

Public Charter Schools Program - Planning and Implementation
2020 - 2021 Discretionary (Competitive) Subgrant

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South Carolina Preparatory Academy - Proposal Narrative

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SECTION 1: THE SCHOOL AND ITS STAKEHOLDERS

The following components explicitly outlines South Carolina Preparatory Academy's (SCPA) planned program, as it relates to the school and its stakeholders:

1.a. Mission of the Charter School and Relationship with Sponsor (Authorizer)

The mission of South Carolina Preparatory Academy (SCPA) is to provide a highly motivational and rigorous curriculum that is virtual in nature and classically based for middle and high school students across the State. Through modern technology, virtual education leverages vital connections that provide opportunities, regardless of geographical location, for students to access high-quality learning experiences. SCPA will open its doors to 100 students in the sixth through eleventh grade. During its second year of operation, SCPA will expand to include its first senior class. As the school continues to expand, enrollment is expected to increase to approximately 1,000 students statewide in the sixth through twelfth grade. While traditional brick and mortar schools are bound by a set schedule, virtual programs impart a more flexible and personalized approach for each student. Flexible cyber scheduling is one of the highest regarded benefits of pursuing a virtual education. As such, SCPA will use its platform to promote the refinement and evolution of analytical thinkers that possess a remarkable set of skills, as they transition into institutions of higher learning and career-oriented positions. The SCPA planning committee recognizes that while some students may be mature enough to sustain as independent learners that can complete their coursework on their own; others may not be as self-sufficient. Nevertheless, SCPA is committed to the success of every child, and will be structured in a way that eliminates any barriers and facilitates successful, authentic learning.

According to State regulations, SCPA will offer at least 25% of instruction in core subjects in a synchronous format (i.e. live/real-time classroom instruction). In middle school, this equates to approximately seven (7) hours per week, whereas in high school, this equates to approximately eight (8) hours per week. Middle school students (6th through 8th grade) are required to spend at least 25 hours per week on their coursework. High school students (grades 9th through 12th) will be required to complete 50

minutes of seat time per day for 180 school days each year. This mandate will also apply to any middle school student that will be taking high school courses. A typical day would consist of five (5) hours of study in each required course (i.e. English, math, science and social studies), with 1-2 hours of synchronous sessions. Additional work will be assigned in other courses such as health, physical education, Spanish/Latin, or the arts. Students will receive their assignments each week by Monday morning, to be completed by the following Sunday evening. All students will be held accountable for the completion of satisfactory work, demonstrating mastery of concepts and standards, as outlined in the pacing of the course syllabus. If a parent/guardian grants their child an excused absence with acceptable proof (e.g. doctors note, printed obituary of a family member, etc.), then they must notify the school in writing within five (5) school days. This notification will be authorized through email, text message, or US mail. Unexcused absences may incite a truancy prevention plan.

SCPA will conduct assessments at the beginning of each school year, to determine academic readiness levels of all enrolled students. They will repeat this same assessment in mid-year, and once more at the end of each school year. The initiation of a national test (e.g. NWEA MAP), will allow SCPA staff to determine the amount of progress achieved over time. It will also allow teachers to identify, as early as possible, the most appropriate level of support needed for students deemed at risk for failure. A review of the 2019 school report cards for South Carolina, shows that students enrolled in virtual schools have struggled to meet state averages on standardized tests. The SCPA planning committee has determined that virtual learning requires a high level of attention and increased accountability to improve current results. While SCPA will encourage all students to take full advantage of real-time instruction, mandatory attendance and participation in interventions will be required of any student who scores more than one (1) year behind grade level, falls behind more than two (2) weeks in their coursework (according to the syllabus), and/or currently failing a subject (particularly in English or math). The school's guidance counselor will review all risk analysis documentation, to determine the best approach to addressing specific risk factors. A meeting with each student's parent/guardian may be scheduled to discuss their Individualized Intervention Plan (IIP), as a part of SCPA's strategy to support those that are struggling

academically. Interventions will be available to all students, but mandatory for individuals who are not showing adequate academic improvement. SCPA teachers will have flexibility within portions of their schedules for intervention sessions, conferences, and planning. Students who fail their English Language Arts (ELA) or math course may be required to participate in SCPA's credit recovery program. Credit recovery allows a child to earn credit for a course that they have previously taken, but did not pass.

In addition, at risk students will also be required to participate in the school's mentorship program with third-party organizations across the State. SCPA will offer personal mentors for all students, but will focus on the school's most vulnerable population to ensure that at-risk students are able to maximize their academic potential and overcome significant barriers to learning. Mentor support will be designed to help students develop time management, study skills, and self-confidence to excel in a virtual learning environment (Competitive Priority 4). To address all critical needs, the school's guidance counselor will work in conjunction with mentors to implement productive strategies to develop and support other life skills that lead to self-sufficiency. Mentors will be assigned to students throughout their enrollment at SCPA, to foster authentic and long-term relationships and improve student opportunities for success. Students will be required to adhere to all mandated provisions so long as their grade point average is below passing. Failure to attend intervention sessions without an approved excuse, will result in truancy.

SCPA will identify intellectually gifted and talented (GT) students through the same coordination, evaluation, and ongoing administration of standardized testing and assessments. Teachers will work closely with the school's GT Program Coordinator and parents/guardians to develop individualized plans to meet the needs of these gifted students. Teachers will integrate accelerated activities and instructional plans to continue challenging and progressing student knowledge and abilities.

The SCPA planning committee intends to deliver a superior virtual model that integrates program advantages of top performing schools to make equitable, quality education attainable for all students within its targeted population. Among the top ranked schools in South Carolina, many of them have high percentages of students that are enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses and dual enrollment programs. SCPA will offer AP and dual enrollment courses and provide the necessary support to ensure

successful implementation and student progression. SCPA will seek to have 50% of its eligible students enrolled in AP and/or dual enrollment courses in its first year of operation. Virtual and face-to-face dual enrollment opportunities will be offered to SCPA students through the University of South Carolina (USC), South Carolina's technical college system, and other local qualified college programs. As academic gains are achieved, SCPA will increase the number of students enrolled in AP and dual enrollment courses. Each student's transcript will reflect the course code and corresponding numerical and letter grade that they received, according to their work in each course. Each student's cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) will be based on the South Carolina 10-point grading scale, which will also be included on the student's transcript and available in PowerSchool. SCPA will comply with all graduation requirements of the State of South Carolina.

Students get the most out of their education when they are exposed to materials that enhance instruction, whether it is online or on paper. SCPA has selected Canvas as its Learning Management System (LMS). Canvas is an online educational platform, which provides a broad scope of resources to support virtual learning. This platform is currently used by institutions such as Clemson and Stanford University. PowerSchool and a variety of other educational programs and web-based curricula integrate directly with Canvas. Through Canvas, students will have their own Google Suite within the school's portal to house assignments. SCPA will use the Carnegie Learning (CL) curriculum, which is currently listed on the State's adopted instructional materials for both ELA and math instruction. CL's Artificial Intelligence (AI) application design, MATHia, provides a *LiveLab* for teachers as they guide their students, in real-time, to support the development of creative problem-solvers and critical thinkers. SCPA will integrate classical literature into existing subjects, to foster a world perspective of understanding in basic vocabulary and formal grammar of the English language to produce students who are culturally literate. A true classical curriculum that is suited for virtual education, is not mass marketed and available for purchase. As a result, SCPA will integrate classical literature from the Core Knowledge sequence (e.g. the Realms of Gold 3-volume anthology collection) into the CL curriculum. Realms of Gold includes short, literary works such as poems, stories, essays, speeches, and other works of literature by renowned

historical writers (e.g. Shakespeare, Poe, Gandhi). Classical works, including Famous Men of Greece, The Trojan War, The Iliad and the Odyssey and The Book of Ancient Romans; will also be incorporated. The development of skills required to understand and master such intense curricula, will advance students that think and learn with order, depth, and complexity beyond the educational environment and into the modern workplace.

CL houses over 1800 activities per course, that are ready for SCPA instructors to use. In addition, CL is fully integrated into Passport, an innovative digital learning environment, which offers additional videos, projects, and assessments to increase student comprehension and support academic progression in both math and ELA. CL also provides additional reading support through an extensive library of other guided and independent selections. Supplemental curricula such as Edmentum will also be used to meet all South Carolina standards in science and social studies. CL and Edmentum fully integrate with Canvas, providing a single login portal for students and parents/guardians to access their entire education. Parents/guardians will also have access to their child's synchronous sessions, as well as all intervention sessions. This integration allows teachers to easily align all instruction and assignments with State standards and allow more time for personal and direct instruction with students.

SCPA submitted its initial charter application to the Charter Institute at Erskine, the school's official sponsor (authorizer). As of April 2020, SCPA received a conditional approval letter from the Charter Institute at Erskine. The required attachment will confirm that the authorizer has received an application on behalf of SCPA, but is still pending review until such time that conditional revisions have been completed. SCPA is expected to receive final approval at the public board meeting on June 10, 2020. The Charter Institute at Erskine is committed to fairness, transparency, and consistency when it comes to school accountability. They believe that each school's situation is unique, and that the accountability system must value, and not penalize, that uniqueness. The institute assumes a prominent role in the establishment and competent operation of high-quality charter schools throughout South Carolina.

1.b. Need for the Charter School

The prospective office space for SCPA is located at 3014 North Main Street, Suite K, Anderson, SC 29621. The SCPA planning committee conducted a needs assessment and evaluation of student achievement data in the area and compared them with current challenges in the South Carolina virtual charter schools' network. The Nation's Report Card for 2019 indicates that South Carolina virtual middle school students are falling behind the State in core academic areas of ELA and math. Comparatively, virtual high school students are also falling behind in Algebra I, English I, Biology I and US History courses. While only 33% of the virtual schools in South Carolina scored below the State's average in ELA at the middle school level, that figure excelled to 80% at the high school level; leaving only 20% of high school students performing at a level equal to or higher than the State's average. Despite aggressive efforts to move the needle in a positive direction, students are continuing to struggle to meet state averages on standardized tests. The State's virtual schools are currently facing challenges that are unique, making progress towards meeting/exceeding the standard difficult.

There is a rising concern among some experts that a completely virtual education is not meeting the needs of students. There are others who feel that a model without the use of technology, is not meeting the needs of the 21st century learner. SCPA believes that all students deserve an opportunity to be a part of a successful virtual experience. As such, it is the planning committee's intent to have a student population that mirrors the demographics of the entire state. Virtual education has evolved to become a tool to help close achievement gaps in high schools and colleges around the world.¹ SCPA will focus on providing high-quality education and interventions in middle school (approximately ages 11-14), to help improve high school (approximately ages 14-18) scores over time. As SCPA middle school students improve, those same students will feed into the high school program at a faster rate (between 3-20% in each subject). Integrating classical instruction has been proven to produce student achievement and aids in closing the achievement gap between high-performing and low-performing students **Competitive**

¹ <https://www.vhslearning.org/virtual-education-future-k-12-students>

Priority 3). The planning committee aspires to lead the virtual schools in South Carolina, producing academic results that not only meet the standard, but surpasses the State's average. SCPA has set appropriate, reasonable, and manageable achievement goals for student performance on state testing, student attendance, and participation rates in AP and Dual Enrollment courses. The school is prepared to meet those targets through intense instruction, intervention plans, remediation plans, and student support services. Ongoing formative assessments and benchmarks will provide instructors with data to determine if teaching strategies are effective.

SCPA will open its doors to 100 students in the sixth through eleventh grade. During its second year of operation, SCPA will expand to include its first senior class. As the school continues to expand, enrollment is expected to increase to approximately 1,000 students statewide in the sixth through twelfth grade. One of the greatest challenges facing virtual schools is the large number of students assigned to instructors. Smaller teacher to student ratios have been proven to positively impact student performance. SCPA's intentionally small opening allows teachers to give adequate and proper attention to enrolled students. SCPA wants to foster a virtual school-family climate, where each student is known by name. It will also allow teachers the opportunity to learn their students' behaviors and foster supportive routines to best address their needs. Class sizes will depend on each course. However, as the school continues to grow, ELA and math courses will continue to maintain smaller ratios to ensure proper attention is provided for each student.

SCPA would like to integrate program advantages of the top performing schools into the virtual setting to make equitable, quality education available to all students in South Carolina, regardless of their geographical location. Among the top ranked schools in South Carolina, there are key practices that have been attributed to their high performance. Many of these schools have high percentages of students that are enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Three (3) of the top ten (10) schools in the State also have a high percentage of students in dual enrollment programs as well. Some schools have reported that 97% of their students are taking and passing these courses. Several of the top 10 schools in the State have high percentages of students that are considered economically disadvantaged. Yet, those same

students are outperforming their counterparts in other areas of the State. This proves that regardless of their classification, lower socioeconomic groups are equally capable of high performance when offered the opportunity to participate in AP and dual enrollment courses and provided proper support. The average number of virtual charter school students that are enrolled in AP courses is approximately 4%, with an even lower average in dual enrollment programs. SCPA will seek to have 50% of its eligible students enrolled in AP and/or dual enrollment courses in its first year of operation and increase those numbers as academic gains are achieved. SCPA is committed to providing as much support as needed to promote educational success amongst all enrolled students.

By middle school, a leading factor in the widening achievement gap, is attendance. There is significant evidence that shows that by a student's ninth grade year, attendance is the key indicator affecting graduation rates.² While traditional brick and mortar schools are bound by a set schedule, virtual programs impart a more flexible and personalized approach for each student. SCPA will enforce a strict and mandatory attendance policy, but the allotted flexibility of a virtual education offers students and parents/guardians, a more inclusive approach to addressing barriers that may be attributing to their attendance issues (Competitive Priority 3). In addition to maximizing time, a virtual education can offer an optimal learning environment that is better suited for the child, which presents fewer distractions and provides a more adaptable solution to student/family health barriers that might otherwise prevent a child from receiving a traditional education.

SCPA has outlined a contingency plan for students that are deemed at-risk and/or under-performing, according a mandated assessment that will be administered at the beginning, middle, and end of each school year. There will be certain optional components, such as attendance in synchronous sessions, intervention plans, and participation in the mentorship program, that will become mandatory until such time that the student can obtain a passing grade on the next available assessment. These mandatory provisions will begin to close the achievement gap between under-performing students and

² <https://www.vhslearning.org/virtual-education-future-k-12-students>

their peers (Competitive Priority 3). Currently, there is no statewide mentorship program in South Carolina that serves students before they reach a crisis. Implementing these testing procedures upon operation and on a consistent basis, will allow SCPA to address educational concerns in a proactive and timely manner. Forty percent of South Carolina students are living in poverty. This excessive number of students with a single risk factor, demonstrates the need for similar programs in the State. No other virtual school and very few traditional schools offer this widespread opportunity, and as such, SCPA plans to make it available to all enrolled students, regardless of performance levels. Studies show that when middle and high school students are connected to a personal mentor, their engagement levels increase, and their communication skills improve.³ SCPA will employ a full-time liaison to coordinate and manage all mentor assignments, pairing at-risk students with a personal mentor located in the same geographical region where the student resides. If a local mentor is not available, the liaison will personally serve those students. Mentors will travel to meet with students as needed to ensure that the program is successful (Competitive Priority 4).

1.c. Support for the Charter School

A group of South Carolina residents reviewed the recent achievement data for virtual charter schools across the State and determined an immediate need for a high-quality virtual school, integrated with a classical curriculum. These individuals formed a planning committee, comprised of a diverse mix of educational, financial, and legal professionals, that fully support the mission and vision of SCPA. The formation of SCPA in no way negates the efforts of the district, as they continue to make strides towards progressing education in each school. Nevertheless, the apparent test data can improve upon the initiation of SCPA's targeted instruction and intervention plans to increase student accountability and performance metrics. As such, the SCPA planning committee has notified the appropriate local school boards of its intention to form a virtual charter school based out of Anderson, SC (3014 North Main Street, Suite K, Anderson, SC 29621). To-date, SCPA has received 293 indications of interest from families across the

³ <https://www.eacs.wa.edu.au/2018/03/mentors-can-improve-academic-performance-teenagers/>

State, which substantially supports the enrollment projections for its first year of operation. The planning committee will continue its outreach efforts to promote and strengthen SCPA's support for implementation, engaging the community every step of the way.

Several of South Carolina's largest employers, including Eastern Industrial Supply Company, Renfroe Industrial Supply, Sage Automotive, and Tri-County Technical College, have written letters in support of SCPA. These companies represent a combined workforce of over 6,000 employees and several billion dollars' worth of investment in the State. In addition, a congressional letter of support has been written and signed by Senator Lindsey Graham, Senator Tim Scott, Representative Jeff Duncan, and Representative William Timmons. SCPA will continue to keep all its supporters informed in and involved with the ongoing development and implementation of the new virtual school.

SCPA will be a tuition-free public charter school, authorized by the Charter Institute at Erskine, designed to mirror a student population that reflects the entire State. The virtual program outlined for SCPA, combines educational opportunities with student support services to help minimize barriers that might otherwise prevent students from thriving in the modern workplace. SCPA is committed to providing as much support as needed to accommodate its flexible learning environment as a virtual school, the integration of a classical curriculum, and increased enrollment in AP and dual enrollment programs. Virtual and face-to-face dual enrollment opportunities will be offered to SCPA students through the University of South Carolina (USC), South Carolina's technical college system, and other local qualified college programs. The SCPA planning committee has already identified a certified Core Knowledge training expert, Cathy Kinter, and procured her services as a contractor in support of the initial year of operation and ongoing annual training related to classical integration. She is specifically experienced in kindergarten through eighth grade instruction within the charter school network. Kinter will serve SCPA staff in properly integrating classical literature into our CL curriculum. She will meet during planning periods at the beginning of the school year, and as needed throughout the year, to provide professional development that is specific to their needs. Additionally, SCPA will contract with third-party entities, as needed, to provide a variety of support services to enrolled students, including opportunities

for students that are considered homeless by definition, have a family member serving in the military, or a variety of other confining circumstances. Proper accommodations will also be administered for all children who receive coordinated services through the Special Education program, or entitled to accommodations as outlined in their 504 plans.

The individuals that make up the SCPA planning committee have developed an all-inclusive educational approach to help close achievement gaps. One of the most vital components of SCPA's support structure, will be its third-party mentor program. There is a great need for more mentor programs in South Carolina to help students avoid crises that result from adverse conditions, and SCPA has elected to begin addressing such conditions. SCPA will employ a mentor liaison who will form and manage partnerships with community members and mentoring organizations across the State to serve students, especially those at high-risk of failure. SCPA's mentor program will focus on maintaining effective communication and understanding of each student's needs, aligning expectations for success with their coursework and ability to be self-sufficient. Mentors will be assigned to students throughout their enrollment at SCPA. The longevity of their assignment will foster authentic relationships and form connections that will improve student opportunities for success. Interested families understand the benefit of mentors and are supportive of the academic growth and individual achievements that are expected as a result of the new virtual school.

1.d. Involvement in the Charter School

The SCPA planning committee intends to bring program advantages of the top performing schools into its virtual setting to make equitable, quality education available to all students across South Carolina. Integrating classical instruction, encouraging AP and dual enrollment courses, and providing a multi-tiered level of support services for students will require continuous accountability and support from parents/guardians, partner organizations, and other community members. SCPA will continue to market across all geographical regions in the State to inform residents of the school's plan to improve the status quo.

By nature, virtual schools provide daily opportunities for parental interaction and involvement, as communication between parents/guardians, teachers, and students is imperative for success; and happens organically on most occasions. Parents/guardians will have contact information to reach and communicate with teachers daily. Parents/guardians are considered “on-site administrators” for teachers and are expected to notify the appropriate SCPA staff member(s) of all special circumstances involving their child (e.g. illness, family travel, etc.). A missed day at school is a missed opportunity to learn, and chronic absences reduce even the best teacher’s ability to produce the best learning opportunities. SCPA teachers will offer office hours for both parents/guardians and students to foster opportunities for transparent communication. As such, families will have 24/7 access to their child’s coursework, synchronous sessions, intervention planning/sessions, and grades. Upon enrollment of students, parents/guardians will be required to participate in a virtual Canvas training to learn how to navigate through the Learning Management System. PowerSchool, most educational programs, and web-based curricula integrate directly with Canvas - allowing families to access all needed information from one login portal.

SCPA will invite parents/guardians to be a part of the South Carolina Preparatory Academy Parent Association (SCPAPA). This organization will serve as the voice of the families enrolled at the school, through which, they can address potential concerns to school representatives. Through the SCPAPA, parents/guardians will have the opportunity to be involved in the advancement of the school and serve in future community outreach events such as open houses. Beginning in the second year, families will be able to apply as a partner family to provide support to new families enrolled at SCPA. When possible, these families will be assigned to others who reside close in proximity to unite the school family and cultivate health support systems and relationships.

In addition to SCPA’s plan to involve parents/guardians in the design and implementation of the school, the employed mentor liaison will help form and manage partnerships with third-party mentoring organizations across the State. This opportunity will be available for all students, especially those who are considered at risk. Upon enrollment, parents/guardians will also be asked to complete a Risk Analysis to assess factors such as: poverty, household demographics, family/student learning disabilities, medical

conditions, and other indicators that deserve a heightened level of support to ensure stability and success within the virtual program. The school's guidance counselor will review the risk analyses to determine the best approach to addressing/overcoming risk factors. SCPA's educational platform implements various directives and provisional plans to ensure the success of every student. Parents/guardians will be called in, as necessary, to ensure that students are adhering to the required intervention plans and utilizing the established support systems to improve academic performance.

SCPA has received surveys of interest from a diverse range of families across the State to support its classically based, virtual school program. SCPA will continue to market across all geographical regions of the State to inform students, parents/guardians, and other interested community members of the school's plans to open. Such marketing strategies include website advertisements, social media postings, Facebook ads, in-person and virtual informational sessions. A sub-committee, appointed by the SCPA planning committee, will be responsible for receiving and processing enrollment applications. This process will include notifying individuals by mail or email to confirm receipt of their application.

Upon official approval of SCPA's charter application, the school will begin accepting applications for enrollment. Applications will be available online and may also be mailed or faxed to/from the school's administrative office. Approximately one month before applications are due, reminders will be issued through the school's social media sites and email communication to families who have shown interest in SCPA. Marketing via phone and other electronic methods will also be administered to ensure that SCPA is able to open at full capacity. All applications must be received by the publicized due date and are subject to any necessary lottery processes.

If the number of student applicants exceeds the number of available slots, SCPA will conduct a lottery to determine which students will be admitted. All parents/guardians of student applicants will be given written notice of their status as accepted for enrollment or to confirm their placement on the waiting list. The lottery will take place in a public location upon an announced date and time. All students whose names are chosen after the available slots have been filled, will be placed on a waiting list in the order that their names are drawn. Only applications received prior to the established deadline will be eligible.

The applicants will be notified of the lottery results. If there is enough interest, SCPA may request from its sponsor (authorizer) to enroll additional students. During the initial planning stages, efforts will be made to attract teachers and resources in preparation for this contingency. In selecting probable students, the application process will consider the following:

- If the applicant is a sibling of a student already accepted (initial enrollment process);
- If the applicant is a sibling applying for the first time (another sibling has already been accepted);
- If the applicant is a sibling of a student currently attending (after first year of operation);
- If the applicant is a child of an SCPA employee; and/or
- If the applicant is a child of an SCPA planning committee member (less than 20% of enrollment)

All offers of acceptance and registration will be made in the order of the lottery results and established waiting list. No offer will be made to any student that is not properly entitled to the next available seat.

All applicants that are accepted into the school will be required to respond affirmatively in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days and complete the enrollment packet. Applicants that do not respond (excluding declinations) will be placed on the waiting list.

Students shall not be denied equal opportunity for admission based on race, sex, color, religion, handicap, marital status, or national origin. Students denied admission to SCPA for reasons other than the lottery results, may appeal to the SCPA Board of Directors. The decision of the Board of Directors is binding on the student and SCPA. Parents/guardians of denied students must adhere to the appeals guidelines and provide SCPA a written notice of appeal within five (5) days of the event - citing the reason(s) for the appeal. The SCPA Board of Directors will review and respond to the appeal in written within five (5) days of receiving the notice. The Board of Directors reserves the right to conduct a hearing with the parent/guardian of the denied student. The Board of Directors also retain final authority to uphold or revoke admission based on the appeal, and any subsequent hearing. All decisions must be finalized in writing within fifteen (15) days from the date of the appeal.

SECTION 2: FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The following components explicitly outlines South Carolina Preparatory Academy's (SCPA) planned program, as it relates to the financial stability of the school:

2.a. Financial Viability of the Charter School

The SCPA planning committee is comprised of a diverse mix of professional, educational, financial, and legal experience. Each member has shown a sincere and dedicated interest in seeing all children of South Carolina as educated and competitive contenders in the global marketplace. Through extensive research and review of achievement data for virtual schools in the State, this group of individuals has developed a long-term, sound business plan to support the implementation of SCPA. The establishment of SCPA is intended to provide an intense, well-rounded educational model that is currently unavailable in South Carolina; an opportunity that will be available to all students in the State, regardless of their geographical location. SCPA is aware of current funding for public schools and will make every effort to take advantage of such opportunities to help secure its financial viability.

Securing SCPA's financial viability is highly contingent upon the success of the school plan, impact of instruction, and follow-through of elevated student achievement. To support the school's business structure, SCPA has mapped out a five and ten-year budget that demonstrates the planning committee's best effort to invest funds directly into the classroom. SCPA's budget was developed using actual expenditure data from local school districts and the expertise of the certified public accountants/advisors of McCay Kiddy. The school will contract with McCay Kiddy to help provide a cash flow budget to ensure SCPA initiates fiscally sound expenditures. The basis for the revenue projection is the minimum funds anticipated per student. SCPA is projected to open its first year of operation with 100 students. Based on the indications of interest that the planning committee has received to-date, SCPA is expected to open at full capacity.

As a virtual charter school, SCPA does not need a large facility to hold day-to-day operations for students. However, upon charter approval, SCPA will engage in a formal lease agreement for a rental

property to house student records, conduct various administrative duties, and provide occasional opportunities for students, staff, mentors, etc. to interact. This allows SCPA’s budgetary philosophy to focus more on (1) the attraction of highly qualified instructors, (2) professional development opportunities, and (3) necessary components of the curriculum and technology integrations for educational success. Although SCPA will not offer South Carolina Retirement System Benefits, all other insurance and financial/budget planning will be supported through current planning committee member, Alex Zelling. Mr. Zelling is the owner of a reputable financial services company (Palmetto Payroll Solutions) that has served public and private entities for over 20 years. His extensive experience will provide relevant management and assistance as needed to further solidify SCPA’s financial viability.

In accordance with statutory requirements, SCPA will undergo an annual single audit and will comply with all aspects of this mandate. SCPA is knowledgeable of the compliance requirements and suggested audit procedures. The Board of Directors will engage an auditor no later than 120 days prior to the close of the fiscal year by soliciting three (3) bids from independent, Certified Public Accountant (CPA) firms; selecting the best firm that meets the needs of SCPA. The annual audit will encompass SCPA’s financial and administrative operations and will be conducted in compliance with all applicable laws. The Board will receive, review, and approve the annual audit in accordance with State requirements and submit to the Charter Institute at Erskine (authorizer) and other required state agencies.

In addition, SCPA will adhere to all accounting, reporting, and auditing procedures required by the Charter Institute at Erskine and all public schools operating in the State. SCPA will remain fiscally solvent; adhere to generally accepted accounting practices; have no material breaches; address financial concerns; and follow the South Carolina pupil accounting system by designing, developing, and implementing a comprehensive Internal Fiscal Control System (Figure 1).

South Carolina Preparatory Academy: Internal Fiscal Control System
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishes financial polices and corresponding financial procedures to properly account for all revenue and expenses as directed in the Financial Accounting Handbook and Funding Manual;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishes polices to adhere to the reporting policies, procedures, and regulations of the South Carolina Pupil Accounting Manual and the South Carolina Student Accountability Manual;

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensures 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 (1) Single Audit Guide, (2) Financial Accounting Handbook, and (3) Funding Manual;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defines and adheres to generally accepted standards of fiscal management;
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develops and approves an annual operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year (no later than June 30 of the preceding fiscal year);
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintains appropriate records on a by-transaction basis, thereby establishing SCPA’s financial management system as audit ready at the conclusion of any given transaction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Makes required reports (on-call, monthly, quarterly, and annually) to the Board and external agents/agencies (Reports maintained and filed according to district, state, and federal requirements); and
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identifies, reports, and deals with material breaches and financial concerns through corrective and preventative action protocols

Figure 1: Internal Fiscal Control System

SCPA anticipates approval of this subgrant, but no grant funds have been included in the charter school’s plan for financial viability. Upon charter approval, the SCPA Board of Directors will be established and will continue the efforts of the founding members/planning committee to sustain the school, even beyond the scope of the subgrant. SCPA is committed to marketing/soliciting participation and support for the charter school to maintain operations as outlined. If SCPA is awarded this subgrant, the school will continue to seek/engage in additional grant opportunities, fundraising initiatives, and monetary support. The planning committee has procured an extensive line of credit for SCPA. As an extension of support, SCPA will also engage in contracted services provided by its authorizer to help manage and minimize any financial impact on the SCPA budget, while continuing to provide exemplary services to its students.

2.b. Contingency Plans for Unanticipated Budget Reductions

SCPA does not have any liens, litigation history, or sanctions from any local, state, or federal regulatory agencies. SCPA’s budget was developed using actual expenditure data from local school districts and the expertise of the certified public accountants/advisers at McCay Kiddy. The school will contract with McCay Kiddy for accounting and financial services. They will prepare a cash flow budget and submit it to the SCPA Board of Directors and school director as a guide to ensure that SCPA is operating within fiscally sound expenditures.

If a shortfall in federal, state, and/or local revenue should occur, SCPA has secured financial resources and active commitments for additional support. The planning committee has procured an extensive line of credit for SCPA to ensure that the school's cash flow for year one is fiscally sound. If a shortfall occurs, the Board and selected school director will first assess the level of budget reductions needed and determine which expenditures can be cut/eliminated before utilizing the line of credit. If a reduction can be avoided, the Board and school director will collectively decide on viable solutions. In some cases, adjusting efforts in one category can help relieve financial stress/shortfalls in another without additional funding.

SCPA planning committee member, Alex Zelling, is qualified to support various finance and budget planning needs. He is the owner of Palmetto Payroll Solutions and is experienced in providing financial services to various public and private entities for over 20 years. In addition, planning committee member, Grant Weatherford, is also experienced in business development strategies, which will allow him to assist Mr. Zelling and the contacted accounting firm in securing and managing SCPA's finances. The SCPA Board of Directors and selected Project Director, Tracey Williams, will continue to seek and initiate fundraising opportunities and other strategies to secure financial support.

SCPA has not solidified any public/private partnerships, but the planning committee will continue to network with community members and organizations to encourage monetary support in the implementation of the new charter school. All anticipated partnerships that are included in SCPA's budget will be monitored effectively and contracted within reason to ensure that the school is not overextending its resources and financial viability.

2.c. Justification of the Three-Year Budget

SCPA has not officially secured funds from any federal, State, district, or local agency. As a new charter school, the items referenced in the budget narrative outline necessary components needed to implement the school's educational plan. SCPA is scheduled to open at the start of the 2021-2022 school year. The budget narrative has been broken down into three (3) phases: the planning phase,

implementation phase 1, and implementation phase 2. Some allocations are based on actual figures and others are projected costs based on research from various vendors. As multiple vendors will be used to secure services, materials, and supplies, SCPA has made every effort to ensure that actual/projected costs are within reasonable range and directly correlate with the applicable frequency and quantity to support the school's educational plan. To help SCPA get started, the school intends to register for The Public Charter School Alliance of South Carolina's (PCSASC) Incubator Program during all three (3) phases. The PCSASC is committed to expanding high quality educational opportunities that improve academic achievement of students through the development of public charter schools.

As a virtual charter school, SCPA does not need a large facility to hold day-to-day operations for students. However, upon charter approval, SCPA will engage in a formal lease agreement for a rental property to house student records, conduct various administrative duties, and provide occasional opportunities for students, staff, mentors, etc. to interact. The allocations for SCPA's office space are computed as a monthly figure for a 12-month duration. Board insurance and fidelity bonding have been included during all three phases. To ensure that SCPA is initiating fiscally sound expenditures, the school will contract with McCay Kiddy to help provide grant management services during all three phases of the subgrant. This budget item is computed at an hourly rate, which projects the least number of hours that advisors will spend per month on conducting budget/benchmark related tasks. The number of hours spent per month increases during implementation phases 1 and 2.

During the planning phase of this subgrant, SCPA will employ a project director to handle a variety of administrative tasks as it relates to the development and implementation of the charter school. Such tasks include developing enrollment policies, procedures, recruitment plans, etc. The project director will also be responsible for partnering with vendors and other community resources to develop marketing materials, generate new business relationships, initiate recruitment strategies, and more. Until a school director is selected and hired, the project director will assume similar responsibilities to ensure that the school is on track to open at the start of the 2021-2022 school year. Upon hire, the school director will have liberty to assign tasks/additional responsibilities to the project director as needed in support of the

school's workplan. The allocations for the project director's services are computed as a monthly figure for a 12-month duration. SCPA will also contract with various vendors to develop policies, procedures, handbooks, and other documentation to support board-approved guidelines for teachers, students, etc. to follow. Allocations for these budget items are computed as a one-time expense. In addition, SCPA will contract with Core Knowledge training expert, Cathy Kinter, to assist staff in properly integrating classical literature into SCPA's CL curriculum for a period of six (6) months during the planning phase and implementation phase 1. SCPA will also hire a special education consultant during implementation phase 1 to support the special education program. The allocations for this line item is calculated monthly for a period of eight (8) months.

Various individuals/entities will be used to develop SCPA's curriculum components for all major subjects (e.g. ELA, math, social studies, and science). During implementation phase 1, this component turns into curriculum training and development for SCPA instructors. The allocations for training are calculated per teacher. SCPA has chosen Canvas, Carnegie Learning, and Edmentum as curriculum resources to support a classical education for virtual learning. Such purchases are represented as yearly amounts in the budget narrative. These integrated platforms will serve as the school's main source of instruction and will only require one login to access each database. Each student and teacher will have access to each platform to support a streamlined and connective approach to achieving educational success. During implementation phase 1, SCPA will purchase various instructional materials to aid students and teachers (e.g. chrome books for students, laptops/software for teachers, and Kinter books for instruction). In addition, the budget narrative also includes a per student rate for State assessment testing materials. The quantity is based on the total amount needed to support each year of operation. As the number of teachers and students increase, additional supplies may be needed to properly equip all individuals.

Implementation phases 1 and 2 include a variety of singular and ongoing purchases to support the development of branding/marketing materials and promotion to different demographics via radio, tv,

newspaper, billboard advertisements, etc. Allocations for advertising/mass media initiatives are projected monthly for the entire year.

SECTION 3: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

The following components explicitly outlines South Carolina Preparatory Academy's (SCPA) planned program, as it relates to the school's governance and management plan:

3.a. Management of the Charter School and Subgrant

The members of SCPA's planning committee are regarded as the founding members of the prospective virtual charter school. The planning committee is comprised of a diverse mix of educational, financial, legal, and professional experience. Throughout the initial process of establishing SCPA, the planning committee has overseen all aspects of the charter application, submission, and amendment procedures. Once SCPA is operational, a selection of interested planning committee members will transition into the Board of Directors. Until such time that the Board is established and/or a school director is selected, the SCPA planning committee will assume all responsibilities as it relates to the management of the charter school and the subgrant. The following highlights the relevant credentials and experience of SCPA's founding members:

Mrs. Tracey Williams

Mrs. Tracey Williams received her Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree in Teaching and a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree in Natural Sciences from Clemson University. She also attained a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from American Public University. Mrs. Williams has secured over 20 years of experience in the field of education; 10 of which were in a virtual setting. She has had the privilege of homeschooling her children, teaching in private schools, traditional public schools, and virtual schools. Mrs. Williams also served as an administrator in one of the largest virtual schools in the United States.

Mrs. Williams was a member of several AdvancEd district diagnostic teams, including Broward County, FL, which is the seventh largest school district in the United States. Her wide range of educational experience gives her a unique perspective on the future of education. She believes that the

combination of a classically based curriculum, mandatory interventions, and a mentorship program is the key to a successful virtual program.

Mrs. Williams lives in Cross Hill, SC with her husband and two sons. She enjoys reading, cooking, and walking her dog.

Mr. Alex Zelling

Mr. Alex Zelling has an extensive business background in the accounting field. He is currently the owner of Palmetto Payroll Solutions. Mr. Zelling specializes in financial services, including payroll management and reporting. He has provided services to large public and private entities across South Carolina for over 20 years. Mr. Zelling brings a wealth of business knowledge and fiscal accountability to SCPA. He also serves on several boards, including Habitat for Humanity.

Mr. Grant Weatherford

Mr. Grant Weatherford received his B.S. degree in Chemistry from The Virginia Military Institute. Upon graduating, he joined the 82nd Airborne Division with the United States Army, in which he served as a Fire Support Officer and later as a Battalion Commander. Mr. Weatherford is currently employed as a Sourcing Manager for Milliken and Company in Spartanburg, SC. He has developed an extensive background in areas of business development, strategy, and manufacturing. Mr. Weatherford's previous employers include Lockheed Martin Corporation and Michelin North America. His experience is worldwide and naturally brings a global perspective to the SCPA planning committee.

Mr. Weatherford lives in Taylors, SC with his wife of 10 years and five children. He is an active member of Covenant Community Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Luke Stamps

Dr. Luke Stamps received his B.S. degree in History from Auburn University, and his Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree and Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Systematic Theology from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is currently an Associate Professor of Theology at Anderson University. Dr. Stamps has served as an Assistant Professor of Christian Studies at California Baptist University in Riverside, CA. He also served as the Executive Director for the Center for Baptist Renewal, a Fellow for

the Research Institute of the Ethics and Religious Commission, and a Senior Fellow for the Center for Ancient Christian Studies. Dr. Stamps is a published author and co-editor of multiple works. He has also published several journal articles and book chapters in the area of systematic theology. He continues to research historical theology to-date.

Dr. Stamps is married and has five children. He believes that SCPA is a needed option for the students in South Carolina and fully supports the initiative. He desires to see education in South Carolina improve, and trusts that SCPA has the components to support the success of virtual students.

Mr. Mike Kuckel

Mr. Mike Kuckel received his B.S. degree in Business Administration from Central Michigan University, majoring in Finance with a concentration in Investments. After continuing his education at Central Michigan in an MBA program, he went on to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he received his M.Div. Mr. Kuckel concurrently pursued the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation, which he attained in 2006. His educational pursuits have been focused on the theological and practical foundations of biblical stewardship, which has led to the founding of The Sovereign Financial Group of One Ascent.

Mr. Kuckel currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of The Sovereign Financial Group of One Ascent. He also serves as the Co-Pastor at Greenville Community Church. His previous experience includes working as a Financial Advisor for Merrill Lynch, an administrator and Stewardship Pastor at a large church in South Carolina. Mr. Kuckel also worked as a Vice President of Stewardship Partners and Regional Director of Broker Relations at The Timothy Plan (mutual funds company).

Mr. Kuckel lives on a small farm in South Carolina with his wife and 10 children. They enjoy spending time together and experiencing the farm life. He serves in his community on the boards of several community ministries.

Lt. Colonel Dena Garner, Ph.D.

Dr. Dena Garner received her undergraduate degree from Furman University and a Masters' degree in Exercise Physiology from the University of South Carolina. She also attained her Doctoral

degree from Oregon State University in Exercise Physiology. She started working at The Citadel in 2004, while completing her post-doctoral fellowship in the Department of Neurology at the Medical University of South Carolina. Dr. Garner is currently a professor in the Department of Health and Human Performance, the Director of Undergraduate Research, and Assistant Provost for Research and Policy at The Citadel.

In relation to her current positions, Dr. Garner works with The Citadel campus to promote research and scholarly activity in all departments. Her job entails promoting external grants to support faculty research and to specifically improve the faculty/student mentoring within these research grants. During her first year of directing undergraduate research, Dr. Garner worked closely with the Provost and other departments to implement The Citadel SURE (Summer Undergraduate Research Experience) program in Summer 2017.

Dr. Garner is excited to serve alongside the other SCPA planning committee members to bring a quality virtual school to the students of South Carolina.

Mr. Michael Acquilano, J.D.

Mr. Michael Acquilano received his undergraduate degree in Corporate Finance and Accounting from Bentley University in Boston, MA. In 2009, he studied International Finance and Negotiations at Ecole Superieure de Commerce de Rouen, one of the top business schools in Europe. After returning from his studies in Paris, Mr. Acquilano lived in Odumasi Krobo, Ghana, where he acted as a Business Consultant for Ghana Poultry Network (GAPNET). He later received his law degree from Ave Maria School of Law in Naples, FL.

Mr. Acquilano currently serves as the Director of the South Carolina Catholic Conference for the Diocese of Charleston. He also serves as a board member for several non-profit and Catholic organizations. Mr. Acquilano lives in Adams Run, SC and is a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church on Yorges Island, SC.

Mr. Adam Neil

Mr. Adam Neil received his B.S. degree in Economics and Finance from the University of Kentucky (magna cum laude). He transitioned to law school at Washington & Lee University in Lexington, VA, where he was the Judge S. Leslie Mestrezat Scholar and member of the Moot Court Board. Mr. Neil became the Managing Counsel for Litigation at the South Carolina Department of Revenue (SCDOR) in January 2019. In addition to litigating both tax and regulatory matters for SCDOR, he also provides oversight of all aspects of civil, criminal, and administrative matters to the Department's Office of General Counsel for Litigation.

Mr. Neil served 16 years in private practice with Murphy & Grantland, P.A. before entering public services. He served as the Assistant General Counsel for the South Carolina State Fiscal Accountability Authority. Mr. Neil has tried over 40 cases to verdict and has handled matters in the State Court of Appeals, Supreme Court, and the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Mr. Neil and his wife, Courtney Neil, have four children. He serves in leadership in representation of various civic and professional organizations, most recently, as a member of the South Carolina Defense Trial Attorneys Association.

The Board of Directors shall have ultimate authority over the conduct and management of the operations and affairs of the corporation and the school. Once SCPA is operational, the planning committee will request nominations from current members that desire to serve on the Board. The employees and the parents/guardians of enrolled students must elect four (4) members of the board. Parents/guardians will receive one (1) ballot for each enrolled student. All other non-parent/guardian members will also receive one (1) ballot each. The Board should consist of at least seven (7) members and no more than twelve (12). All individuals will have ample opportunity to submit names for nominations to the SCPA planning committee in written form. Nominations shall be taken through the close of business on September 30, 2021-2022. Initial elections will be held during the month of November 2021. The term of office for elected members will be for a period of two (2) years, with each vacancy filled for the remainder of any unexpired term. Members may serve additional terms upon re-election, but it is mandatory that an election take place every two (2) years. The SCPA Board of Directors will follow the

Carver Model of Board Governance, which is a groundbreaking model of governance that enables the board to focus on the larger issues, delegate with clarity, control management's job, and rigorously evaluate the accomplishment of the institution.⁴ The Board will consist of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, one or more Vice Presidents, and other assistant officers as designated by the Board. One or more positions may be filled by the same individual. The Board will provide monthly meetings at least ten (10) times per year, with an annual meeting held on February 15th of each year in which the school is in operation, or as the Board may direct in its discretion. Special meetings may be called at least two (2) days prior to, for any lawful purpose(s) by the Secretary upon written request of the President, or at least three (3) Board members.

During SCPA's first year of operation, there will only be one administrator – the school director. Additional administrators may be hired as needed. The ideal candidate will hold a valid administrative certification in South Carolina, with at least one (1) year of experience (specifically in a virtual charter school). In the absence of an administrative certification, a candidate could qualify by having at least one (1) full year of experience in the field of school-based administration. The Public Charter School Alliance of South Carolina (PCSASC) will assist in hiring the school director to ensure that the process is unbiased. If a member of the planning committee applies for the position, that person will resign from the planning committee before the selection process begins. Once the school director is identified and hired, the SCPA planning committee will assist him/her in seeking qualified candidates to fill the certified and non-certified (not to exceed 25% of its faculty) teaching positions as outlined. SCPA will make every effort to hire subject matter, certified teachers; however, it may utilize the option to hire non-certified instructors if exceptional candidates become available. A non-certified employee must still meet the appropriate qualifications for the subject matter they will be teaching. Open positions will be posted through various channels, including hiring sites such as CERRA, Indeed, and the SCPA website and social media pages. If adequate candidates are not found in a timely manner, the school may reach out to

⁴ <https://www.carvergovernance.com/model.htm>

state universities that may have graduates seeking employment, or the PCSASC, which posts openings for South Carolina public charter schools on their website. All employees will be hired at-will, which confirms a contractual relationship where employees may be dismissed by an employer for any reason, without warning, so long as the reason is within the perimeters allowable by law. The Board will only have one employee that will report directly to them – the school director. All other hired employees will report directly to the school director.

The Board will use the Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP) standards and criteria, or a similar tool, to evaluate the school director on an annual basis. The Board may contract with an outside entity to assist in this evaluation, as necessary. In either case, the results will be presented to the entire Board for review and taken into consideration when offering ongoing employment to the school director. Upon completion, the school director will have the opportunity to respond to the evaluation results in writing. The Board will notify the school director no less than sixty (60) days prior to the end of his/her agreement if they intend to terminate the agreement. If the school director is not notified within sixty (60) days of the expiration date, the school director's agreement will automatically be renewed.

At this time, SCPA will not contract with an Education Management Organization (EMO) or Charter Management Organization (CMO). If, in the future, SCPA determines a need for such support, the planning committee understands that it must seek and obtain approval from the Charter Institute at Erskine (authorizer) through a charter amendment, prior to contracting with the EMO or CMO.

3.b. Responsibilities of the Project Director

Until a school director is identified, the SCPA Board of Directors and project director will manage the subgrant to accomplish the charter school's objectives during the planning and implementation phases. Current planning committee member, Tracey Williams, has been selected as SCPA's project director. She will administer direct oversight for all operational tasks, accountability, monitoring, etc. until the school director has been identified and hired by the Board. The project director

will begin planning and implementing initiatives, as outlined to ensure that SCPA is adhering to the designated timeline of activities. She will also work alongside SCPA's accountant to monitor expenses according to the figures presented in the budget narrative. In addition, the project director will also coordinate all outreach and marketing efforts to prepare for the school's opening during the 2021-2022 school year. Such responsibilities include spearheading enrollment procedures in conjunction with the appointed sub-committee. If SCPA must initiate the lottery process, Mrs. Williams will also oversee all associated procedures to register SCPA students at full capacity. She will also serve as the direct contact for all inquiries/concerns from parents and other community members, as it relates to school operations.

The project director will manage all phases of curriculum development. SCPA will be using Carnegie Learning (CL) for both English language Arts (ELA) and math instruction. She will ensure that all integrated technology such as Canvas, Passport and PowerSchool are set up for staff to begin proper training and become familiar with each system prior to the start of the school year. Additionally, the project director will also work directly with certified, Core Knowledge training expert, Cathy Kinter. She is specifically experienced in the kindergarten through the eighth grade implementing the Core Knowledge curriculum in charter schools. She has been contracted to assist staff in properly integrating classical literature into SCPA's CL curriculum. She will work with teachers before and during the school year by grade level to provide professional development that is specific to each teacher's needs.

The project director will also partner with the selected mentor liaison to begin identifying and selecting available mentors for SCPA students. While this opportunity will be offered to all students, SCPA intends to focus on students that are deemed at-risk, as a result of the school's mandatory risk analyses. The mentor program is designed to pair identified students with individuals that resides close in proximity to each student. This will allow mentors to be easily assessible to students to help build long-term relationships. SCPA's mentor partnership program is designed to ensure that students are developing interpersonal and other life skills that lead to self-efficacy and educational achievement. Mentors serving SCPA students will report directly to the project director, who will manage records to document all mentor-student interaction.

The project director will be required to participate in meetings, webinars, and conferences as deemed necessary to interpret and adhere to all requirements outlined in this subgrant. Mrs. Williams will serve as the liaison between the SCPA personnel and other departments. The school director will have liberty to delegate responsibilities related to the subgrant to the project director as needed, to include tasks not outlined in the grant that may arise during planning and implementation phases.

3.c. Management of the Charter School's Planning Initiative

The planning initiative for SCPA is led by its founding members: Tracey Williams, Alex Zelling, Grant Weatherford, Dr. Luke Stamps, Mike Kuckel, Dr. Dena Garner, Michael Acquilano, and Adam Neil. Mrs. Williams has been selected to serve as SCPA's project director to help execute and oversee management of all ongoing operations to ensure that the charter school is fully prepared to open at the start of the 2021-2022 school year. The founding members make up SCPA's planning committee and will take on the responsibility of selecting a qualified school director. Until such time that a school director is selected, Mrs. Williams, Project Director, will work closely with the planning committee to manage the subgrant and other necessary tasks needed to open the school for operation. Her established duties include curriculum development, technology integration, marketing, developing mentor partnerships, and collaborating with the accounting department to manage the budget.

Once operational, interested members of planning committee will transition into SCPA's Board of Directors and follow through with the established protocols to fill vacancies. The SCPA Board of Directors will follow the Carver Model of Board Governance. The term of office for elected members will be for a period of two (2) years, with each vacancy filled for the remainder of the unexpired term. The Board will only have one employee that will report directly to them – the school director. All other hired employees will report directly to the school director. Upon selecting and hiring a school director, the elected individual will have sole authority to offer employment agreements to school personnel according to the established budget. The school director will interview the candidates and determine who will best serve the students of SCPA based on the criteria outlined in each job description. All employees will be

hired at-will, which confirms a contractual relationship where employees may be dismissed by an employer for any reason, without warning, so long as the reason is within the perimeters allowable by law. The school's employment agreements will run throughout the school's fiscal year from July 1 until June 30. In the first year of operation, new staff will receive a stipend for their time assisting in the school's start-up process, as their participation will be mandatory. The Board will use the Program for Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Principal Performance (PADEPP) standards and criteria, or a similar tool, to evaluate the school director on an annual basis. The Board may contract with an outside entity to assist in this evaluation, as necessary.

Upon hire, the school director will communicate all employment policies and procedures with staff. The SCPA planning committee realizes that most certified teachers are trained using traditional models, and that virtual education may be an adjustment. The school director will ensure that professional development courses are geared towards addressing this matter to help develop teachers/staff in mastering a classical curriculum. To prepare them for success in the classroom and across the school as a whole, SCPA staff will be trained prior to the beginning of the school year on all curriculum components and technology integrations in adherence to the South Carolina College and Career State Standards. The school director will also determine the ongoing need for professional development outside of the curriculum, as he/she will work daily with teachers. In addition, SCPA staff will be trained in areas of IDEA, Section 504, and Child Find to assist in the identification, notification, and support of all students with disabilities. The academic training will not be mandatory for the mentor liaison or the guidance counselor. Instead, they will focus on effective mentor-student training to support SCPA's mentorship program.

The school director will perform all certified employee evaluations each year using the ADEPT Performance Standards model. The school director will review the evaluation results with each employee in a timely manner. If the school director deems necessary, the employee will be given recommendations to follow to improve instructional performance. Required improvements will be clearly outlined in the evaluation. If the employee does not make the needed improvements, the school director has the authority

to terminate the employee. All terminations will be reported to the Board in a closed session. If an appeal is made on behalf of the employee, the Board will handle all processes moving forward to hear/address the employee's grievance.

The school director will be responsible for ensuring that all auditing, reporting, and program evaluations are administered and delivered to the U.S. Department of Education and the S.C. Department of Education in a timely manner. He/she may choose to delegate certain tasks to the project director at their discretion to ensure that SCPA is making satisfactory progress toward achieving its objectives as outlined in the proposal.

3.d. Sponsor (Authorizer) Compliance

SCPA has applied and received conditional approval through the Charter Institute at Erskine as its official sponsor (authorizer) as of April 2020. SCPA is expected to receive final approval at the public board meeting on June 10, 2020. As the local education agency (LEA) of SCPA, the Charter Institute at Erskine received its registration to sponsor charter schools in May 2017 from The South Carolina State Department of Education. As an official authorizer, the Charter Institute reviews applications/grants approval for new charters and oversees the accountability and public stewardship of all schools within its authorization. They do not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The Charter Institute is comprised of a highly experienced team that fully understands the unique needs of public charter schools. Each member puts forth a collaborative effort to remove barriers and assist partner schools in their pursuit of academic and operational excellence. As such, The Charter Institute requires all entities within its authorization to adhere to all applicable laws and comply with any act as it relates to the operation of charter schools. To ensure that the authorizer is accountable, all entities must be held in the same regard. These assurances include compliance with Sections 613(a)(5) and 613(1)(b) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), THE Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101, et seq.), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq.), Title IX of the

Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. 1681, et seq.), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794). Any entity that is not in compliance with all of these assurances, will be in violation of mandated policies/guidelines and could be in danger of having their charter revoked. SCPA will sign and abide by the Charter Institute's Statement of Assurances, which outlines the charter's responsibility to work cooperatively with the sponsor to satisfy all obligations under applicable federal, state, and local law.

SCPA realizes that all students have varied needs and abilities, and as such, will fully serve and support students with special needs by providing a full range of services as offered through traditional public schools. SCPA will contract with appropriately certified specialists to meet the needs of its students. SCPA wholly accepts the responsibility to provide all enrolled students with a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), according to the IDEA. Staff will be properly trained in areas of IDEA, Section 504, and Child Find to assist in the identification, notification, and support of all students with disabilities. SCPA will use the three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) process to identify students who may have a disability. All general education students enrolled at SCPA will be considered Tier I students and receive quality instruction from certified teachers. At Tier I, students will be screened using a variety of methods. Results will be properly analyzed by teachers and reviewed during their Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings. Students will be able to track their own progress using their personalized digital data notebook. A child who has reached Tier III will be required to undergo a series of tests to determine if the child would qualify for special education services. SCPA will administer assessments for evaluations or contract with appropriately certified professionals to complete and interpret all observations, rating scales, interviews, etc. Once testing is complete, the evaluation team will meet with the student's parents/guardians to determine the appropriate next steps to offer the best support. SCPA will follow all required timelines that are regulated by law. The IDEA 60-day timeline only applies to the initial evaluation.

If a determination is made that a child has a disability and will require special education/related services, upon seeking the consent for the initial provision of services, SCPA will develop an

Individualized Education Program (IEP) for the child as required by South Carolina Board of Education Regulations 43-243. SCPA will use South Carolina's system to develop and monitor IEPs. To fulfill its obligation, SCPA will employ a full-time special education teacher during the first year of operation to provide services for students already identified, as well as assist in the identification of students who are not yet identified. If a determination is made that a child has a disability, but does not meet the requirements for an IEP and could meet the broader definition of disability under Section 504, the student may require additional accommodations to make education equitable. The child will then receive general accommodations within the general education environment. In accordance with IDEA, "children will be treated as individuals with unique abilities and disabilities that need to be addressed by providing unique support services, which are explicitly articulated in their IEP." This assurance will also extend to students who enroll at SCPA with an IEP already in place. Within thirty (30) days, SCPA will gather data and have an IEP team meeting to determine if the IEP is appropriate for SCPA's virtual environment and can be accepted as is. It may be reasonably determined that the child's current IEP needs to be amended according to the data gathered to provide access to SCPA's general education structure. Parents/guardians of students who have been previously identified as having a disability or already have an IEP in place, will also be offered comparable plans through SCPA.

During the three-year re-evaluation process, the IEP/evaluation team will determine if the student does or does not continue to meet the criteria outlined under IDEA. At such time, if the student does not/no longer meets the criteria for disability, the IEP will determine if the student meets the criteria outlined under Section 504. If the student no longer requires services, they will be exited from special education. When appropriate, services would be removed gradually to assist students in returning to general education instruction. SCPA will ensure that a continuum of alternative placements is available to meet the needs of students with disabilities for special education and related services and that the least restrictive environment issues are considered in placement decisions. The considerations will be determined by the child's IEP team and will consider any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that he/she needs, including the medium through which instruction is delivered.

Transition services will be provided as determined and coordinated by the IEP team to promote conversion from SCPA to post-secondary education, vocational training, or employment. Additionally, SCPA will also include independent living and community preparation within its transitional services.

SCPA's Board of Directors will hold the school director responsible for adhering to and ensuring that all evaluative, instructional, and reporting timelines/procedures for special education are strictly followed. The student's IEP will specify any special circumstances (equipment, supervision, etc.) needed to meet their needs. SCPA will work with the Charter Institute at Erskine and the local districts' Special Education Services to contract any coordinated services needed to fulfill any child's IEP that cannot be provided by the school. If services are unavailable through the local school districts, SCPA will contract with all appropriate services providers, including, but not limited to: occupational/physical therapy, orientation and mobility, speech therapy, and psychology. The school director will ensure that students who qualify for contracted services will have allotted time within their daily schedule to receive necessary provisions. Provisions will be made, as needed, to avoid interference with the student's daily academic instruction. SCPA will comply with all audits and/or investigations by its sponsor and will provide proof of compliance upon request in a timely manner.