



ASCENT
CLASSICAL ACADEMY
OF DOUGLAS COUNTY

Charter Application

Mission

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County trains the minds and improves the hearts of young people through a classical, content-rich education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue in an orderly, disciplined environment.

Vision

By doing this, Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will develop in its students the intellectual and personal habits and skills upon which responsible, independent, and productive lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis of a free and just society.

March 15, 2017



Introduction

The Steering Committee of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County is pleased to present the Douglas County Public Schools this application to establish Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County. Ascent Classical Academy will be a classical, liberal arts and sciences, Core Knowledge K-12 school. We are requesting a 5-year contract to begin in the fall of 2018. It is our intent to open with grades K-10, adding 11th and 12th grades over the subsequent years.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County is closely modeled after Golden View Classical Academy and the other highly successful and nationally recognized program at Ridgeview Classical Schools in Fort Collins, Colorado.

The Steering Committee has visited classical and Core Knowledge schools and observed classrooms and instruction throughout Colorado to see a variety of approaches and philosophies behind content-rich, classical education, governance, and operations. The Ascent Classical Academy Steering Committee and core advisors include Douglas County parents with diverse backgrounds in K-12 education, business finance, charter and option schools, non-profit leaders, and other skillsets.

This application has been prepared in compliance with the Colorado Revised Statutes §22-30.5-101, et. seq, the Colorado Charter School Act. Consistent with the requirements of this Act, Douglas County Public Schools Policy LBD, and the Standard Application, it is our belief this charter school application for Ascent Classical Academy is correct and complete. However, should the Board or staff of Douglas County Public Schools require more details, we will provide the relevant data in a timely fashion.

The community members and parents of young children and students are pleased to offer a proven and high-quality program to the Douglas County community.

Our team looks forward to working with the Douglas County School District throughout the application process.

For questions or additional information, please contact:
Derec Shuler, Steering Committee
Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County
303-900-2297
derec.shuler@ascentclassical.org

| | |
|---|------------|
| A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 1 |
| VISION | 2 |
| MISSION | 2 |
| SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND FEATURES | 2 |
| LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE | 5 |
| B. VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS..... | 7 |
| ASCENT CLASSICAL ACADEMY OF DOUGLAS COUNTY FRAMEWORK..... | 7 |
| VISION | 7 |
| MISSION | 7 |
| PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT | 7 |
| C. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND PUPIL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS..... | 10 |
| ACADEMIC GOALS..... | 10 |
| ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS | 11 |
| ASSESSMENTS AND ALTERNATE EVIDENCE..... | 12 |
| D. EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT | 13 |
| TARGET POPULATION | 13 |
| PARENT SUPPORT FOR ASCENT CLASSICAL ACADEMY OF DOUGLAS COUNTY | 14 |
| COMMUNITY SUPPORT | 16 |
| OUTREACH | 17 |
| E. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND STANDARDS | 19 |
| 1. EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE | 19 |
| 2. CURRICULUM | 22 |
| 3. INSTRUCTION | 48 |
| 4. SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMS, SPECIALS OR ELECTIVES | 59 |
| 5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | 60 |
| 6. ANNUAL CALENDAR & DAILY SCHEDULE | 66 |
| F. PLAN FOR EVALUATING PUPIL PERFORMANCE..... | 73 |
| 1. ASSESSMENTS | 73 |
| 2. DATA MANAGEMENT AND DATA SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS..... | 75 |
| 3. PERFORMANCE STANDARDS..... | 77 |
| G. BUDGET AND FINANCE..... | 80 |
| 1. BUDGET NARRATIVE..... | 80 |
| 2. 5 YEAR BUDGET..... | 82 |
| 3. SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES..... | 82 |
| H. GOVERNANCE | 86 |
| 1. GOVERNING BOARD | 86 |
| 2. LEGAL STATUS AND GOVERNING DOCUMENTS | 92 |
| 3. OVERSIGHT OF OPERATIONS | 97 |
| I. EMPLOYEES | 110 |

| | | |
|-----------|---|------------|
| 1. | RECRUITING AND HIRING..... | 110 |
| 2. | MANAGEMENT AND EVALUATION..... | 114 |
| 3. | SCHOOL STRUCTURE, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES | 115 |
| J. | INSURANCE COVERAGE..... | 118 |
| K. | PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT..... | 120 |
| | PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT..... | 120 |
| | COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT | 121 |
| L. | ENROLLMENT POLICY AND OUTREACH | 123 |
| | FIRST ENROLLMENT ROUND | 123 |
| | SECOND ROUND ENROLLMENT..... | 125 |
| | ENROLLMENT DEADLINE | 126 |
| | RE-ENROLLMENT FOR CURRENT STUDENTS | 126 |
| | COMPLETE REGISTRATION PROCESS | 127 |
| M. | TRANSPORTATION AND FOOD SERVICE..... | 128 |
| | TRANSPORTATION..... | 128 |
| | FOOD SERVICE..... | 128 |
| N. | FACILITIES | 129 |
| | LAND AND FACILITIES PLAN | 129 |
| | FACILITY DESCRIPTION | 129 |
| | CONSTRUCTION PROCESS..... | 130 |
| | OBTAINING A CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY | 130 |
| | LEASE ARRANGEMENT | 130 |
| | CONTINGENCY PLAN..... | 132 |
| | ACA REAL ESTATE AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM | 132 |
| O. | WAIVERS..... | 133 |
| | REQUESTED AUTOMATIC STATE STATUTE WAIVERS | 133 |
| | ADDITIONAL STATE WAIVERS..... | 134 |
| | REQUESTED DISTRICT WAIVERS..... | 142 |
| P. | STUDENT DISCIPLINE, EXPULSION, AND SUSPENSION | 144 |
| | DISCIPLINE AT ASCENT CLASSICAL ACADEMY..... | 144 |
| | POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS (PBIS) | 145 |
| | COMPONENTS OF A SCHOOL-WIDE PBIS SYSTEM | 146 |
| | CURRICULUM | 147 |
| | CONSEQUENCE SYSTEM | 147 |
| | DISCIPLINE OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES..... | 149 |
| | APPEAL PROCESS | 149 |
| Q. | SERVING EXCEPTIONAL AND EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS | 151 |
| | OVERVIEW..... | 151 |
| | ASSUMPTIONS..... | 151 |
| | IDENTIFYING EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS | 151 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| ACAD MTSS ACADEMIC SUPPORT SYSTEM OVERVIEW..... | 153 |
| PROGRAMMING AND SUPPORT FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS | 154 |
| SPECIAL EDUCATION: INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS (IEP) | 155 |
| SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH 504 PLANS..... | 159 |
| ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs) | 161 |
| GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS (GT)..... | 162 |
| AT-RISK STUDENTS (ARS) | 164 |
| R. DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS | 166 |
| S. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT CONTRACTS..... | 167 |
| PARTNERSHIP WITH ASCENT CLASSICAL ACADEMIES..... | 167 |
| SERVICES AND SUPPORT FROM ACA | 170 |
| CHARTER BOARD AUTHORITY..... | 171 |
| SERVICES AGREEMENT WITH ACA | 171 |
| LEASE AGREEMENT | 173 |

A. Executive Summary

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County (“ACAD”) is a classical school using the Core Knowledge sequence in grades K-8 and teaching the liberal arts and sciences in the high school. The school will educate students from kindergarten through 12th grade. Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County proposes to open in the Fall 2018 with a charter from the Douglas County School District RE-1, starting with Kindergarten through 10th grade, adding one grade each year.

At full enrollment, expected in Year 7, Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will have approximately 728 students in 26 classes. The projected average class size in the lower grades is 28 students.

| | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Full Capacity |
|------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| Kindergarten | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 1 st Grade | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 2 nd Grade | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 3 rd Grade | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 4 th Grade | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 5 th Grade | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 6 th Grade | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 7 th Grade | 28 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 8 th Grade | 28 | 28 | 56 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 9 th Grade | 25 | 28 | 28 | 56 | 56 | 56 |
| 10 th Grade | 25 | 25 | 28 | 28 | 56 | 56 |
| 11 th Grade | | 25 | 25 | 28 | 28 | 56 |
| 12 th Grade | | | 25 | 25 | 28 | 56 |
| TOTALS | 498 | 558 | 616 | 644 | 672 | 728 |

Table 1 - School Enrollment Growth

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County seeks to open through grade 10 in order to offer high school level courses from the outset and to have the demand and capacity to hire upper-level teachers. This will allow the student, parents, and teachers to see the fruits of a rigorous kindergarten through high school curriculum and school culture from the outset.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County is expected to be a destination school that families throughout the community seek as a choice for children. The steering committee will work to promote the program to diverse segments of the community through robust advertisement and public meetings.

Vision

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will develop in its students the intellectual and personal habits and skills upon which responsible, independent, and productive lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis of a free and just society.

Mission

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County trains the minds and improves the hearts of young people through a classical, content-rich education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue in an orderly, disciplined environment.

The Vision and Mission of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County include both intellectual training to prepare students for college and their future careers, and the cultivation of moral purpose, to give them a solid foundation in moral character and virtue that will enable them to flourish and live happy lives.

School Philosophy and Features

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will offer a classical education in the liberal arts and sciences. A well-rounded, liberal-arts curriculum prepares students for self-government, which is the foundation for flourishing in a free society.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will use the Core Knowledge sequence in grades K-8, a proven content-rich, cumulative, structured approach developed by Dr. E. D. Hirsch, Jr. This sequence integrates content across subjects by grade level, and builds on previous learning in successive grades. A solid, specific, sequenced, and shared body of knowledge is necessary for all student to prepare for success in higher levels of education and to become informed, productive citizens and future leaders. The demands of this program can and will meet the needs of students, including those with disabilities, English language learners, and gifted and talented students.

Classical education is language-intensive, based on the idea that, according to great philosophers such as Aristotle, human beings are thinking creatures, and everything they think is expressed through language. Whereas the accomplished speaker and writer will always be able to express ideas to the people around him, the person deficient in language will always be at a disadvantage. To promote the mastery of language first in reading and spelling, Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will use an explicit phonics approach as that offered in the Riggs program to teach reading and literacy. The school's explicit phonics program is based on the pathbreaking research of Orton and Gillingham and has demonstrated success in also assisting English language learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities through multi-sensory instructional approaches. As with literacy, the school will teach explicit grammar such that students will master and be able expressly to identify the parts of speech in increasingly complex sentences.

Classical education is informed by the concept of the Trivium, the idea that learning builds on itself in successive stages of training the mind. The Trivium consists of three stages: Grammar, Logic, and Rhetoric. Grammar establishes the foundational building blocks of early education with its focus on the learning of facts and rules and patterns of knowledge. For all the talk of “critical thinking” these days, no one can think at all without something to think about and rules to guide one’s thought. The Logic stage set students on the course of examining the “why” questions concerning why human beings and natural phenomena and numbers work the way they do and how these subjects relate to each other. In the Rhetoric stage of learning, students draw upon their foundation of knowledge and practiced logic in order to develop and to express rational, responsible arguments in clear, persuasive, and elegant language.

While the Trivium is traditionally seen as sequential, the Ascent Classical Academy philosophy also understands these stages as iterative. In the high school years, when exposed to a new topic, such as chemistry or calculus, students will learn a new vocabulary, or “grammar,” and then progress through the logic and rhetoric stages within the subject.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will require a broad core curriculum in literature, history, sciences, math, music and art, and physical training, because in the liberal arts all disciplines are related and reinforce each other. A touchstone of that liberal-arts curriculum is the close reading and intensive discussion of the “great books” of our tradition. Students, prompted by the Socratic questioning of their teachers, will study great, compelling stories as though the characters were real and alive, thus gaining irreplaceable insights into the nature of human character and motivation as well as the love of beauty in a story well-told.

The study of history will concentrate on human beings’ efforts to achieve and to preserve the fruits of civilization—liberty, justice, science, security, prosperity, and the like—despite the inherent challenges of life and the outright opposition of the wayward and malevolent. The study of history will often be told through the words of the actors themselves through reading primary sources. Certain indispensable historical figures, such as Washington and Lincoln, and formative moments, such as the American Revolution and the Civil War, will be considered of signal importance. Geography, chronology, and biography—the building blocks of history—will be studied and mastered from the earliest grades.

Latin instruction is another important component to the literacy program. Because Latin is a highly-structured language, students will develop a deeper understanding of the grammar of the English language as well as insights into all languages. Further, since around half of all English words derive from Latin roots, the formal study of Latin and of “word histories” will engender in students a command over words and an appreciation for the force and dignity of language.

Mathematics is an essential part of a classical education. Mathematics acts as universal language in understanding the measurement and order of the physical universe. In addition to the practical aspects of numerical relations, mathematics teaches logic and abstract problem-solving which prepare the human mind for ordered thought. Ascent Classical Academy will use Singapore math in the early grades to ensure students have a solid foundation of math facts and a deep, conceptual understanding of the subject. Math instruction will be ability-grouped,

and students will take a placement exam to determine their level of proficiency. In the upper school, mathematics will be taught in a traditional manner (e.g., through proof-based, Euclidean geometry) as opposed to chasing after passing fads or allowing calculators to take the place of human calculation through patient, sustained reason.

As with mathematics, the sciences will be taught by laying a foundation of fact on which will be built a fortress of conceptual understanding. Students in the elementary school will be taught the rudiments of sciences normally not studied until high school, such as chemistry and physics, in order to introduce them early on to the workings of the physical universe—thus inspiring both interest and wonder—and to prepare them adequately for those demanding branches of science in high school. Mastering the terminology and processes of science requires a large amount of lecture on the part of knowledgeable teachers, but from the early grades students will be called upon to engage in careful observation and exploration of nature and to reason from those observations.

The fine arts are likewise an integral part of the classical curriculum. Sadly, in our present test-driven educational universe the arts have largely been lost along the way. In a classical school, not only do the arts have a prominent place, but they are studied in way that fully honors and appreciates their methods and elements, their cultural significance, and their cultivation of that magnificent realm known as the Beautiful. Students will learn both art and music every year in grades Kindergarten through eighth and be invited to take further elective courses in the high school. Just as the great works of literature and great moments in history are central features of the curriculum, so will be the great compositions in music and the visual arts.

The formal study and discussions of virtue are an integral part of the Ascent Classical program. The cultivation of virtue, coupled with the pursuit of knowledge, in an orderly environment, is essential in developing the hearts and minds of students. The end goal of a classical education is not just the smart man or woman, but the good man and woman. To foster the practice of virtue and the acquisition of good manners and habits, the school will have a uniform dress code, a closed campus, and a robust code of conduct for all students, teachers, administrators, parents, and staff.

The culture of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County is shaped by the seriousness of our academic mission. The climate will be one of respect and decorum, which are vital for intellectual development and engagement in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness.

Ascent Classical Academy is not reinventing the wheel. Rather, it is thoughtfully replicating Golden View Classical Academy in Golden, Colorado. Golden View Classical is modeled after schools such as Ridgeview Classical Schools, Liberty Common School, and Vanguard Classical Academy, all of which have successful track records and are acknowledged to be among the best schools in Colorado, as well as other classical charter schools across the nation that have met with similar success and are sought after by parents wanting a solid academic and ethical foundation for their children. The school's charter management partner, Ascent Classical Academies, includes members of the founding team of Golden View Classical Academy.

Ascent Classical Academy staff will develop and use internal formative and summative assessments and administer other assessments as required.

Professional development for staff at Ascent Classical Academy will be primarily provided by Hillsdale College, a national leader in classical, liberal arts education. Ascent Classical Academies, the school's management partner, and Golden View Classical Academy will help implement the academic program, establish the culture, and provide mentorship to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County faculty and staff.

With the conviction that a high-quality education should be available to every child, Ascent Classical is not targeting students from a specific demographic but rather is open to all students. Ascent Classical Academy is committed to supporting any student who is willing to work hard and respond to the school's commitment to character. On that same note, Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County staff will be actively working to reach out and inform families of at-risk students about the program and the benefits of a content-rich curriculum and its ability to close the achievement gap.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County has received a positive reception in the community, including early Expressions of Interest and the support of community leaders. The school has also obtained support from many families not currently attending Douglas County Schools, coming from home schools, from private schools, and who live out of district. As a K-12 charter school, Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will be able to provide a high school charter option for many families.

The school is targeting the Lone Tree area to be accessible to families in Highlands Ranch, Parker, Castle Rock, and Centennial.

Leadership and Governance

The principal of Ascent Classical Academy will be the academic leader of the school and be required to teach a class every year. The principal will be responsible for the academic and operational success of the school and will be the sole employee of the board of directors.

Ascent Classical Academies has negotiated to bring Dr. Terrence O. Moore to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County as the founding principal. Dr. Moore has extensive experience as a leader of classical charter schools, including being the founding principal of Ridgeview Classical Schools in Fort Collins and of the Atlanta Classical Academy. He was also the lead architect of the Hillsdale College Barney Charter School Initiative, which is currently supporting sixteen schools.

All teachers will be highly-qualified according to the latest Colorado Department of Education guidance as content experts in the subjects they will teach and well-versed in language and other arts in the early grades.

The board of directors of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will be a governing board and ultimately responsible for the academic, curricular, financial, and operational success of the school

“If you treat an individual as he is, he will remain as he is. But if you treat him as what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought to be and could be.” Goethe

B. Vision and Mission Statements

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County Framework

The underlying philosophy of Ascent Classical Academies is inspired by the following three books: *Cultural Literacy* by E.D. Hirsch, Jr., *Why Johnny Can't Tell Right from Wrong* by William Kilpatrick and *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them* by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. Additionally, *The Making of Americans* by E.D. Hirsch Jr. has been adopted as a foundational text.

Vision

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County develops within its students the intellectual and personal habits and skills upon which responsible, independent and productive lives are built, in the firm belief that such lives are the basis of a free and just society.

Mission

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County trains the minds and improves the hearts of young people through a classical, content-rich education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue in an orderly, disciplined environment.

The Vision and Mission statements were drafted after lengthy research, discussion, and creation of an agreed upon fundamental framework regarding the values, philosophies, and goals for Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County. The Vision and Mission are consistent with the Colorado General Assembly's declared purposes set forth in Colorado Revised Statutes (CRS) §22-30.5-102(2) and (3) of the Charter Schools Act.

Philosophy Statement

It is the belief of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County that all students benefit from a rigorous, content-rich, educational program that develops academic potential and personal character. The school will provide an orderly environment that fosters academic excellence through the habit of thoroughness, the willingness to work, and the perseverance to complete difficult tasks. Through a defined, traditional, classical, liberal arts curriculum, students will be prepared to become active, responsible members of their community.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas Academy believes it is the right and responsibility of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children and that the school is their partner in helping them fulfill their responsibility.

Academic Standards

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will uphold high academic standards for all students regardless of background, socio-economic status, and ability. The curriculum will be a content rich, traditional educational model with provisions to challenge all students to fulfill their individual academic potential.

- Students shall take the defined curriculum and must earn promotion, completion, or graduation.
- English literacy is fundamental to student academic success in all subjects.
- Administrators and faculty are held accountable for each student's achievement.
- The student schedule will be predominantly occupied by the defined curriculum.
- Students will be assessed through class work, regular assignments, periodic tests and portfolios, the levels of which will meet or exceed district, state and national requirements.
- Graduation requirements will meet or exceed those mandated by the district and state.

Development of Moral Character and Civic Virtue

- Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County's environment, curriculum, and instructional style are designed to promote and build strength of character.
- Character is developed through a coherent program of expectations, modeling, and the study of historical and literary figures.
- Staff and faculty will encourage and model behaviors of honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, and self-discipline.
- Students will be expected to practice and develop these traits.

Learning Environment

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will promote a safe, stimulating and disciplined environment.

- Individual student needs will be supported through a multidisciplinary team approach.
- There will be a defined standard of appearance and a closed campus.
- Explicit, defined expectations and consequences will be utilized to provide a safe learning environment through positive behavior reinforcement.
- Students, staff and board of directors members will be expected to demonstrate consistent effort, initiative, and personal responsibility in order to pursue the good, beautiful and true.
- Physical activity, which promotes mental, physical and emotional growth, will be encouraged while reinforcing a healthy lifestyle.
- Teachers will provide the opportunity for students to develop good study skills, that make learning possible and encourage self-motivation.

Parental Expectations

- Parent and teacher partnerships benefit all students and will be conducted with civility and promote student success.
- Parents will exhibit honesty, respect, responsibility, compassion, and self-discipline at all school related events and activities.
- Parents will take an active role in the student's education by supporting the policies of the school, encouraging the student's completion of schoolwork, ensuring consistent attendance, attending parent-teacher conferences, and volunteering.

C. Goals, Objectives and Pupil Performance Standards

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County (“ACAD”) has clear measurements to ensure the school remains focused on its mission.

The Academic Goals include explicit measures against which the academic achievement of students will be measured in accordance with C.R.S. §22-11-204, et seq. Organizational Goals with explicit measures will indicate the school’s organizational and financial success and ensure ACAD can continue to provide a high-quality education option to families and students for the long term.

Performance goals for Ascent Classical Academy will be created using the **SMART** format, meaning they will be: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**mbitious and **A**ttainable, **R**eflective of and **R**elevant to the School’s Mission, and **T**ime-Specific. Baseline data for the School Performance Framework (SPF) will be obtained from state assessments given in 2019.

Academic Goals

Growth

Goal 1: Students grow academically in reading, writing, and math at a rate that ensures they are at or above grade level by 3rd grade, and stay at or above grade level through 10th grade.

- Measure (a): In a cohort analysis of longitudinal growth, on average, students will show an average growth at or above the 60th percentile using the Colorado Growth Model using state approved assessments.
- Measure (b): All ethnic and racial subgroups, Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) students, English Language Learners (ELL) students, and Special Education students, will average 70th percentile growth until reaching grade level. Once at grade level, these students will grow at the same annual percentile as the ACAD average based on the Colorado Growth Model using state approved assessments.

Proficiency

Goal 2: Students meet or exceed state and district standards for mastery in reading, writing, and math.

- Measure (a): The percentage of students, who attend the school for three or more years, found proficient or advanced using the CMAS Assessments for reading, writing, and math, will meet or exceed district averages in grades 3 through 9.

Goal 3: Student Growth Gaps will narrow at a rate meeting or exceeding state and district standards.

- Measure (a): Decrease the gap in the percent proficient and advanced among all ethnic and racial subgroups by 10% by the end of 2023 school year on state approved assessments. The reduction in the gap is the result of increased proficiency of ethnic and racial subgroups and not a decrease of other groups.
- Measure (b): Decrease the gap in the percent proficient and advanced among English language learners (ELLS) compared to those who are not ELLs by 10% by the end of 3 school years. The reduction in the gap is the result of increased proficiency for ELLs students and not a decrease for those who are eligible. Growth will be measured using state assessments.
- Measure (c): Decrease the gap in the percent proficient and advanced among students eligible for special education (SPED) compared to those who are not SPED by 10% by the end of 3 school years. The reduction in the gap is the result of increased proficiency for SPED students and not a decrease for those who are eligible. Growth will be measured using state assessments.
- Measure (d): Decrease the gap in the percent proficient and advanced among students eligible for free and reduced lunch (FRL) compared to those who are not FRL by 10% by the end of 3 school years. The reduction in the gap is the result of increased proficiency for FRL students and not a decrease for those who are not FRL eligible. Growth will be measured using state assessments.

Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness

Goal 4: Students will meet and exceed the state and district standards for Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness.

- Measure (a): The average SAT score for ACAD students who attend for three or more years will exceed the district average.
- Measure (b): The graduation rate for students who attend three or more continuous years will be 95% or greater.

Organizational Goals

Goal 4: Ascent Classical Academy will demonstrate fiduciary and financial responsibility.

- Measure (a): Annual budgets demonstrate effective allocation of financial resources as measured by balanced budgets submitted to Douglas County Schools. The Finance Committee of the Board reviews budgets monthly.
- Measure (b): External, annual audit reports demonstrate Ascent Classical Academy meets or exceeds professional accounting standards.

Goal 5: Parents demonstrate high satisfaction with the academic program and the clear, frequent, and open communication of Ascent Classical Academy.

- Measure (a): Average parent satisfaction with the academic program as measured by an annual survey at the end of the school year will exceed 80%.

- Measure (b): Average parent satisfaction with clear, frequent, and open communication of the school, as measured by an annual survey at the end of the school year, will exceed 80%.
- Measure (c): 85% of students remaining in District will reenroll in Ascent Classical Academy.

Assessments and Alternate Evidence

The assessment tools included in the Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) suite are relatively new and Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County is still seeking to understand their alignment with Core Knowledge and Singapore Math.

Our team expects, and will retain the right, to make significant revisions to the performance and growth goals as more information becomes available on state assessments. Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will initially aim to meet or exceed district performance and growth and later establish more specific goals once additional information is known about the relatively new assessment tools. ACAD may also provide results from other nationally normed tests, such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), to demonstrate academic success as needed.

D. Evidence of Support

Target Population

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County (“ACAD”) is proposing to open along the northern I-25 corridor of Douglas County. This area is being targeted based on early Expressions of Interest and feedback from public meetings and outreach. Locating in this area will make Ascent Classical Academy convenient to families in Highlands Ranch, Parker, Castle Pines, Castle Rock, and from out of district.

Due to its unique implementation of the classical model, ACAD expects to be a destination school, attracting students from a wide area, including out-of-district. Based on the experience with similar schools, ACAD also expects to draw students who are currently attending private schools and being home-schooled. Many parents choosing ACAD will also be interested in the smaller, self-contained K-12 school, though the school will not offer a lot of amenities found at larger schools.

The area ACAD is proposing to serve was identified as an anticipated growth area by the Douglas County School District Planning and Construction¹

Since the school anticipates drawing a student population from a wide geographic area, student demographics are difficult to estimate. ACAD expects to have demographics similar to other schools in the area. The school intends to serve a diverse student population and to support any student willing to work hard.

The below tables indicate demographic data for nearby schools and the ethnic breakdown of Douglas County:

¹ Douglas County School District. Douglas County School District Planning and Construction, *2016-2017 Enrollment Projections and Capacity*, pp 11-13, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://eboard.dcsdk12.org/attachments/4faddbc8-015a-4758-863a-5071b5e6d44b.pdf>

| School Name | 2016-2017 Enrollment | 2015-2016 FRL % | 2015-2016 SPED % | 2015-2016 ELL % |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Eagle Ridge Elementary | 597 | 16.1% | 10.8% | 6.6% |
| Wildcat Mountain Elementary | 556 | 5.7% | 11.6% | 5.2% |
| Mammoth Heights Elementary | 613 | 13.2% | 11.9% | 3.9% |
| Pine Grove Elementary | 559 | 6.0% | 13.7% | 2.8% |
| Prairie Crossing Elementary | 543 | 9.0% | 12.9% | 4.7% |
| Rocky Heights Middle | 1,480 | 3.8% | 8.4% | 2.6% |
| Chaparral High School | 2,202 | 11.1% | 9.9% | 2.2% |
| Rock Canyon High School | 2,175 | 2.9% | 5.9% | 1.6% |

Table 2. Student Demographics for Nearby Schools².

| Racial Identification | Percent |
|-----------------------|---------|
| American Indian | 0.5% |
| Asian | 4.5% |
| Black | 1.4% |
| Hispanic | 8.5% |
| White | 83.4% |
| Minority | 21.3% |

Table 3 - Ethnic Breakdown of Douglas County, Colorado³.

Parent Support for Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County

The steering committee of ACAD has been promoting the school in Douglas County and hosting public information meetings. The school has been accepting Expressions of Interest to obtain sufficient evidence of parent and pupil support as required by C.R.S § 22-30.5-106(d).

As of March 14, 2017, the school has received 231 Expressions of Interest with good momentum at this point in the start-up cycle.

² Colorado Department of Education, School Dashboard, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www2.cde.state.co.us/schoolview/dish/schooldashboard.asp>.

³ United States Census Bureau. *Quickfacts: Douglas County Colorado*, accessed March 5, 2017, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045216/08035>.

| Grade Level | Student Count |
|--------------|---------------|
| Kindergarten | 41 |
| 1 | 17 |
| 2 | 19 |
| 3 | 32 |
| 4 | 25 |
| 5 | 23 |
| 6 | 28 |
| 7 | 13 |
| 8 | 19 |
| 9 | 11 |
| 10 | 3 |
| Grand Total | 231 |

Table 4 - Expressions of Interest by Grade Level.

| City | Student Count |
|-------------------|---------------|
| Highlands Ranch | 93 |
| Parker | 35 |
| Castle Rock | 32 |
| Centennial | 13 |
| Lone Tree | 11 |
| Littleton | 11 |
| Aurora | 5 |
| Castle Pines | 5 |
| Lakewood | 5 |
| Roxborough | 4 |
| Greenwood Village | 4 |

Table 5 - Expression of Interest by Top 11 Cities.

| Zip Code | Student Count |
|----------|---------------|
| 80126 | 55 |
| 80134 | 35 |
| 80129 | 28 |
| 80104 | 13 |
| 80124 | 12 |
| 80108 | 11 |
| 80109 | 11 |
| 80122 | 11 |
| 80130 | 10 |
| 80228 | 5 |

Table 6 - Expressions of Interest by Top 10 Zip Codes.

Community Support

Letters of Support

In addition to prospective parents and students, the Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County team has been reaching out to a broad segment of community leaders throughout Douglas County and Colorado to obtain their support. These leaders include:

Ken Buck, Congressman, 4th Congressional District, Colorado
Mike Coffman, Congressman, 6nd Congressional District, Colorado
Bob Schaffer, Former Congressman, 4th Congressional District, Colorado, and Principal at Liberty Common High School
Bill Owens, Former Governor and State Senate sponsor of the Colorado Charter School Act
Heidi Ganahl, University of Colorado Regent, At-Large
Sue Sharkey, University of Colorado Regent, 4th Congressional District
John Carson, University of Colorado Regent, 6th Congressional District
Debora Scheffel, Former State Board of Education, 6th Congressional District, Colorado
Chris Holbert, Senate Majority Leader, Colorado State Senate
Patrick Neville, House Minority Leader, Colorado State House
Kim Ransom, Colorado State House
Kevin van Winkle, Colorado State House
Roger Partridge, Douglas County Commissioner
Lora Thomas, Douglas County Commissioner
David Weaver, Douglas County Commissioner
Merlin Klotz, Douglas County Clerk and Recorder
Scott Laband, President, Colorado Succeeds
Jeff Wasden, President, Colorado Business Roundtable

Copies of letters of support are included in Appendix 4.

Partnerships

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County has a non-binding affiliation with Hillsdale College's Barney Charter School Initiative ("BCSI"). Hillsdale College is a national leader in classical education and a key partner to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County developing a high-quality, liberal arts program positioned to serve all students.

Hillsdale will assist in providing: principal mentoring, development of curriculum, teacher education, and visits to advise on the operation of the school. In return, the school will: provide for the operation of the school, consult with Hillsdale College as the primary source on the school model, and provide performance and operations reports. This relationship comes at no charge from Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County to Hillsdale College and may be terminated upon written notice.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will also engage Ascent Classical Academies ("ACA"), a charter management organization to manage the school and business operations. The ACA team has experience starting and operating classical charter schools in Colorado and the organization is committed to and supports the principles of the BCSI. The ACA relationship creates a close relationship with Golden View Classical Academy in Golden, Colorado.

Dr. Terrence O. Moore, the expected founding principal of ACAD was also the founding principal of Ridgeview Classical Academy and this is another partnership ACAD expects to establish.

Outreach

The ACAD team has and will continue promoting the school through a variety of channels and efforts to reach a broad and diverse community of parents and students. The team is actively promoting the school through:

- word of mouth advertising,
- public community meetings,
- flyers at local businesses,
- radio appearances,
- active promotion on social media,
- partnerships with other fully enrolled schools of choice,
- posters,
- participation in community events and festivals,
- media advertising,
- and other mediums.

The Ascent Classical Academy team has been holding public information meetings throughout the community, including recent meetings at the Highlands Ranch and Lone Tree libraries, with additional meetings currently scheduled and continuing until school opening in 2018. Members

of the steering committee have appeared on radio shows in the Denver Metro market, including the Americhicks (KDMT 1690 AM), with future appearances planned.

Flyers for the school have been distributed to businesses and libraries throughout northern Douglas County. One-sided flyers are available for download from the ACAD website for parents and supporters to print and distribute.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County has been running paid advertising campaigns on social media, including Facebook, connecting with a culturally diverse group of individuals. These campaigns have been very effective in exposing new families to the school. Prospective parents have also been posting on more localized platforms like Nextdoor.com, another effective source of Expressions of Interest.

The school has been sending press releases to local and community media to include in local newspaper and community-based websites.

The ACAD team was applied for a planning grant from the Daniels Fund and will pursue additional outreach activities based on this grant being awarded.

Parents who have completed an Expression of Interest for their children or have signed up are receiving weekly email newsletters providing information on upcoming events, updates on the school's efforts, invitations to share ACAD with their friends and family, and information on Founding Family status.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County is actively seeking to encourage families of at-risk students to apply, confident that the explicit phonics program and ordered curriculum will help instill a firm foundation in literacy and increase student performance.

Once ACAD and the Douglas County School District execute a charter contract, Hillsdale College will include the school in their publications with over 40,000 subscribers in the Denver Metro area.

Hillsdale College will post an announcement that the school is expecting to open in the fall of 2018 on the Barney Charter School Initiative website.

E. Educational Program and Standards

1. Educational Philosophy and Culture

Core Beliefs about Education and Instruction

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County (“ACAD”) seeks to furnish a rigorous, content-rich, classical liberal arts education to students in Douglas County, regardless of socio-economic background or academic competence. This time-tested course of study will include the common principles of scholarship, citizenship, and moral virtue, with an emphasis on literacy, numeracy, civics, classic literature, and classical teaching methods. We believe that this type of rigorous education will best develop the minds and characters of our students.

Scholarship

To accomplish its mission, ACAD will ground education in the humanities, sciences, and the arts using several research-based curricula already widely used in successful classical academies around the country:

Core Knowledge Sequence — a specific, K-8 grade-by-grade core curriculum of common learning;

The Riggs Institute’s Phonics Program — a multi-sensory, brain-based approach for teaching “explicit” phonics, reading and language arts, with modifications and supplementation from Access Literacy, LLC;

Math — mastery of the fundamentals in the early years provides a solid foundation for a strongly conceptual approach to mathematical skill building and problem solving;

Science — a rigorous curriculum in the lower through upper grades, including exposure to original science research, observations and ideas;

Latin —the development of concentration, analysis, and puzzle-solving skills, nurturing precision in words and thoughts and cultivating an appreciation for the sheer beauty of language, and insight into original works written in Latin;

Modern Languages —a modern romance language in the early grades (K-5) and at the high school level;

Fine Arts — music and visual arts, including theory, history, and performance;

The Great Conversation — fostering a spirit of inquiry and exchange of ideas through the study of the greatest works produced by our civilization.

Students at all levels, beginning in kindergarten, will be taught in the Socratic Method to encourage intelligent, logical, and independent thinking. The Socratic Method uses direct, intentional questions to guide students' understanding of problems and their solutions. While most instruction in the early grades is direct, the amount of Socratic learning increases in each higher grade.

In the high school, students will receive a classical liberal arts education that exceeds the Colorado Academic Standards. Students will study all subjects — literature and language, rhetoric, math, history, civics, the sciences, music and art—through sound, time proven methods. The curriculum will be rigorous and make use of primary sources and the Great Works of the western tradition. Students will receive nightly homework and seniors will be required to compose and defend a Senior Thesis as a capstone to their academic experience at Ascent Classical Academy.

Our curriculum, coupled with the supplemental programs, has proven to be successful for all students, including those with special needs and second language issues. Our school will adhere to the conviction that a liberal education is an end in itself, and that standardized tests do not drive the curriculum.

Citizenship

If a nation expects to be ignorant and free, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be. The functionaries of every government have propensities to command at will the liberty and property of their constituents. There is no safe deposit for these but with the people themselves; nor can they be safe with them without information. Where the press is free, and every man able to read, all is safe.⁴

America's Founders understood that the preservation of a free republic would always depend on the capacity of the American people to remain faithful to the principles of the *Declaration of Independence* and the *Constitution*. They also understood this would not be easy or automatic. The American experiment in liberty is staked upon an education that provides citizens with the knowledge and character required for self-government.

In the spirit of that vision, Ascent Classical Academy will provide students with a rigorous education in the classical liberal arts and sciences tradition that will prepare them to become excellent, highly literate individuals and active, responsible members of their community prepared to articulate and uphold our nation's founding principles.

Moral Virtue and Personal Character

Without virtue, man can have no happiness in this world.⁵

⁴ Thomas Jefferson, *Letter to Colonel Charles Yancey*, Monticello, January 6, 1816.

⁵ Benjamin Franklin, *Articles of Belief*, November 20, 1728.

We believe that nurturing positive character development is a crucial aspect of a quality school, and that a culture of character is closely tied to academic performance and the success of the learning community. Students will be trained in good personal and study habits, such as time management, organization, note-taking, and research. We believe that these habits are essential for academic and future success.

Teaching and coaching in the classical virtues will be integrated throughout the curriculum and in all grades, specifically through student exposure to stories of self-mastery found in classical literature and history.

We believe one becomes good only by practicing right behavior. At Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, high academic achievement, personal discipline, ethics, and responsibility will consistently be reinforced through a disciplined environment and the study of subjects in the classical tradition. To that end, Ascent Classical Academy will be founded on core virtues, such as:

Courage • Moderation • Justice • Responsibility • Prudence • Friendship • Wonder

Teachers and staff will be expected to model these core virtues in all behaviors inside and outside the classroom. These core virtues will provide our students with the opportunity for self-improvement, individual growth, and character development.

In summary, to be “classical” means to uphold a standard of excellence. Ascent will provide an environment that fosters academic and character excellence through the establishment of a unified team approach of its faculty and volunteers. We believe that a classical, liberal arts curriculum coupled with a disciplined and orderly campus will provide students with the opportunity for a rigorous and complete education that will challenge them to excel both in learning and in character.

See Appendix 5 for further discussion of the philosophy of classical education.

Research and Academic History of Classical Education

The beauty of the classical curriculum is that it dwells on one problem, one author, or one epoch long enough to allow even the youngest student a chance to exercise his mind in a scholarly way: to make connections and to trace developments, lines of reasoning, patterns of action, recurring symbolisms, plots, and motifs.⁶

The curricular approach we will use begins with the rudiments of basic literacy and math skills and continues in a coherent and orderly fashion to the higher orders of knowledge, thought and expression. In addition, the curriculum includes a strong civics component that will equip

⁶ David V. Hicks, *Norms and Nobility: A Treatise on Education* (University Press of America, 1999).

students to understand, articulate, and practice the principles on which this country was built, such as liberty, equality, natural rights, Constitutionalism, the rule of law, and self-government.

Classical education emphasizes a study of liberal arts, including the humanities, math and sciences, and the fine arts, with the view that education is about developing the whole person. A classical approach also supports the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, as a key to living a life of goodness, truth, and beauty.

At its core, classical education is:

Systematic: Adherence to a clear process allows for effective coordination of instructional resources and for measurement of student progress toward goals. Systematic study also allows the student to join what Mortimer Adler calls the ‘Great Conversation’ — the ongoing conversation of great minds down through the ages.

Rigorous: To proceed through stages, students must master the expected material or skills inherent in each stage. Rigorous study develops virtue in the student. Aristotle defined virtue as the ability to act in accordance to what one knows to be right. The virtuous man (or woman) can force himself to do what he knows to be right, even when it runs against his inclinations. The classical education continually asks a student to work against his baser inclinations (laziness, or the desire to watch another half hour of TV) in order to reach a goal — mastery of a subject.⁷

Classical education has seen a resurgence in the past few decades, and the results have been impressive. The classical liberal arts approach has many documented successes within a broad range of school settings. These schools represent a broad range of demographics, demonstrating how classical education is proven to be effective for all learners, regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, religion or socio-economic background.

2. Curriculum

Ascent Classical Academy offers a curriculum based in the Classical Liberal Arts and Sciences, with a strong emphasis on civic education.

Our curricular approach is designed to build foundations of knowledge in the early grades. Because children learn by building on what they already know, this curriculum benefits students with different learning abilities. The emphasis on foundational skills and rich content will enable teachers to effectively bring students with pre-existing academic problems up to grade level, and at the same time strengthen the knowledge base and challenge the academic potential of every student at grade level.

This section will focus on the following elements of our curriculum:

- a) Core Knowledge

⁷ Susan Wise Bauer, *The Well-Trained Mind*, 3rd ed. (New York: WW Norton, 2009).

- b) Riggs Reading
- c) Math
- d) Science
- e) Latin
- f) Modern Foreign Language
- g) Handwriting/Cursive
- h) Fine Arts
- i) Use of Primary Source Documents
- j) Character Education
- k) The Great Conversation

Core Knowledge English/Language Learning Arts Sequence

We will use the Colorado version of the Core Knowledge sequence, which has been aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards. This is a specific, K-8 grade-by-grade core curriculum of common learning. Please refer to **Appendix 7** *Core Knowledge Alignment to the New Revised Colorado Content Standards* for a comprehensive review of the alignment. For direct evidence with regard to student achievement in specific classical schools that utilize Core Knowledge, please see **Appendix 8**.

In 1986, Hirsch founded Core Knowledge (CK) based upon his idea of “cultural literacy.”⁸

Since its inception, the mission of the Core Knowledge Foundation has been to “provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.” Core Knowledge is dedicated to the principle that every person benefits from a common knowledge base, while recognizing differing traditions and cultural contributions.

The CK Sequence has evolved from the field testing and consensus building that began in 1990. CK is the result of research into the content and structure of the highest performing elementary school systems around the world. The Core Knowledge Sequence is a grade-by-grade guide of specific topics in history, geography, literature, visual art, music, language, science and mathematics. The CK curriculum aims to achieve the following goals:

- Foster autonomous and knowledgeable citizens;
- Provide every student an equal opportunity;
- Foster community through a shared body of knowledge.

Core Knowledge philosophy holds that these goals are intertwined and dependent upon common knowledge, which enables people to communicate with fellow citizens.

⁸ The source of this section is the Core Knowledge Foundation. 1999. *The Core Knowledge Sequence*. Charlottesville, VA.

The school will supplement the Core Knowledge sequence with material from the Baltimore Curriculum Project, which provides beginning teacher resources and class materials to begin teaching this content-rich curriculum.⁹

Riggs Institute - The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking

Beginning in kindergarten and continuing through sixth grade, Ascent Classical Academy will use the Riggs reading program: *The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking*, which is a multi-sensory and brain-based approach to teaching explicit phonics, reading, spelling, language arts, and composition. Riggs will be modified and supplemented with assistance from Access Literacy, LLC. This program will be taught in conjunction with the Core Knowledge English/Language Arts curriculum.

The Riggs method began with Dr. Samuel Orton, a neuroscientist who researched the functioning of the human brain in learning language skills. He collaborated with teachers to combine his multi-sensory techniques with classical and Socratic instructional approaches to teaching, originally to re-establish language skills to trauma-induced brain-damaged veterans.

Today, Dr. Orton's methods are used to teach primary students. One of his last teacher-collaborators, Romalda Spalding, author of *The Writing Road to Reading* (1957), believed, as Ascent Classical Academy believes, that this method should be both to prevent and correct learning disorders, and most importantly to establish high literacy in virtually all children in the primary grades.

Riggs is an “explicit” phonics approach as defined and recommended in a Federal Compilation of Reading Research: *Becoming a Nation of Readers*. Riggs incorporates phonics-based spelling with a rules system dating from the Webster-Oxford standardization of English spelling, and also provides phonemic/graphemic correspondences from contemporary dictionaries, enabling students to learn correct spelling as well as accepted pronunciations.

Riggs also has several tools available for introducing an informal exposure to Latin into our early grades. These resources provide for easy implementation on the part of the teacher and will enable students to start developing an increasing awareness of the Latin language, and its importance in English vocabulary and language.

Please see **Appendix 9** for an outline of the research basis of the Riggs program.

Riggs Coupled with Core Knowledge: Love of Reading

At Ascent Classical Academy, we believe that reading is foundational for every subject. The activity of reading enriches vocabulary, develops speech and writing abilities, and makes knowledge acquisition possible. Our school will nurture a love of reading from kindergarten

⁹ Baltimore Curriculum Project. “About Us.” Accessed February 23, 2017.
<http://www.baltimorecnp.org/about.html>

through high school graduation through our focus on reading rich and thought-provoking literature.

The use of the Riggs program will help to ensure that our students have a strong reading foundation, and the Core Knowledge sequence, with its central focus on reading, will provide a rich array of reading materials and opportunities for the kinds of in-depth discussions that enhance the reading process and reading comprehension. This practice is closely aligned to the new Colorado Academic Standards which emphasize critically analyzing text within the content area. Reading will be at the heart of all our students' learning and it is our desire to create an environment where reading is natural and fluent.

Our focus on classical literature, with its content-rich vocabulary and rich portrayal of characters, will challenge our students intellectually and ethically. As students read and discuss great moral dilemmas and problems which have confronted mankind for centuries, they will learn the importance of the written word and discover its beauty. The diverse and rich literature in our classroom collections will engage all levels of readers, from kindergarten to twelfth grade. We intend to offer readings which will challenge our students at all levels so every student is inspired to read further and discover more.

MATH

The study of mathematics should instill in students an ever-increasing sense of wonder and awe at the profound way in which the world displays order, pattern, and relation. Mathematics is studied not because it is first useful and then beautiful, but because it reveals the beautiful order inherent in the cosmos.¹⁰

A daily math block will be scheduled for the purpose of content mastery grouping students in K-8th grades, to address the needs of both mathematically-competent students as well as struggling learners.

As the mathematician, astronomer, and physicist Johann Carl Friedrich Gauss observed, "*Mathematics is the queen of sciences.*" To provide a foundation in numeric literacy, Ascent Classical Academy will adopt Singapore as follows:

- Kindergarten: Singapore Math KA and KB
- 1st Grade: Singapore Math 1A and 2B
- 2nd Grade: Singapore Math 2A and 2B
- 3rd Grade: Singapore Math 3A and 3B
- 4th Grade: Singapore Math 4A and 4B
- 5th Grade: Singapore Math 5A and 5B
- 6th Grade: Singapore Math 6A and 6B
- 7th Grade: Singapore Math 7A and 7B
- 8th Grade: Algebra I

¹⁰ From The Education Plan of St. Jerome Classical School, Hyattsville, MD

- 9th Grade: Geometry
- 10th Grade: Algebra II
- 11th Grade: Pre-Calculus
- 12th Grade: Calculus I

Depending on the mathematical foundation acquired in grades K-6, most students will begin pre-algebra concepts in 7th grade and move through the high school math sequence including Algebra I and II, Geometry, Pre-calculus, Calculus I or Statistics or suitable alternative. Students who progress through the math series more quickly may also finish Calculus II.

Approach to Math – Grades K-7

There are other fields in which knowledge is built on previous knowledge, but in no other field do the towers reach such heights, nor do the topmost layers rely so clearly on the bottom ones. ... The secret to proper teaching of mathematics lies in recognizing these layers and establishing them systematically. ¹¹

A chief aim in the study of mathematics is to understand the order and harmony inherent in the natural world as seen through its abstraction in mathematics. In elementary mathematics, this study primarily involves the study of quantities, of numbers and the relationship between numbers through arithmetic operations.

Mathematics has a core position in the elementary curriculum for several reasons. As an abstraction of the natural world, the study of numbers often gives students a first opportunity to make the leap from concrete objects to abstract forms. Additionally, the order and structure of the mathematics provides an excellent opportunity for the student to study logical arguments and to hone reasoning skills.

Elementary mathematics primarily leads students through the arithmetic of numbers, beginning with whole numbers in kindergarten through 3rd grades and progressing to fractions and decimals in the 4th through 6th grades. This is a marked transition that requires students to have strongly understood place value and the regrouping of numbers (borrowing and carrying). The Singapore math curriculum prepares students for this transition.

We agree with Dr. Aharoni's premise that a strong foundation in mathematics education in the early years is essential for success in the later years. By the end of 3rd grade, students should have mastered the basic math facts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Additionally, students should have acquired an initial understanding of the standard algorithms for multi-digit arithmetic operations and have a substantial exposure to measurement.

The Singapore curriculum provides students with an excellent first exposure to the foundational material of the arithmetic of whole numbers through the concrete-pictorial-abstract approach. It is characterized by incremental and explicit instruction using manipulables, constant review, and growing abstraction. Its incremental approach provides a focus on the mastery of basic material coupled with plenty of practice, while also providing a strong introduction to procedural knowledge of more complicated arithmetic algorithms. Emphasizing the mastery of mathematical algorithms, drill, and review, it helps build students' confidence and skill in computations and word problems.

¹¹ Dr. Ron Aharoni, *Arithmetic for Parents: A Book for Grownups about Children's Mathematics*

The Singapore Math curriculum's real strength comes with conceptual understanding. This feature makes it an excellent textbook series to use throughout the elementary grades, especially when the material shifts to fractions and decimals. Furthermore, Singapore Math provides an extended exploration (2-4 weeks) of a topic before moving to the next. This additional time allows students the opportunity to focus on the material and achieve a much deeper understanding. In the earlier elementary grades, Singapore Math also takes this conceptual approach.

This approach will establish a solid conceptual understanding beginning in the early grades and developing as the students advance. Because the curriculum will be used that most aligns with the goals of that grade level, this should minimize the need to supplement with material that is lacking in the curriculum. Finally, this approach will provide a solid basis in elementary mathematics for the student to transition to the upper school mathematics subjects of algebra and geometry.

See **Appendix 10** for the research basis for Singapore Math.

Math Curriculum – Grades 8-12

As in the Grammar School, student achievement, not grade level, determines progress through the mathematics curriculum. For a description and sample curriculum outline of the upper level math courses for the Junior High and High Schools, please see the math section of **Appendix 19**.

Science

Science is facts; just as houses are made of stone, so is science made of facts; but a pile of stones is not a house, and a collection of facts is not necessarily science.¹²

Although the rhetoric surrounding a classical or liberal-arts school often emphasizes the humanities, the sciences are no less important than the humanistic disciplines. Ascent will take a balanced approach to science education that includes direct instruction, teacher demonstrations, reading books, and experimentation. Science will be taught with an emphasis on scientific facts, including the incorporation of technical approaches to observing, describing, recording, ordering, analyzing, testing and comparing predictions to observations.

Our teachers will provide multiple levels of instructional resources, with an emphasis on developing the literacy and vocabulary to successfully navigate increasingly complex scientific texts.

In grades K-8, Ascent Classical will use the Core Knowledge science sequence. Samples and sequences of curriculum resources, which are aligned with the Core Knowledge curriculum, are

¹² French mathematician Jules Henri Poincaré

included in **Appendix 11**. For a description and curriculum outline of high school level science courses, please see **Appendix 19**.

LATIN

The etymology of a word would trigger lengthy discussion, often tedious for us as adolescents but abiding as we became adults . . . as young girls we were peppered with phrases of philosophical power from the ancients, and our father would show how these truths and lessons were alive and valid today.¹³

Learning Latin affords students a critical knowledge of English grammar and a basis for studying other foreign languages. Since over half of English words derive from Latin, students will considerably improve their English vocabulary and "word sense." Words used in everyday English have long histories. Knowing those histories, which may involve multiple languages, equips students with a greater command over those words. The English word *curriculum*, for example, contains the root word *cur* derived from the Latin verb *currere*, which refers to running through a track or course.

By learning Latin, students will learn English and other languages and use English and other languages more easily because of their deeper understanding of the architecture of language. They will expand their knowledge of vocabulary and comprehension. A foundational understanding of Latin will provide greater structure for students in grammar, literacy, writing, and comprehension, as well as provide an invaluable foundation for clear and precise thought. Most importantly, students will experience first-hand the beauty of the language.

Intensive study of the grammar of language will instruct students in how to order those words into clear sentences and basic units of thought, and move into more complex sentences expressing more complex thoughts. Further, the frequent occurrences of Latin in the English language (such as *per diem*, *quid pro quo*, *ante bellum*, *e.g.*, *i.e.*, *status quo*, *et cetera*) will be clearly understood by graduates of our program. Finally, students in the high school will begin to be able to read ancient passages and works written in Latin that are the foundation of our literary, historical, and political tradition. For example, students who complete the normal Latin track will be able to read at least some Virgil in the original when they read the *Aeneid* in translation in the freshman classical literature course.

Students will be encouraged to take the appropriate level of the National Latin Exam.

Latin Roots will be introduced in the 4th and 5th grades using the following curriculum:
English from the Roots Up, Volume 1, Joegil K. Lundquist
English from the Roots Up, Volume 2, Joegil K. Lundquist and Jeanne L. Lundquist

¹³ Martha Wheelock and Deborah Wheelock Taylor, daughters of classicist Frederic Wheelock, *Wheelock's Latin, 7th Edition*

Students will receive explicit Latin instruction in the 6th through 9th grades.

Grades 6 through 8 will use *Wheelock's Latin* by Frederic Wheelock and Richard LaFleur. *Wheelock's Latin* uses a deductive approach to the study of language, explicitly focused on the mastery of grammatical rules.

Grades 6 through 8:

Latin 1a: *Wheelock's Latin*, chapters 1-8.

Latin 1b: *Wheelock's Latin*, chapters 9-19.

Latin II: *Wheelock's Latin*, chapters 20-32

A student who completes Latin II in junior high is ready for Latin III in high school. This series is for junior high school students only.

Grades 9 and up:

Wheelock's Latin uses a deductive approach to the study of language, explicitly focused on the mastery of grammatical rules. This curriculum is appropriate for the high school level.

Latin III: *Wheelock's Latin*, finish book, move to translations (The Gallic Wars, Aeneid, works of Cicero)

Latin IV and beyond: Latin Literature.

The minimum Latin requirement for all students is to complete one year of Latin during High School. Students who complete the normal junior high school sequence will complete Latin III in their freshman year and will then choose whether to continue with Latin or take a modern language. Students who are struggling in English will not begin the Latin sequence until they are proficient in their English skills. Once they are proficient, they will begin the Latin series, whether in junior high or high school.

Please see **Appendix 12** for further support for teaching Latin.

Modern Foreign Language

As resources permit, we will offer exposure to a modern romance language in the early grades, as these are the ages at which children most readily pick up languages. Modern foreign languages will also be offered at the high school level, in addition to Latin, as the school grows. To the extent possible, the course will be taught entirely in the modern language, preferably by a native or near-native speaker.

Handwriting/Cursive: Riggs

. . . the beauty and nobility, the august mission and destiny, of human handwriting.¹⁴

Starting in the middle of the 2nd grade, students will learn to write in cursive, which is a part of the Riggs curriculum. The benefits include the following:

Handwriting trains the brain. The discipline of learning to write a legible script is as much an opportunity for character training as it is an exercise in handwriting. The physical act of writing requires focus, discipline, patience, attention to detail and accuracy – priceless skills for the young child at the beginning of his academic career . . . Cursive improves neural connections in the brain and is faster and easier to learn than printing.¹⁵

1. **Cursive improves the continuity and fluidity of thought in written communication.** Connecting letters increases the speed of writing. Increased speed improves attention span and the ability to excel academically. The connectivity of letters is pleasing to children. They feel the flow of the letters and they sense the delight of the movement.
2. **Cursive improves neural connections in the brain.** Cursive improves the dynamic interplay of the left and right hemispheres of the brain. The physiological benefits of the release and control (up and down) movements of cursive help build pathways in the brain while improving mental effectiveness.
3. **Cursive graphically illustrates the development of fine motor skills.** Handwriting is a frozen manifestation of the complex development of the brain. Few outward expressions convey a well-educated individual better than the ability to communicate thoughts and ideas effectively through the written word. Nice penmanship is like a business suit for your letter, it makes a good impression. Cursive is more individualistic and expressive than printing; it's an art in itself.
4. **Learning cursive can train self-control in ways that other methods of writing do not.** Cursive writing is a fluid, pleasurable kinesthetic exercise that helps ground student's energies.
5. **Cursive can be particularly effective for students with dyslexia or dysgraphia.** It can also aid in preventing the reversal and inversion of letters.¹⁶

See **Appendix 13** for further support for teaching cursive.

Fine Arts

Students at Ascent will receive instruction in the fine arts. Studying music and the visual arts will inculcate love of the beautiful and equip students with important core knowledge about their culture. In keeping with classical education, Ascent will teach music and art largely through the

¹⁴ George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion*.

¹⁵ <http://www.newamericancursive.com/>.

¹⁶ <http://www.newamericancursive.com/>.

study of works and technique of the great masters, including Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Monet.

Music

That is why we teach music:

Not because we expect you to major in music

Not because we expect you to play or sing all your life

BUT - so you will be human

so you will recognize beauty

so you will be closer to an infinite beyond this world

so you will have something to cling to

so you will have more love, more compassion, more gentleness, more good

- - in short, more life ¹⁷

The goal of music instruction is to engage and enrich the child's understanding of music, and deepen their ability to make and evaluate music.

In music, students will be exposed to a wide array of music from jazz to orchestral music as well as vocal music that includes songs from the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods. They will learn about composers and their music, the elements of music, and vocal ranges.

In addition to learning about music history and theory, students will also have the opportunity to perform music. We plan to supplement the Core Knowledge music curriculum with the use of a blended approach of the following three methodologies: the Kodály method (language-based approach to teaching musical performance, including pitch and sight reading), the Orff-Schulwerk process (instrumental-based, including clapping, singing, dancing, and keeping a beat), and the Dalcroze approach (movement-based approach - eurhythmics, including rhythmic movement, aural training, and physical, vocal, and instrumental improvisation). Please see **Appendix 14** for a description of these methods. Our current curriculum outlines are based on a music teacher whose primary background is in the Kodály method, but any of these three methods provides a solid approach to the teaching music. The approach will depend on teacher preference.

The curriculum will meet or exceed the Colorado Academic Standards. Students will learn how to read and notate music, develop the ability to analyze and describe music, sing and play music, and draw cultural connections between music and other disciplines. An outline of the music curriculum, which is based on the Core Knowledge sequence, is included **Appendices 17, 18, and 19**.

Visual Arts

¹⁷ Author unknown.

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us or we find it not.¹⁸

In the Visual Arts, students will learn about the elements of art, sculpture, portraits, still life, landscapes, photography, architecture, expression and abstraction, works of art from long ago, Greek and Roman Art, Medieval Art, the Renaissance, Impressionism, and Post impressionism. They will be exposed to Islamic art and architecture, African art, Chinese Art, Japanese Art, and American artwork. In addition to learning about art history and theory, students will also have the opportunity to do studio art.

History: Original Source Documents

The classical approach is oriented toward the Socratic method, with robust Socratic seminars in the upper grades. We want our students to join the ongoing conversation taking place across time. To do this, students need to study the original sources of history and literature.

Examples of primary source documents include:

- Plato's Republic – Ancient Greece
- The Declaration of Independence – U.S. History
- Private letters between John and Abigail Adams – the workings of the American family
- Diary of Anne Frank – experiences of Jews in World War II

Please see **Appendix 15** for a further discussion of the use of original source documents.

Character Education

As outlined in the previous section, a set of core virtues will be adopted school-wide whose purpose is to build students' moral vocabulary and point them to the character traits necessary to live a good and happy life. Ascent will not have a separate program for the teaching of virtue. Instead, character education and moral culture are the foundation of the school and will be infused throughout the curriculum.

The English word "character" is derived from the Greek *kharaktér*, which means 'engraved mark,' or 'etching.' Excellence of character is the sum of a person's ethical and moral qualities. Good character requires continual practice, and is the foundation of self-government and the maintenance of a free republic. The founders of our nations had a deep understanding of this principle and its necessity:

No government can continue good but under the control of the people . . . their minds are to be informed by education what is right and what wrong; to be encouraged in habits of virtue and to be deterred from those of vice.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *ESSAY XI: Art*, from *Essays: First Series*, 1841.

¹⁹ Thomas Jefferson, letter to John Adams, December 10, 1819

There is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists... in nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness.²⁰

*To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea.*²¹

Classical education encourages this training in the virtues and the attainment of good character. With an understanding that this comes only through long training, practice, and habit, Ascent Classical Academy considers instruction in the virtues to be an essential part of a sound education.

The Great Conversation

Ascent Classical Academy will pursue *The Great Conversation*, as outlined in Robert Maynard Hutchins' book of the same title which introduces *The Great Ideas* series. We will strive to cultivate a student body capable of having an ongoing conversation about what the greatest human minds have discovered and thought, inspiring students to pursue the conversation for the rest of their lives.

The following topics are outlined in Hutchins' *A Syntopicon*:

Angel – Animal – Aristocracy – Art – Astronomy – Beauty – Being – Case – Chance – Change – Citizen – Constitution – Courage – Custom and Convention – Definition – Democracy – Desire – Dialectic – Duty – Education – Element – Emotion – Eternity – Evolution – Experience – Family – Fate – Form – God – Good and Evil – Government – Habit – Happiness – History – Honor – Hypothesis – Idea – Immortality – Induction – Infinity – Judgment – Justice – Knowledge – Labor – Language – Law – Liberty – Life and Death – Logic – Love – Man – Mathematics – Matter – Mechanics – Medicine – Memory and Imagination – Metaphysics – Mind – Monarchy – Nature – Necessity and Contingency – Oligarchy – One and Many – Opinion – Opposition – Philosophy – Physics – Pleasure and Pain – Poetry – Principle – Progress – Prophecy – Prudence – Punishment – Quality – Quantity – Reasoning – Relation – Religion – Revolution – Rhetoric – Same and Other – Science – Sense – Sign and Symbol – Sin – Slavery – Soul – Space – State – Temperance – Theology – Time – Truth – Tyranny – Universal and Particular – Virtue and Vice – War and Peace – Wealth – Will – Wisdom - World

A list of representative books which will be studied at Ascent is included in **Appendix 16**.

Guiding Principles for Curriculum²²

²⁰ George Washington, First Inaugural Address

²¹ James Madison, speech at the Virginia Ratifying convention

²² This section is adapted from Dr. Terrence Moore, *Classical Charter School Academic Program*, Hillsdale Barney Charter School Initiative.

Grammar School (K-6)

Please see **Appendix 17** for the scope and sequence of the Lower School program.

Modern Language

As resources permit, Ascent Classical will offer a modern foreign language in Grades 1-5 in the lower school, to the extent possible taught entirely in the foreign language by a native or near-native speaker.

Latin

The study of Latin will begin in the 6th grade. Students will be taught by a trained classicist.

The rationale behind starting a modern language in the very early years and then beginning Latin in the 6th grade is that oral language comprehension, which will be the focus of instruction in the modern language in Grades 1-5, is well-suited for younger children. Latin is grammatically intense. By the 6th grade, students will have already studied a significant amount of English grammar (including Greek and Latin roots) and will be well prepared to begin the study of Latin.

English Literacy

Students will build a strong foundation of literacy, including spelling, grammar, reading, immersion in rich vocabulary, and writing. The teachers of all disciplines will emphasize correct speaking and writing.

Ascent will provide a robust literacy program to work with students (particularly those coming from other schools) who require additional help in reading, spelling, and particularly writing. This will include special education students, so-called “gray area” students who do not qualify for special education, and students who have not reached grade level in reading.

The literacy program will lead with phonics. These lessons will be conducted largely during times in the student’s schedule that do not conflict with core courses, such as the modern language section.

Other avenues may also be used to immerse students in language, such as listening to books on tape, but never at the expense of the instruction in phonics-based reading and spelling.

Math

The daily math block will meet the needs of both mathematically-competent students as well as struggling learners.

Civic Education

Civic education, teaching concerning the political order and the individual's rights and responsibilities in that order, begins, of course, in the elementary school. Students will learn through American history the basic facts that led to the creation of the American republic and about Americans' subsequent efforts to maintain liberty and justice under the rule of law. Further, they will be taught the first principles of our constitutional order, including understanding the meaning of national symbols and the Flag Code.

Moral Literacy

Ascent will cultivate good character in its students by maintaining order and decorum in the classrooms, holding students accountable for their assignments and personal conduct, and explicitly teaching them the fundamentals of good character.

A set of core virtues will be adopted school-wide whose purpose is to build students' moral vocabulary and thereby point them to the character traits necessary to live a good and happy life. As described earlier in our educational philosophy section, the virtues will be explained to students in detail, and the discipline and decorum of the school will be based upon the practice of these virtues. Virtues are not "values." Virtues are excellences in character, rooted in nature, whose cultivation is necessary to live well and happily in civil society.

In addition to cultivating a moral culture that will pervade the classrooms and the halls and thereby create an environment of "positive peer pressure," the school will teach character through the curriculum. Teaching the great stories of the Western and American literary tradition, the biographies of heroes and the achievements of peoples, and the art and music of our tradition provides guidance and inspiration in the pursuit of truth, beauty, and goodness. The moral sense of young people naturally attaches itself to the good—as long as the good is clearly shown to them and admired. Without such examples to admire, young people in our culture too easily become cynical and jaded. By witnessing the great moral efforts of human beings, the students will expand their intellects and enrich their souls.

Cultural Literacy and Memory

Achieving full literacy entails both the ability to read and to acquire knowledge of the core elements of our cultural heritage. To be able to think, people must have things to think about. To this end, Ascent will embrace the principle of cultural literacy. Cultural literacy refers to the fundamental articles of knowledge necessary to read, speak, and write in any field of inquiry and to communicate with fellow citizens.

Just as calculators will not be used in teaching mathematics, so the attitude that "students don't need to know facts . . . they shouldn't rely on rote memory . . . they can always look it up" will be anathema. The minds of our students will be storehouses well-stocked with knowledge, which will be ordered and re-supplied daily.

Junior High (7-8)

In the Junior High, students will continue to work on the programs begun in grammar school, while going into greater depth. They will now have a class schedule of seven periods, including the four core courses of Literature, History, Math, and Science, as well as Latin, Physical Education, and Art/Music. Please see **Appendix 18** for the scope and sequence of the Junior High program.

The students will have an increased capacity for logic in their thinking, speaking, and writing. The junior high school presents much greater challenges in student behavior. To guide students through the storm of adolescence, the habits of *self-government* will be taught and reinforced.

Latin

Students will continue their study of Latin.

English Literacy

Students will continue to build strong literacy skills.

As in the Lower School, Ascent will provide a robust literacy program in the junior high grades to work with students (particularly those coming from other schools) who require additional help in reading, spelling, and particularly writing. This will include special education students, so-called “gray area” students who do not qualify for special education, and students who have not reached grade level in reading.

The literacy program will, as in the lower school, lead with phonics. These lessons will be conducted largely during times in the student’s schedule that do not conflict with core courses and may be substituted for an elective or other non-core course as determined by the Principal. This will most likely occur in the Latin section. Once the student is proficient in English skills, the study of Latin will begin.

Other avenues may also be used to immerse students in language, such as listening to books on tape, but never at the expense of the instruction in phonics-based reading and spelling.

Math

As in the Lower School, the daily math block will meet the needs of both mathematically-competent students as well as struggling learners.

Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy remains a strong priority in the Junior High as students are introduced to new topics and new books. For example, the students will not have yet studied the World Wars and

will have to learn the “grammar” and basic facts of those important events, even as they are able to enter into a deeper level of inquiry about the causes and consequences than they would have been able to in the lower school. Moreover, there will always be new students to the school who have not directly studied the basics of a given subject, and young people (indeed all of us) have a tendency to forget things. Therefore review is always important.

Teachers can never underestimate “what our Xth graders don’t know.” As a consequence, teachers at all levels must ensure that students are directly taught the basic vocabulary of all subjects. This will enable students to understand the many references to concrete articles of knowledge that any given author assumes of his audience. Teachers, too, must often “look things up” when preparing lessons.

Core Knowledge will remain the curriculum for the core and elective courses through the eighth grade. Nonetheless, certain aspects of the Core Knowledge sequence in these grades may be altered or augmented in keeping with the practice of many schools using that curriculum in the Junior high school. For example, the literature part of the sequence may be enriched with more books, though the vast majority of literary works in the sequence will be read.

Civic Education

In the eighth grade, students will begin a more complete study of the Constitution of the United States than is called for by the Core Knowledge Sequence. In fact, this portion of the history sequence will be made more robust by allotting more time for the Constitution and by interpreting the remainder of the eighth-grade history course in light of Founding principles. Considerable attention will be devoted to the manner of citizen the Founders envisioned and consequently to the rights and responsibilities required for successful self-government.

Moral Education

Just as the students’ civic education will dwell on the principles of self-government, so the prevailing theme for teaching good character will be that of individual self-government. To this end, the Principal or other designated administrator will pay special attention to the Junior High students: both in order to ensure proper discipline in the school and to teach the positive aspects of character. Separate lectures on the core virtues may be offered and required.

High School (9-12)

The High School will build on the foundations laid in the Lower School and Junior High. Students will be able to read much more demanding books, think more clearly about complex problems, and speak and write more effectively. In high school humanities classes (English and history), students will explore the classics of the Western and American tradition. In sciences and mathematics, students will learn the principal branches of those inquiries into the natural world. In the fine arts, students will continue to study classics of music, painting, and sculpture,

while working on their own performance. In addition, foreign languages will be required. Character will be engrained in students by their studying and practicing the virtues.

The objective of the high school curriculum will be to explore issues and texts intensively and in depth. The focus for teaching literature will be the great books and the classics using the Socratic Method. History will be taught mainly through the use of primary source documents—artifacts, documents, recordings or other sources of information created at the time under study. In the high school, for example, teachers of American History will introduce students to historical works that contributed to the formation of American society and culture such as George Washington's *Farewell Address* and Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from Birmingham Jail*. Such primary sources will bring history to life and equip students with essential insight, and research and analytical skills. Students will learn a true account of the times through the eyes and words of those who experienced such events and helped shape history.

High school mathematics and the sciences will offer rigorous training in the fundamentals and theories of these disciplines. Students will receive extensive training in analytical thinking and the scientific method. High school students will take four years of science, beginning with the fundamentals of biology in the freshman year, chemistry in the sophomore year and physics in the junior year. Elective courses in mathematics and the sciences will be added in subsequent years as the school grows and as it better understands the needs of the student body. Textbooks will be used as a resource, not as the basis of the curriculum. Teaching in the sciences will likely include student exposure to reports of original research, observations or ideas such as Galileo's *The Starry Messenger*, Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia* or Euclid's *Geometry*.

Please see **Appendix 19** for a description and sample syllabi of the courses offered in the High School.

The following two charts provide an overview of the High School curriculum and graduation requirements:



Ascent Classical Academy

High School Curriculum

| | Ninth | Tenth | Eleventh | Twelfth |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| English | Classical Literature (Greece and Rome) * | British Literature * | American Literature * | Modern Literature * |
| History | Western Civ I (Greece and Rome) * | Western Civ II (Medieval, Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment) * | American History (Colonial America, American Revolution, 19th Century) * | Modern European History (1789 - present) * |
| Science | Biology I * | Chemistry I * | Physics I | Biology II, Chemistry II, or Physics II |
| Math | Algebra I * or Geometry * or Algebra II * | Geometry * or Algebra II * or Pre-Calculus | Algebra II * or Pre-Calculus or Calculus I | Pre-Calculus, Calculus I, Calculus II, or Probability/Statistics |
| Composition, Civics, and Philosophy | Composition (1 semester) * | Elective (P.E. requirement) * | American Government (1 semester) * Moral Philosophy (1 semester) * | 20th Century American History (1 semester) * Economics (1 semester) * |
| Language | Latin * | Latin or Modern Language | Latin or Modern Language | Latin or Modern Language or Elective |
| Elective | Music* or Art or P.E. or other | Music or Art or P.E. or other | Music or Art or P.E. or other | Music or Art or P.E. or other |

Unless otherwise noted, courses are one year.

Student achievement, not grade level, determines progress through the mathematics curriculum.

An asterisk (*) indicates a course required for graduation.

A minimum of one semester in music is required / two-years total in the fine arts.



Ascent Classical Academy Graduation Requirements

| | DougCo | ACAD |
|---|-----------|-------------|
| English Core courses: Classical Literature (2 semesters), British Literature (2 semesters), American Literature (2 semesters), Modern Literature (2 semesters). | 4 | 4 |
| Math In addition to meeting the credit requirement, students must successfully complete Geometry (2 semesters) and Algebra II (2 semesters). | 3 | 4 |
| Science In addition to meeting the credit requirement, students must successfully complete Biology (2 semesters) and Chemistry (2 semesters). | 3 | 4 |
| History Core courses: Western Civ I (2 semesters), Western Civ II (2 semesters), American History to 1900 (2 semesters), Modern European History (2 semesters), American History 20 th Century (1 semester). | 2.5 | 4.5 |
| Government Core course: American Government (1 semester) | .5 | .5 |
| Economics Core course: Economics (1 semester) | - | .5 |
| Foreign Language In addition to meeting the credit requirement, students must successfully complete one credit in Latin (1 semester). | - | 3 |
| Composition Core course: Composition (1 semester). Depending upon the student's readiness for the standard course, some students may be required to take as a pre-requisite a one-semester basic composition course. | - | .5 |
| Moral Philosophy Core course: Moral Philosophy (1 semester) | - | .5 |
| Fine Arts In addition to meeting the credit requirement, students must successfully complete one course in music (1 semester). | 1 | 2 |
| Practical Arts (includes levels 3-5 of a foreign language) | 1 | - |
| Physical Education/Health | 1 | 1 |
| Electives | 8 | 2 |
| Total | 24 | 26.5 |

- ◇ All students are required to complete the core courses.
- ◇ At the discretion of the principal, a student may be required to complete remedial courses in order to graduate.
- ◇ The principal has the authority to waive any graduation requirement except those meeting the state requirements.
- ◇ Once enrolled full-time, a student will not receive credit from any other institution without the prior approval of the principal.
- ◇ While some courses may be completed in middle school (such as Geometry), graduation credits are only earned in high school.

English

Students will take a semester in composition in addition to four years of literature.

The curriculum will include ancient Greece and Rome, British, American, and modern literature. A sample outline of the authors to be covered is included in the *High School Course Guide* in **Appendix 19**.

The books will be thoroughly read and discussed, with the principle of “less is more” so that students will have a deep knowledge of, for example, two or three Greek plays or two or three Shakespearean plays, not a superficial knowledge of ten of them. The slower pace will challenge the stronger students to become more critical readers and allow the weaker students to keep up with the discussion.

In literature, the Socratic method will govern most discussions. The Socratic method is a systematic questioning of the students about key passages and themes that requires students to think carefully about the story and to consider the insights that story offers into human nature.

Great literature will be seen as moral. The decisions characters must make in certain settings and crises that are either virtuous or vicious, just or unjust, and that consequently leads either to greatness or infamy, happiness or misery. Literature will be discussed as it has been written. Students will come to understand love and hate, victory and defeat, justice and injustice, beauty and ugliness, temperance and intemperance, courage and cowardice, glory and shame, and magnanimity and pusillanimity—by reading and wrestling with the great stories and characters of Western literature. As a result, students will gain insights into their own complex human souls and hopefully be inspired to be great as well as good.

The books to be read in the literature curriculum will be chosen by the principal and the teachers under the guidance of Hillsdale College.

Composition

In addition to the attention given to writing in literature classes, the school will require at least a semester of formal composition in the ninth grade or in subsequent grades for students new to the school.

The class will solidify students’ knowledge of grammar, seek to fix the problems that frequently mar students’ writing, and offer an opportunity to put together the elements of writing they have acquired throughout their literature, Latin, and grammar study in the lower and junior high schools.

Foremost, the class will teach students how to write a compelling “thesis-driven essay.” This is a formal paper that makes a point and effectively employs language, marshals evidence, and orders an argument to make that point. This class may also assist with the writing of papers from other classes.

Due to the different levels of writing among students coming out of the middle school and also coming from other schools, several levels of composition will be offered once the school has been established. Students who begin in a basic composition class will have to take further composition as recommended by the literature teachers. There may be three classes offered: Basic, Standard, and Advanced, with the hope that stronger students will complete the advanced course, and all students will at least complete the standard composition course.

History

Nescire autem quid antequam natus sis acciderit, id est semper esse puerum. Quid enim est aetas hominis, nisi ea memoria rerum veterum cum superiorum aetate contexitur?

To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. What does a person's life amount to without the historical consciousness that weaves one's life into the life of earlier generations?²³

Students will take four years of history, plus a semester each of 20th Century American History, American government, and economics.

Though textbooks may be used to give students the background narrative of any historical period, the course will mostly be taught through the study of primary source documents. The specific curriculum will be determined by the Principal and teachers. The sequence will adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Statutes and Standards ensuring that students receive one credit in both U.S. and world history and half credits in both economics and government.

The overarching principle governing the study of history will be human beings' attempts to achieve both freedom and justice in a constitutional regime, in short, self-government. Further, history will explore humanities' great conflicts and achievements. A great deal of attention will be given to the Western and American political, religious, intellectual, cultural, and economic traditions. At stake are the questions: "What is the just regime?" "What is the good citizen?" "What is human happiness?" "What peoples have achieved the most and why?" "What leads to the rise of a given people?" "What leads to decline?" "What have been the effects of good and great people (heroes) on history?" "What have been the effects of bad people (villains)?" "What did it mean to be a Greek?" "A Roman?" "A Medieval man/woman?" "A Renaissance man or woman?" "What is Enlightenment?" "What is Awakening?" "What is an American, this new man?"

Science

Students will take four years of science in the high school, two of which will have a laboratory component.

²³Cicero, *Orator* XXXIV [120]

Students should gain a genuine understanding of the physical world and be able to explain such complex scientific ideas and processes as genetic transmission, chemical bonding, atomic theory, and force. Teaching in the sciences will include student exposure to reports of original research, observations or ideas such as Galileo's *The Starry Messenger*, or Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia*.

As with mathematics, the classes will be based upon the study of one branch of science per year, the usual sequence being biology, chemistry, physics. To graduate, students must complete the science sequence through chemistry.

The fourth year will be reserved for higher levels of science such as second-year biology, chemistry, or physics. Other semester-long electives, such as astronomy, may be offered as well. With the permission of the Principal, students may "double-up" in the sciences earlier than the senior year.

Mathematics

Students will take four years of mathematics in the high school.

Students will be placed in math courses by ability.

As in the Lower School and Junior High, most math classes in the high school will not allow the use of calculators. There may be exceptions in the higher levels (beyond Algebra II), provided the students do not rely on calculators as a substitute for fully understanding the principles.

As with the other subjects, math will be taught in a classical manner. In addition to acquiring the necessary understanding of math facts, students will also learn the real math behind the algorithm, as opposed to simply performing the various operations without understanding what those operations really mean. This theoretical and conceptual approach, which was also the basis of Singapore math in the earlier grades, forms a solid math foundation.

Beyond the level of pre-algebra, mathematics will be taught in sequence, with each year given to a particular branch of math: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-calculus, and Calculus. Students may be allowed to "double-up" in math with the approval of the Principal.

In order to ensure that students have actually mastered each level of math, the school may require a performance examination to be administered at the end of the year to determine which students may pass to the next level. Algebra I is the lowest level math course for which high school credit will be given.

Government and Political Philosophy

At a minimum, students will complete a semester course in American government.

Civic education is fundamental to the mission of the classical school. The government course will normally be taught in the junior year, while other electives in political philosophy may be offered as well in future years.

The government class in high school will be centered on the Constitution. Since the students in high school will be at a much higher reading level, the class will, in addition to the Constitution, read supporting documents such as debates from the Constitutional Convention, *The Federalist Papers*, *The Anti-Federalist Papers*, important Supreme Court cases, selections from Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, and the speeches of American political figures reflecting upon the Constitution.

Particular attention will be given to the original intent of the Framers of the Constitution by seeking to understand why they created a federal government with a separation of powers; limits upon the executive; a bicameral legislature with different terms and only one branch derived directly from the people; a system known as federalism with national, state, and local governments having different spheres of action; a list of *enumerated* powers; a bill of rights, and so on. The class will seek to understand the Founders' views and explore the extent to which modern American history has been the attempt to get out from under the rule of law provided in the Constitution.

As in the history classes, a textbook may be used, particularly in order to familiarize students with the nuts and bolts of American politics (how a bill becomes a law, the party system, etc.), but the course as a whole will be taught through original sources.

The Fine Arts

In high school, students will continue to study and perform in the arts, most likely in elective courses. Music will include performance courses such as choir, band, and orchestra (once the budget allows). Art will include both studio art and art history.

At a minimum, students will complete two semester courses in the fine arts, one of which must be music.

As in the K-8 curriculum, effort will be made to teach students how the arts provide transcendent and timeless lessons to human beings. They are both a reflection of the philosophy and ethos of a given age, as well as the striving of human beings to reach the realm of the beautiful. While technique and composition in either music performance or painting and sculpture are important matters to study, students will also explore the overall theme and meaning of any work of art or music. For example, what does the Sistine Chapel Ceiling tell us not only about Michelangelo's or Renaissance technique but also about the nature of man? What insight do we gain about the human spirit from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony?

In keeping with the spirit of liberal education, students will be taught the fine arts largely through the works of the best masters, including Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Monet. Students will study the techniques of these artists to gain an insight into the creation of

great works of art. This type of study will help students assimilate some of the techniques learned from the masters into their own work in the performance music and studio art classes.

To this end Ascent will hold an annual “Evening of the Arts” where students are able to showcase their best artwork which they have completed during the year.

In music, students will be exposed to a wide array of music from jazz to orchestral music as well as vocal music that includes songs from the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods. They will learn about composers and their music, the elements of music, and vocal ranges.

Economics

Students will take one semester of economics, normally in the senior year.

The economics class will explore the basic principles of free markets: supply and demand, the division of labor, pricing, and incentives. Aspects of both micro and macroeconomics will be taught. The course may employ a textbook but will not be driven by a textbook approach. The fundamental idea behind the class is that man is an economic being: he is disposed to invent, build, and sell things in order to better his environment and improve his lot in life.

The relations between the market and the political regime will be explored, taking up the important question of what human efforts and enterprises should be performed by government and which should be performed by the free market.

Just as in government class, the perspective of the Founders, and in this instance the era of the Founding Fathers (classical theory), will serve as the guiding light of the class. Readings will include selections from Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations: Books I-III*, as well as more recent books such as Henry Hazlitt’s *Economics in One Lesson* and selections from Thomas Sowell’s *Basic Economics*.

Latin and Modern Language

Students will be required to take at least one more year of Latin in the high school, typically in the first year. After successfully completing Latin 1a, 1b, and II in grades 6-8, students are ready for Latin III in their freshman year of high school. (The Latin teacher will recommend placement based on a student’s progress in Junior High.) This preparation will provide an opportunity for students to read some of their texts both in English and be able to read selected passages in the original Latin in their freshman Classical Literature course (for example, the first 32 lines of *Vergil’s Aeneid*). This will give students a window into the beauty of the Latin language.

Students are required to take at least 3 years of a foreign language in high school, and will either continue in the Latin sequence after their freshman year, or take a modern language elective.

If a new student enrolls at the high school level with no Latin background, the student will be required to complete Latin I, and will have the option of continuing in Latin or taking a modern language to complete the high school foreign language graduation requirement.

Moral Philosophy

Students will take a semester-long class introducing them to the formal study of morality and right conduct.

The basic premise of this class is that man is a moral being: man, despite passions and appetites that often take him down the road to ruin, has a conscience (or a moral sense) that urges him to live virtuously. Indeed, living virtuously is the source of happiness, and happiness the reward of living virtuously.

In order to teach this primary lesson, the class will lay the philosophical foundation for living virtuously and show instances of virtue in action.

The class will not use a textbook but work through sources that shed light on the desirability of right living or the consequences of wrong living. While some of the readings may be from works of philosophy, others will be from literature and history. The purpose will be to show students how human beings attain both happiness and respectability when they live according to conscience and the highest ideas of the good life and how the anarchy of passion and appetite does not lead to genuine happiness or human excellence. Students will see through noble examples in literature and history how human beings practice the virtues. They will also learn how virtue should be the governing force in human relations, whether in friendship, marriage, fatherhood and motherhood, leadership, business, politics, and so on.

The end and purpose of the course is to teach young people how to delight in doing the good and to arm them with the arguments needed to combat the moral relativist sophisms of our culture and the modern age.

Electives

Electives may be offered in subjects other than those above. It is likely that students will wish to take electives in modern foreign languages, art, music, and technology.

Students may decide to continue in Latin beyond the year requirement for graduation, or they may study foreign languages as the school is able provide those teachers. The school will seek out teachers who are fluent in foreign languages, as the majority of the class will be conducted in the language being studied. As soon as possible, students will be required to read in the language, with the intent of being able to translate classic children's stories (at least) by the end of the first year. In subsequent years, the reading of literature in the foreign language will be a significant part of the course.

Ascent will decide whether to require a one-semester course in technology, the purpose being to familiarize students with the basics of computer literacy: spreadsheets, different formats such as PDF, and even some web design. Similarly, keyboarding may be offered in the Junior High as students begin writing formal papers.

Senior Thesis

The senior thesis will be looked upon as a culmination of a classical school education and the rite of passage to a life of virtue and self-government.

Every senior will write and deliver orally a senior thesis on a topic of his or her choosing that emerges from the curriculum. A satisfactory performance on the senior thesis will be required for graduation.

Because the assignment is writing intensive, it will most likely be anchored in the senior literature class. Nonetheless, the student's thesis may concentrate on books, events, or themes that draw on any of the core courses. In the spirit of *The Great Conversation*, the broad questions the thesis will seek to address are "What is a human being?"; "What is a citizen?"; "What is justice?"; "Who is a hero?"; "What is the beautiful?"; "What is the good life?"

These are big questions. Because teenagers are generally far from original thinkers or as yet experienced enough in life to give definitive answers, students will be invited to adopt a particular perspective on one or more of these questions based on the books, events, ideas, heroes, and human achievements that have most moved and provoked them. The students will then be able to speak through the perspective of great thinkers such as Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, the Founding Fathers, or Lincoln.

CU Succeed Program

The CU Succeed program is for high school students wishing to pursue college credit during high school. The courses are college level and require that the high school teacher have at least a master's degree in the specified subject, and meet CU Denver's qualifications to be an adjunct faculty member.

It typically takes one year at the high school level to complete a three-unit semester college course. In this case, the students enroll in the course in the semester that they will complete the course. This means that students start the course in the fall but have until February to officially enroll in the program (enrollment for college credit is not required to take the course). The cost per credit is \$77.

The following are sample CU Succeed classes which may be offered, based on student interest and teacher availability. Unless otherwise noted, the courses are the equivalent of 3 college credits:

Calculus I

Calculus II
Statistics
Biology II
Chemistry II
Physics II
Latin I or II (or above)
French I or II (or above)
Advanced Literary Studies (6 college credits)
Advanced Language / Composition (6 college credits)
American History

Further details about the CU Succeed program, including a list of courses that are guaranteed to transfer to any university in Colorado are included in **Appendix 20**.

3. Instruction

Wisdom begins in wonder.²⁴

In classical education, the methods used to deliver the rich content to the students are as important as the content itself. Our goal is to provide an instructional setting in which our students can best develop their character and minds, including the cultivation of virtue and cultural literacy, effective communication skills, and civic responsibility. This requires the pursuit a rigorous curriculum, coupled with sound instructional methods. Ascent will base our instruction on the approaches used in the best public and private classical schools around the country.

Classical Teaching Methods: Effective, Disciplined Teaching and Learning

The basic principle of classical teaching is that the teacher is required to impart knowledge to students, and is fundamentally responsible for the leadership and direction of the classroom. In a classical classroom in the lower grades, the desks are arranged in rows facing the teacher, and the classrooms are quiet, orderly, and disciplined. A highly knowledgeable teacher stands in front of the class and leads the students into an understanding of the subject matter. The teacher will also actively engage the students with questions, both written and oral, to develop the students' ability to process and communicate information through language.

This approach is used in the higher grades as well, but will often include the addition of the seminar class, in which the room may have a circular configuration. In both cases, the teacher provides the leadership in shaping the discussion of the subject matter, which requires the teacher to have both expertise in the subject and strong communication skills. There is an understanding that education is fundamentally a partnership between the teacher and student; the teacher provides a disciplined framework within which to achieve subject mastery, but the student ultimately has to do the work and make the effort.

²⁴Paraphrase of Socrates from Plato's *Theaetetus*, which focuses on the relationship between philosophy and knowledge.

The instruction at Ascent Classical Academy is based on the following understanding of human nature and education:²⁵

- Human minds long to know things and young minds often prove the most inquisitive;
- Children and young people have the mental capacities for learning;
- The memory is arguably the strongest of these capacities and must be exercised regularly, as would any muscle, in order to gain strength; students will memorize facts of History and Geography, rules of phonics and spelling, facts of Science and Math.
- Learning discrete facts about the world around them enables young people to begin to understand that world and thereby gain insight and confidence, thus inviting further inquiry;
- Knowledge of real subjects is both a marketable commodity and valuable for its own sake. Consequently, the teachers of the classical school will foremost be knowledgeable men and women, preferably trained in the arts and sciences.

Approach to Instruction²⁶

Lower School (K-6)

In the Lower School, instruction will focus on the *explicit* teaching of the basic principles and rules of reading, writing, grammar, speaking, and math. A mastery of these principles and rules provides a strong foundation for all subsequent thought, without which the child will struggle in every subject in future years.

Instruction in the Lower School will have the following characteristics:

- **Lecture/direct instruction/dictation:** teacher presents information; students listen.
- **Modeling/demonstration:** teacher illustrates how something is done.
- **Principle-based question and answer:** teacher asks question, students supply answer immediately.
- **Read aloud:** teacher reads from text.
- **Singing/chanting/rhymes:** students learn a song or chant that tells about information they are to know, while enjoying the learning experience.
- **Drilling small bits of information:** memorization technique that helps students learn large quantities of information.

²⁵These observations on human nature and education come from Dr. Terrence Moore, *Classical Charter School Academic Program*, Hillsdale Barney Charter School Initiative

²⁶This section is adapted from Dr. Terrence Moore, *Classical Charter School Academic Program*, Hillsdale Barney Charter School Initiative

- **Flashcards:** the review small bits of information on cards – usually math or vocabulary.
- **Sound-offs:** group memorization of data by dividing up facts.
- **Explicit and Systematic Phonics Instruction:** the direct teaching of letter-sound relationships through a specified sequence, the foundation for literacy is established and provides students the ability to decode the printed word. Students will be required to “sound out” words based upon the rules of phonics, not to guess at them, and spelling will be taught by applying phonetic rules.
- **Explicit English Grammar Instruction:** the use of tools such as diagramming and the study of root words, students will be equipped to speak and write with a high degree of communicative competence. As students learn to identify parts of speech and seek to develop syntax, they are able to clearly communicate with society on all levels. As students deepen their understanding of the English language and its structure, they improve their ability to easily and fluently express more complex thoughts.
- **Vocabulary Instruction:** knowledge of the origin and meaning of words, including Latin and Greek roots. Teachers are required to be well-versed in language (Ascent will have a preference for hiring liberal-arts graduates in languages such as English, the classics, linguistics). Extensive use of dictionaries, as opposed to guesswork methods such as “inferring meaning from context.” Teachers will recognize the value of constantly explaining words to students. Require students to speak Standard English rather than slang. The teacher will correct ungrammatical language.
- **Literature Instruction:** reading of classic literature rich in language; fairy tales, fables, poetry, to include memorization of famous lines and poems. Children are particularly adept at memorization, and are able to learn songs, rhymes, and recite facts with relative ease. Because young children are so eager to memorize, we challenge them by providing substantial subject matter for them to memorize.
- **Numeracy Instruction:** learning and memorizing arithmetic facts, and also understanding the *concepts* behind numerical relations. For example, What is a fraction? What does it mean to multiply two threes (2×3)? What is place value? When students learn only the algorithm, they do not understand the mathematics behind the equation. No calculators. Premature use of calculators undermines numeracy or “number sense.” *The human mind* is the original calculator. When human beings forget this, they become no more than appendages to their machines.
- **Instruction in the Power of Memory:** Ascent will place instructional value on learning beautiful words by heart, and will bring back the lost art of recitation. The memorization of great poems and lines from literature and speeches is the key to actually “owning” them – capturing the beauty of language in a student’s soul to draw on for the rest of his

or her life.

- **Instruction in Moral Literacy:** the development of good character in our students by maintaining order and decorum in the classrooms, holding students accountable for their assignments and personal conduct, and explicitly teaching them the fundamentals of good character. The components of the discipline plan will be made clear elsewhere.
- **Introduction to instruction in the Socratic Method:** while most instruction will be direct, the idea of the Socratic Method will be introduced with increasing intensity as students advance through the elementary grades.

Junior High (7-8)

Instruction in the Junior High builds on the programs begun in the Lower School, with students continuing to accumulate knowledge and advance in skill areas. Students' increased capacity for logic in thinking, speaking, and writing will enable them to go into greater depth in their coursework. More focus will be placed on developing analytic thinking and reasoning skills, including the capacity for abstract thought, discovering relationships between fields of knowledge, and fitting knowledge into a logical framework. The level of interactive discussion between students and instructors increases as students learn to reason and develop conclusions.

- **Integration and analysis:** Students are expected to demonstrate the ability to move beyond facts to logical integration and analysis. For instance, in the study of literature, whereas the grammar stage student is expected primarily to show comprehension through summary, the logic stage scholar is asked to interpret and evaluate how multiple elements of fiction contribute to the meaning of a text. Similarly, in mathematics, the students are expected to recognize relationships in numerical patterns, explain relationships (e.g., equivalences and probabilities) and to distinguish between the effectiveness of problem-solving strategies for various problems and contexts. The study of science extends beyond factual presentation and rehearsals of scientific inquiry to introductory investigation and experimentation with data gathering and data analysis.
- **Organization of arguments:** During the Junior High years, students are beginning to think independently and develop a propensity for argument. Classical education teaches students of this age to argue well and order facts into organized statements and arguments based on sound reasoning from first principles. "Where is your evidence?" will be the question constantly asked by teachers in every discipline. The study of logic helps students understand the fundamentals of a good argument. Practice in making written and oral arguments helps to further develop these skills. Teachers encourage the use of argumentation in each subject, understanding that each subject has its own logic. In science, we use the development and testing of a hypothesis. In math, we develop a student's ability to logically orient numbers through the more abstract concepts of algebra and geometry.

- **Guided writing:** teacher leads students in a writing assignment
- **Guided problem solving:** teacher leads students in solving problems in math, logic, science
- **Guided oral presentations:** teacher provides directions to lead students through sharing information
- **Guided reading and response:** teacher leads students through a text using text parsing, questioning, and inferences
- **Supervised independent practice:** teacher monitors student work in class
- **Teaching of Study Skills:** Time management, organizing, memory techniques, note-taking, outlining, and research will be emphasized throughout Ascent Classical Academy and integrated throughout the curriculum to equip students for higher learning. Developing stamina for challenging and complex work is imperative for the promotion of a strong work ethic.

High School (9-12)

At the high school level, the Socratic method will increasingly be used in the study of history through original sources, literature through complete classic works, the sciences through intensive experimentation, understanding of the concepts, and applied science. The mathematics program will emphasize complete understanding of the concepts behind numerical relations. As students master the material, they become increasingly capable of taking part in *The Great Conversation*.

- **Utilization of Primary Source Documents:** Primary sources are materials that were created by those who participated in or witnessed the events of the past. Examples include letters, reports, photographs, drawings, sound recordings, motion pictures, and artifacts, as well as other items. Although rights and duties are not tangible, primary sources that reflect and reinforce them are. Primary sources illustrate real events and experiences and introduce students to the individuals who lived them. Primary sources have a significant appeal to students not only in terms of their tangibility and authenticity; their physical attributes can further capture student attention. The letterhead, handwriting, special markings, size, color, texture, or other features of a document can engage students and help them to recall information later.
- **The Socratic Method:** The use of direct, intentional questions to guide students' understanding of problems and their solutions will be a fundamental part of instruction, particularly in literature and history courses in the high school.
- **Effective Communication:** Rhetoric is the art of communicating well. Once a student has obtained knowledge of the facts and developed the skills necessary to arrange those facts into logical arguments, the student must then develop the skill of communicating

those arguments to others. During the high school years, we will focus on helping students develop their minds to think and articulate concepts to others. Writing papers, researching, and orating ideas are skills required in all subjects. Ascent adds polish to these skills to create a knowledgeable student who can communicate effectively. We leverage these skills through the final requirement of the defense of a senior thesis.

Target Population

Our curriculum and supplemental programs are time-tested and researched based, and have successfully been implemented for students from academically, socially, and economically-diverse backgrounds. **Appendix 6** provides descriptions of successful classical schools which cater to a wide variety of student populations and backgrounds – from Westside Preparatory School (inner city Chicago), to Estancia Valley Classical Academy (New Mexico), to South Bronx Classical School, Savannah Classical Academy, Vanguard Classical Academy (Denver), and the Thomas MacLaren School (Colorado Springs).

Ascent Classical Academy’s emphasis on foundational skills and a content-rich curriculum is beneficial to students with a variety of learning abilities and backgrounds. One example we have already cited is Singapore Math. English Language Learners will benefit from the program’s clear and simple explanations of math concepts, which are often just a few words in a cartoon balloon.²⁷ The program’s detailed instruction, questions, problem solving, and visual and hands-on aids — such as blocks, cards and bar charts — ensure that students master the material. Ideally, students do not move on until they have thoroughly learned a topic. Educators say that slowing down the learning process gives students a solid math foundation upon which to build increasingly complex skills.²⁸

Another example is the Riggs method — The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking is appropriate and recommended for teaching all students the explicit phonics, reading, and language arts they must learn in order to succeed. Riggs is a multi-sensory, brain-based approach that addresses virtually every student’s learning style through four pathways to the brain: sight, sound, voice, and writing. This time-tested method not only provides a strong foundation for students who demonstrate academic progress, but is also an effective program for students with pre-existing academic problems. This approach accelerates the learning process and provides an optimal learning opportunity for each student.

Another feature of the Riggs method is its use of appropriate sequencing. Riggs begins at the student’s speech and oral comprehension levels; it allows students to build one skill upon another, always moving from the known to the unknown. Students are presented with a limited number of concepts — or information — in a given period of time. They then practice these concepts in a variety of ways until mastery is achieved. This method will serve ELL students as well as students with special needs across the spectrum.

²⁷ John Hoven and Barry Garelick, “Singapore Math: Simple or Complex?” *Educational Leadership* 65:3, November 2007

²⁸ Internet - Singapore Math Adopted in More US Schools - *The New York Times* Sept. 30, 2010

In addition to offering robust faculty training in core academic subjects, Ascent Classical Academy will provide training in classroom differentiation strategies for students with specific needs. Ascent Classical Academy will cooperate with the local school district and the CDE to ensure appropriate resources are brought to bear on problems that may arise. Additional special education services will be provided by specialists in accordance with a student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). For more detailed information about serving students with special needs, please refer to Section Q - Serving Students with Special Needs.

Implementation of Curriculum: Timeline, Lead Contact, and Action Steps

Ascent Classical Academy has a well-defined curriculum consisting of the following programs, aligned with the Colorado Academic Standards:

- Core Knowledge Literature, Science, Music, History, and Art (K-8)
- Riggs
- Singapore Math
- Latin
- Upper Level Math, Science, Literature, and History
- Modern Language

Timeline

These programs will be implemented in the first year of operation. As the high school grows, courses will be added. The High School Course Guide draft, included in **Appendix 19**, outlines how additional high school classes will be phased in after Year 1.

Lead Contact

The principal is the lead, responsible for the continuous improvement of the implementation and monitoring of the curriculum.

Action Steps

Throughout the year, in order to ensure student mastery of the curriculum, the Principal will observe and evaluate the teachers' effectiveness in delivering instruction. Likewise, the Principal will receive feedback from the faculty regarding the continuous improvement effort.

Achievement and School Improvement

The small-school environment and the cohesive K-12 model created at Ascent Classical Academy will be the foundation from which all our students will benefit, especially those who enter at below grade level.

Ascent Classical Academy believes that an early and on-going evaluation of student preparedness to meet the demands of the curriculum is vital. There will be several methods of student evaluation and contact with parents.

School Improvement Plan

A key goal of the school's learning measurement process will be to provide results of findings and outcomes by way of communication and feedback to students and overall stakeholders. Students, parents, staff and board members will receive published reports of student achievement on an individual and collective basis with the intention of encouraging community ownership of learning outcomes and increased accountability for the teaching and learning practices the school espouses.

These practices will be re-evaluated on an annual basis to allow for adjustment of techniques, strategies, curricula and other relevant programs with the intention of more significantly affecting learning outcomes. Such adjustments will ultimately be incorporated into the school's improvement plan to provide a vehicle for continuous, reflective improvement and overall academic success.

Testing and Data Analysis

As students enter the program, ACAD will conduct our own data analysis and assessment of student learning. Assessment tools include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Riggs and Singapore math student inventories;
- Aimsweb as diagnostic reading assessments;
- WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) for ELL students;
- Teacher-created assessments;
- Portfolios;
- Authentic assessments;
- Observation.

Data from such assessments, in addition to the state required assessments, will be used to identify students not making adequate progress toward the Colorado Academic Standards, and to create an individualized program to improve measurable learning outcomes.

(We understand that the state's implementation of these tests is currently under review, which means that the measures are subject to change under the new evaluation system.)

Students' educational needs will be evaluated by our highly-trained teachers. Students identified as below grade level will immediately be provided with interventions and strategies to help them improve. Instruction will be targeted to bring students up to grade level (or better) and challenge their academic potential for optimal learning. Our ability to monitor and assess these students' progress will be greatly enhanced due to our small student population.

If a student proves to have major deficiencies because of a weak educational background or some other reason, the classroom teacher(s) will, in conjunction with the student services team, work on intervention strategies which may include some pull-out tutoring and additional assignments with the understanding that the purpose is to bring the student up to grade level.

At the lower school level, the modern language section will be used as a pull-out time for interventions. In the case of 7th-12th grade students, additional tutoring and support may be assigned in place of electives. If the student does not have a strong foundation in English, the pull-out is likely to occur during the Latin section, as it is vital that students have a strong foundation in the English language before beginning a study of Latin. Parents will be notified of the particular strategies that are adopted.

Promotion and Retention / Reading Mastery

Solid literacy is the foundation of all learning. Without the ability to read well, a student cannot advance in English, history, the sciences, the arts, and even mathematics. Since language is the basis of all human interaction, a person cannot thrive independently in the world when possessed of only a halting literacy. The ability to read, particularly in the early elementary grades, will therefore be a requirement for promotion.

The school will follow the criteria of reading competency set forth in the Riggs program. Since students in kindergarten and first grade will advance in literacy over the course of the year and all will be given explicit phonics instruction throughout the year, the inability to read at the outset should not be a cause of concern. Parents will be told well in advance if their child may need to be retained.

Student Academic Support

At least once per quarter and in a timely fashion, failing notices will be sent out for students who have a D or an F in an academic subject with the hope that a student's progress can be remediated before failing the term.

In certain cases where more intervention is necessary the teacher, in conjunction with the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) consultant and under the direction of the Principal, may decide to pursue an IEP best meeting the needs of the student.

The objective at Ascent Classical Academy is to maintain the rigorous curriculum designed for each grade. Students may need additional tutoring and support to meet the demands of the program, but we cannot offer remedial classes. We will offer a Basic Composition class to 9th grade students who would benefit from extra instruction before taking the Composition class.

Student Achievement

Students at Ascent Classical Academy should expect to be challenged and to work hard. All students will be expected to master basic skills and content material as well as to master higher

order thinking. Teachers will use performance grouping within the class, where appropriate, in kindergarten through 6th grade. Placement in core subjects in grades 7-12 will be based on aptitude and mastery of previous material. An academic advisor will work closely with students to ensure proper class placement and promotion.

As the 9th through 12th grades grow, Ascent Classical Academy expects to offer additional courses for college credit (CU Succeed) for students choosing a greater challenge.

Classroom Culture and Behavioral Expectations

As evidenced throughout the application Ascent will place a strong emphasis on virtue and the building of character in all our students. Our teachers and administration will set the tone and model virtuous behavior that will then be reinforced during the instruction in the classroom. When appropriate, discussions in class will be centered on our core virtues; students will discuss these ideas as they arise within the literature and text being read.

We find that many students will do the right thing because it is the right thing—not for a prize or to avoid punishment. They expect fair treatment and will thrive in an environment that is committed to teach right from wrong, the difference between justice and injustice, and the importance of serving others. Swift, clear enforcement of the rules is vital; good behavior must be reinforced and poor behavior dealt with expeditiously.

Our character development program will contain the following elements:

- Teachers will establish the principles, and define the rules and behavioral expectations for students, based on school-wide policy.
- Students will be expected to encourage their peers to adhere to these pillars and school administrators will manage student conduct according to these principles.
- Conduct which disrupts learning or threatens to disrupt the operation of the School; which interferes with the rights and privileges of students or other citizens; which endangers the health, safety, or welfare of any person; or which damages property will not be tolerated.
- Students will receive progress reports that include not only academic progress, but progress reflective of their adherence to these character principles.
- Learning Environment

Students are expected to uphold the following Honor Code:

“I am honorable and responsible in conduct, honest in word and deed, respectful of others, and will promote the same.”

More detailed information on our discipline policy is outlined in Section P- Student Discipline, Expulsion, or Suspension.

School Structure

The steering committee of Ascent Classical Academy has counseled with the founders of other successful classical academies for advice, particularly Golden View Classical Academy, Ridgeview Classical Schools, and Liberty Common School. The team has consulted the Barney Charter School Initiative of Hillsdale College for guidance on curriculum and school structure. There is no financial relationship between any parties involved in consultation.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County intends to locate in northern Douglas County, near the I-25 corridor. This will allow the school to be centrally located and accessible to families in Highlands Ranch, Parker, Lone Tree, Castle Pines, and Castle Rock. The school also has interest from families in the Centennial and Greenwood Village area.

The selection of curriculum, hiring of staff, design of our facilities, and the structure of the school will be carefully chosen and maintained to support the mission directly.

The K-3 years are the most critical in the lifelong academic and personal success of a young student. ACAD will be similar to other classical programs with the curricular focus on mastering basic, key concepts to prepare students for long-term success.

ACAC will intentionally integrate two separate schools — grammar and upper — into a unified school on one campus. A “family” atmosphere of respect and cooperation will be promoted among school leaders, teachers, students, and parents, and every individual will be recognized as a part of the family.

The school intends to open with grades K-10 adding 11th grade in Year 2 and 12th grade in Year 3.

Rationale for Opening K-10 in the First Year

The steering committee believes that opening as a K-10 school in the first year, though challenging, will provide the strongest foundation for achieving the best educational instruction for students, based on the following observations:

- A school with high school grades at opening is more attractive to the kind of highly talented principal candidates needed to lead a great school.
- A school with high school grades at opening can attract highly talented teachers who can also serve at the junior high level, thus bringing that level of talent into grades for which recruiting is often more difficult.
- A school that opens with grades K-10 brings a new faculty together in the first year in a way that overcomes a natural sub-grouping which occurs between the grammar school teachers and the upper school teachers. Instead, the teachers develop a common

commitment to the school's mission and to each other as one school, as opposed to two separate schools.

- One of the values of a K-12 school is vertical integration of academic program. Upper grade teachers are subject leaders and can coordinate the curriculum track back down to previous years. A school with upper school teachers at the outset who are specialists in curriculum subjects can assist the elementary school teachers in subjects which they, as generalists, may seek support from those specialists.
- A school that opens as a K-10 overcomes the potential problem that other schools face which open with fewer grades. This problem rests in the enticement to delay in opening the high school due to its perceived difficulty, and the tendency to wait until all the challenges of the first few years are past. This hesitation can stifle the school's movement toward fulfilling its full educational mission.
- A classical school delivers instruction from a challenging and serious curriculum. Teachers find it professionally stimulating, but also very difficult. In time, the curriculum will strengthen the teachers intellectually. A school that opens as a K-10 will permit the teachers to grow in this fashion with the students, and to learn of the content delivered in grades below the one they teach. Without opening K-10, it is quite possible that new high school teachers who arrive in years subsequent to school opening will be in a difficult catch up mode as they teach students who have been learning in this curriculum for several years.
- Many families have more than one child and would want to have all their children in one school. A K-10 range of grades at opening provides a greater probability of having this interest met.

4. Supplemental Programs, Specials or Electives

As a liberal arts program, Ascent Classical Academy offers a rich and broad core curriculum which includes a wide variety of disciplines and subjects, including foreign languages and the fine arts. Our strong focus on the core curriculum will limit our elective offerings.

- The classical school will encourage a robust extracurricular life in music, drama, leadership, community service, public speaking, chess, math and science clubs, team sports, etc. These activities, however, will most likely occur after school hours, rather than during the day.
- Choir, band, and orchestra will be considered a part of the fine arts curriculum and therefore *will* be taught during the school day. Show choirs, jazz bands, and other select groups will hold practices after school.
- Students must maintain a sufficiently high grade point average, as determined by school policy and monitored by the principal, in order to take part in extracurricular activities.

Sports programs must be self-funding. No funding will be allocated to sports programs until teacher salaries are competitive and the schools programs that comprise the core mission are fully funded.

The following activities are samples of student clubs that will be encouraged at Ascent Classical Academy, based on student interest:

- Chess Club
- Drama Club
- Geography Bee
- Guitar Club
- Math Counts
- Logo Club
- Science Bowl
- Spelling Bee
- Yearbook Club

Humanities Day at Ascent Classical Academy

Based on the example of Ridgeview Classical Schools, the school will encourage the faculty and staff to participate in a Humanities Day or some similar event at Ascent Classical Academy, to showcase the kinds of discussions and conversations that teachers and students have every day in class. It will be a day of lectures, readings, performances, and discussions about the humanities. This will provide an opportunity for our local community to join in the Great Conversation, to ask questions, and interact with our teachers.

Evening of the Arts at Ascent Classical Academy

This is an opportunity for students to showcase their best artwork that they have completed during the year.

5. Professional Development

Individual Professional Development Plans

Ascent Classical Academy will provide professional development for all teachers. Teachers will be provided research-based professional development, based on school improvement goals, and will meet in professional learning communities regularly as grade level teams, to analyze student data, and design units and accompanying lessons. The principal will help assess and provide professional development to teachers specific to the needs of the school. New and experienced teachers will be taught to expand upon their initial knowledge base in reading instruction in order to refine their instructional delivery and increase their effectiveness. Teachers will meet with administrators, after benchmarks and testing assessment periods, to analyze student progress and develop an action plan. Finally, staff will be trained to support the

instruction of classical materials within Core Knowledge and the implementation and delivery of the Riggs program through mandatory professional development prior to the opening of the school.

General Expectations

Teacher applicants at Ascent Classical Academy will be expected to possess a degree in a subject such as literature, history, mathematics, science, or an equivalent core subject that indicates a mastery of their discipline. They must have an ability to convey knowledge to young people.

Ascent Classical Academy will make use of the Core Knowledge sequence rather than the Core Knowledge curriculum, leaving the teacher with significant autonomy but also significant responsibility to shape day-to-day lesson plans. The pairs of classes in each grade will share the same curriculum maps; there will be some variation from teacher to teacher, but not a wide divergence in pace or approach.

At the elementary level, the classroom teacher is the primary teacher, but students will be taught Latin by a classicist (grade 6), and art, PE, and music by arts, or “specials,” faculty members.

Prospective teachers are expected to have and maintain an intellectual life, and be capable of discussing major topics within the scope of a liberal arts curriculum.

The work environment at Ascent Classical Academy will be collegial, with teachers frequently participating in extracurricular activities ranging from reading groups with fellow teachers to chaperoning clubs and dances for students.

Individual professional development plans will be administered by the principal in collaboration with the teachers.

First Year Professional Training (August 2018)

In August, immediately prior to the opening of the school, Ascent Classical will provide a 14 day professional development program for the new teaching staff.

[Hillsdale College Professional On-Site Training](#)

This training will include a 10 day professional development program provided by Hillsdale College. Please refer to **Appendix 21** for a copy of the agreement between Ascent Classical Academy and Hillsdale College.

Hillsdale’s teacher training agenda is as follows:

Day 1: Philosophical Foundations of Classical Education; Overview of Core Knowledge

Day 2: Academic Policies; Classroom Management

Day 3: Science; History

Days 4-5: Math

Day 6: Grammar; Composition; K-6 Literature

Days 7-10: K-6 Phonics/Spelling/Handwriting; 7-10 Literature (Day 7 only); Latin (Day 7 only)

Instruction in the teaching of Core Knowledge and Singapore math is included, including the philosophy and design methodology of these programs.

The sequence may change depending upon scheduling. Hillsdale College does not charge the school for this training.

[Ascent Classical Academy Teacher Professional Development](#)

Following the Hillsdale training, an additional six days of professional development are scheduled in August so that the teaching staff can coordinate within grade levels and within disciplines.

The Special Services Team will ensure that as a part of this professional development time, the teachers, staff and administrators have training in meeting the needs of SPED, ELL, GAT, and Section 504 students. This includes the process of identification, assessment, developing a plan, monitoring, and evaluation.

SUBSEQUENT YEARS

[Hillsdale College Professional Training in Michigan](#)

At the end of the first year and in subsequent years, teachers at Ascent Classical travel to Hillsdale, Michigan to attend a three day teacher training program in June, on the Hillsdale College campus.

Topics presented at the summer Hillsdale training include:

[General](#)

Foundations of Classical Education

Classical Education Foundations and Moral Philosophy

Culture, Discipline, and Classroom Management

[History](#)

Teaching Elementary Topics

Teaching the American Founding

Teaching the U.S. Constitution

Teaching Western Civ I (Constitution of the Roman Republic)

Teaching Western Civ II (Renaissance)

Teaching 20th Century American History (and other upper level courses)

English / Literature

Riggs “201”

Grammar

Composition

Teaching Elementary Literature (Example: Tom Sawyer)

Teaching Upper Level Literature

Teaching Poetry

Latin

Latin for Everyone

Building Classroom Resources for Beginning Latin and Beyond

Latin Prep and Exams

National Junior Classical League

Math

Teaching Mathematics Instructional Philosophy

Teaching Singapore Math

Teaching Pre-Algebra

Teaching Math in the Upper Levels

Science

Science Instructional Philosophy

Lectures on the teaching of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Electives

Music

Ideas for Curriculum Planning, Lesson Content, and Assessment within Music Courses

Integrating Music within the Arts and Other Subjects

Growing your Music Program

Learning Theory: Master Teacher Profile

Art

Teaching Art

Hillsdale College does not charge the school for this training. This group of presenters is representative of the types of presenters who will lead the professional development program at the onsite August training at Ascent Classical.

In addition, through its relationship with Ascent Classical Academies, Golden View Classical Academy has invited teachers, parents, and high school students to visit in order to see how an established classical school functions.

Teacher Prep Time and Additional Professional Days

The sample class course schedules in **Appendix 23** indicate the teacher prep periods during the school day. Teachers typically have two prep periods and 5 classes.

New Teachers and On-going Staff Development:

The Center for High Impact Philanthropy makes the following observation regarding teacher quality:

A quality teacher is one who has a positive effect on student learning and development through a combination of content mastery, command of a broad set of pedagogic skills, and communications/interpersonal skills. Quality teachers are life-long learners in their subject areas, teach with commitment, and are reflective upon their teaching practice. They transfer knowledge of their subject matter and the learning process through good communication, diagnostic skills, understanding of different learning styles and cultural influences, knowledge about child development, and the ability to marshal a broad array of techniques to meet student needs. They set high expectations and support students in achieving them. They establish an environment conducive to learning, and leverage available resources outside as well as inside the classroom. The Principal will ensure that teachers have the appropriate IEP training to coordinate with student services and staff regarding the identification of students for student services. Teachers will have an understanding of the development, implementation, and assessment of intervention plans.²⁹

The principal, in collaboration with teachers, will develop a school professional development program for new and continuing teachers, administrators, and other staff.³⁰ The purpose of this effort will be to ensure that teachers who are new to the school are able to effectively implement the school's curriculum, and to be a part of a culture of continuous improvement.

The professional development program will have the following general structure:

- Needs assessment;
- Goal setting;
- Improvement;
- Assessment.

The principal will provide feedback to teachers and staff throughout the year.

Academic Discussion Groups

²⁹ *High Impact Philanthropy to Improve Teaching Quality in the U.S.*, School of Social Policy & Practice | University of Pennsylvania, 2010, page 7.

³⁰ Our plan will include programs and elements that are consistent with state and district policy. Please refer to *Section O Waivers* for more information.

Based on the model at Golden View Classical Academy, a part of the staff development program at Ascent Classical Academy will include the cultivation of intellectual collegiality amongst the teaching staff. Once a week, the faculty will meet to discuss a text that has been provided to them beforehand. Sometimes these texts have an obvious connection with teaching and learning, but occasionally the piece is simply read because it is interesting or especially well written. The point of the discussion is often less about the text than about fostering discussion between the veteran Ascent Classical Academy faculty and its newest members.

Teachers should participate in weekly conversations, because in nuanced and subtle ways, these exercises will bear fruit in their classrooms. It is also important that faculty have an intellectual outlet and are not consumed by the grind that can be the first year of teaching at a school like Ascent Classical Academy. For parents or students, but especially for prospective teachers interested in applying to Ascent Classical Academy, the following is a representative list of the types of articles that may be discussed:

- **Augustine**. "The Teacher," in *Against the Academicians and The Teacher*. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1995.
- **Huxley**, Aldous. "Knowledge and Understanding," in *Complete Essays, Volume V, 1939-1956*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002.
- **Mansfield**, Harvey C. "Science and Non-Science in Liberal Education," in *The New Atlantis*, Summer 2013.
- **Murray**, Charles. *The Europe Syndrome and the Challenge to American Exceptionalism*. <http://www.american.com/archive/2009/march-2009/the-europe-syndrome-and-the-challenge-to-american-exceptionalism> (accessed on 23 January 2014).
- **Nelson**, Robert H. "The Secular Religions of Progress," in *The New Atlantis*, Summer 2013.
- **Newman**, John Henry. *The Idea of a University*, chapters 5-7. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982.
- **Oakeshott**, Michael. "A Place of Learning," in *The Voice of Liberal Learning*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001.
- **Oakeshott**, Michael. "The Voice of Conversation in the Education of Mankind," in *What is History and Other Essays*. Charlottesville, VA: Imprint Academic, 2004.
- **Orwell**, George. "Notes on Nationalism," in *Essays*. New York: Everyman's Library, 2002.
- **Ruskin**, John. "The Nature of the Gothic," in *On Art and Life*. New York: Penguin, 2005.
- **Schall**, James V. "What a Student Owes His Teacher," in *Another Sort of Learning*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988.
- **Schumacher**, E.F. "The Greatest Resource – Education," in *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2010.
- **Sowell**, Thomas. "Intellect and Intellectuals," and "Knowledge and Notions," in *Intellectuals and Society*. New York: Basic Books, 2010.
- **Thompson**, C. Bradley. "The New Abolitionism: Why Education Emancipation is the Moral Imperative of Our Time," in *The Objective Standard*, Winter 2012-2013.

Participation in Colloquia and Humanities Day will also be encouraged.

Some additional sample resources for veteran teachers include the following:

The Colorado Council for Economic Education (CCEE) provides economic and personal financial literacy (PFL) programs for Colorado K-12 teachers and students. Throughout the year, CCEE offers classes that enable teachers to help students meet Colorado's Academic Standards in both Economics and PFL. Participants receive solid economic content, engaging pedagogical practices, as well as state-of-the-art teaching resources / materials. These courses are usually offered with the option of graduate –level continuing education credit for teachers.

[The Bill of Rights Institute: Constitutional Seminars for Teachers](#)

These professional development programs are designed to include both content and pedagogy. The day-long seminars engage teachers with leading academics on important constitutional principles, historical events, and Supreme Court rulings. Led by a Master Teacher, teachers explore ways to bring knowledge to the classroom using Bill of Rights Institute materials and teaching strategies. Each participant in the one-day programs is given a professional development certificate showing completion of 6 contact hours of instruction. State and local requirements for continuing education credits vary widely, but the Bill of Rights institute is happy to provide any documentation that a participating teacher may need to satisfy these requirements.

6. Annual Calendar & Daily Schedule

The following draft of the 2018-2019 calendar outlines the course of the school year, which is divided into two semesters with four quarters and includes 162 total days in school (student contact days) and 180 teacher work days. A copy of the calendar can be found in **Appendix 24**.

The 16-day professional development program, previously described, takes place in late July and August. The 11-day block of professional development days in June marks the time period in which Ascent Classical Academy teachers travel to Hillsdale, Michigan to receive yearly training in a 2 day professional seminar (with 1-2 travel days). The teachers will be divided into three groups according to the grade level taught. Each group will be scheduled to leave for Michigan on a different day, according to Hillsdale's schedule.



Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County 2018-2019 School Calendar

| 2018 | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| August | | | | | | |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

| 2019 | | | | | | |
|---------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| January | | | | | | |
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

| | Total days | Hours per day | Total hours | Minimum req'd | Extra hours | Extra days |
|--------------|------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|------------|
| Secondary | 162 | 6.83 | 1107.00 | 1056 | 51.00 | 2 |
| Elementary | 162 | 7 | 1134 | 990 | 144 | 2 |
| Kindergarten | 162 | 3.08 | 499.45 | 450 | 49.4 | 2 |

| |
|---------------------------------|
| Contact Days |
| No School |
| First/Last day of School |
| No School/Potential Make-up Day |

| Day start | Day finish |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 7:40 AM | 3:00 PM |
| AM Kinder start | AM Kinder finish |
| 7:40 AM | 10:45 AM |
| PM Kinder start | PM Kinder finish |
| 11:55 AM | 3:00 PM |

| September | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | | | | | | 19 |

| February | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | | | | | | |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | | |
| | | | | | | 18 |

| October | | | | | | |
|---------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |
| | | | | | | 21 |

| March | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | 1 |
| | | | | | | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | 16 |

| November | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| | | | | | 3 | |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | |
| | | | | | | 17 |

| April | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | |
| | | | | | | 20 |

| December | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | 15 |

| May | | | | | | |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | | | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |
| | | | | | | 18 |

The lower school has a 6.83 hour day (7:40-3:00). The number of student hours in school for the year is 1,107.

The Junior and High Schools have a 6.83 hour day (7:40-3:00). The number of student hours in school for the year is 1,107.

The class schedule is ordered according to the following principles:

Grammar School

1. English and math are best scheduled in the morning when the students are most alert.
2. English literacy subjects are best taught at the beginning of the day in grades K-4. This schedule also allows parent volunteers to participate right after they bring their own children to school (primarily in grades 1 and 2, and possibly 3).
3. In the elementary grades, "Reading" means the students read the practice reading books in their ability-grouped circles. "Literature" means the teacher is teaching a work of literature to the students.
4. A common math block (10:25-11:15 am) across all elementary grades permits ability grouping of the students.
5. The "specials" (Music, Art, PE, Modern Foreign Language) normally meet every other day. In the 6th grade, students take Latin full time and do not have P.E.
6. With a school of several hundred students, daily opening activities (attendance recording, pledge of allegiance, recitations, and announcements) are best done in the classroom.
7. In the elementary school, lunch is staggered somewhat to prevent overcrowding of the lunchroom and playground.
8. Recesses and restroom breaks are scattered through the schedule to accommodate the younger students.
9. Kindergarten is half-day.
10. With the exception of the kindergarten teacher (who teaches music and art), teachers have prep time during the music/art/modern language/P.E. "specials."

An example of the Grammar School schedule is as follows:



Ascent Classical Academy Grammar School Sample Schedule

| TIMES | Grade K | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 |
|-------------|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 7:30-7:40 | Opening | | | | | | |
| 7:40-7:50 | Phonics / Reading / Spelling | Reading | Reading | Literature | Literature | Spelling/ Grammar/ Handwriting | Spelling/ Grammar/ Handwriting |
| 7:50-8:00 | | | | | | | |
| 8:00-8:10 | | | | | | | |
| 8:10-8:20 | | | | | | | |
| 8:20-8:30 | Music - Art - P.E. rotation | Phonics/ Spelling/ Grammar/ Handwriting | Phonics/ Spelling/ Grammar/ Handwriting | Spelling/ Grammar/ Handwriting | Spelling/ Grammar/ Handwriting | Sec. 5a Mod. Lang. & P.E. Sec. 5b Music & Art | Sec. 6a Latin A Sec. 6b Music & Art |
| 8:30-8:40 | | | | | | | |
| 8:40-8:50 | | | | | | | |
| 8:50-9:00 | History / Science | Literature | Literature | Literature | Literature | 10 min break | 10 min break |
| 9:00-9:10 | | | | | | | |
| 9:10-9:20 | Recess | Recess | Recess | 5 min break | 5 min break | 10 min break | 10 min break |
| 9:20-9:30 | | | | | | | |
| 9:30-9:40 | K Singapore Math | 1 Singapore Math | 2 Singapore Math | 3 Singapore Math | 4 Singapore Math | 5 Singapore Math | 6 Singapore Math |
| 9:40-9:50 | | | | | | | |
| 9:50-10:00 | | | | | | | |
| 10:00-10:10 | | | | | | | |
| 10:10-10:20 | | | | | | | |
| 10:20-10:30 | Literature | 5 min break | 5 min break | 5 min break | 5 min break | Sec. 5a Music & Art Sec. 5b Mod. Lang & P.E. | Sec. 6a Music & Art Sec. 6b Latin A |
| 10:30-10:40 | | | | | | | |
| 10:40-10:50 | | | | | | | |
| 10:50-11:00 | | | | | | | |
| 11:00-11:10 | Recess (enrichment) | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | 10 min break | 10 min break |
| 11:10-11:20 | | | | | | | |
| 11:20-11:30 | Opening | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | Lunch | 10 min break | 10 min break |
| 11:30-11:40 | | | | | | | |
| 11:40-11:50 | Phonics / Reading / Spelling | Recess | Recess | Recess | Recess | Science | Science |
| 11:50-12:00 | | | | | | | |
| 12:00-12:10 | | | | | | | |
| 12:10-12:20 | | | | | | | |
| 12:20-12:30 | History / Science | 5 min break | 5 min break | 5 min break | 5 min break | Lunch | Lunch |
| 12:30-12:40 | | | | | | | |
| 12:40-12:50 | Music - Art - P.E. rotation | Sec. 1a Mod. Lang. & P.E. Sec. 1b Music & Art | Sec. 2a Mod. Lang. & P.E. Sec. 2b Music & Art | History / Geography | History / Geography | Recess | Recess |
| 12:50-1:00 | | | | | | | |
| 1:00-1:10 | | | | | | | |
| 1:10-1:20 | Recess | Sec. 1a Music & Art Sec. 1b Mod. Lang & P.E. | Sec. 2a Music & Art Sec. 2b Mod. Lang & P.E. | Recess | Recess | Literature | Literature |
| 1:20-1:30 | | | | | | | |
| 1:30-1:40 | K Singapore Math | History / Geography | History / Geography | Sec. 3a Music & Art Sec. 3b Mod. Lang & P.E. | Sec. 4a Music & Art Sec. 4b Mod. Lang & P.E. | History / Geography / Economics | History / Geography / Economics |
| 1:40-1:50 | | | | | | | |
| 1:50-2:00 | | | | | | | |
| 2:00-2:10 | Literature | History / Geography | History / Geography | Sec. 3a Music & Art Sec. 3b Mod. Lang & P.E. | Sec. 4a Music & Art Sec. 4b Mod. Lang & P.E. | History / Geography / Economics | History / Geography / Economics |
| 2:10-2:20 | | | | | | | |
| 2:20-2:30 | | | | | | | |

The final schedule will be determined based on space and actual school day.

Junior High and Senior High School

1. There are seven 50 minute daily class periods plus a 30 minute study hall. There is a single lunch period.
2. Students can consult with teachers, begin homework, and receive additional reading instruction (if needed) in a common study hall after lunch. The study hall, which generally takes place in the student's homeroom, is 30 minutes. Expectations about studious behavior are established from the beginning.
3. The standard teaching load is five classes, though there may be some variation.
4. The schedule assumes a 5-minute passing period is adequate.
5. The Junior High and High School follow the same schedule.

For a master list of K-12 schedules for Years 1 through 5, which includes teacher prep periods, please refer to **Appendix 23**.

Sample schedules for the junior high and high schools are included below:



Ascent Classical Academy Junior High School Sample Schedule

| | 7a | 7b |
|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Period 1 | CK English | Latin B |
| Period 2 | CK Science | CK English |
| Period 3 | 7a Singapore Math / Algebra I | CK History |
| Period 4 | Lunch | Lunch |
| Period 5 | Latin B | CK Science |
| Period 6 | CK Music/Art | CK Music/Art |
| Period 7 | CK History | 7b Singapore Math |
| Period 8 | Elective | Elective |

| | 8a | 8b |
|----------|----------------------|--------------|
| Period 1 | CK Science | CK History |
| Period 2 | Latin C | Algebra I |
| Period 3 | Algebra I / Geometry | Latin C |
| Period 4 | Lunch | CK Science |
| Period 5 | CK English | Lunch |
| Period 6 | CK History | CK English |
| Period 7 | CK Music/Art | CK Music/Art |
| Period 8 | Elective | Elective |



Ascent Classical Academy High School Sample Schedule

| | 9a | 9b |
|----------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Period 1 | Biology I | Geometry / Algebra II |
| Period 2 | Latin I | West. Civ. I |
| Period 3 | Geometry / Algebra | Composition/Basic Comp./Elect. |
| Period 4 | Lunch | Lunch |
| Period 5 | Composition/Basic Comp./Elect. | Classical Literature |
| Period 6 | West. Civ. I | Biology I |
| Period 7 | Classical Literature | Latin I |
| Period 8 | Elective | Elective |

| | 10a | 10b |
|----------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Period 1 | British Literature | Algebra II / Geometry |
| Period 2 | Chemistry | British Literature |
| Period 3 | P.E. / Elective | P.E. / Elective |
| Period 4 | Lunch | West. Civ. II |
| Period 5 | Elective | Elective |
| Period 6 | Algebra II / Pre-Calc | Lunch |
| Period 7 | West. Civ. II | Chemistry / Physical Science |
| Period 8 | P.E. / Elective | P.E. / Elective |

| | 11a | 11b |
|----------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Period 1 | Amer. Gov / Moral Philosophy | Amer. Gov / Moral Philosophy |
| Period 2 | American History | Physics |
| Period 3 | American Literature | Elective |
| Period 4 | Lunch | American History |
| Period 5 | Elective | Lunch |
| Period 6 | Pre-Calc / Algebra II / Calc | American Literature |
| Period 7 | Physics / Chemistry | Pre-Calc |
| Period 8 | Elective | Elective |

| | 12a | 12b |
|----------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Period 1 | Modern European History | Modern Literature |
| Period 2 | 20th C. Amer. Hist./Economics | 20th C. Amer. Hist./Economics |
| Period 3 | Elective | Elective |
| Period 4 | Lunch | Calculus |
| Period 5 | Elective | Elective |
| Period 6 | Calculus / Pre-Calc | Lunch |
| Period 7 | Modern Literature | Modern European History |
| Period 8 | Elective | Elective |

F. Plan for Evaluating Pupil Performance

1. Assessments

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, (“ACAD”), will use internal school level assessments to evaluate both student needs and the effectiveness of the academic programs, and external measures to measure student performance and comply with district and state requirements to ensure content standards will be met.

Incoming Student Assessment

Incoming students to ACAD, may be required to take standardized and subject-specific tests, both created by faculty and available through curriculum providers, like Singapore Math. This will allow the school to place students in the appropriate math classes, e.g., and measure student performance at our school. The school will also request students’ previous state assessment data for growth and longitudinal analysis. Testing will only be done once a student is offered a seat in the school and will not be required as a condition of being offered a seat.

Formal Assessments

| Grade | PARCC/CMAS | Aimsweb (READ Act) | ACCESS | PSAT/SAT |
|-------|------------|------------------------------|---------|----------|
| K | | 09/2018, 12/2018, 04/2019 | 01/2019 | |
| 1 | | 09/2018, 12/2018, 04/2019 | 01/2019 | |
| 2 | | 09/2018, 12/2018, 04/2019 | 01/2019 | |
| 3 | 04/2019 | 09/2018, 12/2018, 04/2019 | 01/2019 | |
| 4 | 04/2019 | | 01/2019 | |
| 5 | 04/2019 | | 01/2019 | |
| 6 | 04/2019 | | 01/2019 | |
| 7 | 04/2019 | | 01/2019 | |
| 8 | 04/2019 | | 01/2019 | |
| 9 | 04/2019 | | 01/2019 | 04/2019 |
| 10 | | | 01/2019 | 04/2019 |
| 11 | | | 01/2019 | 04/2019 |
| 12 | | | 01/2019 | |

Ascent Classical Academy will administer the above formal assessments. These assessments will provide information to determine if the school is achieving its goals and

objectives, as well as meeting other requirements. The dates estimated in the above table are estimates, based on the 2016-2017 Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) schedule.³¹

The Colorado Measures of Academic Success (CMAS) include several assessments, the Partnerships for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) and the Science and Social Studies assessments.

The PARCC test will be the primary assessment measuring performance against the Colorado Academic Standards in the 2018-2019 school year. PARCC is an English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessment. The ELA component will be administered in grades 3-9 and mathematics administered in grades 3-8 and three times in the high-school years.

The PARCC is administered in the spring of the academic year. This assessment will be used to determine academic growth, performance, and gaps in learning among the student body and a key tool in measuring our Academic Goals. The PARCC assessment provides key data on school performance required by the Colorado Growth Model and to create the School Performance Framework (SPF). Ascent Classical Academy will use the PARCC data to measure and track growth among its students.

The Science and Social Studies assessments will be given at various points throughout a student's academic career, per CDE guidelines.

The Colorado Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act (READ Act) requires schools to conduct interim assessments of literacy development of students in grades K-3 in the areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary development, including oral skills, reading fluency and reading comprehension.

Aimsweb is a READ Act compliant assessment approved by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE)³² and Douglas County Schools³³ to assess literacy. Aimsweb measures oral reading, fluency, and comprehension. This test will be administered in the fall, winter, and spring in grades K-3 and used as an additional tool to help teachers identify student progress and guide instruction. Vocabulary and reading comprehension will be assessed by teachers using other assessments from the Riggs literacy program.

³¹ Colorado Department of Education, *General Assessment Information*, accessed February 12, 2017, <http://www.cde.state.co.us/assessment/GeneralInfo>.

³² Colorado Department of Education, *READ Interim Assessment*, accessed March 5, 2017, <https://www.dcsdk12.org/assessment-and-system-performance/assessment###>.

³³ Douglas County Public Schools, *Assessments in Schools*, accessed February 13, 2017, <https://www.dcsdk12.org/assessment-and-system-performance/assessment>.

The SAT is administered in the spring and required for 11th grade students. The SAT is a measure to assess Ascent Classical Academy's performance in Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness and a component of the SPF. It is also used as a college entrance exam.

The ACCESS for ELLs is an English language proficiency assessment given annually in grades K-12 to students identified as English language learners (ELLs). ACCESS for ELLs will provide an objective assessment when a student meets proficiency in English and help Ascent Classical Academy staff improve its student services for English language learners.

Interim and Summative Assessments

Ascent Classical Academy will use teacher- and staff-created interim and formative assessments to adapt and drive student instruction. These will include quizzes, tests, essays and other checks on learning. Teachers will develop their own assessments with the assistance of the program materials adopted throughout the school, and ensure the assessments are aligned to standards and learning objectives.

Riggs and Singapore also have assessment tools to help guide teachers as they develop more thorough and in-depth assessments. Teachers will develop and use appropriate assessments to track student progress, areas needing improvement, and identify students needing additional support or referral as part of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).

2. Data Management and Data Support for Teachers

As an ongoing practice, data from both summative and formative assessments (informal and formal) will be collected and analyzed monthly to determine if students are making the expected progress, particularly in grammar school reading and math. The data collected will be used to determine appropriate placement in content mastery groups for math as well as evaluating student strengths, challenges and weaknesses in the core content areas. The data from all assessments will be disaggregated to show a trend analysis not only for each student, but for all students. ACAD will use the results of the data to create information and intelligence to drive instruction. Adjustments will be made to instructional delivery and any other areas necessary to improve student achievement. The school will not expect significant adjustments to curriculum in the first three years as the academic program is implemented.

The founders of the school believe in the importance of good assessments but also understand student learning and how teachers teach is central rather than merely focusing on raising test scores and school grades. Assessment should not always happen at the end of a lesson or unit but along the way. This ensures teachers have an opportunity to evaluate and inform instruction. Students also play a role in assessment

as they assess themselves through reflection of their own individual work, mastery, and how they can improve and build on prior knowledge.

Student growth is an important measure of academic progress and the School's success. ACAD will primarily use the PARCC assessment to evaluate student growth to the Colorado Academic Standards. Using this data, the staff will determine the need for more frequent assessments based on student growth and performance.

The principal will be responsible for creating and managing a performance management plan to monitor continuously student and school performance and to adjust assessment practices to fulfill the vision and mission of the school. The Performance Management Plan will include three components: a) a Student Information System (SIS), b) interim and formative assessments, and c) a data management system. Costs to implement and support the systems required in this plan are reflected in the budget. The system will be in place before the school opens in 2018.

a) Student Information System (SIS)

A Student Information System is a software application or service that collects and stores items such as student contact information, grades, and attendance. Ascent Classical Academies use Powerschool given its open platform and modules that allow the automation of student applications, registration, and other functions that allow the School to meet its mission and vision.

Teacher training on the SIS will be provided during the training that takes place prior to the start of school each year. The Colorado League of Charter Schools also sponsors Powerschool training throughout the year. ACAD may decide to use an alternate SIS during the life of the charter contract based on feature advances and improvements. ACAD will deliver all required data for state reporting to Douglas County in the state-approved data formats.

b) Interim and Formative Assessments

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County uses a number of formative and interim assessments to ensure student learning is successful on a daily basis:

- **End-of-Lesson Assessments** – A teacher's lesson planning requires an informal formative assessment with each lesson taught. Teachers must be able to show evidence that the lesson's learning target has been met by the majority of students. These informal assessments also help the teacher identify students who need additional teaching or opportunities for practice. If a teacher finds that an unexpected number of students failed the assessment, then other strategies will be implemented, such as re-teaching the material, offering better notes or practicing note-taking skills, using better handouts or reading material, coaching

students on study skills, or offering a regular tutorial or review session. End-of-lesson assessments may include a classroom assignment that is reviewed by the teacher, such as a quiz or short writing assignment.

Teachers in grades K-8 will develop assessments based on guidance from the Core Knowledge material and the Barney Charter School Initiative to ensure assessments and learning objectives are in line with the curriculum and sequence. Though teachers are responsible for creating their own examinations, they may use model tests provided by these organizations or master teachers in similar schools. The Core Knowledge Sequence used by ACAD is aligned with Colorado state standards.

- **Interim Assessments** – These are more formal, teacher-developed assessments that are given at the end of a major unit. They provide the teacher with information about specific standards students have mastered, which need re-teaching, reinforcement, or additional practice, and which students are struggling with which skills. Interim assessments may be a test or a formal writing assignment. Assessments are developed at the beginning of the unit to provide evidence that students have mastered the standards and learning targets. Interim assessments will be given to measure progress against short-term and long-term goals.

c) Data Management System (DMS)

Ascent Classical Academy will conduct further research on a data management solution and will consider a platform like Alpine Achievement. Alpine Achievement integrates information from the school's SIS, PARCC, school-developed interim assessments, the Colorado Academic Standard-aligned Core Knowledge assessments, and student plans. The system enables teachers and administrators to view data and create reports that provide meaningful information that can be used to plan for instruction and ensure that students' needs are being met. The data management system will also allow for longitudinal analysis of student growth. Student plans, such as Response to Intervention plan, English Language Development plans, and Individual Education Plans (IEPs), can all be housed securely through Alpine Achievement.

3. Performance Standards

The School will issue grades to each student for each class in which a student is enrolled. ACAD believes firmly in grade integrity. Grades will reflect the range between true mastery and insufficient knowledge of a subject.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| A - Mastery | D - Insufficiency |
| B - Proficiency | F - Failing |
| C – Sufficiency (Competence) | |

In addition to these general parameters, Ascent Classical Academy will be using a 4.0 grading scale to calculate Grade Point Averages (GPAs) in the high school. Core high school classes are taught at an honors level and will be awarded an additional point for purposes of GPA calculations outside the school. The letter and numerical grades for this system are listed below:

| | | | | | |
|----|---------|-----|----|-------|-----|
| A | 94-100% | 4.0 | C | 74-77 | 2.0 |
| A- | 90-94 | 3.7 | C- | 70-74 | 1.7 |
| B+ | 87-90 | 3.3 | D+ | 67-70 | 1.3 |
| B | 84-87 | 3.0 | D | 64-67 | 1.0 |
| B- | 80-84 | 2.7 | D- | 60-64 | .7 |
| C+ | 77-80 | 2.3 | F | 0-60 | 0 |

The grading scale as defined above is utilized for all students. Incompletes should only be given under special circumstances as determined by the principal. Parents will be informed of the student's progress throughout the year.

Notices will be sent for students who have a D or F in an academic subject with the hope that the student's progress can be remediated before failing the term. A parent portal, which keeps parents up-to-date as grades are entered, may be used in lieu of notices sent home. Nonetheless, there should be an initial evaluation sent home after the first few weeks of the year. Further, parents whose native language is not English will be offered a special tutorial on the use of the parent portal.

If a student demonstrates significant deficiencies because of a weak educational background or other reason, the classroom teacher(s) will, in conjunction with Student Services, work on remediation strategies. This may include pull-out tutoring with the understanding that the purpose is to bring the student up to grade level. In the case of 7-12 grade students, remedial classes or extra tutoring may be assigned in place of electives or study hall. Parents or guardians will be informed and involved in developing strategies to support the student.

Additional information on course offerings and descriptions, promotion and graduation requirements, GPA calculation, triggers for intervention, and other related topics, are available in Section E – Education Program and Standards or the sample *Family Handbook* in Appendix 25.

The school will analyze and report assessment data and academic success annually to parents. The School Accountability Committee will closely monitor academic performance more frequently, throughout the year, and will make recommendations to the principal, who will keep the board of directors informed.

ACAD will share the school's annual state assessment, PSAT/SAT, and other standardized exam results with parents and guardians through email, links on the school

website, and in a letter reflecting individual scores sent home with students. The school will communicate with Douglas County School District personnel to ensure they have the latest information. The public will also have access to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County's assessment results from a link on the school's website and through various other online resources like SchoolView (<http://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview>) and Chalkbeat (<http://co.chalkbeat.org>).

As part of the accountability process, the School Accountability Committee will assist in developing the annual Unified Improvement Plan (UIP)

G. Budget and Finance

1. Budget Narrative

The budget for Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, (“ACAD” or “School”), has been carefully prepared to support the delivery of a high-quality educational program to students and the achievement of the ACAD mission and vision. The management partner, Ascent Classical Academies, (“ACA”), supports the school’s mission to institute its complete educational program from day one. ACA’s experience in partnering with another fiscally sound school in Colorado has allowed the team to review budgets for existing charter schools that would operate similarly to the school and has helped ensure this budget is based on historically supported assumptions.

ACAD has created a financial model including a 5-Year budget primarily driven by student enrollment. Ascent Classical Academy will take a conservative approach to financial and budget planning, knowing that financial insolvency is a key factor in the failure of charter schools.

In addition to working with ACA, ACAD will also work with Hillsdale College’s Barney Charter School Initiative, (“BCSI”), staff to review and provide oversight of financial and budget data. The BCSI is familiar with baseline operational spending for schools similar to ACAD and will be able to provide additional insight and perspective on the school’s operations.

Budget Guidance and Assumptions

Ascent Classical intends to open in 2018 with 513 students in grades K-10, adding a grade a year and increasing to two full sections per year. In Year 7, the school will be prepared to enroll 728 students in K-12, the maximum size of the school.

The Douglas County School District provided the ACAD team a FY18-19 Charter Budget Application template in Excel that the financial model and assumptions are based on. This budget template includes costs hardcoded into the model. This budget model is included in Appendix 26.

The financial model is built using per pupil revenue (PPR) of \$7,338 and mill levy override (MLO) of \$550 based on guidance from Douglas County staff.

PERA, the state employee retirement plan, contributions rates will be increasing over the next several years.

ACAD will apply for the Colorado Charter School Start-Up grant, not included in the budget. The school will have two windows to apply for this grant before the school opens. While ACA will be applying for private implementation grants on behalf of ACAD

to cover the initial cash required for the start-up grant, a reimburseable grant requiring the funds to cover initial expenditures, ACAD will seek to negotiate with Douglas County for an advance to cover the first year of the start-up grant expenses.

ACAD is expecting to enroll 60 students per grade in the grammar school, though it's budget is built on 56 per grammar school grade.

The most significant expenses running a school are the staff costs. ACAD has conducted a compensation survey of other charter schools in Colorado and referred to the Colorado Department of Education 2016 State of Charter Schools³⁴ to determine staff salary levels.

ACAD expects to build a new campus for its school. ACA and the project funders will work with ACAD to create a lease schedule with flexible terms and be structuring their financial deal accordingly. ACA will also provide all furniture, fixtures, and equipment as part of its capital development.

The facility expenses are targeted at 18% of the total budget, a benchmark considered a best practice by the Colorado Department of Education. The management partner, ACA, will be developing a campus with a goal of keeping total facility costs near this benchmark while being flexible on payments over the first several years.

ACA included business operations, human resources, payroll, professional development, legal, and marketing in its fee. ACAD also has access to shared special professional services through ACA.

Staff insurance costs are based on health plans options provided by an insurance broker, tailored to the specific size and staffing plan of our school.

The ACAD financial team has conducted a sensitivity analysis and developed contingency budgets based on changes in enrollment and student funding.

ACAD will meet Douglas County School District budget reporting requirements, comply with the Financial Transparency Act by posting financial documents on its website, and will finalize a budget by June 30 of each year.

ACAD intends to negotiate other services with Douglas County School District.

The proposed budget will allow the school to achieve its mission and vision.

³⁴ Colorado Department of Education, *2016 State of Charter Schools Triennial Report*, p. 39-40, accessed February 23, 2017, <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/2995557/2016-State-of-Charter-Schools-Report-FINAL-Updated.pdf>.

2. 5 Year Budget

The detailed Ascent Classical Academy 5-Year Budget is included in Appendix 26. The financial and budget model is built on a template provided by the Douglas County Schools and calculates TABOR and PERA requirements.

The assumptions and guidance for the budget are included in the previous section.

ACAD has a base budget and has also developed several alternative scenarios reflecting under-enrollment. In these scenarios, the staffing and facilities have been adjusted to ensure the school is able to adjust to unfavorable conditions, remain solvent, and still provide a high-quality education to students.

3. Systems and Procedures

Reporting

The school will comply with all state and authorizer reporting requirements. The school will prepare quarterly financial reports in accordance with the Financial Transparency Act, the CDE chart of accounts, and authorizer policies. Each year, the budget will be finalized by the June 30 deadline.

Annual Audit and GASB Compliance

Each year, the school's board will enlist the services of a state-licensed independent public accounting firm with experience in the K-12 education sector to perform the financial statement audit for the school. The financial statements will be accurately presented in accordance with both generally accepted accounting principles and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). An audit report will also be issued on the auditor's considerations of internal control over financial reporting, and on compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements, and other matters in accordance with Government Auditing Standards. Audit procedures will include testing the effectiveness of internal controls over financial reporting as well. This report will be disseminated with the school district, the public, and required state agencies.

In the event the school spends \$750,000 or more in federal funds during a fiscal year, the independent auditor will also perform a federally required A-133 Federal Single Audit. A report will be issued on compliance with requirements that could have a direct and material effect on each major program and on internal control over compliance in accordance with OMB Circular A-133. Audit fieldwork will be completed in a timely manner to ensure that the audit report is completed and issued by authorizer and state entities' specified deadlines. The projected audit expense is included in the financial plan in this application, and will be a component of each annual board-approved budget.

Each audit will demonstrate ACAD's fiscal solvency, adherence to generally accepted accounting practices, and have no material breaches. ACAD will work with ACA to quickly address any management letter concerns and will share the results of the audit with all required stakeholders.

Management of School Finances

The Services Agreement with ACA ensures that the school is provided with a full suite of operations services, including administrative financial services such as accounting, purchasing, and payroll. A draft Services Agreement has been included as Appendix 31. Additionally, the school will have on staff a business analyst who serves as the manager of the school's finances.

The school's business analyst will regularly provide the principal with detailed income statements and reconciliation of funds. On a quarterly basis, the business analyst will prepare financial statements for the board, which will include both an income statement and a balance sheet. The business analyst will also ensure that all reporting requirements are met, including but not limited to: grant expenditure reports; quarterly reports; annual audited financial statements; 990 forms, and authorizer-required financial status reports. A system of financial controls will be established to ensure that all purchases made with federal, state, and private revenues – including the proposed capital construction funds – are controlled and monitored.

There will be many controls surrounding financial processes, including that:

- Supervisors must approve and release entries into the payroll system before payroll is generated.
- Any requested staff changes require the approval of both the school principal and an official at ACA.
- Regular comparisons are done to staff rosters and payroll ledgers.
- An integrated computerized system manages all purchasing, general ledger, grant accounting, fixed assets accounting, and cash disbursements activities.

ACA also has formal written policies for purchasing, accounts payable, the use of corporate credit cards, board discretionary funds, principal discretionary funds, school money handling, deposits, and a security policy. These draft practices and procedures that will be adapted and adopted are included as Appendix 22.

The board's annual budget process is described in detail in Section H - Governance.

Bank Account Reconciliation

Bank reconciliations will be performed monthly. All cash receipts and transfers to the bank accounts will be posted individually, and ACA's accounting department will ensure a proper segregation of duties.

Financial Systems and Processes

As part of its comprehensive scope of services, ACA will provide the school with accounting, purchasing, payroll, and other administrative financial services. The board will contract annually with an independent, certified accounting firm to perform an audit of the school's finances. ACAD also will ensure that the school consistently maintains compliance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and generally accepted standards of fiscal management.

Vigorous Board oversight and the management partner's systems and controls will ensure that the school complies with the highest standards of fiscal responsibility and accountability.

Internal Controls

ACA will provide business administration services to the school. ACA will utilize an accounting software system to process all accounting transactions. The school's financial records are maintained on a modified accrual basis of accounting in accordance with GAAP.

ACA will account for payroll, purchasing, general ledger, grant accounting, fixed-assets accounting, cash receipts and disbursements, budgeting and other financial activities. ACA has formalized written policies for purchasing (grant and non-grant), accounts payable, corporate credit cards, board discretionary funds, principal discretionary funds, processes for handling school money, deposits, security, and fixed asset inventories that will be used at ACAD. See Appendix 22 for draft financial policies.

For payroll, the business analyst will enter employee hours into the payroll system. The principal will approve and release all time entered before it can be utilized to generate the payroll. The hours worked will be reviewed by ACA's payroll department for reasonability. An external service provider, such as Automatic Data Processing (ADP), will process payroll. Any pay rate changes will be initiated the payroll system by the employee's supervisor and approved by ACA payroll team.

Purchasing

General purchases will begin with a purchase order. The purchase order requisition will be submitted. As items are received, the school office (or receiving team at ACA) will enter the receipt. When an invoice is entered, the accounting system will perform a three-way match against the purchase order and the receipt prior to processing a payment. Once the invoice has been properly matched, it will be coded to the proper general ledger account number and processed for payment. Invoices that are received without a related purchase order will be sent for approval by the appropriate department/school manager/supervisor. Expense approval authority levels will be established based on employee level (manager, director, principal, etc.). The system will automatically check for duplicate invoice numbers and will not allow the same invoice to be entered twice. All checks, regardless of value, will require two signatures. Positive pay will be utilized for checking accounts to ensure proper authorization of payments to vendors.

Financial Statements and Reports

Bank reconciliations will be prepared on a monthly basis by the ACA accounting team and will be reviewed/approved as assigned. On a monthly basis, school financial statements (balance sheet and income statement) will be prepared and reviewed. The review performed by the will include comparison of current spending year to date to prior year spending and the current budget. Any discrepancies will be investigated to ensure revenue and expenses are accurate.

On an annual basis, a school audit report will be prepared by an independent auditor and will include all required financial statements and back up documentation in accordance with GAAP and GASB. The school audit report will be submitted to the ACAD board for review and approval. Upon approval, the report will be submitted to all required parties.

Alignment to Mission and Vision

The financial policies and procedures included here are aligned with the mission and vision. ACAD will have a governing Board and contract with ACA for the operation of the school. The policies and procedures described above give the school all decision-making power over the use of finances but ensure that the school has a highly competent financial support team to implement the school's direction on a day-to-day basis.

H. Governance

1. Governing Board

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County (“ACAD”), will be governed by a local board of directors, that will oversee and create the educational and operational policies of the school to ensure adherence to the school’s stated mission, vision, and philosophy. The implementation of board policies and procedures, and daily operations will be the responsibility of the school principal. Board bylaws and governance policies will be drafted and approved prior to school opening. The board retains the right to update its policies through the life of the school.

Mission and Vision Guidance

The mission and vision will guide all the efforts to govern ACAD. These statements, along with the goals and philosophies described previously, will be guiding principles driving the board’s decision making processes for the students and families served. The mission will be posted prominently throughout the school building, included on all board meeting agendas, and referenced before making any key governance and operating decisions. It will also be included as an important aspect in parent and community communications and documents, such as the family handbook.

Board Governance Overview

It shall be the responsibility of the board to oversee the academic, financial, and organizational viability of ACAD. The board will focus on governance while our management partner, Ascent Classical Academies (“ACA” or “Network”) focuses on day-to-day operations. The steering committee will work to establish the founding board and their transition to become the governing board for ACAD.

Responsibilities of the board will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- The board will evaluate all aspects of the school as being consistent with the mission, vision, and philosophy of the school as defined in the ACAD approved founding document.
- The board will select, hire, and evaluate the principal.
- The board will operate in openness and keep communication frequent and clear.
- The board is responsible for providing strategic leadership for the school.
- The board has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the ACAD students receive maximum benefit from the educational resources available.
- The board is responsible for financial oversight to support the financial stability of the school.
- The board has final responsibility in all fiscal affairs of the school.
- The board will provide oversight of the management partner, ACA, to ensure the organization is serving the needs and expectations of the school.

- The board will conduct annual reviews of all committees, including a self-evaluation, to ensure effectiveness.
- The board must ensure that the accountability committee upholds the goals of the contractual agreement with Douglas County School District.

Board Composition

The steering committee is responsible for developing ACAD through school startup. The steering committee has developed the vision, mission, and philosophy, academic program, and structures that will guide ACAD into the future. The current steering committee members are:

Derec Shuler: Mr. Shuler is a founder of Golden View Classical Academy; the ACA flagship school being replicated in Douglas County. He is an entrepreneur with a background in business, real estate, technology and project management. He is an officer in the United States Army Reserves. Mr. Shuler has been involved in education and education policy as a member of A+, Stand for Children, and Colorado Succeeds. He has worked with several other charter schools, including as a member of the steering committee of a charter startup in Denver Public Schools. Mr. Shuler has elected board experience dealing with public funds, administration and governance.

Robert Garrow: Dr. Garrow is the founding principal at Golden View Classical Academy; the ACA flagship school being replicated in Douglas County. As a principal, he has experience in the successful creation and development of an academic school culture, hiring, teacher development in the classical framework, financial management, and school operation. Prior to working at Golden View Classical Academy, he served as the assistant principal at Founders Classical Academy of Leander, in Texas. Dr. Garrow earned his PhD in politics and policy at Claremont Graduate University and undergraduate degree in political science from the University of Colorado at Boulder. He and his wife live with their children in Boulder.

Kimberly Gilmartin: Mrs. Gilmartin currently works with No Waitlists in the area of marketing and communication outreach, assisting charter schools in creating awareness in their communities. Mrs. Gilmartin has a professional background in cable, satellite, and video services and technology. Prior to starting her own web-based business in 2014, she spent years as an executive with various cable and video providers including Comcast, AT&T Broadband, and TCI. She graduated with honors from Florida State University, with a Bachelor of Science in Communications and Broadcast Television. She also serves as the Vice-Chair on the Board of Directors at Golden View Classical Academy. Mrs. Gilmartin is passionate about the core principles of a classical, liberal arts education. She and her husband reside in Littleton with their three children.

Clairissa Jolley: Mrs. Jolley has a background in property management in the commercial real estate sector. She is active in various church, school, and civic

endeavors and the mother of two children in Douglas County Schools. Mrs. Jolley is completing her degree in Business Management at Brigham Young University – Idaho. She and her husband live with their two children in Highlands Ranch.

Natalie Walker: Mrs. Walker is an entrepreneur and operates her own insurance company. She has also worked as a legal assistant and office manager. Mrs. Walker is the mother of two children, one of whom is homeschooled and the other attends a Douglas County charter school. Mrs. Walker has a degree in English from the University of Utah. She and her husband live with their two children in Highlands Ranch.

Rob Williams: Mr. Williams is vice-president and chief financial officer (CFO) of Erie County Investment Company, a company primarily involved in real estate and oil and gas development. He participates in and substantially influences all strategic operating decisions and oversees all accounting, administrative, auditing, information technology, and tax functions for Erie, its affiliates, and subsidiaries. He is also currently an adjunct professor of accounting at Metropolitan State University of Denver. Before joining Erie, he was employed as a tax accountant with a public accounting firm. He is a certified public accountant (CPA), and a member of several accounting organizations. He has a Bachelor's degree, summa cum laude, in accounting and an MBA from Regis University. Mr. Williams and his wife live in Douglas County and have two children attending Douglas County Schools.

Resumes and a skills matrix of the current steering committee are included in Appendix 27.

Through community outreach efforts, the current steering team has been actively recruiting a pool of interested and qualified candidates to participate in the application and founding efforts of the school. The primary qualification for team members is that they support and understand the school's mission, vision and philosophy, and that they desire to develop and maintain a charter school that will provide a classical, content-rich education in the liberal arts and sciences. In addition, a good mix of skills and competencies, such as law, finance, K-12 education, human resources, fundraising, technology, real estate, and experiences will be preferred.

Upon charter authorization with the Douglas County School District, the steering committee will transition to the founding board of directors based on the criteria and requirements described in this section. This founding board will be responsible for governance with more significant involvement in the administrative and operational aspects of starting the school. The board selects and hires a principal for the school, who will ultimately be responsible for implementing and refining the academic framework of the school, as approved by the board, and for school operations. The founding board may include some but not all members of the steering committee. Mr. Shuler, Mrs. Gilmartin, and Dr. Garrow will be leaving ACAD before the start of the first school year and will take steps to avoid any conflict of interest.

The board will be composed of five directors and the principal, who will be an ex-officio member of the board. The board will transition administrative and operational responsibilities to the principal, while retaining and refining the governance responsibilities that will be the responsibility of the board throughout the tenure of the school. This initial board will serve a full, three-year terms, beginning with the first operating school year, after which they will have staggered terms as described below. The board may, as allowed in the bylaws, expand to include more members.

The board will be a self-replicating board meaning the board will select replacements for members who have completed their terms. This structure was determined to be a best practice based on site visits to other similar schools and through case studies. This governance structure has been approved by the board's legal counsel.

The primary function of the board will be to uphold, clarify, and support the vision, mission, and philosophy of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County. All decisions of the board will be made considering these goals and objectives. Each board director will possess and understand the charter application and operating contract with Douglas County School District, the ACAD Bylaws, policies, and the Articles of Incorporation, and sign the Board Duties and Responsibilities Agreement. ACA has a template of board duties and responsibilities available for the ACAD board to adopt.

It will be the first obligation of each director to become informed about the school's history, philosophy of education, contractual goals and obligations, current operations and concerns. ACAD will place a premium on the continuing education of its board. To that end, the board shall have an annual board retreat that will include training and orientation for new directors, a review of key documents, and strategic planning for the next school year. ACAD may have a board committee that will identify and encourage qualified persons to become candidates to serve on the Board, organize the orientation for new Directors, and organize the ongoing education for the entire Board. ACA will also assist in the board recruitment process, providing resources to educate board candidates on the mission and vision and important governance topics critical to the success of an effective, functioning board.

Board Orientation and Training

Steering committee and potential founding board members have already attended training sessions such as the Charter School Boot Camp conducted by the Colorado Department of Education and the Colorado League of Charter Schools. The founding board will continue to look for similar opportunities such as the Colorado League of Charter School's Onboarding Charter School Training and Board Fundamentals. Ongoing and anticipated future training for board service at ACAD includes the information below, separated in to three modules.

Module One will discuss, among other things:

- The governance model of the school, including board roles and responsibilities.
- Details about board processes and procedures.
- The structure of board meetings and the open meetings and public records laws.
- Information about the school's programs, systems, and policies.

Module Two will discuss, among other things:

- Parliamentary procedures and the role of board members in the use of such procedures.
- A review of the school's bylaws and articles of incorporation.
- A review of the charter and delineation of responsibilities to the authorizer.
- A review of the Services Agreement with the school's management partner, including a discussion about roles and responsibilities of both the board and ACA, autonomy of the board and oversight of ACA, reports due to the board, and termination procedures.
- A discussion of the lease and its provisions.

Module Three will discuss, among other things:

- Proper use of closed sessions and the limitations on items that can be discussed outside of public meetings.
- Structure of public comment periods at board meetings.
- Reviewing, approving, and overseeing school budgets.
- Allocation of board funds and their proper use.
- State assessments and their meaning, impact, and reporting and the school's formative assessment process.
- The School Improvement Plan process.
- Our student discipline policy and behavior management system.
- The family handbook.
- Resources available to the board and the school through ACA.
- Parent satisfaction surveys.
- Annual reporting requirements.
- Crisis management system/protocol.

The School will continue to seek training opportunities for the duration of its existence. ACAD will schedule a minimum of three to five hours of governance training for its board members at the beginning of each school year, and will select programs that best meet the current needs of individual members and the school. The board plans to take regular advantage of the training opportunities offered through the Colorado Department of

Education and Colorado League of Charter Schools. ACAD will set aside funds in its budgeting process specifically to cover the costs of board training opportunities.

ACAD will also seek support and advice on board governance training from a number of national sources as well, such as the Center for Public Skills Training and the National Charter School Resource Center. The School will also leverage its professional resources, including those our members can draw upon from their own experience, to ensure the board is considering a diverse set of viewpoints on effective governance. Board members will connect with board members at other existing charter schools, including ACA and Hillside Barney Charter School Initiative-partner schools, to discuss and share best practices in board governance.

Board Self-Evaluation

It will be critical to the effective governance of ACAD that members of the board hold one-another, and the board collectively, accountable for making decisions in accordance with the mission and vision and in the best interest of students. As such, the board will annually complete a board self-evaluation. There are numerous resources that the board will leverage to complete this evaluation, including teacher and parent satisfaction results, student test scores, and data regarding board meetings. An example of guiding benchmarks for our self-evaluation has been included in our board member agreement in Appendix 3. ACAD will also participate in the annual school improvement process and will conduct an annual review of our partnership with ACA.

School Accountability Committee

The Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County School Accountability Committee (SAC) is an all-volunteer committee responsible for monitoring the academic progress, school safety, and appropriate resource allocation of the school. The SAC will fulfill its function by administering school surveys, regularly reporting to the principal, and making recommendations on the unified improvement plan (UIP) to the principal.

The SAC initially will be composed of the principal, two teachers, four parents, and one community member. The board will appoint the SAC. Parent representatives will always be the majority block and the chairman will be a parent, selected from among the committee. The organization and responsibilities of the SAC will comply with CRS §22-11-401 et al.

Board Subcommittees

Advisory committees may be created to assist with policy setting and operation of the school. Policy-setting committees will report to the board; operational committees will report to the principal. Committees created by the board may be filled through appointment by the board chairman or by majority vote of the board, depending on the

committee. The board shall determine how committee members will be selected when it first creates the committee. Board committees shall be composed of at least one director and other persons selected by the board to serve on that committee. The principal and board chairman, or their designee, shall be ex-officio, non-voting members of all board committees. Committees may include but are not limited to: a facilities committee, finance committee, fundraising committee, and technology committee.

2. Legal Status and Governing Documents

Articles of Incorporation

The board has filed articles of incorporation with the Colorado Secretary of State. The non-profit corporation, Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, Inc., has been formed for the sole purpose of establishing and governing ACAD. If approved, ACAD will be the charter holder for the school and have the power and authority to govern its operations. ACAD will operate as a public body according to applicable, law, and comply with Colorado Sunshine Laws.

It is ACAD's goal and obligation to operate with transparency in the oversight and operations of the School. ACAD embraces the responsibility of the Board's financial stewardship of public tax dollars. The articles of incorporation as a non-member corporation are included as Appendix 28.

501(C)3 Status

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will apply for non-profit status under Internal Revenue Service Code 501(c)3.

Bylaws

Bylaws were developed in consultation with legal counsel and are included in Appendix 28. The Bylaw sections governing the board are summarized below:

Number of Directors – The board will have at least five directors. The board may vote to increase the number of voting directors, not to exceed nine, with a 2/3 majority vote.

Director Qualifications – Candidates to the board must support the stated mission and curriculum of the school and profess a strong desire to be involved in the governance of the school in terms of the stated mission, vision and philosophy of the school.

Terms of Voting Directors – In general, directors will serve three-year terms. Directors may serve a maximum of three consecutive terms. After an expired term-limit, a former director may not be re-elected to the board until at least one year off the board, at which

time he or she may again seek election to the board. The initial founding board (voting seats “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, and “E”) will serve a full, three-year term. One year after the initial term, two of the directors (seats “D” and “E”) will be up for re-election (these two directors will have been identified at the start of the initial term). The following year, two additional directors (seats “B” and “C”) will be up for re-election. And the next year, the final initial director (seat “A”) will be up for re-election. In this manner, the board elections will be staggered in perpetuity.

Appointment - The ACAD Board will be self-perpetuating. New directors will be selected by the existing directors. Appointments will take place in May, and newly appointed directors will begin their terms in July.

Meetings and Attendance Expectations - The board shall meet at least once per month when school is in session, and all meetings shall be open to the public with a period for public comment. Special meetings of the board may be called by the principal or the board chairman. Notice and the agenda for every meeting shall be publicly posted no later than 24 hours prior to a meeting. Meeting minutes shall be drafted; draft minutes will be approved by majority vote of the directors, and approved minutes will be publicly posted. Colorado Open Meetings Law will govern executive sessions.

The board shall comply with these and other requirements of the Colorado Open Meetings Law, any amendments to it, and any successor to the law. Directors are expected to attend all meetings, unless excused; unexcused absences from two or more of the Board meetings in any year shall be grounds for removal of a Director.

Quorum and Voting - A quorum at all meetings of the board shall consist of a majority of the voting Directors. Directors present by telephone shall be deemed to be present “in person”, provided such persons can simultaneously hear and speak to all other persons present. Each Director shall have one vote; Directors may not vote by proxy. Unless otherwise specified in the Bylaws or in the Articles of Incorporation, the act of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board.

Vacancies – In the event of a vacancy (or vacancies) on the board, it shall be the duty of the remaining, voting directors to appoint new director(s) to fill those vacancies, to achieve a minimum of five, voting directors. A new director appointed to fill a vacancy shall fill the unexpired portion of that term. For purposes of term limits, if a person is appointed to fill a three consecutive, three-year terms.

Resignation - A director may resign at any time by giving written notice of resignation to any member of the board. The resignation is effective when the notice is received, unless the notice specifies a later effective date.

Removal - Any member of the board may be removed by the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the voting directors. The agenda produced for that meeting must state that there will be a vote to remove a director, and the subject of the vote must be named in the agenda. A director may be removed for violating board policies, the board agreement, or when no longer meeting the qualifications for director, including a failure to support the state mission and philosophy of the School.

Officers of the Board – The officers of the board shall consist of the chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. Any member of the board is eligible to hold one of these positions. The board shall appoint its officers at the annual meeting (May)

Amendments – The bylaws may be amended with the approval of two-thirds (2/3) of the board of directors.

Legal Compliance and School Policies

Ascent Classical Academies are non-sectarian, non-religious public schools, and in all respects, shall operate as such.

Ascent Classical Academies shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations related to non-discrimination.

ACAD will comply with the Colorado Open Meetings Law (see CRS §24-6-401) (“OML”) and Colorado Open Records Act (see CRS §24-72-204) (“CORA”), and any successors thereto. As described in detail above, the ACAD board will post its agenda and run its meetings in accord with the OML. Similarly, ACAD will comply with the CORA in every respect.

With assistance and guidance from legal counsel, the board will ensure the school has all necessary policies and procedures in place prior to the first day of school, including those related to discipline, student records and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Open Meetings Act, the Colorado Public Records Act, the Colorado Sunshine Law, special education, English language learners, student identification and related services, emergency procedures, and fiscal operations. School leadership, in conjunction with the operational partner, ACA, will develop and recommend school policies to the board, and the board will review and adopt policies consistent with the mission and its responsibilities.

One of the benefits of partnering with ACA is the significant operational protocols the organization already has in place to comply with the requirements for public charter schools in Colorado. Combined with the ACA’s oversight and support, ACA’s well-defined practices and procedures will greatly improve the start-up and ongoing operations of ACAD. Sample draft policies which have already been developed and

included in Appendices 25 and 30. At this point, ACA anticipates developing, at a minimum, policies in the following areas:

- Academy Staff Policy
- Admission and Enrollment Policy
- Board Member Qualification Policy
- Board Powers Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Criminal History Check Policy
- Facility Use Policy
- FERPA Policy
- Fiscal Management Policy
- Instructional Programming Policy
- Nondiscrimination Policy
- Public Comment Policy
- Purchasing Policy
- Student Health and Safety Policy
- Technology and Internet Safety Policy
- Tobacco-Free Policy
- Wellness Policy

After the school year has begun, ACA will continue to add or revise policies as needed to better serve its students and fulfill the vision and mission.

School Accountability Committee

The school will establish a School Accountability Committee as described above consistent with state statute, CRS §22-11-401 *et. al*, in function and composition.

Conflicts of Interest

The board will govern the school with respect, dignity, and the utmost consideration for ethical behavior and processes. Pursuant to the bylaws and Conflict of Interest Policy, a board member shall inform the board of any direct or indirect conflict of interest with regard to any transaction contemplated by the board. Conflicts of interest include transactions in which a member of the board has a material financial interest, or with which the member is presently serving as a director, officer, or general partner of another party. The transaction may be approved only by a vote of the majority of board members who have no conflict of interest. A draft Conflict of Interest Policy can be found in Appendix 25 and 30.

The board will consult independent legal counsel should any real or apparent conflict of interest ever arise.

Board Member Agreement

The steering committee has adopted a comprehensive Board Member Agreement. In addition to agreeing to uphold the mission of ACAD and act in the best interests of the school and non-profit corporation, as outlined in our bylaws, all members of the governing board are required to submit to annual conflict of interest and sign the Board Member Agreement as well as an annual affidavit as required by law for compliance with executive session confidentiality obligations. Attached is a copy of the agreement as Appendix 3 of this application. Lastly, all members of the board shall complete a criminal background check.

Parent and Community Member Grievances

Parents and guardians are partners in the education of their children, and addressing and responding to the concerns of parents or guardians will be a priority for the school. School leaders and teachers will actively work to engage in open dialogue with parents about any questions or concerns they have about the School or their children. The Family Handbook (see example in Appendix 25) will be distributed to each family at orientation before school opening and will include a presentation of the parent- and community member-grievance process. The board has also included a draft policy addressing grievances in Appendix 25. This policy may be further amended after consultation with legal counsel.

Parent Concerns/Grievances Process

Classroom teachers will be the first line of communication for parents and guardians to address concerns. Teachers will respond to parent inquiries promptly, respectfully, and in accordance with the school's guidelines for handling parent grievances. If parents are unsatisfied with the response from their student's classroom teacher (or if the nature of the complaint does not involve a classroom teacher), parents should contact the principal for academic and vice-principal for non-academic matters, to arrange a meeting to discuss the concerns. The school leadership will make every reasonable attempt to respond appropriately to parent concerns in such a way that resolves the issue satisfactorily.

On the rare occasion when speaking directly with the teacher or the school leadership team does not resolve the concern, parents or guardians may bring the unresolved concern directly to the ACAD board. Parent concerns directly relating to a board policy or decision, an alleged violation of state law, charter, or other applicable laws, or concerns about the school management or operations, will be advised to be brought directly to the board. Concerns brought to the board must be presented in writing. The board will address the concern at or before the next public meeting.

Community Concerns and Input

The school intends to be a good neighbor – students, parents, and staff live in and around the community, and the school will strive to be a successful contributor to the community’s economic, social, and cultural success. Community residents wanting to express concerns, share ideas, or make requests of the school will be welcomed at regularly scheduled public board meetings. Time will be allotted on the agenda for each meeting for public comment.

3. Oversight of Operations

Board Oversight of Operations

As outlined earlier in this section, it will be the board’s responsibility to ensure ACAD fulfills its mission. The founding group will transition to become the governing board, ensuring a seamless transition of responsibility from founding to oversight of operations.

The board will make sure our school has the needed systems, personnel, and resources in place to create an environment conducive to scholarly learning and designed to meet the academic and operational goals. The board will perform the functions essential to governance, including ensuring that students are learning, that funds are appropriately managed, and that the school complies with all charter, state, and federal requirements. If needed, the board will create smaller committees to further address specific topics, such as a finance committee, that will meet and report back to the ACAD Board. Independent legal counsel will assist in reviewing policies and carrying out the board’s duties to govern the school.

Annually the board will contract with an independent auditor to ensure fiscal propriety, and may contract with a third-party evaluator of the educational program as necessary for an independent perspective on the performance of our school.

More specifically, board roles and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Articulating, maintaining, and driving the mission throughout the school community.
- Holding ACA accountable for the efficient and effective operation of the school and for the achievement of academic goals.
- Reviewing and approving the school’s annual budgets and ensuring that proper financial procedures are in place and effectively implemented.
- Reviewing, approving, and monitoring progress toward academic, financial, and operational goals.
- Reviewing and approving school policies.
- Appointing officers and committees as needed.
- Adopting, amending, and repealing bylaws as needed.

- Developing and maintaining effective relations with the authorizer and necessary state departments.
- Ensuring that meetings are conducted in accordance with the Open Records Act and the Colorado Sunshine Law.

Partnership with Ascent Classical Academies (ACA)

The steering committee initially weighed replicating the school as part of the network structure, that would have allowed several schools to operate under one board. In discussions with legal counsel, the committee decided to work with ACA as a charter management organization (CMO). This has the benefit of having an independent governing board in the community while giving ACAD access to shared services and operational support to ensure the school will be successful. The option of operating the school independently was also explored.

ACA was selected as the management partner based on the organization's expertise, resources, experience, productive interactions with the ACAD Board, and expressed commitment to the community. ACA is uniquely positioned and unquestionably qualified to deliver the educational program envisioned for the school, and offers the comprehensive array of school management services desired. ACA has expressed a commitment to the principles of the Hillsdale College Barney Charter School Initiative ("BCSI") that aligns with ACAD's agreement with the BCSI.

With the financial and operational resources and expertise ACA brings to this effort and with ACAD's diverse professional backgrounds and investment in the community, ACAD and ACA will form a strong partnership that provides a new, excellent educational choice to families in Douglas County.

The ACA partnership offers a comprehensive educational program including curriculum, professional development, and staffing, as well as a facility for our school – that aligns with the mission. Given ACA's commitment to excellence in the charter school sector, ACAD and ACA will create a strong team to launch, operate, and succeed with the school.

Importantly, the Services Agreement with ACA also outlines in detail the organization's operational responsibilities. These responsibilities include comprehensive educational and administrative services. Subject to the oversight of the board, ACA will be required to implement operational practices and procedures that are consistent with board policy, the board's Charter, and applicable law. Such practices and procedures include:

- Student recruitment and student admissions.
- Student assessments, including testing, promotion, and retention.

- The acquisition of instructional materials, equipment and supplies, and the administration of all extra-curricular and co-curricular activities and programs included in the budget.
- Employment of personnel working at the school and management of all personnel functions.
- All aspects of the school's business administration.
- All aspects of the school's accounting operation, including general ledger management, financial reporting, payroll, employee benefits and payroll tax compliance.
- All aspects of facilities administration and maintenance.
- Student behavior management and discipline.

This well-defined division of responsibility is a core benefit of our plan. The board and ACA have already clearly established the lines of governance and operations, which should benefit school operations, student achievement, and ultimately achievement of our board's mission.

If granted a charter, there will be no points of tension or concern as authority transitions from a founding committee to a governing board. Instead, the ACAD board will remain in its governance role and ACA will immediately begin to execute the plan described throughout this application.

Board Oversight of Academics

In order for the board to measure progress, it will need and require regular reports on student performance and assessments. The board will use this information to assess the school's progress toward the goals specified in our charter. These reports also will include operational information pertinent to student performance such as student count numbers, attrition percentages, student attendance, student discipline, at-risk population, percent of students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and more. School leadership, in conjunction with ACA as appropriate, will provide the board with the information needed to assess all aspects of the school's performance, including:

- Absolute and comparative student performance on internal diagnostic and interim assessments.
- Growth in student learning.
- Current status under state and federal accountability systems.
- College readiness status.
- Vital statistics on the student population, including demographics, enrollment count, and IEP count, as well as the corresponding achievement levels of these subgroups.
- Parent satisfaction and other stakeholder information.

- When necessary, the board may also contract for a third-party evaluation of ACA to ensure that ACA and school leaders are meeting and exceeding expectations.

Board Oversight of Finances

The board has the fiduciary responsibility for ACAD. It will be the board's job to closely monitor the school's finances. The ACAD board must ensure that the school remains financially viable and operates with sound fiscal practices. The Services Agreement with ACA to operate the school day-to-day and to provide all necessary services and supports, requires that ACA recommend an operating budget to the board for its review and approval before each school year. This operating budget will set forth in detail the anticipated revenue and expenses of the school in compliance with the charter and applicable law. The board will review and approve the budget, and will ensure that it is balanced and appropriate to meet the requirements set forth in the charter.

The board will approve the annual budget by June 30 each year. This budget will contain the best estimates of student enrollment and specific student characteristics that may drive the budget (such as the number of students needing intervention support or special education services), with an acknowledgement that once enrolled for the school year, factors such as these that influence the budget may differ somewhat from the adopted projected budget. Similarly, the budget included in this application contains best assumptions about the student population and other factors, and may require modification when actual components are known. In the fall, when the school is enrolled and the specific student population and needs are determined, an amended budget will be adopted.

The board will provide regular oversight and feedback on the budget throughout the school year. The board will review a financial statement each quarter that tells how the school is doing against the budget in detailed categories, and will request adjustments to the budget and more information as needed.

Through both the Services Agreement and board oversight, ACA will be obligated to manage and operate the school in accordance with the budget approved by the board. Expenditures during the academic year shall not deviate materially from the provisions of the approved budget. If necessary, the board will review and approve amended budgets based on student need.

Identifying Needs to Inform Budget Process

Identification of the school's needs – to further the pursuit of the mission – will be the first step in the budgeting process. The board, school leadership, and the School Accountability Committee will evaluate the needs of the school and the students after careful review of the investment in the educational program and school operations in comparison with budgeted amounts. Together, the board and school leadership will

collaborate to develop a plan to address any unmet needs, including the reallocation of existing financial resources or the allocation of new resources.

As ACA is the day-to-day operator of the school and is contractually obligated to deliver high quality academics, ACA will present the board with a draft budget for their review and action. The draft Service Agreement with ACA requires ACA to provide all necessary accounting, financial, and business administration services. ACA's development of the draft annual budget for the school will be generated in large part based on the experience in school operations, and will include reasonable and reliable estimates and assumptions (as well as known costs) for the services, resources, and staff required to operate a quality educational program and to effectively implement the school model chosen by the board. The ACAD board will have final authority over the budget, and will formally approve the annual operating budget each year (in addition to approving any amendments to the budget throughout the year).

At a minimum, quarterly financial statements will be generated for the board, and school leadership and ACA will present to and discuss these statements with the board. The board also will contract annually for an independent audit of the school's finances and financial procedures. This audit will serve as an additional measure of the school's fiscal soundness.

Timeline

The budgeting process will begin in late winter and early spring of the preceding school year, when the board begins to receive information to aid in clearly identifying students' needs. As outlined above, the board will use this information to provide feedback to ACA and the school leader will, in turn, prepare a preliminary budget for presentation to the board in April or May for the upcoming school year.

The board will ask for clarification or adopt the budget before June 30. Upon approval of the preliminary budget, our board recognizes it will not have definitive enrollment figures and associated costs, and will still be analyzing student information results from the current school year. As such, the board anticipates reviewing an amended budget in the fall of the upcoming school year, which includes more definitive information. The board will review quarterly financial statements to ensure ACA is spending in accordance with the board-approved budgets. The board will require the management partner to present any potential significant variances from the board approved budget and approve subsequent budget amendments as necessary for the appropriate fiscal oversight of ACAD.

Initial Budget

The first-year budget for ACAD has been developed based on expected local and state funding. Also, importantly, the board and ACA have paid specific attention to staffing

and other intervention resources that will be necessary to meet students at their respective learning levels. More detail on the first-year budget is included later in this section.

Future Budgets

For budgets in the second school year and beyond, the board envisions beginning with an assessment of need. Through the school improvement planning efforts, school evaluations, and the board's monthly monitoring of academics and finances, there will be a robust amount of information to help establish budget priorities. As a conservative measure, and because there are not yet have any guarantee of the level of federal funding such as the Colorado Charter Schools Program (CCSP) Start-up Grant, none has been included in the five-year budget.

Budget Team

The board anticipates creating a finance committee, to be headed by the treasurer, to provide the first layer of appropriate governance and oversight of school finances. Under the Services Agreement with ACA, the school will have a wide variety of highly qualified specialists, with experience assisting schools in Colorado, dedicated to managing the business aspects of ACAD. This team includes a business analyst who will work with the principal on staffing decisions, budget management, compliance with all federal, state, district and authorizer reporting requirements, as well as day-to-day operational issues. ACA also will play a role in working with the board and school leadership to ensure that all educational programming resource needs are being fully met in a way that provides the appropriate financial foundation for the academic success of the school.

As outlined above, the board will also provide direction and feedback to ACA and school leadership based on the results of internal audits and assessments. The board will provide feedback to the school leadership team, who will work with the assigned business analyst at ACA to develop an annual operational budget for presentation to the board for review and approval.

Budget Assumptions

All major budget assumptions – including things such as anticipated student count, number of classrooms necessary for those students, the number of teachers, paraprofessionals and support staff needed, costs for textbooks and other learning supplies, and more – will be discussed with school leadership and the board. During each year's budgeting process, the board will review these assumptions and estimates for reasonableness and completeness, collaboratively resolving any differences with ACA. The budget approved by the board each spring prior to the start of the next school year will contain the best estimates of student enrollment and specific student characteristics that may drive the budget (such as the number of students needing

intervention support or special education services), with an acknowledgement that once enrolled for the school year, factors such as these that influence the budget may differ somewhat from the adopted budget. Similarly, the budget included in this application contains the best assumptions about the student population and other factors, and may require modification when actual components are known. Each fall, when the school is enrolled and the specific student population and needs are determined, an amended budget will be adopted.

The board will monitor actual costs in comparison to budgeted amounts, and in concert with an assessment of planned versus actual enrollment, student progress, and the school's academic and operational needs, may amend the budget after consultation with ACA and planning for additional resources to meet the school's needs if necessary.

Fiscal Audits

Each year, the board will contract with an independent certified public accountant or a public accounting firm licensed in Colorado to perform a fiscal audit of the school.

The audit will include a review of the adequacy of the system of internal controls in place at the school to ensure that financial statements are being accurately presented and are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, grant agreements, and other matters also will be tested as part of the annual financial review. If the school expends \$750,000 or more in federal funds during any fiscal year, the independent auditor also will perform a Federal Single Audit as required by federal regulation.

ACAD will maintain the highest standards of fiscal responsibility and accountability. A budget allocation sufficient to cover the audit expense is included in the school's preliminary budget, and the board will ensure that each annual budget allocates sufficient funds for this purpose. Audit results, including any management letter comments, will be reviewed by the board each year. The annual audit will be conducted to ensure the fulfillment of all reporting requirements applicable to our charter school.

Board Oversight of Leadership

The principal will be an employee of ACA, and along with ACA will be accountable to the ACAD board for the operation of our school. The board will collaborate with ACA in hiring, evaluating, and overseeing the school principal. ACA and the BCSI offer an experienced and expert school leadership recruitment team that identifies and evaluates school leaders for their skills, experience, and personal attributes. These specialists are experienced in evaluating both internal and external applicants, and while the board and ACA will leverage their recruitment networks to identify qualified external applicants, the ACAD board will work with ACA and the BCSI to first identify and recruit outstanding

candidates from within the network of ACA and BCSI-partner schools. Through the Services Agreement with ACA, the board maintains the authority to express reasonable dissatisfaction with the principal. If ACA and the principal have been given sufficient time and support to remedy an issue and there has been insufficient improvement, the board can order that the principal be terminated.

Recruitment and Hiring of School Leader

The school has already identified and committed to hiring Dr. Terrence O. Moore as the founding principal. Below is the general process used to recruit and hire a school leader.

Recruitment

There are several important criteria ACA's uses when vetting school leadership candidates. First, high-quality candidates will have a *proven record of building culture* through the creation of strong relationships and the modeling of a vision based on achievement, character, personal responsibility, and accountability. Second, the candidate is self-directed and has had success as an *instructional leader*, with a strong intellect and knowledge of teaching and learning. Third, the candidate must demonstrate that he or she is *leader and coach*, focused on the "service" of leadership, with a top priority being the development and success of others. Finally, the candidate must be a *systems thinker*, who has a demonstrated competence in developing priorities and ambitious goals focused on student achievement, and developing systems designed to achieve those goals.

The primary role of the principal will be to ensure that the school meets the needs of students, families, and teachers, and must work effectively to ensure that his or her team is equipped in a way that creates a culture of academic excellence throughout the school. Ultimately, the principal will be responsible for the overall quality of the school and will be fully accountable to the board, the community, and the school's management partner, ACA.

ACA offers an experienced and expert school leadership recruitment team that identifies and evaluates school leaders for the skills, experience, and personal attributes required for successfully leading ACA-partner schools. It is a goal to identify and hire the school leadership six months to a year before the school opens. These recruitment specialists are experienced in evaluating both internal and external applicants. An internal candidate would bring to the school the advantage of experience specifically running an ACA-partner school and thus would be more likely to successfully implement the educational program from day one.

Promoting from within the ACA and BCSI-partner school network also helps ensure that principals and leaders will be familiar with the instructional practices and administrative

procedures desired in the school culture. Additionally, such promotions are a key element of attracting quality teachers who see the development of a deliberate advancement path for high-performing employees. Teachers and staff with strong skills and great potential to become excellent school principals are identified from across the ACA-partner school network and brought together during the school year to learn, train, and grow as educators and building leaders. Select participants are interviewed for available principal opportunities within the ACA-partner school network. ACA and BCSI leadership development, in conjunction with the distributed leadership model, helps ensure that high-quality school leaders with experience in the ACA school model are being developed continuously. This serves as a ready resource for finding the right principal for the school.

Various candidate-sourcing strategies will be used to identify educators with a proven record of leading a school to strong academic results. Such sourcing strategies will include:

- Partnerships with the Hillsdale College Barney Charter School Initiative, local colleges and universities.
- Online advertisements placed on ACA's websites, education forums, and association job pages.
- Print advertisements placed in newsletters, journals, and local newspapers.
- Attendance and sponsorship of national education conferences.

Candidates for school leadership roles will be evaluated based on professional positions held over the past 10 years, and on competencies in areas such as their own teaching ability, their ability to coach teachers, experience creating and maintaining a school culture to support the mission, vision, and philosophy of the school, read and interpret student achievement data, and create constructive relationships with parents and the school community at large.

ACA has a defined process to help ensure the organization identifies high quality school leaders. It will be critical that the school leader for ACAD has a significant and successful track record meeting the needs of diverse learners, leading a school or team, developing and sustaining community and parent relations, and distributing leadership among its faculty. The anticipated criteria and general steps in the school leader selection process are outlined below.

[Hiring Process](#)

Step One: Sourcing and Screening

Objective: Screen applicants to identify candidates who appear to meet experience, qualifications, and skill requirements. A draft job description can be found in Appendix 30 of this application.

Develop a robust candidate pool:

Leverage internal ACA and BCSI-partner school network.

Exercise traditional external sources (advertising, referrals, and networking).

Qualification Review Process:

- o Qualify leadership experience.
- o Phone screen.
- o Explore opportunities and fit.
- o Feedback from ACA.

Step Two: Evaluation

Objective: Use informational, chronological, and competency technique to evaluate suitability of promotion or employment at ACA based on determine metrics.

Initial Interview:

- o Candidates submitted for review.
- o Visit candidate's current school whenever possible.

Principal Assessment Interview:

- o Critical behavior interview.
- o Instructional knowledge competency.
- o ACA school visit.

Step Three: Hiring Recommendation

Review interview feedback.

Conduct reference check.

Follow up interview (if necessary).

Presentation to the board.

Step Four: Decision

Board affirmation.

- o The board will consult with ACA and the BCSI in good faith on the principal selection. The principal is critical to the success of ACAD, and, in-turn, ACA's ability to deliver on its contractual obligations outlined in the Services Agreement.

Position is offered to the principal candidate.

School Leadership Responsibilities

As outlined throughout our application, ACAD will implement a distributed leadership model. The principal and vice-principal will comprise the school leadership team.

The school leadership team will be responsible for the following:

- Implementing the academic program and creating a culture that fulfills the mission and vision of the school consistent with the board's classical philosophy.
- Establishing himself as the master teacher of the school.
- Supervising and monitoring the educational program, including special education.
- Designing the school master schedule to ensure adequate time is spent on each content area.
- Implementing an assessment and record system that provides academic and anecdotal information on each student.
- Monitoring the achievement goals for the school and for each student.
- Implementing a school-wide tool for parent and community communication.
- Providing opportunities for parent participation, including in the school's governance.
- Reporting school activities and academic achievement to the board at regular board meetings.
- Establishing the plan to develop moral character and virtue into the academic program and communicating this program to staff, students, and parents.
- Establishing all school procedures and organizing systems that allow for student and staff safety and well-being.
- Conferring with teachers, students, and parents concerning educational and behavioral problems in school.
- Providing teachers with clear expectations for classroom management procedures.
- Monitoring classroom management plans for teachers to ensure consistency and alignment to the school-wide plan.
- Providing teachers and staff with an understanding of students' backgrounds through professional development.
- Providing in-service and outreach opportunities to support parents in communication, parenting styles, and educational support to students.
- Providing teacher involvement and development opportunities.
- Establishing specific staff expectations for conduct.
- Monitoring student enrollment, attendance, and engagement.
- Implementing a school-wide character development and academic honor program to recognize and motivate students for accomplishments.
- Establishing, communicating, and monitoring the school's discipline system to promote student responsibility and good conduct.
- Providing school activities that integrate curriculum content, such as field trips and assembly experiences.
- Providing oversight and planning for student interventions at classroom level.
- Implementing a school-wide vocabulary development program that aligns to the curriculum.

School Leadership Team Qualifications

Some of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of the school leadership team members are noted below. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Education and/or Experience: Bachelor's degree required, master's degree preferred; three or more years related experience and/or training; or equivalent combination of education and experience.

Language Skills: Ability to read, analyze, and interpret common scientific and technical journals, financial reports, and legal documents. Ability to respond to common inquiries or complaints from parents, regulatory agencies, or members of the business community. Ability to write speeches and articles for publication that conform to prescribed style and format. Ability to effectively present information to top management, public groups, and/or the board of directors.

Mathematical Skills: Ability to calculate figures and amounts such as discounts, interest, commissions, proportions, percentages, area, circumference, and volume. Ability to apply concepts of basic algebra and geometry.

Reasoning Ability: Ability to define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions. Ability to interpret an extensive variety of technical instructions in mathematical or diagram form and deal with several abstract and concrete variables.

Certificates, Licenses, Registrations: Any teaching license and administrative certification as determined by state requirements.

Evaluation of School Leader

The principal will be informally evaluated throughout the year. The board will also use the results of school evaluations to assess the effectiveness of the principal. In addition, the principal will also be formally evaluated each year. A specific description of the leadership evaluation process is included in Section I - Employees.

The school leader will be given a score of exemplary, effective, developing, or ineffective in each category and a summative evaluation score will be assigned. The principal will use evaluations to inform professional development, compensation, retention, and, if necessary, recommendation of termination. There is no more important aspect to the success of the school than high-quality teaching in every classroom, and principal must foster that in the teaching staff.

Founding School Leader Identified

The steering committee has identified Dr. Terrence Moore as founding principal for Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County. Dr. Moore is an experienced classical charter school leader. He was the founding principal at Ridgeview Classical School

before becoming a professor at Hillsdale College. While at Hillsdale, Dr. Moore was one of the chief architects of the Barney Charter School Initiative model, based on his experience at Ridgeview Classical Schools. Dr. Moore is currently the founding principal at BCSI-sister school Atlanta Classical Academy. Dr. Moore's *curriculum vitae* is included in Appendix 2.

I. Employees

1. Recruiting and Hiring

Hiring and retaining the highest quality employees will be a top priority at Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, (“ACAD”). The educational program and culture attract the finest educators to teach at Ascent Classical Academy, but our employment policies, as well as how they are administered, must create an environment that makes working at the school a joy. Our employment policies, as summarized below and explained in detail in the sample Employee Handbook in Appendix 30, strive to strike the correct balance between, on the one hand, rigid guidance and, on the other hand, flexibility to respond appropriately to any situation.

ACAD will select its personnel according to its own policies and procedures. The school will comply with all federal and state rules and regulations, including, without limitation, requirements related to conducting proper background and criminal checks and non-discriminatory hiring and employment practices. Ascent Classical will adopt its own written policies, in compliance with federal and state law, concerning recruitment, promotion, discipline and termination of personnel; methods for evaluating performance; and a plan for resolving employee-related problems, including complaint and grievance procedures; provided, however, Ascent Classical Academy shall not have the authority, by virtue of such policies or procedures or other action of the Board of Directors, to change the at-will nature of the employment relationship. A sample of ACAD’s Employee Handbook is found in Appendix 30.

Recruiting

ACAD will rely primarily on the strong candidate network and teacher recruitment capabilities of our management partner Ascent Classical Academies, (“ACA” or “Network”). Well-documented research underscores the importance of hiring and retaining highly-qualified and committed teachers. This is especially true in an educational program as rigorous as ACAD’s. The school will aggressively recruit excellent teachers at the local, state, and national level. Recruiting strategies to be used include:

- *Traditional Recruiting:* ACA is constantly seeking and screening potential candidates through traditional and digital marketing strategies, including job fairs, university career fairs, social media, advertising, and direct referrals. ACA will advertise online, in select local markets, and throughout the ACA network of charter schools.
- *Campus Relationships:* On behalf of ACAD, ACA will leverage its relationships with colleges and universities to include Hillsdale College, St. John’s, Grove City College, Claremont Graduate University, and others, to tap pipelines of teacher

candidates. This will give the school prime access to the best teacher candidates and the ability to hire new high-quality graduates as soon as possible.

- *Referral Networks*: Recognizing that most teachers find teaching positions through referrals, we will actively pursue new teacher candidates through referrals from ACA-partner schools in Colorado and Hillsdale-affiliated schools across the country.
- *Career Fairs and Conferences*: Recruiters and ambassadors will actively participate in local, regional, and national career fairs and conferences. This will allow direct contact with both new graduates and current teachers who are in the market for new employment opportunities.
- *Workforce and Talent Pipeline Planning*: ACAs workforce planning function is designed to assist our school in understanding the current local labor supply and demand in the area, helping us prepare for current and future hiring needs.

Ascent Classical Academy has already identified a principal for ACAD and expects to hire teachers by late spring of 2018.

Salary and Benefits

To compete in the marketplace for qualified teaching staff, ACAD will establish a salary schedule that takes into account the market at traditional and other charter schools, salary levels at area private schools, and the uniqueness and benefits of the school. ACAD will utilize job descriptions found in Appendix 30 for each faculty and staff position in order both to guide the discretion of the principal and to inform applicants what is expected at each position.

At-Will Employment

All faculty and staff will be “at-will” employees and will be notified of this status throughout the interview process. Absent special circumstances, all employees will serve the school on an at-will basis, i.e., they may end employment at any time for any reason or no reason, and likewise the school may end an employee’s employment at any time for any reason – subject, of course, to state and federal legal requirements. To provide continuity and avoid disruption, ACAD requests, but does not require, that teachers provide at least thirty days’ notice prior to resigning employment. Likewise, the school will provide as much notice as possible under the circumstances to an employee prior to any separation of employment. When a formal job offer is extended, the offer letter will include the statement that the offer is for an “at-will” position. All employees will be employed by ACA and are not District employees. ACA will also provide an employee handbook that details the employment agreement and additional details for staff.

Hiring

ACA will take great care to recruit high-quality educators for its students and superb leaders for the administrative team.

Candidates who pass an initial screening will progress to a phone interview. They may then be invited to ACAD for an on-site meeting. Teacher candidates may be requested to conduct a mock or demonstration lesson for the principal and anyone else involved in hiring.

ACA will screen all faculty and staff by conducting full criminal background checks in accordance state statute and which would meet or exceed any school district set of policies. In accordance with House Bill 08-1344, Ascent Classical Academies will utilize the Colorado Department of Education database to learn if potential employees have had prior employment problems due to past errors, offenses, or unethical acts. In addition, ACA will run a criminal background check on prospective employees through the Colorado Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The school will investigate whether to pay for the additional information for the more expansive check from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, available through CBI. The school has not yet been able to conduct a cost-benefit analysis to determine whether the more-extensive Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) check is worth the added cost.

Prior to hiring any applicant, ACA will check the person's references carefully and thoroughly. The school will check both the references an applicant lists on an application as well as supervisors not named on the application or resume when possible.

Staff Positions and Qualifications

Principal

The position of principal is the most important hire made by the School. Establishing the culture of ACAD, aligned with the School's vision, mission, and philosophy, will be critical to the long-term success of the school.

One of the key contributions Hillsdale College Barney Charter School Initiative will make to ACA and the School is to locate, screen, and help the ACAD Board hire a highly-qualified and effective principal. Hillsdale College is a nationally recognized leader in classical and liberal arts education and has a rigorous, on-going national campaign to identify and recruit potential leaders for classical charter schools. Hillsdale also provides training and ongoing mentoring and development for classical school leaders.

The most significant characteristics of the school leader candidate include demonstrable leadership ability; the caliber of intellect and extent of knowledge needed to create and foster a climate of learning within the school and to project learning outward; and a firm understanding of and loyalty to classical education and the tradition it represents.

With the help of Hillsdale College and ACA's support to identify viable school leader candidates, the ACAD Board will interview and hire the principal.

The ACAD team has identified Dr. Terrence O. Moore, founding principal of Ridgeview Classical Schools and of Atlanta Classical Academy, to be the founding principal of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County. Dr. Moore is one of the most respected and experienced classical school leaders in the country. He will be teaching at ACAD's sister school, Golden View Classical Academy, during the 2017-2018 school year and will be working on hiring faculty and staff and starting ACAD pending funding beginning in the spring of 2018.

The leadership philosophy of Ascent Classical is that the principal must be the academic leader, or master teacher, of the school. In this role, the principal is expected to teach at least one class and be a mentor for the rest of the faculty. This approach of making the instructional leader the head of the school—the individual who leads from the front—is successfully working in schools the Ascent Classical Academy team has visited, such as Golden View Classical Academy, Ridgeview Classical Schools, and the Thomas MacLaren School.

The principal is responsible for developing and distributing leadership among the faculty. A job description for a principal is located in Appendix 30.

Our principal will be experienced and responsible for hiring teachers, implementing a classical liberal arts and civic-minded curriculum, establishing a studious and decorous school culture, maintaining a healthy enrollment, and ensuring financial integrity. These leadership responsibilities are essential to helping Ascent Classical achieve its mission, vision, and philosophy, develop and sustain a community of learners, and build a strong network of parents.

Ascent Classical also prefers a principal have a master's degree, teaching experience at the K-12 or college level, a record of leadership, and demonstrated abilities in speaking and writing.

Teaching Faculty

To be hired, teachers will possess at least a four-year degree, be able to show competence in the core academic areas in which they teach, demonstrate a love for educating children, and explain why they want to work in our unique program. Once hired, teachers will receive extensive and ongoing professional development from ACA's own internal programs, Hillsdale College, and other quality training offered both locally, statewide, and nationally.

To be successful at the school, teachers must:

1. Be committed to the mission, vision, and objectives of the school as set forth in this charter application and as more fully described through faculty training and day-to-day life at the school.
2. Be highly-qualified in their field.
3. Make decisions that serve the best interests of the education of the students.
4. Develop an expectation of success and excellence for the individual student and the school as a whole.
5. Conduct his/her duties in a professional manner.
6. Have a “can-do” attitude about any job that needs to be done.
7. Realize that a teacher’s expectations of a child often become self-fulfilling.

An Ascent Classical teacher should be intellectually curious and display the same sense of wonder about the world that the School expects of its students. Consequently, teachers should be self-motivated to continue to develop professionally, as they also participate in the professional development offered by the school.

The school will request a waiver from the Colorado requirement regarding licensed staff so that the school may cast a wider net and attract highly-qualified personnel who do not necessarily have a Colorado teaching license. For instance, many retired college-level instructors live in Douglas County and may be interested in teaching at ACAD but do not have teaching certificates.

The principal of ACAD will assess the “Highly-Qualified” status of any non-licensed staff using the clear standards presented by the Colorado Department of Education and the No Child Left Behind Act until alternate standards are accepted³⁵. Teachers may take the PRAXIS exam for endorsements in given areas.

Special Education teachers will be licensed as waivers are not available for staff in these positions.

Other position descriptions may be found in Appendix 30.

2. Management and Evaluation

School leadership and instructional staff will use external assessment results to obtain information on student learning, achievement gaps, and instruction, and to access and use data systems to efficiently manage, disaggregate, display, and report multiple types and sources of data. Data will be used to adjust or change instruction and professional development focus areas.

³⁵ Colorado Department of Education, *Highly Qualified Teachers*, accessed March 2, 2017, http://www.cde.state.co.us/FedPrograms/tii/a_hqt.asp.

As a school focused on high achievement, the leadership of ACAD is dedicated to having the best teachers and maintaining a culture of continuous improvement. The school will develop, refine, and improve a manageable yet comprehensive, consistent evaluation plan in alignment with the school's mission, goals, educational program as well as student achievement goals, assessment, and academic expectations. These evaluations will be used to shape further faculty and staff development.

The School will work with ACA and sister schools to develop this plan using proven best practices that best apply to ACAD.

Full-time ACAD employees will be formally evaluated at least once annually. New teachers will be given an initial evaluation in the first semester followed by a more formative (summative) evaluation in the second semester. The principal will evaluate teachers and other staff. The Board of Directors will evaluate the principal. Teachers will be evaluated against criteria described in their job description, curriculum guides, past performance, classroom observations, work with master teachers, and indicators of academic performance, including the test scores achieved by each teacher's class or classes. Prior to, and in preparation for, a formal evaluation, teachers will complete a self-evaluation form (a sample is attached as Appendix 31).

In addition to the annual formal evaluation, ACAD will use frequent, informal evaluations, particularly in the case of employees new to the school. These informal evaluations will be conducted in a give-and-take manner: employees will be invited to be a genuine part of the conversation towards improvement.

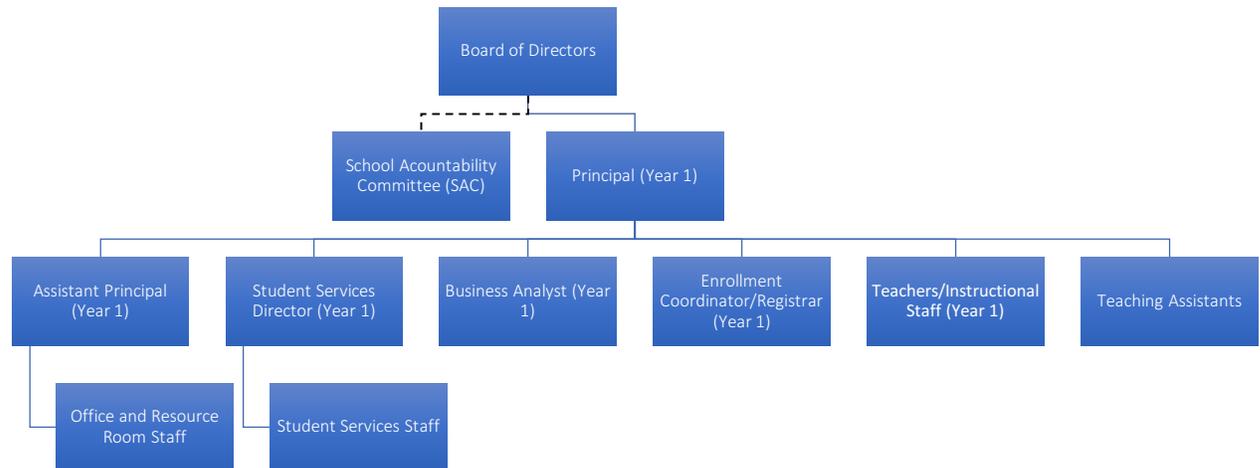
By engaging in regular performance evaluations, ACAD is assessing how well the teachers are doing with respect to their curricular and non-curricular responsibilities. Regular evaluations should give rise to individualized performance goals for each teacher. This entire process is one part, but an important one, of a larger system of performance management that includes training and professional development.

The training ACAD provides – developed internally, through Hillsdale College and ACA, or in conjunction with other organizations, like the Colorado League of Charter Schools – constitutes part of the continuing, professional development of faculty members. ACAD will also actively facilitate the development of teachers by supporting them in pursuing independent studies, college coursework, seminars, conferences/workshops, and scholarly or creative projects—all either connected to the general development of the mind or to the specific development of expertise in areas they are teaching at ACAD.

Faculty

3. School Structure, Policies, and Procedures

Organization Chart



Staff Roster

The staffing plan for ACAD is included in the budget model in Appendix 26.

Staffing increases will follow the staffing plan as enrollment and funding allow.

Succession Planning

The ACAD board of directors will work with ACA and the principal to develop a succession plan. Having this plan in place is an expected part of the risk management and the strategic planning responsibility of the board and will proactively prepare faculty, staff, and the board to respond to an unexpected or expected departure of the school leader in order to minimize the impact on school operations.

This planning will include an emergency leadership replacement plan and an expected leadership succession plan.³⁶

Policies and Procedures

ACAD's leadership, faculty, and staff will be at-will employees of ACA as set forth in the draft Services Agreement included here as Appendix 31. School leadership will

³⁶ Christine Campbell, "You're Leaving? Succession and Sustainability in Charter School," accessed Jan 3, 2017, http://www.crpe.org/sites/default/files/pub_ICs_Succession_Nov10_web_0.pdf.

determine staff structuring based on skill and performance to best serve the needs of students.

Applications for faculty and staff positions will be accepted from all qualified candidates. Applicant screening, interviews, and selection will comply with all employment non-discrimination laws and policies.

Once a candidate is selected by the school leadership, the appropriate staff member at ACA will help to facilitate final referencing and criminal background checks. The principal will offer regular hiring updates to the Board, particularly during the spring of each academic year. ACAD will benefit from an efficient fingerprinting process to ensure that the criminal records of candidates are examined before teachers or staff ever have contact with students. This practice meets or exceeds the standards required by law and will help ensure the safety of students and staff.

Selected candidates will be offered a letter of appointment, confirming their start date and pay rate. The purpose of the letter is to define and clarify circumstances under which employment will occur.

Employment with ACA is on an at-will basis; policies and procedures have also been defined to handle unacceptable leadership or employee performance. In the event that performance is unacceptable, and depending on the particular circumstances, discipline may occur. Discipline may include a warning, coaching, Performance Improvement Plan, or suspension/administrative leave. If the employee does not meet performance expectations or there is a significant violation of policies or procedures, termination may occur.

The ability to pursue the mission and implement the programs described in this application requires ACAD to attract and retain highly effective leaders, teachers, and staff. The school's partnership with ACA will provide the school leadership with access to well-established and fully developed talent recruiting channels. School leadership will determine staff structuring based on skill and performance to best serve the needs of students.

Applications for staff positions will be accepted from all qualified candidates. Applicant screening, interviews, and selection will comply with all employment non-discrimination laws and policies.

Appendix 30 provides an example of draft ACAD policies, expected to be similar to a nearby sister school. The founding committee and ACAD Board of Directors will continue reviewing employee policies of other similar schools for examples and best practices.

J. Insurance Coverage

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County ("ACAD") will obtain all necessary and prudent types of insurance, including, but not limited to the following: liability, worker's compensation, errors and omissions, property (building, if appropriate, and contents), and student accident, and catastrophic accident insurance. ACAD will provide a certificate of such insurance to Douglas County Schools no later than September 1st of each year. ACAD may obtain competitive quotes from insurers before purchasing insurance. A quote from HUB International is reflected in the budget and includes the following coverages:

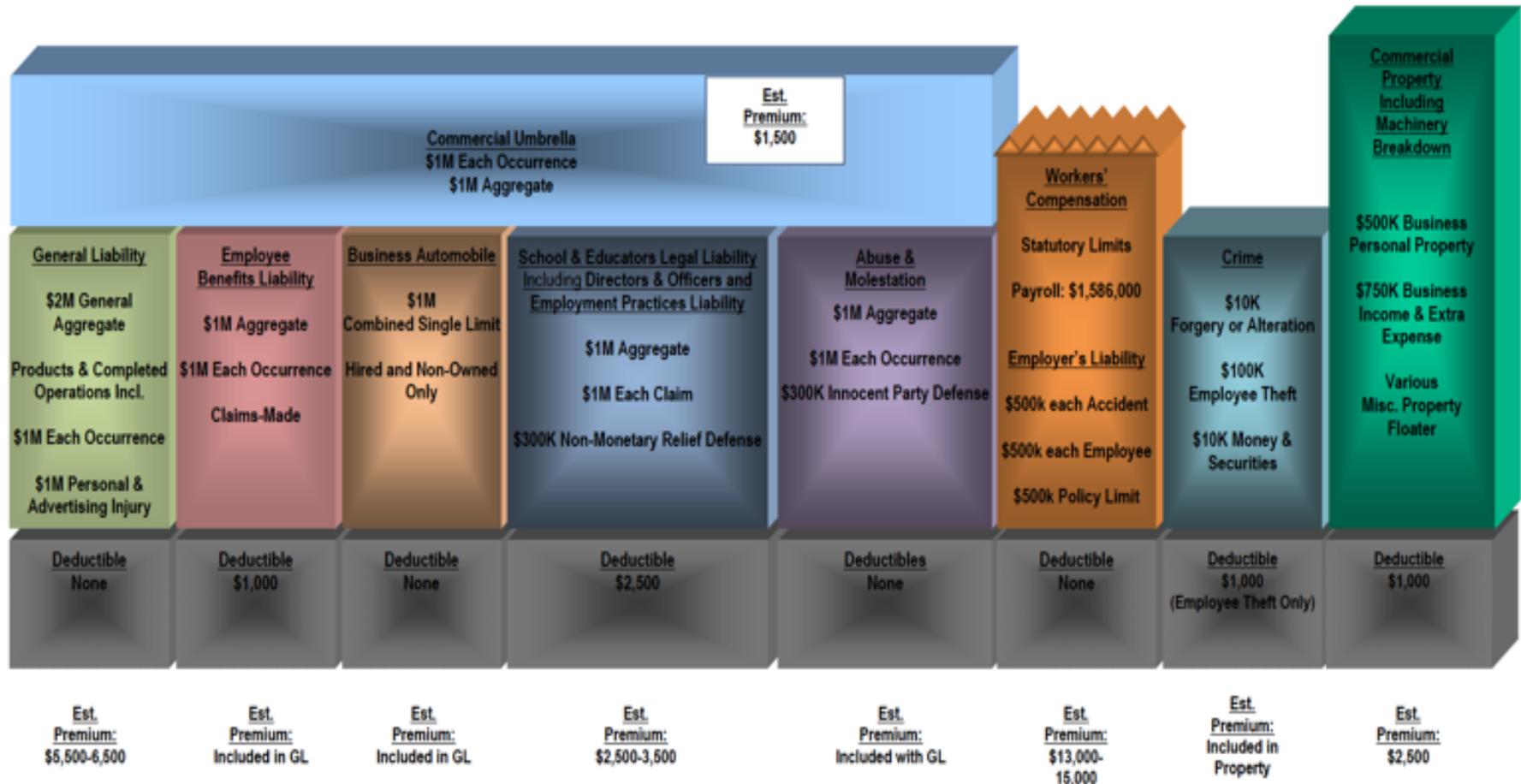
Liability policies at \$1,000,000 per occurrence/wrongful act covering the following: Bodily Injury; Property Damage; Abuse and Molestation; Educators' Legal or Teachers' Professional (Errors and Omissions); Employee Benefits; Employment Practices; Directors and Officers; and Automobile.

Insurance placing coverage that meets individual exposure for the following: Property, including business income and extra expense; Crime and Fiduciary Liability; Student Accident; Off-campus activities, including field trips, program specific needs and sporting events; Cyber Liability, including social media exposures; Workers' Compensation. Excess or Umbrella Policy is at minimum of \$1,000,000 that addresses many of the school's liability exposures.

A visual representation of the total insurance structure follows.

Total Estimated Program Structure

Total Premium: \$25,000 – 29,000



K. Parent and Community Involvement

Parental Involvement

The Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, (“ACAD”), team strongly believes parental engagement and involvement are critical for student success and a key factor for a high-achieving school³⁷. ACAD will create simple and meaningful opportunities for parents to be involved in the School and their child’s education.

With the evidence that parental involvement leads to increased student success, ACAD expects parents to participate and volunteer in the School as members of the Ascent Classical community. Two-parent households will be expected to volunteer 30 hour per year and single-parent households should volunteer 15 hours per year. While recommended and expected to retain a culture of community ownership, there will not be punitive consequences for failure to meet this requirement.

The Donnell-Kay Foundation describes parent engagement in high-performing charter schools on a Continuum of the Individual, School, and System levels.³⁸ ACAD will engage parents and provide opportunities across the levels in this continuum. The levels are briefly described:

1. Individual – Setting the standard for raised expectation, based on strong relationships and open communication.

Examples of parental engagement at this level include parents and teachers having open lines of communication, with staff working to get to know the parents of their students. Teachers will openly make themselves available and welcome contact with parents to help invest them in their child’s academic goals. Teachers will also work to engage “hard-to-reach” parents to let them know their support is critical for the success of their child and the culture of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County. This level of engagement is the most effective level to connect with families of at-risk and underserved students. The desired outcomes of this engagement level are raised expectations and strong relationships with families.

2. School – Creating a school framework for engagement and supporting parents as active participants in the school community.

³⁷ Kisner, Rebecca, *The Parents Engagement Continuum in High-Performing Charter School: A Guide for Schools*, p. 3, accessed March 4, 2017, <http://dkfoundation.org/assets/files/2013-Parent-Engagement-Continuum.pdf>.

³⁸*ibid*, p. 3.

This is level where parents are involved in building a school community. ACAD will encourage parents be involved as classroom or office volunteers, organizing and staffing events, being involved on school committees, and donating or providing goods and services needed by the school. Volunteer opportunities will be available during both traditional and non-traditional times. These opportunities will allow parents to witness the high-quality instruction and experiences of their child and to create greater support networks among parents. The desired outcomes from this level of engagement are creating a strong community and school culture of parental ownership in the School's mission and vision and retention of students and families.

3. System – Empowering parent leaders to support other parents in their engagement and mobilize as advocates for high-quality schools.

This is the level of engagement where parents are empowered and become leaders in their child's education. Parents will be encouraged to be advocates for the School, be leaders in supporting other parents as they begin their engagement, and spread the word in their communities to connect other families with high-quality education options. Outcomes from this level of engagement are recruiting more families to the school and protection and replication of high-performing schools.

As a school of choice, ACAD will be focused on delivering the best education for students to remain a desirable choice for parents. While the school will primarily consider the academic needs of students in any decision-making, ACAD will conduct an annual survey of parents for constructive feedback. The principal will be responsible for ensuring a meaningful survey is conducted and may delegate this responsibility to the School Accountability Committee (SAC).

School administrators will consider the results of the survey and take steps to address parent feedback in a timely manner.

Parent and Teacher Organization

In addition to encouraging and providing opportunities to be involved directly with the School, ACAD may encourage the establishment of a parent and teacher group to support the School, consistent with the framework mentioned above.

Community Involvement

In addition to being a school developing the minds and hearts of its students, Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County aims to be a valuable part of the community, both to its parents and the community in general.

Within the school community, ACAD may have a book club for parents. Many parents did not have an opportunity to read and study the books students at Ascent Classical Academy will encounter. ACAD would like to select a book a semester and have a faculty member guide a

parent group through a series of discussions. The benefits of this effort will be two-fold, it will connect parents with what their kids are learning in the classroom and it will further develop the school community.

Traditionally underserved and bilingual families may not understand the concept and value of a classical, liberal arts, and Core Knowledge education. To connect with these families, the school will also emphasize that in addition to developing the intellect of students, ACAD also believes strongly in developing good character and virtues. These are more universal ideas and core principles of ACAD to which these parents may also relate.

In addition to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County being a future resource and offering value to the community, the steering committee has been engaging community organizations to leverage partnerships to strengthen the program and add value to others.

The Ascent Classical Academy team will continue engaging civic and community organizations such as:

- Rotary
- Kiwanis
- Optimist Club
- Chambers of Commerce
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
- 4-H Clubs

L. Enrollment Policy and Outreach

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, (“ACAD”), sets forth the following non-discriminatory enrollment policy as required by law.

Within the time limits and priorities described below, students shall be enrolled at ACAD in two rounds, the First and Second Enrollment Rounds.

Enrollment will take place without regard to race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, ancestry, disability, or need for special education services, in compliance with federal, state, and local laws.

First Enrollment Round

The First Enrollment Round will be conducted by random lottery, consistent with all applicable laws and guidance.

Lottery Overview

In the event interest in a grade is beyond capacity, enrollment is determined by a random lottery system. All completed applications turned in by the deadline will be eligible for the lottery. All applicants are randomly selected during the lottery. Should there be more lottery applicants than available seats, students are randomly assigned waitlist numbers. ACAD does not carry its enrollment list over from year to year and students not selected in the lottery will be invited to reapply for the following year.

Lottery Application Process

The principal or his designee will determine, based upon the total number of students currently enrolled, how many enrollment openings are available for each grade level. Class size may be approximately 25-30 students per class with two classes per grade, totaling 50-60 students per grade. Classes may be over-enrolled by two students per class to account for natural attrition. The principal may determine final class sizes. The application process may be conducted online. The application will not request demographic information nor if a student requires special services.

Lottery Application Criteria

Parents may submit an enrollment for their child anytime during the Enrollment period for the appropriate grade level for their child and only for the upcoming school year. Only full-time students will be accepted.

Lottery Application Deadline

All applications for the lottery must be filled out completely and legibly. Applications received after the deadline indicated below will be added to the end of the wait list in the order they are received.

Lottery Mechanics

When the number of eligible applicants exceeds the space available in a particular grade to which admission is sought, a process of random selection shall be conducted. Random selection will occur when the priority list of applicants has been exhausted. Ascent Classical Academy's lottery is conducted giving consideration to a number of different priority statuses.

Priority 1: Founder/Board Policy

Those children whose parents/guardians were active in the planning process by serving on the founding interim governing board, an advisor to the founding interim governing board, active volunteer who completes 30 hours of service, or other criteria established by the founding Board beneficial to the successful founding of the school, will receive priority for admission if their applications are received by the application deadline. Said families must have been designated a "founding family" by Ascent Classical Academy's Board of Directors. Current Board members also receive enrollment priority. Reserved Priority 1 seats will not exceed 20% of grade capacity. Priority 1 families will taper off throughout the existence of the school as their children graduate.

Priority 2: Staff Policy

Children of staff members who work 30 or more hours per week will receive priority for admission. These children will be allowed to remain in the school regardless of whether or not the parent/guardian remains employed by the school.

The total number of students enrolled under the priority Founder/Board/Staff policy will not exceed 20% of the school's population. If there are fewer spots than the number of priority applicant's, then a separate lottery is held for these applicants with priority status. Children of Founders and Staff are given priority over siblings. Any student falling under the Founder/Board/Staff policy who is not eligible for priority due to exceeding the 20% threshold, will be entered into the general lottery.

Priority 3: Sibling/Household Policy

It is the intent of Ascent Classical Academy to support whole families and create a cohesive and inclusive school community. Siblings of enrolled students will receive priority for admission if their applications are received by the designated deadline. Families may also apply for household priority. Household priority is given when a child, who is not a sibling, lives with a currently enrolled or admitted family. In this situation, custody papers or other legal documentation must be provided to claim priority.

General Lottery

Once priority seats have been filled, Ascent Classical holds a general lottery as described above. The lottery will be held no later than the second Monday of February. Students who reside within the Douglas County RE-1 School District limits will be given preference over students living outside the District boundaries. Seats will be assigned randomly.

Siblings of multiples, such as twins or triplets, will be grouped together within their respective priority category.

At the conclusion of the lottery for each grade level, applicants will be ordered on a waitlist for each grade.

Second Round Enrollment

The Second Round Enrollment period opens as soon as the First Round is closed to new applications.

Applicants applying in the Second Round will be offered open seats or placed on a wait list on a first come, first served basis, after the First Round lottery is conducting and wait lists established.

Grounds for Denial of Admission

Subject to the school's responsibilities under the Exceptional Children's Educational Act and applicable federal, state and local laws, the following will constitute ground for denial of admission to the school:

- Failure to meet age requirement.
- Having been expelled from any school district the preceding twelve months.
- Having engaged in behavior in another school during the preceding twelve months that is detrimental to the welfare or safety of other students or of school personnel.
- Failure to comply with the immunization provisions. Families who choose not to immunize their children must sign an immunization waiver.
- Falsification of application or enrollment documents.

Time Frame and Public Notice

The First Round application period will take place from October through 2:30pm of the Friday of the first full school week of January. Grade level lists will be compiled no later than the second Monday following the close of the First Round application deadline. Once a name is drawn, the parent(s) will be notified by email and given 72 hours to accept or decline the seat. This offer is only for the grade level the parent applied for for their child.

If the parents(s) cannot be contacted because they failed to make notification of changes in their email or phone number, they shall be removed from the lottery pool.

If the parent declines an opening offered to their child, that child's name is withdrawn from the application pool and the parent(s) may choose to reapply at a later date.

If a student is offered a seat into Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County after August 1, the parent or guardian must respond within 48 hours or that child's name is withdrawn from the application pool. The parent or guardian may choose to reapply to be put back into the application pool.

Openings at ACAD will be advertised at parent information meetings, on its web site, and posted in the school. ACAD will not discriminate in recruiting and will reach out broadly to the entire community, including households that do not speak English as a primary language, students with disabilities, and other underserved groups to inform of early enrollment list availability.

Enrollment Deadline

ACAD will only accept new students after October 1st with approval of the principal.

Re-Enrollment for Current Students

Current ACAD families do not need to enter the lottery each year but they must do two things to secure their seat for the following year.

Each December parents of students currently enrolled in the school will receive a form asking if they are planning on returning the following year and if so, how many children they would like to enroll. This information helps determine how many seats are available for the lottery. Failure to return the forms by the deadline may result in the loss of a students' seat for the following year. This step is NOT the registration for the following school year. Additional steps must be taken to secure a seat for the following year.

All currently enrolled students must be re-registered between April 1 and June 30th for the next school year. A student is not fully registered until this step is complete.

ACAD will notify currently enrolled families of the registration process via e-mail and in writing via the ACAD newsletter at the end of each school year. School staff will offer several reminders via e-mail. ACAD will not make individual reminder calls.

It is the sole responsibility of the parent to keep their e-mail and phone numbers updated as well as follow the registration process and meet the required deadlines. If a parent fails to make the deadline and fails to notify the admissions director, the seat will be offered to the next person on

the wait list. The parent may choose to have the student's name added to the bottom of the wait list.

Complete Registration Process

After being offered a seat at ACAD, parents will be required to complete additional steps to complete their registration, including notifying their current school of their acceptance of a seat at the school and authorizing their child's records be transferred to ACAD.

This deadline will be established by the principal, or his designee, and communicated to parents.

If parents do not inform their previous school and authorize the release of their child's records by the deadline, they may forfeit their seat, and it will be offered to the next child on the waitlist.

Ascent Classical Academy retains ownership of its Enrollment Policy and may update it as needed, to include ensuring compliance with federal grant guidelines. The policy will include strict prohibitions on discrimination and meet all applicable laws.

M. Transportation and Food Service

Transportation

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will not offer transportation and recognizes this may be an issue making access more difficult to its program

For parents without transportation, Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will encourage carpools. The school will also participate in SchoolPool to connect students with transportation (<http://www.waytogo.org/getting-around/schoolpool>).

Food Service

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County does not participate in the National School Lunch Program. The school staff may distribute and collect *Economic Data Surveys* from families instead of Free and Reduced Lunch Applications for purposes of other funding.

If a student forgets his lunch, school staff may provide him or her with a solid nutritional meal.

N. Facilities

Land and Facilities Plan

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, (“ACAD”) has identified a 25-acre parcel of land near the intersection of I-25 and Lincoln Avenue, suitable for the construction of a new K-12 school facility.

Ascent Classical Academies, (“ACA”), is providing the school with expert real estate assistance for this application and has been in contact with the parcel owner. Our team is also in the process of identifying back-up parcels should further investigation determine that the preferred parcel not be suitable for the school.

Upon approval of the charter application, the real estate ACAD has worked with ACA to identify will be purchased by ACA and construction or renovation will begin. ACA’s construction period will less than seven months (see below).

For the new school, ACA development partners will make a multi-million-dollar upfront investment to cover construction and construction-related costs. The school and the board do not pay anything up front. The school’s facility, financed privately and with no taxpayer money, will be built to house the entire planned K-12 academic program. The final build out may be completed over multiple phases. The academic program described throughout this application will be met in the facility as described below. This description serves as the facility needs assessment.

Being able to occupy a facility specifically designed to house the educational program ACAD intends to offer is a huge plus for the students and faculty. The school will be able to avoid the situations of a new charter schools try to fit into church basements or crowd into a facility that is too small or ill-designed for their programs. A partnership with ACA that gives the school the top-notch facility needed for its program is one of the great advantages of the school plan.

Facility Description

When construction is complete, the total square footage of the building will be approximately 55,000 square feet and will provide sufficient space for a play area, a play field, and adequate parking. The facility will be safe, clean, and conducive to student learning. The school will be accessible and will accommodate all students. The school building will include:

- Classrooms (30)
- Student support rooms (7)
- Faculty prep room
- Gymnasium
- Art room
- Music room
- Administrative spaces (7)
- Front office

Construction Process

Once acquisition of a school site has been finalized, ACA will manage the school facility construction process and report to the ACAD board frequently on progress toward an on-time school opening. The facility will be constructed and equipped to comply with all health, building code, and safety requirements, as well as meet all regulations as outlined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Given the ACA team’s knowledge of and experience with site acquisition and construction timeline, ACAD is confident that the school will be completed in sufficient time for a September 2018 opening.

Below is the proposed construction timeline.

| Phase | START DATE | FINISH DATE |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Pre-Design | Mar 2017 | May 2017 |
| Schematic Design/Design Development | May 2017 | July 2017 |
| Construction Documents/Permitting | August 2017 | September 2017 |
| Pre-Qualification/Sub-Bidding/GMP Final Review | October 2017 | November 2017 |
| Construction | December 2017 | August 2018 |
| Move-In/Close Out/Warranty | August 2018 | August 2018 |
| First Day of School | N/A | 9/4/2018 |

Obtaining a Certificate of Occupancy

The board and ACA will ensure that the school will meet with all applicable building codes in the development of the facility. The team will work as required with a local building inspector to timely determine all required state and local approvals for any new construction and renovations. Our board and ACA will receive any required certificate of occupancy for the school prior to occupancy. ACAD will ensure that ACA complies with all applicable land use processes, building requirements, and certifications, and that a certificate of occupancy is obtained prior to school opening. ACAD will also have adequate insurance coverage.

Lease Arrangement

ACAD will be leasing the school facility from ACA, and ACA will retain ownership of the building. ACA is shouldering the financial and operational risk involved in acquiring real estate,

constructing a facility, and maintaining the premises, and ACA fronts all costs necessary to deliver a newly constructed facility and a comprehensive K-12 educational program from day one. The school benefits from this arrangement, as the Board is able to spend its time and effort overseeing and evaluating the school's performance, not on real estate, facility financing, and other operational matters. ACAD will also get to occupy a facility that precisely meets the needs of the educational program.

Unlike traditional district schools where the construction, renovation, and occupancy costs associated with a school facility are all borne by taxpayers and not seen in an individual school's annual operating budget, the school must pay rent to cover these normal operating costs. The lease rate, shown in the multi-year budget plan, is based on a market rate for projects with similar characteristics and risk factors. Charter school projects are inherently higher risk due to the single-use nature of the facility, a recurring dependence on charter renewal for the authorization to operate, and poor access to private capital financing markets.

The relationship the school maintains with ACA as the manager of its school operation will be separate from its relationship with ACA as the building owner, the former relationship governed by the Services Agreement and the latter covered by a Lease Agreement. ACA's ownership of the school facility will not create any adverse conditions on the board when considering the performance of ACA as an operations partner, and the fact that ACA owns the facility is likely to increase the board's ability to ensure that ACA remains vigilant and accountable to its educational responsibilities.

In the unlikely event that the board becomes dissatisfied with ACA's performance and seeks to terminate the Services Agreement for the operation of the school, the board will ensure that a plan for alternatively housing the school is developed before terminating the contract with ACA. The board will never take a course that causes the school to become "homeless," and will assure that another facility suitable to house the school and available to rent will be found before taking such a step. First, the proposed contract with ACA should allow the school to remain in the leased facility until the end of the given school year at a constant rental rate, allowing enough time to properly plan for any such transition. Second, the planning process currently underway for the facility includes an exhaustive search of suitable new-build and renovation possibilities, and the board intends to keep the "short-list" of options available during at least the first charter term. And third, even if the board terminates its operating contract with ACA, the option exists to continue to rent the same facility from ACA through a landlord-tenant arrangement.

Having ACA invest in the capital expense of the facility likely increases the company's desire to ensure that the school keeps renting the facility from them, and that happens only if the board and the authorizer are happy with ACA's performance. Thus, the envisioned arrangement for the school facility enhances the leverage our board has to ensure ACA remains focused on stellar student academic performance at the school.

Contingency Plan

In order to ensure the school’s facility plans stay on track, a number of properties that will suit the construction of a new facility or will allow the renovation of an existing facility will be identified. If there are unforeseen hurdles with the preferred property that cannot be overcome in a reasonable timeframe or at reasonable expense, the board and ACA will be well-positioned to move expeditiously to secure one of the other properties from the “short-list” of viable real estate opportunities. The other properties being considered in contingency planning will be made available to Douglas County School upon request.

ACA Real Estate and Development Team

Among the partner’s ACA is working with on the facility development project is Kurt Connolly of Inline Management, acting as the owner’s representative.

O. Waivers

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County (“ACAD” or “School”) will comply with all state and federal law policies that are not waived.

The waivers below are requested to allow the School to deliver on its mission and vision, in partnership with Ascent Classical Academies (“ACA”), which we have described throughout this application. The steering committee has worked with our independent legal counsel to compile this list of waiver requests.

Pursuant to the Charter Schools Act, ACAD requests waivers of certain Colorado Revised Statutes or State Board of Education rules listed below. Each statute is identified and the reason for each request given as well as a replacement plan. The waivers will enable ACAD to better meet its mission, goals and objectives, and implement its education program. Although a replacement plan is identified with each non-automatic waiver requested, additional replacement policies and refinement of the noted plans will occur prior to the start of school operations.

Requested Automatic State Statute Waivers

Pursuant to CRS §22-30.5-103, ACAD will be granted the following automatic waivers, that do not require a Rationale and Replacement Plan, for the term of the charter contract³⁹:

| Charter School Automatic Waivers as of 1/1/15 | |
|---|---|
| Statutory Citation | Description |
| 22-32-109(1)(b), C.R.S. | Local board duties concerning competitive bidding |
| 22-32-109(1)(f), C.R.S. | Local board duties concerning selection of staff and pay |
| 22-32-109(1)(t), C.R.S. | Determine educational program and prescribe textbooks |
| 22-32-110(1)(h), C.R.S. | Local board powers-Terminate employment of personnel |
| 22-32-110(1)(i), C.R.S. | Local board duties-Reimburse employees for expenses |
| 22-32-110(1)(j), C.R.S. | Local board powers-Procure life, health, or accident insurance |
| 22-32-110(1)(k), C.R.S. | Local board powers-Policies relating the in-service training and official conduct |
| 22-32-110(1)(y), C.R.S. | Local board powers-Accepting gifts, donations, and grants |
| 22-32-110(1)(ee), C.R.S. | Local board powers-Employ teachers’ aides and other non-certificated personnel |

³⁹ Colorado Department of Education. “Waiver Request Guidance: Updated December 2015.” Accessed Mar 3, 2017. <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdechart/waiverguidanceforcharterschools>.

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| 22-32-126, C.R.S. | Employment and authority of principals |
| 22-33-104(4) | Compulsory school attendance-Attendance policies and excused absences |
| 22-63-301, C.R.S. | Teacher Employment Act- Grounds for dismissal |
| 22-63-302, C.R.S. | Teacher Employment Act-Procedures for dismissal of teachers |
| 22-63-401, C.R.S. | Teacher Employment Act-Teachers subject to adopted salary schedule |
| 22-63-402, C.R.S. | Teacher Employment Act-Certificate required to pay teachers |
| 22-63-403, C.R.S. | Teacher Employment Act-Describes payment of salaries |
| 22-1-112, C.R.S | School Year-National Holidays |

Additional State Waivers

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County requests the following “non-automatic” waivers from state statute and rule. These waivers are important in supporting the autonomy of the school to achieve its mission and vision aligned with the philosophy and program proposed in this charter application.

22-1-110, CRS. Effect of Use of Alcohol and Controlled Substances to be Taught

Specifies how, when, and to what extent the effects of alcohol and controlled substances will be taught in all grade levels.

22-1-128, CRS. Comprehensive Human Sexuality Education

Specifies how, when, and content for human sexuality education to be taught in all grade levels.

Rationale: The Douglas County School Board has granted the board of directors of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County the authority to determine the educational program and curriculum for the school.

Replacement Plan: Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will create an appropriate and evidence based curriculum in accordance with the Charter School Agreement.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will experience an enhanced educational program by being able to administer the school program keeping with the philosophy and mission as stated in the Charter School Agreement.

22-9-106, CRS. Local Board of Education-Duties-Performance Evaluation System

Requires employee performance evaluations be performed by a person holding an administrative certificate (Type D).

Rationale: The ACAD principal or designated head of school must have the ability to perform the evaluation of all personnel. Should any other designated administrator not have a Type D certificate, this should not preclude him or her from administering the evaluations under the direction of the head of school. The Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County board of directors must also have the ability to perform the evaluation for the principal or designated head of school.

Plan: ACAD uses its own evaluation system as agreed to in the Charter School Agreement with Douglas County School District R-1. ACAD's evaluation system will continue to meet the intent of the law as outlined in statute. The methods used for Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County's evaluation system includes quality standards that are clear and relevant to the administrators' and teachers' roles and responsibilities, and have the goal of improving student academic growth, and meet the intent of the quality standards established in SB 10-191.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waivers will be Evaluated: Since teacher performance has a critical impact on the performance of the entire school, the impact of this waiver will be measured by the same performance criteria and assessments that apply to the school, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: With this waiver, the school will be able to implement its program and evaluate its teachers in accordance with its Performance Appraisal System, which is designed to produce greater accountability and be consistent with the school's goals and objectives. This will benefit staff members as well as students and the community.

22-32-109(1)(n)(I), CRS. Board of Education-Specific Duties
School Calendar

22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(B), CRS. Board of Education-Specific Duties
Adoption of District Calendar

Rationale: The number of days in the school year at Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will exceed the statutory requirement. ACAD will prescribe the actual details of its own school calendar to best meet the needs of its students. The local board will not set these policies and ACAD may have a calendar that differs from the rest of the schools within the district.

Replacement Plan: The final calendar and the school’s daily schedule will be designed by ACAD and will meet or exceed the expectations in state statute

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, the school will be able to implement the necessary policies to increase student achievement.

22-32-109(1)(n)(II)(A), CRS. Board of Education-Specific Duties
Teacher Pupil Contact Hours

Rationale: Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will prescribe the actual details of teacher-pupil contact hours to best meet the needs of students. The local board will not set these policies.

Replacement Plan: ACAD will prescribe the actual details of teacher-pupil contact hours instead of the Douglas County School District. Hours will meet or exceed the current requirements in statute.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, the school will be able to implement the necessary policies to increase student achievement.

22-32-110(1)(r), CRS. Exclusion Materials from Schools and Libraries

Excludes materials found to be immoral or pernicious from schools or libraries.

Rationale: The Douglas County School Board has granted the Board of Directors of Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County the authority to determine the educational program for the school. ACAD should be delegated the authority to establish and maintain appropriate standards for material acceptable in its school in accordance with the Charter School Agreement.

Replacement Plan: The Ascent Classical Academy will establish its own policy on what is acceptable in the school.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, Ascent Classical Academy will set its own policies in keeping with the philosophy and mission as stated in the Charter School Agreement.

22-32-119, CRS. Kindergarten

Establishing and maintaining kindergarten

Rationale: The Douglas County School Board has granted the Board of Directors of Ascent Classical Academy the authority to determine the educational program for the

school. ACAD should be delegated the authority to establish and maintain a kindergarten in accordance with the Charter School Agreement.

Replacement Plan: The educational program for Ascent Classical Academy is described in the approved Charter School Agreement and the kindergarten will follow the description.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, ACAD will experience an enhanced educational program by being able to administer the school program at kindergarten in keeping with the philosophy and mission as stated in the Charter School Agreement.

22-32-120, CRS. Food Services

Provides rules and requirements for food service

22-32-134.5, CRS. Healthy Beverages

Prohibits the sale of beverages not meeting nutritional guidelines

22-32-136, CRS. Children's Nutrition

Healthful alternatives – information – facilities- local wellness policy – competitive foods

22-32-136.3, CRS. Children's Nutrition - No trans fats in school foods

Foods with trans fats not allowed to be served in schools.

Rationale: Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will be operating independently of other schools in the Douglas County School District and should be delegated the authority to develop, adopt, and implement its own operational policies, rules and regulations, subject to the limitations in the Charter School Agreement.

Replacement Plan: The board of directors of ACAD will adopt policies and the principal or designated head of school will prescribe rules and regulations.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, ACAD will set its own policies in keeping with the philosophy and mission as stated in the Charter School Agreement.

22-63-201, CRS. Employment certificate required

Prohibits board from entering into an employment contract with a person who does not hold a teacher's certificate or letter of authorization.

22-63-202, CRS. Teacher employment, contracts in writing-duration-damage provision

Rationale: Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County should be granted the authority to hire teachers and principals who will support the school's goals and objectives. The principal will not function as a traditional district school principal, but rather will be responsible for a wider range of tasks. The school will seek to attract principals and teachers from a wide variety of backgrounds, including, but not limited to teachers from out-of-state, teachers with a lapsed Colorado certificate, persons with several years of successful teaching experience in a setting not requiring a license, as well as persons with business or professional experience. All employees of ACAD will be employed on an at-will basis. All teachers at ACAD will meet the latest state guidelines for "highly-qualified" status.

Replacement Plan: The school will, as appropriate, hire certified teachers and principals. However, in some instances it may be advantageous for the school to be able to hire highly-qualified teachers and/or administrators without a certificate and who possess unique background and/or skills that fill the need of Ascent Classical Academy.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, the school will be able to employ professional staff possessing unique skills and/or background filling all staff needs.

22-63-203, CRS. Probationary Teachers -renewal and non-renewal of employment contract
Provides for contract with probationary teachers and allows for non-renewal and renewal of employment contract.

Rationale: Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County should be granted the authority to develop its own employment agreements and terms and conditions of employment. The school will be operating differently from other schools with a unique curriculum for which having the proper teaching staff is essential. Not every teacher who is successful in the regular public school will be successful at ACAD. All employees at ACAD will be employed on an at-will basis.

Replacement Plan: ACAD has teacher agreement with the terms of non-renewal and renewal of employment agreements, and payment of salaries upon termination of employment of a teacher.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, the school will be able to employ professional staff possessing unique skills and/or background, filling all staff needs.

22-63-204, CRS. Interest Prohibited
Receiving money from the sale of goods

Rationale: As provided for in the Charter School Agreement, all staff employed at Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County are employees of the school and not of Douglas County School District. As a result, the authority of the employing board to provide written consent in these matters should be transferred to ACAD.

Replacement Plan: Ascent Classical Academy will follow Ascent Classical Academy Board Policies and the Charter School Agreement as approved by the Douglas County School District.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of this waiver, ACAD will be able to administer the school program in keeping with the philosophy and mission as stated in the Charter School Agreement.

22-63-206, CRS. Teacher Employment, Compensation and Dismissal Act

Permits transfer of teachers between schools upon recommendation of district's chief administrative officer.

Rationale: Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County is granted the authority under the Charter School Agreement to select its own teachers. No other school nor the Douglas County School District should not have the authority to transfer its teachers into ACAD or transfer teachers from ACAD to any other schools, except as provided for in the Charter School Agreement.

Replacement Plan: The school will hire teachers on a best-qualified basis. There is no provision for transfers.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: The school expects as a result of this waiver it will be able to manage its own personnel affairs. There is no provision for transfers.

22-32-109(1)(oo), CRS. Local board duties concerning career and academic plans
301-81, CCR. Rules Governing Individual Career and Academic Plans

Rationale: Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County is granted the authority to establish its own curriculum and academic program. It should be allowed the autonomy to help prepare its students for life after graduating the school. This statute requires a school to create a plan for its students that directs the students' course selection and includes other requirements not aligned to the mission and vision of the school, affecting its autonomy.

Replacement Plan: ACAD has a challenging and well-defined core course requirement for graduation. School staff will work with students and parents to help advise students on how to reach their goals for life after graduating ACAD, whether they chose college, career, or another path. ACAD may also offer college-level courses in lieu of concurrent enrollment.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that this waiver be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of this waiver will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: The school expects as a result of this waiver it will be able to offer a more meaningful post-secondary education readiness program for its students, aligned to the school's mission and vision.

Requested District Waivers

Listed below are the waivers requested from the Douglas County School District Policies. In some instances, waivers are requested not because of any substantive disagreement with the scope, intent or language of a policy, but rather because the subject policy specifies that the District Board of Education, the Superintendent or a school principal bears responsibility for performing a particular action or function; where in the ACAD model for governance/administration these functions would be performed by the ACAD Board, school administrator, and/or our management partner Ascent Classical Academies.

ACAD request waivers from district policies and rules on Foundations and Basic Commitments (A Section), School Board Governance and Operations (B Section), General School Administration (C Section), Fiscal Management (D Section), Support Services (E Section), Facilities Planning and Development (F Section), Personnel (G Section), Instruction (I Section), Students (J Section), and School and Community Relations (K Section).

Rationale: Charter schools have unique status and are expected to be innovative in educational reform. In order for ACAD to be successful and operate in a manner consistent with its mission and vision as outlined in this charter application, it must be able to operate beyond certain policy limits of traditional educational approaches. The school requires the additional flexibility to support its autonomy in operations, governance, employment, student culture, academics, and other area.

Replacement Policies: Replacement policies will be developed to be consistent with the philosophies of the ACAD Board and ACA and meet the requirements of all local, state, and federal laws. ACAD already has a significant set of policies available that better align to the mission, vision, and culture of the school.

Duration of the Waiver: The school requests that these waivers be for the duration of its contract with the Douglas County School District. Therefore, the waiver is requested for five academic operating years, through June 30, 2023.

Financial Impact: The school anticipates that the requested waivers will have no financial impact on the Douglas County School District or Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County.

How the Impact of the Waiver Will be Evaluated: The impact of these waivers will be measured by the performance criteria and assessments that apply to Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, as set forth in this Charter School Agreement.

Expected Outcome: As a result of these waivers, ACAD will be able to implement its program in a manner the supports its autonomy and is consistent with its Educational Philosophy, Mission, and Vision, of the School.

ACAD would like to negotiate specific district policy waivers through the charter contracting process and will work with district staff to vet ACAD proposed replacement policies.

P. Student Discipline, Expulsion, and Suspension

Discipline at Ascent Classical Academy

Discipline at Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, (“ACAD”), serves the educational mission. The establishment of the culture of ACAD is not only a necessary condition for educational success, it is also a core component of the educational program. The school seeks to draw students out of the youth culture that pervades much of their adolescent lives and into the community of wonder, with each person actively pursuing a habitual vision of greatness illustrated by the best our tradition offers.

The foundation of discipline and order at Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County is the realization that a civilized learning community demands certain fundamental norms of courtesy, ethics, and orderly behavior in order to fulfill its mission. The intent to create an orderly, disciplined community is evidenced by the ACAD uniform policy, a closed campus, and focus on good character and virtue.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County welcomes children into its program with the understanding that they will be on time for class, be properly groomed, complete their assignments, follow rules of good classroom order, be honest, and follow the spirit and letter of the *Family Handbook*, see Appendix 25. This *Family Handbook* will be available to students and parents upon enrollment and posted on the school’s website. Parents and students must sign a document that they have read and understand the expectations set out in the *Family Handbook* at the beginning of each school year.

Unless there are clear mitigating circumstances, students are responsible and accountable for their actions. Students in the seventh through twelfth grades are entirely capable of living appropriately in the ACAD culture. Students in the earlier grades will receive more guidance in developing good habits and character, an effort in which parents are also included.

A high premium is placed on the teacher’s personal investment in the student and the school resists the practices that depersonalize so many schools. ACAD not relate to students principally under the rubrics of rules and regulations; rather, the school emphasizes the dignity of the teachers and students and of a culture marked by strong ethics, legitimate and caring authority, friendliness, compassion, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness, and beauty. Within that framework, rules, regulations, and consequences are merely means to an end. Just as the school expects teachers to expend considerable energy into coaching and directing the students to take on the educational goals of the school, ACAD also expects teachers to encourage students in the face of difficult tasks and to praise them for work well done.

Students who do not live up to these fundamental expectations need to be corrected. In many cases, a verbal correction is sufficient. Faculty may expect this correction to suffice. If it does not, however, further penalties may be required.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County distinguishes between academic deficiencies (which require an academic response, and are addressed through remedial and corrective action) and nonacademic misbehavior.

Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is an empirically validated, function-based approach to eliminate challenging behaviors and replace them with pro-social skills. Use of PBIS decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions (i.e., punishment or suspension) and can lead to both systemic and individualized change. PBIS fits well within a broader framework defined by the school's core virtues – courage, moderation, justice, responsibility, prudence, friendship, and wonder.

PBIS can target an individual student or an entire school, as it does not focus exclusively on the student, but also includes changing environmental variables such as the physical setting, task demands, instructional pace, and individualized reinforcement. It is successful with a wide range of students, in a wide range of contexts, with a wide range of behaviors.

Blending behavioral science, empirically validated procedures, durable systems change, and an emphasis on socially important outcomes, PBIS always involves data-based decision making using functional behavioral assessment and ongoing monitoring of intervention impact.

Why Do We Need PBIS?

- Problem behavior is the single most common reason why students are removed from regular classrooms. Even though students with extreme problem behavior represent only 20% of school enrollment, they can account for more than 50% of behavioral incidents.
- Harsh punishment and zero tolerance policies have not been effective at either improving behavioral climate in schools, or preventing students with problem behaviors from entering the juvenile justice system.
- Three years after being excluded from school, almost 70% of these youth have been arrested.

Failure to implement the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), due to a lack of incentives or negative attitudes toward children with challenging behaviors by administrators, policy makers and school personnel, is unacceptable. Students should not be excluded from school based solely upon inappropriate social behavior. Appropriate services can readily address and modify many of these behaviors, leading to more positive outcomes than simple punishment.

How is PBIS Implemented in School Settings?

PBIS is based on behavioral theory. Problem behavior continues to occur because it is consistently followed by the child getting something positive or escaping something negative. By focusing on the contexts and outcomes of the behavior, it is possible to determine the functions

of the behavior, make the problem behavior less effective and efficient, and make the desired behavior more functional. This often involves changing systems, altering environments and teaching new skills, as well as focusing on the problem behavior.

PBIS should be a collaborative effort among parents, teachers, counselors and administrators; all partners should be committed to its implementation. PBIS is more effective when it includes the target individual as well as other significant individuals, such as peers, teachers, and parents.

What Are the Benefits of PBIS?

All students, both disabled and non-disabled, can benefit from PBIS:

- Research conducted over the past 15 years has shown that PBIS is effective in promoting positive behavior in students and schools. Use of PBIS as a strategy to maintain appropriate social behavior will make schools safer. Safer schools are more effective learning environments.
- Schools that implement system-wide interventions also report increased time engaged in academic activities and improved academic performance.
- Schools that employ system-wide interventions for problem behavior prevention indicate reductions in office discipline referrals of 20-60%.
- Appropriately implemented PBIS can lead to dramatic improvements that have long-term effects on the lifestyle, functional communication skills, and problem behavior in individuals with disabilities.
- A review of research on PBIS effectiveness showed that there was over a 90% reduction in problem behavior in over half of the studies; the problem behavior stopped completely in over 26% of the studies.

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will establish a strong proactive Positive Behavior Intervention and Support system to encourage a positive and effective approach to discipline. Through a consistent and effective PBIS system, we expect to:

- Support student achievement.
- Reduce suspension and referral rates.
- Increase attendance.
- Maintain and healthy and positive school climate

Components of a School-wide PBIS System

- Administrator support, participation and leadership.
- Common purpose and approach to discipline centered around the school's core virtues.
- Clear set of positive expectations and behaviors.
- Procedures for teaching expected behavior.

- Continuum of procedures for encouraging expected behavior.
- Continuum of procedures for discouraging inappropriate behavior.
- Procedures for ongoing monitoring.

Curriculum

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County incorporates awareness and discussion around its core virtues throughout the school, curriculum, and instruction. Teachers incorporate the virtues into lectures and discussions with students/

Classroom Management

- Set/Define Expectations

Classroom expectations posted:

- Consistency through students' classes
- Respond to individual needs, strengths, and preferences
- Maintain environment conducive to learning (alter as necessary)
- Teach new skills – replacement to the challenging behavior
- Reinforce positive behavior

Consequence System

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Level One | Staff Warning Teacher or administrator warning Verbal reprimand (teacher or administrator) Confiscation |
| Level Two | Notification of parent or guardian Administrator/student conference Detention: before school, after school, or during lunch Assignment of work detail at the school Billing of parent for damages to property In-School alternatives Probation |
| Level Three | Conference with parent/guardian Suspension as determined by staff Development of expectations contract |
| Level Four | Out of school suspension Alternative to suspension (Parental attendance at school) Remedial discipline plan Letter of restraint Charges filed or report made to law enforcement officials |

Within each Level, consequences may include detention, probation, suspension, and expulsion. These consequences are defined as follows:

- Detention: A teacher, staff member, or an administrator may assign detention. Detention may be served before school, during lunch, or after school. The duration of detention may be between fifteen to sixty minutes, depending on the offense.
- Probation (In School Suspension): The principal, or his designee, may assign probation. This may be up to three-days from attending a specific class or all classes. The student will be assigned work from the teacher of the specific class that he/she has been removed. The student will be allowed to reenter the class only after a consultation meeting including the student, parent/guardian, teacher and the principal, or his designee. Depending on the results of the consultation meeting, the probation may become permanent for the remainder of the semester or school year.
- Suspension: Only the principal may suspend a student. These suspensions shall last from one to ten days in length. If the suspension is an out of school suspension, the student will not be allowed on campus for the duration of the suspension. The student will not be allowed to return to school until a parent or guardian attends a complete day of class with the student at the end of his suspension term and attends a meeting with the principal or his designee. Suspensions may become recommendations for expulsion.
- Expulsion: Only the principal may recommend a student for expulsion. The authority to expel a student belongs to the Douglas County School District Superintendent. The Superintendent's decision may be appealed to the Douglas County School District Board, outside of the appeal process for Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas Academy.

Possible Infractions/Violations

In general, students must be polite and attentive or there may be consequences. Infractions and violations include but are not limited to:

- Interference with the movement of people at an exit, entrance, or hallway of a school building without authorization from an administrator.
- Interference with an authorized activity by seizing control of all or part of a building.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent participation in an authorized assembly.

- Use of force, violence, or threats to cause disruption during an assembly.
- Interference with the movement of people at an exit or an entrance to School property.
- Use of force, violence, or threats in an attempt to prevent people from entering or leaving School property without authorization from an administrator.
- Disruption of classes or other school activities while on School property or on public property that is within 500 feet of school property. Class disruption includes making loud noises; trying to entice a student away from, or to prevent a student from attending, a required class or activity; and entering a classroom without authorization and disrupting the activity with loud, inappropriate, or profane language or any misconduct.
- Interference with the transportation of students in School vehicles.

Discipline of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are neither immune from the Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County disciplinary process nor entitled to participate in programs when their behavior impairs the education of other students. ACAD will comply with the Individuals and Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in disciplining these students. Students with disabilities who engage in disruptive activities and/or actions dangerous to themselves or others will be disciplined in accordance with their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), behavioral intervention plan, and this policy. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit an IEP team from instituting consequences for disorderly or unacceptable actions as a part of the student's IEP. The plan shall be subject to all procedural protections established by the IEP process.

All students, including students with disabilities, may be suspended for violations of the Family Handbook. For suspension of a student with disabilities, a team including Student Services staff members and the principal, will determine whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of the disability and whether the student's disability impaired his or her ability to control or understand the impact or consequences of the behavior. Once the team determines that the behavior was not a manifestation of the disability, disciplinary procedures shall be applied to the student in the same manner as applied to non-disabled students. A student with disabilities whose behavior is determined to be a manifestation of his or her disability may not be dismissed but will be disciplined in accordance with his her IEP, any behavioral intervention and this policy.

Appeal Process

Ascent Classical Academy makes use of a three-step appeal process in dealing with student disciplinary matters. First, either the student or his/her parent/guardian corresponds, orally or in writing, with the assistant principal. The assistant principal has the authority to informally determine routine matters of student discipline without consulting with other members of the

administration. The assistant principal may choose to speak with whoever proves helpful under the circumstances.

If the situation is not resolved at this first level, then the student or his/her parent/guardian may communicate, orally or in writing, with the principal. If, on the other hand, the first step is skipped, then, absent unusual circumstances, the principal will direct the student/parent/guardian to first speak with the assistant principal. The principal may take any appropriate steps to hear all perspectives on the issue and then provide a plan on how to resolve the appeal. The principal may require any person to submit a written statement about the situation.

If the student or his/her parent/guardian is not satisfied with the decision of the principal, then they shall submit a written statement to the chair of the ACAD board of directors. The board chair, or his or her designee, may call for others to present written statements as well. If the concern cannot be resolved in normal correspondence, the board chair shall place the item on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled board meeting, or, if circumstances demand, call a special board meeting to address the issue.

The appeal will be heard in an executive session of the board unless the parent, guardian, or non-minor student requests the appeal be conducted in an open meeting. At the board meeting, the student/parent/guardian and/or their representative shall have the opportunity to address the board. The board may also choose to hear from any other person. The board shall allot time enough for all sides to be given an adequate hearing. The board shall then deliberate and render a final decision, which is not subject to further appeal.

The draft policies on discipline and suspension are found in Appendix 25.

Q. Serving Exceptional and Educationally Disadvantaged Students

Many titles are given to students who struggle in school: exceptional, at-risk, special, IEP, 504, disadvantaged, etc. To simplify the language in the section of this application, this application will collectively name them “exceptional,” but will describe its approach to each group individually within its section within this part of the application.

Overview

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, (“ACAD”), is committed to serving all students who are willing to work hard to be successful in the program. This commitment extends to all students in the school including those who have physical, emotional, behavioral, learning, and other disabilities, those students with exceptional academic capabilities, and those who may simply lack the academic or behavioral knowledge and skill needed to independently access the general education program. Simply, the school has the same vision for exceptional students as other students, which is to develop within them the intellectual and personal habits and skills which will lead them to live responsible, independent and productive lives.

Assumptions

The design, development, execution, and improvement of the program to support exceptional students at ACAD will be guided it by the following assumptions:

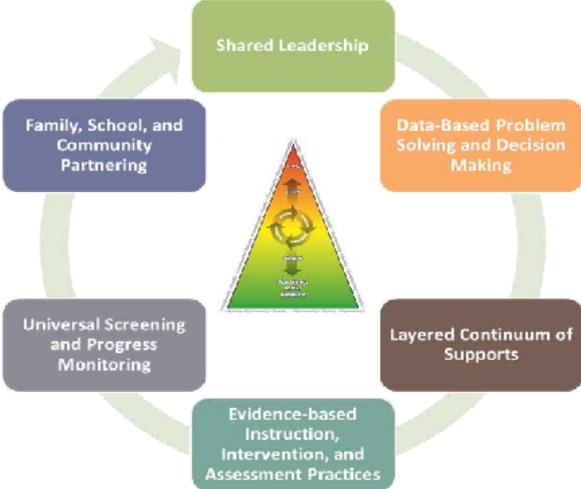
- By culture and by law, ACAD must work to ensure that all students, including exceptional students, progress academically.
- ACAD is committed to applying available resources needed to do so. This especially includes collaborating with the Douglas County School District in supporting exceptional students, including best practices in instruction, content development, assessment, and administrative knowledge.
- ACAD is committed to providing student with a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in compliance with special education laws. The school is committed to serving students in the least restrictive environment, providing as much push-in support as possible to meet the students’ needs.
- The ACAD administrative and instructional teams understand the requirements of federal and state laws governing special education, including the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Colorado Exceptional Children’s Education Act.

Identifying Exceptional Students

ACAD believes that all students deserve the very best education possible. For that to occur, the school is committed to provide best first instruction in the classroom for every student. At the same time, given the school’s high expectations for academic success and the behavior required to achieve it, ACAD will provide a comprehensive support system for all students built

around the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Response to Intervention (RtI). Schools commonly use these two terms to describe the process by which they identify, categorize, and support struggling students. While similar, they are not synonyms. RtI describes a system of support to specifically improve academic outcomes (primarily reading). MTSS describes a systematic way to support not only students who have academic deficits through RtI, but also to organize a more complete response to supporting struggling students. The MTSS process drives this through shared leadership, data-based problem solving and decision-making, layered continuum of supports, evidenced-based instruction, intervention, and assessment practices, screen and progress monitoring, and family, school, and community partnering as illustrated in the district’s essential components of MTSS diagram:

Colorado MTSS Essential Components



With support from Ascent Classical Academies, (“ACA”), and the Barney Charter School Initiative, (“BCSI”) team, ACAD has the expertise to develop, execute, and improve its MTSS program. Experience indicates that academically, the initial focus of the MTSS system will be to provide additional instruction and practice in reading (phonics, fluency, and comprehension), math (primarily arithmetic through pre-algebra), and writing (handwriting, spelling, use of common conventions, sequence, and editing). In addition, ACAD will provide instruction and practice in functional skills (e.g., dress, deportment, management of emotions, social interactions, test anxiety, public speaking) as well as note- and test-taking skills, materials management, and executive functioning.

ACAD MTSS Academic Support System Overview

Within MTSS, academic components of ACAD's will consist of four levels of intervention and support for all at-risk students. Tiers 1-2 describe academic instruction and interventions delivered primarily by teachers within the classroom. Tier 3 will include support from specialists. Tier 4 describes process by which students who aren't making academic progress via tiers 1-3 are then provided out with additional instruction and support generally outside the classroom. While the student services team will support students at all levels of academic progress, its primary responsibility will be to develop and operate Level 4 interventions.

Tiers 1-4 Summary

- **Tier 1: Benchmark:** Tier 1 focuses on developing and delivering direct, best first instruction and practice in the classroom to all students. In the grammar school, this means that students will focus on developing key skills including a deep knowledge of phonograms, spelling, vocabulary, handwriting, arithmetic and number sense, and sentence and paragraph structure and writing. In the upper school, teachers will focus on generalizing and applying knowledge and skills learned in grammar school to literature, Latin, grammar, mathematics, science, and history. At all grade levels, Tier 1 instruction will be supported by clear and high expectations for behavior and executive functioning including regular exposure to the school's core virtues.
- **Tier 2: Strategic:** Tier 2 focuses on providing interventions in the classroom to support improvements in specific academic and functional issues exhibited by one or more students. The classroom teacher will analyze data, select the intervention material and method, instruct, and assess progress. She will also document and communicate progress to the student(s), parents, and other teachers as appropriate.

Tier 3: Intensive: Tier 3 focuses on students who are not making progress despite their participation in Tier 1 or Tier 2 levels of instruction and practice. As with Tiers 1 and 2, the classroom teacher takes the lead, but he can also reach out to school and specialists including the student services team (e.g, special education teacher, school psychologist, speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, paraprofessionals, etc.) for additional help to develop the intervention, provide instruction, and assess student progress. The teacher will continue to be responsible for communication with parents.

- **Tier 4: Exceptional Students:** In addition to instruction, practice and support gained through Tiers 1-3, exceptional students are qualified to participate in Tier 4 supports and programs (e.g., IEP, 504, ELL, GTA, etc.) through formal reviews of records, outside input (e.g., a doctor's diagnosis of a disability), parent and teacher input, and normed-assessments. Once qualified, Tier 4 students will receive additional instruction and support to improve their ability to independently access the general education program at ACAD through improvements to cognitive, communication, academics, social/emotional/behavior, health, and motor knowledge and skills. As needed, they will

also receive instruction and support to develop functional skills such as reducing test anxiety, public speaking note- and test-taking, materials management, and executive functioning.

- ACAD accommodations will generally follow the 2015-2016 Colorado Instructional Accommodations Manual: A Guide to the Selection and Implementation of Accommodations for Students with Disability.⁴⁰

Programming and Support for Exceptional Students

Identification and Planning

At Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, decisions about providing access to Level-4 interventions and supports are made when one or more of the following events occur:

- The student enrolls with an existing and current IEP or 504,
- The student does not make progress when exposed to best first instruction or in response to Tier 1-3 interventions,
- Parents request an evaluation (often after outside evaluation has occurred).

For students who arrive at school with an IEP or 504 plan, ACAD will follow the student's plan and will make adjustments as needed in collaboration with teachers and parents. Sometimes, this means conducting a new evaluation as changes in placement (e.g., a new school) can have a significant impact on a student's ability to access the general education program. For students who are not making progress via interventions or whose parents request a formal evaluation, the student services team will execute an evaluation that consists of observations and assessments selected to identify suspected academic and/or functional deficits.

Once an evaluation is complete, the team will meet to discuss findings and to determine if the student qualifies for a formal special education or a 504 program. If the student qualifies for an IEP, the team will also identify the goals, accommodations, and services that will best help the student progress towards independence. If they qualify for a 504, the team will identify accommodations and supports to help the student access the general education program. The student services team will also identify disabilities and place the student in formal programs (IEP, 504, ELL, GT, etc.) as needed. Depending on the suspected nature of the student's deficit(s) the evaluation, qualification, identification, and program design will take anywhere from a few days up to 60 days if the student demonstrates more complex cognitive, communication, academic, health, social/behavioral, and/or motor skill issues affecting their ability to independently access the general education program at ACAD. Note that for all exceptional students, ACAD will follow federal, state, and district requirements for all evaluations, eligibility, programming, and assessment processes.

⁴⁰ Colorado Department of Education, 2015-2016 Colorado Instructional Accommodations Manual: A Guide to the Selection and Implementation of Accommodations for Students with Disability, accessed Feb 26, 2017, <https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/accommodations>.

Programming to Support Exceptional Students

Federal, state, and local laws require school districts and schools to categorize students into a variety of programs including special education (IEP), 504, English Language Learner (ELL), Gifted and Talented (GT), and At-Risk (e.g., READ plan, general lack of progress, etc.). ACAD will develop, execute, assess, and adjust programming using research-based practices and evidence based programming (where possible) for each student regardless of their specific program. Note that it will do this in accordance to student needs and school expectations as well as all applicable federal and state laws as well as district requirements.

Special Education: Individual Education Programs (IEP)

As public schools, charter schools have open lotteries and must provide appropriate special education services as needed by students with disabilities. ACAD welcomes, will identify, instruct, assess, and accommodate students per the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as well as state and district requirements to provide a free and appropriate education for any student with an identified disability that affects their ability to fully engage in the educational program at ACAD.

As a school, ACAD uses a lottery system to select students for enrollment. Therefore, based on selection by a random lottery, the school will accept any student with an IEP within boundaries set by the school district. ACA expects students to arrive with existing district IEPs, out-of-district IEPs (from both in-state districts as well as out-of-state districts), Individual Service Plans (non-binding IEPs created by private schools with district support), and/or with evident needs (e.g., a doctor's diagnosis of ADHD or ASD) for special education support. Existing IEPs will be accepted, implemented, and updated as needed through IEP amendments through the existing period for the IEP. In- and out-of-state IEPs will be accepted and modified through the required student IEP transfer process and amendments once the IEP is accepted. Students identified as possibly needed special education support will be evaluated and programs designed per federal, state, and district requirements for initial IEP evaluations.

Individualized Education Program (IEP Components)

Each ACAD IEP will include the following federal and state required components as well as any requirements specifically required by the district:

- The student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, describing how the student is currently doing in school and how the student's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
- Annual goals for the student, meaning what parents and the school team think he or she can reasonable accomplish in a year.
- The special education and related services to be provided to the student, including supplementary aids and services (such as a communication service) and changes to the program or supports for school personnel.

- Accommodations that mitigate the impact of a student's disability on their ability to independently access the academic program as well as more accurately demonstrate their level of mastery of knowledge and skills.
- How much of the day the student will be educated separately from nondisabled students or not participate in extracurricular or other nonacademic activities such as lunch or clubs (called extent of nonparticipation).
- How (and if) the student is to participate in state and district-wide assessments, including what modifications to tests the student needs.
- Service delivery details, such as when accommodations and services begin, how often they will be provided, where they will be provided, and how long they will last.
- How school personnel will measure the student's progress toward the annual goals.
- For students who are or who will turn 15 during the IEP year, the IEP will also contain goals and services to support planning for the college and/or career transition.

In terms of focus and tone, and understanding that parents and students are critical elements in ensuring that the IEP is successful, the IEP team will write the IEP to ensure that parents, the student, and IEP team can both understand and execute it. Once the IEP has been finalized, the special education coordinator and teacher will provide a copy to parents and will also share the student's goals, accommodations, and services with classroom teachers via a secure, online, school-based system. In addition, students with IEPs (especially in upper school) will be provided with copies of their accommodations to help develop their self-advocacy. Each student's IEP will be reviewed at least annually. The student will be re-qualified for special education support at least every three years. The IEP will end no later than when the student graduates from school. As important as the official schedule, the student services team will frequently contact parents to gain their perspective on their student's progress under the IEP. This can include informal discussions via email, text, telephone, and face-to-face as wanted or needed by any member of the student's IEP team.

Special Education Instructional Programs and Practices

In full compliance with IDEA, ACAD is committed to providing a continuum of services in the least restrictive environment that is appropriate to the individual student's needs. Because best first instruction occurs in the classroom, ACAD will focus on educating special education students in the mainstream classroom. The student services coordinator, specialists, interventionists, and para-professionals, and teachers will work with regular classroom teachers to provide effective instruction, accommodations and modifications, and support for special education students so that they achieve their IEP goals and so become more independent students. For example, depending on the disability, a student's IEP might include accommodations such as oral testing, extended time, alternative formats, human readers and scribes to ensure that students can both learn and demonstrate their knowledge and skill accurately.

At the same time, to ensure that ACAD provides instruction, practice, and support for all identified areas of need, students may also require pullout from the general education

classroom(s) to work with the special education teacher and specialists such as the speech language pathologist, mental health provider, occupational therapist, and interventionists. In addition, students may work with special education teachers and paraprofessionals to increase their instruction and practice time with content and functional skills. To minimize the impact of these pullouts, ACAD will pull students from art, music, PE, and/or study hall (note that ACAD expects that students who miss art, music, and PE will have the chance to participate in these classes at least part of the year by switching the pullout times between music/art and PE the semester break). In general, ACAD's goal will be to ensure that students with IEPs will work in their classrooms at least 80 percent of the school day with the school's preference to be more than 90 percent of each day. In the event the student requires more out-of-classroom instruction and practice, the IEP team will work to minimize disruption to the student's participation in core content classes.

Assessing and Monitoring the Progress of Special Education Students

As with all students, special education students' progress is monitored using a variety of assessments including curriculum-based, teacher-made, standardized (e.g., DIBELS or MAP), and district and state assessments (e.g., CMAS). At ACAD, all students with IEPs will have an annual meeting which includes parents, special education teacher, the general education teacher, and Student Services Director) at which the data are reviewed to confirm the student's progress towards achieving IEP goals as well as academic independence. At the meeting, instructional strategies, goals, accommodations and services may be adjusted. Strategies may be refined or modified based on the student's progress. Note that a parent or the special education teacher can submit a special request to have a student and their IEP reviewed, re-evaluated, reviewed or modified before the annual evaluation with the agreement of the parent. Amendments to an IEP can occur at any time and can be held with or without a formal meeting at the parents' discretion. Also, each student will undergo a complete re-evaluation every three years to confirm their continued eligibility for special education. Finally, the special education teacher will send home quarterly progress reports that document the student's progress towards his or her IEP goals.

Non-Supported Special Education Students

In the event that ACAD believes that a student's disability or disabilities will make it impossible for the student to access the academic program at ACAD even with the support of an IEP, the school will work with the district, parents, and specialists to confirm whether ACAD can enroll the student. Only the district may determine the special needs of a child exceeds the ability of the school to serve him or her.

Special Education (IEP) Summary

| Component | Description |
|-----------|-------------|
|-----------|-------------|

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Relevant Law | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Federal: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)</u>: Most recent update Part B Regulations became effective December 31, 2008. • <u>Exceptional Children's Education Act (ECEA)</u>: Most recent update became effective March 1, 2016. |
| Number of students with IEPs. | Approximately 10% of the student population (+/- 50 students within two years). 60-65 percent will be in grammar school with balance being in the upper school. |
| Expected most common disabilities. | The team will support any disability. Based on experience in other classical schools, expects that the most common disabilities will include communication/language, academic, other health impairments (e.g., ADD/ADHD), executive functioning, motor skills, and autism spectrum disorder. |
| Initial intervention components | Academic, mental health, communication/language, occupational therapy, phonics, fluency, comprehension, arithmetic, pre-algebra, handwriting, sentence-building, longer form writing (e.g., 5 paragraph essay), executive functioning, note-taking, study habits for assessments, working memory and processing speed. |
| Curriculum components | Curricula may include such Orton-Gillingham-based programs as the Riggs Institute's <i>The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking</i> (phonics, spelling, handwriting), Lindamood-Bell (phonics), <i>Read Naturally</i> (fluency), McCall-Crabbes (comprehension), Singapore Math, teacher-made content, etc. |
| Support team | Special education coordinator (licensed), special education teacher (licensed), mental health provider, occupational therapist, speech language pathologist (licensed), reading interventionist(s), para-professionals (bachelors with education experience), career and college coordinator, district experts in assistive technology, audiology, vision, etc., assessment coordinator. |
| Evaluation/Assessment Tools | Cognitive, communication, academic, social/behavior, health, and motor skill assessments such as WISC-5, CELF-5, GFTA-3, OWLS-2, WIAT-3, BASIC-3, BRIEF, Bruininks-Oseretsky Test of Motor Skills, ASD evaluation tools, curriculum-based measurement, teacher-made assessments, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), others as indicated by specific student characteristics, evaluations provided by outside experts (e.g., behavior specialist, psychiatrist, etc.). |
| Assessment schedule | At least quarterly or as described in a student's IEP. |
| Training | The professional development focus for ACA will be to develop the student services team and when appropriate classroom teacher's ability to provide reading, arithmetic, and writing |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| | interventions, functional interventions for behavior, executive functioning, studying, test taking, working memory/processing speed, and disability specific expertise such as autism spectrum disorders, dyslexia, and PTSD. |
| Reporting schedule | Quarterly or as needed/wanted by the team, including parents. |
| Exit Timeframe | When academically independent or with graduation from high school (up to age 21.). |

Supporting Students with 504 Plans

This type of plan falls under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which is the part of federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against public school students with disabilities. A 504 Plan defines a person with a disability as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity (such as reading or concentrating). In addition, they must have a record of the impairment (e.g., an evaluation provided by a medical doctor). Also, the impairment or significant difficulty can't be temporary must be shown to impact their ability to fully participate in school. Similar to an IEP, each 504 Plan outlines how a child's specific needs are met with accommodations and modifications to mitigate barriers to learning. Note that Section 504 defines "disability" in very broad terms, which is why children who are not eligible for an IEP may often qualify for a 504 plan.

Once a student's 504 plan has been finalized, the 504 coordinator and teacher will provide a copy to parents and will also share the student's goals, accommodations, and services with classroom teachers via a secure, online, school-based share.

Identifying and Determining Eligibility for 504 Students

ACAD will identify 504 students through a referral from parents, school staff, community agencies, medical providers, the student, and/or other concerned parties. This referral will be made or delivered to the school's 504 coordinator. Upon receipt of the referral, the 504 coordinator will work with parents and the school staff to determine if an evaluation is warranted. If it is, the school will conduct the evaluation using data from outside assessments as well as assessments conducted by the school. If the school decides that an evaluation won't occur, the school will notify parents. Once the evaluation is complete, the 504 coordinator as well as other individuals familiar with the student will meet with parents to review data to determine if the student is eligible for a 504 plan and to consider the design of that plan and especially the accommodations that will best support the student's academic progress. Once the plan is agreed to an in place, the team will meet annually to review the student's progress and update the plan as needed. The team will also meet every three years to complete a re-evaluation. Finally, if the student becomes able to access the education program at ACAD independently, the team will schedule a re-evaluation to support a decision to discontinue services.

Instructional Programming and Practices

The majority of 504 students will receive the majority of their instruction in the classroom. As needed, they will be provided their environmental, instructional, and/or behavioral accommodations by their teacher(s) and/or para-professionals under the oversight of the 504 coordinator. In addition, they may also work with specialists (e.g. mental health professional, reading specialist) for instruction and practice to develop skills the student needs to become more independent learners. They may also receive services to mitigate issues related to their disability such as transportation, school health/nursing services, counseling, audiology, physical therapy, orientation and mobility support.

Assessing and Monitoring the Progress of 504 Students

ACAD will conduct formal annual reviews to update a student’s 504 plan. The school will also conduct a formal triennial re-evaluation every three years to reconfirm the student’s eligibility for his or her 504 plan.

504 Program Summary

| Component | Description |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Relevant Law | Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. |
| Number of students with IEPs. | 3-5 percent of the student population or 10 to 15 students. |
| Expected most common disabilities. | While ACA will be prepared to support any disability, based on experience in similar classical schools, the most common disabilities are expected to be related to executive functioning (attention, focus, organization), allergies, and vision or auditory processing issues as well as academic and health issues that don’t rise to the level of a special education disability. |
| Initial intervention components | Accommodations including extended time and separate locations for assessments, reading interventions, access to specialists. |
| Curriculum components | School-based. |
| Support team | 504 Coordinator, mental health provider, occupational therapist, speech language pathologist (licensed), reading interventionist(s), district experts in assistive technology, audiology, vision, etc., and the school assessment coordinator. |
| Evaluation/Assessment Tools | School-based as well as any required district, state, or federally required assessments. Some students may come with outside assessments as well, which will be considered during the initial evaluation as are updates from outside support (e.g., a vision therapist). |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Assessment schedule | Annual plus quarterly for classroom grades. |
| Reporting schedule | Annual review. Triennial re-evaluation every three years. |
| Exit timeframe | 504s can follow a student to post-high school placements including into college and career. |

English Language Learners (ELLs)

ACAD wants all students to master English. An English Language Learner (ELL) is a student who is unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often comes from a non-English-speaking home and background, and who typically requires specialized or modified instruction in both the English language and in his or her academic courses. At launch, ACAD expects to enroll 15-20 students who may be ELL students. ACAD will follow the requirements of the Colorado English Language Proficiency Act (HB14-1298) when developing and operating its ELL program. Specifically, the school will:

- Identify, through the observations and recommendations of parents, teachers, or other persons the students whose dominant language may not be English.
- Assess, such students, using instruments and techniques approved by CDE and the district, to determine if their dominant language is not English.
- Certify to the department and district those students in the school whose dominant language is not English.
- Administer, provide and assess the effectiveness of programs for students whose dominant language is not English.

Identification of English Language Learners

ACAD will identify ELL students using the following CDE process (note that ACAD will adapt this process to meet any specific district requirements):

- Require every student's parent or guardian complete a Student Language Data Form/Parents Home Language Questionnaire as part of the enrollment process. This form identifies students whose Primary or Home Language is Other Than English (PHLOTE).
- The ELL coordinator will follow-up with parents to confirm that the student does in-fact belong on the ELL list based on the significance of the language to the student's ability to communicate at home and the frequency of its use.
- If parents confirm that their student does belong on the list (and if they consent to assessment), the ACAD ELL coordinator will proctor the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) test. If a student scores as being Fluent English Proficient (FEP), the parents will be notified and no further ELL services will be provided. If the student is not

proficient, their score may place them in either the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or the Not English Proficient (NEP) categories. Parents are notified and with their permission, ELL services start.

- The ACAD ELL coordinator will create an ELL plan for each student who is LEP or NEP. They will work with the student's classroom teacher and his parents to create an ELL plan for each English language learner at the school. This plan will include annual goals and mastery benchmarks for the student, as well as a description of the strategies and tactics for instruction, practice, and assessment.

Instructional Programming and Practices

ELL instruction will consist of intense exposure and work with the Riggs explicit phonics program used throughout the school. Once an ELL student masters the sounds of the English language, he will progress through the Riggs program to learn the grammar and structure of English, as well as developing their vocabulary, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. If necessary, ELL students may also be assigned to a reading-focused ELL intervention for additional instruction and practice.

If an ELL struggles to meet benchmarks, the ELL coordinator and the regular classroom teacher(s) will collaboratively identify additional interventions that can be used to improve the student's progress towards English-language proficiency. When a student reaches proficiency (level 6) on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment and all other assessment data indicate strong English language skills, the student will exit ACAD's ELL program.

ELL students may also receive testing accommodations in the same way that students with IEPs and 504s receive accommodations for testing.

Assessing and Monitoring the Progress of ELL Students

Once the ELL plan is in place, the ELL coordinator will also develop and maintain a portfolio to track students' progress. This portfolio will include interim assessment data and results from the annual ACCESS for ELLs to provide a comprehensive picture of the student's progress in developing English language skills. Progress will be reported to parents and the district quarterly or to the district's preferred schedule, whichever is more frequent.

Gifted and Talented Students (GT)

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County believes all students should be treated like they are "gifted" by providing access to a very challenging curriculum, through the flexibility of its program, and through the high academic and behavioral expectations that will be in place in all classrooms. Gifted students are often described as those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language)

and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, or sports).” At launch, ACAD expects to enroll 15-20 students who may be GT students.

The development, administration, programming, and assessment of ACAD's GT program will be guided by the Colorado Exceptional Students Educational Act, and specifically by section 2220-R-12.00 Gifted and Talented Student Programming. This law requires administrative units to identify GT, implement gifted education student programs providing programming options and services for gifted children, and assessing their effectiveness (note that ACAD will adapt its GT program to meet any specific district requirements).

Identification of GT Students

In general, identification of students as gifted incorporates three main components: academic, cognitive, and observational:

- Academic characteristics are based on the results of standardized, curriculum-based, teacher-made tests, and classroom results.
- Cognitive input will come from data captured by the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) administered students in Grade 2 as well as other cognitive evaluations such as the Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children-5th Edition (WISC-5), Stanford-Binet, or Woodcock-Johnson.
- Observational data comes from parents, teachers, and outside sources (e.g., doctors, therapists, and other experts).

With academic, cognitive, and observational input, the ACAD student services team will review the body of evidence and formally confirm the designation. With designation as gifted, the student services team will work with the student, parents, and teachers to develop an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP).

Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)

If the student is determined to meet GT requirements, the student services team will identify areas of strength that may include verbal reasoning, reading, writing, quantitative, non-verbal, creative, talent, and leadership. ACAD also recognizes that GT students' strengths usually lie in a few areas – they do not need to show strength in all areas considered as GT. With these determinations made, the GT coordinator, classroom teacher(s), and parents will develop and Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) that describes a goal designed to help them both take advantage of their capabilities and becoming more independent students by:

- Taking control of their learning
- Having a deeper understanding of their learning style and become strength based learners
- Becoming the driver in improving their education
- Acquiring learning skills that will apply to learning situations in life

- Developing a greater sense of their abilities
-

Instructional Programming and Practices

At ACAD, the GT coordinator will work with the student, their parents, and the teacher to implement the student's ALP. Work on the goal(s) within the ALP may occur at school, outside school, and online.

Assessing and Monitoring the Progress of GT Students

ACA will assess the GT student's progress annually to confirm progress towards the goal(s) in the student's ALP using academic and observational data and will provide the report to the student, parents and district.

At-Risk Students (ARS)

Experience at other new classical schools suggests that the largest cohort of exceptional students can be at-risk students (ARS) as concerned parents seek a new school in the hopes of improving their student's academic progress. ACAD defines an "at-risk" student as any student not performing near or at grade level in one or more content or functional areas. At launch, ACAD expects that 75-100 students may be at ARS students.

Identification of At Risk Students

ACAD will identify ARS students through Tiers 1-3 of its MTSS and RTI process. The school will consider data collected from curriculum-based and teacher-made assessments, content-oriented assessments such as DIBELS, intervention progress monitoring, informal assessments, discipline data, teacher observations and parent feedback.

Instructional Programming and Practices

The nature of classical education and its implementation at ACAD supports ARS students. Grammar school programming includes a very specific focus on phonics, spelling, and handwriting through the Riggs Reading and Writing Program, math through Singapore Math, and Core Knowledge for literature, writing, history, and science. These provide students with the necessary foundation skills they will need to apply and generalize their knowledge and skills as they progress in age and grade, especially as curricula. In the upper school, the focus moves from developing academic knowledge and skills to its application and generalization by studying classical literature and history, science and mathematics. This programming and the practice of teaching in the Socratic style, combined with a school culture built on seven core virtues and clear and high expectations for both academic and behavioral success, provide students with clear goals and boundaries for their learning.

At the same time, the school recognizes that because many incoming students will not have been previously exposed to its high academic and behavioral standards, it will be incumbent on the school to provide support. To this end, ACAD will provide support through tactics such as ability grouped math classes, resource support, formal and informal tutoring as determined by the Principal and staff, extra time as needed, academic clubs, and athletics. Finally, students will wear uniforms to promote the school's culture and reduce distractions.

Assessing and Monitoring the Progress of ARS Students

The assessment and monitoring of ARS students will occur through the school's MTSS program with teachers, support staff, and administrators meeting regularly both formally and informally to determine which students will benefit from additional support and how that support should be formatted and executed. Data will flow from classroom, school, district, and state assessments as well as from assessments specific to individual students. The goal for ARS students, as will be for all ACAD students, is to be academically independent.

R. Dispute Resolution Process

In the case of disputes between Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County, (“ACAD”) and Douglas County School District concerning governing policy provisions of the charter contract, the school will comply with the statutory requirements of CRS §22-30.5-107.5, Dispute Resolution.

The school or Douglas County School District may initiate a resolution to any dispute concerning a governing policy provision of the school’s charter contract by providing reasonable written notice to the other party of intent to invoke the statutory dispute resolution process. This notice shall include, at a minimum, a brief description of the matter in dispute and the scope of the disagreement between the parties.

Within 30 days after receipt of the written notice, the school and Douglas County School District shall agree to use any form of alternate dispute resolution as described in CRS §13-22-3. Any form chosen shall result in final written findings by a neutral third party within one hundred twenty days after receipt of the written notice.

The parties may agree to be bound by the written findings resulting from the dispute resolution, in which case, the findings shall be final and not subject to appeal except to the State Board of Education.

If the parties do not agree, an appeal may be made to the State Board of Education in accordance with and subject to the provisions as defined in CRS §22-30.5-107.5.

A decision by the State Board of Education shall be final.

S. School Management Contracts

Partnership with Ascent Classical Academies

The Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County (“ACAD”) Board chose to partner with Ascent Classical Academies (“ACA”) because the organization provides a comprehensive educational program that includes curriculum, professional development, staffing, and more, plus a school facility. Moreover, the organization’s program and approach to education – including its virtues and school-wide and classroom frameworks – will serve the ACAD mission well.

ACA is a new charter management organization established by a team experienced in classical charter public schools in Colorado. The steering committee of ACAD initially considered founding the school using a charter network structure. This would have served the mission to establish more high-quality classical charter school, providing them with operational expertise and support to help them grow well, but would not have allowed local governance. By deciding to partner with ACA as a charter management organization, ACAD will be able to share services with other ACA-schools, obtain business operations support, have access to a strong network of teacher and leader mentors, and important for the Douglas County community, have a local board of directors.

Best Educational Interest

Partnering with ACA is in the best interest of ACAD. ACAD established a relationship with the Hillsdale College Barney Charter School Initiative, (“BCSI”), based on the ACAD board’s belief in and support for the guiding principles of the Initiative and the BCSI’s experience and commitment to classical education. ACA is firmly committed to these same principles and the leadership has experience in implementing the academic program and creating the necessary culture for high-quality classical charter schools.

Performance in Colorado

ACA will be partnering with Golden View Classical Academy (“GVCA”), also a BCSI-affiliated charter school beginning the 2017-2018 school year.

GVCA parents report very high levels of satisfaction, with over 90 percent of parents satisfied overall with the school. ACAD believes this level of satisfaction will be attained in Douglas County through the partnership with ACA.

Best Financial Interest

The ACAD board appreciates the direct investment ACA has pledged to our school.

- Consistent with the draft Services Agreement, ACA will fund and deliver the educational program desired by the board even if public revenues come up short of our approved budget. In this way, ACA assumes all financial risk, and the ACAD board is guaranteed in the ability to deliver the educational program we envision.
- ACA will be eligible for financial support for charter replication that will benefit ACAD.
- In building a new school, ACA typically leverages millions of dollars in private capital to create a new or renovated facility, investing in the community without taxing its residents.

The ACAD board and legal counsel have reviewed the draft Services Agreement with ACA and concluded that it provides a desired arrangement to achieve our mission and serve our community.

Network Capacity

Ascent Classical Academy of Douglas County will be the second school working with ACA in the 2018-2019 school year. ACA is working to develop more resources to provide member schools through expansion. Being a part of a group of similar classical schools will continue improving the service and value provided to all schools, both in the ability to establish and operate a great school that aligns with our mission and vision, and to continually look at ways to improve all aspects of network school, both in teacher development, curriculum enhancement, governance development, and operations and processes.

Although well positioned, ACA is aware of, and actively managing risks to expansion. A discussion of these risks, as well as mitigation strategies, is included below.

Key Risks to Growth

ACA is able to mitigate many risks faced by new schools through its comprehensive Services Agreement and long-term commitment to its partner schools. Once a charter is awarded, ACA commits to purchase real estate and build or renovate a new building all at no cost to the partner school board. ACA provides private capital to finance the facilities, and provides these funds as a contribution, not a loan. Additionally, ACA is privately funded, and partner schools and boards have no obligation to raise philanthropic funding.

ACA does experience some of the same risks and challenges that many schools face, including: identifying excellent school leaders and teachers; creating a culture of high academic expectations and high care for students; and adapting to the needs of the specific student populations that enroll at ACA-partner schools and quickly accelerating their academic performance. Detailed below are plans to mitigate these risks.

Identifying Excellent School Leaders and Teachers: The availability of experienced and high-quality school leaders is essential to successfully establishing a new public charter school. There are several components to ACA’s ongoing efforts to address this priority.

Principals of ACA-partner schools identify leaders and teachers whom they see potential for school leadership roles and recommend them to ACA for further leadership development opportunities.

In this role as “talent scout,” principals benefit significantly from ACA’s “distributed leadership” administrative model. In this model, the principal provides ongoing coaching and mentoring to every teacher.

Emphasis on experience: ACA also recognizes benefits in having school leaders and a small core of teachers come to a school with some previous experience with the ACA model. This kind of experience and seasoning helps ACA implement its model consistently and facilitates the sharing of best practices and experience from lessons learned under this model.

Commitment to competitive compensation: ACA also believes strongly that effective instruction comes from highly satisfied teachers. Highly satisfied teachers are a result of competitive compensation, a work culture that rewards high performance, and strong instructional leaders.

Commitment to teacher development: ACA strives to ensure that newly recruited teachers evolve into excellent teachers in practice.

The value of the ACA-partner school network: ACA recognizes the value of operating in places that are near existing ACA-partner schools, from which teachers may transfer. As ACA expands, ACA’s network of partner schools will aid the organization significantly in identifying individuals with potential leadership capabilities.

Creating a Culture of High Academic Expectations and High Care for Students: Teachers and school leaders need to spend their time focused on instruction, not classroom management or behavioral issues. ACA-partner schools now utilize a positive behavioral intervention system and school-wide approach to promote good character and virtue leading to a strong school culture from day one.

Adapting to Meet the Educational Needs of Students: ACA-schools have created a culture of continuous improvement that intensely monitors student academic progress and provides the structure and supports necessary to adapt instruction and services to meet the needs of all students, regardless of the specific student population. Professional development for teachers and school leadership is comprehensive and ongoing, and includes frequent classroom observations and feedback to teachers. The formative and diagnostic systems are robust, providing teachers with real-time information on how each student is progressing and allowing them to individualize instruction. Additional assistance is always available from the network’s

leader and teacher mentors, who will be actively participating in the academic oversight of the schools. Finally, ACA-partner schools implement a solid academic intervention strategy.

A robust, developed, and well-resourced intervention program established from day one of instruction is essential to the long-term success of students, staff, and the school. In cooperation with partner boards, ACA conducts a detailed needs assessment for each community it enters, and modifies intervention programming to best meet the needs of students on the first day of instruction. ACA is also committed to modifying its intervention programming early and often – by investing supplemental financial resources if needed – to ensure that this intervention program evolves with the changing needs of its partner schools. New ACA schools benefit from existing schools, which have refined intervention programming to meet unique needs.

Services and Support from ACA

ACAD will leverage the strength of ACA’s human capital, financial resources, and experience starting schools – along with our professional expertise and community contacts – to successfully launch our school. At the ACA office in Golden, Colorado, will serve as a resource for partner schools in areas such as academic intervention support, accounting and payroll, marketing, construction and facilities maintenance, curriculum and instructional development, human resources, purchasing, special education, talent acquisition, board support, and technology support. Some of these services ACA will provide for our school are summarized below:

Real Estate and Construction: When our charter application is approved, the ACA will be prepared to identify and purchase real estate with construction soon beginning. ACA’s construction period for this school is expected to be 7-8months. The team ACA has assembled has a successful history of building new facilities and renovating existing structures. The school facilities will contain space to house the first phase of the academic program.

Recruitment, Staffing, and Human Resources Management: Excellent teaching in each classroom is key to academic achievement. ACA will support the school by conducting teacher and staff recruitment and overseeing the hiring process, advertising positions online and through internal ACA websites, and participating in college recruiting fairs locally and throughout Colorado, and in other venues around the country. ACA also has established relationships with high-quality schools of education to identify top talent, another source of support that will be tapped by the ACAD board. ACA will manage recruitment, compensation, payroll, and compliance. The school will benefit significantly from this experience and support.

Professional Development: Teachers and school leaders will have the opportunity to take advantage of professional development opportunities offered through ACA. ACA will supplement many of the trainings teacher and school leaders participate in at the Hillsdale College summer professional development. ACA will also have a mentor teacher program for teachers across the ACA-network to interact and share practices.

Curriculum: The classical curriculum and instructional program for the school is designed by the BCSI for engagement in all subjects.

Back-Office Functions: The partnership with ACA will provide the school with all back office functions, including standardized purchasing, accounting, business services, informational technology, data reporting, data warehousing, and payroll systems. This will allow school staff to better focus all effort on instruction and student learning.

Financial Support: Partnering with ACA will provide the school with upfront financial investment that will ensure effective support and growth. Working with ACAD on viable sites identified for the schools, ACA will purchase the land or facility and undertake all construction and renovation necessary for the school building. ACA also has committed to ensuring that the school can start out serving grades K-10, and then grow slowly by one grade each year the school reaches capacity and serves grades K-12. ACA will identify sufficient start-up funding (in the form of grants, not loans), that will allow ACAD to provide a complete educational program and do so in a building suited for a K-10 configuration.

Charter Board Authority

The ACAD board will exercise its statutory authority and contractual and fiduciary responsibilities at all times. The board is independent of ACA and will contract with independent legal counsel to advise the board in its duties. ACAD can sever the relationship with ACA at any time, with or without cause with 90 days' written notice.

ACAD understands that ACA is making a significant investment in the school and while grateful, this does not beholden ACAD to ACA in any way. The Services and Lease Agreements, as described below, are separate and if ACAD chooses to terminate the Services Agreement, the Lease Agreement automatically terminates as well. If desired, ACA is committed to continue to provide support for the remainder of the school year should the school sever the relationship during the year. ACA will provide directors and officers insurance and will not require ACAD to assert, waive, or not waive any governmental immunity. There will not be any real or perceived conflicts of interest between ACA and governing board.

Services Agreement with ACA

The Services Agreement with ACA, attached in draft form as Appendix 31, clearly outlines the ACAD board's independence, as well as the responsibilities of both ACA and the board. ACAD recognize that it holds the charter and is are responsible for achieving its goals. ACA will be held accountable for the academic results of the school and helping the board meet the charter goals. Because ACA manages school operations, ACAD will also hold ACA accountable for the fiscal and operational soundness of ACAD.

ACAD is partnering with ACA to deliver an educational program that the school is confident will serve the community well, achieve the charter goals, and advance the mission and vision. ACAD will retain independent legal counsel that can be consulted regarding ACA matters.

Under the Services Agreement ACAD intends to enter into with ACA, the board may terminate the management arrangement prior to the end of the term, with or without cause, with 90 days' written notice. The board also may terminate the contract if ACA fails to remedy a material breach of the agreement within 30 days' notice of such a breach. Examples of a material breach include: ACA failing to account for or make expenditures approved by the board in the annual budget; ACA failing to follow board-approved policies and procedures; the school or ACA receiving an unsatisfactory performance rating as reported by a state or independent evaluator; and, ACA taking or failing to take any action that places the charter in jeopardy of termination, suspension, or revocation.

If the board terminates the Services Agreement with ACA, state and federal charter school revenue will continue to flow to the school to fund its daily operations. The board expects the highest level of performance from ACA. If that mark of excellence is not met, ACA will surely know about it and will either fix it or ACAD will terminate the relationship. The goal is not to have a mediocre school – ACAD (and ACA) want to set a model of excellence for others. The envisioned arrangement provides substantial and sufficient autonomy for the board to ensure it can accomplish this goal.

The board will regularly receive reports on the school's academic and operational progress. ACAD will receive information on academic growth, comparative performance, accountability, and college-readiness to evaluate academic progress, and will use student attendance data, parent and staff satisfaction survey results, and a comprehensive review of the overall performance of ACA as operational measures of accountability. Financial viability will be measured by the school's annual financial audit.

Evaluating the Performance of ACA

The board plans to evaluate the performance of ACA and specifically will review data to ensure that ACAD is making progress toward the charter goals listed in Section C.

Also, as outlined in Section H - Governance, the board will contract periodically with an outside third party that has experience and expertise in evaluating the performance of charter schools to evaluate ACAD. Included in such an assessment will be an evaluation of ACA's operation of the school and the services it is providing, and an evaluation of progress school leaders are making in meeting expectations for the school. This report is envisioned to serve as the foundation of an improvement action plan developed collaboratively with the board and ACA and implemented as soon after the report has been presented to and discussed by the board as practical.

Authorization to do Business

ACA is authorized to do business in Colorado, as provided in Appendix 31. ACA will report to our board.

Fee Structure

The management partner supports the mission to institute the complete educational program from day one. This includes pledging the funds necessary to cover any operating expenses that might exceed revenues. Additionally, ACA will help ensure positive cash flow. Through our partnership, ACAD will have cash on hand to pay staff and cover expenditures from any unforeseen circumstances - even in advance of receiving our per pupil funding - which can adversely affect new charter schools.

The Services Agreement with ACA clarifies that ACA assumes the obligation for all expenses, and assumes all financial risk. In exchange – logically, practically, and appropriately – the board allocates all revenue to ACA. The residual between revenue and expenses, if any, is the organization’s financial compensation. If expenses exceed revenues in any given year, the obligation to cover the shortfall is solely ACA’s.

The draft Services Agreement with ACA pledges funds, if necessary, to cover expenditures that exceed revenues in the early years of the school’s operations. These are contributions to the school, not loans. The Services Agreement maintains ACA’s commitment to providing sufficient revenue to meet the school’s budgeted expenses in subsequent years if public revenues drop below projections.

Employment of Staff

As described in detail in Section I - Employees and defined in our Services Agreement with ACA, ACA will hire and employ all staff. This will allow the ACAD board to focus on governance while ACA provides a high-quality employee compensation and benefit package.

Lease Agreement

The board will have a Lease Agreement with ACA, which is separate from the Services Agreement that guarantees that ACAD can occupy the school facility for at least one additional full school year even if ACAD terminates the management relationship with ACA.

If ACAD chooses to terminate the relationship with ACA for managing the school, the Lease Agreement may state that ACAD is entitled to remain in the building for the remainder of the school year as well as for the subsequent school year. After that, ACAD is free to purchase the building, negotiate a new lease agreement, or find another location. ACAD believes this arrangement serves the school well:

- ACA incurs all the costs of developing the facility and constructing it to accommodate the school. The Board itself does not need to take on that role.
- In addition to assuming all the financial risk, ACA's ownership of the building provides an additional incentive for it to ensure the high-performance of the school; if ACAD is dissatisfied with the academic or other results, it can sever the management arrangement, move, and leave.