

**I. ;CHARTER SCHOOL/PETITIONER INFORMATION**

**Question 1-** Including the SBOE application, the petitioner should copy the following form as the first page of their charter petition:

**Charter School Name:** DeKalb PATH Academy

**Charter School Type:** Start-Up-Renewal (Start-Up, Conversion, Cluster, or Renewal)

Grade Levels Served: 5-8      Ages Served: 10-15

Proposed Opening/Renewal Day: July 1, 2015

Proposed Charter Term: 5 years

*The petition should be consistent with the DCSD policy that the charter will be issued for up to a five year period and renewal charters will be issued for up to five years, based on whether or not performance goals have been met as specified in the charter.*

Primary Contact:      Zelia Brown-Harvey  
 Phone:                    678-768-1308  
 Address:                 3007 Hermance Drive  
                                  Atlanta, GA 30319

Is this representative authorized to execute the charter contract?  Yes     No

If no, list the name and contact information for the authorized representative below:

Representative:      Suttiwan Cox  
 Phone:                    404-664-1007  
 Address:                 3007 Hermance Drive  
                                  Atlanta, GA 30319

The Petitioner should indicate all grade levels to be served each year during the charter term. For each year of the charter term, please indicate the maximum number of pupils the charter school plans to serve each school year.

<b>Year/Grade</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2015-2016</b>						<b>90</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>102</b>					<b>368</b>
<b>2016-2017</b>						<b>94</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>90</b>					<b>368</b>
<b>2017-2018</b>						<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>					<b>368</b>
<b>2018-2019</b>						<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>					<b>368</b>
<b>2019-2020</b>						<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>92</b>					<b>368</b>

The number of each grade level might be adjusted up or down due to circumstances such as retention, withdrawal, etc. But the total number will not exceed 368.

## II. MISSION STATEMENT & INNOVATION

**Question 2- What is the Charter School’s Mission? How does it support the legislative intent of the school’s program to “increase student achievement through academic and organizational innovation?”**

The mission of DeKalb PATH Academy is to create a safe and nurturing learning environment in which refugee, immigrant and local children from the Atlanta (DeKalb County), Brookhaven, Chamblee, Doraville, and Clarkston areas in DeKalb County, Georgia can develop the knowledge, skills, and character needed to succeed in top-quality high schools, colleges, and the competitive world beyond regardless of their socio-economic and linguistic barriers.

Our mission supports the legislative intent to increase student achievement through academic and organizational innovation by immersing students in an educational program that includes rigorous academics, high levels of instructional and socio-emotional support, school-wide character development, a strong and cohesive school culture with high parental involvement and support.

PATH has a 12-year track record of consistently fulfilling this mission. This is demonstrated by the continuous growth and achievement of our students despite the fact that the school serves a significantly higher population of English Learners (ELs) (28%-38%) than that of the DCSD (11%) and the state (5%) and higher population of disadvantaged students (85-98%) than that of DCSD (68%-75%) and the state (53%-60%).<sup>1</sup>

- Between 2003- 2011 DeKalb PATH Academy met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for 8 out of 9 years when AYP was required by the Georgia Department of Education.
- For the 2011- 2012 and 2012-2013 school years, when the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) replaced AYP, DeKalb PATH Academy’s overall CCRPI Scores were significantly higher than those of DCSD and the state as demonstrated in the table below:

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<sup>1</sup> Georgia Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.hunt-institute.org/elements/media/files/ELL/Georgia.pdf> retrieved on July 10, 2014.

	2012			2013			Difference Year to Year	Difference Year to Year	Difference Year to Year
	PATH	DCSD	STATE	PATH	DCSD	STATE	PATH	DCSD	STATE
ES Report	83	64.1	74.5	83.2	62.9	77.8	+2	-1.2	+3.3
MS Report	85.4	66.2	73.8	90.9	59.9	74.6	+5.5	-6.3	+6

It should be noted that while the overall CCRPI score of DCSD decreased, the scores of both DeKalb PATH Academy and the state increased. DeKalb PATH Academy also out-performed all of the local elementary and middle schools from which the majority of our students are drawn (Woodward Academy, Montclair, Cary Reynolds, Dresden, and Oakcliff) by an average of 5% in CRCT Reading, 6% in CRCT Language Arts, 7% in CRCT Math, 15% in CRCT Science, and 23% in CRCT Social Studies .<sup>2</sup>

- DeKalb PATH Academy has achieved a notably higher percentage of students meeting and exceeding expectations in CRCT in reading, language arts, mathematics, science and social studies for the first four years of the current charter term (2010-2015).
- Academic achievement growth is evident in every grade level from 2003-2014.
- The school was named a 2008 and 2009 Distinguished Title I School by the Georgia Department of Education.
- The Georgia Public Policy Foundation named DeKalb PATH Academy a 2008 and 2009 “No Excuses” school.
- The school was named a 2014 Title I Reward School-High Performing by the Georgia Department of Education.
- The school was named by DCSD in 2014 as one of the Top Five Middle Schools in the overall scores, progress scores, ED/EL/SWD Student Performance, and above state average scores.
- The school was named by DCSD in 2014 as one of the Top Five Elementary Schools in ED/EL/SWD Student Performance.
- PATH Academy’s average daily student attendance in the past seven years was 97%-98%. These numbers exceeded those of the DeKalb County School System and the State.
- For the first four years of the current charter term (2010-2015) DeKalb PATH Academy has achieved significant progress on the 8th grade writing assessment. Our mean scale scores increased from 215.77 in 2011 to 220.95 in 2015. The number of students meeting and exceeding in 2014 was 93%.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Georgia Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/CRCT-Statewide-Scores.aspx> on July 10, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Georgia Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/WA-Grade-8-Statewide-Scores.aspx>, retrieved on July 10, 2014.

Data to support the evidences of the student academic growth and achievement can be found in Appendix A.

**Question 3- Please provide specific examples of and documentation regarding programs that would be offered by your school that are not offered in any existing schools in DCSD. Please see Board Policy IBB.**

DeKalb PATH Academy affirms the legislative intent which supports a school program that increases “student achievement through academic and organizational innovation” utilizing PATH Compass, a unique interacademic - culture based methodology that embraces academic and organizational excellence. PATH Compass is interacademic in that it is not tied to a specific research-based strategy, method, or program but matches research-based academic strategies, methods, and/or programs to perceived student, class, and school-wide needs as they become evident. It allows for flexibility and change both in students and in instruction throughout the school year and throughout the term of the charter. We use the interacademic model to go beyond student profiles and simple *student differentiation to customizing* individual student and class education. Student profiles rely upon an established and often times inflexible set of observed or otherwise acquired characteristics used to categorize students as belonging to a certain type or group, an outline so to speak of what the teacher sees as being significant, hence needing a certain type of instruction. Differentiation searches for and expresses the differences between students and what they need to achieve academic success. This sets the stage for finding and using strategies to meet the needs expressed in the differences. Customizing is not an outline or a representation of a student nor is its function to search for and express differences between individual students and their needs. The PATH Compass interacademic model presupposes that sound academic practice and academic achievement is not limited to categories, groups, types, or just those characteristics or needs that appear significant nor are they solely dependent upon the **expression of individual learning** differences and needs of students. It goes beyond the aforementioned to customize or construct an academic achievement program that is based upon and in accordance to a more holistic view of individual student specifications—whatever they may be. This means that because its nature is always to be custom-made, the academic achievement program is built to be altered to retain its customized fit.

PATH Compass is culture based in that it recognizes, allows for, and utilizes the roles that ethnic cultures, economic cultures, socio-emotional cultures, and PATH school culture play in the academic achievement of PATH students. PATH Compass celebrates the basic fact that academic achievement is contingent upon a collection of factors that work in tandem to accomplish success. This success is evident in PATH Academy’s selection as a 2008 – 2011 Distinguished Title I School, a 2013 Title I Rewards School, and a 2014 Title I Rewards-High Performing School. The last two honors carry the following distinctions:

1. DeKalb PATH Academy was the only Title I middle school in DeKalb County to achieve Reward Status in 2013.
2. DeKalb PATH Academy was the only Title I School to achieve Reward – High Achieving Status in DeKalb County in 2014.

PATH Compass includes eight intra-related Compass Points each of which is integral to the academic achievement of PATH students:

- **PATH Mission**  
PATH Mission Driven, Highly Qualified Administrators

PATH Mission Driven, Highly Qualified Teachers  
PATH Mission Driven Professional Student Support Staff  
PATH Mission Driven Plant Services Staff

- **PATH Culture**
  - Rigorous Academics
  - School-wide Character Development
  - Socio-Emotional Support
  - Ethnic and Economic Culture Recognition and Utilization
  - Parental Involvement
  - Parental Support Groups
- **PATH Morning Circle**
  - PATH Pledge
  - PATH Motto
  - Morning Announcements
- **PATH Paycheck**
- **PATH Curriculum**
  - PATH IAC Literacy Model
  - PATH Field Lessons (Local and Out-of-State)
  - PATH Compass Clubs
- **PATH Instruction**
  - Interacademic Model
  - Ethnic, Economic, and Socio-Emotional Culture Methodologies
  - Data Driven
  - Flexible Ability Scheduling
- **PATH College Bound Culture**
  - High School (Public and Private) Visitation
  - College/University Visitation
  - College Student Volunteer Program
- **PATH Outreach**
  - Alumni Initiative
  - Stakeholder Acquisition, Partnerships, and Maintenance
  - Capital Campaigns

PATH Compass provides the schemata and guidance for the following programmatic and organizational innovations that have driven our consistent academic success.

***PATH Interacademic Curriculum Literacy Model***

The PATH Interacademic Curriculum (IAC) Literacy Model is a part of the PATH Curriculum Compass Point that is applied in every course offering at PATH Academy as well as in all communication models that are utilized with the students and the parents of PATH Academy students. This model supplements and bolsters the Georgia State Requirements for Literacy Across the Curriculum by adding to and bolstering the Literacy Standards For Reading in History/Social Studies in Grades 6-8, the Literacy Standards for Reading in Science and

Technical Subjects in Grades 6-8, and the Literacy Standards for Writing in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Grades 6-8 by adding the following:

- Key Ideas and Details for ELA CCGPS in Literary and Informational Reading
- Vocabulary Acquisition and Use for ELA CCGPS in the Language Section
- Speaking and Listening to include Comprehension and Collaboration and Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas for ELA CCGPS
- The utilization of the Language Progressive Skills Chart Grades K-12 “because they will require continued attention in higher grades as they are applied to increasingly sophisticated writing and speaking.” (ELA CCGPS Language Progressive Skills Chart Grades k-12, Georgia Department of Education. 2012)

PATH Academy will implement this Literacy Model to help meet the needs of its EL and SWD student populations as well as the needs of parents with limited or no English acquisition.

#### ***4-Year Middle School Structure***

Our school structure differs from the traditional middle school, in that we serve grades 5-8. This model has several advantages. First, it gives us one more year than traditional middle schools to raise student achievement levels. Fifth grade students arrive at PATH well behind grade level and below standards in core subject areas, but graduate eighth grade at or above grade level and exceeding local and state achievement levels, as evidenced by our academic performance. Second, it allows us to provide higher quality instruction in fifth grade through teachers who specialize in their respective content area. Third, it allows us to enculturate new students into the PATH’s culture and rigorous academic and behavioral expectations before they reach the critical adolescent stage. As a result, student buy-in to the PATH culture remains high throughout all grade levels, which in turn impacts student performance.

#### ***Scheduling***

Our school structures its schedule like that of a high school. Our students attend classes with different subject area teachers. Each PATH teacher is certified in a core subject according to his/her college major. Therefore, each teacher is highly qualified and knowledgeable in the subject he/she is assigned to teach. Furthermore, all teachers are trained to work collaboratively in teaching literacy across the curriculum.

#### ***Administrators Serve as Teachers***

Besides holding leadership certificates, administrators must hold additional and/or endorsement certificates that are relevant to the needs of our student population (e.g. special education, gifted, reading, and ESOL) with at least 5-years of teaching experience in one of the core subject areas. Our administrators are required to teach in a classroom at least 18 hours per academic year in the subject areas of their certification. Teaching hours can be fulfilled during the regular school program, Saturday school program, and summer school program. By actually teaching a class an administrator will remain more connected to the daily routine of the teachers, their needs and expectations. The administrator will also have more insight and understanding of students’ needs that are the basis of school improvement.

***Extended School Day***

PATH students attend school from 7:45 am to 3:50 pm. This allows us to provide *connected* morning and afternoon enrichment periods during which students receive individualized remediation, homework assistance, tutorial, and/or accelerated learning.

***School Culture***

PATH’s strong school culture is a Compass Point that consists of a system of structures and routines that create a positive, safe, family-like climate, and build student motivation and character. At the heart of these structures and routines is another Compass Point, the PATH student paycheck system (paycheck). The paycheck revolves around a truncated form of the school motto “be nice, work hard” and functions as a carrot and stick approach to increasing positive behavior and hard work. Students earn “PATH dollars” every day for positive behavior, hard work, and timely homework completion. Conversely, students can lose dollars and receive consequences for not being nice, not working hard, and not completing homework on time. The paycheck is signed every evening by the parent, thus serving as a mode of daily communication of student progress..

Another Compass Point that is central to our culture is Morning Circle. This is a weekly school-wide gathering where students recite the school motto and pledge in a call-and-response format, and reflect on a thought for the week. Morning Circle promotes community and helps to keep students focused on the immediate goals of academic excellence, good character, and the long-term goal of college attendance. In conjunction with Morning Circle, Tuesday through Thursday there are daily morning announcements that serve as a constant reminder of the values and goals expressed in Morning Circle.

**PATH Morning Announcement Script**

<b>Announcer:</b>	<b><i>Greetings PATH Academy students and staff. It is now time for our daily announcements.</i></b> (Pause)
<b>Announcer:</b>	<b><i>Let us begin with a moment of silence as we reflect upon what we are going to do today.</i></b> (Pause for 30 seconds)
<b>Announcer:</b>	<b><i>Good morning.</i></b>
School:	...Good morning
<b>Announcer:</b>	<b><i>Where are we going?</i></b>
School:	...To college
<b>Announcer:</b>	<b><i>Why are we going to college?</i></b>
School:	...To get an education
<b>Announcer:</b>	<b><i>Why do we need an education?</i></b>
School:	...To create opportunities in our lives and make a difference in our communities
<b>Announcer:</b>	<b><i>Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.</i></b> (Pause) <b><i>I pledge allegiance--to the flag--of the United States of America</i></b> <b><i>And to the republic, for which it stands,</i></b> <b><i>One nation</i></b> <b><i>Under God</i></b> <b><i>Indivisible</i></b> <b><i>With liberty and justice for all.</i></b> <b><i>You may be seated.</i></b>

<b>Announcer:</b>	<b><i>Today's announcements are as follows....</i></b>
	<b><i>The thought for the day is...</i></b> (Repeat twice)
<b>Announcer:</b>	<b>Let us end with the PATH Motto. (Pause)</b> <b><i>We work hard.</i></b> <b><i>We are nice.</i></b> <b><i>We are on task and on time.</i></b> <b><i>We persevere.</i></b> <b><i>We accomplish.</i></b> <b><i>We triumph,</i></b> <b><i>AND, we do it with honor.</i></b> <b><i>We are PATH Academy!</i></b>

Also critical to our culture is the consistent communication of high expectations for all students. Every student at PATH, regardless of socio-economic status, linguistic barriers, or previous academic performance, is expected to reach their highest academic potential. Together, teachers and staff work hard to push students to their highest potential. Struggling students are provided additional support and expected to achieve. All students are given teachers' cell phone numbers and are expected to call in the evenings for homework assistance. Teachers willingly open their evening time to respond to students' needs.

***PATH Paycheck***

One of the unique and effective means of communication with parents at PATH Academy is the use of the PATH Paycheck (See Appendix B). The Paycheck has been developed and improved with the input of students, teachers, parents, counselors, and administrators since its first implementation in August of 2002. It was created to

- promote daily communication between home and school
- promote daily parent and teacher communication regarding the students' homework assignments, classroom participation and behavior
- promote parents' awareness of their children's academic progress and daily conduct
- empower parents to take daily responsibilities toward their children's education
- promote parents' initial collaboration with school regardless of their educational, socio-economic, or linguistic background
- be a reward and consequences system for the students
- teach students personal responsibility
- encourage students to behave and act in a way that will promote time on task and safety to all
- encourage students to do basic mathematics and learn how to budget
- celebrate students' work ethic and conduct
- provide teachers, counselor and administrators a means to keep track of students' study habits, conduct, strengths and weaknesses for intervention purposes
- help prepare students to become college and career ready

- show students that they must earn the things they need and want in life.

### ***How Does the PATH Paycheck Work?***

Every Monday students receive a new PATH Paycheck for the week. Students must carry their paycheck to every class. The PATH Paycheck is divided into 5 sections for five days. Each day is divided into periods corresponding to the numbers of periods the students will attend. Each period is divided into three sections: Be nice, Work hard, and Homework. At the beginning of the class, when the teacher collects homework assignments from her students, she puts her initials on the section for homework. If students work hard and are nice for the rest of class, the teacher initials those sections also. Since students earn one PATH dollar (\$1.00) per section, students have the ability to earn three PATH dollars (\$3.00) per class. Accordingly, students will earn \$0.00 for each section in which the criteria is not met. On the back of the paycheck there are behaviors and their PATH dollar values. Underneath this section is a transaction register where the teacher assigns consequences for inappropriate behavior as well as keeps an account of the money that students earn and spend. Students earn extra money by doing special jobs or by initiating or doing some noteworthy deed. For instance, if a student displays unusual courage then that student earns ten PATH dollars (\$10.00). If a student misbehaves and has been warned several times, the teacher puts an alphabet code that corresponds to the behavior and the dollar amount it is worth beside it on the register. For example, OT is off task fifteen PATH dollars (\$15.00), D is not following directions five PATH dollars (\$5.00).

At the end of the day, students add their PATH dollars and reconcile their registers. Then they record the amount in the Daily Total box. At home the students must show their paychecks to their parents daily, and at least one of their parents/guardians must sign them. Thus, parents/guardians are informed about their children's daily behavior, homework and class work through their children's paychecks. Plus, there is room on the back of the paycheck for parents and/or teachers to write a short note should there be a concern or a success report that needs to be communicated. If there are any severe offenses, parents are contacted immediately.

The total amount of money that students earn on their paychecks is recorded in grade level banks by bankers. Every week in each grade level, teachers will conduct a ceremony that includes announcement and honoring students with good paychecks. Specials treats will also be provided to the honorees. Students are encouraged to work toward an achievable amount of money on their paychecks. At the end of the year, students must earn enough money to be able to participate in the year-end field trips. They also work toward short term goals like earning enough PATH dollars to attend dances, movies, and perfect paycheck activities.

### ***Content Area Ability-Grouped Classes***

At each grade level, core content is delivered through ability-grouped classes. Student groupings are determined by student performance on standardized assessments-including the former CRCT, ITBS, ACCESS for ELLs, and MAP; classroom performance; student input; and teacher recommendations. This allows us to deliver an accelerated curriculum in each core content area for high-performing and gifted students, and to provide the necessary support and remediation to help lower-performing students excel. English learners (ELs) are also grouped together in core content areas for differentiated instruction and language support. These class groupings are flexible, and are not a form of permanent "tracking". **Students are regularly moved from one designated group to another group based on teachers' recommendations throughout the**

**school year.** This flexibility is another way of meeting the individual academic needs of all students.

### ***Distributed Leadership***

Each grade level team and each content area team are led by an exceptional teacher who has demonstrated leadership among his/her peers. Team leaders are empowered with the appropriate degree of decision making authority at their grade level or in their content-area. They are viable members of the administrative team and have a vote that carries administrative weight in the day to facets of school operation that directly affect the general well-being of students and faculty. This structure creates a staff culture of ownership of student learning and results in high levels of cooperation between teachers and administration.

### ***Data-Driven Instruction***

In 2013-2014, PATH began the **use of NWEA’s MAP testing as our in-house universal screener.** Through MAP, we assess student progress 3 times per year in math, reading and language use. MAP results allow us to compare our students’ growth and performance to national norms, predict how students will perform on state assessments, and then utilize the data to inform and improve instruction. Teachers and administrators analyze and interpret individual, class, grade-level, and school-wide test results, and hold critical discussions about the data. Teachers receive ongoing professional development in how to use the data to plan targeted, differentiated instruction based on student needs.

Since the beginning of our school in 2002 PATH has tracked its students test scores in CRCT in mathematics and reading. The tracking of our students’ test scores enables PATH to give timely, appropriate, and relevant academic assistance to students who fall behind. Students who perform at the high level are encouraged to take more challenging classes. Tracking students’ academic achievement also allows PATH to evaluate its teachers’ performance. Staff development sessions and instructional coaching are established to assist individual teachers whose student academic performance is not satisfactory. Teachers also use 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade ITBS scores as a diagnostic look at how their students are progressing in key academic areas, and as diagnostic data that can be used to create intervention groups and to drive curricular decisions.

### ***College Bound Culture***

A College Bound Culture is another Compass Point that undergirds and supports our interacademic and culture-based methodology. ;Every week during morning circle, students recite the reasons that they are going to college—“to create opportunities for our lives and make a difference in our communities.” Our rigorous curriculum and our culture of high expectations and achievement help prepare students for future success in college. In addition, we emphasize the importance of our students’ entering top quality public and private high schools in order to continue their preparation for college entrance and success. We encourage students to participate in DCSD Magnet Programs Testing Sessions and provide pertinent information about School Choice Programs. We have a long-established relationships with DCSD’s DeKalb Early College Academy (DECA) as well as with local private high schools and out-of-state private boarding schools, and have a full-time liaison on staff who works throughout the year with these institutions. Throughout the eighth grade year, students take field trips to visit local public and private schools, and representatives from those schools as well as from boarding schools visit

PATH to recruit students. As a result, a number of PATH students each year matriculate to some of the top public and private high schools in and outside of Atlanta.

### ***Bonuses for Teachers***

At the end of each school year, teachers are eligible to receive a moderate amount of bonus pay based on student achievement determined by availability of funds and **based on student performance that is informed by the following Compass Points: PATH Motto, PATH Instruction and PATH Outreach**. For example, a teacher may receive a bonus based on the number of students meeting and/or exceeding expectations on the Georgia Milestones exam. The greater the number of students meeting and/or exceeding, the higher the bonus amount. It is important to note that we are extremely careful not to allow this system to incentivize any unethical practices on the part of our teachers and staff. Bonus amounts are very modest, come on top of an already competitive salary, and serve mainly as a way to tangibly recognize and celebrate teachers' accomplishments. Furthermore, we adhere very strictly to appropriate and ethical test administration practices. Everything is done by the book. Teachers are trained in ethical practices and model the virtues such as honesty, fairness, and responsibility that we expect of our students.

### **Local and Out-of State Field Lessons**

PATH Academy raises annual funds to provide meaningful and relevant local field lessons. All field lessons are curriculum based and used as supplemental tools to enhance learning. Students earn the opportunity to participate in field lessons according to the amount of PATH dollars they earn on their paychecks. During the past twelve years the students have gone to Washington D.C., Philadelphia, New Orleans, New York, Savannah, GA, etc. Below is an example of the sixth grade team's justification for their trip to Washington, D.C.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Standards Covered in Washington D.C.**

##### *Social Studies:*

SS6CG1 The student will compare and contrast various forms of government.

- a. Describe the ways government systems distribute power: unitary, confederation, and federal.
- b. Explain how governments determine citizen participation: autocratic, oligarchic, and democratic.
- c. Describe the two predominant forms of democratic governments: parliamentary and presidential.

ELACC6-8RH2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

ELACC6-8RH7: Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

Language Arts:

**SL.6.2:** Interpret information presented in graphical, oral, visual or multimodal formats and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

**RI.6.2:** Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; summarize the text.

**RI.6.3:** Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

These standards are covered when students read, interpret, and discuss the information they see throughout the trip—the Gettysburg Address at the Lincoln Memorial, quotes and biographical data at the MLK and other memorials, information at the Natural History Museum, etc. They also are able to make connections to what they’ve learned in social studies by seeing first-hand the important places and buildings that they’ve discussed in class, such as the White House and various memorials.

**PATH Alumni Initiative**

PATH Alumni Initiative is a fairly new addition to the PATH Outreach Compass Point. It involves inviting former students back to PATH to renew and/or strengthen the PATH values and goals that guided them to success, providing an academic and socio-emotional support system for 9<sup>th</sup> graders, providing additional support to 10<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders, keeping track of the accomplishments of former students, putting a PATH Alumni Mentor Program into effect to help with the transition of PATH 8<sup>th</sup> graders to High School, and cultivating other ways that PATH alumni can give back to the school in ways that will help current students who are in attendance at PATH.

***Parent Support Group***

At PATH Academy we recognize the importance of developing the whole child. While academic achievement is important, equally important to students’ future success are socio-emotional development and the inculcation of character skills such as perseverance, grit, and determination, which are high predictors of future success in college, the work place, and beyond. As we have worked closely with students and their families over the years, we have found that many students are adversely impacted by stressors occurring in the home. In recent years, we have seen an increase in family stressors and traumas as the result of things like divorce, separation, alcohol abuse, and other issues. In order to support our students and their families, our counseling department has established a parental support group conducted by a bilingual counselor/psychologist for families dealing with adverse situations. This group is ongoing and meets regularly throughout the year, and provides families and students with the support and skills needed to effectively cope with challenging circumstances. Furthermore, we have been able to refer families to outside and community services when we learn of issues that we are unequipped to handle, including social and psychiatric services. Providing these supports

has proven beneficial to students as finding a way to cope with external stresses improves their ability to succeed in school.

***PATH Clubs***

PATH Clubs are a part of the PATH Curriculum Compass Point. These clubs are considered a part of PATH Curriculum and are structured to address cultural and socio-emotional concerns that face our students. Two examples of such clubs would be The Social Justice Club which deals with inequities in society and offers corrective and coping strategies and PATH Girls Rock which deals with cultural, character, and self-worth issues that plague a large portion of the female student population at PATH. It offers things like safe haven discussions, academic helps, defines and offers strategies to use while living within two cultures, discusses worth and character, and female empowerment that leads to personal success and ethnic empowerment. Some clubs require parent permission slips because of their sensitive and critical nature.

**III. DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

**School’s Curriculum and Unique Program Elements**

**Question 4 – Describe the focus of the curriculum.**

PATH Academy offers a rigorous academic curriculum based on the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) and Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) for grades 5-8. In alignment with our mission, our curriculum focuses on providing students with the knowledge and skills needed for success in high quality high schools and preparation for college. These including strong reading, writing, higher-order processing and critical thinking skills, as well as vital character skills such as hard work, perseverance, respect, and teamwork. No matter where a student starts, by the time he/she graduates from PATH, he or she will be academically and socially ready to excel in high school and beyond.

**Questions 5 - Provide a description of the curriculum and how it will be implemented, including the standards, skills, and content to be covered in each grade the school will serve and must be aligned with the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) so that applicants assure coverage of each standard area topic. Identify materials/programs that the school plans to purchase to support the stated curriculum. This statement should discuss the focus of the curriculum and any distinctive or unique instructional methods to be used that are research-based and standards driven.**

PATH Academy delivers a comprehensive, rigorous academic curriculum based on the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) in English/Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science, as well as Health, P.E., Music, and Technology. Throughout the curriculum, students develop mastery of the CCGPS standards, and develop higher-order thinking skills, strong work habits, and the character skills necessary for success in school and life.

PATH requires both vertical and horizontal team collaboration units. This collaboration is concept-based and underscores the relational quality of learning and life. Further it works as a part of the curriculum to craft teaching and learning for understanding which facilitates the critical thinking ability to apply the familiar to make sense of the unfamiliar. PATH culture and college and career readiness instruction provides opportunities for students to acquire and cultivate skills and character strengths that will prepare them not only to succeed but also to

become productive citizens of the world. The curriculum for each subject area is outlined below:

### *ELA*

PATH grades 5-8 use a concept-based data driven approach to English Language Arts aligned with CCGPS. The concept based approach fuels in-depth student understanding of literary and informational reading, language, writing, and speaking and listening by helping students organize and retain important ideas and skills, move beyond the information provided by foundational facts to thought and to thinking about their own thought processes, and transfer what they learn across the curriculum to make connections and to see patterns. This then works to help students develop the literary intellect to grapple with a world of increasing complexity and accelerating change.

PATH uses data from ongoing comprehensive assessment to inform this approach. For example, diagnostic assessments provide baseline and starting literacy points; formative assessments measure reading levels, comprehension, and language skills; inquiry rubrics assess authenticity, rigor, on-going assessment woven into the design of instruction, exploration relevant to curriculum outcomes but grounded in life and work beyond school, technology usage, and elaborated communication techniques; and finally, formal outcome assessments such as CRCT, MAP, and ACCESS provide summative information. All assessments are aligned with CCGPS outcomes and work to help PATH preserve the *integrity of each* student's native language while teaching them to understand and correctly manipulate English in ways that will help them academically and in society at large.

### *ELA/Literacy Across the Curriculum*

To help ensure that PATH students acquire, understand, and demonstrate progressive language skills, concentrated emphasis is placed upon CCGPS literacy standards. PATH implements reading, ELA Language, and Speaking and Listening Standards across all grade levels and in all areas of instruction including integrative electives. Each Subject Area Team and Grade Level Team incorporates explicit research based strategies to build literacy based upon individual student and whole class needs. Journal writing, composing and writing word problems, writing out how a problem is solved or what procedure to use, taking a stance and defending it in writing, written reports and inquiries, summaries, critical analyzes, and specialized note taking are all examples of how PATH uses writing across the curriculum.

Oral presentations, explanations, debate, paraphrasing knowledge and strategies, other forms of oral redelivery, giving oral directions, dramatic oral representations, and grand conversations are examples of how PATH uses speaking across the curriculum. Vocabulary acquisition within the context of written material, reading content area based novels, articles, poetry, proofs, biographies/autobiographies, essays, and short stories are examples of how PATH uses reading across the curriculum. PATH provides on going professional development to bolster literacy skills and research based strategies for all faculty and support staff.

### *Mathematics*

PATH grades 5-8 use a mathematics curriculum that is conceptual and inquiry based. Since the CCGPS for mathematics is structured to complement conceptual and inquiry based learning and many literacy elements are embedded in them, the framework of CCGPS for mathematics itself

posits consistency in expectations and common goals for teachers. It drives the deep understanding of mathematical concepts as not being isolated but a part of every discipline and area of life. Students learn through inquiry and discovery which raises their confidence and thus their achievement level. The Mathematics PATH Instructional Team does develop supplemental goals to provide revisions to scope and sequences if necessary; meet the needs of specific students, and accommodate PATH in-house requirements, but these additions are always aligned and informed by CCGPS.

Advanced Math and CCGPS Coordinate Algebra are also a part of the PATH mathematics curriculum. Gifted math and high achievers in 6th and 7th grade are taught using the CCGPS 6th and 7th Grade Advanced Standards and gifted 8th grade math and high achievers are taught using CCGPS Coordinate Algebra Standards. Those students who take CCGPS Coordinate Algebra also take the county EOCT in Coordinate Algebra to determine mastery and whether or not they will earn high school credit for the course.

#### *Mathematics Across the Curriculum*

PATH recognizes that mathematical concepts are embedded in all disciplines throughout each grade level and believes learning that is based upon deep understanding provides recognition, access, and utilization of these concepts. Therefore, mathematics and mathematical concepts are used across the PATH curriculum. The use of CCGPS Standards for Mathematical Practice

- make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- reason abstractly and quantitatively
- construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- model [using mathematical principles]
- use appropriate tools strategically
- attend to precision
- look for and make use of structure
- look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning, or reasoning and explaining, modeling and using tools, seeing structure and generalizing add to the habits and attitudes of all thinkers and problem solvers as well as augment critical thinking, creativity, and rigor in every discipline.

#### *Science*

PATH grades 5-8 use a science curriculum that is concept and inquiry-based. The curriculum is built upon quality questioning techniques, investigation, and scientific inquiry that teaches the concepts and characteristics of science and its content. It is a student centered, hands-on, discovery approach that allows students to move beyond exploration of concrete self-evident information and predictable results to counterintuitive information and anomaly as they work to formulate and justify hypotheses, connections, and principles. Students also gain practice in using the scientific method as they work toward mastery of science standards. PATH science curriculum uses CCGPS Literacy Standards to supplement and expand the literacy requirements included in GPS science standards.

#### *Science Across the Curriculum*

Scientific concepts, strategies, and content are embedded in every discipline across all grade levels. To ensure recognition, access, and utilization of the benefits of science in all disciplines, PATH includes science across the curriculum as an integral part of instructional planning and instruction. This encourages the recognition of diversity and the discovery of the nature of domains included in each discipline. It assists students in the investigation and analyzing of data and of main ideas and concepts both known and unknown, then urges them to recognize systems and to form hypotheses and to make predictions. Reasoning fueled by quality questioning techniques helps students measure and manipulate ideas with informed creativity as they explore.

#### *Social Studies*

PATH uses a social studies curriculum in grades 5-8 that is concept and inquiry based. It is closely tied to CCGPS literary standards, mathematics, and science and uses these relationships to aid in bridging essential understanding about the past and how it relates to contemporary and future events. Historical inquiry encourages students to develop habits that move them to ask questions about evidence from primary and secondary sources, viewpoints, patterns, and connections. Students can then speculate and make suppositions and explore why those suppositions matter. The interdisciplinary treatment of environmental issues such as location, climate, and distribution of resources and how they have, do, and will affect the life and growth of human societies as well as the impact of various governments within those societies upon learning, literature, technology, economics, and other movements underscores the interactions and relationships between all facets of societies.

#### *Life Skills and College and Career Readiness*

PATH students in all grade levels participate in coursework designed to address life skills and college and career readiness. Classes meet once a week throughout the school year and use a blended curriculum approach. Life skills such as character building, problem solving, and making good choices are taught and measured using authentic inquiry-based assessment. College and career readiness modules are completed on the computer by each individual student at his/her own pace using College Career 401 Program. The program is broken into grade level steps that are completed on a yearly basis.

#### *Enrichment/Integrated Electives*

PATH students in all grade levels participate in enrichment, arts, and physical education as part of PATH curriculum. Enrichment is rigorous and innovative geared toward extending the intellectual skills of students. Arts and physical education (P.E.) are taught using an integrated approach in recognition of their embedded and complementary natures. For instance, movement concepts and strategies include rhythm, self-expression, and levels of fitness. Team sports are infused with challenge, improvisation, variations, accompaniment and arrangement within specified guidelines. Both posit performance alone and with others. Both provide health. Electives are also integrated in content area subjects. Collaborative units include the historical and cultural significance of the arts and utilize P.E. as a laboratory for the application of content area skills.

#### **Model and Methods of Delivery**

The PATH model, developed and perfected over 12 years to suit our unique student population, combines a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum, intensive academic and emotional support, common protocols, data-driven and differentiated instruction, and attention to students' backgrounds and cultures. The essential practices that make up our model are described below.

*Content Area Ability-grouped classes for differentiation*

At each grade level, core content is delivered through ability-grouped classes. Groupings are determined by student performance data (CRCT, ITBS, ACCESS for ELLs, MAP, and classroom grades). For example, in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the students with the highest CRCT math scores and strongest prior math performance are grouped together, and so on, down to the students with the lowest scores and prior performance. This model allows us to differentiate instruction based on students' current level of proficiency. It allows us to provide an accelerated curriculum for high-performing and gifted students, and to provide the necessary support and remediation to help struggling students to excel. Furthermore, English learners (ELs) are also grouped together for sheltered instruction and language support. Throughout the year and at the beginning of each school year, students may be moved from one group to another based on their needs.

*Use of instructional best practices*

Instruction is delivered by highly qualified, Georgia certified teachers with experience working with international and/or minority students, and who have demonstrated success at raising student achievement. Teachers employ a variety of research-based best practices to push students to high standards, including:

- direct whole-class instruction
- indirect whole-class instruction
- instruction incorporating various learning modalities
- instruction adapted to multiple intelligences
- teacher-directed small group instruction
- one-on-one teacher instruction
- cooperative learning
- extensive use of technology (interactive boards, computers, tablets)
- educational and motivational field lessons
- whole body multi-sensory instruction
- whole-language instruction
- project-based learning
- differentiated instruction

*Paycheck system*

The paycheck system mentioned in section II empowers teachers to promote student success by functioning as a carrot and stick approach to motivate positive behavior and hard work. Students carry their weekly paycheck to every class, and earn “dollars” each period for “being nice,” “working hard,” and turning in homework on time (for a total of 3 dollars per class

period). Students can receive additional “deposits” for going beyond expectations or “deductions” for specific violations. For example, deposits can be earned through actions that demonstrate a high degree honesty, caring, fairness, courage, responsibility, good citizenship, cooperation, leadership, or perseverance. Dollars are deducted for offenses such as the use of profanity, lying, disrespect, horseplay, being tardy, being off task, being unprepared, uniform violations, cheating, and unauthorized electronics. A parent signature is required on the paycheck every night. In this way, parents are informed daily about their children’s behavior and work habits. Paycheck dollars are tallied weekly and are used toward specific privileges, including attendance at school dances, special events, and field trips. High paycheck earnings are also honored alongside academic achievement at school awards ceremonies.

#### *Common planning*

Teachers also promote student success through horizontal and vertical common planning. Grade level teams meet weekly to coordinate and develop lessons that are rigorous, integrated, and aligned to standards. They also use this time to address individual student academic, socio-emotional, and behavioral needs. Cross-grade content area teams also meet frequently to plan and develop a vertically aligned curriculum.

#### *Professional Development*

PATH provides teachers with ongoing, on-site and off-site professional development in strategies and best practices. New teachers are given a comprehensive orientation to PATH’s culture and protocols. Outside experts are brought in on teacher planning days to train faculty in research-based best practices and methods. For example, in 2012-2013, teachers received trainings in the Marzano Instructional Framework and teaching complex texts. Teachers also receive regular instruction by PATH staff members with expertise in specific areas such as use of technology or working with English learners. In 2013-2014, for example, teachers received a series of trainings in effective uses of the interactive board. As a result, use of this technology has increased both in quality and quantity school wide. Finally, new and other selected teachers work with an instructional coach throughout the year to improve their practice. The instructional coach identifies specific areas of improvement and works with teachers to develop and implement a growth plan. For off-side training and staff developments PATH teachers participate in local and national conferences conducted by different educational associations, such as GATESOL, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Science Teachers Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and Special Education Educators Trainings. Ongoing professional learning and growth is essential to PATH’s model.

#### *Teacher Accountability*

Because student achievement and growth are a priority at PATH, PATH Academy teachers are held accountable for student outcomes. Teachers are recognized and rewarded for positive outcomes, and state assessment results factor into staffing decisions each year. Furthermore, teachers are provided with regular feedback on lessons, and held accountable to high standards of professional practice through the PATH Academy and TKES evaluation systems.

#### *Use of data to inform instructional planning*

At the beginning of the school year data from CRCT, ACCESS for ELs, teacher-made assessments, and 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade writing scores are analyzed and used to group students into classes as well as to guide instructional planning. For 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students ITBS and

COGAT scores are also analyzed and compared with the year-end CRCT scores to plan more rigorous lessons compatible to national norms. Teachers work together with the data to map out the curriculum. Then MAP assessments are used throughout the year to provide teachers immediate feedback on student progress on the Common Core Standards in relation to national norms. MAP is administered in fall, winter, and spring. With the assistance of PATH administration, teachers work together to analyze MAP data and use it to identify student learning deficits and to target and differentiate instruction accordingly. MAP data is also used to assess the effectiveness of our instructional programs. The use of data allows PATH to focus on continuous improvement and growth of student achievement.

**Question 6- A full and complete curriculum, aligned, for all grade levels to be served during the proposed charter term is required to be submitted as an Appendix item. This information must be aligned with Common Core and Georgia Performance Standards (where applicable).**

PATH Academy uses the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) to dictate and undergird standards for reading, language arts, and mathematics, and the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) combined with CCGPS literacy standards to dictate and undergird standards for science and social studies. (See Appendix C) Although PATH uses existing state planning and instructional resources, PATH Instructional Teams develop complementary goals to supplement these resources in ways that help to further drive instructional planning, instruction, assessment development and administration to meet the specific needs of PATH students. One such need is the specific focus on the acquisition and proper utilization of progressive language skills that are crafted to move PATH students to proficiency in manipulating all facets of the English language in critical and proficient ways.

**Question 7- Class Sizes**

**Please describe your intended class sizes, including the minimum and maximum number of students. Be sure to explain the source of any additional funding necessary if the class sizes are smaller than those set forth in the SBOE Class Size Rule 160-5-1-.08.**

PATH Academy adheres to the SBOE Class Size Rule 160-5-1-.08. However, due to a high number of ELL students and low-performing regular students who need academic assistance, the class size of PATH is sometimes smaller than that of a regular school. For example, the class size in ESOL language arts classes is between 10 and 18 students. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade EIP classes the class size is between 15 and 18 students. In regular classes in 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade, the class size is between 20 and 24 students.

PATH is a Title I school and receives extra funding from Title I. The funds are used to hire extra teacher(s) so that class size can be reduced and full-time paraprofessional (s) to assist in the classrooms in which struggling students need additional academic assistance.

For the past 12 years PATH has maintained “Title I Comparability” as required by NCLB and shall continue to do so. Annually PATH must file the Teacher Comparability report for Title I funded and non-Title I funded teachers to the Office of Federal Programs. PATH has exceptional records of compliance with the rules and regulations of the Federal Program and in appropriation of funds.

### Question 8- Gifted and Talented Students

**Describe methods, strategies and/or programs for meeting the needs of students identified as gifted and talented. Include any diagnostic methods or instruments that will be used to identify and assess those students.**

PATH complies with Georgia Department of Education rules, regulations, and procedures to refer, assess, and determine giftedness except where DeKalb County School District modifications are present. In such cases, PATH uses DeKalb County School District modifications. Students may be referred by teachers, by parents, and by student performance on standardized tests such as the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), CogAT, and Renzulli in at least one area. Tests such as these evaluate the four qualification areas used to determine gifted program eligibility: mental ability (96%), achievement 90%, creativity (90%), and motivation (90%). Students must score in the aforementioned percentile ranks in three of the qualification areas.

The PATH Gifted Placement Committee reviews all referrals and using the state mandated guidelines, found in Rule 160-4-2-.38 Education for Gifted Students Evaluation and Eligibility Chart, decides who will be identified for gifted program evaluation. Students who have been identified as gifted, whose parent(s) have given consent, and who have signed a Continuation Policy receive at least five segments per week of gifted services either in a Cluster Grouping Model or in an Advanced Content Model. The Cluster Grouping Model places and serves 12 or fewer gifted students in a regular classroom setting. The class is taught by a teacher who is Georgia State certified or endorsed in gifted education. Gifted students in this model are taught using a curriculum that is differentiated in process, assessments, and products. Students who are served in the Advanced Content Model receive services in a minimum of one core content class that is taught by a Georgia State gifted certified or endorsed teacher. The class size can be as high as 25 students. The students are taught an accelerated curriculum that emphasizes higher order thinking skills such as problem solving, process skills, and research projects. Students who have been identified as gifted by another LEA within the state of Georgia receive reciprocity.

Each year, the PATH gifted coordinator reviews the progress of all gifted identified students who receive gifted education services. Students will continue to receive gifted education services as long as they demonstrate satisfactory academic performance (80% or above) in regular and gifted education classes or for two year periods at which the end of such time they are tested again. Students who do not maintain satisfactory academic performance are placed on probation for one semester. During probation, students continue to receive gifted education services while attempting to achieve satisfactory performance status in gifted classes. Students who fail to demonstrate satisfactory performance in both regular and gifted education classes during the probation period and for whom gifted services are no longer appropriate will have a final review before the end of service occurs. Students may resume receiving gifted services upon meeting the eligibility criteria described in previous paragraphs as determined by the PATH Gifted Placement Committee.

PATH makes its gifted program more viable by adding to its scope and structure. It is geared to service the special needs of PATH students. To provide a more holistic program that deals with the socio-emotional as well as the intellectual well-being of the gifted and talented, PATH will facilitate parent classes that provide strategies for parents to use to help them understand and effectively deal with their gifted students. PATH will provide on-going professional development on-site not just for teachers and administrators but also for the PATH *counselor*. Studies show that gifted students require special forms of counseling to meet their needs. The

PATH gifted coordinator, school counselor, school social worker, and selected team leaders will attend county and other off-site gifted professional development. The gifted coordinator will also oversee the development of an on-site gifted section in the school library to be used by teachers, parents and students.

### **Extracurricular Activities and Other Auxiliary Educational Activities**

**Question 9- List all proposed extracurricular activities or other auxiliary educational activities along with the grade levels in which these activities will be offered.**

#### *Student Clubs*

Student clubs are an important part of PATH's educational program. Clubs offer exposure to extra-curricular activities and academic enrichment in subjects students are passionate about. Clubs meet weekly and are teacher-designed and led, so offerings vary each year. In 2013-2014, clubs included girls' sports, chess, ultimate Frisbee, advanced percussion, yearbook, creative arts, film, basketball, soccer, dance, art, film production, step team, anti-bullying/harassment, world languages, science, and math. Students choose their clubs with the upper grades receiving first choice. Volunteers assist teachers with implementing club activities. Club involvement has been seen to increase PATH students' motivation, build peer-to-peer relationships across grade levels, foster adult-student bonds outside of the academic setting, and strengthen our sense of community.

#### *Competitive Athletics*

PATH Academy currently fields two competitive sports teams, boys and girls soccer, available to students in good behavior standing. Places on the team are based on try-out and are in high demand. Teams compete against other local private, public, and charter middle schools. Competitive sports have been seen to provide numerous benefits for PATH students, including a sense of belonging, character building, and the development of teamwork and other social skills.

**Question 10- Please list and describe the partnerships the school has developed to offer extracurricular activities (ex: chorus, band, sports, clubs, art). This information should explain who the partner organization is, at which location the activity will be offered, and any charges associated with providing these activities. Please provide copies of contracts or correspondence setting forth the terms of the partnership.**

#### *Partnership with Oglethorpe University*

PATH Academy has a long-lived partnership with Oglethorpe University. The partnership benefits both organizations in many ways. Oglethorpe undergraduate students are placed each semester in PATH classrooms, both as volunteers and to fulfill fieldwork experience requirements for their courses. These placements provide our teachers with an extra adult in the classroom to assist with daily activities and give Oglethorpe students an opportunity to learn more about the field of education while serving their community. Most significantly, this partnership allows PATH students a chance to interact with and be inspired by young people who have succeeded in middle school and high school and persevered to college, which is a

large part of the mission of our school. This is especially important at PATH since many of our students will be the first in their families to attend college. Oglethorpe also hosts events throughout the year for PATH students, which have included an international language fair, an environmental science fair, field trips for student government officials, tours of the campus, tickets to attend Georgia Shakespeare plays and PATH's 8th grade graduation each year. This partnership allows PATH students the unique opportunity to access a piece of the college experience at a young age and helps to make more concrete the pledge we make at PATH that our students are "going to college to create opportunities for themselves and a make a difference in our communities."

*Mentoring Program*

PATH Academy has partnered with several organizations over the years to match students in need of additional adult support in their lives with mentors. Currently we work most closely with Culture Connect and the local chapter of the Knights of Columbus volunteer organization to provide this service for our students. Culture Connect is an organization whose mission is to "foster cultural fluency between immigrants and the community at large through language services, mentoring and education." We work with their "Go-Betweeners" mentorship program that matches PATH Academy students with young adult mentors who are from a similar cultural background, speak their same home language and share the experience of learning how to 'go between' their home culture and American culture at school and in the community. With the Knights of Columbus organization, we match 7/8th grade male students with adult male mentors from the community to provide extra support, attention and resources for our students who are identified as struggling socially, emotionally or academically. This program involves one-on-one and group tutoring at school between mentors and mentees, field trips to the mentors' places of employment and sporting events and provides PATH students with an additional adult who is invested in their success and well-being. Mentoring programs at PATH reflect our dedication to serving the whole child and developing a school culture and community with a positive, safe and family-like climate.

*Partnership with Reach for Excellence, Inc.*

Reach for Excellence is a tuition-free academic and leadership enrichment program that empowers determined learners and expands their possibilities in the classroom, in the community, and in life. Reach offers students of limited income a mix of academic, cultural, and community-based experiences that prepares them for the challenges of college-preparatory programs and high schools. Students and families make a three-year commitment to attend weekend and summer classes. The student population is comprised of academically talented students who have the determination to succeed and through Reach discover the path. Reach for Excellence provides them with not only tools to excel, but also caring mentorship. Reach faculty and staff prepare students for success with more than classroom education; the program also teaches etiquette, leadership, and contribution to society. Reach for Excellence students form a community of like-minded young people who strive to better their opportunities in the classroom and in life.

*Partnership with Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic School (OLA)*

PATH Academy has an on-going partnership with Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic School (OLA), a private school in our neighborhood. OLA reached out to PATH in an effort to expand their athletics program with which we were happy to help. OLA has supplied monetary

assistance and expertise in the upgrading of athletic fields at PATH to our mutual benefit. PATH students now benefit by participating with OLA teams and leagues. We foresee a long-term association with OLA. An additional benefit of this association has come from the connection with OLA parents who have taken an interest in PATH as a school. Some now participate on our board of directors and as volunteers at the school.

*Partnership with Latin American Association*

Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, PATH Academy will partner with the Latin American Association to provide after-school and summer programming for a select group of students. One of the Latin American Association's goals is to reduce the Latino drop-out rate in the Atlanta area. They have created a series of after-school programs that begin in 6th grade and follow students until 12th grade to support the goal of increased Latino high school completion. The PATH Academy/LAA branch of this program will initially serve 20-30 6th grade students and will grow each year until we are serving 60-90 students in 6th, 7th and 8th grade. Students will be selected for this program based on an assessment of academic and social risk factors for dropping out. Through this program, students will gain the knowledge, skills and support necessary to ensure that they successfully graduate from high school and continue on to an institution of higher education that best serves their interests and needs. This partnership reflects PATH Academy's ongoing dedication to working with community members and various stakeholders to ensure that our students succeed in middle school, high school and beyond, regardless of social, economic or linguistic barriers.

*Assistance from Organizations and Individuals*

Several organizations and individuals have for years assisted our students in various ways. Second Helpings Atlanta, Inc., which is an independent non-profit, charitable food rescue and redistribution project, delivers food to distribute to our students' families once a week. Marist High School PTO conducts food drive for our students' families during Thanksgivings and gift drive during holiday season. Community and Southern Bank sponsored gifts for families during the holidays. St. Dunstan Church conducts annual school supply drive for our students. COSTCO provides students with backpacks and reading materials. Individuals in the community donate their time and money to sponsor our students' extra- curricular activities and materials.

**IV. STATE AND FEDERALLY MANDATED SERVICES**

**State and Federally Mandated Services to Students with Disabilities**

**Question 12- Describe methods, strategies and/or programs for meeting the needs of students with special needs and disabilities. Include any diagnostic methods or instruments that will be used to identify and assess those students.**

PATH Academy complies with all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations in serving students with disabilities, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA").

PATH Academy shall not discriminate against a student with any disabilities during the admission process and/or other aspects of school operations. PATH Academy will ensure that appropriate accommodations and equipment are provided to the students. All students with disabilities will be provided with a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) special

education in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Currently PATH Academy has an SST chair, who has been trained by DCSD to handle the SST process and a full time certified special education teacher who is responsible in teaching special education classes and manage IEP cases of the students in the special education program. Besides the full-time special education teacher PATH Academy has 2 regular education teachers and an administrator who are also certified in special education. They are able to give additional academic assistance to students with special needs and disabilities in their classes beyond the requirements specified in their IEPs. According to an arrangement between DCSD and start-up charter schools, DCSD has provided a Lead Teacher for Special Education (LTSE) to oversee the special education program in each start-up charter school. The LTSE provide technical assistance to the special education teachers, regular teachers, and SST chair on a weekly basis.

Due to smaller class size, smaller school environment, flexible grouping, and data driven practice, teachers and staff members are able to accurately identify students who lag behind their peers in different subject areas. Teachers also work as a team in implementing the Response to Interventions (RTI) process in their teaching.

The process used to identify and place students in the Special Education Program is as follows:

- Teachers use GAEOE’s Response to Intervention: Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions in their teaching. The following timeline is usually implemented:  
 Tier 1: Four to 6 weeks of Standards Based Instruction —GPS, differentiation, grouping, benchmarks.  
 Tier 2: Six weeks of Individual Needs Based Instruction—supplemental instruction with evidence based interventions, monthly/bimonthly progress monitoring in deficit area
  - a. Identify the Problem
  - b. Assess why the problem is occurring (e.g. can’t or won’t do work).
  - c. Select an intervention (CCPS manual or school-based program).
  - d. Select a desired goal.
  - e. Document progress using RTI forms at least 1 time weekly.
  - f. Conduct at least 2 parent conferences to discuss concerns and progress (Tier 2 summary form).
  - g. Consult with SST chair to request SST (R1 form).
- If a student fails to make academic progress after Tier 1 and 2 interventions, the student will be referred to the SST chair.
- SST chair starts an SST process for the student. When the student goes through the SST process in Tier 3 and fails to make adequate academic progress, the student will be referred to special education evaluation (Tier 4).
- The student will be evaluated by the psychologist or evaluator(s) from DCSD. The parents or guardians will be given the general information containing general description of types of psychological evaluation. The psychologist or evaluator(s) will choose specific tests that are thought to be best for the student’s age, grade, and physical growth. Parents will be given specific information on the tests used at the time the results are reviewed and at special education Individualized Education Program (IEP)/Placement meetings.

Below are some of the tests that the psychologist or evaluator(s) may use to evaluate a student:

- **Intellectual**  
 Differential Abilities Scales, Second Edition (DAS-II)

Kaufman Assessment Battery For Children (K-ABC)  
 Wechsler Intelligence Scale For Children-Third Edition (WISC-III)  
 Woodcock-Johnson Tests Of Cognitive Ability III (WJ III COG)

- **Academic**  
 Wechsler Individual Achievement Test, Third Edition (WIAT -III)  
 Wide Range Achievement Test - Revised (WRAT-R)  
 Woodcock-Johnson Tests Of Achievement III (WJ III ACH)
- **Cognitive**  
 Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (VMI), 4<sup>th</sup> ed  
 Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing, Second Edition (CTOPP)
- **Social Emotional**  
 Behavior Assessment Scales for Children, Second Edition

Once the student is placed in the special education program, the student will receive the services according to his/her IEP. Incoming students with an IEP will receive their service according to their IEP as well. At least once a year, but more often if necessary, each student's IEP will be reviewed and updated so that the student will receive the most appropriate and effective interventions and support he/she needs. At least once every three years a re-evaluation meeting is held to determine if continuation of Special Education Services is required.

The Special Education Program at PATH Academy emphasizes co-teaching and inclusion models that will provide appropriate intervention and support to the student in the content areas in the general education classroom. Special education students also receive extra tutorial services during the after school tutorial program and Saturday School Program. The special education and the regular education teachers monitor the students' academic progress closely through weekly and unit assessments. They meet weekly to discuss methods and materials that they can use to improve students' academic progress. At the end of each quarter, the assistant principal of student development will discuss the academic progress of each student to see whether the student meets the goals set forth in his/her IEP. If the student does not meet his/her goals, a more comprehensive plan of modification and intervention will be established. If the student meets or exceeds his/her goals, new goals may be added. At the end of the school year, academic progress of each student is evaluated and compared with that of his/her peers in regular education program. This helps the teachers to revisit the delivery of the materials and the curriculum. Teachers might find that adjustments must be made to meet the needs of the students in the special education program.

The students in the special education program at PATH Academy have shown great improvement as the 2013 CCRPI results indicated that DCSD named PATH Academy one of the "Top Five Middle Schools" with ED/EL/SWD Student Performance above state average.

The following arrangements for special education services are also implemented by DCSD:

- Itinerant services for students with speech/language disorders, as identified in their IEP, shall be provided by the DeKalb County Department of Support Services. December 1 federal count earnings and category three FTE earnings by the charter school for speech students shall be retained by DCSD.
- Students whose IEP list services in the areas of vision impaired, legally blind, deaf/hard of hearing (hearing impaired), or orthopedically impaired may receive services from an itinerant teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)

- Medicaid earnings generated by the provision of special education and related services shall be retained by DCSD.

### **Educational Services for English Language Learners**

**Question 13- Describe the methods and strategies by which the school will serve English Language Learners (ELLs), including:**

- **A description of the special language instructional program to be provided to ELLs that is designed to teach English, as well as general curriculum and who on staff will coordinate this effort.**
- **A provision indicating that ELL students will not be excluded from curricular and extracurricular activities in school because of the inability to speak and understand the language of instruction.**
- **A plan that ensures that the appropriate staff, curricular materials, and facilities are in place and used properly.**
- **Appropriate evaluative standards for measuring the linguistic and academic progress of ELL students, including program exit criteria.**

#### *Overview*

As part of PATH Academy's target population, English Language Learners (ELLs) are at the heart of our mission. Over 90% of our students speak a language other than English at home, and in 2013-2014 school year 38% of students qualify for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services. As a result, ESOL plays a major role in our educational program.

#### *Identification, Placement, and Assessment*

PATH Academy adheres to Georgia Department of Education guidelines and procedures for the identification, placement, and assessment of English learners. Upon enrollment, students are identified as eligible for ESOL services through their DCSS (or other Georgia school system) permanent record file or through the Home Language Survey (HLS). Students identified as eligible are then screened for placement using the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT). Students qualifying for services are then placed in our ESOL program (described in detail below). Students are assessed annually using ACCESS for ELLs. ACCESS scores are used to determine each student's appropriate placement and readiness for program exit. Students scoring 5 or above on ACCESS are eligible to exit ESOL services. Exited students are then monitored for two years.

#### *Program Description*

PATH Academy employs a full-time ESOL teacher, and 2 English language arts teachers with ESOL endorsement, several content area teachers also have ESOL endorsement. The school also provides regular training to content-area teachers in methods and strategies for accommodation of lessons for ELLs. PATH's founding principal and one assistant principal have ESOL as their primary field of expertise, which aides in the effective implementation and oversight of our ESOL program.

ELLs who are eligible to be served in ESOL program are served through pull-out model during English language arts classes. They are taught by ESOL teacher and/or team-taught by the ESOL and language arts teacher. The curriculum for this course is based on the state-adopted WIDA English Language Standards and aligned with the CCGPS, and focuses on building social and academic English language skills in the four domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Students' progress is monitored throughout the year to ensure that ELLs have the tools they need to excel in PATH's rigorous curriculum.

In each grade level ELLs are grouped together in a class, in which the content area teacher provides accommodations through modified and "scaffolded" lessons. For example, teachers may pre-teach vocabulary, provide background knowledge, use a high number of visual aids, review frequently, and employ a host of other research based strategies for making content comprehensible to ELLs.

**Question 14- Include a provision in the petition stating that the charter school will comply with all special education laws and regulations, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the IDEA.**

PATH Academy shall comply with all federal special education laws and regulations, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

**Question 15- Supplemental Education Services**

**Describe methods, strategies and/or programs for students receiving supplemental education services. These services should be provided pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind.**

PATH Academy provides Supplemental Education Services (SES) to all students throughout the year, regardless of the school's current CCRPI status. These services are provided in the form of morning and afternoon enrichment, clubs, and tutorial sessions, Saturday school program and summer school program. During these sessions students receive assistance with assignments and supplemental instruction based on areas of struggle (as determined by test scores, report card grades, and teacher input), delivered by teachers, paraprofessionals, and volunteers. In the event that PATH should fall into Focus, Priority, or Alert status (PATH is currently in Highest Performing Reward Status), PATH will continue to offer these supplemental education services to all students pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.03 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind.

**Question 16- Remediation Services**

**Describe methods, strategies and/or programs for meeting the needs of students at-risk of academic failures through remediation. Include any diagnostic methods or instruments that will be used to identify and assess those students who are performing below grade level as well as the processes/programs/tools to be used in**

**providing them with remedial instruction. These services should be provided pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-5-.01 and NCLB.**

PATH Academy uses multiple means to identify students in need of remedial instruction. These include annual CRCT results, ACCESS results, ITBS results in 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade, writing assessments in 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, benchmark and MAP testing results, classroom grades, and teacher observation. At the beginning of each school year, students are placed into ability-grouped classes according to their academic needs. Students with low academic growth and/or who did not meet standards are grouped together for intensive support and remedial instruction. Then students are assessed throughout the year using MAP, benchmark assessments, and classroom assessments. These assessments are used to identify specific student needs, and grade level teams work together with administrators to use the data to make instructional decisions and to determine how best to support student needs.

**V. PERFORMANCE-BASED GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES**

**Question 17- Please list and describe in detail specific performance-based goals and measurable objectives related to state and federal assessment standards.**

PATH will measure the academic success of students longitudinally. Not only is students' academic progress tracked individually, but it is also tracked collectively as a part of a cohort. Students whose academic progress lags behind their peers in their cohort will receive extra help through the after school tutorial program, Saturday school program, and summer school program as needed. From the data collected in the past twelve years it is evident that our students have made continuous academic progress. The school has graduated eight classes of eighth graders. In each of the graduating classes only 1-2% of the students did not pass both reading and mathematics.

Goals and objectives have been established based on the actual academic results of our students in the past 4 years of the current charter term. The actual data will ensure that the school has set rigorous, yet attainable performance targets. In addition to those goals outlined in the Start-up/Conversion Goals (See Appendix D), PATH Academy will meet the following performance objectives:

Goal 1: During each year of the five-year charter term, PATH Academy will “Beat the odds” as determined by formula measuring student growth. Below are the performance objectives under “Beat the odds”:

Measure 1: ELL students and students with disability will raise their achievement scores in GA Milestones End of Grade (EOG) tests in all content areas (reading, English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) by 2% every year. The scores of 2015 will be used as baseline scores for the consecutive year as we track the students' progress.

Measure 2: Regular students will raise their achievement scores in GA Milestones End of Grade (EOG) test in all content areas by 5% every year. The scores of 2015 will be used as baseline scores for the consecutive year as we track the students' progress.

Measure 3: Gifted and talented students will raise their achievement scores in GA Milestones End of Grade (EOG) in all content areas subjects by 8% every year. The scores of 2015 will be used as baseline scores for the consecutive year as we track the students’ progress.

Measure 4: Students in each grade level will raise the percentile of their cohort in all content areas in the Georgia Student Growth Model (GSGM) by 3-5% annually. The table below is the comparison of our student GSGA percentile in each grade level:

2013 Report	5th Grade		6th Grade		7th Grade		8th Grade	
	CRCT	GSGM	CRCT	GSGM	CRCT	GSGM	CRCT	GSGM
	%passing	%ile	%passing	%ile	% passing	%ile	% passing	%ile
Reading	93	40.5	98	60	98	45	100	73
ELA	93	35	99	46	98	66	97	52
Math	93	51.5	94	65	99	40	98	81.5
Science	83	55.5	86	61.5	80	40	92	77
Social Studies	85	66	96	83	98	82	93	55

It should be noted that the percentile in 5th and 6th grade shows below average growth in reading and language arts because our school starts in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, all the students in this cohort arrive with below grade level, some as much as 3 grades below grade level. In the 6<sup>th</sup> grade approximately 35% of this cohort are new students and over 60% are served in ESOL program. The results also show that despite the low level GSGM percentile in 5<sup>th</sup> grade in reading and English language arts, students show steady growth in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. By the time students graduate in 8<sup>th</sup> grade their growth model shows significant gain that surpasses those of the State’s and the District’s students.

	2012			2013			Difference Year to Year	Difference Year to Year	Difference Year to Year
	PATH	DCSD	STATE	PATH	DCSD	STATE			
ES Report	83	64.1	74.5	83.2	62.9	77.8	+2	-1.2	+3.3

MS Report	85.4	66.2	73.8	90.9	59.9	74.6	+5.5	-6.3	+6
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Below are performance objectives under CCRPI:

Measure 1: Every year throughout the charter term CCRPI scores of elementary level (5<sup>th</sup> grade) will be higher than the CCRPI scores of the State by 5% and of the District by 10%.

Measure 2: Every year throughout charter term CCRPI scores of middle school level (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades) will be higher than the CCRPI scores of the State by 8% and of the District by 12%.

Measure 3: Every year throughout the charter term ELL and Students with Disabilities will increase their percentage of State Performance Target (SPT) by 3% until they meet the required SPTs in all subjects.

**VI. DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS**

**Question 18- Student Performance Data, Measures of Student Improvement, Monitoring, and Assessment Calendar**

*Charter Schools are mandated by Georgia statute to participate in the administration of state assessments. DeKalb County may require assessments beyond those required by the state. Materials for these assessments are provided by the state. Materials for DCSD Required Assessments are provided by the District.*

**a. What assessments will the School administer to obtain student performance data for each student?**

PATH Academy uses an array of assessments to obtain as thorough and accurate a picture of student performance as is available to us. To that end, we administer the following assessments throughout the school year:

- Georgia Milestones (previously CRCT) in Reading, Language Arts, Math, Social Studies, Science (Grades 5-8)
- Georgia Milestones EOCT Coordinate Algebra (8th Grade)
- ITBS (5th and 7th grade)
- CoGAT (5th and 7th grade)
- ACCESS for ELLs (English Learners grades 5-8)
- MAP Common Core Math (Grades 5-8)
- MAP Common Core Reading (Grades 5-8)
- MAP Common Core Language Use (Grades 5-8)

**b. Describe how the school will obtain baseline achievement data.**

At the beginning of each school year, PATH Academy collects student achievement data for incoming 5th grade students. State test scores, including Georgia Milestones (previously CRCT), ACCESS for ELLs, and other assessment data are obtained from the DeKalb County Schools (almost all of our students come from DeKalb County elementary schools). In addition, for grades 6-8, PATH Academy utilizes data from the previous school year's assessments to establish baseline data for each grade level. Assessments include Georgia Milestones/CRCT; ACCESS for ELLs; MAP assessments from fall, winter and spring showing student growth patterns throughout the previous school year; ITBS and CoGAT. In addition, we administer MAP at the beginning of the school year to obtain baseline data for students.

PATH Academy re-administers the school wide baseline assessment, MAP, which is aligned with CCGPS, two other times during the school year. Data from it helps teachers to formulate a progressive picture of individual and whole class student achievement. Teachers periodically use this data along with on-going teacher formative and summative assessment to organize/re-organize units within the scope and sequence to reflect student needs and gains, to inform planning, and to guide instruction. Instructional leaders use the information to inform professional development needs of individual teachers and staff.

In compliance with district mandate, PATH Academy will do a quarterly formal benchmark assessment of student growth. Benchmark assessments will be based upon CCGPS, state generated Scope and Sequences, and Curriculum Maps as well as MAP baseline data and classroom formative and summative assessments. They will be based in part upon county pacing guides. Subject Area Teams will formulate the assessment for each grade level. PATH will use the data gained to plot where students are in comparison to where other students in the state and county should be, to drive teaching, remediation strategies, enrichment strategies, and pacing.

**c. Describe how the school will benchmark student growth.**

PATH Academy uses the "PATH Paycheck" as a daily benchmark tool. It allows students, parents and teachers to see daily gains, pinpoint daily needs, and utilize school culture and research based interventions. Every four and one half weeks, a progress report benchmark is issued to all students and parents. It documents student progress using the average of teacher assessments of student work. It provides a mechanism for students, parents, teachers, and instructional leaders to scrutinize real time overall student data, hold discussions, collaborate and formulate a relevant action plan that further identifies and addresses student needs.

PATH Academy benchmarks student growth throughout the year using NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments. MAP is a computer-based, online benchmark test aligned to the Common Core standards given three times during the school year. MAP gives us detailed information about students' progress in core content. We use that data to make instructional decisions at the school, classroom, and student level. We administer MAP in fall (August-September), winter (December-January), and spring (April-May) in three subjects: Math, Reading, and Language Use. Following each MAP administration, the PATH academy data team and teachers work together to analyze and interpret the data, and use that data to improve instruction. For example, we use MAP results to inform student groupings, and to provide teachers guidance for differentiating instruction based on students' academic needs. In each of the three subject areas tested in MAP, the results tell us which domains students are stronger or

weaker in. They also tell us how much students have grown since the previous test administration. So, for example, the mid-year MAP administration allows us to see how much a student has learned, and through that to determine whether current instructional strategies are working, and how we need to change course or make adjustments to assure student progress. MAP opens up conversations about our classroom practice and challenges us to make changes and acquire new instructional skills and strategies to help students succeed. Ultimately, MAP gives us a tool for continuously evaluating the effectiveness of our instructional program.

**d. Describe plans to formally and informally assess student performance in the core academic areas.**

*Annual assessments*

PATH Academy participates in the statewide and DCSD testing program, including the Georgia Milestones (previously CRCT) in all core content areas, ACCESS for ELLs, and the Coordinate Algebra EOCT for select group of 8<sup>th</sup> graders. We also use ITBS and CoGAT with the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. Assessments are administered according the DCSD testing calendar. PATH’s assessment coordinator attends all required DCSD assessment-related staff development sessions and meetings. PATH adheres to all District’s testing requirements and deadlines.

*Interim Assessments*

As described above, PATH Academy uses MAP to formally assess student performance at interim points throughout the year. The data from MAP, along with classroom performance data such as grades and student work samples, are used by individual teachers and grade level teams to assess student performance in the content areas.

*Classroom formal and informal assessments*

PATH Academy teachers formally assess students throughout the year through daily homework, weekly quizzes and tests, student projects, folder checks, unit assessments, and mid-term and final exams. Teachers use these assessments for both formative and summative purposes. Teachers also informally assess students understanding and progress through observation, questioning techniques, student conferences, and other methods. This process does not occur in isolation in the classroom. Grade level teams meet weekly to discuss individual student progress. Students who are struggling in one or more areas are identified, and the grade level team confers to determine how to help those students succeed. Assessment of student progress is an ongoing process that never stops.

**e. Describe plans to diagnose educational strengths and needs of students and plans on how this data will be used for instructional planning.**

As described above, PATH Academy uses assessment data from state assessments, MAP, and other formal and informal assessments to diagnose educational strengths and student needs continuously throughout the year. First, prior to the beginning of the school year, the administrative team analyzes CRCT/Milestones, ACCESS for ELLs, and other annual assessment data and uses these data to inform student placement decisions and teaching assignments. In addition, our summer school functions as a time

to diagnose student needs and plan for the upcoming school year. Specifically for incoming 5<sup>th</sup> graders, our two and a half week summer program is used as a time to identify student needs. This gives us a jump start on targeting instruction when the regular school year begins. Then, at the beginning of the school year, the data team/administrative team will lead the faculty and grade level teams in looking at the previous year's data to help set annual goals and inform their instructional planning. Then, diagnosis of student needs continues throughout the year through grade level team meetings and through the data team's analysis of MAP and other data. As described above, the diagnoses that come out of these meetings are used to inform instructional planning.

**f. Describe the school's plan for using assessment data to monitor and improve achievement for all students over a set period of time.**

As described above, PATH Academy uses MAP and formal and informal classroom assessment data to monitor and improve student achievement throughout the school year and from year to year. Data is analyzed by the administrative team and at grade level team meetings, to diagnose students' strengths and needs, adjust instruction, and set goals for student learning. One of the tools in MAP is an individual student goal-setting worksheet. Using this tool, we are able to monitor students' progress over time on the MAP assessments, and set mid-year and annual achievement goals for each student based on their past progress. We are able to design instruction to reach those goals. Under the guidance of the administrative team, teachers are constantly looking at student progress and data to inform instructional decisions. Furthermore, because MAP is administered online, data showing students' growth and achievement is available immediately to administrators, teachers and students. Thus, administrators and teachers can diagnose student learning problems, and make adjustments to instruction quickly. Through this process we monitor and work to improve student achievement throughout the school year and from year to year.

**g. Provide a statement that the charter school will administer all state assessments in accordance with the DCSD testing calendar.**

PATH Academy will administer all state assessments in accordance with the DCSD testing calendar. It will adhere to all procedures and deadlines in accordance with DCSD and GaDOE policy.

**h. Charter schools, at their own expense, may implement additional assessments. If students will participate in charter initiated assessment programs, please describe these programs in detail.**

PATH Academy has implemented Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments at our own expense. As described above, MAP is a computer based online interim/benchmarking assessment system which is used to measure student progress in Math, Language Arts, and Reading throughout the school year. MAP results are used by faculty and staff to inform instruction and to assess the effectiveness of our educational program. Another benefit of MAP is that it is used by schools nationwide, and allows PATH Academy to compare our student growth rates to national and regional norms. This allows us to gauge the effectiveness of our academic programs in relation to others

throughout the country. Further information about NWEA’s MAP program is included in the appendix.

**Questions 19- Required Accountability Provisions and Assessment Guidelines**

- a. Describe how the charter school shall comply with the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 through § 20-14-41 and federal accountability requirements.**

PATH Academy has and shall continue to comply with the accountability provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-14-30 through § 20-14-41 and federal accountability requirements.

- b. Describe how the charter will adhere to all assessment guidelines and procedures as outlined by the State Assessment Handbook, the State Accommodations Manual and other state and local guidance on assessment.**

PATH Academy will adhere to all assessment guidelines and procedures as outlined by the State Assessment Handbook, the State Accommodations Manual and other state and local guidance on assessment. PATH always has a trained and knowledgeable assessment coordinator who is thoroughly familiar with the State Assessment Handbook and State Accommodations Manual, stays up to date on all assessment requirements, and attends all required trainings.

- c. Describe how staff from the charter school will attend required test administration training held by DCSD.**

PATH Academy test coordinator will attend required test administration training held by DCSD.

**VII. DESCRIPTION OF SCHOOL OPERATION**

**Question 20- Attendance Zone**

**Please describe or provide a map which indicates you target attendance zone.**

PATH Academy will utilize the O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2062 (1.1) concerning attendance zone. The attendance zone will be divided into two sections. Section 1 is the Buford Highway Corridor, which is defined by Interstate 85 as the southeast boundary, the Fulton-DeKalb County line as the west boundary, the Gwinnett-DeKalb County line as the north boundary, and a line one-half mile to the northwest and parallel to Peachtree Street/Peachtree Industrial Boulevard as the northwest boundary. Section 2 is the Clarkston, Stone Mountain, and Lithonia areas defined by the following zip codes – 30021, 30083, 30086, 30087, 30088, 30038 and 30058.

In accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(a)(1)(A), the Charter School elects to give enrollment preference to the following categories of applicants and in the following priority:

- Siblings of students enrolled in the start-up Charter School
- Students whose parent or guardian is a member of the governing board of the Charter school or is a full-time teacher, paraprofessional, or other employee at the charter school.

**Question 21- School Calendar and Schedule**

PATH Academy has used and will use the school calendar of DeKalb County School District for its operation and assessment (See Appendix E). PATH Academy may not open except at the beginning of each school year. PATH Academy’s school year must begin no more than two weeks before or two week after the beginning of DCSD’s school year.

The daily schedule is as follows:

7:45-8:45	Morning Group/Enrichment
8:45-9:45	First Period
9:45-10:50	Second Period
10: 55-11:45	Lunch and Recess for 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade.
10:55-11:55	Third Period for 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade
11:50-12:50	Third Period for 5 <sup>th</sup> grade
12:00- 12:55	Lunch/Recess for 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> grade
12:55-1:55	Fourth Period
2:00-3:00	Fifth Period
3:00-3:50	Snacks/Enrichment/Tutorial

**Question 22 – Admission, Enrollment and Withdrawal**

- a. Please include an enrollment application in the appendix.**
- b. Describe application and enrollment periods and procedures.**
- c. Describe procedures for situations if student applications for admissions exceed available space, including the following:**
  - i. The precise manner in which the lottery will be conducted and by whom;**
  - ii. Measures to ensure that the admissions process adheres to legal requirements; and**
  - iii. The procedures for wait-listing students who are not included in the first round of lottery offers.**
- d. Describe the procedures for student withdrawal or transfer.**
- e. Please include the school’s admission policy for potential students that is equitable, non- discriminatory, and will ensure that the student populations will reflect community demographics.**

Admission to PATH Academy will be a cooperative decision between students, parents, and teachers. Students and parents must choose to enroll in PATH Academy instead of remaining at

their zoned public schools. The school encourages and motivates the students and their families to view an intense academic commitment as their key to the future. Students, parents, and teachers will be expected to sign DeKalb PATH Academy's PATH to Excellence (See Appendix B). This document addresses the areas of attendance, homework, behavior, and academics. In accordance with all federal laws and the Georgia Charter Schools Act no student will be denied admission to PATH Academy based on race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, or disability.

#### *Student Recruitment*

PATH Academy will be a public, nonsectarian, nonreligious, nonprofit school organized and operated under the laws of the state of Georgia. The following recruitment methods have been employed with great success:

- post flyers and notices in local supermarkets, churches, community centers, and apartment complexes
- visit local organizations in each neighborhood
- visit and explain to prospective students and their families the purpose of PATH Academy
- conduct parental information sessions to elaborate on the commitment involved with attending PATH Academy
- canvass neighborhoods to further reach interested families
- ask current parents for help in talking to their neighbors
- advertise in the local newspapers and community association newsletter, and radio stations

#### *Application Enrollment and Procedure*

PATH Academy enrolls students in 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Due to its reputation as a high performing school, PATH is one of the most sought after charter schools in Georgia. However, each year almost 95% of our students rising 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students re-enroll at PATH. Therefore, in 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade there are very few spaces available for new enrollees.

Applications are taken year round, but formal recruitment of incoming rising 5th graders will begin on February 1st for the following school year and close on March 10<sup>th</sup>. Parents can download the application (See Appendix B) form the school website, call the school for the application form to be faxed or mailed to them, or pick up the application form at the school. The application form is in English and Spanish, and translation services in other languages and assistance completing the application form are available through the school staff.

#### *Random Drawing/Lottery*

If the number of applicants exceeds capacity of the grade level or building, PATH Academy will ensure that such applicants have an equal chance of being admitted through a random lottery. If a lottery is required, it will be held in an open forum in the school cafeteria at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday of the week that follows March 20. Parents do not have to be present at the drawing. The process will be provided to the parents in advance and explained again before the lottery begins. After the explanation parents will be allowed time to ask questions to ensure that

everyone understand the process. All written or verbal information will be given in both English and Spanish.

*Lottery Process*

1. Each applicant will be assigned a number. The list of the names of students with assigned numbers will be posted around the building. Parents will have a chance to see what number their child is assigned to prior to the lottery. Index cards and pens/pencils will be available for the parents to write down their child's number if they choose.
2. Numbers will be written on ping pong balls representing each applicant. The number of the ping pong balls will equate to the number of applicants.
3. The numbered balls will be placed in a container and will be randomly drawn one by one by a community member who is not affiliated with the school.
4. There will be 3 more people involved in the lottery process, the first to announce the number, the second to record the number, match the name to the number, and check off the number that is called, and the third to video record the entire process.
5. When all spots are filled, the process will continue until every name has been drawn. That process will determine the order of the waiting list should an opening arise.

Any applications received after March 25th will be added to the bottom of the waiting list. As openings occur mid-year, families on the waiting list will be contacted regarding the vacancy. They have 48 hours to accept the available opening. If they decline the offer, their name is removed from the waiting list and the next person on the waiting will be contacted.

PATH Academy has complied and will continue to comply with the following guidelines:

- PATH Academy may not provide any enrollment preferences other than those set forth in the state law O.C.G.A. §20-2-2066 (a) and (b).
- PATH Academy is a public school with open enrollment. As such, it may not use admissions criteria or admissions applications that would not otherwise be used at a traditional public school.
- Students not residing in DeKalb County are not eligible to attend the charter school.
- Practices such as requiring parents or guardians to attend a meeting, be interviewed, tour the facility or have students provide a written narrative as a condition for enrolling a student are not permitted.
- PATH Academy may not use enrollment applications that require submission of letters of recommendation, essays, resumes, or other narrative summaries of a student's school or community activities: i.e.: grades, academic programs, test scores, attendance record, or disciplinary history.
- PATH Academy may use enrollment applications for the purpose of verifying the student's residence within the school's attendance zone. Please remember that the school should only seek information that is necessary for admitting the student, such as his or her name, date of birth, address, grade, and contact information.
- In recognition of the need to plan and staff for incoming students, PATH Academy may ask for additional information (including special education or English language learner status), however, it is the school system's preference that such information be collected via post-admission enrollment forms. The admission application must make it

completely clear that providing the additional information is voluntary, not necessary for submitting the application, and will have no bearing on the student's potential admission to the school.

- As part of such applications, charter schools may require parents and students to agree to abide by the school's stated expectations, including requirements for parent and/or student volunteer hours.
- PATH Academy is a free public school and may not charge tuition.
- Copies of the school's charter agreement must be offered to parents of enrolling students electronically, and if requested, by paper copy.
- DCSD will provide the necessary software and training for the Student Information System software, while the charter school shall provide hardware and the necessary Internet service connection and technology support.
- DCSD's Student Information System software is to be used for the collection of all data and information required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-320 for mandatory reporting to the Georgia Department of Education (GDOE) and Federal agencies (Example: Discipline).
- The charter school shall report daily attendance and discipline incidents to DCSD using the standard, approved method of data collection. Master schedules and student schedules must exist for all students, as well as final marks for each course after each semester.
- DCSD will provide the necessary software and training for the Student Information System software, while the charter school shall provide hardware and the necessary Internet service connection and technology support.

#### *Withdrawal*

PATH Academy will comply with the provisions of O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2066(d) for withdrawing students. DeKalb County School System and PATH Academy agree that a student may withdraw without penalty from PATH Academy at any point in time and return to his/her local zoned public school or any other school to which he/she can gain admission.

#### **Question 23- Recruitment and Diversity**

**Provide an outreach plan, including strategies for publicizing and recruiting prospective students that is equitable, nondiscriminatory, and will help ensure that the student population will reflect the demographics of the community you intend to serve.**

PATH Academy will explore as many avenues of outreach as possible to guarantee a broad spectrum of exposure and reach students representative of the racial and socioeconomic diversity of the school district. The staff and parents have publicized and will continue their effort to reach out to prospective parents as follows:

- home visits in local school areas
- referrals from our students and their families
- neighborhood flyers
- speaking at churches and prayer meetings

- speaking at civic organizations
- speaking at community based organizations
- local newspaper and community association newsletter advertisements
- teacher and counselor referrals from other campuses

**Question 24- General Provisions Regarding Student Discipline**

- a. **Please state whether or not the school intends to adopt the DeKalb County School District's Student Code of Conduct as the school's discipline policy.**
- b. **Provide the school's student discipline policies and procedures, setting forth student due process procedures for all disciplinary action, not just for the most serious forms of discipline such as out-of-school suspension and expulsion, in a Code of Conduct, as an Appendix item.**
- c. **If the school intends to require a uniform, the dress code policy should also be included.**

Safety, order, and student discipline will be fundamental to learning at PATH Academy. While students need a challenging curriculum, dedicated teachers, and proper materials, they must also have a secure learning environment where they feel safe. PATH Academy adopts the DeKalb County School District's Student Code of Conduct- Students Rights and Responsibilities and Character Development Handbook (Appendix F) as the school's discipline policy. Our assistant principal has attended and will continue to attend all trainings conducted by the DCSD Department of School Discipline and Safety. PATH Academy will report its daily attendance and disciplinary incidents to DeKalb County School District using the standard, approved methods of reporting and data collection originated by DCSD. In using DCSD's Code of student Conduct PATH in regard to the student discipline PATH Academy will adhere to the following:

- Ensure that your school is recording all DeKalb students' disciplinary infractions in Infinite Campus;
- Ensure that the student is receiving due process, when needed; and/or
  - Be cognizant of the ramifications of the consequence provided: 1) Constitutional/Due process rights, 2) Civil Rights & non-discriminatory impact, and/or 3) Special Education Rights- i.e. manifestation hearing and days of OSS.

*Suspension and Expulsion*

PATH Academy will follow the rules and regulations stated in DeKalb County School District's Code of Student Conduct ~ Rights and Responsibilities and Character Development Handbook and all due processes established by the DeKalb County School System will be followed. The school will follow the procedural rules normally used in DeKalb County schools concerning grievances and complaints from students and parents. All suspensions, expulsions, and alternative instruction must be in accordance with DeKalb County School Board Rules, the State

School Safety Plan, Federal Law (PL94-142) and 34 C.F.R. Part 300. PATH administrators have been trained in all aspects of discipline and safety by the DCSD School Discipline and Safety Department.

In addition PATH Academy will use the discipline forms generated by DCSD. Consistency in open communication with parents is the key to our schools' safe and productive environment. At the beginning of the school year parents are asked to attend an orientation of the school discipline protocol. Training classes in effective parenting and parent support groups are also regularly provided at the school. The school provides transportation to these trainings upon parents' request. PATH Academy has a full time social worker, a counselor, and a bilingual parent/school liaison to provide assistance to students and parents. Thus, parents, teachers, administrators, and support staff work as a team to develop the whole child. One of our assistant principals is assigned the task of developing student growth both academically and emotionally. For the past 12 years PATH Academy has had a very low rate of disciplinary problems (around 2-4%) and a high attendance rate (97-98.5 % annually).

In-class and school disciplinary actions will include, but are not limited to:

- deduction of dollars from school paychecks
- additional assignments to be completed at home and/or at school
- detention after school
- mandatory homework/study hall after school
- time-out
- loss of incentives and school trips

PATH Academy requires its students to wear school uniform. The dress code policy can be found in Appendix B regarding School Culture under Uniform. .

**Question 25- Discipline Provisions and Students with Disabilities**

**Provide a description of how the charter school will meet the federal due process requirements for students with disabilities, or students believed to have a disability, who are suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons.**

PATH Academy will meet the federal due process requirements for students with disabilities, or students believed to have a disability, who are suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons. PATH Academy will use the guidelines published in the District's Student Disciplinary Procedures and Character Development Handbook, which state clearly the discipline provisions for special education students or students covered under 504. The most important part of the discipline provision is that the District Due Process Hearing cannot take place until a Manifestation/Determination meeting is conducted. The parents need to be notified immediately by telephone, if possible, and to receive written notice within 24 hours of a proposed suspension of five school days or less. The notice should describe the incident, proposed suspension and the child's rights. The parents also have the right to request an informal conference with the school principal prior to the suspension unless the child's presence in school poses a danger. (Appendix F page 41).

**Question 26- Grievance Policy**

**Describe the rules and procedures concerning how the school will address grievances and complaints from students, parents, and teachers. The grievance policy should clearly**

**articulate how individuals may present grievances, how those grievances will be reviewed, and who will undertake the task to review grievances, as well as the time frame for disposing of a grievance.**

It is the policy of DeKalb PATH Academy that students, parents, and teachers have the right to address grievances and complaints. PATH Academy's Grievance Policy is as follows:

*Students and Parents*

PATH Academy adopts the DeKalb County School District's Student Code of Conduct- Students Rights and Responsibilities and Character Development Handbook and will follow the rules and regulations set forth by DCSD concerning disciplinary procedure such as due process, and hearing as addressed in question 24.

PATH encourages parents to resolve conflicts that are not disciplinary concerns but are academic concerns at the lowest personnel level. PATH believes that problems are likely to be resolved when parents get a chance to talk to the teacher(s) or staff member(s) directly. Therefore, we have set a complaint procedure for resolving difficult situations:

Level 1: Parents first request a conference with the teacher(s) or staff member(s) involved. If the parents feel that their concerns are not addressed and they are not satisfied with the resolution at this level, they shall proceed to Level 2.

Level 2: At this level the parents shall request to meet with the Principal to address their concerns. The request can be done in person, by email, or by letter. Within 3 working days of the reception of the request from the parents, the principal will contact the parents to set up a meeting with them to discuss their concerns. At this level, it is up to the discretion of the Principal whether he/she will ask the teacher(s) or staff member(s) and the student to be present at the meeting. At the conclusion of the meeting a resolution/decision will be made by the Principal and explained to all attendees. All attendees shall sign a document acknowledging that they understand the resolution/decision made by the Principal. Signing this document is an act of acknowledgement not acceptance of the resolution/decision. A printed version of the resolution will be given to the parents if the parents are able to wait for the preparation of this document. If the parents are unable to wait, within 1 working day after the meeting a printed version of the resolution/decision will be placed in a sealed envelope and given to the student to deliver to the parents. To safeguard the delivery of the document, an additional copy will be sent via certified mail. The parents must sign the bottom portion of the document stating that they have received the document and returned the signed portion to PATH Academy.

If the parents are still not satisfied with the resolution/decision of the Principal derived from the meeting, they shall proceed to level 3.

If the same person holds the positions of Principal and CEO, parents shall proceed to Level 4.

Level 3: At this level the parents must write a letter of appeal to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of DeKalb PATH Academy Inc. The letter of appeal must include the following components:

- a. The mailing address or e-mail address of the parents to which notices and all other documents may be delivered;
- b. The statement of intent of the parents to utilize the complaint procedure;
- c. A brief statement of the facts on which the complaint is based that explains how a meeting/hearing with the CEO is needed.

The letter may be hand-delivered or sent via certified mail to the school address. Within 3 working days of the reception of the letter of appeal the CEO will contact the parents to set up a meeting with them. The meeting shall be done within 10 days of the reception of the letter of complaint. The CEO may or may not request that the Principal, teacher(s), staff member(s), and student or witness (es) if any be present at the meeting. At the conclusion of the meeting a resolution/decision will be made by the CEO and explained to all attendees. All attendees shall sign a document acknowledging that they understand the resolution/decision made by the CEO. Signing this document is an act of acknowledgement not acceptance of the resolution/decision. A printed version of the resolution will be given to the parents if the parents are able to wait for the preparation of this document. If the parents are unable to wait, within 1 working day after the meeting the printed version of the resolution/decision will be placed in a sealed envelope and given to the student to deliver to the parents. To safeguard the delivery of the document, an additional copy will be sent via certified mail. The parents must sign the bottom portion of the document stating that they have received the document.

After the meeting, if the parents still are not satisfied with the resolution/decision presented by the CEO, they shall proceed to Level 4.

Level 4: At this level the parents shall proceed in the same manner as level 3. However, the letter of appeal must be sent to the Chair of the DeKalb PATH Academy Governing Board via certified mail using the school address. Within 20 working days from the date stamped on the envelope, the Chair or a designated Board member will set up a meeting/hearing with the parents and all concerned staff members of DeKalb PATH Academy Inc. to resolve the conflict. The Board Chair might also call witness(es) if appropriate. The procedure at the meeting/hearing and the delivery of the resolution/decision made by the Board chair will be identical to those explained in Level 3.

Ultimately if the parents are not satisfied with the decision of the Board Chair, they can contact DeKalb County School System Governmental Relations and Special Projects at 678-676-0713 for further assistance.

**It should be noted that PATH will not respond to attempts that do not follow this order of procedure. Parents whose first language is not English may write the letter**

**in their own language and may bring their own interpreter/translator to the meeting. However, PATH Academy shall provide interpreter/translator at the meeting.**

*Employees*

All employees shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible. DeKalb PATH Academy Governing Board encourages all employees to resolve complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality whenever possible. If the conflicts remain unresolved, the employees shall take the following procedure:

**Employees**

All employees shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible. DeKalb PATH Academy Governing Board encourages all employees to resolve complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality whenever possible. If the conflicts remain unresolved, the employees shall file their grievances or complaints in writing with the Principal and CEO (if the two positions are separate positions who will try to resolve the conflicts. All employees have the right to contact DeKalb PATH Academy Governing Board any time if they are not satisfied with the Principal and CEO' s decision. Since DeKalb PATH Academy employs its own employees and has specific waivers from DCSD Board Policies GAE-2 and GAE 3.

The procedure to file grievances or complaints is as follow:

**Level 1:** An employee should send a letter of his/her grievances or complaints to the Principal. In his/her letter the employee must state clearly the facts and nature of grievance. Within 5 working day of the reception of the letter the Principal will set up a meeting with the employee to discuss the grievances /complaints to resolve the grievance or complaints. The Principals has two options:

*Option A:* Make a resolution/decision at the meeting and explained it to the complainant. The complainant sign a document stating that he/she understand the resolution/decision. Within 2 working days a printed version of the resolution/ decision will be given to the complainant by the principal. The decision/resolution document will contain the minutes of the meeting, the detailed procedure and time line of the action the Principal will take to resolve the grievance/complaints if any.

Within 10 working days after the first meeting, the Principal shall call the second meeting with the complainant to discuss what action has taken place to resolve the grievances/conflicts. If the complainant is satisfied with the results of the of the Principal's action in resolving the grievances/conflicts, he/she will sign a document stating that the grievance/complaints have been resolve to his/her satisfaction. However, if the complainant is not satisfied with the results, he or she has the right to proceed to Level 2.

If the same person serves as Principal and CEO, skip to level 3.

*Option B:* If the Principal concludes that there is a need to call witness (s) and conduct more investigation into the grievances/complaints before the resolution/decision can be made, he/she will inform the complainant about the procedure he/she will take and the timeline in which more investigation and witnesses can be interviewed.

The complainant will sign a document stating that he/she understands the Principal's decision. Within 2 working days the Principal shall give the complainant a printed version of the meeting minutes along with detailed procedure and time line of the investigation and interviewing of the witnesses.

Within 10 working days after the first meeting, the Principal shall call the second meeting with the complainant. The principal must send a letter to inform the complainant of the date, time and location the second meeting will take place. In this meeting the Principal may call witness (s) necessary. In this meeting all attendees will be able to provide information and evidences if any regarding the grievances or complaint. The Principal shall make a decision and explain it to all attendees. At the conclusion of the meeting all attendees shall sign a document acknowledging that they understand the resolution/decision made by the Principal. Signing this document is an act of acknowledgement not acceptance of the resolution/decision. A printed version of the minutes including the Principal's decision/ resolution will be given to all attendees within 1 working day.

Within 10 working days if the complainant is satisfied with the outcome of the Principal' decision, he/she should inform the principal in writing. He/she will be asked to sign a document stating that the grievance/complaints have been resolved to his/her satisfaction so that the casd can be closed. However, if the complainant is not satisfied with the results, he or she has the right to proceed to Level 2

If the same person serves as Principal and CEO, skip to level 3.

**Level 2:** At this level the employee shall proceed as in Level 1, except that the letter shall be sent to the CEO of DeKalb PATH Academy, Inc. via certified mail to the school address. The complainant must state the facts and the causes of his/ her dissatisfaction with the Principal' decision/ resolution in his/her letter. The complainant must provide personal phone number and personal email address in his/her letter. The CEO shall acknowledge the reception of the letter as soon as he/she receive it via telephone call or email. Within 10 working days the CEO should hold a meeting with the complainant. The CEO may or may not call witnesses. It is up to the CEO's discretion to accept the Principal's decision/resolution without further investigation. If the CEO decides to pursue further investigation he/she shall inform the complainant in the meeting. In either case, the complainant must sign a document acknowledging he/she understands the resolution/decision made by the CEO. Signing this document is an act of acknowledgement not acceptance of the resolution/decision. A printed version of the decision/ resolution along with the minutes of the meeting will be given to the complainant within 1 working day via email, school mail and certified mail.

If the employee is still not satisfied with the resolution/decision of the CEO, he/she shall proceed to Level 3.

**Level 3:** At this level the employees write a letter of appeal to the Chairman of DeKalb PATH Academy Inc. Governing Board. The letter of appeal must include the following components:

- a. The mailing address or e-mail address of the complainant to which notices and all other documents may be delivered;
- b. The statement of intent of the complainant to utilize the complaint procedure;
- c. A brief statement of the facts on which the complaint is based that explains how a meeting/hearing with the Board chair is needed.

Within 5 working days of the reception of the letter of appeal the Board Chair contact the complainant via email and certified mail to set up a meeting/hearing with him/her. The meeting/hearing shall take place within 21 calendar days. The Board Chair or a designated Board member shall send a letter informing the complainant of the date, time, location of the meeting/hearing, and any additional evidence that are necessary in the meeting/hearing.

Board Chair or the designate Board member will invite the Principal and CEO to attend the meeting. He/she may call witness (es) as necessary. The procedure at the meeting/hearing and the delivery of the resolution/decision made by the Board chair will be identical to those explained in Level 2.

Ultimately if the employee is not satisfied with the decision of the Board Chair, they can contact A Complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the Board may appeal that decision to the State Board of Education. Such appeals shall be governed by the applicable State Board policy and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1160.

It should be noted that employment at DeKalb PATH Academy is “At Will” employment. The contract between of each employee and DeKalb PATH Academy Inc. states clearly that:

**TERMINATION:** “Said Employee agrees to a moral obligation, but not a legal obligation, to work the full term of the contract, and PATH agrees to a moral obligation, but not a legal obligation, to employ “Said Employee” for the full term of the contract. However, either party may revoke this Agreement at any time, without specifying any reason for doing so. This is “at will employment” and not a contract for a fixed term; no tenure or right of continued employment is created by this contract. There is no contract right or property interest created in any specific assignment, position, duties or responsibilities.

**NOTICE:** If “Said employee” decides to revoke this Agreement “Said Employee” will give the Principal of PATH at least thirty (30) days’ notice of this decision in order that classes and other duties may be covered. If PATH decides to revoke this Agreement, PATH will give “Said Employee” 30 days’ notice of its decision. However, in either case “Said Employee” may be relieved of duties at any time. PATH will pay normal pay rate for all or part of this notice period, provided “Said Employee” has diligently, properly and cooperatively worked to transfer to PATH and Teacher’s replacement all property, records, and information so that there is an amicable and seamless transfer of said employee’s students’ educational program.

#### **Question 27- Personnel**

**Describe a plan for organization and management of faculty, instructional staff, and other employees of the charter school. Please include a copy of the faculty handbook in the Appendix.**

The operation of DeKalb PATH Academy is controlled by the Governing Board. The Board hires the CEO/Principal to carry on all the aspect of the operation of the school that follow the mission and vision stated in the charter. An organizational chart is included in Appendix G. The job description of various positions of employees at PATH Academy in Appendix G and the Bylaws describe how the organization the plan for organization and management of faculty, instructional staff, and other employees of the charter school (See Appendix H).

**Question 28- Staff Qualifications, Recruitment and Hiring Practices & Procedures, and Compensation**

**a. Describe the school's employment policies and procedures, including the proposed staff qualifications, employee recruitment procedures, hiring practices, and compensation.**

PATH Academy will not discriminate against employees on the basis of disability, race, creed, color, gender, national origin, religion, ancestry, marital status, and sexual orientation. PATH academy will have the freedom to employ its own teachers and staff members. The terms in the contract and compensation package for all employees will be determined by DeKalb PATH Academy, INC. The payment of compensation, including salaries and benefits, will be the sole responsibility of PATH Academy. PATH Academy reserves the right to adjust the salary schedule to reflect the actual economic condition and the allotted funds from the state and DCSD. All eligible employees will participate in Teacher Retirement System of Georgia and Social Security System until December 31, 2014. PATH Academy will not participate in the State Health Benefit Plan as provided pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2880 and O.C.G.A. § 20-2-910. Though the normal term of employment is for one academic year, PATH Academy reserves the right to terminate the employment of any teachers or members of staff at any time in accordance with the content of each individual contact. In addition, PATH Academy reserves the right to terminate the employment of any employees at any time.

*Employee Recruitment*

PATH Academy employee recruitment procedures are as follows:

- Word of mouth
- Posting the vacancies on school website
- Advertising through news media
- Advertising through educational organizations, teacher recruitment organizations and colleges of education in the state of Georgia and around the country
- Participating in job fair organized by leaders of charter schools in Georgia

*Staff Qualification and Hiring Practice*

*Common Qualifications*

All employees of PATH Academy should be individuals

- with a diverse background and or experience working in a culturally diverse environment
- who are culturally sensitive and aware of the needs and difficulties faced by refugee and immigrant children that are different from the mainstream American children

- who possess the desire to advocate for and bring quality education to the traditionally underserved refugee, immigrant and minority children
- who are flexible and willing to assume various different responsibilities beyond their job description
- who believe in the mission and vision of PATH Academy
- who value learning, equity, and equality opportunity in education
- who believe that all children can succeed in life with quality education.

*Teachers*

Besides the common qualification cited above the teachers must be individuals

- with a least a bachelor's degree
- who have the knowledge and skills in content area that they are going to teach
- who hold a GA teaching certificate or are certifiable according to the certification rules and regulations mandated by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission.

*Administrators*

Besides the common qualification cited above the teachers must be individuals

- with at least a Master's degree in education leadership
- with a Georgia Educational Leadership certificate
- who have at least 5 years of teaching experience in one of the core subject area with additional and/or endorsement certificates that are relevant to the needs of our student population (e.g. special education, gifted, reading, and ESOL)
- who are willing to teach at least 18 hours per academic year either in the regular school program, and/or Saturday school program and/or summer school program.

PATH Academy has created a culturally diverse environment in our hiring. In 2014-2015 school our employees represents 21% Asian, 16% black, 19% Hispanic, and 44% white. Over 70% of our employees speak at least 2 languages.

The selection of administrators, teaching staff, financial and school operational staff, and supporting staff is based on the needs of our students and support of the school mission. Teaching staff is selected from a pool of talented individuals whose knowledge and skills of the content area are the priority. Because the teachers have the deep knowledge and skills of the subject matters they teach, they are able to inculcate the students the love and enthusiasm of those subject. Staff members in the school operational wing are also talented and experienced people who are knowledgeable in various types of school operations such as student information system, federal meal program, and procurement of supplies and resources. The financial/human resources department is run by individuals with knowledge, skills and experience in these areas. Every aspect of school operation is done professionally and efficiently without red tape that normally causes unnecessary delay. Thus, the school is able to save both money and time to get all the jobs done with fewer people.

All employees of PATH academy will be evaluated according to their roles and responsibilities. Additional information regarding employment, recruitment, compensation, and evaluation of employee can be found in The Employee Handbook (See Appendix G).

Though the normal term of employment is for one academic year, PATH Academy reserves the right to terminate the employment of any teachers or members of staff at any time in accordance with the content of each individual contract. In addition, PATH Academy reserves the right to terminate the employment of any employees at any time for the following serious reasons:

- Use of drugs or alcohol on campus
- Conviction of a felony crime
- Theft of any property
- Willful destruction of school property
- Reporting to work under the influence of any alcoholic or illegal substance
- Possession of firearms or other illegal weapons on school premises
- Deliberately making or using false records, material requisitions, passes, etc. All employees will agree to the Code of Ethics for Educators as prepared by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. By agreeing to the Code, the employees are committed to abiding by federal, state, and local laws and statutes to
  - fulfill the terms and obligations detailed in the PATH Academy contract
  - file necessary reports of child abuse
  - maintain a high level of professional conduct
- In addition to the Code of Ethics, all personnel will be in compliance with the Drug Free Public Work Force Act of 1990.

**b. Job descriptions are a required Appendix item.**

The job descriptions are provided in Appendix G.

**c. Describe whether the charter school will use the state salary schedule, or if another schedule will be used, provide that schedule.**

Teachers and non-instructional staff will be paid based primarily on the DeKalb County School District's salary schedule. (See Appendix G)

**d. Indicate if substitute teachers will be utilized, for which positions, and at what rate of pay.**

Substitute teachers will be utilized for all teaching position when needs arise. The rate for substitute teacher is \$14/hr.

**e. Salary schedule for all certified employees is a required Appendix item.**

A salary schedule for all certified employees is provided in Appendix G.

**Question 29-If certification by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GAPSC) is not required, please provide a description of the training and experience that will be required, including how the school will determine whether a teacher has demonstrated**

**competency in the subject area(s) in which he/she will teach as required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). If the teacher is required to be highly qualified under No Child Left Behind, please describe how the school will ensure the teachers meet the definition of "highly qualified."**

PATH Academy requires its teachers, administrators, and teacher assistants (para professionals) be certified by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GAPSC). In the 2013-2014 school year PATH Academy had 100% Highly Qualified Teachers.

**Question 30- Background Checks**

**Describe the charter school's procedures to ensure compliance with the requirement that all staff members and governance board members are subject to fingerprinting and background checks.**

A criminal background check will be conducted prior to employment for every individual who is employed by PATH Academy. PATH Academy uses the Georgia Applicant Processing Service (GAPS) established by the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) to conduct finger printing and background checks of its employees. Once the results have been released to the representative (CEO/Principal) of DeKalb PATH Academy, INC. and no criminal records of the employees are found, all related documents shall be destroyed by shredding immediately. A log of the results of all background check will be kept in a locked cabinet in the office of the CEO/Principal. All employees or prospective employees must sign a consent to authorize PATH Academy and GCIC to conduct criminal background checks.

**Question 31- Employee Evaluation**

**Provide the methods of employee evaluations that will be utilized**

Description of employee evaluations is provided in the Employee Handbook (See Appendix G).

**Question 32 State Health Benefit Plan Participation**

PATH Academy will not participate in State Health Benefit Plan.

**Question 33- Transportation**

**Describe whether transportation services will be provided and include a statement that the transportation program will comply with applicable law. If transportation services are not provided, explain how this will not discourage eligible students from attending the school.**

In the past twelve years PATH Academy has provided transportation to students who reside within the attendance zone and will continue to do so. DeKalb County School District transportation department is the provider of the transportation through a lease agreement with PATH Academy. The agreement details the cost of the transportation and bus routes. DCSD calculates the mileage, gasoline use, and salary and benefits for each bus driver base on days of operation during each billing period. After the actual cost is calculated 5% management fee is added to it. Currently there are six buses serving students in Buford Highway corridor and one in Clarkston, Stone Mountain, and Lithonia areas. The buses in Buford Highway corridor run like all other District’s buses in the area. Due to the distance, the Clarkston/Stone Mountain/Lithonia bus stops at central locations where parents must drop off and pick up their children at designated times.

Although PATH Academy is provided with funding for transportation services, the amount of fund received per student per year is \$45.45 for 2014-2015 school year. PATH Academy paid approximately \$145,000 for transportation in 2013-2014 school year (See Appendix I). Thus, PATH Academy spent approximately \$400/year per student on transportation.

**Question 34- Food Service**

**State whether the charter school will provide food services (including participation in the National School Lunch Program).**

PATH Academy will provide food service and will participate in the Federal School Nutrition Program offering free and reduced priced lunches, breakfast, and snacks to those students who qualify. PATH Academy has been audited by Georgia Department of Federal Lunch program twice. The audits found that PATH Academy has met all the standards concerning nutrition facts, food storage, holding and serving of food that has been cooked elsewhere and transported by a properly-licensed caterer. PATH Academy shall comply with all applicable laws governing food service for students. (See Appendix I)

**VIII. FACILITIES**

**Question 35- Location of New or Existing Facilities and Building Modifications**

**Describe the school facilities to be used and their location(s). Please state whether the building is new or existing.**

PATH Academy is located on Oglethorpe University campus. The school building is the former Jim Cherry Elementary School of DeKalb County School District. The address is 3007 Hermance Drive, Atlanta, GA 300319. The current lease will be extended to June 30, 2023.

The building has been continuously renovated and maintained since the beginning of our lease in June of 2003. However, modifications necessary for utilizing the space for educational purposes was not made because the building has been a school building. The school has received funding through Charter School Facilities Grants to repair the roof and improve the lighting and other outdated features in the building.

Upon moving into the building the school obtained documentation regarding asbestos removal and management program from the previous occupants. The school personnel were trained and certified on asbestos management.

The asbestos was completely removed in the summer of 2007. (See Appendix J) PATH Academy follows DeKalb County School System's emergency safety plan in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-1185. A school plan is provided in Appendix K.

**Question 36- School Site Selection Form**

N/A

**Question 37 - Documentation of Ownership/Lease Agreements and Occupancy**

**Provide documentation of ownership or a copy of the lease of the facility. If ownership documentation or a lease is unavailable, provide a timeline for obtaining such facilities or providing such documentation (this question does not apply to conversion charter schools).**

Lease agreement is provided in Appendix J.

**Question 38- Certificate of Occupancy**

Certificate of occupancy is provided in Appendix J.

**Question 39 – Safety and Health Requirement**

PATH Academy has developed a safe school plan annually through the District safety plan website. School participates in the monthly fire drills, annual tornado drills, intruder drills, and lock-down drills. Reports are filed with Office of Insurance and Safety Fire Commissioner monthly. Administrators from PATH Academy participate in all safety and emergency trainings conducted by DeKalb County School District and follow the District's safety/emergency protocols. Seventeen percent of our staff members have CPR training. School cafeteria, kitchen, and bathrooms are inspected by DeKalb County Public Health Department 2-3 times a year. We usually receive a score of 99-100%. Fire extinguishers, fire alarm, sprinklers, severe weather warning system, surveillance cameras are installed throughout the building. Fire extinguishers, fire alarm, and sprinkler system are regularly inspected and maintained by certified inspectors. All information regarding safety and health requirements is provided in Appendix J.

**IX. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT****Question 40- Involvement in Developing the Petition**

**Describe how parents, community members, and other interested parties contributed to the development of the petition and how they will be involved in the school.**

Parents have always been highly involved in our school operation. Two parents, Mercedes Martinez and Sue Chaisaengsukul were an integral part of the start-up planning process and the development of the charter petition. They assist in mobilizing refugees and immigrants in Clarkston and Buford Highway areas to be involved in the starting of the school.

**Question 41- Continuing Involvement of Parents and the Community**

- a. Community and parental involvement are keys to charter school success. Describe in detail the community support for this school and the need for this particular school in the community it will serve. Support may be evidenced through additional documentation.**
- b. As part of your evidence of community engagement, you must provide a letter or a petition signed by parents/guardians of school-age children eligible to attend the charter that demonstrates that they would consider enrolling their child in the proposed school. These items may be placed in the Appendix.**
- c. Describe the steps you have taken to develop any partnerships and your plans to further develop additional community partnerships.**
- d. Provide a list of organizations that have committed to partner with your school and the potential nature of the partnerships. Provide evidence of support from the partners in the Appendix.**

Parental and community involvement has always been a powerful driving force of our school's success. Despite the fact that over 80% of our parents are not native English speakers, their level of involvement in school activities has always been high. From the beginning in 2001 the immigrant and refugee communities embraced the mission and vision of DeKalb PATH Academy and assisted in recruiting students and supporters as mentioned in question 40. PATH Academy operates under the belief that the teachers, parents, and students must work together as partners to provide the atmosphere and potential for a quality education. Parents are a vital part of this partnership, and the PATH to Excellence outlines the ways in which DeKalb PATH Academy expects and needs the parents to support the educational mission of the school. The PATH to Excellence, which requires parental support, includes making sure that their child attends school every day; signing their child's Paycheck daily; helping with homework and ensuring that it is complete each night; reading with their child each night; assisting their child in contacting the teacher; and being available to meet with the teachers at home or at school if the need arises.

As the school continues to grow, it has expanded its contact with the stakeholders outside of the immigrant and refugees communities. Below are steps that have been employed to solicit community support and involvement:

- a. Parent Contact: PATH Academy has a bilingual parent-community liaison that consistently and regularly contacts parents to inform them of school activities and invite them to participate.
- b. School Newsletter: Parents receive school newsletters on the regular basis in English and Spanish.
- c. Person-to person contact: Representatives from PATH Academy make personal contact to stakeholders in the community through canvassing the neighborhood. This method enables the school to start a meaningful conversation with the community stakeholders and create a pool of supporters and volunteers.
- d. Community Meetings: Representatives from PATH Academy hold meetings or Q&A sessions about the school at the community centers, apartment complexes, places of worship, colleges of education of private and public universities, and non-profit organizations to recruit supporters, and solicit advice and partnership.
- e. Letters of invitation: Letters of invitation are sent to stakeholders inviting them to visit school or join school activities on a regular basis.
- f. Letters of Appreciation: Students at PATH Academy write letters of appreciation to volunteers, donors and parents on a regular basis.
- g. Holiday Greeting Cards: PATH Academy students send Holiday Greeting Cards to volunteers, sponsors, and parents annually.

During every charter renewal cycle, parents, teachers, board members, and community members from different walks of life have been contracted or invited to take part in the charter renewal petition process. They make suggestions, input, and advice in the improvement of school curriculum, assessment, teacher and staff evaluation, fund raisers, grant writing, organizational plans, legal advisement and recruitment of board members.

For the past twelve years community members, organizations both profit and non-profit have supported our school mission with monetary donation or in-kind donation. PATH has had formed strong relationship and partnership with many organizations. The school has the partnership agreement with the following organizations:

- Oglethorpe University
- Latin American Association
- Reach for Excellence
- Our Lady of the Assumption

Detailed information of our partnership with these organizations can be found in Question 10. The partnership agreements can be found in Appendix L.

## **X. DEMONSTRATION OF FISCAL FEASIBILITY AND CONTROLS**

PATH Academy has had and will have full autonomy on its budget and expenditures. PATH Academy has been conducting proper financial practices in budgeting, internal controls, and auditing. DeKalb PATH Academy, INC. is a non-profit educational institution incorporated in Georgia (Appendix M). The school prepares its financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles in the United States of America, which are audited annually, following its fiscal year end of June 30. PATH Academy also follows the guidelines in Principle & Practices for Nonprofit Excellence (Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, 2005) with some modifications.

PATH Academy has had a sound financial management. The sound financial management of the school derives from the fact that the CEO, Ms. Suttiwan Cox has received formal training in financial aspects of school operations. In 2001 Ms. Cox was selected as a KIPP Fellow by the KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) Foundation to attend six-month training in preparation for starting and operating a charter school. She took a six-week intensive courses in business administration that included finance, management, human resources, non-profit board operation, and fundraising at the Haas School of Business at the University of California at Berkeley. She also completed her 12-week internship at KIPP Charter School and YES Charter School in Houston. During her internships she worked with the finance directors of both schools to learn firsthand that fiscal responsibilities and accountabilities were critical to operate a successful charter school.

In the summer of 2005 Ms. Cox received another fellowship to attend the Leadership for Educational Entrepreneurs (LEE) program – a two-year Master’s program housed in Arizona State University at the West campus that offered a mix of business and education courses for working professionals involved in the charter school industry. The LEE program was funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Education and supported by a network of local and out-of-state educational consultants, advisors, mentors, and faculty. LEE delivers instruction to its students – called “protégés” within the program – through online courses, summer institutes, and regional sites. Courses train protégés in skills crucial to running a charter school, including business administration, marketing, financial planning and reporting, writing business plans, applying for funding, and evaluating teachers. Protégés also participate in internships and design action research projects to further develop their skills as practitioners and scholars. By the end of 2006 Ms. Cox completed the program with a 3.97 GPA and received her M. Ed. with specialization for Educational Entrepreneurs.

PATH Academy has followed the generally accepted standards of fiscal management which includes the following:

- A budget that clearly defines achievable goals as defined in the school’ charter
- Accounting records that are properly and accurately record and account for all cash transactions
- Maintenance of documentation that outlines internal controls on business practices and operations.

- Demonstrate compliance with state and federal laws, regulations, and other compliance requirements
- Transactions are executed in compliance with laws regulations, and the provisions of contracts or grant agreements that could have a direct and material effect on state and federal funds, property, and other assets are safeguard against loss from unauthorized use or disposition.
- Required audits are performed and submitted on time
- Documentation that supports school's financial statements and that reflect its financial positions/condition, results of operations or changes in new assets and where appropriate, cash flows for any fiscal period
- Maintenance of positive financial cash flow as required by the General Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)
- Taking immediate necessary corrective action to correct any audit findings

**Question 42- Fiscal Plans**

**Describe the school's plans for fiscal management; and specify how the school will manage budget and expenditures**

There are three people responsible for the financial management of the school, the Treasurer, who is a member of the Board of Directors, the CEO/Principal and CFO. The financial responsibilities of the three persons are as follows:

- Treasurer: overseeing the accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements of the corporation and keeping proper financial records.
- CEO: planning budget, approving purchases, signing of checks, and overall financial responsibility.
- CFO: assisting the CEO in the planning of the budget, preparing, payroll, accounts payable, general ledger, reconciliation of accounts, production of financial statements, preparations for audits, etc.

The following financial policies and procedures are implemented to insure sound fiscal practice:

- An annual budget will be drawn up by the school CEO/Principal, CFO, and submitted to the Treasurer and the Board of Directors for approval by June 1 of each year.
- The Board of Directors is updated monthly of the financial and operational condition of the school through reports and other methods. The Board of Directors also has access to all financial information at all times.
- The CEO and the Chairman of the Board of Directors will have authorization to sign all school checks. Items over \$10,000 will require both signatures, as outlined in the Bylaws of DeKalb PATH Academy, INC.
- The school has established appropriate financial policies and procedures according to the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), checking accounts are held in financial institutions acceptable in Georgia, adequate payroll procedures, procedures for

the creation and review of monthly and quarterly financial statements, and establishment of liability insurance.

An annual financial audit by an independent Georgia-licensed certified public accountant will occur within 90 days of the end of each fiscal year (June 30) and the audit report will be made available to all entities that have provided PATH Academy funds to operate the school. As required by state law, unaudited financial statements for the fiscal year ending on June 30 will be provided in the annual report no later than October 1 of each year, with audited statements forwarded to the local board and state board upon completion.

For the past twelve years as the CEO of PATH Academy, Ms. Cox has been able to lead the school to its financial stability. She has been able to balance the budget and keep the school operating smoothly without financial problems. The school has operated under the funding pursuant to O. C. G. A. § 20-2-2068.1(c) with success and has been financially stable and independent from DeKalb County School District. Since the start of the school in 2002 DCSS has never assisted PATH in any financial situation beyond what is required under the charter laws.

PATH Academy has been accustomed to the fact that its annual proposed budgets will be calculated upon an allotment of funds prepared by DeKalb County School District. DCSD calculates the allotment using the formula set forth in § 20-2-2068.1(c.1-4). DCSD also retains 3 percent of the total funds earned by the school for administrative services actually provided to the school. Payments from state and local earnings will be paid monthly beginning July through June 30th. Therefore, the funding for a new school year starts on July 1. Currently DCSS wires the funds to PATH Academy on the last day of each month. (See Appendix N).

#### *Internal Control*

PATH Academy prepares financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). It also has established a sound internal control in the following manner:

#### *Monitoring*

Monitoring is a process that assesses the quality of internal control performance over time. The following are several monitoring procedures that should be performed:

- Management should approve all accounting system procedures.
- A responsible official should approve public distribution of financial reports and information.
- Budget should be compared to actual revenues and expenditures on a monthly basis to identify variances.
- Set procedures should be established for authorizing budget amendments.

#### *Control Procedures for Budgeting*

- The governing board should adopt a budget for all funds.
- The budget should be in enough detail to provide meaningful comparisons with actual transactions.

*Control Procedures for Cash*

- Proper control over cash receipts is essential because cash is the easiest of all assets to misuse.
- Access to cash should be limited and should be controlled as soon as possible when received.
- A non-accounting staff person should receive the mail, open it and list all checks on a Daily Collection Report or in a pre-numbered receipt book. This report or receipt should identify the date, name of organization or person submitting payment, amount of payment and description of what the payment is for.
- An account staff member should receive the checks and Daily Collection Report or receipt book from the person opening the mail.
- Deposits should be made daily by someone other than the person who prepared the deposit. All deposits should be made in official depositories.
- All deposits should be in institutions authorized by CEO/Principal.
- All funds held by the financial institution should be insured by the FDIC or otherwise fully collateralized.

*Control Procedures for Deposits in Financial Institution Financial Institutions*

- All bank statements should be reconciled promptly upon receipt by a staff member independent of the cash receipts and disbursement functions. Statements should be delivered unopened to this staff member.
- In performing the reconciliation's, the staff member should check for the following:

*Deposits*

- Compare dates and amounts of daily deposits as shown on the bank statements with the cash receipt journal.
- Investigate bank transfers to see that both sides of the transaction have been recorded in the unit's financial records.

*Disbursements*

- Account for all check numbers, including voided checks.
- Examine canceled checks for authorized signatures, irregular endorsements and alterations
- Look for checks payable to cash. Investigate these items.
- Bank reconciliation procedures should always include comparing the reconciled balance to the balance per the general ledger for accuracy.

**Question 43- Budget and Cash Flow Spreadsheet**

**Please use the spreadsheets provided by GADOE, which list detailed budget information projecting revenues and expenditures for the first five years of the proposed charter term. If any sources of revenue appearing in the spreadsheets are anticipated to come from private sources, documentation of such revenues must be included along with the petition. Include a budget that complies with O.C.G.A § 20-2-171.**

The required spreadsheet is provided in Appendix O. However, the budget spreadsheet is structured for new charter school with planning year. The planning year budget is not applicable to us, so we start in year 1. However, due to the formulae embedded in the spreadsheet that require numbers in designated cells, our planning year. Cash flow ends up with red flags.

**Question 44- Chief Financial Officers**

**Identify the school's Chief Financial Officer and describe how that person's credentials comply with the Guidance for Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-9-.04 for the purpose of developing and adhering to generally accepted accounting principles.**

The Chief Financial Officer of PATH Academy has a B.A. in accounting, an M.BA, and an M. Tax degrees. She also has 8 years of experience in accounting and finance.

**Question 45: Student Recruitment**

- a. **Provide a description of the method used to recruit the number of anticipate student at the school and a statement setting forth the school pain for maintaining and/or increasing attendance**
- b. **Describe the manner in which the school's enrollment count will be determined for the calculating charter school funding, pursuant to O.C.G.A. 20-2-2068 or O.C. G.A. 20-2-2090 (d), as appropriate.**

Information concerning student recruitment can be found in Question 23.

**Question 46 -**

**Provide a statement stating that the petitioner acknowledges that, if approved by both the DeKalb and State Board of Education, the charter school will begin to receive state and local funding from the DeKalb County School District on July 31st of the academic year the school begins operations.**

N/A

**Question 47 –Identify the representatives of the school who will be responsible for the financial management of the charter, and describe plans to procure and maintain during the entire length of the charter a Crime/Fidelity Bond covering all persons receiving or disbursing funds. The DCSD required bond amount is \$1 million.**

The Governing Board and the CEO/Principal will be responsible for the financial management of the charter. The details of fiscal responsibilities and fiscal control and management are in

question 42 and the Bylaws. Information of Crime/Fidelity Bond in the amount of \$1 million is provided in Appendix P.

**Question 48- Other Sources of Funding, Grants, and Fundraising** Charter schools are encouraged to submit grant applications to federal, state, and local government agencies. In addition, charter schools may receive funds from private sources such as corporations, individuals, foundations, and philanthropic groups. The charter school shall be solely responsible for the use and accountability of any federal, state, private or local grants. In addition, the charter school shall be solely responsible for the repayment of any loans or demands for the repayment of grant funds obtained by the school.

- a. **Please describe in detail the school's plans for securing other sources of funding. This plan should demonstrate financial independence from the school district by using state and local funds and a feasible plan to supplement those funds with other funding sources on a yearly basis as required.**

Since 2002 PATH Academy has acquired grants from the various sources such as Federal Department of Education, foundations, private companies, and individuals, as well as in monetary donations and in-kind donations from non-profit organizations, foundations, private companies and individuals. In 2014-2015 school year PATH Academy plans to submit a grant application for GADoE's Facility Grant and other grants that are available for non-profit organization or charter schools.

- b. **Describe any planned fundraising efforts and who will lead and coordinate these efforts. Because there is no guarantee that these funds will be awarded, you must describe how your school would remain solvent if you do not receive these funds.**

PATH Academy PTO plans fund raising twice a year. The first one starts in fall and the second one in spring. Usually PTO raises approximately \$10,000/annually.

- c. **Independent private funding sources that have been secured must be evident through a letter of intent, commitment letters, and/or loan agreements from the funder. This may be included as an Appendix items.**

N/A.

- d. **If any, provide evidence of your organization's federal tax-exempt status in the Appendix.**

DeKalb PATH Academy's federal tax-exempt can be found in Appendix M.

## **XI. DESCRIPTION OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

### **Question 49- Governing Boards or School Councils**

**Please disclose how the school will be governed by stating whether the school will utilize a governing board or a local school council as provided for in O.C.G.A. § 20-2-85.**

DeKalb PATH Academy INC. is governed by a nonprofit governing board. The governing board consists of members of the local community representing a diversity of

expertise including legal, business, non-profits, financial, accounting, and education. The board also consists of a variety of stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and the community. The specific composition of the board is described in the Bylaws in Appendix H.

**Question 50- Board Control and Management**

**Please state that the governing board shall be subject to the control and management of the local board and subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 et seq. and 50-18-70 et seq.**

The governing board of DeKalb PATH Academy has the autonomy in making decisions on behalf of the school in the following matters including but not limited to:

- Personnel decision
- Financial decision
- Curriculum and instruction
- Resource allocation
- Establishing and monitoring the achievement of school improvement goals
- School operation

See governance matrix in Appendix H.

With the above autonomy, the governing board is subject to the control and management of the DeKalb County Board of Education and is subject to the provisions of O.C.G.A. §§ 50-14-1 et seq. and 50-18-70 et seq.

**Question 51- Governing Board Roles, Functions and Composition**

*Describe in detail the following:*

- *The governing board’s function, duties, and composition (the minimum number of board members required by DCSD is five).*

The role of the DeKalb PATH Academy governing board is to provide supervision, control, and direction to the management of DeKalb PATH Academy. The board’s functions include setting policies; advancing the mission, purpose, and objectives of the PATH Academy; and supervising the disbursement of funds. The board is responsible for the hiring, supervision, and evaluation of the CEO/Principal.

The governing board’s duties include assuring that the school has adequate resources to fulfill its mission; monitoring the financial health of the school by approving the annual budget and reviewing monthly financial statements; assuring that the principal/CEO has the moral and professional support needed to effectively manage and lead the school to success; serving as liaison between the school and the community; championing the school’s mission; and measuring the performance of the school in relation to its charter goals and objectives.

The board is composed of 9 members representing various fields of expertise, including legal, finance, accounting, business, and education. The board at all times consists of

two parent representatives and one faculty representative. Below is a list of the current board members:

Mark Zamora	Community Member	Chair
Ginger Williams	Community Member	Vice Chair
Joseph Patin	Community Member	Treasurer
Veronica Linder	Parent	Secretary
Fernando Juarez	Parent	Member
Veronica Tinsley	Teacher Rep.	Member
Whitney Deal	Community Member	Member
Monica Miles	Community Member	Member
Tabitha Press	Community Member	Member

• *How will the governing board’s role uphold the school’s mission and vision? Please provide specific examples.*

Through its role as supervisory body of the organization, the board holds the CEO/principal and the school accountable for fulfilling the school’s mission and meeting the performance goals and objectives of the charter. It does so by annually evaluating the performance of the school in relation to its charter and to state accountability measures, including the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI), the Beating the Odds (BTO) index, and Student Academic Growth Measure . In addition, the board assists with fundraising and establishing community partnerships to assure that the principal/CEO has sufficient resources to fulfill the school’s mission.

• *How will the governing board evaluate the principal’s performance? This should include the assessment tool that will be used to determine effectiveness.*

The board evaluates the principal’s performance annually based on the school’s performance on the goals and objectives of its charter; the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI); and the Beating the Odds (BTO) index. In addition, the board is in the process of being trained in the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) tool. These tools help the board to determine the principal’s effectiveness as the school leader, to inform decisions regarding the type and amount of support the principal may need, to inform policies that affect the leader’s performance, and ultimately to determine

the direction of the school regarding leadership each year. The DeKalb PATH Academy governing board strongly believes that effective leadership is critical to the success of the school, and takes seriously its role in evaluating the principal's performance.

• *How will the governing board ensure effective organizational planning and financial stability? Please provide specific examples.*

The governing board oversees the organizational effectiveness and financial stability of the school. The board analyzes monthly financial statements at each board meeting. The school CFO is present at each meeting to explain financial statements answer board members' questions. In addition, the board analyzes and approves the annual budget at the beginning of each fiscal year. The board has a treasurer and members with business, financial, and accounting expertise who bring their knowledge and skills to the table throughout this process.

• *How and when will governing board members be selected?*

Presently the governing board consists of member with diverse background and expertise. The board will continue to maintain a diverse board with board skillset by recruiting interested persons in the community through word of mouth, advertisement, and suggestions from GA Charter Schools Association when a vacancy occurs on the board. The prospective board members will be selected based on the needs of the board on his/her demonstrated support for the school's mission, and willingness to commit the necessary time and energy to the role. Prospective members are invited to consider serving on the board, asked to submit a CV or resume, and interviewed by the board. New members are then elected to office by a majority vote.

• *How long will each governing board member serve?*

Per the bylaws of DeKalb PATH Academy, Inc., members of the governing board serve for a term of 3 years, and until their successors are elected and qualified, or until their earlier death, resignation or removal. See Appendix H.

• *How will the governing board ensure that current and future members avoid conflicts of interests?*

DeKalb PATH Academy Inc. has a comprehensive written conflict of interest policy in its bylaws. All board members with a potential conflict of interest are required to disclose that interest to the board. The board then has procedures in place to discuss the potential conflict of interest and determine whether a conflict exists. Per the bylaws, the board is required to exercise due diligence through this process. If a member of the board fails to disclose a conflict of interest, then the board is obligated to take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action. The detailed policy and procedures are included in the bylaws attached in Appendix H.

• *How will governing board members be trained? How often?*

DeKalb PATH Academy governing board members receive regular training in principles and best practices of charter school governance. Board members participate in training provided by the Georgia Charter Schools Association(GCSA). This includes online offerings, in-person courses, and GCSA’s annual conference. Training topics include introduction to board governance, introduction to management, and budgets. Training determinations are individualized based on the member’s needs and role on the board. For the 2014-2015 school year, a member of the education committee is a credentialed Leadership Key Effectiveness System (LKES) evaluator.

In addition, the governing board recently underwent a comprehensive board assessment and development process. During school year 2012-2013, via a grant from partner and landlord Oglethorpe University, the board hired a consultant from the Georgia Center for Nonprofits to conduct assessment of the board’s effectiveness and provide recommendations for improvement. As a result of this process, a number of changes were made to the board, including the expansion of the board to 9-11 members.

• *How will governing board members be removed from office, if necessary?*

Per DeKalb PATH Academy bylaws, any or all of the directors may be removed with or without cause by a majority vote of the entire Board at any special meeting of the Board called for that purpose.

• *Provide a brief plan for continuous governance training, recruitment and retention of high quality governing board members.*

Board members will continue to be required to participate in annual training. The board will continue to utilize the services of GCSA, as well as utilizing consultants and internal expertise. Prospective new members will be recruited by current board members, and vetted and interviewed by the board before the board votes to approve a new member. Ongoing training for current members helps to ensure retention of high quality governing board members.

• *Briefly explain the recruitment plan of new members if vacancies occur.*

As explained above, when a vacancy occurs on the board, new members are recruited members to replace the outgoing member. Prospective members are targeted based on areas of expertise with the goal of maintaining a diverse board with expertise in the areas of governance, business, finance, non-profits, law, and education. They are identified through the business and personal networks of current board members. If a vacancy for the parent representative position becomes vacant, new members will be recruited through the PTO. Similarly, if a vacancy occurs in the faculty representative position, a qualified faculty member will be recruited to replace that member.

**Question 52- Parent and Community Involvement on the Governing Board*****a. How will parents, community members, or other interested parties be involved in the charter school's governing board?***

DeKalb PATH Academy bylaws require that two board members be parents or guardians of currently enrolled DeKalb PATH Academy students. Parent representatives on the board act as liaisons between the board, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), and the community. They provide a crucial parent voice on the board, and keep the board informed of the activities of the PTO.

***b. How will the school promote parental and staff involvement in school governance?***

DeKalb PATH Academy bylaws ensure that two board members be parents or guardians of currently enrolled DeKalb PATH Academy students at least one board member be a current faculty member. Parent representatives serve as the bridge between the board and parent community, assuring open lines of communication and cooperation between the board and PATH parents. Similarly, the faculty representative provides a voice for the teachers and staff on the board, and helps to keep the board informed regarding what is happening in the school.

***c. How will the school communicate with students' families?***

The school communicates with families regularly, frequently, and through multiple means, including written communication, in person meetings, phone calls, email, and through the school website. All communication with families is done in a language understood by the parents. Governing board activities, including meeting dates, minutes and major decisions are regularly communicated to students' families. Because there are parent representatives on the board, communication between the board and students' families is regular and productive.

**Question 53- Certificate of Incorporation**

*In the appendix, attach an official copy of the certificate of incorporation for the required Georgia nonprofit corporation from the Georgia Secretary of State, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(b)(4). (Conversion Charter Schools do not need to provide certificates of incorporation; however, the by-laws to be used by the governing board are still required).*

The certificate of incorporation is included in Appendix M.

**Question 54- Bylaws**

*In the appendix, please provide the proposed charter school's bylaws, pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-2065(b)(4). (All petitions must provide a copy of the by-laws in final form; no drafts.)*

Bylaws are provided in Appendix H.

**Question 55- Conflict of Interest**

Signed Conflict of Interest forms are provided in Appendix H.

**Question 56– Board Member Resumes**

Board member resumes are provided in Appendix H.

**Question 57- Grievances and Conflict Resolution between Parties**

*a. What will the governing board's role be in resolving teacher, parent, and student grievances and other conflicts? This should include specific procedures and protocols for grievance resolution for each group.*

The governing board's role in resolving the conflict between parties has been explained in the response to Question 26. The Board will hold hearing of grievances as needed when the complainant is not satisfied with the Principal's or CEO's decision. The procedure and timeline is also explained in the response to Question 26.

*b. Describe the plan or method that the charter school's governing board will utilize for resolving conflicts with the DeKalb County School District and/or Board of Education. Explain how conflicts will be addressed and resolved.*

PATH Academy believes that the school and the District have had a long amiable relationship. Usually the conflicts have been resolved at the District level. PATH hopes to continue the practice for which all conflicts will be resolved at the school and District level first with conversation and in writing. However, if the each party or both is dissatisfied with the resolution, mediation will be requested to the Charter School Division, Georgia Department of Education.

*c. Describe the method that the governing board plans to utilize for resolving internal conflicts.*

The Governing Board welcomes comments from all employees. The Board members are available to talk to employees at all times. Therefore, employees can report any grievance verbally or in writing. However, there is a procedure that the complainant can talk if he or she is unable to resolve the conflict at the lower personnel level. The procedure is explained in response to Question 26.

**Question 58- Business Arrangements or Partnerships with Existing Schools, Educational Programs, or Non-Profit Entities.**

PATH Academy has partnership with the following organization:

Oglethorpe University

Latin American Association

Reach for Excellence

Our Lady of the Assumption (OLA)

**Question 59-Contract with Charter Management Organization (CMO) or Education Management Organization (EMOs)**

N/A

**Question 60-Legal Counsel**

PATH Academy has secured representation as legal counsel by the law firm of Kilpatrick Townsend, LLP, which has agreed to represent the school on a pro bono basis on legal matters and provide legal advice to help the school ensure compliance with the requirements of law with respect to legal issues. Kilpatrick Townsend, LLP has reviewed the DCSD charter petitioner guidelines and the petition documents being submitted. In addition, two of the members of PATH Academy's Governing Board are attorneys who have agreed to provide their legal expertise to the school on legal issues.

**Question 61- Indemnification and Insurance Requirements**

Information concerning indemnification and insurance requirements is provided in Appendix P.

**Question- 62 Required Appendices and Statements in the Appendices**

Required appendices are provided in the petition.

**Question 63- DCSD Assurances and Required Statements**

Assurances and required statements are in front of this application.