

## CHARTER APPLICATION

### Executive Summary

Name of Charter School: DeKalb Brilliance Academy

Opening Date: July 26, 2021 Proposed Charter Term Length: five years

Grade range at the end of Year 5: Kindergarten-7<sup>th</sup>

What grades will the school enroll in its first year of operation? Kindergarten, 1st, and 3rd grades

Expected enrollment in the first year of the charter term: 168

Expected enrollment at the end of Year 5: 420

This application was approved by DeKalb Board of Education on \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_.

For each year of the proposed charter term, indicate the number of students the charter school plans to serve.

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Yr 1	84	56	0	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	168
Yr 2	56	84	56	28	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	252
Yr 3	56	56	84	56	28	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	308
Yr 4	56	56	56	84	56	28	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	364
Yr 5	56	56	56	56	84	56	28	28	0	0	0	0	0	420

1. Research shows that charter schools are more academically, financially and organizationally stable if they grow by only one grade each year. If the charter school plans to grow more than one grade each year, please provide a brief rationale for this growth model. (350 words or less)

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will employ a slow-growth model to build to our Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade school. Our K-8 model responds to feedback from families that have expressed wanting to minimize school transitions by having a combined elementary and middle school option, and therefore we propose a non-traditional K-8 school. Our model will ensure students are prepared for high-quality high schools and we will dedicate specific staff (Family & Community Collaboration Facilitator) to high

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school placement. Additionally, our K-8 model is consistent with other highly-effective charter schools in DeKalb County, such as Leadership Preparatory Academy, The Museum School, and GLOBE Academy.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will begin with Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in the 2021-2022 school year. We will begin with Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade to have a cohort of teachers working with developmentally similar standards that can collaborate to grow their professional practice. Additionally, we will include 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to meet accountability requirements for a tested grade. We chose an elementary grade for this requirement to allow us to intentionally build out our middle school after we have progressed through our initial founding stage.

After the founding year, we will employ a slow growth model in the following years and will move to a two-classroom per grade model, ensuring an overall small school size. In alignment with researched best practices, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will add one new grade each year, serving Kindergarten- 4<sup>th</sup> grades in year two, Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> grades in year three, and so on. This progression will allow DeKalb Brilliance Academy to intentionally build elementary and middle school models at separate stages of the school's growth. By year five, the last in the proposed charter term, our school would serve 420 students in grades Kindergarten-7<sup>th</sup>, with 308 students in the lower school (K-4<sup>th</sup>) and 112 students in the upper school (5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup>).

2. State the charter school's mission and describe why this initiative is important to the community it will serve. Also provide a brief description of any defining features of the school. Include how stakeholders were involved in the petition process and will continue participating. (350 words or less)

**MISSION:** With unwavering commitment to exceptional academics, leadership development, and community collaboration, DeKalb Brilliance Academy prepares all Kindergarten-8<sup>th</sup> grade students to

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thrive in high school and college, have fulfilling careers, and become impactful leaders in our communities.

Our founding board is committed to our mission because over 800 community members (including over 300 age-eligible) families in South DeKalb and South Atlanta expressed the need for a school that prepares students not only for college, but also as leaders. Our model would be the only K-8 school in DeKalb focused on entrepreneurship. We are committed to preparing our students as leaders, both to improve growing job sectors, and to interrupt cycles of intergenerational inequities.<sup>1</sup>

**EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMICS:** In addition to rigorous math and science, our academic model will be built around comprehensive literacy and multidisciplinary humanities (English language arts integrated with social studies). This approach will build students' critical thinking skills by giving them opportunities to analyze complex questions about history, literature, science, and current events using multiple perspectives and sources.

**LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:**

- **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL):** Our SEL approach will be centered around our core values that develop the skills needed for successful leadership. We will have classroom meetings at the beginning and end of each day reflecting on how actions align to our core values.
- **ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECT-BASED LEARNING:** Integrated into our humanities, math, or science units, is our innovative approach to project-based learning. We will partner diverse community experts with teachers on designing projects, coaching teams of students, and being in the audience when students present their work. This will give our students access to

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<sup>1</sup> Pirani, Fiza. "Atlanta has the worst income inequality in the US, Bloomberg report finds." The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Oct 11, 2018. <https://www.ajc.com/news/local/atlanta-has-the-worst-income-inequality-the-bloomberg-report-finds/BsUkLHtoLEZEwI504r9oeM/>.

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extensive practice in leadership skills such as identifying a problem, researching solutions, planning and executing goals, collaborating in teams, and presenting their ideas with confidence.

**COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:** Early, frequent, and thorough collaborative partnerships with families and our community are the foundation for our model.

- **Families:** We will build relationships and leverage the expertise of families through family meetings before the school year starts and collaborative conferences throughout the year.
- **Community:** Diverse community leaders and professionals will partner with teachers and students for our Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning.

3. Describe the charter school’s academic program, specifically focusing on why it is innovative in your school district(s). Include mention of any waivers of state law and SBOE rule that are needed to be able to implement the academic program. Be sure to describe any special characteristics of your charter school, such as a special population or some other feature or features which enhance educational opportunities. (350 words or less)

We will ensure our students can succeed in high-demand careers and lead in our communities while nurturing each students’ unique talents and gifts<sup>2</sup> through the following innovations (please see questions 19 and 26 for waivers required to implement innovations):

**EXCEPTIONAL ACADEMICS:**

- **Multidisciplinary humanities:** Our comprehensive literacy approach pairs English language arts with social studies and/or science to support students in responding to complex problems. For example, in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade unit on natural disasters, students will write a speech, supported with evidence from their research, stating an opinion about how to prioritize aid following a natural

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<sup>2</sup> Gottfried, Allen W.; Gottfried, Adele Eskeles; and Guerin, Diana Wright. “The Fullerton Longitudinal Study: A Long-Term Investigation of Intellectual and Motivational Giftedness.” *Journal for the Education of the Gifted*, v29 n4, Jun 2006, 430-450. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ746291.pdf>.

disaster in a neighboring country.

- **Two-teacher literacy model:** We will accelerate student learning through a two-teacher literacy model<sup>3</sup> so students can learn more quickly in small groups<sup>4</sup> focused on phonics, writing, and guided reading.

#### **LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:**

- **Social-emotional learning:** Students will develop SEL skills daily. To support this, teachers will have dedicated SEL professional development centered around our core values.
- **Entrepreneurial project-based learning:** Our innovative approach will partner diverse community experts with teachers and students to work on entrepreneurial projects. For example, in a unit about inventions that changed people's lives throughout history, a product engineer will partner with 5<sup>th</sup> graders to identify a social problem they want to solve and design, draft, and pitch a business plan for an invention to solve that problem.

#### **COMMUNITY COLLABORATION:**

- **Learning Partnership Plans (LPPs):** We will leverage the expertise of families<sup>5</sup> by meeting with each family before the school year starts and collaborate to create LPPs that will be reviewed together three times a year. As part of the LPP, we learn each student's strengths and talents, outline their academic and SEL goals, and generate commitments from students, teachers, and families to reach those goals.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Liben, David and Meredith Liben. "Both and' Literacy Instruction K-5: A Proposed Paradigm Shift for the Common Core State Standards ELA Classroom" Achieve the Core, 11 Sep 2013. <https://achievethecore.org/page/687/both-and-literacy-instruction-k-5-a-proposed-paradigm-shift-for-the-common-core-state-standards-ela-classroom>.

<sup>4</sup> Shin, Yongyun. "Do Black Children Benefit More From Small Classes? Multivariate Instrumental Variable Estimators With Ignorable Missing Data" Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics, Vol. 37, No. 4 (August 2012), 543-574.

<sup>5</sup> "Partners Education in A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships." SEDL, US Department of Education, 2013. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> "How Parent Involvement Leads to Student Success." Waterford, 1 Nov 2018. <https://www.waterford.org/education/how-parent-involvement-leads-to-student-success/>

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- **Advisory councils:** Student, family, and staff advisory councils will have representation at governing board meetings to ensure we continually learn from our community.
  - **Utilizing community experts:** To expand learning beyond the walls of our school and expand students' visions for their futures, we will form partnerships that give students access to experiential learning with experts they can relate to leading high-demand careers.
4. Describe the charter school's organizational structure, specifically focusing on its innovation and need for flexibility, its general partnership structure with an educational service provider (ESP) if any, and the school's community interest and need. (350 words or less)

**COMMUNITY INTEREST AND NEED:** After engaging with over 860 community stakeholders, including over 330 age-eligible families through 136 surveys, and 655 petition signatures, the demand for a college preparatory school that prepares students to be entrepreneurial leaders is clear from South DeKalb and South Atlanta families. 95% of families surveyed agreed that South DeKalb would benefit from our school model, and over 90% of those families would enroll their children in DeKalb Brilliance Academy if given the opportunity. Families have expressed wanting to have their children prepared to lead "on the global stage" and to experience "a wide range of careers." Although we will have a broad attendance zone (DeKalb County and Atlanta Public Schools) to ensure an inclusive school, our community engagement has focused on Southeast Atlanta and Southwest DeKalb, where our early community engagement found the most demand for new school options and families have reported driving their students 30-45 minutes to magnet programs, before beginning their own commutes to work.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:** To deliver our ambitious model, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will prioritize student-facing staff. At a minimum, we will match the DeKalb County salary schedule to ensure we can hire talented teachers, Reading Specialists for our two-teacher literacy rotations, and Special Educators to deliver specialized services. Our Dean of Operations will support day-to-day

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operations of the school to allow our Head of School to prioritize instructional practices. We will add a Dean of Curriculum & Instruction in year three, and a Family & Community Collaboration Facilitator in year four. Our Dean of Curriculum & Instruction will ensure sustainable teacher support by dividing teacher support responsibilities with the Head of School, and our Family & Community Collaboration Facilitator will ensure high-quality partners for our Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning and strong high school and college planning for our middle school students (see Exhibit 32).

**INNOVATION AND FLEXIBILITY:** Please see Question questions 19 and 26.

**EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PROVIDER:** We will not utilize an educational services provider.

## APPLICATION CONTENTS

### ACADEMIC PROGRAM

1. Describe the focus of the curriculum (including if it incorporates STEM, STEAM, International Baccalaureate, or any other such branded program). Include as **Exhibit 10** a copy of the scope and sequence for each proposed course/grade level.

### RIGOROUS, RELEVANT, COLLEGE-PREPARATORY CURRICULUM

Our commitment to a rigorous and relevant college-preparatory curriculum is rooted in the significant evidence that all students benefit from rigorous academics<sup>7</sup> especially when combined with appropriate supports and a teacher with high expectations for all students.<sup>8</sup>

- **Rigor:** The way we value rigor – the thinking, reading, writing, problem solving, and speaking that students accomplish in the classroom<sup>9</sup> – is evident in our curricular decisions. Our selections for curricula – EL Education for humanities (supplemented with school-designed resources to ensure we cover all GSE social studies standards), Eureka for mathematics, and Amplify for science, are research-based, aligned to Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), show significant evidence of growth in student academic outcomes,<sup>10,11</sup> and meet the highest bar of academic rigor as measured by Ed Reports.<sup>12</sup> Our teachers will utilize gradual release (moving from direct modeling to students working independently), small group instruction, and tasks where students explain their thinking (both in writing and in discussion) to ensure that implementation of our curricular choices is rigorous.

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<sup>7</sup> Hammond, Zaretta. “Your Brain on Culture.” *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*, Corwin, 2015, 49.

<sup>8</sup> “The Opportunity Myth: What Students Can Show Us About How School Is Letting Them Down—and How to Fix It” TNTP, 25 Sept 2018. <https://tntp.org/publications/view/student-experiences/the-opportunity-myth>.

<sup>9</sup> Ladson-Billings, G. “But that’s just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy” *Theory Into Practice*, 34, 1995, 159-165. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849509543675>.

<sup>10</sup> “Data Stories.” Great Minds. [https://greatminds.org/data\\_stories](https://greatminds.org/data_stories).

<sup>11</sup> “By the Numbers.” EL Education. <https://eleducation.org/impact/curriculum/by-the-numbers>.

<sup>12</sup> “Reports Center.” Ed Reports. <https://www.edreports.org/reports>.



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- **Relevance:** Students need to see their learning as relevant – either reflective of their own identities and interests or as something new and engaging – as a prerequisite to learning.<sup>13</sup> Our relevant curriculum will balance content that reflects students’ own identities with topics that help them understand the experiences of others.<sup>14</sup> Students will be expected to ask questions and analyze why things happen the way they do, to defend their thinking, and build on the ideas of their peers to deepen their understanding of content through “Habits of Discussion” in all classes.<sup>15</sup> This has been used successfully by K-8 schools like Springfield Prep, which is among the top 5% of schools in Massachusetts for math and the top 1% of schools for ELA.<sup>16</sup>
- **Multidisciplinary units:** To make our commitments to rigor and relevance come to life, our multidisciplinary units will integrate challenging content with complex questions about students’ own experiences and new perspectives. Examples include:
  - **2<sup>nd</sup> grade:** School and Community: “In this unit, students build their literacy and citizenship skills as they engage in a study of schools. Students begin by exploring the guiding question—“What is school, and why are schools important?”—through a variety of literary and nonfiction texts to learn about schools around the world and the challenges some communities face in sending their children to school. This leads students to consider the similarities and differences between their own school and some of the schools they have read about. They use their learning to produce an informational book detailing these similarities and differences, and what makes school important overall in a short book titled, ‘The Most Important Thing about Schools.’”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Hammond, Zaretta. “Your Brain on Culture.” *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*, Corwin, 2015, 49.

<sup>14</sup> Style, Emily. “Curriculum As Window and Mirror” The National SEED Project, 4 Nov 2013.

<https://nationalseedproject.org/itemid-fix/entry/curriculum-as-window-and-mirror>.

<sup>15</sup> Lemov, Doug. “Building Ratio Through Discussion.” *Teach Like a Champion 2.0*, Jossey-Bass, 2015, 316-324.

<sup>16</sup> “2018 MCAS Results.” Springfield Prep Charter School. <https://www.springfieldprep.org/our-results>.

<sup>17</sup> “Curriculum.” EL Education. <https://curriculum.eleducation.org/>

- **7<sup>th</sup> grade:** Screen Time and the Developing Brain: “Students explore adolescent brain development and the effects of entertainment screen time on the brain. Students read informational texts to build background knowledge about adolescent brain development. Then, they begin to focus on the issue of screen time and how it may affect teenagers. Students evaluate the soundness of reasoning and the sufficiency and relevancy of evidence in argument texts and media. They dive deeper into the potential benefits and risks of screen time by participating in a robust research project that concludes with students writing a position paper.”<sup>18</sup>

**CURRICULUM SELECTIONS:** All curricular options have been reviewed for full alignment to the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), evidence of proven success in high-performing schools that have quickly closed educational gaps, the highest bar for rigor through external reviews at Ed Reports,<sup>19</sup> and alignment to our multidisciplinary, project-based approach.

**HUMANITIES: ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS & SOCIAL STUDIES:** Our ELA approach utilizes EL Education, a proven curriculum<sup>20</sup> created by the Harvard School of Education and Outward Bound, as well as Wilson Education (Foundations/Just Words), based on Orton-Gillingham research on how phonics instruction is best taught.<sup>21</sup> We will supplement the Social Studies in EL’s knowledge-based units with teacher-created resources to ensure a comprehensive approach to the GSE for ELA and Social Studies.

**HUMANITIES:**

- **EL EDUCATION READALOUD (K-2) & SHARED READING (3-8):** Our daily read aloud

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<sup>18</sup> “Curriculum.” EL Education. <https://curriculum.eleducation.org/>

<sup>19</sup> “Reports Center.” Ed Reports. <https://www.edreports.org/reports>.

<sup>20</sup> “By the Numbers.” EL Education. <https://eleducation.org/impact/curriculum/by-the-numbers>.

<sup>21</sup> “What is the Orton-Gillingham Approach?” Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators. <https://www.ortonacademy.org/resources/what-is-the-orton-gillingham-approach/>.

or shared reading is embedded in our humanities units and is an intentional time to build students' love of reading, academic vocabulary, content knowledge, and reading comprehension through intentional questioning and habits of discussion. Teachers will model close reading strategies through multiple reads of the same text to teach annotations as students work their own copy of the text. In middle school, students will utilize close reading and habits of discussion with increasing independence.

- **EL EDUCATION WRITING & PRESENTING:** Our writing will be embedded in our humanities units, with writing prompts in response to texts. Teachers will model writing genres (narrative, argumentative, informational) and work in iterative cycles with students to outline, draft, revise, and publish written works. In K-2, this includes modeling grammar and writing structure through interactive writing. In 3-8, students will increase their ability to cite evidence and organize details to support their ideas and arguments.
- **K-4 LITERACY ROTATIONS:** Utilizing the station-rotation model, teachers will instruct small, leveled student groups (based on reading assessment data) during our 70-minute rotations block. **Guided Reading (Teacher A):** Students will work on targeted reading fluency and comprehension strategies. **Phonics & Word Study (Teacher B):** Students will practice explicit phonics skills through the comprehensive, multi-sensory Foundations program (K-3) or word study (4-5). **Independent Group (different options will occur on different days): Independent Reading:** Independent reading time will build students' love of reading through high-interest books that they select. **Play stations (K-1):** Young students will increase their oral language development through block and/or dramatic play stations that support conversations with their peers.
- **5-8 LITERACY ROTATIONS: LITERACY ROTATIONS: Book Clubs:** Based on reading assessment data, teachers will pull small groups of students to practice specific skills and accelerate growth specific to their reading level in a book club format. **Independent reading:**

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Students will become voracious readers, increasing their volume of reading and competing for the highest number of pages read through our house-system reading competitions. **Writing revisions or extension:** Students will have the opportunity to revise, share peer feedback, and/or continue writing projects.

**MATHEMATICS:** DeKalb Brilliance Academy will utilize the evidence-based<sup>22</sup> Eureka curriculum for mathematics, which is designed to teach math as a coherent body of knowledge to create the conceptual understanding students need for advanced mathematics. We will supplement Eureka with open-source Cognitively Guided Instruction resources from Achievement First, one of the nation’s highest-performing charter school networks.<sup>23</sup>

- **EUREKA MATH FLUENCY:** Students will practice the fluency skills they need for success daily in short games to build their automaticity and to be able to tackle more cognitively-challenging mathematics.
- **EUREKA MATH WORKSHOP:** Our curriculum builds the content knowledge of how mathematics works through modeled practice, gives students opportunities to build understanding through guided practice, and allows teachers to give feedback to students as they apply their knowledge in independent practice.
- **COGNITIVELY GUIDED INSTRUCTION (K-5 only):** Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) is “focused on: (a) the development of students’ mathematical thinking; (b) instruction that influences that development; (c) teachers’ knowledge and beliefs that influence their instructional practices; and (d) the way that teachers’ knowledge, beliefs, and practices are influenced by their understanding of students’ mathematical thinking.”<sup>24</sup>
- **ACCELERATED MATHEMATICS (6-8 only):** In Middle School, our approach to

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<sup>22</sup> “Data Stories.” Great Minds. [https://greatminds.org/data\\_stories](https://greatminds.org/data_stories).

<sup>23</sup> “Annual Reports.” Achievement First. <https://www.achievementfirst.org/about-us/annual-reports/>.

<sup>24</sup> Carpenter, T. P., Fennema, E., Franke, M. L., Levi, L., & Empson, S. B. (2015). Children’s mathematics: Cognitively guided instruction.

mathematics evolves. As students being able to articulate their mathematical thinking becomes required to be successful in the core mathematics, we will remove the CGI component. We will use our entire math block in Eureka Math Workshop and students will engage in an accelerated mathematics scope & sequence in grades 6-7, so that all our students can take Algebra I in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and subsequently can take advanced mathematics in high school.

**SCIENCE:** K-8 students will have daily science instruction. We will utilize the research-based Amplify Science Curriculum, which utilizes “knowledge-based units and blends hands-on investigations, literacy-rich activities, and interactive digital tools to empower students to think, read, write, and argue like real scientists and engineers.”<sup>25</sup> Our science courses will give students additional experiences aligned to our leadership development – analyzing complex questions, solving problems in teams, and presenting their ideas rooted in evidence.

**SPECIALS:**

- **K-4 SPECIALS:** In grades K-4, students will rotate between physical education and STEAM specials to build the foundation for a full coding program in middle school. Our K-4 students will have physical education 3 times a week in addition to recess to ensure they develop gross motor skills and practice teamwork. Our STEAM specials will reinforce students’ identities as leaders, through studying the art, music, inventions, and scientific contributions of the African diaspora.
- **5-8 SPECIALS:** Our middle school students will rotate between physical education 2 times a week (in addition to daily recess) and coding specials. Physical education is important in developing healthy habits in adolescents. There are few jobs in our future economy that will not require coding, and many families have specifically requested coding in our focus groups and surveys.

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<sup>25</sup> “A new phenomena-based curriculum for grades K–8.” Amplify. <https://amplify.com/programs/amplify-science/>.

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2. Describe the instructional methods that will be implemented, including innovative, distinctive, or unique instructional techniques or educational programs (e.g., project-based learning).
  - Why are these innovations appropriate for this population/school?
  - Explain how these innovations will increase student achievement.

## **TWO-TEACHER LITERACY MODEL**

In our changing, knowledge-based economy, students will not have access to jobs or leadership without the ability to read, research, and access new knowledge quickly. Currently in our target zip codes, 24.4% of students are reading on grade level in third grade.<sup>26</sup> DeKalb Brilliance Academy will ensure all students have access to literacy through:

- **Extended time for comprehensive literacy instruction:** Comprehensive literacy instruction requires extensive time.<sup>27</sup> At DeKalb Brilliance Academy, we will prioritize 140 minutes in our schedule each day to ensure we can teach all the elements students need to be successful in literacy: reading foundations (including phonics and phonemic awareness), guided reading, reading comprehension, independent reading, and writing.
- **Two-teachers for small group instruction:** Small groups can accelerate learning – both broadly and for African American children specifically.<sup>28</sup> During literacy instruction, we will utilize a three station-rotation model with two-teachers, allowing for leveled student groupings for guided reading, reading foundations (such as phonics and phonemic awareness) - each with a specific teacher - and a third group of students that independently reads or revises their writing.

Resurgence Hall, a K-7 school in Atlanta, utilizes the two-teacher literacy rotations approach and has higher performance than 75% of the state and higher growth than 87% of the state on the

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<sup>26</sup> “Georgia Milestones 2018-19 Statewide Scores.” Georgia Department of Education, 2019. <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/Georgia-Milestones-2018-2019-Statewide-Scores.aspx>.

<sup>27</sup> Liben, David and Meredith Liben. “Both and’ Literacy Instruction K-5: A Proposed Paradigm Shift for the Common Core State Standards ELA Classroom” Achieve the Core, 11 Sep 2013. <https://achievethecore.org/page/687/both-and-literacy-instruction-k-5-a-proposed-paradigm-shift-for-the-common-core-state-standards-ela-classroom>.

<sup>28</sup> Shin, Yongyun. “Do Black Children Benefit More From Small Classes? Multivariate Instrumental Variable Estimators With Ignorable Missing Data” Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics, Vol. 37, No. 4 (August 2012), pp. 543-574.

GOSA school report card.<sup>29</sup>

- **Literacy across content areas:** Literacy supports success in every subject in school and prepares students for leadership across all professional sectors.<sup>30</sup> At DeKalb Brilliance Academy, teachers will ensure that students speak and write with evidence grounded in text, utilize Habits of Discussion strategies for rigorous discussions, learn academic language, and practice writing in every single subject. For example, in the Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) component of our math block, students will describe their solution strategies to their peers using academic vocabulary and precision.

## **DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION**

Our teaching culture will be one that prioritizes providing feedback, for both teachers and students, and ensures thoughtful reflection on how to improve teacher practice rooted in student data. Our teachers will plan backwards from standards and goals for students to create daily lesson objectives and goals.

Teachers will provide students feedback and collect data in every class to drive their instruction. The Head of School (and subsequently the Dean of Curriculum & Instruction) and teachers will assess targeted formative assessments and student work weekly in Collaborative Student Work Meetings to plan and practice strategies for reteaching and ensure student mastery of key lesson objectives aligned to GSE.

- **SUMMER TRAINING:** Teachers will complete an intellectual preparation cycle, based on the scope & sequences and materials for the first two units for all subjects. This includes annotating and analyzing standards and creating exemplar student responses for end-of-unit assessments and projects to plan backwards from standards and student goals.
- **TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE OF TEACHING:** Teachers will preview the standards and objectives for unit/lessons coming two weeks in advance.

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<sup>29</sup> “Resurgence Hall GOSA Report Card.” Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, 24 Aug 2015.  
[http://www.resurgencehall.org/kindergarten\\_teacher/report-card/](http://www.resurgencehall.org/kindergarten_teacher/report-card/).

<sup>30</sup> Alber, Rebecca. “How Important is Teaching Literacy in All Content Areas?” Edutopia, 15 Jan 2014.  
<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/literacy-instruction-across-curriculum-importance>.

- **ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE OF TEACHING:** In Lesson Planning Clinics, teachers will build exemplar student responses and predicted misconceptions, key questions, checks for understanding, and items they will collect data on through “intentional monitoring”<sup>31</sup> during student independent work.
- **DURING THE LESSON:** Teachers will intentionally monitor student work and provide feedback to individual students and the class, based on trends in the data of how students perform on pre-identified lesson objectives.
- **AFTER THE LESSON:** Our teams will utilize the Weekly Data Meeting evidence-based practices outlined in *Leverage Leadership 2.0*.<sup>32</sup> Teachers will work in teams with their instructional coach (Head of School or Director of Curriculum & Instruction) to analyze a sample of student work (e.g. exit tickets, writing tasks, etc.), identify the critical errors to address in student thinking, plan and practice reteach strategies, and ensure student mastery.<sup>33</sup> See Exhibit 31 for Collaborative Student Work meeting agenda.

#### **ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECT-BASED LEARNING:**

DeKalb Brilliance Academy’s commitment to Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning stems from our community engagement, in which families expressed the need for a safe, supportive school that would not only ensure academic success, but also prepare students as leaders. Currently, a K-8 school that focuses on entrepreneurship does not exist in DeKalb County, although there are multiple aligned high school programs with which to partner, including the 3DE program which infuses case studies from leading local companies into all aspects of learning to deepen student learning and engagement.

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<sup>31</sup> Lemov, Doug. *Teach Like a Champion 2.0*, Jossey-Bass, 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Leverage Leadership 2.0: A Practical Guide to Building Exceptional Schools*, Jossey-Bass, 2018.

<sup>33</sup> Louis, Karen Seashore et al. “Learning From Leadership: Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning” Center for Applied Research and Education Improvement, Jul 2010. <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/investigating-the-links-to-improved-student-learning.aspx>.



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Our Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning will utilize partnerships with community leaders and experts (see Exhibit 10 for example projects and Exhibit 18 for example partners) to design relevant, experiential projects to embed in our college-preparatory academic units each semester. For example, in one project a financial advisor would partner with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra teacher to design an investment competition for teams of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to make proposals for short- and long-term investment strategies to build economic and algebraic knowledge, financial literacy, teamwork, and presentation skills. The structure for this work will be:

- In our planning year, we will analyze DeKalb County and Atlanta Public School student data for areas with the biggest gap between student aptitude for high-demand careers and student interest in those careers. We will compare our findings to the scope and sequence of standards and generate a list of project ideas.
- During summer orientation, teacher teams will review project areas, generate new ideas, and rank project ideas. The leadership team will partner with our Board of Directors to secure community leaders to support project design (see Exhibit 18 for example community partners). Our leadership team will onboard volunteers, through a process that includes but is not limited to conducting background checks and training community partners.
- In our quarter 2 teacher professional development day, community leaders will partner with teachers to plan projects to launch in quarter 3. Teams will plan specific expedition dates (see Exhibit 22a, line 62 for field trips) to learn from community experts and/or opportunities for experts to come to the school to coach student teams.
- Students will build collaboration skills through working in teams on all projects and through implementing feedback from professional experts. Each expert will give student teams feedback in-person twice throughout the semester to support their growth and reinforce the concept of the gift of feedback.
- Students will present their work in our Celebrations of Learning at the end of the semester with

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fellow students, families, and professional community leaders in the audience. This event will build students' courage, foster pride in their work, give them opportunities to practice their leadership voice, and reinforce the importance of service to improve our communities.

- Over time, we will have a robust collection of projects and a strong group of partners, which will ensure our students have access to a wide range of Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning each semester. By the time students complete 8<sup>th</sup> grade, they will have had 18 experiences with professional leaders they can relate to, with solving complex challenges in teams, and with presenting their ideas with conviction.

Further examples of this work are:

**Kindergarten:** In our Kindergarten humanities unit studying the importance of nature in communities around the world, a local architect would meet with teachers to design a project for students to design a new park in their community.

- Students will go on expeditions dates to explore parks nearby, to visit architecture offices, and/or review space in our community that could accommodate a park.
- Students will build their curiosity by closely analyzing texts such as *Mama Miti* in order to understand the importance of nature in a community and utilize their addition strategies to summarize the quantities of items needed in the park design.
- Student teams will work through modeling tools and drawing to design a new park. Together, teams will write why the park is important to their community, get feedback from the community expert, and present their work in the Celebration of Learning. Afterwards, the school would submit designs to our DeKalb County Commissioner on behalf of the students.

**5th grade:** At this stage, our Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning will take the form of fuller case studies. In our humanities unit, exploring inventions that changed people's lives throughout history,

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teachers will collaborate with a product engineer on a design project to create a product to address a current social problem.

- Students will build their curiosity and background knowledge through examining texts such as “Investigating the Scientific Method with Max Axiom, Super Scientist,” building understanding as to how technologies are developed to meet societal needs.
- Students will work in teams to complete the vision/planning for the product (literacy class), the design for the project (art class), the product specifications (geometry), and the pitch for why the product should be funded (argumentative writing in ELA). Students will receive feedback from the community expert and present their work in the Celebration of Learning.

3. Describe the anticipated student-to-teacher ratios and the reasoning for choosing these ratios.

Our student to teacher ratio will be no more than 28:1 for the majority of the day. We have chosen to focus additional staffing on where it is needed to most quickly accelerate student growth – on the two-teacher reading rotation model, in which teachers will work with groups of 6-8 students (see Exhibit 22a, line 10 for Budget). Additionally, small-group instruction will be a regular practice to support students in filling gaps, with teachers pulling students during independent work time, such as the Cognitively Guided Instruction block in mathematics.

4. Describe how the charter school intends to meet the needs of students identified as gifted and talented. Include in your description any diagnostic methods or instruments that will be used to identify and assess these students.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will identify and provide services to students identified as gifted in accordance with Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38.

**IDENTIFICATION:** If students score above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on NWEA MAP, the family will be notified to be able to consent to or decline the assessment process below, which will occur in November each year.

- **Achievement:** Score above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile in both ELA and math on the NWEA MAP, the norm-referenced test used at DeKalb Brilliance Academy.
- **Mental ability:** Score at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile (for grades K-2) or the 96<sup>th</sup> percentile (for grades 3-8) on the composite or full-scale score of NWEA MAP, the norm-referenced test used at DeKalb Brilliance Academy.
- **Creativity:** Score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on the total battery score of a norm-criterion-referenced test of creative thinking (such as the Torrence Test of Creative Thinking).
- **Motivation:** Receive a score at or above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile on a standardized motivational characteristics rating scale, receive from a panel of qualified evaluators a score at or above 90 on a 100 point scale on a structured observation or evaluation of student-generated products and/or performances, or for grades 6-8 have a two-year grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale where a 4.0 = A and 3.0 = B, or a numeric grade point average (NGA) of 90 percent on a 100 point scale where 100 = A and a 89 = B.

**GIFTED PROGRAMMING:** Based area charter schools, 9% of DeKalb Brilliance Academy students are projected to receive gifted services. Because of our project-based approach, we will deliver gifted programming through extensions in core blocks by gifted-certified teachers (literacy rotations including advanced book club for middle school students, writing, CGI math), through Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning extensions, and in STEAM/coding extensions in our Specials classes.

5. *For High Schools only:*

- Describe how the school will determine whether a student has satisfied the requirements for high school graduation, including earning credits or units and awarding completion credentials.
- Describe how the school will meet college and career ready obligations, including how the school will incorporate dual enrollment, Move on When Ready, and AP classes.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will culminate in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and therefore not include high school grades.

## STATE- AND FEDERALLY-MANDATED SERVICES

6. For students with disabilities, describe how the charter school will provide state- and federally-mandated services under both the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Reciting the requirements of law and rule is insufficient. Your description should include the school's specific plans to:

- Evaluate and identify students with disabilities;
- Develop, review, and revise Individualized Education Programs (IEPs);
- Integrate special education into the general education program;
- Ensure that the school facility meets the requirements of other related laws including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504;
- Address student discipline;
- Handle programming disputes involving parents;
- Ensure confidentiality of special education records;
- Purchase services from special education vendors or contract with your local district to provide a continuum of special education services and how this arrangement will work; and
- Secure technical assistance and training.

Our data-driven approach to college-preparatory curriculum and to our values-driven culture will ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, receive the individualized supports they need for success.

### IDENTIFICATION & EVALUATION

When families enroll in the school, our Office Assistant will ask about IEP/504 plans in their enrollment packets, as well as check Infinite Campus to confirm any pre-existing plans. Additionally, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will fulfill our LEA requirements and evaluate any student with a suspected disability to fulfill Child Find obligations, or any student for whom the parent/guardian has requested an evaluation. Any plans for students that have pre-existing IEPs or 504 plans will be implemented immediately. Our Learning Partnership Teams (general education teachers & families) will be joined by one of our certified Special Education teachers and our Head of School (year 1) or Dean of Curriculum & Instruction (year 3

and onward) to form our IEP teams. IEP teams will hold a transition meeting within the first two weeks following enrollment to ensure IEP implementation and clear communication.

### **MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS:**

Our approach to multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) follows guidance from the GaDOE. Any students that do not have pre-existing IEP or 504 plans but are below grade level and in our bottom 30% in each grade in ELA, math, or behavior will be considered for additional supports through the following MTSS steps:

- 1) Select and Administer Screener:** Between Family Welcome Visits and student orientation, our teachers will conduct F&P assessments, math screeners, and GKIDS readiness checklist (K only) as universal screeners. Data from screeners, will be input directly into our student information system (SIS).
- 2) Use Data Management System for Storage and Access:** We will utilize Infinite Campus to ensure that our data can be seamlessly integrated into state systems. Data from screeners, academic interventions, and behavior interventions will be input directly into our SIS, so no data transfer is necessary.
- 3) Validate and Interpret Results of Universal Screener:** Through our SIS, grade-level teams will review visual reports of data in monthly MTSS meetings to determine cut scores for intervention groups. Leadership and grade-level teams will also review behavior data weekly, looking for students with patterns of behavior challenges each week.
- 4) Use Multiple Data Points to Verify Risk:** In the monthly MTSS meetings, grade-level teams will use additional data points (e.g. progress monitoring assessments) to determine if multiple data points confirm needs for supports. For behavioral supports, teams will review historic data to confirm trends or areas that require additional data collection to understand triggers and antecedents.
- 5) Use Data to Group Students and Determine Area of Need:** For students that are confirmed as needing interventions at each level through the process above, grade-level teams will make homogenous, appropriately sized groups for interventions.

**6) Determine the Intervention to Address the Area of Need and Implement with Fidelity:** For each group identified, grade-level teams will design appropriate interventions and data collection strategies. Interventions could include phonics, math fluency, reflection space protocol for student de-escalation, etc.

Grade-level teams, under supervision from school leadership, will select evidence-based resources for interventions, such as spiral review lessons in Foundations or Eureka, or from sources such as the National Center on Intensive Intervention. Examples may include letter-sound isolation for students struggling with phonics or working with modeling and manipulatives for students struggling with place value concepts. Data collection strategies for interventions will be integrated into our SIS weekly and reviewed in monthly MTSS meetings.

**7) Progress Monitoring to Determine the Effectiveness of Curriculum, the Instruction, and the Intervention:** During the year, F&P, NWEA MAP, and ELA/math unit assessment data will be utilized to collect feedback on changes needed in the scopes and sequences, lesson plans, and/or instructional practices when more than 80% of students do not master concepts. Behavioral data will be reviewed on a monthly basis to understand if positive behavior intervention systems are working for at least 80% of students on a month-to-month basis.

**8) Use Progress Monitoring Data to Determine Next Steps:** Additional data collected from intervention/assessment data trackers will determine if students need continued, more intensive, or less intensive interventions. In monthly grade-level MTSS meetings, we will review data to determine if students need additional interventions (moving from Tier 2 to Tier 3), are showing that they no longer need as many interventions through improved data (moving from Tier 2 to Tier 1 or moving from Tier 3 to Tier 2), or are showing they should stay in the same intervention.

**9) Special Education Evaluation:** For students moving to Tier 3 that do not show progress, we will make a recommendation to move to Special Education evaluation. Under GaDOE SBOE 160-4-7.09-6, we will communicate the recommendation for evaluation to parent/guardians for them to consent to or decline testing, by meeting with families to share the recommendation and providing sending a parental

consent to evaluation (PCE) ~~form home~~. If the parent/guardian declines evaluation, the student will remain in Tier 3 MTSS supports. Special Education evaluations will be conducted by ~~a licensed psychologist through a contracted vendor (see Exhibit 22a, line 88 for Budget)~~ DeKalb County School District. Additionally, at any point that the school suspects a disability, we will refer for an evaluation and parents can request evaluation at any time by requesting and signing a PCE. The initial evaluation must include at least two measures of cognitive intelligence and intelligence-based testing. Students will be tested in all areas of suspected disability. After an evaluation, the results will be shared with the parent/guardian and the Head of School (year 1) or Dean of Curriculum & Instruction (year 3).

**10) Develop IEP and 504 Plans:** The IEP team for the student (Head of School/Dean of Curriculum & Instruction, classroom teacher, Special Education teacher, DCSD educational psychologist, and parents/guardians) will meet to review the evaluation results, MTSS data, and other evidence to determine eligibility for services and develop an IEP or 504 plan. To be eligible for special education services, students must qualify as a student with a disability in one of the 13 categories listed in the IDEA. Once a student is determined eligible for special education services, the team will meet to create an IEP within 30 days. The IEP must include present levels, goals that are written with input from classroom data and the child's teacher(s), special educator(s), external evaluation results, the family, transition plan to services, Behavior Improvement Plan (BIP – as needed), and any related services. After IEP/504 creation, all modifications and accommodations will be implemented (see Special Education Programming below).

#### **PROGRAMMING, ASSESSMENTS, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & TRAINING**

Based on area schools, 12% of DeKalb Brilliance Academy students are projected to receive special education services. Any student with an IEP or 504 plan will receive all appropriate services through Special Education-certified staff, DCSD services, and contracted vendors when needed (see Exhibit 22a, in Budget see line 43 for Special Education staffing and line 88 for special education contracted services for anything required above district-provided services in Budget). We will serve students on the full



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continuum of services required by mild, moderate, and severe disabilities. Students will be served through the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible, beginning with push-in services whenever appropriate for student needs (for example, a Special Educator providing instruction in the same lesson/classroom setting as general education program). To ensure integration of special education into the general education programming, teachers will plan together during common planning sessions.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will hire sufficient Special Education-certified teachers to ensure a continuum of services aligned to any accommodations and modifications outlined in each students' IEP or 504 plans. Our contracted service provider will provide specialized services such as speech or occupational therapy, as well as technical assistance to train our staff on any specialized modifications or accommodations defined in students' IEPs or 504 plans (see Exhibit 22a, line 88 for special education contracted services in Budget). For assessments, our leadership team and Special Education teachers will follow the guidance of GaDOE SBOE 160-4-7-.06 to ensure accommodations and modifications for each student are provided in accordance with the IEP or 504 plans. For Georgia Milestones State Assessment System, students will either engage in the GMAS with appropriate accommodations (in accordance with GaDOE guidance) or will engage in the Georgia Milestones Alternative Assessment.

Progress monitoring on IEP goals will be included in DeKalb Brilliance Academy's Data-driven Instruction approach and be reviewed in monthly grade-level meetings. IEPs, 504 plans, and related services will be reviewed by the team every year and re-evaluated every three years at a minimum. Families or staff can request an IEP review at any time.

## **FACILITY**

In our planning year, our Head of School and Dean of Operations will ensure that any site that is finalized for the school can accommodate facility needs to support students with disabilities, such as ramps,

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elevators, and/or ADA restrooms. Beginning in year 1, the Dean of Operations will collaborate with the Office Assistant to ensure all facility needs are addressed upon receiving a student enrollment packet.

## **STUDENT DISCIPLINE**

Any student with an IEP or 504 plan will go through the same processes outlined according to our discipline policy, which will be shared with parents/guardians and students upon enrollment and reviewed at Family Orientation. As a school focusing on social-emotional learning, we will implement logical consequences and limit suspensions as much as possible. Expulsions will only occur in cases of state or federal mandates involving weapons and illegal substances. In cases where a student with an IEP or 504 plan has a long-term suspension (more than 10 days at once or cumulatively throughout the year), our school will follow the manifestation meeting protocols outlined in the IDEA law. A team of family members, teacher, special educator, Head of School and any other involved staff will convene for the manifestation hearing. The team will analyze antecedents, perceived motives, reactions, and outcomes of the behavior resulting in the disciplinary infractions, to determine the answers to two questions: “Was the behavior caused by or directly and substantially related to the child's disability? Was the behavior a direct result of the school's failure to implement the child's IEP?” If the behavior was a result of the student’s disability or the school’s failure to implement the IEP, no further disciplinary actions may be taken.

Additionally, if the behavior is a result of the student’s disability or the school’s failure to implement the IEP, the school will review the student’s Behavior Intervention Plan and/or conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment to determine the function of the student’s behavior and revisit the interventions in place.

## **DISPUTES**

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will make every effort to resolve any concerns from families through IEP team meetings to review quantitative and qualitative data and family and educator perspectives to make

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the best decision for our students. In any case where families remain unsatisfied, they can engage in our grievance policy (will be outlined in our student/family handbook and reviewed at Family Orientation):

- 1) Submit complaint in writing (mail or email) to the Head of School.
- 2) Head of School will respond to complainant with confirmation of receipt and explanation of grievance process and timeline (which will include notifying families of their rights to engage in due process or file a complaint with the SBOE), launch investigation and response, and inform the complainant of all actions taken within five business days. The Head of School will also alert the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for informational purposes at this stage.
- 3) If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may escalate to the Chair of the Board of Directors by submitting written notice to the Chair within 10 business days of receiving the communication on actions from the Head of School.
- 4) The Chair of the Board will convene a board committee (typically Governance Committee and any other board members needed for specialized expertise) to investigate, make a determination, and share the decision with the complainant within 10 business days. All decisions will also be shared with the entire board in writing for informational purposes.
- 5) The decision is typically final, however if the committee cannot come to a decision, the committee will convene the entire board to investigate the matter, come to a decision, and share the final decision with the complainant.
- 6) If the complainant is unsatisfied with the Board's decisions, he/she may appeal to the State Board of Education in accordance with O.C.G.A 20-2-1160.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will meet all requirements outlined in the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to protect the privacy and rights of students and families. Staff will receive training on FERPA requirements in summer training each year, and all Special Education records will be kept in a

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locked cabinet that is only accessible to the Head of School and Dean of Curriculum & Instruction, who will be participate in GaDOE student records and confidentiality training.

7. For English Learners (ELs), describe how the charter school will provide state- and federally-mandated services. Reciting the requirements of law and rule is insufficient. Please include in your description any diagnostic methods or instruments that will be used to identify and assess those students, as well as the instructional program that will be provided to ELs.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will identify students learning English and deliver programming to ensure student success in accordance with GaDOE SBOE Rule 160-4-6-.02. Based on our targeted physical location of 30032 or 30034, we anticipate a 2% ELL population, but have budgeted for more students requiring evaluations since our attendance zone encompasses all of DeKalb County and Atlanta Public Schools (see Exhibit 22a, line 88 for contracted services in Budget). We have constructed a school model and staffing plan to support our community of students that includes:

- **Extended time for comprehensive literacy instruction:** We will prioritize 140 minutes in our schedule each day to ensure we can teach all the elements students need to be successful in literacy: reading foundations (including phonics and phonemic awareness), guided reading, reading comprehension, independent reading, and writing.
- **Two-teachers for small group instruction:** During literacy, we will utilize a three station-rotation model with two-teachers, allowing for leveled student groupings for guided reading, reading foundations (such as phonics and phonemic awareness) - each with a specific teacher - and a third group of students that independently reads or edits their writing.
- **Literacy across content areas:** Teachers will ensure that students speak and write with evidence grounded in text, utilize Habits of Discussion strategies to have rigorous discussions, learn academic language, and practice writing in every single subject, such as in the Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI) component of our math block where students will describe their solution strategies to their peers using academic vocabulary and precision.

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER IDENTIFICATION**

For all families that indicate a language other than English is spoken in the home on the home language survey, students will be assessed using the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 to determine English language proficiency levels in the domains of speaking, listening, reading and writing within two weeks of enrollment. DeKalb Brilliance Academy will utilize qualified staff or funds allocated to external evaluation vendor to conduct assessments (see Exhibit 22a, line 88 for contracted services in Budget).

### **ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAMMING**

The results of the assessment and the programming plan will be communicated with families in their preferred language, as indicated on the home language survey. If a student is identified as ELL, they will be provided with Sheltered English Immersion instruction – Sheltered Content Instruction and/or Direct ESL instruction depending on the ACCESS data. This instruction will be provided during our 70-minute literacy rotations model (see Question 2).

### **PROGRESS MONITORING**

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will utilize the WIDA suite to monitor progress and adjust appropriate instruction, accommodations, and modifications to ensure student progress. Students will be exited from the ELL program when indicated by ACCESS exam scores or general education assessments indicate language proficiency. Upon exiting the ELL program, students will be monitored with ACCESS for two years, and will be provided services again if regression is measured.

For assessments, our leadership team will ensure accommodations and modifications for each student. For Georgia Milestones State Assessment System, students will either engage in the GMAS with appropriate accommodations (in accordance with GaDOE guidance such as use of assistive device) or will engage in

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the Georgia Milestones Alternative Assessment. Additionally, through our Data-driven Instruction practices, we will analyze data by subgroup, to ensure that our ELL students are growing at a rate that is at least as much as general education students.

8. Describe the methods, strategies, and/or programs the charter school will use to provide remediation for students at risk for academic failure.

Daily, weekly, interim, and summative assessments will give us the information we need to adapt our teaching strategies, curriculum, and project-based learning to meet our students' goals.

- **Daily:** Teachers will assess student outcomes from independent student work daily to adjust lessons for the next day.
- **Weekly:** As outlined in Question 37 and Exhibit 31, teachers will have weekly coaching, professional development, and collaborative student work meetings to analyze progress toward goals and adjust lesson plans, assessments, and teaching strategies in areas where students are not reaching goals.
- **Monthly:** The Head of School, Dean of Curriculum & Instruction, and teachers will analyze data immediately following interim, MAP, and F&P assessments to inform full-class and small-group re-teaching strategies to ensure student mastery of targeted GSE standards. Data will be analyzed holistically, by subgroup, and by individual student to ensure all learners are making progress towards our academic goals. MTSS meetings will also occur monthly. Lastly, the Head of School will report on academic outcomes monthly to the Board's Academic Committee, and to the full Board of Directors as part of the monthly performance dashboard.
- **Annually:** The Head of School and Dean of Curriculum & Instruction will lead analysis of data from the GMAS, MAP, and Entrepreneurial PBL in post-planning and summer planning, to evaluate need for changes to curriculum, teacher coaching, and professional development. We will bring in external experts to provide professional development in areas of need identified through this data analysis. If our goals are not met, the team will adjust our curriculum scopes &

sequences, internal unit assessments, and in areas where there are significant, continued gaps, examine if a new curriculum needs to be used in any area to ensure that our academic content is adequately preparing students for grade-level expectations on the GSE each year. The Board of Directors will use assessment data as a major indicator in the evaluation, coaching, and contract renewal decisions for the Head of School, and will also use the data to make sure the budget prioritizes appropriate resources in areas where the school is not meeting its goals. In the cases where the goals are not met, the Board will prioritize additional supports for the school leader, including external training and coaching. If academic goals are consistently not met, the board will have serious discussion about if the Head of School is the right leader for the school and make any necessary changes.

## ASSESSMENT METHODS

9. Explain how the school will obtain individual student baseline achievement data, continue monitoring growth, and use that data to continuously inform and improve instruction (including formative assessments).

**ASSESSMENT SYSTEM:** We will utilize Infinite Campus (student information system) to input data from assessments and interventions, ensuring our data can be seamlessly integrated into district systems.

**OBTAINING STUDENT BASELINE DATA:** Once a child has enrolled in our school, our Office Assistant will search Infinite Campus to pull previous data such as support plans (IEP and 504) to ensure we are prepared to support every student. We will also implement universal screeners (described below).

**ASSESSMENT TYPES** (see Exhibit 22a, lines 58 and 65 for Budget; Exhibit 33 Assessment Summary):

**Universal screeners:** During Family Welcome Visits in the summer or in a child's first week at the school, teachers will conduct universal screener assessments [F&P (K-8), math screener (1<sup>st</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade only) and GKIDS readiness checklist (K only)].

**Progress monitoring assessments:** Based on our universal screeners, our teachers will create Learning Partnership Plans with families (see Exhibit 34) in the first month of school and meet with families at least three times/year to share progress on those goals, included, but not limited to:

- NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP): K-8 nationally normed, adaptive, GSE-aligned assessment in math and reading three times/year. MAP learning continuum resources will be used to inform small group instruction, as well as Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).
- Fountas & Pinnell (F&P) Reading Assessment: K-8 one-on-one reading assessment that measures fluency, accuracy, phonemic awareness, and reading comprehension every 6-8 weeks. F&P data provides reading levels we will use to plan small group literacy rotations.
- Interim Assessments: K-8, internally-created, common unit assessments (based on curriculum-embedded unit assessments) to assess student mastery of GSE standards covered in specific units in humanities (ELA + social studies), math, and science every 4-6 weeks. We will analyze data immediately following interim assessments to inform full-class and small-group strategies for reteaching content not yet mastered.
- Formative assessments: K-8 daily independent student work in humanities, math, and science to assess the learning objectives of each lesson. Teachers will analyze data to inform re-teaching strategies for the next day. Teacher teams will analyze common student work examples once/week in our Collaborative Student Work Analysis meetings.

**Summative assessments:** We will analyze data from the GMAS, MAP, and Entrepreneurial PBL annually to adjust our curriculum scopes & sequences, and internal unit assessments to ensure our academic content is adequately preparing students for grade-level expectations on the GSE each year.

- Georgia Milestones Assessment: all students in grades 3-8 will participate in the GMAS assessments (math 3-8, ELA 3-8, science 5/8, and social studies 5/8) once/year.
- Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning Celebrations of Learning: Teachers will utilize teacher-created rubrics to give students criteria for success, for student self-reflection, and for teacher



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feedback to students at the end of each semester as a culmination of our Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning units (see Exhibit 10 for example rubric).

10. Explain how the charter school will work with the local school system to participate in statewide assessments.

**ENSURING ASSESSMENT PARTICIPATION:** DeKalb Brilliance Academy is committed to ensuring that all 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade students participate in the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (ELA & mathematics for grades 3-8, as well as social studies and science for grades 5 and 8) and that all Kindergarten students participate in the GKIDS assessment. Additionally, we will administer NWEA MAP to better understand student growth, in alignment with DeKalb County School District assessment administration. Our Dean of Operations will attend all district trainings for assessments and manage our assessment preparation and implementation. The Head of School (and subsequently the Dean of Curriculum) will supervise test administration to ensure that all procedures and protocols are followed.

**COMMUNICATING IMPORTANCE OF STATE ASSESSMENTS:** DeKalb Brilliance Academy will communicate the importance of assessments to understand student progress toward college and careers. Through our process of collaborative conferences, families, teachers, and students will meet three times each year to set goals and monitor progress, including sharing unit assessment, F&P, and NWEA MAP results and the alignment to students being on track to meet GSE expectations measured in GMAS. Teachers will also call families at least once/month to update families on student progress. We will communicate the importance of state testing in our family orientation and family-teacher conferences, including strategies for test success such as review materials, and important testing day reminders for how families can support their children.

## **ACADEMIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

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11. Locally approved charter schools are required to exceed both the state and local district’s CCRPI averages and to Beat the Odds. (For more information on these two measures, please go here [CCRPI and BTO.](#)) In addition to these measures, what goals will the school use to hold itself academically accountable?

- Indicate the expected rate of student performance growth in each year of the proposed charter term that demonstrates the rigor expected from charter schools. Each year of student growth will be measured against the baseline data obtained during the first year of the charter term.
- You are urged to include cohort measures that show the progress over time of a single cohort of students.
- You are also urged to include national norm-referenced test results among your performance measures (e.g., NWEA’s MAP and/or ITBS).
- At a minimum, goals should be (1) aligned with Georgia Standards of Excellent (the SBOE-approved curriculum standards); (2) measurable on at least an annual basis; (3) attainable; and (4) reflective of the mission set forth in the petition. Schools should consider goals regarding student growth including low-performing or educationally disadvantaged populations.
- Each year a charter school operates, it is expected to out-perform the state and the district.

State CCRPI			District CCRPI			Projected CCRPI				
Elem.	Middle	High	Elem.	Middle	High	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
77.1	72.1	77.0	71.9	67.2	68.7	78	80	82	84	86

	Assessment	Year 1 Baseline	Year 2 Target	Year 3 Target	Year 4 Target	Year 5 Target
<b>Academic Goal #1: Students at DeKalb Brilliance Academy will demonstrate proficiency in Literacy.</b>						
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>By May of each school year, at least 85% of students will demonstrate three levels of growth each year as measured by the Fountas &amp; Pinnell Literacy Assessment.</i>	Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Assessment	At least 85% of students grow at least three levels				
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>By May of each school year, all students will demonstrate a growth of 5 percentage points per year until the average score exceeds 85% as measured by the NWEA MAP Assessment ELA growth measure.</i>	NWEA MAP ELA Assessment	Baseline established in year 1	+5 percentage points			
<b>Measure 3:</b> <i>At least 70% of all students who have attended DeKalb Brilliance Academy for two or more years will score in the top two levels in mathematics on the Georgia Milestones Assessment, increasing by 2% each year as measured the ELA Georgia Milestones Assessment.</i>	Georgia Milestones ELA Assessment	N/A	70 %	72%	74%	76%
<b>Academic Goal #2: Students at DeKalb Brilliance Academy will demonstrate proficiency in math.</b>						

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	Assessment	Year 1 Baseline	Year 2 Target	Year 3 Target	Year 4 Target	Year 5 Target
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>By May of each school year, all students will demonstrate a growth of 5 percentage points per year until the average score exceeds 85% as measured by the NWEA MAP Assessment math growth measure.</i>	NWEA MAP Math Assessment	Baseline established in year 1	+5 percentage points			
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>At least 70% of all students who have attended DeKalb Brilliance Academy for two or more years will score in the top two levels in mathematics on the Georgia Milestones Assessment, increasing by 2% each year as measured the math Georgia Milestones Assessment.</i>	Georgia Milestones Math Assessment	Baseline established in year 1	70%	72%	74%	76%
<b>Academic Goal #3: Students at DeKalb Brilliance Academy will demonstrate growth across all content areas.</b>						
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>By May of each school year, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will increase its overall CCRPI score by at least 4% of the gap between 100 and its previous year overall CCRPI score in each grade band (elementary and middle).</i>	CCRPI Overall Score	Baseline established in year 1	+4% of gap between 100 and previous year overall CCRPI			
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>By May of each school year, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will increase its CCRPI Progress Score in each grade band by at least 10% of the gap between 100 and its previous year CCRPI Progress Score in each grade band (elementary and middle).</i>	CCRPI Progress Score	Baseline established in year 1	+10% of gap between 100 and previous year CCRPI Progress Score			
<b>Measure 3:</b> <i>By July of each year, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will have a positive 'Beat the Odds' score.</i>	Beat the Odds Score	Positive Beat the Odds Score				

## SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

12. Describe the governing board's composition. Your description should:
- Identify each member of the governing board;\*
  - Identify the skill sets to be represented by the governing board (e.g., business, finance, legal);
  - Explain how board members are representative of the school and the community, and how parents and community members will be involved in the governing board;
  - Describe your plans to ensure that the charter school maintains a diverse board (in all respects) with broad skill sets;
  - Describe how and when board members will be selected, and how long each member will serve (and attach as **Exhibit 2**);
  - Explain how and why board members may be removed from office;
  - If the board utilizes a subcommittee structure, describe this structure and identify the subcommittees; and
  - Describe how current and future governing board members will avoid conflicts of interests (and attach as **Exhibits 3 and 4**).

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**COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD:** DeKalb Brilliance Academy’s board is an experienced, diverse board with professional experience across the fields of education, law, finance, commercial real estate, marketing, fundraising, and community development. Our board includes individuals that lead significant organizations in DeKalb County and Metro Atlanta, have managed multi-million-dollar budgets and \$2 billion in real estate assets, have served for a Superior Court judge, have founded highly-successful charter schools, and have managed significant education, youth development, and community engagement organizations. Of the board of seven people, four identify as female and three identity as male, five identify as African American and two identify as White, and the board ranges from early 30s to late 50s in age.

ROLE	DESCRIPTION OF SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE
<b>Jocelyn Alter (Lead Founder/ Proposed Head of School &amp; ex officio member of board)</b>	Ms. Alter began her career in education teaching pre-K in a high school (supporting both pre-K students and their parents enrolled in the high school), to ensure parenting students could reach their college and career goals. In this role, she observed issues of inequity and wanted to resolve those issues systemically. She went on to serve in senior roles at the NYC Department of Education, including as Chief of Staff for the Division of Academics, Performance, and Support. After moving to Atlanta to be closer to family, Ms. Alter began coaching district leaders at TNTP, and later joined The Kindezi Schools as the Chief Academic Officer where she managed three school principals and the central teams supporting instruction, education support services, and social-emotional learning. Inspired by the strength of the communities of South DeKalb and South Atlanta and wanting to build more school options that reflect that strength, Ms. Alter began exploring the possibility of creating a school that harnessed community collaboration to prepare students for leadership. Most recently, she joined the highly-competitive dual Fellowship with BES and GCSA to found DeKalb Brilliance Academy. She holds a BA in Art and Dance from SUNY Brockport, an MPA from New York University, and has completed Relay Graduate School of Education’s Principal Supervisor Academy Fellowship.
<b>Caitlin Fitzsimons (Board Member/ Governance Committee)</b>	Caitlin FitzSimons believes that education gives people choice and that all people deserve the agency to make decisions on their behalf. Ms. FitzSimons currently serves as the Senior Director of Marketing at OneGoal, a national nonprofit organization working to close the postsecondary degree divide. In her six years at OneGoal, she has developed and executed fundraising strategies and helps lead the organization’s marketing and communications strategy. Committed to her community, Ms. FitzSimons has coached junior high and high school basketball, has served on the St. Louis-based Wyman Center board, served as a mentor with Chicago-based Horizons for Youth, and actively volunteers with her church community. She holds a BS in Marketing from the University of Alabama and an MBA from Washington University.
<b>Brian Howell (Secretary/ Finance Committee)</b>	Brian Howell is an Atlanta native, and a commercial real estate leader with a commitment to serving his community. He has served in multiple board roles, including on the High Museum of Art Young Professional Board, NAIOP Developing Leader's Forum, and was past president of Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta’s young professional group. Mr. Howell currently serves as Senior Vice President at Foundry Commercial where his primary focus is marketing and leasing office properties. Previously, he was at Stream Realty Partners where he represented three million square feet of primarily Class A office, executed 250 leases - totaling 1.8M SF with an aggregate gross rent of \$94M. In 2016, Mr. Howell was Stream Atlanta’s top producer and was a multiple recipient of the Costar Power Broker award. He has also served on the asset management teams of both Rosemont Realty and Columbia Property Trust. Mr. Howell is pursuing his MPS in Real Estate from Georgetown University and holds his BS in Business Management from Georgia Institute of Technology.

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<p><b>Courtney Jackson</b> (<b>Board Member/Chair of Governance Committee</b>)</p>	<p>With over 10 years of legal experience, Courtney Jackson is a proven trial attorney with a passion for public service. She is a native of DeKalb County and supports budding future litigators as a Georgia High School Mock Trial evaluator. Ms. Jackson currently works as a staff attorney for the Superior Courts of Georgia, providing legal advice and counsel to a Superior Court Judge and court personnel. Previously, Ms. Jackson was a Senior Assistant Solicitor-General in Henry County where she embraced number of roles including training newly-licensed attorneys and serving as liaison to school social workers to reduce truancy. Ms. Jackson holds a BS in Environmental Science from Spelman College and a JD from Tulane University Law School.</p>
<p><b>Nedra Jones</b> (<b>Board Member/Finance Committee</b>)</p>	<p>Nedra Jones is an experienced financial leader with a passion for community involvement. She currently serves as the Chief Financial Officer for the YMCA of Metropolitan Atlanta, where she has been promoted through the roles of Controller and Vice President of Finance and Risk since she first joined the organization in 2010. During her 20+ year career, Ms. Jones has held various accounting and finance leadership positions for Fortune 500 companies and non-profit organizations including: Deloitte &amp; Touche, First Data Corporation, AT&amp;T, Black Entertainment Television (BET), and Clark Atlanta University. Ms. Jones holds her CPA designation and earned her BA in Accounting from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (A&amp;T). She previously served on the Advisory Board of the Cam Newton Foundation and the Board of Directors of It's the Journey, Inc., and is a 2013 graduate of Leadership DeKalb.</p>
<p><b>Chawn Payton</b> (<b>Treasurer/Chair of Finance Committee</b>)</p>	<p>Chawn Payton serves his community by providing financial literacy and creating generational wealth through comprehensive financial planning. Currently he does so through the financial planning practice he leads at Northwestern Mutual, as well as serving on the Finance Committee on the board of Zion Baptist Academy. Previously, he served as a management consultant for Accenture, where he was responsible for business process and technology implementation for a variety of large banks headquartered along the east coast. Mr. Payton was born and raised in Valdosta, GA, and graduated with a Computer Engineering degree from Florida A&amp;M University.</p>
<p><b>Brandon Riley</b> (<b>President/Chair of Governance Committee Academic Committee</b>)</p>	<p>A native and current resident of South DeKalb, Brandon Riley has been dedicated to leading youth development programs since college. He is currently the Operations Manager for the City of Stonecrest Parks and Recreation. Previously, he served in roles at the Boys &amp; Girls Club of Metro Atlanta organization for seven years, including as the Executive Director of the East DeKalb Boys &amp; Girls Club, where he increased average daily attendance by 64 percent in three years by engaging in extensive community engagement, collaboration with community organizations, and creating programming that matched what families wanted for their children. Mr. Riley holds his M.S. in Sports Administration from Georgia State University, holds his B.S. in Biology from Alcorn State University, is a former collegiate baseball player, and is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.</p>
<p><b>Aja Settles</b> (<b>Vice Chair/Chair of Academic Committee</b>)</p>	<p>Working in education for fifteen years, Ms. Settles has had diverse experiences as a teacher, curriculum writer, assistant principal, school leader, and school leader coach. She currently serves as the Dean of Relay Graduate School of Education's Texas Leadership Program, where she works with school and system leaders across Texas to improve their instructional leadership practices. Prior to joining Relay, Ms. Settles was an Instructional Leadership Director at the KIPP Foundation, supporting leaders in over 200 schools. Ms. Settles worked at Uncommon Schools where she founded North Star Academy's second elementary school in Newark, NJ. She is the co-author of <i>Great Habits, Great Readers: A Practical Guide for K-4 Reading in Light of the Common Core</i> and is featured in <i>Leverage Leadership: A Practical Guide for Building Exceptional Schools</i>. Ms. Settles received her MA in Educational Leadership from Columbia University and her Primary Literacy Coordinator certification from Lesley University.</p>

**PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNING BOARD:** In addition to the four board members connected to DeKalb County currently serving on the board, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will utilize and advisory structure, in which three separate advisory councils for staff, students, and families, will each have monthly advisory council meetings, as well as each have a non-voting

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representative at each full board meeting to participate in discussion of board matters and decisions (see Exhibit 35 for current Community Advisory Board).

**LENGTH OF BOARD SERVICE:** Founding board members will serve initial one, two, or three-year terms (additionally eligible for a three-year second term) to ensure strategic succession for the founding board. Founding board members will be able to serve up to two terms. Subsequently, new board members will serve terms of three years, and up to two terms (see Exhibit 2 for By-laws).

**SELECTION OF NEW BOARD MEMBERS:** The Governance Committee will be responsible for the recruitment, selection and recommendation of new board members.

PROCESS STEP	DESCRIPTION
<b>Sourcing Candidates</b>	The Governance Committee will determine areas of need based on board goals and succession planning. Candidates will be sourced from professional networks (e.g. GCSEA), LinkedIn, and professional referrals from current board members. In order to maintain the diversity of our board, we will set goals for our recruitment pool for board members to ensure that our pool of candidates is reflective of our community.
<b>Resume Review</b>	The Governance Committee will review candidate resumes and/or LinkedIn profiles for experience in targeted fields, indicators of successful leadership, progressive responsibility, and indications of commitment to volunteer or service work.
<b>Phone Interview</b>	The Governance Committee will have phone interviews with all candidates to assess interest, mission fit, and review detailed board requirements (up to two two-year terms, at least 6 hours/month of service, and an annual financial contribution). At this stage, the Governance Committee will also conduct a thorough online search to flag any issues in candidate background or potential conflicts of interest.
<b>In-person Meeting</b>	Candidates selected to move to the next stage will meet with members of the Governance Committee in person to review school model in detail, and further assess mission alignment and contributions to board service.
<b>Recommendation to Full Board</b>	The Governance Committee will recommend candidates to the full board for approval. Two-thirds of the board must vote in favor of a candidate for them to be offered a position on the board.
<b>Offer and Onboarding</b>	We will extend a formal offer to new board members, including a Board Member agreement which will detail all board member responsibilities and commitments that new members will have to sign prior to joining. New members will go through our onboarding training, state-required new board member training, and serve on a trial basis for the first sixty days.

**REMOVAL OF BOARD MEMBERS:** Board members who fail to uphold their duties in agreement with our founding board agreement, By-laws, or who act in a manner that prevents the school from achieving its mission will be removed by a majority vote. Board members may resign at any time by

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filing a written resignation with the Chair. The resignation may take effect on that date or at any later time specified in the notice.

**BOARD STRUCTURE:** The DeKalb Brilliance Academy Board of Directors will ensure we achieve our mission for our school through strategic planning and progress monitoring, alignment of assets to priorities, protecting financial assets, ensuring legal and ethical integrity, selecting and evaluating the Head of School, and advocating for the School’s mission and goals to garner support from community. As a board of 7-13 members, the board will utilize a subcommittee structure that will report to the full board monthly to ensure these duties.

**OFFICERS/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:** Our board will have four officers that make up our Executive Committee – Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Board Chair is the senior volunteer leader who oversees implementation of board and school policies and ensures that appropriate administrative practices are established and maintained. The Vice Chair is the secondary volunteer leader and performs the duties as required in the Chair’s absence. The Treasurer provides direction for the financial oversight responsibilities. Lastly, the Secretary provides direction for the keeping of legal documents including minutes of all Board meetings.

**GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE:** chaired by the Chair, drives continuous improvement of the Board:

- Identifying, selecting, and recommending candidates for Board membership (see Question 25).
- Investigating any potential conflict of interest and making a recommendation to the Board for resolution.
- Planning Board education related to governance roles and responsibilities including new member orientation, Board retreats, and ensuring that all Board members meet Georgia training requirements.

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- The Board Chair will conduct an annual evaluation of the Board and individual Directors, including each Director's self-assessment and report a summary to the Governance Committee and full board.
- Hearing grievance complaints, conducting investigations, and presenting findings to full Board.

**ACADEMIC COMMITTEE:** The Academic Committee will ensure that all Board members know and measure progress to the charter commitments:

- Defining clear measures and monitoring progress toward goals outlined in charter contract, including working with school leadership to set annual goals to be discussed and approved by the full Board.
- Working with school leadership to share with the Board monthly and annual successes, barriers to reaching goals, and strategies to overcome these barriers.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE:** chaired by the Treasurer, is responsible for ensuring organizational financial health:

- Reviewing and recommending to the Board for approval, an annual budget for the school, as well as a three-year financial forecast, in collaboration with the Head of School, Dean of Operations, and back-office provider.
- Reviewing and presenting monthly financial statements to the Board.
- Arranging for an annual audit and submitting to the Board.
- Reviewing grant proposals when required by funders.
- Reviewing all non-budgeted expenditures over a 10% variance of budget to actuals.



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**ADVISORY COUNCILS:** student, family, and staff advisory councils will have representation at governing board meetings to ensure we can continually learn from our community. The board appoints one representative from each to serve on the Board in a non-voting advisory capacity for a one-year term.

**AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:** The Governance Committee will ensure that all board members follow the conflicts of interest policy per the state laws (O.C.G.A.20-2-2065(b)(5) and O.C.G.A20-2-63). Potential conflicts of interest are carefully vetted for as part of the board selection process. All board members have signed the Conflict of Interest form that discloses any potential conflicts. The Governance Committee will ensure that all members complete this form at the start of each fiscal year to capture any changes in conflicts of interest. If any conflict of interest is disclosed or discovered, that board member will recuse her/himself from any votes or board activities where the conflict of interest would be present. In cases where the conflict of interest impairs the operation of the school or the ability to achieve our mission, removal from the board would be considered (as outlined above).

13. Describe the governing board's functions, duties, and role in each of the following areas:
  - Curriculum and school operations (including policies, legal compliance);
  - Establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals;
  - Personnel decisions (primarily school leader selection, evaluation, and termination); and
  - Budget (including fundraising and resource allocation).

The DeKalb Brilliance Academy Board will be responsible for our school achieving our mission and the academic, financial, and organizational success of the school through:

**LEADERSHIP:** The board will select, hire, support, and evaluate the Head of School. The board will conduct mid-year and end-of-year evaluations of the Head of School using the Leader Keys Evaluation System (LKES) rubric and process. At least two board members will be certified in LKES to ensure

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fidelity of this process. The board will not evaluate other staff. The Head of School will report to board committees and the monthly full board meeting through monthly financial documents, academic progress monitoring dashboard, and overall school goal progress dashboard.

**GOALS:** The Head of School will suggest annual goals aligned to the charter contract, which the board will review and approve each year. The board will also approve the monthly dashboard format, which will summarize progress toward school goals across major indicators such as academic outcomes, student attendance, staff performance, family engagement, etc.

**BUDGET:** The Board of Directors approves the budget, ensures the annual audit, approves monthly financials, and establishes fiscal policies. As part of the board, the Finance Committee, which is chaired by the Board Treasurer, works closely with management to ensure strong fiscal planning, close review of all financial documents, and presents to the full board for review monthly. The Finance Committee also provides financial counsel regarding major financial decisions by the board, including board votes on any contracts over \$5,000. In January each year, the Head of School will set priorities for the upcoming year and work with the CFO to draft a proposed budget. The proposed budget is reviewed by the Finance Committee for feedback. After Finance Committee feedback is complete, the budget is presented to the full board for discussion and feedback, as well as in two public hearings for community feedback, before being brought to the full board for vote. Please see Question 20 for additional details.

**POLICIES:** The Board establishes governance, financial, and school policies, including, but not limited to board policies, the staff handbook, and the student/family handbook. Policies will be reviewed and voted on for approval annually.

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**LEGAL COMPLIANCE:** The board complies with all legal requirements and training through establishing board policies, which will be monitored by the Governance Committee, chaired by the Board Chair. The board will be informed of and closely involved in any actual or pending litigation.

**OVERSIGHT OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION:** As outlined in “Leadership” above, the board will select, hire, support, and evaluate the Head of School. The Head of School will hire all other staff. All staff will receive a mid-year and end-of-year evaluation (using the appropriate evaluation tool such as TKES for teachers). The Head of School will post available positions, review applications, interview, and coordinate hiring. The Head of School is charged with monitoring the day-to-day implementation of our school model through management and coaching of staff.

**FUNDRAISING:**

The governing board establishes annual fundraising goals for the board. As part of these efforts, each board member will give an annual gift that is meaningful to their ability to give. Board members will also identify individual and corporate donors in their networks to support fundraising goals. The Head of School will identify grants that are aligned to school priorities, and lead applications, in collaboration with fundraising experts on the board.

14. Describe how current and future governing board members will comply with open meetings and records laws.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy acknowledges the board shall be subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 et seq. and 50-18-70 et seq. regarding open and public meetings and inspection of public records.

**OPEN AND PUBLIC MEETINGS:** O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 et seq. The DeKalb Brilliance Academy Board of Directors will meet monthly and post the annual schedule of meetings on the school website and

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in a highly-visible location in the front office and other areas frequented by our school community. Any changes to the schedule would be published in the same locations at least two weeks in advance, as well as advertised on the school's social media profiles. All meeting locations will be announced in advance and held in publicly-accessible locations. Meeting agendas will be available at least one week in advance on the school's website. The board will provide clear signage, seating, and agendas for any members of the community that want to attend the meeting. Additionally, 16 minutes will be provided for open comment at the beginning of each meeting (2 minutes per speaker, in the order that they have signed into the meeting attendance sheet). Meeting minutes will be posted on our website upon approval (from the previous month's meeting). In the event of an executive session (due to personnel matters, negotiations including real estate, or threatened or potential litigation), the board will motion in the open meeting to go into executive session and state the general reason, which will be reflected in the minutes. Meeting minutes will be recorded for Executive Sessions but will not be made public. Committee meetings will be held to the same open meetings standards as general board meetings for location accessibility, notice, and meeting minutes. Special meetings held outside of regularly-scheduled board meetings will be announced at least 24 hours in advance through the county's legal notice publications, school website, and school social media.

**PUBLIC RECORDS:** In accordance with O.C.G.A. §§ 50-18-70 et seq., DeKalb Brilliance Academy will comply with all open records requests, while following FERPA guidelines to ensure student and family privacy (either redacting or excluding records that contain private information, in accordance with FERPA). Open records requests will be directed to our Dean of Operations, who will collect appropriate records and submit to Head of School to check for accuracy and completeness, before delivering to the person making the request. All open records requests will be processed within three business days of receipt of request. If the records exist, but are not immediately available, the Dean of Operation's response will include a description of the records and a timetable for their release.

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15. How will the board comply with board training requirements? Include in this plan areas of focus that are specific to the board and school. Attach as **Exhibit 5** a copy of the board's Governance Training Plan.

To ensure compliance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2072 and SBOE Rule 160-4-9-.06, the DeKalb Brilliance Academy board will contract for high-quality charter school governance training as soon as possible upon approval of the petition and will report such training to the DeKalb County School District. The DeKalb Brilliance Academy founding team has had initial conversations with the Georgia Charter Schools Association as a contractor to provide training. The Governing Board will contract training specifically covering: Governance, Personnel, Strategic Planning, Board Ethics, Board and Community Engagement, Budgeting, Financial Oversight, Evaluating and Supporting Head of School, and Effective Board Meetings. All training sessions will be conducted by a State Board of Education approved training provider. Inclusive of our annual whole board governance team training of 3 hours, our training requirements will be 15 hours for new board members (all in year one), and 9 hours for veteran board members. In addition to the required three hours of training on Fiscal Responsibilities of Board Members; Risk, Internal Controls and Audits; Federal Funds; Financial Reporting and Fund Accounting; and Budgeting training required for new charter school governing board members in the planning year, the DeKalb Brilliance Academy Governing Board will engage in an additional 3+ hours of finance training during the planning year focused on QBE funding formulas and disbursement, provided by a State Board of Education training provider. Please see Exhibit 5 for our board governance training plan.

16. How will the charter school's governing board work collaboratively with the local school district and Board of Education?

The DeKalb Brilliance Academy proposed Board and Head of School are committed to collaborating with the local board of education. We have extended the invitation to meet with all DeKalb County School Board members, met with several DeKalb County School Board members, and attended trainings with staff from the DeKalb County School District Office of Innovation.

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As a school, we would like to collaborate with district high schools through our high school placement program and collaborate with local schools on teacher training, student projects, and Celebrations of Learning. DeKalb Brilliance Academy has begun this work by building relationships with the 3DE program in DeKalb County, with early childhood providers, and with local charters such as International Community School and The Museum School.

Additionally, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will produce an annual report, which will be communicated directly to staff, families, and appropriate district staff via email and made available to the general public via our website. The annual report will contain in accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-2067.1-(C)(1)-(6):

- Progress toward goals as outlined in the charter.
  - Academic data for the previous year (including state academic accountability data such as standardized test scores and adequate yearly progress).
  - Unaudited financial statements for the fiscal year ending on June 30, provided that audited statements will be forwarded to the local and state board, upon completion.
  - Updated contact information for the school and the administrator.
  - List of current board members, financial supporters, and donors.
17. Describe what decisions the board will make and what decisions the school administration will make (and attach as **Exhibit 6** a Locally-Approved Charter School Partners Roles and Responsibilities chart which can be found on the GA DOE website). Describe how board members will stay out of daily management issues.

Please see Exhibit 6 for examples of how our school will divide the roles of governance versus management. At the highest level, DeKalb Brilliance Academy's board is responsible for oversight in pre-emptive policy creation and approval, financial oversight (including annual budget approval and monthly financial review), leader and school evaluation, and accountability to our charter goals (including monthly progress monitoring), as well as local, state, and federal laws, rules, and regulations. Our staff

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(management) is accountable for the overall management of the school and oversees day to day operations. This includes overseeing hiring processes, spearheading recruitment efforts, and overseeing the school’s academic programming. All aspects regarding people management, academic programming, and operational systems are managed by the school leader.

## ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS, PLANS, AND WAIVERS

18. Although standard organizational goals will be included in your charter contract (see charter contract template), please list and provide a detailed description of the charter school’s measurable goals reflecting where the school envisions itself organizationally at the end of its first charter term. Goals should include areas such as governing board training; student and teacher recruitment/retention; school climate; student discipline; and student, parent, and teacher satisfaction. Each year of growth will be measured against the baseline data obtained during the first year of the charter term.

	Assessment	Year 1 Baseline	Year 2 Target	Year 3 Target	Year 4 Target	Year 5 Target
<b>Organizational Goal #1:</b> <i>DeKalb Brilliance Academy demonstrates fiduciary and fiscal responsibility.</i>						
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>External, annual audit reports demonstrate that the school meets or exceeds professional accounting standards.</i>	% Audit compliance	100% compliance and no significant findings				
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>Budgets for each academic year demonstrate effective allocation of financial resources to ensure effective execution of mission as measure by yearly balanced budgets.</i>	Annual budget	Balanced, mission-aligned budget. Monthly cash flow statements demonstrating fiscal health.				
<b>Measure 3:</b> <i>Each year, DeKalb Brilliance Academy earns at least a four-star financial efficiency rating.</i>	Financial Efficiency Rating	4 star rating, or higher				
<b>Organizational Goal #2:</b> <i>DeKalb Brilliance Academy has high levels of enrollment, attendance, and re-enrollment.</i>						
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>DeKalb Brilliance Academy is at least 95% fully enrolled by Fall FTE count each year.</i>	Fall FTE enrollment count	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>DeKalb Brilliance Academy averages 95%+ daily attendance.</i>	% daily attendance	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%
<b>Measure 3:</b> <i>90% of students completing the school year re-enroll the following year.</i>	% student re-enrollment	90%	90%	90%	90%	90%
<b>Organizational Goal #3:</b> <i>DeKalb Brilliance Academy will promote a positive school experience that engages students, parents, and teachers.</i>						
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>Each year, DeKalb Brilliance Academy earns at least a four-star climate rating.</i>	Climate Star Rating	4 star rating, or higher				

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	Assessment	Year 1 Baseline	Year 2 Target	Year 3 Target	Year 4 Target	Year 5 Target
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>Family satisfaction with school, as measured by annual survey, on average exceeds 85% with a minimum of 75% of families responding.</i>	Family survey	85% agree in survey they would recommend the school to another family				
<b>Measure 3:</b> <i>Staff satisfaction with school, as measured by annual survey, on average exceeds 85% with a minimum of 85% of staff responding.</i>	Staff survey	85% agree in survey they would recommend the school to another teacher				
<b>Measure 4:</b> <i>Each academic year 85% of students will indicate that they enjoy coming to school as measured by an annual student survey.</i>	Student Survey	85%	85%	85%	85%	85%
<b>Organizational Goal #4:</b> <i>Board of Directors provides effective school oversight for DeKalb Brilliance Academy.</i>						
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>Board conducts formal annual review of school leader.</i>	School leader review	Completed leader evaluation compliant with all LKES process requirements				
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>Board conducts annual self-evaluation to assess strengths and areas for improvement.</i>	Annual board self-evaluation	Completed board self-evaluation aligned to goals and responsibilities				
<b>Measure 3:</b> <i>Board conducts formal annual review of By-laws, board policies, and school policies</i>	Annual review and published policy documents	Completed annual review, policy updates, and published on school website				
<b>Measure 4:</b> <i>By January 1st, 100% of the DeKalb Brilliance Academy Governing Board members will receive 9-15 hours of Georgia-approved board training each year of the charter term as measured by board training documentation.</i>	Board training documentation	100% documented to complete 9-15 hours of Georgia-approved training				

19. Describe any organizational innovations that will be implemented during the proposed charter term.
- Why are these innovations appropriate for this unique school?
  - Explain how these innovations will increase organizational effectiveness.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will utilize broad flexibility from law, rule, and regulations as allowable in O.C.G.A §20-2-2065(a). We acknowledge we cannot waive the provisions outlined in O.C.G.A. §20-2-2065(b), and further, would not waive any provisions that would prevent our ability to comply with the Georgia Department of Education’s accountability system or that would prevent our compliance with federal law or regulations, or prevent our ability to receive state or local funds. Examples of how we would utilize these waivers to increase student achievement and exceed the goals outlined in the charter contract include but are not limited to:



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- **O.C.G.A. § 20-2-155:** we will utilize flexibility from the rule on school climate management program to ensure our school's core values and climate management are aligned with our communities' demand for a school that provides the social-emotional skills students need to be successful leaders.
- **O.C.G.A. §20-2-151, O.C.G.A. §20-2-160(a), O.C.G.A. §20-2-168(c), O.C.G.A. §20-2-221:** we will utilize flexibility from the rules on school day and school year for students and employees to implement our extended day model, early release for professional development, and extended year for increased teacher development and student learning.
- **O.C.G.A. §20-2-184 and O.C.G.A. §20-2-171:** we will utilize flexibility from the rule on media specialists to reprioritize funds to build robust classroom libraries and fund our two-teacher literacy model to accelerate student growth in our literacy goals.
- **O.C.G.A. §20-2-1010:** we will utilize flexibility from instructional material requirements to implement our rigorous academic model, such as our multidisciplinary humanities units and Cognitively Guided Instruction in mathematics to build student critical thinking skills and increase student achievement.
- **O.C.G.A. §20-2-211 and O.C.G.A. §20-2-940:** we will utilize flexibility from rules about teacher selection, hiring, and termination to ensure that we have the highest-quality teachers prepared to lead our innovative model and grow their practice rapidly through coaching and professional development.

## **FISCAL FEASIBILITY AND CONTROLS**

**Please note that the base per-pupil funding amount identified in the locally-approved budget template included in your Charter Application Packet will be included in your charter contract. Your local school system's approval of the base per-pupil funding in your budget is based upon the school system's good-faith estimate of the base per-pupil amount at which it will fund the charter school as long as the school system receives the state and local revenues upon which the approved school budget is based.**

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20. Will the charter school utilize the local school board for fiscal management or other services? If yes, describe the level of autonomy the school will have over budgets and expenditures and/or any other area(s) for which the school has contracted with the local board to provide services.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will have complete autonomy over the budget and expenditures. The Board of Directors will be responsible for establishing fiscal policies, approving the annual budget, ensuring an annual external audit (as well as ensuring staff response to any findings), and approving monthly financials. The Board will exercise financial oversight through the external, contracted Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Candy Yu, provided through our back-office provider Avolon Accounting. Our CFO will report directly to the board. In addition to the CFO and the Head of School, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will hire a Dean of Operations, who will be responsible for HR functions, administrative duties (including supplies inventory and purchasing), vendor agreements, and logistics. As part of the board, the Finance Committee, which is chaired by the Board Treasurer, works closely with management to ensure strong fiscal planning, close review of all financial documents, and present to the full board for review monthly. The Finance Committee also provides financial counsel regarding major financial decisions by the board, including board votes on any contracts over \$25,000. Chawn Payton will serve as the DeKalb Brilliance Board Treasurer. He has 10 years of finance experience, and will be supported by our Finance Committee, which brings an additional 20 years of finance experience (including CPA experience), and experience managing over \$2 billion in real estate assets.

On an annual basis, the Head of School sets priorities for the upcoming year and works with the CFO to draft a proposed budget. The proposed budget is reviewed by the Finance Committee for feedback. After Finance Committee feedback is complete, the budget is presented to the full board for discussion and feedback, as well as in two public hearings for community feedback, before being brought to the full board for vote.

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On a monthly basis, staff (Head of School and Dean of Operations) will work directly with the CFO to develop monthly budget and financial statements, to present for review to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will present for the approval of the board at large. The CFO, with oversight from the governing board's Finance Committee and support from the Head of School, will be responsible for ensuring compliance with generally accepted accounting principles, state and federal regulations, and charter school rules. We will utilize back-office software accounting system to support transparency and complying with generally accepted accounting principles.

21. Identify the school's chief financial officer (CFO). Describe a résumé illustrating how the CFO's credentials comply with SBOE Rule 160-4-9-.05 (and attach as **Exhibit 23**).

Candy Yu is the founder and president of Avolon Accounting & Charter CFO Services (AABS LLC).

Over the past 22 years she has built extensive experience from bookkeeping through a multibillion corporation assistant controller. Ms. Yu, who holds a degree in accounting, was voted into the Top 3 of the Chamber of Commerce's 2014 Top Young Professionals. She has a proven track record of implementing successful financial and accounting solutions in charter schools throughout Georgia.

Avolon is now the number one accounting firm among Georgia charters and has over 30 charters in Georgia in their portfolio. They have successfully turned around four high-risk charters to be back in compliance and successfully transitioned another four charters from national management companies to in-house operations. Over the past 9 years, Ms. Yu has been recognized for transforming charter schools through her comprehensive, personalized high-quality back office support & CFO model. She holds the GA Charter Schools Financial Management Certification and has taught charter school budget and petition budget courses on behalf of the Georgia Charter Schools Association, and at the Alabama, South Carolina, and GCSA charter conferences and independent charter school symposium.

22. Describe how the school will fund planning and start-up operations prior to receiving state and local funding, including legal setup, facility identification, initial staffing, etc.

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The majority of our start-up operation funding is guaranteed by BES (see Exhibit 18, Partnership Agreements), which will provide \$325,000 from the Walton Family Foundation in start-up funding upon authorization.

In addition to our board's commitment to annual giving, as evidenced by 100% of board members participating in their commitment to give \$5,800 by June 2020 (see Exhibit 18, Partnership Agreements), the board will utilize DeKalb Brilliance Academy's nonprofit status to apply for federal, state, and local grants supporting charter school launch and entrepreneurship initiatives, including the Federal Charter School Program planning grant and the Charter School Growth Fund grants.

23. Describe the school's plans for securing other sources of funding, including funding from individuals, corporations, foundations, or any other source.

Our fundraising strategy will include pursuing gifts from board members, corporations, individuals, foundations, and other philanthropic groups.

- **Year 0 (through June 30, 2020):** All board members will make a meaningful personal financial contribution. The Head of School, with support from the board as needed, will compile (1) a list of foundation and corporate grants that support charter startups and entrepreneurial programs for future application and (2) a list of corporations and philanthropic groups that could provide future in-kind donations (uniforms, project-based learning supplies, computers, etc.).
- **Year 1/Building Year (2020-2021):** A fundraising strategy that consists of board, foundation, corporate, and individual gifts will be put in place and executed. This plan will include 100% board participation, an annual individual giving campaign, a grant application calendar, multiple fundraising events (Gala, Fun Run, etc.), corporate and community sponsorships, and in-kind donations.

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- **Operating Years (2021 and beyond):** The Board and Head of School will adjust the fundraising strategy from Year 1 as needed to ensure financial stability and meet the school needs.

24. The appropriate segregation of duties is often a problem when starting a charter school due to limited personnel. Describe the steps the school will take to ensure the appropriate segregation of duties to establish proper internal controls, including compliance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2074 which states that the CFO cannot also serve as CEO or in any other position at the school.

As a public school, it is critical to ensure segregation of duties to protect against human error, and in the worst case, to protect against acts that endanger the financial health of the school such as theft.

Segregation of duties provide critical checks and balance for any organization. Our segregation of duties policy will be clearly outlined in our fiscal policy and manual for staff that the board will review and approve annually. Our segregation of duties separates approval, accounting, and signatory functions by individuals:

- Office Assistant will take in bills and invoices and ensure delivery to our Dean of Operations.
- Dean of Operations will submit to back-office provider to record, code, and input into a chart of accounts.
- Back-office provider will check invoices against contracts and budgets (as well as work with staff to resolve any questions) and prepare checks, including operating payroll twice each month.
- Dean of Operations will bring all checks ready for signature to Head of School. Head of School will review bills/invoices prior to signing checks. Checks above \$5,000 will require an additional signature from Board Treasurer (with exceptions for approved recurring expenses, such as rent or payroll).
- Dean of Operations will maintain copies of all documents within our office for reference in annual audit.

Monthly, the CFO and back-office provider (supported by our Dean of Operations and Head of School) will prepare financial statements including budget-actuals, cashflow, and three-month projections. Any

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budget-actual variance over 10% will require an explanation from management. The Finance Committee will review these statements and supporting documents monthly in the Finance Committee meeting, and then report out to the full board in the monthly board meeting.

Annually, our board will review, provide feedback, and approve our budget and fiscal policies. Candy Yu, who serves as our CFO, will work with our Dean of Operations and Head of School to provide all documentation required in our annual, external audit, as well as respond to any findings and/or recommend any policy changes in response to findings from the audit.

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

25. Although standard financial goals will be included in your charter contract (see charter contract template), please list and provide a detailed description of the charter school’s measurable goals reflecting where the school envisions itself financially at the end of the initial charter term. Goals should emphasize fiscal health and sustainability. Each year of growth will be measured against the baseline data obtained during the first year of the charter term.

	Assessment	Year 1 Baseline	Year 2 Target	Year 3 Target	Year 4 Target	Year 5 Target
<b>Financial Goal #1:</b> <i>The school will continuously cover short-term financial obligations.</i>						
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>The school’s working capital ratio (current assets/current liabilities) will be greater than 1.</i>	Balance sheet	1.05 Assets to Liabilities				
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>The school will maintain at least 45 days’ worth of cash on hand.</i>	Monthly cash flow projection	At least 45 days cash on hand				
<b>Measure 3:</b> <i>The school’s enrollment variance will not be greater than 8%.</i>	Enrollment on first of each month	154+ students enrolled	231+ students enrolled	283+ students enrolled	335+ students enrolled	386+ students enrolled
<b>Financial Goal #2:</b> <i>The school will cover long term obligations and control cost.</i>						
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>The school’s debt-to-asset ratio will be less than 95%.</i>	Annual audit	Debt-to-asset ratio < 95%				
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>The school will increase cash on hand at the end of each year.</i>	Annual audit	\$75,000	\$100,000	\$125,000	\$150,000	\$175,000
<b>Measure 3:</b> <i>The school will be cash positive each month.</i>	Monthly financials	Positive cash balance				
<b>Financial Goal #3:</b> <i>The school will build the capital needed to buy a permanent site.</i>						
<b>Measure 1:</b> <i>The school will set an annual fundraising goal to reach the 5-year target.</i>	Annual audit	\$30,000	\$40,000	\$50,000	\$75,000	\$100,000
<b>Measure 2:</b> <i>The school will add new individual donors each year.</i>	Donor list	25	50	75	100	125

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	Assessment	Year 1 Baseline	Year 2 Target	Year 3 Target	Year 4 Target	Year 5 Target
<b>Measure 3:</b> <i>The school will add surplus funds to a school purchase account at the end of each year.</i>	Annual audit	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$30,000	\$35,000	\$40,000

26. Describe any financial innovations that will be implemented during the proposed charter term.
- Why are these innovations appropriate for this unique school?
  - Explain how these innovations will increase financial effectiveness.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will utilize broad flexibility from law, rule, and regulations as allowable in O.C.G.A §20-2-2065(a). We acknowledge we cannot waive the provisions outlined in O.C.G.A. §20-2-2065(b), and further, would not waive any provisions that would prevent our ability to comply with the Georgia Department of Education’s accountability system or that would prevent our compliance with federal law or regulations, or prevent our ability to receive state or local funds. Examples of how we would utilize these waivers to increase student achievement and exceed the goals outlined in the charter contract include but are not limited to the following. To allow the majority of our funds to be spent on student-facing roles, we will employ a back-office provider, janitorial, and transportation contracts rather than creating FTE positions for those services. By utilizing external services, we ensure that we are getting specialized supports for these areas of organizational effectiveness, knowing that a different staff member at these firms would have expertise in accounting best practices as opposed to long-term budget forecasting and strategic planning. We will allocate the funds this flexibility provides to implement a strong academic model, including employing more teacher FTEs as Reading Specialists to ensure our success in the two-teacher literacy model, and employing our Family & Community Collaboration Facilitator to support our middle school students in the highest-quality high school placements possible and maintaining relationships with our community experts for our Entrepreneurial Project-based Learning. Lastly, our team will focus significantly on staff development, with 24 days of professional development each year – 2-3 times the amount of surrounding school districts. Our organizational innovations will allow significantly more staff members, staff time, and administrative task to be focused on successfully implementing our rigorous academics and entrepreneurship focus to set our students up

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for success as leaders across many professional fields. To successfully implement these innovations, we would utilize flexibility from the requirements in O.C.G.A. §§ 20-2-167 and 20-2-86 which outline the expenditure requirements of Quality Based Education funds to allow us to apply any excess money from these funds to the following year, and use those funds to improve DeKalb Brilliance Academy’s program. As we implement a slow-growth model, expanding our program over the duration of the charter, reinvesting these funds into DeKalb Brilliance Academy and aligning them with other grant and private funding will allow us to drive student achievement. The requested waiver is consistent with the intent of the law to efficiently manage the Quality Based Education Funds.

## SCHOOL OPERATIONS

27. What is the charter school’s attendance zone?

DeKalb Brilliance Academy’s attendance zone will be all of DeKalb County and Atlanta Public Schools. Although we will have a broad attendance zone (DeKalb County and Atlanta Public Schools) to ensure an inclusive, diverse school, our community engagement has focused on a geographically contiguous area in Southeast Atlanta and Southwest DeKalb (30032, 30034, 30316, 30354), where our early community engagement indicated there was the most demand for new school options.

28. List the local schools that will feed into the charter school. Please also list the schools into which the charter school’s students will feed.

With a district-wide attendance zone, DeKalb Brilliance Academy projects to attract students from a wide range of elementary and middle schools across the county and would potentially feed into all the high schools in the County. Based on our community interest so far, the schools in APS and DCSD we are most likely to draw from are:

<a href="#"><u>Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Barack H. Obama Elementary Magnet School Of Technology</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Bob Mathis Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Burgess-Peterson Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Chapel Hill Elementary School</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Cedar Grove Middle School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Chapel Hill Middle School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Columbia Middle School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Long Middle School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>McNair Middle School</u></a>
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<p><a href="#"><u>Columbia Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Flat Shoals Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Humphries Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Kelley Lake Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Narvie Harris Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Oakview Elementary</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Peachcrest Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Rainbow Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Rockbridge Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Snapfinger Elementary School</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Toney Elementary School</u></a></p>	
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29. What are the racial and socioeconomic demographics for the school’s proposed attendance zone?

The proposed physical locations for our school are in 30034 located on Flat Shoals Parkway, which is highly accessible for both families traveling on I-20 and I-285, in addition to having surrounding population density to support the school. Our targeted zip codes for physical location (30032 and 30034), represent an estimated more than 95,000 residents, 84% of which are African American in 30032 and 82% of which are African American in 30034. Compared to DeKalb County in general, where 42% of people over the age of 25 have a bachelor’s degree, that rate is only 25% in 30034 and only 20% in 30032. In 30034, 17% of people live in poverty. In 30032, that is nearly a third of the zip code, with 27% of people living in poverty.<sup>34</sup> Lastly, Atlanta is currently ranked as the worst city in America for income mobility – the average household in the top 5% of earners make 11 times the city’s median income.<sup>35</sup> The impact of providing more high-quality choices for families in South DeKalb and South Atlanta will combat inequities not only in the communities we serve, but in our city at large.

We believe firmly that our next political, business, and creative leaders are currently students growing up in South DeKalb and South Atlanta. The 10-county Metro Atlanta area has a projected growth of 810,432

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<sup>34</sup> “Quick Facts, United States.” United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>.

<sup>35</sup> Foster, Sarah and Wei Lu. “Atlanta Ranks Worst in Income Inequality in the U.S.” *Bloomberg*, Bloomberg LP, 10 October 2018, [https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-10-10/atlanta-takes-top-income-inequality-spot-among-american-cities?utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_content=business&utm\\_source=twitter&utm\\_campaign=socialflow-organic&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-10-10/atlanta-takes-top-income-inequality-spot-among-american-cities?utm_medium=social&utm_content=business&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=socialflow-organic&cmpid=socialflow-twitter-business).

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jobs by 2040.<sup>36</sup> Notably, 108,210 of those new jobs will be in DeKalb County, with the most growth being in education, healthcare, and ‘professional and scientific’ careers.<sup>37</sup> Our students deserve to have access to these high-demand careers. At DeKalb Brilliance Academy, we know that having more than one in five students complete college will certainly improve the growing industries in our city and state.

30. Please check any of the following enrollment priorities pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1) that will apply to the school. Indicate in the rightmost column the rank order in which they will be applied. If the school will not utilize a particular enrollment priority, please insert “N/A” in the first and the last columns for that priority.

<b>Check any applicable enrollment priorities</b>	<b>O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1) Enrollment Priorities</b>	<b>Ranking</b>
X	A sibling of a student enrolled in the charter school.	1
N/A	A sibling of a student enrolled in another local school designated in the charter contract.	N/A
X	A student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the charter school or is a full-time teacher, professional, or other employee at the charter school.	2
N/A	Students matriculating from a local school designated in the charter contract.	N/A
N/A	Children who matriculate from a pre-kindergarten program which is associated with the school, including, but not limited to, programs which share common facilities or campuses with the school or programs which have established a partnership or cooperative efforts with the school.	N/A

31. Explain the rules and procedures that will govern student application and registration in the school. In your explanation:
- State whether the school will utilize a weighted lottery to provide an increased chance of admission for educationally disadvantaged students as defined in State Board Rule 160-4-9-.04(o) and pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1), State Board Rule 160-4-9-.05(2)(g), and Department guidance. If yes, indicate in the rightmost column the rank order in which they will be applied. If the school will NOT utilize a weighted lottery or a particular category, please insert “N/A” in the first and the last columns for that category.

<sup>36</sup> “One Page Summaries.” *The Atlanta Region’s Plan*, Atlanta Regions Plan. <https://www.atlantaregionsplan.org/population-employment-forecasts/>.

<sup>37</sup> “Forecast 2040.” *Neighborhood Nexus*, Neighborhood Nexus, <https://documents.atlantaregional.com/The-Atlanta-Region-s-Plan/pop-employment-forecasts/dekalb-forecast.pdf>.

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As a free, public charter school, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will admit any eligible child in our attendance zone. A child is eligible to attend if they live in DeKalb County or Atlanta Public Schools, if they are the age for our open grades, and if they apply to enroll.

**APPLICATION:** Our application (see Exhibit 7) will require applicants to provide an address to confirm they live in our attendance zone, as well as give the child’s name, date of birth, parent/guardian contact information, and eligibility for federal services such as WIC/SNAP/TANF (to allow us to implement our weighted lottery preference for Economically Disadvantaged students). Our application, deadline, and lottery date will be posted on our website and we will have extensive outreach efforts to distribute paper applications (see Question 33), including digital advertisements, mailing to families that previously expressed interest, and hosting information sessions with application completion support at recreation centers, daycare centers, churches, and libraries. We will conduct these outreach efforts in all targeted zip codes. The application window will be January 1 - ~~March 1~~ February 15 of each academic year. All applications received after this time will be put on the waitlist in the order received.

**ENROLLMENT PRIORITIES:** DeKalb Brilliance will use the enrollment priorities set forth in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1) and will give preference to applicants in the following order: (1) sibling of a student enrolled in the start-up charter school; and (2) student whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the charter school or is a fulltime teacher, professional, or other employee at the charter school.

**WEIGHTED LOTTERY:** In accordance with State Board Rule 160-4-9-.04(o) and pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1), State Board Rule 160-4-9-.05(2)(g), and Department guidance, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will implement a weighted lottery to give Economically Disadvantaged students a higher weight in our lottery. We have outlined a weight “up to 20” to allow us to assess the enrollment

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pool each year and set a weight that will allow us to reach our goal of our school representing the economic diversity of our neighborhood.

**LOTTERY:** If the number of applications received exceeds our available seats, we will hold a random lottery. Public notice will be given of date, time, and location of the lottery will be given electronically and posted in the school at least one month in advance, so all interested parties can attend if desired. In an open and transparent process, names will be drawn one by one; as each student is drawn, that student and applicant siblings are placed in their respective grade levels. After the general lottery is held, another random lottery will take place to select an ordered waiting list. Students are removed from the ordered waiting list if a student selected in the lottery fails to register or declines their invitation to enroll. The waiting list will only be in effect for one school year; students must reapply each year.

**NOTIFICATION:** Parents/guardians will be notified by mail of each child's admission status and will have 14 calendar days after the postmarked date on the notification to return a signed enrollment registration card for each child offered enrollment or signed waiting-list applicant card for wait-listed children. If no form is returned within 10 days, DeKalb Brilliance will make three attempts to contact the family via email and phone before the 14-day deadline. If no form has been returned by the two-week deadline, the child's admission space or waitlist order will be given to the next eligible candidate. DeKalb Brilliance Academy will hold multiple events to support enrollment form completion (see Question 33).

**REREGISTRATION AND REAPPLICATION:** The reregistration process will occur each year from January 1-February 1 for families currently enrolled in the school. We will communicate reregistration timeline and processes on our website, via email, physical letters home, via text message and in our monthly phone calls from teachers. For any families that do not reregister one week before our deadline, we will text and call two times, as well as remind them through normal school interactions (such as

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student drop off/pick up) prior to the deadline. However, we will not hold seats for currently enrolled students after the lottery has taken place.

<i>Check any applicable categories</i>	<b>O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1) Weighted Lottery Categories</b>	<b>Weight Given</b>
X	Economically disadvantaged students	Up to 20
N/A	Students with disabilities	N/A
N/A	Migrant students	N/A
N/A	Limited English proficient students	N/A
N/A	Neglected or delinquent students	N/A
N/A	Homeless students	N/A

32. Describe the steps the school will take to recruit students who are representative of the racial and socioeconomic diversity in the attendance zone for the charter school.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy is committed to our school representing our community. We named our proposed school DeKalb Brilliance Academy to reflect our commitment to the students, families, and leaders of the DeKalb community, and to the brilliance – the strengths, talents, and leadership each group brings to the work.

- **GOALS:** To ensure our school is reflective of our community, we will set and monitor goals for our application pool to be at least 80% African American, at least 70% eligible for free/reduced lunch, and at least 12% receiving special education services (grades 1-8 only), all of which are reflective of the communities in which we plan to physically locate the school.<sup>38</sup>
- **OUTREACH AND MARKETING:** Our outreach and marketing campaign has focused (and will continue to) on the geographically contiguous zip codes surrounding our school location – 30032, 30034, 30316, and 30354. These zip codes have a significant majority of African American residents (60%-91%), and we have been conscious about being reflective of the rich diversity in our community in everything from our marketing materials to the diversity in our

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<sup>38</sup> “Downloadable Data.” The Governor’s Office of Student Achievement. <https://gosa.georgia.gov/report-card-dashboards-data/downloadable-data>.

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founding team. Our enrollment plan (see Question 33) outlines key strategies that we will employ to ensure the racial and socioeconomic representation of our community, including collaborating with daycare centers, recreation centers, and public service providers to get to families where they already gather.

- **TRANSPORTATION:** We have intentionally prioritized transportation in our budget to be able to provide busing for those living in our immediate neighborhood and remove barriers for as many families in our community as possible.
- **WEIGHTED LOTTERY:** Our intentional choice to utilize a weighted lottery for students that qualify for WIC/SNAP/TANF, over students who do not qualify, is to ensure that our school reflects the socioeconomic diversity of the communities we serve.

33. How will the school maintain/increase its student enrollment during the charter term?

DeKalb Brilliance Academy recognizes that the success of our school is dependent on being fully enrolled. We will create ambitious goals to ensure our school is fully enrolled by July of 2021. Based on guidance from the Charter School Growth Fund's data on typical enrollment conversion rates, our school will set the following goals for the 2021-22 school year: for 168 students to attend, by July of 2021, at least 180 students need to be enrolled, from at least 340 student applications, and our outreach (mailing, social media ads, community events) needs to reach families representative of 27,000 children.

To achieve these ambitious goals, we will build a campaign across digital, in-person, and mail platforms that will take families from awareness to enrollment. In our planning year, we will take the following actions each quarter to ensure enrollment. The board will monitor our progress toward enrollment goals on a monthly basis in quarters 1 and 2, and on a weekly basis in quarters 3 and 4. Our efforts move from building awareness to targeting to applications to building a community. Through these efforts, those that have registered their children will feel connected to our staff and other families and be more likely to attend the DeKalb Brilliance Academy.

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QUARTER	GOALS	ACTIVITIES
<b>FY21 QUARTER 1</b> (July-September)	- At least 10,000 reached - At least 200 enrollment interest forms	- Facebook/Instagram: targeted ads for awareness - Digital ads: keywords + addresses within 5 miles of school - Email: monthly mailing list updates/spread the word requests - In-person: flyers and sessions at early childhood and recreation centers, attend fall fest community events
<b>FY21 QUARTER 2</b> (October-December)	- At least 20,000 reached - At least 400 enrollment interest forms	- Facebook/Instagram: targeted ads for awareness - Digital ads: retargeted + AdWords - Email: monthly mailing list updates/spread the word requests - Mail: direct mailers to target zip codes for awareness - In-person: flyers/sessions at early childhood and recreation centers, attend holiday community events, info sessions in all target zip codes
<b>FY21 QUARTER 3</b> (January-March)	- At least 27,000 reached - January-March: at least 100 applications each month; at least 340 applications by <del>end of March</del> <u>February 15</u>	- Facebook/Instagram: retargeted ads to build interest - Digital ads: retargeted + AdWords - Email: monthly mailing list updates/spread the word requests to mailing list and families that have already applied - Mail: direct mailers to accepted and waitlist - Call: enrollment & waitlist calls - In-person: flyers/sessions at early childhood and recreation centers, churches, hold info sessions in all target zip codes (on-site enrollment support at all events); events for families that have applied to learn more about the school - January 1- <u>February 15</u> : Application window <b>opens</b> - March 1: <del>Deadline for applications</del> <del>March 12</del> : Lottery
<b>FY21 QUARTER 4</b> (April-June)	- At least 90 registered	- Facebook/Instagram: targeted ads to those likely to enroll - Digital ads: retargeted + AdWords - Email: monthly mailing list updates/spread the word requests to mailing list and families that have already applied - Mail: direct mailers to accepted and waitlist - Call: enrollment & waitlist calls - In-person: flyer/sessions at early childhood and recreation centers, churches, hold info sessions in all target zip codes (on-site enrollment support at all events); events for families that have applied to learn more about the school
<b>FY22 QUARTER 1</b> (July-September)	- At least 180 registered	- Facebook/Instagram: targeted ads for grades with open seats - Digital ads: retargeted + AdWords for grades with open seats - Email: monthly mailing list updates/spread the word requests - Call: enrollment & waitlist calls - In-person: in addition to those listed below, family welcome events (playdate, picnic) and orientation; attend school fairs and 'back to school' events - July 5-23: Family Welcome Visits - July 17 & 24: Family Orientation - July 26: First Day of School

34. Briefly describe information regarding the program – e.g., PBIS – that your school will use. If you will not use PBIS, please explain why the program you have chosen was selected instead.

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Explicit social-emotional learning (SEL) supports academic achievement<sup>39</sup> and develops emotional intelligence (the ability to accurately identify his/her own and others' emotions).<sup>40</sup> With those skills, students can tackle challenging content, collaborate with their peers, and solidify the knowledge and skills they need to lead in whatever path they choose for their future. Our educators will develop students as leaders through:

**Affirming environment:** Students cannot learn in environments where they do not feel safe physically, emotionally, and socially<sup>41</sup> or in environments where they do not have attachments to adults.<sup>42,43</sup> DeKalb Brilliance Academy will ensure students' identities are affirmed in every part of the school environment. The pictures and quotes on our walls will not only connect to our core values, but also build rich representation of diverse leaders, families, and communities, that reflect students' identities and communicate to students that they deserve to be leaders across all fields.<sup>44</sup>

**Predictable routines:** At DeKalb Brilliance Academy expectations and consequences will be consistent across classrooms so students, teachers, and families always know what to expect. We will utilize strategies from Responsive Classroom to set our classroom expectations and how we will respond when those expectations are not met (for example, ranging from how a student sharpens a pencil to how he/she engages in discussion with a peer). Responsive Classroom is "a student-centered, social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline... comprised of a set of research, and evidence-based practices designed to create safe, joyful, and engaging classroom and school communities for both

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<sup>39</sup> Taylor, Rebecca et al. "Promoting Positive Youth Development Through School-Based Social and Emotional Learning Interventions: A Meta-Analysis of Follow-Up Effects" *Child Development*, 88, 4, Aug 2017, 1156–1171. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/cdev.12864/full>.

<sup>40</sup> "Measuring the Return on Character." *Harvard Business Review*, Apr 2015, 20-21. <https://hbr.org/archive-toc/BR1504>.

<sup>41</sup> Hammond, Zaretta. "Your Brain on Culture." *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*, Corwin, 2015, 47.

<sup>42</sup> Stafford-Brizard, K. Brooke. "Building Blocks for Learning: A Framework for Comprehensive Student Development" Turnaround USA, 2016. <http://www.turnaroundusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Turnaround-for-Children-Building-Blocks-for-Learningx-2.pdf>.

<sup>43</sup> Hammond, Zaretta. "Your Brain on Culture." *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain: Promoting Authentic Engagement and Rigor Among Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students*, Corwin, 2015, 47.

<sup>44</sup> Martins, Nicole & Harrison, Kristen. "Racial and Gender Differences in the Relationship Between Children's Television Use and Self-Esteem: A Longitudinal Panel Study." *Communication Research - COMMUN RES*, 39, 2012, 338-357, 10.1177/0093650211401376.



students and teachers.”<sup>45</sup> Students will be able to easily take ownership over the day-to-day logistics of their school experience to build their independence and allow more time and energy to focus on learning.

**Values-driven community & explicit SEL instruction – Compass Model:** Our school will center around our core values from the Compass Model<sup>46</sup> -- Sharp Mind (curiosity & diversity), Noble Purpose (joy & identity), Big Heart (courage & kindness), Aligned Actions (determination & integrity) and True North (balance & presence). Students will learn explicit habits connected to the values in a morning meeting (“circle”) at the beginning of each day, and each academic lesson will contain an SEL learning objective tied to our core values. Classrooms will have a daily closing meeting focused on a core value, in which teachers will facilitate a discussion on how that core value presented in the classroom community that day.

**Positive behavior incentives – House System:** We will incentivize students to behave in a way that will be aligned to our core values through a “House System” (used by high-performing Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta).<sup>47</sup> Through the House System, students will be placed into “houses” (teams), earn points as a house, develop house pride, and celebrate reaching house goals. Lastly, we will celebrate student success aligned to the values publicly through our weekly schoolwide community meetings.

35. Briefly describe the rules and procedures concerning student discipline and expulsion, including code of conduct and due process procedures (and attach a copy of as **Exhibits 11 and 12**).

**STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT:** Our code of conduct will be included in our Student and Family Handbook (which will be distributed to families annually in their preferred home language) and will be consistent with the requirements of due process and with federal laws and regulations regarding students with disabilities. Our code of conduct will be aligned with the DeKalb County Code of Conduct to outline

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<sup>45</sup> “What is Responsive Classroom.” Responsive Classroom. “<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/>.”

<sup>46</sup> “Valor Compass.” Valor Collegiate. <https://valorcollegiate.org/the-valor-compass/>.”

<sup>47</sup> “Ron Clark Academy House System.” Ron Clark Academy. <https://www.rcahousesystem.com/>.

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the maximum consequences a student can receive for a behavior. However, because our school focuses on SEL, our school will implement logical consequences and limit consequences that separate students from our school community as much as possible. We will design a behavior matrix that outlines progressive discipline responses for specific behaviors and complies with all state and federal law. Our teachers will give feedback on the matrix during summer training and teachers will be empowered with tools to manage most behaviors in their classrooms. For example, when a student presents a behavior that is not in line with our core values, the teacher will first name what other students are doing well, then give private correction to the individual student (such as in a whisper), and finally invite a student to do a reflection and conference in the classroom.

**COMMUNITY INFRACTION:** Certain behaviors are not tolerated in our community to keep it safe for all learners. If a student commits one of these infractions, they will be immediately referred to the Head of School:

- Unsafe behaviors, such as hitting, kicking, or biting; targeted disrespect of another member in the learning community including threats, bullying, hazing or harassment of any kind; leaving class without permission.

Students who are referred for multiple infractions will be referred to our MTSS process to support students in reflecting on behavior, navigating emotional triggers, and SEL skill development.

**SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION** (10 days or less): Our school will limit suspensions as much as possible. If an infraction warrants a suspension and all the steps of the classroom progressive discipline model have been followed, the Head of School may use his/her discretion to issue a short-term suspension in alignment with the school code of conduct and behavior matrix. For example, students that get in a physical altercation with each other would be considered for short-term suspension. Upon return to

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school, the student will be returned to the community through a restorative conference with the child, family, and any involved parties.

**LONG-TERM SUSPENSION** (more than 10 days): Long-term suspensions will only be used in the most serious cases and will follow the same procedures outlined in short-term suspensions.

**EXPULSION:** DeKalb Brilliance will only expel students for those reasons legally required by Georgia law, in weapons or illegal substance cases.

**MANIFESTATION HEARINGS:** Please see Question 6 for description of discipline policies for students with IEP or 504 plans.

36. Briefly describe the rules and procedures concerning how the school will address grievances and complaints from students, parents, and teachers. Include the role the governing board will play in resolving such grievances and complaints (and attach a copy of as **Exhibit 13**).

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will make every effort possible to resolve any concerns through collaborative meetings to review data, consider student, family, and educator perspectives, and to make the best decision for our students. In any case where families remain unsatisfied, they can engage in our grievance policy (which will be outlined in our Student and Family Handbook):

- 1) Submit complaint in writing (mail or email) to the Head of School.
- 2) Head of School will respond to complainant with confirmation of receipt and explanation of grievance process and timeline (which will include notifying families of their rights to engage in due process or file a complaint with the SBOE, when appropriate), launch investigation and response, and inform the complainant of all actions taken within five business days. The Head of School will also alert the Executive Committee for informational purposes at this stage.
- 3) If the complainant remains dissatisfied, they may escalate to the Chairperson of the Board of

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Directors by submitting written notice to the Chairperson within 10 business days of receiving the communication on actions from the Head of School.

- 4) The Chairperson of the Board will convene a board committee (typically Governance Committee and any other board members needed for specialized expertise) to investigate, make a determination, and share the decision with the complainant within 10 business days. All decisions will also be shared with the entire board in writing for informational purposes.
- 5) The decision is typically final, however if the committee cannot come to a decision, the committee will convene the entire board to investigate the matter, come to a decision, and share the final decision with the complainant.
- 6) In the cases of families and students, if the complainant is unsatisfied with the Board's decisions, he/she may appeal to the State Board of Education in accordance with O.C.G.A 20-2-1160.

37. Briefly describe the school's employment procedures and policies (and attach a copy of as **Exhibit 14**).

All policies related to employment procedures and policies will be reviewed and approved by the board in our planning year. All staff will receive our staff policies in our Employee Handbook at the time they accept an offer of employment, and we will review important policies in our summer training.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION:** DeKalb Brilliance will hire the most qualified staff to benefit our students. We will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, national origin, or disability.

**HIRING:** To ensure our students have access to rigorous, relevant college-preparatory academics, as well as the social-emotional and entrepreneurial tools they need to be leaders, Dekalb Brilliance Academy will

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engage in a rigorous hiring process to source high-quality teaching candidates. Our process will be as follows (with an expedited version of this process for mid-year hires):

Step	Description
<b>Marketing</b>	We will utilize college partnerships, hiring fairs (such as GCSA), extensive online/social media advertising, and our existing networks (Spelman, Emory, University of Georgia, Kennesaw State, Clark Atlanta, Georgia Tech, Georgia State, TNTP, Relay, Teach for America, etc.) to create a robust pool of candidates submitting applications.
<b>Resume Review</b>	Our Head of School will review resumes for all submissions for education and previous experience to determine if candidates are qualified to move forward based on previous teaching training and/or experience.
<b>Teaching Video</b>	Qualified candidates will be invited to submit a video of their current teaching, with accompanying student work samples.
<b>Teaching Video Review</b>	Our Head of School will review the teaching video using the TKES rubric, to determine whether to move candidate forward (and if so, identify one strength and one area of growth).
<b>Phone Interview</b>	Our Head of School will conduct a phone interview with qualified candidates, to assess mission fit, candidate interest in our school model, and provide feedback from the teaching video. Candidates will be invited to record a second video incorporating feedback.
<b>Teaching Video II</b>	Candidates will submit a video incorporating the feedback from the phone interview. After the founding year, this will be a demo lesson at our school.
<b>In-Person Interview</b>	Candidates that move to the final stage will be offered an opportunity to have a final conversation to assess mutual fit and details of the role. Candidates will engage in several scenario/role play questions.
<b>Reference Check</b>	Our Dean of Operations will conduct 3 reference checks per candidate, including at least one immediate supervisor
<b>Offer</b>	Head of School will call to extend an offer to candidate, and our Dean of Operations will then send offer letter, contract, and benefits information to the candidate via DocuSign. All offers will be contingent on background checks.
<b>Background Check</b>	Our Dean of Operations will coordinate background checks and fingerprinting to ensure full clearance prior to any staff member's start date.

**SUPPORT:** Our teachers are essential to achieving our goals for students. We realize to succeed in increasingly-complex roles, teachers need a robust system of supports. At DeKalb Brilliance, we will support teachers through:

- **Summer professional development:** Our three-week summer professional development plan will give teachers the strategies and professional learning communities they need to implement our rigorous academics, SEL, and entrepreneurship. See Exhibit 31 for summer development schedule.
- **Materials:** Our teachers are provided research-based curricula, with proven student achievement results for everything they are asked to teach.
- **Collaborative planning:** Our teachers will have at least two hours of planning each day, and

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intentional structures for collaborative lesson planning and student work analysis. See Exhibit 9 for daily schedule.

- **Professional development:** Each Wednesday, we will release our students to our extended day program by 2 PM to allow for two hours of professional development on core teaching taxonomy skills,<sup>48</sup> building content expertise, and studying models from leading teacher practitioners, to grow their teaching. See Exhibit 31 for sample professional development schedule.
- **Instructional coaching:** Teachers will receive a weekly classroom observation and follow-up meeting from their instructional coach, grounded in the student outcomes utilizing Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's *Get Better Faster* evidence-based coaching trajectories.<sup>49</sup> See Exhibit 31 for coaching session agenda.

**EVALUATION:** Our teachers will all receive mid- and end-of-year evaluations using the TKES system. For any employees not covered under the TKES and LKES system, we will create a similar system of job competencies, self-reflection, and supervisor feedback at the mid- and end-of-year timeframes.

**TERMINATION/RESIGNATION:** Our employees will be at-will employees and either party may terminate the contract at any time, with or without cause. Resignations will require at least two-week's notice.

38. Briefly describe the school's insurance coverage, including the terms, conditions, and coverage amounts (and attach a copy of as **Exhibit 15**).

Insurance will be obtained in alignment with the GaDOE pre-opening checklist, the charter contract, and DeKalb County School District policies upon authorization. DeKalb Brilliance Academy has obtained a quote from Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. Insurance and Risk Management services (see Exhibit 15). The

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<sup>48</sup> Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Get Better Faster: A 90-day Plan for Developing New Teachers*, Jossey-Bass, 2016.

<sup>49</sup> Bambrick-Santoyo, Paul. *Get Better Faster: A 90-day Plan for Developing New Teachers*, Jossey-Bass, 2016.

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proposed quote includes terms, conditions and coverage amounts as indicated below. Coverage includes general liability/abuse, Directors & Officers, Employment Practices, Fiduciary, Property, Workers Compensation/Employers Liability, Auto, Employee Benefits, Educators E&O, Crime and Excess \$1-10 Million Limits. During the planning year, premiums are based upon projections of 0 students, 1.25 staff members, \$173,462 payroll, and \$0 contents. In year one, premiums are based upon 1st year projections of Premiums are based upon 2nd year projections of 168 students, 12.5 staff members, \$946,464 payroll, \$10,000 contents. In year two, premiums are based upon 2nd year projections of 252 students, 17.5 staff members, \$1,337,944 payroll, \$15,000 contents.

39. Briefly describe how the governing board has taken students' transportation needs into consideration. What transportation services will be provided for students?

Although it is not required for charter schools, DeKalb Brilliance Academy will provide a busing route to students that live within a specific radius of the school, for example further than one mile, but within five miles of the school, to ensure we can remove the barrier of transportation for as many students as possible. This decision to go beyond the way charter schools typically utilize car drop-off only, is based on community member feedback on the importance of providing transportation and cost recommendations from charter schools currently providing busing services. We have accounted for \$50,000 per bus (see Exhibit 22a, line 95 for Budget), which is the average current operating cost from multiple charters. ~~We will increase our budget for leasing a second bus in year four of the school's operation.~~ The buses will meet federal and state safety requirements and all vehicles will be covered by auto liability insurance included in our lease agreement. Vehicles will be inspected monthly by authorized service personnel and undergo required annual inspections by the Georgia Department of Safety.

## CONTRACTS WITH EDUCATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

40. Identify your ESP or charter partner(s) and explain how this arrangement will be in the best educational and financial interests of the charter school.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will not utilize an education service provider.

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41. Describe the decision-making process and due diligence exercised by the founding/governing board in choosing to contract with the ESP.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will not utilize an education service provider.

42. Briefly describe the range of services the ESP or charter partner will provide for the charter school.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will not utilize an education service provider.

43. Explain how the governing board will maintain its fiduciary responsibilities as a charter holder including monitoring and assessing the performance of the ESP or charter partner.

DeKalb Brilliance Academy will not utilize an education service provider.

44. Attach a copy of your signed ESP contract as **Exhibit 16**.

## **FACILITIES**

45. Describe the school facility that the charter school proposes to use. Include in your description:
- The location of the facility;
  - Whether the facility is new or existing; and
  - Whether the facility requires any renovations for utilizing the space for educational purposes. If yes, describe the extent of the renovations and the source of funding to pay for the renovations.

Both options for school location, 5455 Flat Shoals Parkway and 3412 Kelley Chapel Road, are former church schools located on Flat Shoals Parkway, making them highly accessible via I-20 and I-285. Both sit on large lots with multiple points of ingress and egress and significant room for parking, creating an efficient and safe flow of traffic for carpool lanes. The size of the lots will also allow for outdoor activities and temporary modular classrooms, if contingencies are needed.

Our primary option, 5455 Flat Shoals Parkway has (1) a two-story educational building with administrative offices, 28 classrooms, (2) a separate gymnasium building with additional classrooms, a library, and kitchen, and (3) a central building with a commercial kitchen and a cafeteria which can sit 200 people. For our primary option at 5455 Flat Shoals Parkway, we would engage in a graduated lease for years 1-3, with a purchase option in year 4 (see Exhibit 10 for facilities details, and Exhibit 4, line 129 for rental costs for years 1-3 and annual payment costs for purchase in years 4-5).



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Our secondary option, 3412 Kelley Chapel Road, is a separate building from Kelley Chapel United Methodist's sanctuary. It hosts a spacious gymnasium, on-site kitchen, and nine classrooms. This space could accommodate our growth for two years for core content, special education, and specials classrooms.

Both facilities have been former schools and have restroom facilities, classrooms, and multi-use spaces designed for student use. This will be much more cost effective than the conversion of an office building. Due to the age of the properties, both facilities options will require upgrades in painting, ceiling tiles, classroom equipment (e.g. dry erase boards), and multipurpose spaces (e.g. shelving or modular units to store student bookbags and jackets). There will likely be costs to ensure the property meets all applicable code and ADA requirements. Lastly, we understand that when acquiring facilities, unexpected costs may come up. As a result, we have budgeted a 5% contingency for these unforeseen costs (see Exhibit 22a, line 117 for contingency fund in Budget).

Our team has contracted with Colliers International, who has successfully secured facilities for dozens of Atlanta charter schools, to lead our facilities process. Colliers has already conducted site tours with the DeKalb Brilliance Academy team, term discussions with landlords and brokers, and reviewed DeKalb Brilliance Academy budgets and facility plans to ensure viability.

When our lease is in the stages of finalization, we will contact the DeKalb County School District before finalizing any agreements, conduct initial walkthroughs with the GaDOE, and contract with an inspector to conduct an environmental safety assessment and identify issues that require remediation. Once our lease is executed, an inspector will be brought on to walk through the facility noting any potential hazards. The environmental site assessment and risk hazard analysis will be completed by March 2021. The Risk/Hazard Analysis completed in accordance with the requirements of guideline for Risk Hazard Assessment of Educational Facility Sites will be completed by a registered, professional engineer licensed to do business in the State of Georgia and shall include the following information at a minimum:

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- Identification of each hazard.
- An evaluation of each hazard.
- Options for mitigating each identified hazard (if appropriate).
- A statement from the engineer based on his/her professional judgment and the findings of the Risk/Hazard Analysis regarding the suitability of the site for an educational facility.

Our Georgia-registered architect will use this information to produce construction documents. From there, we will bid out construction to general contractors. Our selected general contractor will then submit the applications for appropriate permits by March 2021 to complete construction on site. The general contractor will complete repairs/improvements identified in the safety assessments and inspections. Upon completion of renovations, we will contract with an inspector to ensure all inspections of the school are complete. Once the inspections are complete, we will submit our application and work with the GaDOE facilities unit to obtain a site code, no later than April 1, 2021. Next, we will launch any minor renovations that need to be completed and work on the safety plan in order to receive a school code before opening. After receiving a site code, the architect will submit as-built drawings in order to receive a school code by May 1, 2021. Following site approval, we will work with real estate agent and contractor to ensure we obtain certificate of occupancy and insurance.

46. Does the charter school have an MOU for the purchase or lease of the facility, pending charter and facility approval?

Yes, we have a MOU and it is provided as **Exhibit 19**.\*

No, we do not have a MOU.

*\*Note: The MOU should include the total proposed facility cost. It should also set forth any material terms that will be reflected in a lease, such as the lease term.*

47. Does the charter school have a lease for an approved facility?

Yes, we have a lease and it is provided as **Exhibit 19**.

No, we do not have a lease, but plan to submit one to the Department by December 1, 2020.

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48. Does the charter school have a Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the proposed facility?

Yes, we have a CO and it is provided as **Exhibit 20**.

No, we do not have a CO, but plan to submit one to the Department by May 1, 2021.\*

*\*Note: Schools must obtain a CO no later than 45 days before the start of the charter term on July 1.*

49. Does the charter school have an emergency safety plan pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185 for the proposed facility?

Yes, we have an emergency safety plan and it is provided as **Exhibit 21**.

No, we do not have an emergency safety plan, but plan to submit one to the Georgia Emergency Management Agency by May 1, 2021.\*

*\*Note: Schools must submit an emergency safety plan no later than 45 days before the start of the charter term on July 1.*