by the principal or assistant principal. Very severe offenses may be met with immediate suspension or expulsion.

Consequences for misbehavior are correlated to the above levels of tracking/notification, but they will be tailored to the student and behavior in question. The point is to educate and improve students with an eye towards justice, not to tie every offense to a formulaic consequence.

Detention

Students may receive detention as a consequence of misbehavior tracked by either a PBS or a Pink Slip. Detention will occur after school or during lunch. During lunch detention, students will generally be permitted to do homework and eat their lunches quietly. Afterschool detention is a more serious consequence, and students will not be permitted to do homework during this time and will be assigned other appropriate tasks.

Detention takes precedence over any extracurricular activity. Students who miss detention will need to make it up and serve another detention, and they may also receive a Pink Slip (see below). Repeatedly missing detention may result in Pink Slips and/or suspension.

Notifying Parents

The School will notify parents of discipline problems that escalate to the level of a PBS or a Pink Slip. The school may also notify parents of lesser infractions, especially in cases involving a recurring problem. When a student is removed from the class for being disruptive, the school shall contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) as soon as possible to request

his, her, or their attendance at a conference, which conference will include the student.

Pink Slips

For consistent and/or more serious disruptions, the student will be sent to the Office and will receive a Pink Slip. Pink Slips accumulate over the course of the school year, and a student's total will not reset until the end of the spring semester. Receiving a Pink Slip indicates that a student's behavior is a serious problem, and earning repeated Pink Slips will result in more serious consequences each time. It is our hope that the consequences for receiving a Pink Slip will encourage students to display good character and act in accordance with the school's mission.

1st Pink Slip: Student is sent to the Office and parents are notified. Student may receive detention. If the infraction is serious, a student may be suspended.

2nd Pink Slip: Student is sent to the Office and parents are notified. Student may receive detention. If the infraction is serious, a student may be suspended. The student's parent(s) will meet with the assistant principal to discuss the student's behavior. The purposes of this meeting are to exchange accurate information about the student and to determine how the school-parent partnership can best work to reform the student's behavior.

3rd Pink Slip: Student is sent to the Office and parents are notified. Student goes home at least for the rest of the day. If the infraction is serious, a student may be suspended for more than the rest of the day. Upon the student's return, a parent should accompany the student to class for one full day to observe the school day.

4th Pink Slip: Student is sent to the Office, calls home, and goes home. If the infraction is serious, a student may be suspended for more than the rest of the day. The administration will consider expulsion as a fitting consequence.

A two-day suspension will be given for every disciplinary referral over four. When a student is issued over four referrals he or she may be subject to a longer suspension or expulsion.

Long-Term Suspension and Expulsion

The principal has authority to suspend a student--remove him or her from the regular education program--for up to ten (10) school days. Prior to suspending a student, the following due process must be provided:

1. The principal will informally talk with the student to explain the reasons for the proposed suspension,
2. The principal will give the student a chance to explain his or her version of what happened, and

3. The principal will then determine whether suspension is warranted.

The principal must notify the student's parents before the student has been sent home, on the day the suspension occurs. This notice shall include the grounds for the suspension and give parents an opportunity to talk with the principal about the matter.

If the principal believes a student's conduct warrants expulsion (removal from the education program for more than ten (10) days, then additional due process must be provided.

1. The principal will informally talk with the student to explain the reasons for the proposed suspension,
2. The principal will give the student a chance to explain his or her version of what happened, and
3. The principal will then determine whether a short-term suspension is warranted pending review for expulsion.
4. If the principal decides to expel the student, the students' parents shall immediately be notified, in writing, of the proposed expulsion, including the cause, length, and process for appeal.

If a student is found to have used or possessed illegal drugs, possessed a firearm on school grounds, or committed aggravated assault on a school employee, the student shall be subject to a one-year expulsion, which may be modified by the principal on a case by case basis.

In compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-63-235, any student who brings a firearm or weapon of any kind to campus, or a gathering organized by the school will be expelled. Other infractions that may lead directly to suspension or expulsion include:

- ? Bullying;
- ? Physical aggression;
- ? Explosives or fireworks;
- ? False alarms, bomb threats, 911 calls, threats against persons, or hoaxes,
- ? Cheating;
- ? Sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, color, sex, disability, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religion as defined by Title IX.

If a parent or guardian wishes to appeal the expulsion, the student's guardian is to notify the principal within ten days of the expulsion determination. Within an additional ten days after receiving a notice of appeal, the principal will coordinate with the ARA Board of Directors to schedule a hearing to review the expulsion. This may be done in alignment with the regularly scheduled monthly meeting if the timeline permits or through calling a special meeting. It is the right of both the student and the charter school to have legal representation at the hearing.

At the choice of the student, the appeal can be heard either in open

session or in closed session. The student shall notify the principal or Board of Directors of his/her choice no less than 3 days before the hearing. The Chair of the Board of Directors shall preside at the hearing. The general procedure shall be: (a) introduction of parties, (b) presentation of the student's case, (c) presentation of the charter school's case, and (d) questions from the Board. Following questions, the Board shall deliberate in closed session. Following the closed session, the Board will then vote on the matter in open session and announce its decision. A written decision confirming the vote will be sent within ten days of the hearing.

If the expulsion is overturned, the student may return to class. In such a case, all absences will be excused and the student would have up to 10 days to complete missing work without penalty.

Ashley River Academy (ARA) will strictly adhere to the tenants of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) and the procedural safeguards provided under IDEA and State law for students with disabilities. In disciplinary matters, this means that a student with disabilities may, based on the severity of the behavior, be moved to a temporary alternate placement determined by the IEP team or suspended for no more than 10 consecutive school days (a student may be moved by a temporary administrative decision if there is a risk of serious bodily injury).

A student does not have to have an IEP in place to receive IDEA discipline protections. Protections are available as long as the school had knowledge that the student may have a disability before the misconduct occurred.

ARA may suspend a student with a disability for up to 10 days without a duty to continue to provide services from the IEP, review his or her Behavior Intervention Plan, or reconsider the Functional Behavior Assessment. Suspending a student with disabilities for more than 10 cumulative days in a single school year (even for separate incidents), however, constitutes a change of placement. In those cases, the student must continue to receive all services required by the IEP. If a student's behavior warrants in-school suspension, the Academy will provide services comparable to those in the student's IEP and that allow the student opportunities to participate in his or her general curriculum.

If a student with a disability is being considered for expulsion or a suspension that would result in more than 10 days (consecutive or cumulative of the school year), the Academy will conduct a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) hearing. At this hearing a determination will be made regarding whether the behavior was caused by, or had a direct or substantial relationship to, the student's disability, or whether the conduct resulted from the school's failure to implement the IEP. Parents will be notified at least 24 hours prior to an MDR.

If the MDR results in a finding that the behavior was not a manifestation of the disability, then the Academy will take the same disciplinary action for

the student with a disability that it would have for children without disabilities. As noted above, if a removal constitutes more than 10 cumulative days during the school year, all required IEP services shall be provided. If necessary, the Academy may also perform a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and implement positive behavioral intervention services to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

If the MDR results in a finding that the behavior was a manifestation of the disability, or if the conduct was a direct result of the Academy's failure to implement the IEP, then ARA staff will conduct an FBA or, following a review, modify any existing behavioral intervention plan as necessary. The student will be returned to the student's placement at the school (though the parents and the school may agree to a change of placement as part of modifications to the IEP or BIP). Parents or the school may appeal an MDR determination. An appeal hearing must be held within 20 days of notice by the LEA representative. A decision shall be rendered within 10 days.

Disability services shall be provided during the appeal process. If the school believes continuing IEP services is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others, the school may appeal that decision. School officials shall remove a student to an interim alternative setting for up to 45 school days, regardless of whether the conduct is a manifestation of the disability in the following three situations: a student is found to have used or possessed illegal drugs, possessed a firearm on school grounds, or committed aggravated assault on a school employee. In these cases, the student may be placed in an alternative education setting for up to 45 days. The principal will notify parents of all matters related to the incident in writing. And parents may bring an attorney or advocate to any related meetings.

Regardless of the determination following the MDR, the school will resume providing IEP services on the 11th day of suspension (if they were halted as part of the suspension).

All appeal procedures are designed to protect a student's right to due process. ARA will monitor all behavior and discipline data to ensure policies do not disproportionately affect any student group, including students with disabilities. All disciplinary action may be appealed to the principal or the Board of Directors as outlined in the relevant appeal or grievance procedures detailed in the application.

Transportation

Response to Transportation

Although there is currently no plan to provide buses and drivers, if that occurs, ARA will comply with the state requirements for transportation as outlined in the following documents, which would be kept on file in the school office. These documents include the:

? South Carolina School Bus Driver's Handbook (issued by the SC Department of Education)

? Code of Laws of South Carolina 1976 (Title 23, Title 56, and Title 59)

? Board of Education Regulation for School Transportation: Regulations 43-80 (1976 Code 59-67-10 through 59-67-710).

The school does not have current plans to provide transportation. However, ARA will continue to monitor factors such as stakeholder demand for transportation as well as accessibility to the school for all populations with specific consideration given to the barriers that may disproportionately affect students with disabilities or pupils in poverty. If exploration of feasibility and safety yield a decision to pursue transportation, ARA will pursue an amendment of its charter with the Charter Institute at Erskine. From there, policies would be developed and all regulations regarding transportation of students will be closely and properly followed. For example, drivers would need to meet the state training requirements and be properly credentialed. Adequate vehicle insurance would be obtained and maintained at the proper limits. School buses might be purchased or leased and would need to meet state safety requirements, and background checks would need to be conducted on all adults who would be involved in the transportation plan. Any services that would require a contract would be reviewed and approved by the ARA legal counsel and Board of Directors prior to commencement.

Although ARA does not intend to contract for transportation services, the school will proactively work to ensure transportation is not a barrier to accessing the school. The school has allocated funds in the budget for contingency transportation solutions should there be a need mandated by a student's IEP. Any transportation arrangement for special education students to attend school or activities will be in accordance with all state and federal laws and regulations.

Additionally, ARA will work with the PTO to facilitate communications and solutions around identified transportation needs. This could take the form of carpooling options, creating centralized pick-up or drop-off locations, or exploring third-party services.

Response to Budget and Finance

Members of the Planning Committee of Ashley River Academy (ARA) bring significant experience in financial planning and school-startup. The Committee Chair, Tom Drummond, operated his own successful business for more than 20 years. Janine Nagrodsky serves as the Treasurer on the Board of a nonprofit organization in Charleston County and brings specific expertise and experience in school fundraising. Joel Schellhammer, serving as a representative of ACE Foundation, along with the Board of Directors of his organization, brings experience and support in charter development and start-up efforts around the country. Tara Wood and Nicole McCarthy also have experience serving on nonprofit boards in South Carolina, understanding the requirements and responsibilities in fiscal stewardship, as well as the oversight methods that are necessary to monitor the financial practices of the school.

The Planning Committee of ARA worked with Prestige Charter School Solutions in development of the application budgets. Prestige, a financial firm in operation since 1999, has been providing financial services and management supports to independent private and charter schools in South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. The Planning Committee elected to work with Prestige in development of its financial plan because of the organization's presence in South Carolina, experience with Institute charter schools, familiarity with school funding in the state, as well as its record of success with independent financial audit results and school objectives.

Budget development has been significantly mission-aligned. A majority of funding is focused on attracting and retaining high-quality personnel, with salary and benefit packages that consider the educational market in Charleston County (against recently reported figures found here: <https://screportcards.com/overview/school-environment/financial-data/?q=eT0yMDlyJnQ9RCZzaWQ9MTAwMTAwMA>). More than 2/3 of the initial year budget is allocated towards the educational program (including instructional salaries, instructional materials, student programming, and other direct student services). It should be highlighted that this proportion would be significantly higher if the school did not have access to the board, leadership, and teacher trainings that will be provided at no cost to ARA through the Barney Charter School Initiative of Hillsdale College.

The budget assumptions, calculations, and revenue estimates are described in detail in Appendix X and Appendix Y.

In preparation for complying with the fiscal policies of the Institute, as well as ensuring readiness for state and federal grant program procedures outlined by the Charter Institute at Erksine, ARA will:

- ? Ensure registration for an Employer Identification Number (EIN) with the IRS;
- ? Verify its federal non-profit status with the authorizer;
- ? Establish a bank account that is owned by the school to receive state and federal funding from the Institute, as well as completing and submitting the Electronic Deposit Agreement;

? Comply with the Code of Federal Regulations Part 25 by registering to receive a unique entity identifier (UEI) and enrolling in the System for Award Management (SAM) in order to be a potential recipient of federal grants through the Institute.

The school recognizes that these funding streams currently received by the Institute and rolled down to eligible Institute schools (including Title I, Title II, IDEA, CTE, and one-time funds such as ESSER) are not guaranteed sources of revenue. As such, ARA will not include them in preliminary budgets, but will ensure school staff are prepared and trained to develop required needs assessments and grant plans in accordance with Institute timelines and state and federal allowability guidelines.

At the time of submission, ARA has not developed its proposal to include any negotiated services directly provided by the proposed authorizer, the Charter Institute at Erskine. However, ARA is open to working with the Institute and its portfolio of schools to participate in its shared services model or work with other schools to advance purchasing power efforts that would allow for added economies of scale in pricing for any systems, softwares, or equipment utilized by ARA and peer schools. In addition to the possibilities of participation in this shared services framework, ARA anticipates working closely with Institute staff and peer schools through taking advantage of the multitude of training opportunities offered by Institute staff across charter operations, as well as joining the leadership initiatives provided by the Institute (leadership and mentorship programs, the Kids First conference, and the Coordinator Collaboration Space to name a few).

Strong financial policies are critical in clarifying roles, authority, and responsibilities for the school and Board's financial management and function. As such, Ashley River Academy (ARA) will adopt and implement the school-level financial policies and procedures developed by the Charter Institute at Erskine

(<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/twh2umpwuvumwc7/AAALbiO-0LFg4Qy5KslAKdeNa?dl=0>). These include, but are not limited to, policies pertaining to the school's financial management, conflicts of interest, credit card use, payroll, fixed assets, travel and meal reimbursements, and signatory powers.

Assurances that will be embedded in these school fiscal policies include:

- ? Establishing financial policies and corresponding procedures to properly account for all revenue and expenses as directed in the Financial Accounting Handbook and the Funding Manual;
- ? Establishing policies to adhere to the reporting policies, procedures, and regulations of the South Carolina Pupil Accounting manual and the South Carolina Student Accountability Manual;
- ? Ensuring that all accounting, reporting, and auditing procedures and requirements comply with the published specifications of the Office of District Auditing and Field Services contained in the (a) Single Audit Guide,

- (b) Financial Accounting Handbook, and (c) Funding Manual;
- ? Maintaining school books and records according to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and standards of fiscal management;
- ? Maintaining appropriate records on a by-transaction basis thereby establishing our financial management system as audit ready at the conclusion of any given transaction;
- ? Making required reports (on-call, monthly, quarterly, annually) to the Board and external appropriate agents and agencies. Reports will be maintained and filed according to Institute, state, and federal requirements;
- and
- ? Identifying, reporting, and correcting any material breaches and financial concerns through corrective and preventative action protocols.

The school will also adhere to requirements and best practices in financial transparency. To accomplish this, ARA will enter a monthly upload of all general fund financial transactions into SmartFusion, the system utilized by the Charter Institute at Erskine and its portfolio schools, by the 30th day of the subsequent month. Quarterly, the school will submit a Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss Statement. As detailed in other sections of the budget narrative, the annual audit report, as well as the preliminary and final school budgets will be submitted annually by required deadlines.

ARA will implement a comprehensive Internal Fiscal Control System in alignment with the recommended financial policies and procedures adopted by the Charter Institute at Erskine. At the administrative level, this will include:

- ? Communication of policies and procedures to staff, including whistleblower protections and confidential reporting of potentially fraudulent behavior;
- ? Development of a comprehensive set of functional level controls;
- ? Development of processes of risk identification and assessment;
- ? Training that ensures staff are properly prepared to implement financial procedures;
- ? Determination on appropriate delegations of authority;
- ? Development of systems to regularly monitor and review school processes; and;
- ? Ensuring open and effective channels of communication with auditors.

An annual audit is both a statutory and regulatory requirement; accordingly, the ARA Board of Directors will comply with all aspects of this mandate. The school audit procedures will adhere to the guidelines outlined by the Charter Institute at Erskine and the South Carolina Department of Education Single Audit Guide (<https://ed.sc.gov/finance/auditing/manuals-handbooks-and-guidelines/annual-audit-guide-and-lars-template/>). The ARA Board will engage an auditor no later than 120 days prior to the close of the fiscal year by soliciting three bids from independent Certified Public Accountants (CPA) firms and selecting the firm that (a) has prior charter school auditing experience and (b) best meets the needs of the school.

The audit process will span a review of the financial and administrative operations of the school, and the ARA Board will receive, review, and approve the annual audit prior to required submission to the Charter Institute at Erskine and required state agencies on or before November 1st of each year.

Although the school does not currently plan to offer South Carolina Retirement System benefits to its employees through S.C. PEBA, school staff will be offered a separate, defined contribution retirement plan. The compensation packages for staff will include medical, dental, and vision coverage plan options that are also competitive with local district options.

In alignment with Institute guidelines, the budget shall be based on documented SCDE estimated revenues in accordance with the allocations in S.C. Code Ann. §59-40-140(A)-(C). The principal, in consultation with the Administrative Team and Finance Subcommittee of the ARA Board of Directors will develop the annual operating budget. This budget will be brought to the full Board of Directors for consideration, input, and approval.

As part of its budgeting process, ARA will establish and maintain adequate operating reserves in order to prevent cash flow or other financial challenges. When determining this reserve amount, ARA will prioritize the school's mission and long-term strategy, current and future financial commitments, and day-to-day operating costs. These cash flow projections will be submitted to the Institute in compliance with their financial submission calendar during Years 0 and 1, and throughout each subsequent school year.

On or before April 30th of each year, ARA will submit a preliminary proposed budget to the Institute for the upcoming school year. Following at least two public readings of the budget during the school's monthly board meetings, and considering any feedback from the Institute, ARA will submit its final, board-approved budget to the Institute by July 1st of each fiscal year. Modifications required or permitted throughout the year will be accomplished through budgetary amendments formalized through review of the board's Finance Committee and approved by the full Board of Directors.

ARA developed its budget conservatively, minimizing incorporation of soft funds. Although the school anticipates applying for the Start-Up grant to support revenues in planning year and initial years of operation, ARA recognizes this source of funding is not guaranteed. In the event that these funds are not secured, or revenue projections are not met, the partner organization of ARA, ACE Foundation has committed the provision of a revolving line of credit up to \$1,000,000 upon authorization of its charter. This is in addition to a previously committed \$750,000 zero-interest loan provided by ACE Foundation partners to support planning and start-up efforts. These are detailed in Appendix AA.

Response to Facilities

Securing a facility is critical to generating local community support, generating adequate enrollment, and building effective partnerships with local organizations to support the school. The Ashley River Academy (ARA) Planning Committee recognizes the importance of providing the school's staff and students with a physical environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

A report published by the 21st Century School Fund, *For Generations to Come: A Leadership Guide to Renewing Public School Buildings*, identifies the negative impacts of inadequate school buildings, including: alienated students; low staff morale; high rates of teacher attrition; inability to provide specialized curricula; reduced learning time; distractions from learning; reduced ability to meet special needs; lack of technological proficiency; health problems for staff and students; safety hazards; and, less supervision of students' behavior. The committee understands that better school buildings support increased student learning potential, and is committed to building or leasing a facility that will initially serve its K-5 students well and, as the school grows, will ultimately meet students' needs throughout their high school years. Ideally, Ashley River Academy (ARA) will ultimately serve all K-12 students in one building, or neighboring or adjoining buildings, on a large (10 acre) campus.

The desired size and layout call for a facility with over 50,000 square feet, two-stories with primary grade classrooms located on the lower level and middle and secondary classes on the second floor. A multi-purpose space, with adjacent food warming capabilities, will serve as a cafeteria, gymnasium, and auditorium, on the first floor.

The upper floor will be serviced by an ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant elevator. A playground and recreation field will be included in the site plan. An emphasis on safety will be included in facilities design including a "single point of entry" and perimeter fencing.

Initially, with projected enrollment of 340 students, ARA will need 16 classrooms for year one: 3 for each of grade levels K-3 (12) and 2 for each of grade levels 4-5 (4). A minimum of 35 square feet per student will be required, with about 800 square feet per classroom preferred. Classrooms for kindergarten students will feature a conveniently located set of restrooms and handwashing stations, preferably within or next to each of the classrooms. Additionally, there will be an adequate number of restrooms located throughout the building for all other grade levels and staff.

Consistent with other successful Hillsdale member schools, ARA will ensure ample space is available for growth of classroom space and offices as the school's enrollment grows. Separate classrooms will also be provided for music and art. Ideally a large library space can be provided and will be alternatively used as a study hall, space for special events, and/or for one-on-one tutoring space.

A gymnasium and auditorium with ample space for physical education and performing arts are also a priority for schools as facilities are being considered. As the school grows to serve students through grade 12, 32 classrooms will be desired as well as a room for art, music and a science lab that feature gas lines, sinks and vented hoods are strongly desired.

Three-thousand square feet of space for administrative offices, printers, copiers and other standard office equipment, and storage will be required. A total of two additional work rooms and an adequate number of restrooms for teachers will also be necessary.

Outdoor green-space will also be desired with ample room for parking, transportation pick-up and drop-off lines and recreational areas for use by younger students for recess activities and by older students for basketball and other organized sports activities. Ideally, facilities will be located on a ten-acre site to allow for future growth opportunities.

In compliance with federal regulations and the guidelines outlined in the Office of School Facilities (OSF) requirements for charter schools and Facilities Planning and Construction Guide (<https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/planning-building/facilities-requirements-for-charter-schools/>), ARA will ensure prospective facilities meet the needs of all students and adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for school buildings. ARA acknowledges that requirements of building, fire, and other applicable codes and regulations cannot be waived in selection and construction or renovation of a facility.

In addition to the planning committee, representatives of the partner entity, American Classical Education (ACE) Foundation, have experience as founding board members that specifically includes opening and operating classical academies in different locations. ACE Foundation Board members recognize that every location has different strengths and weaknesses, and that knowledge of the local area is key in finding the "just right" facility for the school within each community. The entity brings expertise in working with multiple commercial real estate investment and development firms to provide services that span both charter school construction and leasing arrangements. This would include identification of facilities, lease negotiation or sale terms, and processes for renovation and approval by the South Carolina Department of Education Office of School Facilities (OSF). If near or long-term plans involve construction, ACE Foundation also provides support to partner classical schools in land acquisition, architect selection, and construction management. The planning committee will leverage this expertise to secure and renovate the ideal facility for ARA's Year One opening.

ARA has evaluated multiple sites and existing facilities within Charleston County and continues to actively pursue multiple potential paths to secure

a facility. To assess the viability of identified sites, ARA will partner with experienced charter school developers to assist in evaluating the alignment of the prospective facility with the outlined needs of ARA. Partners that have worked with committee or ACE representatives in this type of work historically include Summit Development Group, BCCG, and BoumaUSA. In addition to this site assessment, ARA has established relationships with real estate professionals, including Committee membership that reflects real estate expertise as well as direct work with Timothy Lemoine, Director of Development with BC Construction Group. This role will continue to monitor prospective sites and work with the team through lease or purchase negotiations.

In alignment with requirements of the Office of School Facilities (OSF), ARA will also work with a South Carolina licensed design professional to serve as a liaison who will oversee the facilities approval process between the school and OSF. This person (alongside an architect if applicable) will provide construction documents, manage required code, conduct zoning and land use analyses, and identify traffic study criteria needed for the primary facility. Additionally, any prospective accessory buildings considered Assembly Occupancies by relevant codes, such as auditoriums and gymnasiums, will also have approval processes managed by the Design Professional. ARA acknowledges that all roadway improvements required by the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) including, but not limited to, road widening, intersection realignment, creation of turn lanes, and signaling, are the responsibilities of the school.

Through its work with the BC Construction Group, the Planning Committee has identified five prospective locations for building in the Mt. Pleasant area. Although not floor plans, detailed information on these locations are included in Appendix BB. The primary location of interest is Park Avenue Blvd in Mt. Pleasant. This is a 12.73-acre property with 9 acres approved for commercial development. It is located near Highway 17, and sits near several service and commercial businesses including Roper St. Francis Mount Pleasant Hospital, multiple office parks, neighborhoods, apartment complexes, and recreational facilities. The location is centralized to a significant proportion of the families who have expressed interest in enrolling their children in ARA. The owner welcomes the use of the land by ARA, and the Committee has generated a rendering of a potential facility for the space.

Additional areas identified include two adjacent lots in Tupelo Village along North Highway 17 that are zoned for commercial use and could be combined for purchase. Additionally, a nearly 9-acre property is under consideration on River Landing Drive, near the Mark Clark Expressway that sits amidst several neighborhoods, apartment complexes, as well as retail and restaurant options that indicate a community presence. Other sites being reviewed include 12-acre property on Clements Ferry Rd in the Daniel Island area, and a 10-acre site further north of Mt. Pleasant in Monck's Corner.

ARA expects that a final site will be identified during the summer of 2023 and that this selection window still allows ARA to pursue both construction and renovation site options. If site control does not prove possible by this date and a site cannot be selected in time to allow ARA to have confidence in its ability to open the proposed school on time, ARA will rapidly secure a temporary leased facility that accommodates Year 1 needs while a final location is obtained and developed for Phase II implementation.

Outreach will also be made to the Charleston County School District, to local friends and supporters of Hillsdale College, and local businesses and organizations to investigate additional sources for facilities that may not yet be on the market, but may become available during the application approval process.

Phase 1: As referenced above, ARA may lease a building to serve the needs of the school in Year 1. If the first facility secured is not ample space to grow with the school to serve K-12, then the board will work on Phase 2 of development while operating the school in its Phase 1 site.

Phase 2: During year 1, the school will purchase a larger site or they will purchase land and build a single K-12 campus on an undeveloped parcel.

The ARA Board has not yet selected a facility for ARA, but has identified multiple potential school sites and begun to determine initial development costs as detailed in Appendix BB.

In the coming months - Prior to July 2023 -- the Committee will work with its team and consultants to identify other potential school sites for comparison to the first identified cohort in terms of size, cost, growth potential, amenities and financing options.

In the second and third quarters of 2023, the Committee will select a site for ARA, negotiate terms of the purchase, lease or build, execute financing, and begin renovations or construction.

By Feb. 1, 2024, ARA will finalize its facility arrangements and submit required documentation to the OSF and its authorizer for approval. All inspections - fire, fire extinguishers, health and safety, boiler, occupancy, etc. - will occur in the spring and early summer of 2024, well in advance of the school's opening.

Appendices and Additional Information

Evidence of Support (Appendix Item C) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370380>

School Calendar and Daily Schedule for the Academic Year (Appendix Item F) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370381>

Support Documents for the described Educational Plan (Appendix Item G) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370382>

List of Teaching Positions (Appendix Item H) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370383>

Charter Committee (Appendix Item K) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370384>

Bylaws (Appendix Item L) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370385>

Articles of Incorporation (Appendix Item M) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370386>

Organizational Chart (Appendix Item N) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370387>

Sample Job Descriptions (Appendix Item P) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370388>

School Start-Up Plan (Appendix Item Q) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370389>

Draft Discipline Policy (Appendix Item T) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370390>

Student Enrollment Projection Form (Appendix Item V) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370391>

Five Year Budget [must be in Excel] - (Appendix Item X) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370392>

Ten Year Budget [must be in Excel] - (Appendix Item Y) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370393>

Documentation of Any "Soft Funds" (Appendix Item AA) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370394>

Applicable Insurance Documentation (Appendix Item FF) <https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370395>

Description Area

Additional Appendix Items The remaining appendix items listed below, are required *as applicable. You may combine multiple files into one upload by compressing/"zip" them into one folder/file. Please view the resource guide on tips how to do so. (Appendix Item B) Evidence of Notification (to both the local school board of trustees and local delegation)* (Appendix Item D) Conversion School Support* (Appendix Item E) Private School Documentation* (Appendix Item I) Virtual School List of Courses* (Appendix Item J) Agreement with Sponsoring District for Special Education Services* (Appendix Item O) EMO/CMO Documentation* (Appendix Item R) Letter of Agreement from Sponsor Regarding Compliance with S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-410 et seq. (2004)* (Appendix Item S) Letter(s) from Sponsoring District Regarding Desegregation Plan or Order* (Appendix Item U) Transportation Services Contract* (Appendix Item Z) Memorandums of Agreement for Negotiated Services* (Appendix Item BB) Floor Plan of Identified Facility* (Appendix Item CC) Proposed Lease or Rental Agreement* (Appendix Item DD) Documentation from the SCDE's Office of School Facilities* (Appendix Item EE) Documentation from the SCDOT School Traffic Engineering*

Additional Appendix Items - upload attachments *as applicable.

<https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370396>

Additional Appendix Items - upload attachments *as applicable.

<https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370397>

Additional Appendix Item - upload attachments *as applicable.

<https://www.formstack.com/admin/download/file/14100370398>

Addenda for the Charter Institute at Erskine (CIE)

Has your planning team applied for a charter in the past? No

Will your Charter School be an Alternative Education Campus (AEC)? No

Does your school plan to enter a contract or lease agreement with a church or other religious organization? No

Signature Certification Page

Name of Proposed Charter School Ashley River Academy

City, State, and Zip Code for Proposed Charter School Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

Proposed Sponsor Charter Institute at Erskine

Description Area Certification: I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information and data contained in this application are true and correct. The applicant's governing body has duly authorized this application and documentation, and the applicant will comply with the South Carolina Public Charter School Statement of Assurances if the charter school is approved.

Signature of Charter School Committee Chair



Date February 01, 2023
