

CFDA 84.282E
Charter Schools Program (CSP)
Federal Non-SEA Charter School
Grants to Charter School Developers
for the Opening of New Charter Schools and
for the Replication and Expansion
of High-Quality Charter Schools

Agency: Office of Innovation and Improvement, Department of Education

Proposal From:

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Competitive Preference Priority 1—Supporting High-Need Students by Increasing Access to

High-Quality Educational Choice. CLS provides students with disabilities access to a high-quality education in an inclusion setting that improves their academic outcomes through authentic and personalized learning experiences. In fact, SWD at CLS perform significantly higher than the local school district on state end-of-grade testing. Most recent comparative data from Spring 2017, shows that SWD at CLS achieved a proficiency rate 15.1% higher than in the local school district (Appendix E, North Carolina End of Grade Test Results).

CLS is committed to recruiting, enrolling, and retaining students with disabilities. Our marketing program (Section i) details the strategies that we have used to successfully increase our school's diversity including our SWD population. Since the 2015-2016 school year, we have increased our SWD population from 4.3% to our current population of 8.5%. Furthermore, 12.7% of our students have IEPs or 504s. CLS believes that hands-on, student-centered learning is best for all students, and CLS provides critical opportunities for students with disabilities to find their strengths and develop metacognitive and 21st century skills that will help them achieve college and career readiness. Often, schools exclude students with disabilities from project-based and real world learning experiences because they are below grade level, but CLS has seen SWD excel in both academic achievement and confidence because this type of authentic, learning-by-doing experiences are a part of their schedules every day.

Additionally, CLS has intentionally designed a physical learning environment that supports SWD. Every classroom space is flexible, providing opportunities for students to sit on carpeted areas on the floor and to move tables and chairs into different configurations. CLS also has many different options for seating, including seats that rock, stools that wiggle, stand-up

desks, bean-bags, clipboards for work on the floor, and pod chairs for students with sensory challenges who prefer tight, close spaces. All students are encouraged to find places and positions for work that enable them to focus best. CLS will continue to attract and retain SWD because of its commitment to being an accessible option for all families, its personalized approach to learning, its emphasis on whole child development, and its extensive system of student support.

Competitive Preference Priority 2—Dual or Concurrent Enrollment Programs and Early

College High Schools. CLS believes that access to college level coursework and experiences are critical to many aspects of the CLS model for these reasons: 1) Access to rigorous coursework supports personalization of learning; 2) Exposure to college learning experiences will better prepare CLS students for a successful college experiences; and 3) Advanced learning opportunities will help students to meet the requirements of CLS’s Passion Project program. CLS will support and enable concurrent enrollment in high school and college-level courses through both formal and informal partnerships:

- Students will be able to enroll in online and distance-learning courses through accredited institutions in order to meet high school credit requirements and earn college credit. During their junior or senior year, each student will be required to take an appropriate college level course relevant to their Passion Project.
- CLS has existing relationships and partnerships with University of NC-Charlotte’s Center City campus, Queen’s University, Northeastern University, Davidson College, and Central Piedmont Community College. One goal of CLS's planning year will be to explore formal early college partnerships and programs with these institutions. CLS’s geographic proximity

to these institutions will make these partnerships logistically feasible. CLS’s fundraising team will begin early in the planning process to work on making such partnerships economically feasible for all students as well.

- It will be the expectation that 100% of CLS students participate in a concurrent enrollment opportunity, based on their specific learning needs and Passion Project topic. These opportunities could include fulfilling a high school credit through a college level online or distance learning course, participating in a skill certification course at a community college or vocational school, or earning college credit through Advanced Placement courses.

Competitive Preference Priority 3—Single School Operators. CLS opened in 2015 as a single public charter school, serving 280 students. CLS is authorized by North Carolina’s State Board of Education as evidenced in CLS’s Charter (Appendix E, Contract with Authorizer) issued on July 1, 2015 which states, “The SBE has reviewed the Application submitted by the Nonprofit and has approved it subject to adherence to all requirements set forth in this Charter and the Charter School Act. The Application is fully incorporated in this Charter and all representations and conditions in the Application are binding on the charter school.”

Furthermore, in the letter of support written by the Director of the Office of Charter Schools, Mr. Dave Machado (Appendix C), he offers his support of CLS’s grant application, and he explicitly references CLS as “a separate school and a single entity,” fully demonstrating that CLS operates as a single charter school.

Application Requirements

(a) Roles and Responsibilities. As one of 71 groups applying to operate a public charter school in North Carolina in 2014, CLS’ Board of Directors understood that securing approval would be

a difficult task; however, the founding leadership and Board invested the time, energy, and personal finances to ensure that they developed a strong program unparalleled in the Charlotte public school market. CLS was one of only 11 out of those original 71 applicants to earn approval by the North Carolina Charter School Advisory Board, and they earned that approval unanimously.

The CLS leadership and Board not only felt confident that they had created the program and selected the team members that would meet the needs of Charlotte's students, but they were confident that their innovation and partnerships would redefine what's possible in K-8 education. Now CLS is looking to expand these innovative practices and partnerships into a program that serves high school students, creating a full K-12 program that not only prepares them academically, but also gives them the tools to shape their minds and their well-being for the remainder of their lives.

CLS's Board of Directors are charged with creating policies that drive the operation of the charter school while the administrative team is responsible for operating the school within the limitations of those policies. CLS's organizational chart (Appendix I) outlines the lines of responsibility within the school up to the Board of Directors.

CLS not have contractual agreements with other organizations. As an independent public charter school, CLS makes all academic, operational, finance, and governance decisions within the confines of applicable federal, state, and local laws, and within the terms of CLS's Charter approved by North Carolina's State Board of Education.

(b) Quality Controls. In CLS's Charter Agreement, the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) has granted CLS a license to operate a Public Charter School. The term of the

charter is effective from July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2020. The SBE has approved CLS's application, and as such, all representations and conditions set forth in the application are considered binding and must be executed by CLS. Annually, the self-selected goals and objectives contained within the charter application are evaluated through Performance Framework reporting (Appendix I, CLS Performance Framework, 2016-2017).

The Office of Charter School's Performance Framework (PF) is a standard mechanism for reporting on achievement of CLS's stated goals. The PF provides a consolidated view of each charter school's performance relative to a list of academic, operational, and financial requirements. The academic elements of the PF are all standard indicators provided by the State accountability team. The operational and financial elements of the Framework are all required by statute, State Board policy, or the Charter Agreement.

The State of North Carolina issues a Report Card for each public school operating within the State; as such, CLS has two NC Report Cards (Appendix I, CLS NC Report Cards). CLS earned a report card grade of B as a School Performance Grade for both the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years.

In the event that there are any proposed substantial changes to CLS's charter (as defined in the chart below), CLS shall immediately submit in writing to the Office of Charter Schools and the SBE, and no proposed amendment is valid until the SBE approves the modification. In addition, CLS is required to notify the SBE of any conditions that are likely to cause it to violate the terms of this Charter or applicable law. CLS is required to comply with all statutory and SBE requirements defining adequate criteria for Public Charter School performance; consequences for failing to meet the statutory requirements are also listed below.

Material Revisions Requiring SBE Notification & Approval	Conditions Likely to Violate Charter or Law Requiring SBE Notification	Grounds for Termination by SBE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enrollment growth beyond 20% as set out in statute; ● Relocation; ● Transferring the charter to another non-profit entity; ● Altering the mission or targeted student population; ● Employing or terminating a management company; ● Changing the application respecting the National School Lunch program; and ● Changing the application with respect to student transportation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Any circumstances requiring closure of CLS. ● Of the arrest or charge of any members of the governing board or of a CLS employee. ● Any change in its corporate status. ● A default on any obligation which shall include debts that are past due by sixty (60) days or more. ● If at any time student enrollment decreases by twenty percent (20%) or more compared to the most recent pupil count submitted to the SBE and/or DPI. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Failure to meet the requirements for student performance; ● Failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; ● Violation of law; ● Material violation of any of the conditions, standards, and procedures set forth in the Charter; ● Two-thirds of the faculty and instructional support personnel at CLS request termination or nonrenewal; or ● Other good cause warranting nonrenewal or termination.

(c) Solicit Input from Parents and Community. Parent and community involvement is critical to the success of any school. For this reason, CLS utilizes all means necessary to ensure that parents and community members' voices are consistently heard and taken into consideration during decision making. CLS's guiding principle for communication is an "open-door" policy, wherein parents and community members are encouraged to seek out leadership with ideas, questions, and concerns as they arise. At the end of each term, CLS also asks students, teachers, and families to complete feedback surveys, in order to ensure continuous rethinking and refining of CLS's practices and keeping CLS's stakeholders' needs a priority.

CLS has also implemented structured events during which parents and community members have the opportunity to provide input; this includes monthly coffee talks with leadership, focus groups to explore specific topics, and PTSO general meetings held each term. CLS uses a variety of communication methods to ensure that parents receive communication and

advance notice about opportunities to provide input through CLS's weekly eNews email, social media including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, and through paper communication sent home with students in their Friday folders.

CLS is committed to being responsive to parent and community input as demonstrated last year when CLS went through the process of adopting a state-approved waiver to utilize a weighted lottery in CLS's admissions procedure to increase the school's socioeconomic diversity (Appendix I, CLS Weighted Lottery Approval Letter). Parents and community members voiced a range of opinions and had many questions about how the shift in admissions would affect the CLS and Charlotte community. In response, CLS held town hall meetings where community members were able to openly discuss the topic with members of the CLS leadership team. Additionally, CLS brought in speakers including parents from the West Charlotte community who had personally experienced school integration, school leaders from Raleigh who also adopted a socioeconomic preference policy, and Dr. Amy Hawn Nelson, an expert on Charlotte school segregation and integration. Through soliciting and responding to parent input, CLS was able to move forward, as a community in implementing this school initiative to increase CLS's diversity.

As CLS expands to include high school, the school plans to continue to utilize the successful strategies listed above. During the planning phases of the high school expansion in particular, CLS will have events for prospective parents, community members, and community partners to contribute their ideas. Working collaboratively with community partners will be critical as CLS enlists their support and insight to embed community-based, real-world learning

experiences into the curriculum and brainstorm new possibilities for community engagement with public schools.

(d) Planned Activities and Expenditures. CLS has set several important goals for its high school component and has aligned the activities and expenditures planned in this grant proposal to support its ability to meet those goals. In addition to the necessary investments in staff, professional development, curriculum, and facilities to create a strong academic program, in order to achieve these goals, CLS is committed to the following:

Goal Area	Measurable Objective
Intentional Diversity	Beginning in its first year, CLS High School will serve a student population that is reflective of the racial demographics of the City of Charlotte and that is 40% economically disadvantaged students.
	85% of CLS High School students, parents, and teachers will report that the school and community feel equitable and inclusive on an annual survey of school culture/climate.
College Readiness	85% of students will be on-track with credit accumulation by the end of their sophomore year.
	CLS High School will graduate 85% of students within four years and 95% of students within five years.
	95% of CLS High School will enroll in post-secondary education within 18 months after graduation from CLS High School.
Career Readiness	95% of CLS High School students will score as “career-ready” on varied assessments, including NC State End-of-Course exams, internship supervisor feedback surveys, career inventories, and on grades in CLS High School career-focused courses.
Global Readiness	By senior year, 85% of students studying Spanish will score Level 5 on the STAMP foreign language assessment and 85% of students studying German or Mandarin will score Level 4 on the STAMP foreign language assessment.
	100% of students will demonstrate progress in the Intercultural Competency Framework, as indicated through class assignments, extracurricular activities, service and internship opportunities, or independent studies.
Community Involvement	By Grant Year 5, CLS programming/opportunities will have reached over 1000 Charlotte-area community members, with 85% reporting that the programming was “effective,” “inspiring,” and “applicable to their life/work.”
Student Wellness	Each year, CLS will score an overall average of 4 out of 5 on the Mindsets Essential Skills & Habits (MESH) Assessment survey of student skills and school culture (Panorama Education) to demonstrate a culture of positive student wellness.

Intentional Diversity. Mecklenburg County, the local school district in which CLS is located, is the most racially segregated district in the State of North Carolina, and many schools (60 out of 160) are hyper-segregated, with 10% or fewer white students attending (Charlotte

Observer). While the local district has attempted to improve school integration through a recent reassignment plan, they continue to face community resistance. CLS wants to provide proof that integration is not only possible, but benefits all students. Grant expenditures will support the Admissions, Recruitment, Marketing, and Communications teams by temporarily subsidizing salaries, as well as funding resources needed to advertise to and recruit a diverse student body.

Specifically, in year two, grant funds will be used to host parent information sessions as well as a speaker series, where childcare and food will be provided, to promote the school in all parts of the Charlotte community. The accessibility of these events and intentionality of the marketing strategy will ensure a diverse pool of students and faculty applicants (Marketing Plan, Section i). As an intentionally diverse school, CLS applied and was approved for a state-approved waiver for a weighted lottery for Economically Disadvantaged Students (EDS) that gives admissions priority to students qualifying for free or reduced lunch. Past enrollment indicates that the EDS waiver is an effective way to not only increase access to economically disadvantaged students but to also increase the racial and socioeconomic diversity of a school's student body.

Grant funded trainings and curriculum development will focus on the themes of diversity, equity and inclusion, fostering the development of a learning environment that values diversity and seeks economic and social justice.

Community Engagement. As CLS High School is designed to prepare its students for careers, it must also work to redefine the role of community partnerships in the learning experience and model new ways for community members to be involved in public schools. Therefore, key expenditures are required during the planning phase of the school as well as into

the beginning years of the school's opening. Specifically, beginning in year one, personnel, including the School Designer in Residence (future Head of School) and Curriculum Developers, will work alongside CLS' thirty-two current community partners to establish plans for evolving those relationships into more sophisticated opportunities for high school students, as well as seek out new partnerships in order to develop a comprehensive curriculum that uses the city to imagine new possibilities for personalized, rigorous, and engaging instruction. In addition to hosting interns, community partners could serve as "field experts," providing content knowledge during project-based units; "clients" for whom CLS's students work on real world projects; or as "expert judges" to help teachers evaluate student work with and from a professional lens.

In years three through five, expenditures on the whole school retreat, professional development, and stipends for personalized learning opportunities for teachers will equip teachers with the skill set to teach in this innovative way and further capitalize on community resources.

In year five of the grant, funding will help to fund an internship coordinator, as well as fund teacher training wherein staff will prepare professional development based on their experience teaching with the greater Charlotte community as their expanded campus. Ultimately, the school will not only use the community for learning, but the community will see the school as a place for them to learn as well. This in-turn creates models for students of lifelong learning.

Economic Mobility. According to research reported by the Equality of Opportunity Project, Charlotte is ranked 50th out of America's 50 largest cities in terms of economic mobility, with a high concentration of generational poverty (Equality of Opportunity Project). Currently in Charlotte, a child's zip code often determines his or her potential life opportunities,

but CLS's model seeks to disrupt that trend. Specifically, the integration of community into learning experiences will broaden students' perspectives of what's possible, as they are exposed to and inspired by diverse people and career fields. On campus, the advisory program will provide a small setting for nurturing personalized guidance in all facets of school life - academic, social, behavioral - to ensure the success of each student.

Beginning in year one, the curriculum developer will create advisory program content and resources for advisors. In years two through four, training including professional development workshops and whole school retreats funded by the grant will include training in cultural competency, restorative discipline, trauma-informed practices, and advisory curriculum to ensure that all students have an advisor that is equipped to support them well. Additionally, in year four, the grant will fund the summer “bridge” program, which will provide teacher pay for instructional planning and delivery during the summer orientation program for students coming in below grade level in reading or math. The opportunity for additional instruction will increase student readiness for the upcoming school year and help to level the playing field for students coming from different schools. Beginning in year four, grant funds will allow CLS to hire a college counselor to support students in exploring and preparing for the college and financial aid application process, and in year five, funding will ensure that students receiving free or reduced lunch are able to attend sophomore year college visits.

By investing in CLS's community and internship programs and embedding multiple levels of support prior to and throughout students' years at CLS High School component, students will gain both the confidence and access needed for upward economic mobility.

Educational Innovation. Culminating in the Research and Development Fund in year five of the budget, CLS High School will utilize funds from the grant to establish its campus as a meeting place for bringing together like-minded educators throughout the community (from private, charter, and district schools that serve different populations), as well as national speakers, to build bridges, share best practices, get inspired, and feel less isolated in their attempts to take instructional risks to benefit their students. Spending on curriculum development, professional development, and travel for school visits in years one and two will be critical in informing CLS's plan for innovative instruction and learning from others on how to best implement CLS's model. In the development of the CLS lower and middle school models, visits to other innovative schools around the country provided critical inspiration as well as insight. In addition to the opportunity to gain new ideas and glean lessons learned from like-minded schools who have already implemented similar high school models, these trips are valuable time for team building. The investment in CLS's founding staff will not only strengthen CLS's ability to impact its students, but it will also empower its team to become change-makers in the Charlotte schools community and beyond.

In addition to the core activities described above, there are two additional activities proposed for support through grant funds that will ensure CLS's ability to meet our goals: small school size and enriching school environment.

Small School. With the expansion to high school, CLS is committed to maintaining a small learning environment through the creative use of CLS's funding and human resources. Small schools are a highly desirable option for Charlotte families and few currently exist, especially at the high school level. Since the mid-90s, many systems have invested in creating

small school communities which were believed to be able to offer more support for students, and improve student achievement, school culture, and teacher satisfaction. Bolstered by significant investments from the Gates Foundation and supported by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, the impact of small schools has been studied extensively. While individual school success varies, the National Education Association cites the following benefits: higher student achievement and school attendance; improved school climate and teacher satisfaction; higher graduation rates, particularly among disadvantaged students; and improved instructional quality and teacher-student relationships.

Enriching Environment. Keeping high school students engaged and motivated in school often requires tapping into their extracurricular interests and unique needs as adolescents. Investments in CLS's arts and music programs will provide a foundation for enrichment offerings that will promote whole child development and ensure that CLS is providing all of CLS's students with opportunities to pursue their passions, and arts and music programs have been widely researched and proven to have a positive impact on student learning. Purchases of books and materials for CLS's school library will provide students with the opportunity to choose what they read and ensure a text-rich environment that promotes literacy. CLS's budget also allots money each year to fund technology programming including the development of a personalized learning platform in year 4. These investments will allow us to differentiate instruction, as well as ensure that all students have equitable access to technology.

Financial Sustainability. CLS has developed planned activities and expenditures that reflect strategic investments that will be made early in the high school's implementation in order to create a well-developed high school program and curricula; create a foundation for a positive

school culture; ensure that CLS has well-prepared, trained, and supported staff; and allow CLS to develop a program that will have a long-lasting impact on student success in college and career readiness and in their life-long personal wellness. Investing in the development of CLS High School staff at the program's inception will ensure the longer-term success of the vision to show what's possible for community engagement, counteract Charlotte's economic mobility challenges, become an example of a positive, integrated school, and serve as a catalyst for innovation in other Charlotte area schools.

In order to become the public charter school model CLS aspires to be, the leaders of CLS understand and take seriously the importance of being economically self-sufficient. Certain investments in furniture, office supplies, website design, grant management assistance, architectural services, operations, leadership, and fundraising support made with grant funds encompass one-time start up costs. Made strategically with grant funds early in the school's launch, these investments contribute to the financial sustainability of CLS High School at the end of the grant period. By the school's 4th year of operation, CLS High School will be fully enrolled (400+ students) and the allotment from the State of North Carolina and local counties will suffice for the majority of CLS High School's operating costs. In the earlier years of high school operation, due to fewer students enrolled, the allotments would be proportionately smaller while many of CLS's expenses, including facility, furniture, and infrastructure, would remain the same. Any minimal deficits in CLS's annual operating budget would be compensated by an annual fundraising campaign, the Lab Innovation Fund, which already has an established record.

Money raised each year helps fund many of the programs and activities that make CLS special and allow CLS to create a truly innovative learning environment. Gifts to this fund are

unrestricted and are invested according to school priorities. In this fiscal year, Board and staff have identified the following areas for additional support: technology, library, staff development & retention, facility, and after school programming. This year, CLS is on track to raise \$275,000. Since CLS's first year, the CLS community has raised more than \$1.8 million from all sources in the past three years and are honored that more than 75% of CLS's families have supported the school by making a donation. This money has been used to get CLS's building ready, build CLS's amazing playground, attract top-notch staff, enhance CLS's innovative curriculum, advance CLS's personalized learning programs, and undertake many other initiatives that enhance a child's education.

With clear and measurable goals, a strategic and feasible action plan, and the financial support of this grant for a successful launch, CLS is well positioned to have a long-lasting positive impact on its students, the Center City Charlotte community, and the broader educational community.

(e) Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Strategies. CLS's goal is for all parents to have the opportunity to participate in school events and feel part of the greater CLS school community. To achieve this goal, CLS makes sure that parents and families are informed about school news and events by providing information in CLS's weekly eNews email, via social media, and through paper notification sent home in students' Friday folder, as well as on CLS's website that remains current with basic information about CLS's school, a list and description of CLS's Board members, and an "Announcements" section filled with Board meeting dates and minutes.

To engage parents in the life of CLS High School, CLS will begin involving parents very soon after the enrollment process. During the spring prior to a student's first year at the school, the family will be invited to attend an orientation night. This event will set the tone for the school and help families know what to expect and to plan in advance. In later years, CLS will also offer additional programming during the summer.

Prior to the start of school each year, CLS will hold an informal and casual "Setting Up Our Space" event, at which time families are invited to come help the school and teachers set up for the year, including putting together furniture, covering bulletin boards, organizing supplies, etc. This enables parents who might be less comfortable in formal school event settings to get to know the Heads of School, faculty, and each other in a less structured setting, in which all parents are able to contribute at an equal level. Pizza and drinks will be served, creating a welcoming atmosphere for students and families. Once school begins each year, CLS will welcome parents and community members into the school for an Open House and Curriculum Night. These events will give the CLS staff an opportunity to meet the current and future families and other members of the CLS community and provide them with a review of the school mission, policies and procedures, curriculum, and student expectations.

CLS also expects parents to be regularly involved in the school community. Enrollment packets will include an outline of CLS's goals and expectations for them as contributing members of CLS's school community. Some of these expectations include: taking an active role in monitoring their child's academic progress, communicating regularly with teachers, exchanging positive and constructive feedback, providing volunteer service in some capacity to

the school, and seeking out and getting to know their child's friends' parents in order to stay better connected to their child's school and social networks.

In order to build partnerships between families and CLS, the school will provide several opportunities for parents to participate in school governance and parent leadership. They can serve as parent representatives on the School Advisory Council, Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and/or as a class parent or school volunteer. Through these avenues, parents have a voice within the CLS community and their point of view and expertise can be represented. During the school year, CLS will also provide Wellness Programming for parents and families. Highlights from this year's program included guest speaker nights featuring Southeast Psych's discussion of current mental health trends and concerns amongst middle school students and Time Out Youth's discussion on supporting students' understanding of diversity and providing parents ways to discuss diverse families with their kids. CLS views parents as integral partners in achieving CLS's vision and mission and in helping each student to fulfill his/her potential; therefore, CLS truly welcomes these opportunities and more for parents and community members to get involved at CLS.

Community Engagement. As a key piece of CLS's school vision for authentic, real-world learning, CLS has a robust community engagement strategy that is tied to CLS's instructional model. CLS has developed numerous valuable community partnerships, and with the high school seeks to develop new pathways for collaboration ranging from internship opportunities and community service to community members acting as “field experts” and “consultants” for students' project-based learning (Section g).

(f) Transportation Needs. CLS deliberately chose a location in Center City Charlotte for many reasons: to have regular access to the local organizations and cultural institutions in that area; to attract a diverse student body of families who live in close proximity to central Charlotte; and to be within walking distance of public transportation for students who wish to attend CLS from the outer parts of the city. CLS has created multiple options from which parents may choose as the transportation plan for their child.

During CLS's three years of operation, the school has provided all CLS families with a transportation survey in their enrollment packets in order to be aware of and responsive to their transportation needs as well as to ensure that no child is denied access to CLS due to lack of transportation. Based on survey results, CLS has developed the following transportation plan that gives CLS families several options for transportation to school each day:

Carpooling. CLS coordinates a carpooling program for families who live near each other and have indicated that they wish to carpool to and from school together. To facilitate this, CLS uses the addresses of all families who wish to participate in this program to organize central stops for pick-up and drop-off locations. Parents who wish to work out carpooling systems on their own are encouraged to do so.

CATS Transportation. With the development of CLS High School and the further development of CLS Middle School, CLS has explored how to best utilize the Charlotte Authority Transit System (CATS) bus and light rail passes. The lower school campus is on the light rail, making it a good choice for families, and CLS wants to ensure that cost is not a limiting factor for that choice. CLS is exploring the option of offering families a subsidized cost of \$25 per semester for families who have shown an interest in utilizing public transportation and

are in need of financial support. Currently, CATS offers UNCC students an all-access pass for the cost of \$25 per semester, and CLS will work with CATS for a similar program for CLS students. For families qualifying for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch, CLS would provide those passes at no cost to the families.

School Bus. Finally, CLS offers a school bus service provided by a contracted bus company at a subsidized cost. This service has multiple pick-up and drop-off locations in the East, West, and Central Charlotte areas. The bus stops are in community locations, and the route is designed based upon the information received from the CLS transportation surveys. CLS has negotiated a contract with the bus company to provide the service at a fixed cost, but for the school to retain a percentage of the fees to create a "transportation fund" to cover the costs for students who need financial assistance for other transportation options when the bus service doesn't extend to the student's location. All of these options afford students the opportunity to receive free transportation access to CLS's unique and high-quality educational experience.

(g) Support All Students. CLS believes that all students can be successful when they are known, when they are supported, and when they are engaged in learning. CLS's instructional model was designed with the unique developmental needs of children in mind and to support all students in all aspects of their personal, academic, and social development. CLS's model is working; with an engaging curriculum combined with support structures, CLS has established a track record of successfully supporting all students as evidenced by high student retention. The retention rates for the 2015-2016 to 2016-2017 school years and 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 school years were 94% and 89% respectively, with 94% reporting that they will return for the 2018-2019 school year.

CLS's accomplishments in these areas are the result of creating a small, nurturing, relationship-based school environment with an instructional program that inspires and motivates students through authentic, challenging, and engaging coursework, while simultaneously providing critical emotional and academic guidance for whole child development. Each element of the CLS instructional model has been driven by the CLS vision and developed with the unique needs of adolescents in mind in order to promote student success and wellness. They include the following: Intentional diversity, College Readiness, Career Readiness, Global Readiness, Community involvement, and Student Wellness. These elements will allow the high school to meet system and accountability requirements, to support students' developmental needs, to prepare students to get into and be successful in post-secondary endeavors, to provide them with an important foundation for career achievement, and to set them up with habits for lifelong personal wellness.

Intentional Diversity. CLS saw the need to ensure that it is serving a percentage of EDS students that represents the Charlotte average, so it requested and received an enrollment waiver from the SBE (Appendix I, CLS Weighted Lottery Approval Letter). CLS's desire to increase the diversity of its student body is two-fold: 1) CLS believes that public charter schools should reflect the communities in which they are located; and 2) CLS believes that integrated schools enrich the experiences and learning of ALL students and better prepare all students for a diverse world and workplace. Intentional diversity in student recruitment and admissions is only one part of CLS's goal; CLS also seeks to create and sustain an environment and school community that is equitable and inclusive and that honors, celebrates, and embraces diversity. There are several specific programs that will support CLS's efforts:

Personalized Learning. CLS recognizes that diversity comes in all forms and needs to be honored first and foremost in our recognition that students will learn in different ways and at different paces. Additionally, students will be coming to CLS High School from diverse elementary and middle school experiences. While the CLS curriculum is aligned to North Carolina Common Core Standards, and the content/skills tested on the SAT, the school has also identified a set of additional criteria required for graduation – based on 21st century skills, college/career readiness, and metacognitive skills. Because of this large number of “standards” in which students must demonstrate mastery and CLS’s belief that mastery of these standards will be non-linear and unique for each student, the school will work to develop a Personalized Learning Platform through which student progress through these various standards and learning objectives can be monitored.

On this Personalized Learning Platform, and through the CLS advisory program, students will develop Personal Learning Plans (PLPs) which will help drive their schedules, their academic goals, and various learning strategies. These PLPs will be revisited during each conference and will be used for reflection and goal-setting in order to personalize the experience of, and provide the required support for, each student. This tool will enable CLS to help each student continue to progress, regardless of the various experiences and strengths with which they entered the school. The tool also ensures that, while students may master requirements at different times and in different ways, all students are held to the same high standards and expectations. Additionally, students, teachers, families, and advisors know at all times where students are, what each student is working on, and how each student’s needs must be met. Finally, this tracking process lets the school know exactly which courses students should be

taking that will enable them to develop mastery in the areas needed; this ensures that CLS does not provide a one-size-fits-all experience.

Individualized Student Scheduling. The CLS High School model will also utilize individualized scheduling to make the school experience more personalized and individualized. CLS does not believe that one path to graduation fits all, nor that this one path can work for a diverse student body, with varying school backgrounds. CLS believes that not only should there be multiple paths, but that students' experiences of these paths must also be individualized. In order to progress through requirements, prepare for college, and focus on their individual goals, students need to be able to take the courses they need, when they need them,. CLS also believes that students should have choice in the courses they take, and that students will be more motivated and successful when taking courses they're interested in. In order to fulfill these goals of a more personalized high school experience, CLS will engage in a complex process of scheduling students.

Each spring, administrators will determine which types of courses to offer for the following year based on students' credit and requirement needs; this involves reviewing student transcripts and knowing graduation and college requirements well. The faculty will then participate in a brainstorming session in which course ideas are shared and then checked to ensure feasibility and student interest. Students will then complete a survey to help determine the offerings of greatest interest. While this process will occur annually, the scheduling of individual students will actually occur each term, in order to constantly provide varying levels of differentiation based on student readiness and course demand. The scheduling process is detailed

and arduous, but it is the structure that is most fundamental to CLS being truly student-centered and personalized.

Passion Projects. CLS believes that students in high school must begin to gain practical experiences learning independently and developing expertise. CLS also understands that adolescents are more motivated as students when given the opportunity to explore topics of interest and that college applications are strengthened when a student demonstrates accomplishment in a particular area of passion. Additionally, by providing students with the opportunity to learn independently, in a self-directed manner for a sustained period, CLS feels that students will be developing the kind of skills needed for success in college and career. These assumptions underlie the CLS's Passion Project program, in which students select an area of interest and study it more deeply as juniors and seniors.

The Passion Project program includes several requirements designed to provide students with the opportunity to learn something well. Students will first be required to take a sequence of courses designed to provide the fundamentals of their chosen field of passion, an opportunity to think, read, and write more critically about their chosen field, and to develop an understanding of what it really means to be an expert in that field. Students will then complete higher level coursework related to the Passion Project, ideally including at least one Advanced Placement or college or community college course, sometimes offered through online programs or distance learning. Students are also required to gain hands-on experience with their passion alongside professionals in a related field, through internships. Additionally, students have the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise by sharing it with others through Teaching Assistant-ships at CLS or other appropriate settings. Finally, students complete a Senior Project, through which they will

demonstrate their specific area of expertise with a project of their own design. This process furthers CLS's goals of providing choice and empowering students to take charge of their own high school experience.

College Readiness. Supporting all students means developing curriculum that is academically rigorous and highly engaging and motivating for students. Creating opportunities for choice and pacing in how students meet core class and content requirements will form an academic foundation that capitalizes on students' strengths, ignites their passions, and re-establishes a love for learning, thereby fostering greater student ownership of learning, meaningful relationships with faculty, and obvious connections between their learning in high school and their future academic careers.

Core Experiences and Distribution Requirements. CLS requires students to complete various Core Experiences, designed to provide students with the academic skills and experiences necessary for high school graduation, postsecondary admissions and success. Courses such as literature seminars, writing workshops, and scientific thinking and laboratory experiences teach students important work habits, habits of mind, and communication skills that will be required of students in their academic careers. Particular emphasis is placed on preparation for NC state End-of-Course exams, the SATs, and other college entrance exams, as well as ensuring that students have college-level experiences with reading, writing, research, and classroom discourse.

Mathematics at CLS will also be offered as a Core Experience. Required all four years, the mathematics programmed is designed to provide each student with the content and pacing needed at each stage of their learning. At the beginning of each term, students will be assessed; their course placement for the following term is determined by their readiness to move forward.

The mathematics curriculum simultaneously prepares students for required State testing and the SATs, while also ensuring, through mini real-world projects, that students understand the concepts deeply. During the junior and senior years, students who have completed required testing have the option to participate in applied math courses, designed to provide them with real-world practice of concepts such as statistics and finance. Students will also be able to pursue advanced mathematics topics through math Quests, as well as Advanced Placement math courses.

Additionally, a variety of less traditional course choices are offered as options through which students can meet State credit requirements in different subject areas. These distribution requirements can be met through courses such as “Freakonomics,” astronomy, personal finance, “Facing History and Ourselves,” and social movements. This variety of course offerings supports CLS’s mission to provide students with choice and varied opportunities to find meaningful connections with learning in all subject areas.

Online Learning. While the leaders of CLS firmly believe that online learning will never replace the power of a teacher and classroom setting for the development of collaborative learning skills and social experience, learning online is – and will continue to be – a reality for the world in which students are growing up. Learning to make sense of online texts and resources is a critical skill for students’ academic success as well as their ability to be literate citizens of the 21st century workplace and global community.

CLS will use a combination of self-developed online experiences as well as offering access to accredited online courses. Online learning provides three solutions to common school challenges: to provide a more individualized, self-paced way for students to learn lower level

content in preparation for required exams; to broaden the curricular options available for students; and to offer students opportunities to study independently and to move at an advanced pace or to recover missed credit.

CLS's courses will be hosted in Google Classroom, using a combination of purchased content and teacher-created questions and activities, to teach students foundational content and vocabulary required to pass required NC State exams. Using an online format enables students to move at the pace most appropriate for them, allows students to prepare for tests in a more individualized way by focusing on the material they haven't yet mastered, and gives teachers direct, immediate, and specific feedback on where each student struggles. Other online course providers, such as K-12, Edgenuity, Khan Academy, Connections Academy, and open courses available through MIT, Stanford, Yale, and many other reputable universities will help CLS to expand its course offerings and provide students with more choice. For small schools, limited both in funds and personnel, online courses will provide CLS students with the opportunity to take courses offered at other schools, AP classes, and college coursework through these online and distance learning programs.

Career Readiness: Fundamental to a person's success in the 21st century world and workforce will be the ability to learn and develop expertise in new concepts, tools, or career fields. This ability to understand how best one learns, and to seek the appropriate tools in which to learn, is part of the explicit metacognitive skill development that the CLS provides through the Quest program and CLS's focus on Tony Wagner's Seven Survival Skills.

Challenge Based Learning Quests. Quests are CLS's unique, intensive, interdisciplinary courses developed around real-world challenges, designed to develop students' understanding of

big ideas and broad global concepts, and their development and application of 21st century skills. Quests are developed with real work and real world challenges in mind; whenever possible, this work actually derives from the needs of real clients, who might come to CLS with a real challenge or task for students to complete. Solving this challenge, or completing this job, then becomes the driving force and curriculum of the Quest. Both the content and skills students learn each day contribute to their understanding of the task or challenge, provide content-related context, and enable them to complete the challenge well, at a high level of quality, as professionals would.

Quests are designed using a backward planning process (informed by the Understanding By Design model developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe), with teachers first identifying topics of interest related to required standards. Teachers then work together to brainstorm ideas and take each course idea through a checklist to ensure feasibility, rigor, and student interest. Once a course is selected, the teacher responsible for planning the course contacts potential clients or experts to support the students' work, defines what the final product looks like, and identifies the criteria for one that is well-done. With this final product and how it will be assessed in mind, the teacher plans the students' experience, incorporating content and 21st century skills into lessons and activities, connecting each day's focus with the broader purpose and daily work of the Quest.

Quests also provide students and teachers with the opportunity to interact with experts from the field. Whether acting as the client, project consultant or evaluator, professionals provide the content expertise to help teachers and students better understand the problem and develop more promising solutions. These experts are typically found through faculty and family

connections. At CLS, experts are expected to include authors, scientists, local entrepreneurs, and college professors. Through Quests, students have the opportunity to work alongside experts to do real work for an audience outside the school that will make a difference to an organization or community, and that teaches them important skills and understandings in a more meaningful way.

Survival Skills. In addition to academic standards informed by Common Core Standards and the NC Standard Course of Study for academic subjects, CLS strives to instill in all students the skills that will prepare them to be successful in 21st century careers. Based on the research of Tony Wagner, CLS adopted these Seven Survival Skills in addition to design thinking, as the curriculum for career preparation: 1) critical thinking and problem solving; 2) collaboration across networks and leading by influence; 3) agility and adaptability; 4) initiative and entrepreneurship; 5) effective oral and written communication; 6) accessing and analyzing information; and 7) curiosity and imagination. Through Quest classes and the Passion Project program, students at CLS will have regular opportunities to gain practical experience developing these skills, and will receive feedback on their development of these skills, ensuring that students are well-prepared for success in the modern workplace.

Global Readiness: To further prepare its graduates for success, CLS will require students to learn a second language and offers Spanish (the fastest growing language in the United States), German (the fastest growing international industry in the greater Charlotte area), and Mandarin Chinese (the fastest growing language in the world) as a daily core experience. CLS believes that learning a second language has many benefits, including increasing students' global awareness, improving their cultural competencies, raising their overall academic

achievement, and providing them with a competitive advantage in college admissions and job placement (New York Times and AMP Global Youth Network). It is the expectation of CLS that, upon graduation, students will be conversationally fluent, demonstrate basic literacy in the second language, and develop their intercultural competencies. CLS will use the Avant STAMP assessment to monitor students' progress in their second language learning and has developed an "Intercultural Competency Framework" to inform curriculum, student cultural experiences, and to track students' progress in cultural competency development. This dual emphasis on language and culture supports CLS's vision of creating a school community that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive, and providing learning experiences and an environment that will truly prepare students for success in a global workplace.

Community Involvement. Traditionally "lab" schools are formally partnered with institutions of higher learning to serve as a training site for teachers and for the purpose of educational experimentation and research. CLS, however, was conceived as a "lab school" for the City of Charlotte to become a school with which the community could experiment with partnerships and collaboration, and that could serve as a training site for the entire Charlotte education community. Being a lab school makes CLS students' educational experience a unique one and provides an opportunity to extend learning outside the school walls; students and teachers learn collaboratively with each other and community partners, creating contextual experiences. With its Center City location, CLS is accessible to the rich cultural resources of the metro-area to expand and enhance learning opportunities. In lower and middle school, the Community-as-Classroom approach gives regular access to local organizations, namely Discovery Place children's science museum, Imaginon children's library, Children's Theater of

Charlotte, Charlotte Ballet, Community School of the Arts, Crescent Communities River District Project, and collaboration with many other local businesses through CLS's Quest program. For example, a third grade teacher has capitalized on community partnerships with Pop-Up Produce and 7th Street Market to develop a Quest in which students manage the school garden and then have the opportunity to sell their produce at 7th Street Market. This ensures CLS students a more hands-on, inquiry-based learning experience with authentic outcomes.

In high school, CLS will expand the Community-as-Classroom approach to establish a Field Experience Program, which will provide students with the opportunity to complete off-site internships. Through the Field Experience Program, students will learn skills and gain experiences that will prepare them for the future, as well as motivate and show them connections between the real world and the school work they're doing each day. The structure of the program, which will begin placing students in the 9th grade, is designed to serve three primary purposes: 1) Service: Build students' sense of citizenry and community by exposing them to the work of and need for community-based service organizations; 2) Exposure: Provide opportunities for students to experience the 21st century workplace and to learn about various career options and possibilities; and 3) Expertise: To give students opportunities to develop their passions and to become "experts" in a particular field, by exploring and working within it for an extended period or on an intensive project.

In order to prepare students to be successful interns, they will complete a seminar course, in which they develop resumes, practice interview skills, learn workplace etiquette, and strengthen their communication skills. Once students are placed in internships, they will complete regular reflection statements and participate in check-in sessions with their advisors.

Successful completion of the program each year requires a final reflection and site evaluation by the student, as well as a positive final evaluation for the student completed by the site supervisor.

The presence of community members - whether they serve as guest speakers, project partners, evaluators, mentors, or internship supervisors - in the CLS model will provide invaluable exposure, opportunities, and inspiration for students, and will demonstrate to the Charlotte community the powerfully critical role it can play in changing life outcomes for youth.

Student Wellness. Finally, CLS believes that success in high school, post-secondary opportunities, and careers is dependent on healthy social-emotional development. CLS supports whole child development through student wellness practices that are relationship-based, proactive, and compassionate, ensuring that all students are positioned for success in academics and life. Specifically, CLS implements a comprehensive advisory program, regular instruction in and practice of health and wellness activities, and a discipline policy grounded in restorative practices. CLS's advisory curriculum is informed by the work of Angela Duckworth's (UPenn) research-based CLS program, in addition to mindfulness practices adopted from the Hawn Foundation's MindUp Program, which incorporates brain-based research in lessons and activities designed to help students better understand themselves, their behaviors and actions, and to provide strategies for managing stress, making wise decisions, responding to challenges, and handling conflict.

In keeping with CLS's vision to create authentic learning opportunities that lead to life-long practices, CLS's approach to student wellness also informs CLS's physical education and health programs. In lieu of traditional PE classes that often marginalize many students, CLS students have choices in how they meet their PE requirements, including options such as

Taekwondo, yoga, dance, sports skills, and personal fitness. CLS's goal through these programs is to help all students find fitness activities that they enjoy and that provide both physical and mental health benefits. By providing such options, students at CLS are able to find personally meaningful and effective outlets for stress and energy that ultimately enable them to be more focused students, to reduce stress, and to make better decisions about their actions and behaviors.

Advisory. Based on the belief that adolescents perform better in school and transition more smoothly to adulthood when they feel known and supported, the high school will extend the advisory program of the CLS model. This component of the model, in which groups of 10-12 students are partnered with a faculty advisor, is critical in providing each student with a supportive and individualized high school experience. Through multiple meetings each week, advisors will lead group-building activities, facilitate school-wide initiatives and developmentally appropriate activities, and provide one-on-one guidance to advisees.

The advisory culture will be supported through advisory-based orientation activities each fall, a dedicated and “sacred” time in the schedule when only advisory activities are happening, and through leader modeling, every adult in the school serves as an advisor. Advisors are supported with curriculum materials focused around unit themes, regular reflection and planning sessions, and a “lead advisor” to go to for support and ideas. Advisories, ideally, remain together throughout their four years of high school so that they build a strong and consistent support network, and so that advisors get to know their advisees and families well. When a student feels he/she is not a good fit for an advisor, a change request can be made.

Advisors will meet with advisees’ families during conference weeks, serve as the primary liaison between the school and home, and will be held accountable for meeting the needs of their

advisees. One primary role of advisory is to develop students' metacognitive skills, achieved in-part through CLS's student-led conference process. Through these conferences, students begin to take responsibility for their academics, understand that grades are *earned*, and become empowered to achieve goals through self-advocacy and student agency. The process also helps students to better understand themselves as learners, to identify patterns and habits associated with success and struggle, and to develop and adopt strategies for future success. Ultimately, the process empowers students to be in control of their own progress and goal attainment, and to advocate for themselves as learners.

Advisors will play an important role in helping students to track their academic progress, develop appropriate goals, and make necessary adjustments to their work habits and course selection to ensure success along the way. Most importantly, however, the advisory program provides students with an in-school mentor and advocate and a small, family-like group that will support them through the various challenges of high school and adolescence.

Restorative Practices and Discipline Procedures. In keeping with the belief that students must be agents of their own learning and future, CLS utilizes a restorative approach to discipline, with the goal for students to own mistakes, accept responsibilities, and take actions to "make things right." Restorative practices promote inclusiveness, relationship-building, and problem-solving through methods such as "circles" for teaching conflict resolution, which involves bringing together victims, offenders, and their supporters in conferences to address wrongdoing. Instead of punishment and negative consequences, students are encouraged to reflect on and take responsibility for their actions, and come up with plans to repair harm. Case studies and evaluations conducted in schools worldwide indicate that restorative practices

improve relationships among students and teachers, reduce disciplinary problems and build community (International Institute for Restorative Practices). Teachers at CLS undergo intensive training throughout the school year to further develop their restorative practice toolkit.

Aligned with its mission and core values, CLS's approach to student conduct is similarly structured to ensure that it guides students toward appropriate behavior, demonstrates the real-world reward of "doing the right thing," and is age and developmentally appropriate. CLS's goal is for its students to choose to do the right thing at all times, whether an adult or other person is present or not. To achieve this, CLS's entire community views discipline as a learning process, not a system of punishment. CLS invests the time early in students' lives to help them see the benefit of treating others well, caring for common spaces and materials, and respecting themselves and others. As such, CLS utilizes a framework called the Code for Living.

This approach to developing the whole child includes the following themes: Respect, Responsibility, Inclusion, Compassion, Honesty & Integrity. These themes are embedded and integrated into all aspects of the CLS community and culture, from signage throughout the building, to an advisory curriculum and student awards and incentive programs built upon these themes. In addition to being woven into the culture and day-to-day life and activities of the school, CLS believes that the concept of these themes must be explicitly taught. The themes drive the Advisory curriculum, including lessons, discussions, and projects related to each, and they are embedded in CLS's approach to student discipline.

While CLS understands the importance of developing the whole child and recognizes the value of solid character development for students' long-term success, CLS also executes a Code of Conduct to ensure that CLS's students are abiding by these themes and not disrupting the

learning process of others. CLS teachers spends the first six weeks of every school year reviewing these school rules, positively reinforcing them in all situations throughout the school year, and rewarding them when applicable.

Finally, as part of the CLS mission to provide a nurturing and developmentally sensitive environment enriched with authentic experiences and personalized learning, CLS's expectation is that students will be thoroughly engaged in learning, which will result in limited discipline issues. Teachers are supported in the creation of student-centered and engaging activities that are differentiated for each student's individual needs so that students are learning interesting material at a level that is "just right" for them. Teachers are trained to implement elements of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Responsive Classroom programs so that students are incentivized by their positive behavior rather than just punished for their negative actions. As often as possible, students are redirected and reengaged into their learning activities so that the enforcement of the discipline policy can be avoided. However, when necessary, CLS teachers follow the protocol outlined in the CLS Student Handbook for handling matters of misconduct. All of this contributes to creating a classroom and school environment where CLS's innovative instructional program will be most effective.

CLS's comprehensive vision for high school - which emphasizes diversity, college readiness, career readiness, global readiness, community involvement, and student wellness - considers the full spectrum of adolescent experiences and needs, creating a model that will engage students, keep them motivated to complete high school and pursue their life passions, and feel well supported throughout the process.

(h) Budget and Operations Autonomy. CLS's bylaws explicitly delineate the authority of CLS and how it is relegated to the Board of Directors and to the Executive Director (Appendix I, CLS Bylaws). The clear description of the governance duties of the CLS Board clarifies that the responsibilities of the Executive Director includes the entire operation of the school in accordance with the policies set by the Board and all regulatory and legal requirements by which all public schools must abide. The Executive Director works in collaboration with the CLS Board in determining policy changes and programming needs. Each spring the Executive Director develops a plan, goals, and budget for the coming year; this plan and budget is approved by the Board and submitted to the State Department of the Public Instruction. At each monthly board meeting, the Executive Director provides a report on progress towards the plan and budget updates and can proposed budget amendments as needed. The CLS Board places tremendous confidence in its Executive Director to lead and provide daily management of the school and its resources and views the Board's role as one of governance, fiduciary responsibility, and oversight.

Hiring and firing are two of the most important duties of the Executive Director and the administrative team. Although the hiring and dismissal of all CLS employees (other than the Executive Director) is ultimately the responsibility of the Executive Director, the Board provides final approval on all personnel decisions. Because CLS's success is due to its high-quality team, CLS has designed and followed a collaborative and rigorous process to ensure that each potential staff member is a great fit for the school and community. Once a candidate advances through the process, at least two professional references are reviewed and he/she undergoes a criminal

background check and a review of citizenship or eligible status. Pending the results, the Executive Director will seek Board approval for hiring.

On the rare occasion, there are actions that could lead to an employee's dismissal. A violation of any CLS employee policy pursuant to the CLS Staff Handbook is grounds for an immediate dismissal. In addition, staff can be dismissed for unsatisfactory job performance; in that case, the Executive Director will make every effort to resolve the issues prior to dismissal, but if she is unable to do so, the employee will receive two (2) weeks notice.

(i) Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention Policies and Procedures. As defined in Article IX, Section 2, of the North Carolina Constitution and Part 6A of Article 16 of Chapter 115C of the North Carolina General Statute, CLS is a public school and shall be accessible to all North Carolina students eligible to attend public schools under G.S. 115C-366. After the first two years of operation, CLS recognized the need for additional controls to ensure that it is serving a percentage of economically disadvantaged students (EDS) students that represents the Charlotte average, so it requested and received an enrollment waiver from the SBE (Appendix I, CLS Weighted Lottery Approval Letter).

This waiver was granted in the third year of operation (at the time, CLS was one of only 2 schools in NC with this waiver to give priority admission to EDS students). CLS set a goal to reach a population of 40% EDS in order to match the demographics of the community and school district in which it is located. Through targeted outreach, CLS reached its year 1 goal of increasing enrollment of EDS students from 17% of the total student population to 25% of the total student population. CLS is positioned to increase the school's EDS population to 30% in the

2018-2019 school year and to reach the ultimate goal of 40% within the next two years. CLS High School would open its first year freshman class with a population of 40% EDS.

As demonstrated, CLS is committed to serving a diverse student body. Therefore, CLS continues to work toward a student population that is reflective of Mecklenburg County, the county in which the school exists. According to the 2016 American Community Survey, the demographic make-up of the county is 42% White, 35% African American, 14% Hispanic, 6% Asian, and 3% Other. This differs slightly from that of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), CLS's Local Education Agency (LEA), which is 28% White, 38% African American, 24% Hispanic, 6% Asian, and 4% Other. In addition to these efforts, due to CLS's emphasis on foreign language instruction, CLS will seek to increase the Spanish- and Chinese-speaking populations with the goal of developing bilingual graduates.

Marketing/Enrollment Plan. CLS's goal is to have a student population that is reflective of Charlotte's diversity. With an Uptown location, a 15-mile radius has provided a diverse pool to which we have marketed the school. Strategically recruiting students from all seven learning communities has given CLS a ready-made strategy for creating a school with the diversity that reflects that of Charlotte.

Marketing materials are available in both English and Spanish, and open houses and information sessions are held in both languages. CLS hosts special Saturday open houses with childcare to help make it easier for all families to attend.

Timeline for CLS High School Marketing Plan

Winter-Spring 2019

- Notify friends, contacts, and colleagues of the completion of the enrollment application and continue with informal promotion of CLS mission and vision.
- Post application update on website, update language, add details of instructional programs, and respond to all early inquiries.
- Develop Facebook and Twitter accounts Form and meet with Community Engagement Committee to develop marketing strategy, including an analysis of demographic and audience, and timeline that integrates CMS magnet application schedule.
- Work with branding expert and graphic designers to create logo, branding strategy, and templates.
- Design and print CLS flyers and brochures.
- Begin initial outreach to daycare centers, churches, and preschools, by meeting with program/community leaders; determine which sites are likely to encourage application to CLS; distribute fliers and set dates for information sessions for fall 2020.
- Pursue media opportunities in local radio, TV, and newspapers.
- Develop additional marketing materials for target groups.
- Identify speaking and networking opportunities for Head of School and local education conferences and events to attend.

Summer-Fall 2019

- Continue to keep website and social media accounts updated.
- Issue a press release to relevant media outlets; run ads on multicultural radio stations, in local newspapers and magazines, in English and Spanish.
- Print and distribute flyers, brochures, application guidelines to summer programs and camps, high-traffic family areas, at local fall events, open houses, information sessions, and all events attended by CLS administrators and Board members.
- Work with charter organizations and other charter schools to plan common student recruitment events for the fall season.
- Identify neighborhoods that have demonstrated weaker interest and develop plans for second round of media coverage, flyer distribution, new targets for open houses.

Winter-Spring 2020

- Continue to keep website and social media accounts updated.
- Continue to host monthly open houses and provide information sessions to feeder schools/programs.
- Develop targeted third-round plans for programs and neighborhoods where little interest has been shown; problem solve with Committee and work connections as necessary.
- Conduct additional media blitzes focusing on areas of less interest and fewer applications.
- Secure interviews in 2-3 media outlets to continue to generate buzz.

Summer 2020

- Promote and hold a "ribbon-cutting" event when space/building opens.
- Conduct the summer "bridge" program that is a HS summer orientation program for students coming into CLS High School below grade level in reading or math with the goal of increasing student readiness for the upcoming school year and build community early on for students new to CLS.
- Teachers will meet to develop mission-specific instructional plans and delivery methods for CLS with a focus on building college and career readiness.
- Hold a "Day in the Life" event to showcase CLS teaching and learning practices; include opportunities for each CLS partner organization to promote their own programs.
- Order CLS apparel, stickers, and other marketing items.

Fall 2020: Students receive CLS founding class t-shirts at Orientation program CLS opens.

(j) Ensuring FAPE to Eligible Children. CLS offers an educational program that ensures a full continuum of services for all students. For students with disabilities (SWD), this means that they receive a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) through the inclusion model, co-teaching, and ongoing differentiated instruction. In the 2016-2017 audit of CLS's students with disabilities program (Appendix I), the state of North Carolina rated the school compliant with IDEA and commended the CLS staff for ensuring that received referrals were processed in a timely manner.

CLS believes, and is supported by research, that the inclusion model works best for most SWD. CLS employs a co-teaching model in which special education teachers plan alongside classroom teachers and push into classrooms to provide additional one-to-one or group support to SWD. As a result, those students are part of an educational setting that provides the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) in which they experience the lesson firsthand with their classroom teacher and receive supplemental instruction from a special education-trained teacher. They also have the benefit of observing their classmates problem-solve through their work and set personal goals for themselves. This example enriches the classroom community and allows all students to learn from and respect one another. While CLS believes in the inclusion model, it is understood and acknowledged that there is no "one size fits all" solution to meeting the needs of SWDs; therefore, when a setting other than the inclusion setting is noted on a student's IEP, that alternative setting is provided.

At CLS, SWD receive differentiated instruction throughout the day and particularly during student support time and advisory. During reading instruction, teachers conduct running records to determine their independent and instructional reading levels and work with them in

homogeneous guided reading and strategy groups. During writing, classroom and special education teachers individually confer with students to determine the next steps for their writing. With CLS's math program, students spend significant time working at their own pace, on the skills that they need to work on, and are supported by classroom teachers, assistant teachers, and SWD teacher when issues with particular challenges arise. This model is student centered and allows the SWD students to challenge themselves and truly push themselves to their academic potential, never to be limited by their placement or the level of other students in their classroom.

Throughout this core instruction, classroom and SWD teachers are cognizant of the SWD students' IEPs and are modifying instruction and work when applicable to ensure that they are in compliance with the IEP goals and plans. Quarterly parent-teacher conferences are scheduled between the parents, teachers, and advisors to make certain that all stakeholders share the same ideas about the SWD students' achievement and progress. Other staff members who work with the SWD students are also informed of the IEP goals and will work with the students at the appropriate levels in their subject areas.

When it comes to a parent or teachers' attention that an SWD student may need related services, an IEP meeting will be scheduled, and the team will convene. The adult who made the referral brings documentation of the need to the meeting and the team discusses the options that are available at the school. If the services are available at CLS, the student receives the related services on-site on a part or full-time basis, depending on the need. If the services are not available, CLS contracts with personnel from the Local Education Agency or another charter school to obtain the services for the child.

CLS believes that all students deserve a sound instructional program, and through these

SWD services and the inclusion model, students with disabilities are well supported at CLS, achieving academic outcomes and outperforming their peers in the local school district.

(k) Embodying the Definition of a Charter School. CLSs Charter from the North Carolina State Board of Education (Appendix E, Charlotte Lab’s Notice from the Authorizer) states the autonomy and flexibility granted to the charter school which in all ways is consistent with the definition of a charter school: CLS shall at all times be operated by the Board of Directors in accordance with G.S. 115C-218-et seq and all other applicable laws and regulations. CLS’s Board of Directors shall adopt and ensure compliance with a conflict of interest policy.

CLS received nonprofit 501c3 designation in 2014, recognizing CLS as an independent operator responsible for the employment, management, dismissal, and discipline of its employees (Appendix D, CLS Proof of Non-Profit Status). In addition, CLS shall ensure that it complies with the Federal and State Constitutions, all applicable federal laws and regulations, all applicable health and safety laws and regulations, whether federal, state, or local.

(l) Single-Sex Educational Program. N/A CLS is not proposing a single-sex educational program.

(m) Waivers. N/A CLS is not requesting nor is justifying any waivers of Federal statutory or regulatory requirements.

(n) Logic Model

Problem Statement: The K-12 public school offerings in Mecklenburg County do not include a center city-located program that extends classroom learning into the spaces of diverse partner organizations through which children become inspired by personalized learning and experiences, and mentored and nurtured by skilled and compassionate adults and a support system that will prepare them for success in college and a global workplace.

Resources	Needs	Activities	Outputs	Outcome (Results)		Impact	
Elements needed to implement the program	Needs and the evidence of needs for services	Key activities/services to address the need(s)	Data/service stats: numbers, products, or services	Short-Term Benefits to Target Population (1-2.5 years)	Mid-Term Benefits to Target Population (2.5-5 years)	Long-term benefit to community, system, organizations (6-10 years)	
Marketing Team Students	Local school district is mostly segregated Charlotte is ranked 50/50 states for economic mobility	Intentional Diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment & Marketing Strategy Continue Weighted Lottery Summer "Bridge Program" Personalized Learning Platform Passion Project Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enrollment rate Diversity rate Participation rate in "Bridge Program" Participation rate in Passion Project Program 	Student population that is reflective of the racial demographics of the City of Charlotte and that is 40% economically disadvantaged students.	85% of CLS High School students, parents, and teachers will report that the school and community feel equitable and inclusive on an annual survey of school culture/climate.	Economic mobility	
Head of School & Admin Team Curriculum Developer Community Partnerships Internship Coordinator	Inequitable access of economically disadvantaged students to authentic learning experiences	College Readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual/Concurrent Enrollment Core Experiences & Distribution Requirements Online Classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily attendance rate College Attendance & Graduation rate EOC/AP pass rates (and number of AP offerings) 	85% of students will be on-track with credit accumulation by the end of their sophomore year. CLS High School will graduate	85% of students within four years and 95% of students within five years. 95% of CLS High School will enroll in post-secondary education within 18 months after graduation from CLS High School.	Being an example of a positive, integrated school Success/wellness of graduates.	
	Importance of 21st Century Skills	Career Readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field Experience Program Challenge-Based Learning Quests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job Placement Job Readiness 	95% of CLS High School students will score as "career-ready" on varied assessments, including NC State End-of-Course exams, internship supervisor feedback surveys, career inventories, and on grades in CLS High School career-focused courses.		Serve as a catalyst for innovation in other Charlotte area schools, by hosting National speakers, planning events, teacher-led professional development, partner events (hack-a-thons, educator wellness, etc.)	
	Limited programs in the area Key languages for future business world	Global Readiness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit staff to teach Spanish, Mandarin Chinese & German Develop World Language Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STAMP test for foreign language and EL students Intercultural Competency Framework 	100% of students will demonstrate progress in the Intercultural Competency Framework, as indicated through class assignments, extracurricular activities, service and internship opportunities, or independent studies.	By senior year, 85% of students studying Spanish will score Level 5 on the STAMP foreign language assessment and 85% of students studying German or Mandarin will score Level 4 on the STAMP foreign language assessment.		
	Importance of social-emotional learning & metacognitive skills Need for small schools	Student Wellness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advisory Program with emphasis on social-emotional development Restorative Practices-Based Discipline Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MESH survey Student and Faculty Wellness Surveys 	Each year, CLS will score an overall average of 4 out of 5 on the Mindsets Essential Skills & Habits Assessment survey of student skills and school culture (Panorama Education) to demonstrate a culture of positive student wellness.			Showing what's possible for community engagement
Building in Center City	Fit into city's 2020 Vision Plan Currently no high schools in Center City Be located close to business world.	Community Involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Location in Center City Community as Extended Family Create Internship Opps. Cultivate Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from Internship Site Supervisors and Partner Organizations 	CLS programming/ opportunities reach over 1000 Charlotte-area community members, with 85% reporting that the programming was "effective," "inspiring," and "applicable to their life/work."			

Assumptions: CLS assumes that students who participate in our high school program will perform with higher academic and interpersonal proficiency and will be better prepared for success in higher education and careers because of the innovative, whole-child approach at CLS and the exposure to and use of Center City opportunities, which will be both attractive to and serve the needs of CLS's students and the aspirations of their parents.

(o) Audited Financial Statements. CLS’s most recent independently audited financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles are included in the appendices (Appendix F, CLS 2016-2017 Audit). Within this document, the auditor states: “In our opinion, the Charlotte Lab School, Inc. complied, in all material respects, with the types of compliance requirements referred to that could have a direct and material effect on its major State program for the year ended June 30, 2017.” There weren’t any findings of noncompliance on the summary of weaknesses page (p. 36), nor were there any findings of noncompliance regarding CLS’s financial statements or its State award findings and questioned costs.

Additional Requirements for Applicants for CFDA 84.282E

(1) A Separate School by its authorized public chartering agency and the State. CLS is a separate school authorized by North Carolina’s State Board of Education. As such, CLS is accountable for all reporting under Title I, Part A of the ESEA as found in CLS's Charter issued in July 1, 2015 (Appendix E, Charlotte Lab’s Notice from the Authorizer).

(2) Student Assessment Results. In the table included in Appendix E (North Carolina End of Grade Test Results), CLS has included student assessment results for each subgroup for all students and for each subgroup of students for the first two years of CLS’s operation. Also included is a side-by-side comparison of the assessment results from CLS and those of the Local Education Agency, Charlotte-Mecklenburg School. As the results indicate, CLS is significantly outperforming CLS's local district and state of North Carolina on the state end-of-grade standardized assessments in reading, math, and science. Additionally, CLS is outperforming these comparisons when examining the data for various subgroups. Specifically, CLS performs higher than the local school district with male, female, Asian, two or more races, black, and

white students, and performs significantly higher than the local district with students with disabilities.

There are two subgroup performance data points, for Hispanic and Economically Disadvantaged Students, that indicate needs for improvement. CLS is already implementing several initiatives to address these gaps, including the following:

- Improved professional development for teachers in instructional practices for students living in poverty and English Language Learners;
- Tutoring, small group support, and Learning Lab time to provide remediation;
- The hiring of faculty to specifically work as interventionists to support struggling students;
- Increased instructional time focusing on test preparation and test-taking skills.

While these two subgroups indicate performance challenges on the NC State End-of-Grade tests, both groups have demonstrated growth on the NWEA MAP assessments (Appendix E, CLS EDS/Hispanic Student Growth) and in reading levels, as measured through the Fountas & Pinnell method (Appendix E, Fountas and Pinnell Achievement Data).

In addition to CLS's strong performance results in these standardized measures, student growth has also been measured and documented in students' social-emotional and 21st century skill development. As part of CLS's work as a grantee with NewSchools Venture Fund, CLS students participate twice each year in a Mindsets, Essential Skills & Habits (MESH) Survey that measures student growth in non-cognitive areas and assesses student, faculty and school culture. According to the MESH Results, (Appendix E, MESH Survey Results) CLS outperforms other schools in the national cohort in all areas of the survey, indicating CLS's strong school culture and effective social-emotional learning practices and programs. Finally, students, teachers, and

parents report observing student growth in many 21st century skills, specifically improved collaboration, confidence, public speaking, presentation skills, student agency, self-advocacy, leadership, agility and adaptability, critical thinking, and problem solving. While CLS is working to develop more quantitative measures to track students' mastery of these skills, student growth is evident. Continuing the CLS model through grades 9-12 will enable CLS's students to continue to make progress in academics, social-emotional development, and the skills that will lead them to college and career success.

(3) Attendance and Student Retention Rates. On CLS's School Report Card, the attendance rate for both the 2015-2016 and the 2016-2017 school years was consistent at 95.5%, higher than the State average either year. CLS has also enjoyed high-levels of both Student and Faculty Retention. After CLS's first school year, 2015-2016, CLS had 96% Student Retention and 97% Faculty Retention; after the second year, 2016-2017, CLS had 89% Student Retention and 98% Faculty Retention. The preliminary survey results for the 2018-2019 school appear promising, with 94% of CLS's students indicating that they are returning next year, and faculty intent-to-return surveys in-progress.

(4) Compliance and Management Issues. In the 2016-2017 Performance Framework (PF) (Appendix I), CLS's status for all Operational Annual Monitoring Criteria was deemed "Compliant" with the one exception of A6, Student admissions and lottery requirements. However, in an April 2018 letter from the Director of the Office Of Charter Schools, Mr. Dave Machado (Appendix I), states that CLS has been found to be "substantially compliant with items reported in the PF." Later in the letter, Mr. Machado states, "we have no reason to think the

school will be noncompliant” in the upcoming Performance Framework for the 2017-2018 school year.

Furthermore, in the same PF report (Appendix I, CLS Performance Framework, 2016-2017), CLS’s status was “Met” for all Measures with the exception of D2, the charter school met or exceeded expected growth; D11, Hispanic Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency; D12, American Indian Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency; and D13, Economically Disadvantaged Subgroup Grade Level Proficiency. As stated in Section D of the application, CLS has created new systems to ensure that that the status of each of these measures are Met.

As further evidence of the scrutiny the CLS enrollment policies have undergone, in 2017, CLS sought and was approved for a weighted lottery by North Carolina’s State Board of Education (NC SBE). CLS sought this approval to ensure that CLS’s enrollment processes created an enrollment pool that reflected the diverse population stated in CLS’s charter. The NC SBE reviewed and approved this request to conduct a weighted lottery on January 4-5, 2017 (Appendix I, CLS Weighted Lottery Approval Letter).

In all other areas, including finance, governance, safety, academics, and operations, CLS has consistently been found to be in compliance.

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