

ATHLOS ACADEMY OF ST. CLOUD



Prepared Mind ● Healthy Body ● Performance Character

Planned Opening: Fall 2016

Volunteers of America - Minnesota
Application for Charter Authorization

COVER SHEET

VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA-MINNESOTA

CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR AUTHORIZATION

Proposed Name of New Charter Public School

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud

Contact Information

(School mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail)

Site not yet determined. Site identification will proceed upon charter approval.

Name of Primary Contact **Primary Contact Information** (If different from above)
(Mailing address, phone number, fax number, and e-mail)

Grade Levels Served When **Number of Students When Fully Enrolled**

Fully Enrolled

K-12 1200 student's at capacity

Proposed Opening Date **Where Will the School be Located?**

2016 Within St. Cloud School District 742

Is this charter public school a conversion of an existing district public school (see Minn. Stat. § 124D.10, subd. 5 (2008))?

If “yes”, attach a separate sheet with an explanation.

A conversion request is considered only with evidence of both: No

- *A petition from at least 60% of a school’s full-time teachers seeking conversion; and*
- *Approved public school district board minutes recognizing the petition.*

Is this charter public school an expansion of an existing education program in any form (public, private, or otherwise)? No

If “yes”, attach a separate sheet with an explanation.

Is this charter public school planning to offer any online coursework? No

Has the new charter public school been approved by the State of Minnesota as a nonprofit corporation or cooperative? No

If no, provide a specific date by which the new charter public school plans to be approved as a Minnesota nonprofit corporation or cooperative. Date: Fall 2016

FOUNDER CONTACT LIST

**VOLUNTEERS OF AMERICA-MINNESOTA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FOR
AUTHORIZATION**

Provide information for ALL individuals directly involved in the development of this new charter public school (founders, board members, developers, grant writers, consultants, etc.)

Type all information in the form fields below.

Name	Phone Number	E-Mail Address	Developer Role (board member, consultant, etc.)	Minnesota Teacher License File Folder #
Dan McKeon	██████████	██████████	██████████	██████████
Jackie Reineke	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Lee Hoyhta	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Josh Hirschfield	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Stephanie Gardner	██████████	██████████	██████████	

Table of Contents

- I. [Executive Summary](#)6

- II. [School Foundation](#)7
 - A. [Need](#)7
 - B. [Vision and Mission](#)12
 - C. [Innovation and Purpose](#)13
 - D. [Learning Program, Student Achievement, and Accountability](#)15
 - E. [Alignment with VOA-MN Hallmarks](#)45

- III. [Pre-Operational Planning](#)49
 - A. [School Founders](#)49
 - B. [Governance](#)50
 - C. [Marketing, Outreach, Enrollment, and Admissions](#)59
 - D. [School Calendar](#)64
 - E. [Staffing and Management](#)71

- IV. [Program Implementation and Budget](#)78
 - A. [Facility Plan](#)78
 - B. [Transportation Plan](#)80
 - C. [Four-Year Operational Budget](#)83
 - D. [Budget Narrative](#)87

- V. [Governance Attachments](#)94
 - A. [Founders’ Resumes](#)94

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MISSION - The mission of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is to provide high quality educational opportunities for the whole child built on the three foundational pillars of Prepared Mind, Healthy Body, and Performance Character.

VISION - The Vision of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is to produce students who are well-prepared to face life's challenges and who have developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills as well as a broad knowledge base and healthy lifestyle habits. The school's culture celebrates high academic achievement, fosters individual growth in athletics and performance character, and promotes regular family engagement.

PURPOSE – In accordance with §MN124D.10, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud seeks to provide learning opportunities for all students through the implementation of innovative teaching methods.

GRADES & TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION – Athlos Academy of St. Cloud intends to serve a total student population of approximately 1200 students at a K-12 campus. During the first year of operation the school will reflect a K-6 enrollment which will roll into a full K-12 program.

INTENDED LOCATION – Athlos Academy of St. Cloud has not yet chosen a specific location for the first campus. However, it will be located within the boundaries of School District 742.

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY - Graduates of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud embody the performance character traits research identifies as more predictive of a person's success than intellectual talent or educational attainment (Duckworth 2007; Tough 2013). The purposeful development of grit, leadership, and social intelligence prepares all students for the rigor of advanced high school and college courses and arms them with the self-confidence and social intelligence necessary to be successful in a competitive world.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH - By way of student-centered instruction that incorporates workshops, centers, and direct instruction, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud teachers effectively support students while simultaneously inspiring them to develop the autonomy and integrity necessary to be successful as independent, self-motivated learners. The partnership of these instructional methods ensures students receive systematic, explicit, and efficient instruction that can then be applied to relevant, real-world situations.

MEETING STUDENT NEEDS - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will achieve high levels of academic achievement while lowering district-wide dropout rates by instilling students with strong academic skills, healthy bodies, and resilient performance character traits.

II. SCHOOL FOUNDATION

A. NEED

Description of evidence – Athlos Academy of St. Cloud proposes to locate within the St. Cloud School District 742. The school is partnering with The Charter School Fund (TCSF) to secure facilities which the school will lease. Currently, TCSF is actively looking for suitable properties. While the exact location of the school’s first campus is yet to be determined, the area in which the school is seeking to be located would greatly benefit from the three pillar approach of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud.

All eight of the traditional elementary and middle schools in St. Cloud School District 742 that did not achieve AYP in 2014 (five of which also did not achieve AYP in 2013)¹ are within 5 miles of the likely location of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud. 51% of students, district wide, scored below proficiency² on the MCA Mathematics exam in 2014, and 53% of students scored at this level on the MCA Reading exam³. In comparison, the state average in these combined categories was 39.5% in Mathematics and 41% in Reading. Overall, 12% more students scored below proficiency in the St. Cloud district than across the state of Minnesota in both Mathematics and Reading.

¹ AYP 2014 – Not Making AYP Report. Minnesota Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Data/>

² These figures represent the “does not meet standard” and “partially meets standard” categories combined.

³ Academic Standards. Minnesota Report Card. Retrieved from <http://rc.education.state.mn.us/#academicStandards/>

The high number of struggling schools and the degree to which these schools are struggling to support student achievement speak to a local need for high quality academic programs. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is prepared to provide students with research-based curriculum that provides for broad differentiation as well as high levels of professional development support for teachers through on-site instructional coaches, third party curriculum specific workshops, and ample PLC time.

Another important indicator of community need for a school with a strong Performance Character program is the number of discipline referrals in St. Cloud School District 742. The number of referrals increased to 585 reported referrals in 2012 ⁴(the last year for which this data is publically available). This is nearly 100 more than reported in the previous year. This factor indicates a need for a stronger sense of school culture and a research based, preventative approach to discipline. The Athlos Academies Performance Character program is designed to be such a program as it includes community building morning meetings, community celebrations, and continuous conversation with students and their families about student performance character growth.

While many factors contribute to graduation rates, failure to achieve academic success in the early grades (i.e. reading on grade level by 3rd grade, etc.⁵) as well as high rates of discipline referrals and low rates of family engagement are established contributors to the dropout crisis. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud intends to support student education from Kindergarten through

⁴ Minnesota Department of Education. "Number of Disciplinary Actions, Trend Report." Data Reports and Analytics. Retrieved from <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp>

⁵ Education Week. Diplomas Count 2014.

graduation. The district wide graduation rate is a full 10% below state average (70% district, 79.8% state). Of the students who did not graduate in 2014, 6.8% dropped out (as opposed to the state average of 5.1%)⁶.

The “State Indicator Report on Physical Activity 2014⁷” published by the Center for Disease Control reports that between 20 and 25% of Minnesota residents do not engage in sufficient physical activity. In addition, approximately 13% of 9th grade students in Minnesota struggled with obesity as of 2010⁸. The overall prevalence of obesity in Minnesota reached 25.5% by 2013⁹. All of these factors argue for a need to develop programs that help students develop healthy living habits from an early age, a primary mission goal of the Athlos Academy of St. Cloud model.

Additionally, the proposed location of school has a higher rate of low income families than the district as a whole. Low income populations tend to have a positive correlation with poorer levels of nutrition and greater prevalence of obesity¹⁰. Statewide, 38.5% of students in Minnesota qualify for free and reduced lunch. This rate is significantly higher in the St. Cloud

⁶ Minnesota Department of Education. Minnesota Report Card. Graduation Rates. Retrieved from <http://rc.education.state.mn.us/#graduation/>

⁷ Center for Disease Control. (2014). State Indicator Report on Physical Activity. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/downloads/pa_state_indicator_report_2014.pdf

⁸ Minnesota Department of Health. 2014. Children and Adolescent Overweight Fact Sheet. Accessed from <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdr/obesity/pdfdocs/childreoverwightfactsheet.pdf>

⁹ Minnesota Department of Health. 2014. Overweight and Obesity Prevention. Accessed from <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdr/obesity/index.html>

¹⁰ Center for Disease Control. (2014). Childhood Obesity Facts. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>

school district, at 54%¹¹. However, of the students at the public schools within 5 miles of the proposed location 67% receive free or reduced lunch¹².

It is important to also note that St. Cloud is a commuter city. Within a 20 mile radius of the proposed location of the school, the student population is over 40,000¹³. Of the families who live in this area, 56.7% of the working population commutes more than 15 minutes to work each day. The location of the school takes into consideration easy access to main routes of through traffic in order to fill seats.

Statewide goals – Athlos Academy of St. Cloud offers a promising and innovative model for providing high-quality charter school education to the St. Cloud community. [The Three Pillar](#) approach (page 14) is supported by high-quality curriculum designed to support academic achievement, athletic performance, and performance character development for every and each student. By combining high-quality programs in these three areas, the school will provide a whole-child approach to education that recognizes the relationships between body, mind, and character.

The academic curriculum choices are [research-based](#) (page 16) and have strong track-records of student achievement. [Literacy](#) (page 17) and [Mathematics](#) (page 22) are further strengthened by programs designed to support effective differentiation thereby assisting teachers in meeting the

¹¹ Minnesota Department of Education. Minnesota Report Card. Demographics. Retrieved from <http://rc.education.state.mn.us/#demographics>

¹² Minnesota Department of Education. On Track District Data 2014. Retrieved from <http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Data.jsp>

¹³ Applied Geographic Solutions 08-2014, Tiger Geography

varying needs of students, specifically students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, special education, and English Language Learner services, all of whom are underperforming in the district.

The research-based [Performance Character Curriculum \(page 30\)](#) is designed to build social intelligence and a sense of community throughout the school while engaging whole families in the learning process. The [Healthy Body Pillar \(page 27\)](#) is designed to celebrate every student as an athlete, building confidence and a sense of team, while physically activating the brain in ways that are research proven to lead to greater academic achievement. This pillar includes a physical fitness for every child, health and nutrition curriculum, and a culture of wellness throughout the school.

While the academic program is promising in its support of addressing the achievement gap, it is the combination of the Three Pillars that really speaks to the innovation of the Athlos Academy of St. Cloud program. While many schools run character education and physical education programs as a side note to their academic programs, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud believes that greater academic achievement for all students will be achieved by bringing performance character education and healthy lifestyle into the forefront of our educational programs.

Community support – The St. Cloud area currently offers little choice in education to families. While Stride Academy serves a population of 527 students in grades K-8, the district serves over 10,000 students in grades K-12¹⁴. While Stride Academy reports a waiting list, the options for

¹⁴ Minnesota Department of Education. Minnesota Report Card. Retrieved from <http://rc.education.state.mn.us/>

choice in education are limited in St. Cloud and families in the area have yet to be well educated about the opportunities charter schools can provide for their children. Additionally, there is no school in the St. Cloud area that provides a focus on developing healthy living habits as a primary focus of the school. The Athlos Academy of St. Cloud model has developed strong community support in Brooklyn Park, evidenced by high levels of enrollment and several hundred students on waiting lists in grades K-6. The founders of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud believe the school will be as well received in the St. Cloud area. This is especially supported as Athlos Academy schools across the country currently have waiting lists that top 2000 per campus, a feat that has been achieved in only a few short years.

Nearby schools and programs - The Athlos Academy of St. Cloud Board of Directors is working with The Charter School Fund (TCSF) to identify suitable land for the first of the three proposed campuses. The following list indicates nearby schools and programs: Discovery Community Elementary, Kennedy Elementary, Westwood elementary, Central MN Joint Powers District, and Stride Academy Charter School. Private schools include, All Saints Academy St. Joseph, All Saints Academy Waite Park, Apostolic Christian Academy, and Holy Innocents.

B. VISION & MISSION

VISION - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will produce students who are well-prepared to face the challenges of life, and who have developed critical-thinking skills, a broad knowledge base, and healthy lifestyle habits. Graduates of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will embody the performance character traits research identifies as more predictive of a person's success than

intellectual talent or educational attainment, including grit, leadership, and social intelligence ([Duckworth 2007](#); [Tough2013](#); [Seligman 2006](#)).

At Athlos Academy of St. Cloud, families engage regularly in promoting the development of the whole child, including mind, body, and character. Students have high levels of self-confidence, perform well in advanced high school courses, and are prepared for success in college and career.

It is our ultimate goal that Athlos Academy of St. Cloud students become lifelong learners who understand that learning, wellness, and strong performance character are inextricably connected. As a result, our vision is that all students who graduate from the school mature into courageous, persevering, humble leaders who contribute to a better society and daily inspire others in their careers and communities to live fulfilling, responsible, and successful lives.

MISSION- The mission of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is to provide high quality educational opportunities for the whole child built on the three foundational pillars of Prepared Mind, Healthy Body, and Performance Character.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud provides research-based academic programs that promote standards based learning and are full of personal relevance and purpose. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud regularly integrates scientifically designed physical activity and wellness programs into the daily experience of all students that challenge obesity and promote academic achievement. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud incorporates a daily focus on essential performance character traits

taught collaboratively and measured cooperatively. The school implements high-quality instructional and assessment practices and uses data-driven decision making.

C. INNOVATION AND PURPOSE

NEW AND UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS - The Athlos Academy of St. Cloud educational model consists of three Pillars: Prepared Mind, Healthy Body, and Performance Character. This model is rooted in the belief that each pillar is intrinsically dependent on the strength of the other two and that the overall success of a child in college, career, and life is at its best advantage when supported by high quality programs in all three pillars.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud provides a new and unique approach to teaching and learning in that every student engages in four scientifically developed physical activity sessions each week, performance character is integrated into the culture of the school, and high academic achievement is an expectation for all students.

IMPROVING LEARNING AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT - The research of scholars such as Phillip D. Tomporowski and Peter Van Duncan¹⁵ clearly demonstrates the interconnectedness of physical activity and academic performance: physically fit, healthy students are higher achievers in the classroom¹⁶. In addition, Angela Duckworth's research on

¹⁵ Van Duncan P. (2011). Associations of Physical Fitness and Academic Performance Among Schoolchildren. *Journal of School Health*; Dec2011, Vol. 81 Issue 12, p733-740, 8p.

performance character development clearly aligns traits such as “grit” with high levels of achievement in the classroom and beyond¹⁷.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud asserts that a Prepared Mind can only reach its fullest potential when innovative academic curriculum is combined with regular physical activity and performance character development. One component alone certainly contributes to a student’s overall success, but does not maximize it. John Ratey, MD, author of *Spark*, emphasizes the connections between academic performance and physical fitness in this way: “That which we call thinking is the evolutionary internalization of movement.”¹⁸ His work illustrates that better fitness leads to greater abilities for the brain to stay focused, and therefore leads to higher academic achievement. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud seeks to implement a program aimed specifically at improving student learning and achievement through the implementation of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud’s Three Pillar program.

OTHER STATUTORY PURPOSES – Athlos Academy of St. Cloud promotes learning for all pupils through a commitment to best practices in assessment (§124.D10.1). This includes professional development for all teachers, dedicated PLC time for data analysis, and a meaningful system of observations and feedback for all teachers. The school encourages the use of different and innovative teaching methods (§124D.10.2), including integrating physical activity into each school day and heavily incorporating performance character in the school culture. The school will not only measure academic learning outcomes, but will also implement

¹⁷ Duckworth, Angela, and Peterson, Christopher. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 92 (6). 1087-1101.

¹⁸ Ratey, John J.,M.D. (2013). *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*. Page 40.

innovative means of measuring other mission based goals (§124.D10.3). This includes utilizing the Fitness Gram assessment to measure Healthy Body Performance as well as implementing a Performance Character assessment and reporting system developed by Athlos Academies. These measures allow the school to be uniquely accountable for achieving academic goals and other charter promises (§124.D10.4). Additionally, the school provides new professional opportunities for teachers by providing approximately 50 professional classroom and leadership positions in the local community that promote and provide support for teachers to develop cutting edge best practices in teaching and learning (§123.D10.5).

D. LEARNING PROGRAM, STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY, CURRICULA, TOOLS, METHODS, & INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNIQUES

Educational Philosophy

Athlos is a Greek word meaning “feat”, an act of skill, endurance, imagination, or strength. We believe children are capable of achieving great feats in all areas of their lives. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud asserts that learning and wellness are inextricably connected. The school’s educational philosophy is based on three pillars of whole child education: Prepared Mind, Healthy Body, and Performance Character. We believe that each pillar is dependent on the strength of the other two and that together they prepare students to achieve success in college, career, and life.

We believe that research-based academic, athletic, and performance character programs provide carefully crafted opportunities for students to learn and grow. We believe that the use of valid

and reliable assessments reflects our commitment to continuous growth. We believe that talking openly and honestly about student learning as it relates to academic standards and performance character traits encourages students to take ownership of their learning and engages families in the process. And we believe in delivering an engaging curriculum that is aligned vertically, across disciplines, and to standards.

In an environment that promotes research-based curriculum, strong assessment practices, and family engagement, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud relies on Student Centered Instructional strategies to ensure students achieve their fullest academic potential. This approach requires significant investment in ongoing professional development for teachers, administrators, and staff. At Athlos Academy of St. Cloud, instruction is presented by outstanding teachers, working in partnership with families in a values-rich and data-driven environment.

The Healthy Body program engages students in becoming more active learners by teaching discipline, motivation, and teamwork. This program seeks to improve physical health, athletic skill, and the self-image of all students. Studies show that students who engage in a regular and effective physical education program show greater academic achievement gains than their peers who do not have such athletic training opportunities.

CURRICULA AND TOOLS: PREPARED MIND/ ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud refers to its academic program as the Prepared Mind Pillar. Curriculum and instruction will be aligned with the Minnesota State Academic Standards as stated in the Alignment to Minnesota State Academic Standards section of the charter.

The school will incorporate curriculum resources designed by Athlos Academies and other outside sources in order to facilitate high quality teaching and learning in the school.

Criteria for All Curricula at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud

- The program is in alignment with the Minnesota State Academic Standards.
- The program maintains quality vertical and horizontal alignment.
- The program is structured but allows for significant differentiation.
- The program encourages multiple teaching modalities.
- The program offers interdisciplinary opportunities and contextual learning.
- The program encourages relevant, real-world application of knowledge and skills.
- The program promotes skills to critically and innovatively analyze and synthesize learning.
- The program offers professional development materials or opportunities.

The curricula Athlos Academy of St. Cloud has chosen will be used either to drive or supplement instruction. Administrators and teachers will work together to develop curriculum maps that identify the specific content, context, supporting materials, and cross-curricular integration. Significant curricular resources, mentorship opportunities, and coaching are provided by the school to support emerging teachers, but the opportunity to have more flexibility in the classroom is offered to teachers who may be approaching master teacher status.

This approach stems from the notion that every classroom presents its teacher with a different set of strengths and challenges, and a unique breadth of culture, interests, and talents. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud believes that instructional choices and curriculum incorporation should be guided in structure at a school-wide level, but that high-quality and well-supported teachers know their students best and need sufficient flexibility under the umbrella of curriculum in order

to teach well. Teachers at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will be encouraged and empowered to take ownership of their work and, as a result, will become more confident, stronger educators.

LITERACY - The following curricula have been chosen as resources for facilitating teaching and learning. Professional development is incorporated throughout the year. Initial training will focus on implementation procedures. Ongoing training will focus on achieving student success in alignment with state standards.

Lucy Calkins Units of Study for Teaching Reading and Writing– Teachers will be encouraged to use these units of study as the core of the K-5 writing curriculum to ensure students develop strong reading and writing skills that can be applied across all disciplines. The curriculum provides K-5th grade specific support for teaching writing workshops that will help students meet and exceed the Minnesota State Academic Standards. Lucy Calkins’s work is based on the following 7 principles of literacy research¹⁹:

- There are fundamental qualities of all good reading and writing.
- Using a specific process to teach the complexities of writing increases student achievement.
- Students benefit from teaching that offers direct instruction, guided practice, and independent practice.
- To write and read well, students need dedicated time every day with specific expectations of volume and stamina.
- A successful curriculum provides differentiated instruction.
- Writing and reading are a joined process and students learn best when they are meaningfully connected.
- Students need clear goals and frequent feedback.

¹⁹ Calkins, Lucy, with Colleagues from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. (2014). “Research Base: Units of Study.” Firsthand Heinemann. Retrieved from <http://www.heinemann.com/shared/onlineresources/E00871/UoSWResearchBase85x11.pdf>

Units of Study for Teaching Writing - There are four units of study per grade level that are organized around the three types of writing included in the Common Core—opinion/argument writing, information writing, and narrative writing. Each unit contains 18-22 lessons, each including all the teaching points, mini-lessons, student conference guidelines, and small-group activities required to teach writing comprehensively in a writer’s workshop style.

The curriculum comes complete with significant professional development opportunities, a set of teacher instructional resources, and digital student support materials. It also includes a set of valid and reliable performance assessments and a scope and sequence of learning progressions across opinion, information, and narrative writing that include benchmark student texts, writing checklists, and assessment rubrics. Uniquely, this curriculum supports differentiation through an “If...Then...Curriculum” which offers alternate units of study presented as if/then scenarios that support targeted instruction to meet the needs of both excelling and struggling students.

Units of Study for Teaching Reading - offers resources for teachers to implement rigorous and responsive reading workshops. Teachers will be encouraged to use these units of study or similarly designed units as the core of the K-5 reading curriculum. The carefully organized spiral curriculum and sequential units of study provides K-5 support for teaching students how to read with sophistication and engagement. Each of the unit books provides a comprehensive roadmap for teaching a reading workshop, helps teachers plan goals, mini-lessons, independent reading time, share sessions, and assessment for that unit.

Similar to the Units of Study for Teaching Writing, supplementary materials include: professional development opportunities, a set of teacher instructional resources, and digital student support materials.

Cost: The cost of implementing this curriculum includes professional development, teacher support resources of approximately \$1000 per set and a series of “ Trade Book Packs” that include the texts referenced throughout the units of study and that model effective writing techniques and provide significant background knowledge that encouraging students to read as writers.

Engage NY ELA Curriculum Modules²⁰ – *Engage NY ELA Curricula* is a free, open source series of teaching modules commissioned by the New York State Department of Education to support its transition to Common Core learning. These modules were developed by Expeditionary Learning²¹, an organization supporting high performing schools for more than 15 years. The modules will serve as full curriculum for emerging teachers and as curriculum structural guides for more advanced educators. This curriculum was chosen to ensure that during the school’s first years of operation, high quality curriculum design is incorporated into the learning experience of students and that teachers have the opportunity to experience teaching such units.

²⁰All modules, including curriculum maps, unit and lesson plans with common core alignment, and recommended text lists can be downloaded here: <https://www.engageny.org/resource/grade-3-ela-module-1-unit-1>

²¹ <http://elschools.org/>

The curriculum includes six modules for each grade level from 3rd to 8th grade. These modules focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking in response to high-quality texts. Each module is intended to last a quarter of a school year; the additional modules allow for teacher choice throughout the year. The modules sequence and scaffold content aligned to the Common Core Standards and associated national tests, including PARCC and SBAC. An evaluation will be conducted to ensure that these modules also meet Minnesota State Academic Standards prior to the start of the school year. Modifications will be made as necessary.

Each module concludes with a comprehensive performance task which provides detailed feedback to teachers on how students are achieving on key standards. Modules may include more than one unit; each unit includes cohesive and building learning progressions that help students build knowledge, gain necessary skills, and develop an understanding of major concepts. The modules also include suggested daily lesson plans, associated guiding questions, recommended anchor or model texts, scaffolding strategies, examples, and other resources.

Cost: The cost of implementing this curriculum is in purchasing texts for independent student reading. Teachers will choose which modules to implement in their classrooms and texts will be purchased accordingly.

Supplementary Resources – Other resources will be made available to teacher to assist with facilitating teaching and learning, including Reading A-Z, Raz Kids, and Words Their Way.

These programs provide high-quality differentiation resources that teachers can utilize as needed.

Words Their Way²² is a classroom-proven framework for teaching spelling that provides detailed directions for teachers working with students in each stage of spelling development. The program is certified as a valid instructional intervention tool by the National Center on Intensive Intervention Research at the American Institute for Research²³. Words Their Way has a variety of resources all geared to meet the needs of different types of spellers: emergent spellers, derivational relations spellers, syllables and affixes spellers, ELL spellers, Spanish-Speaking ELL spellers, Pre-K and Kindergarten spellers, etc. A set of books will be purchased as shared resources for each learning community in the school, including the K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 communities.

Reading A-Z²⁴ is web-based reading program that provides easy access to reading materials at a range of instructional levels that help students become proficient readers. The program offers 27 levels of text complexity and support resources such as lesson plans, quizzes, discussion cards, and worksheets. Reading A-Z also includes a phonics program, reader's theater scripts, fluency passages, paired book lessons, close reading packs, and literature circle journals. The program is in alignment with the Common Core Standards and provides connections other reading programs and popular leveling systems. (cost is approximately \$90 per classroom)

²² Pearson. Words Their Way: Word Study in Action. "Phonics + Spelling + Vocabulary = Word Study". Retrieved from http://www.mypearsontraining.com/pdfs/TG_WTW_Wordstudy.pdf

²³ <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/>

²⁴ <http://www.readinga-z.com/>

Raz-Kids²⁵ is a web-based reading program that offers animate E-Books and 27 levels of text complexity. Students can listen to books while reading highlighted phrases, read a book at their own pace, record a book to practice fluency, and take comprehension quizzes after completing a book. The program provides a classroom management tool in which teachers can roster up to 36 students, create assignments, and access individual reports. There is also a formative assessment tool that determines areas of student weakness and identifies needed supplemental instruction. Raz-Kids works together with Reading A-Z to give students the instructional resources and practice they need to be successful. This program will likely serve to provide support for struggling readers but will not be used as core reading curriculum. (cost is approximately \$90 per classroom).

MATHEMATICS - The following curricula have been chosen as resources for facilitating teaching and learning. Professional development is incorporated throughout the year. Initial training will focus on implementation procedures. Ongoing training will focus on achieving student success in alignment with state standards.

Initiative for Developing Mathematical Thinking (IDMT)²⁶ – Athlos Academy of St. Cloud intends to engage with IDMT to provide teachers with significant professional development workshops and resources. The experts at IDMT are led by Dr. Jonathan Brendefur, a professor of Mathematical Education at Boise State University. Dr. Brendefur has worked with international experts over the past ten years as his team has developed the foundations for the DMT program. IDMT is committed to improving student learning in mathematics by offering

²⁵ <http://www.raz-kids.com/>

²⁶ <http://dmt.boisestate.edu/>

professional development for elementary and middle school teachers, and has been responsible for ongoing teacher training for over 12,000 teachers through their partnership with the Idaho State Department of Education and through outreach programs across the country.

The framework for this professional development is comprised of five critical features²⁷: taking students' ideas seriously, pressing students conceptually, encouraging multiple strategies and representations, addressing misconceptions, and understanding the relational structure of mathematics. The development of mathematical thinking is focused on developing a student's sense of enactive, iconic, and symbolic processing of mathematics. Increased academic performance results from long term implementation of the program.

This training is designed to help teachers recognize that no “silver bullet” curriculum exists, and that completing assignments is not the same as learning the material. Teachers can best support student learning by developing their own abilities to understand how their students are thinking about mathematics and by providing targeted support through a variety of resources. The school has chosen resources that best match state standards and current trends in mathematics education as a base, however, other materials may be used to supplement at the teachers' discretion with the end goal of student achievement.

Bridges in Mathematics (K-5)²⁸ – This program was designed by The Math Learning Center, a non-profit organization, to help students become confident mathematical thinkers and motivated

²⁷ <http://dmt.boisestate.edu/projects>

²⁸ <http://www.mathlearningcenter.org/curriculum>

learners with the ability to explore new ideas and effectively articulate their insights and questions. For each grade level, the Bridges curriculum provides full lesson plans with an emphasis on problem-solving. The curriculum focuses on developing students' deep understandings of mathematical concepts, proficiency with key skills, and ability to solve complex and novel problems. Bridges blends a variety of teaching methods including direct instruction, structured investigation, and open exploration. Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate Bridges into the K-5 classroom in conjunction with a skill-based partner program called Number Corner. Number Corner is a program that emphasizes skills practices in the context of broader mathematical concepts.

This curriculum is accompanied by a set of valid and reliable benchmark exams that will be used in the first year of school operations to ensure alignment with MCA, and once alignment is verified, will be used as an ongoing series of benchmarks. This program was chosen by the Portland School District in 2011 based on carefully monitored pilot programs and significant research into its effectiveness²⁹. It is also given credit for significantly improving student achievement on standardized tests in Tennessee³⁰.

Connected Math (6-8) - Connected Math is a middle school curriculum for grades 6-8 designed by the Connected Mathematics Project at Michigan State University³¹. The program was adopted in the Hopkins Public Schools in Minnesota resulting in significant achievement gains

²⁹ http://www.oregonlive.com/portland/index.ssf/2011/01/portland_schools_will_get_new.html

³⁰ http://www.thedailytimes.com/news/alcoa-elementary-triples-advanced-proficient-students/article_755cd0a4-1918-5676-8576-87f14fa6214b.html

³¹ <https://connectedmath.msu.edu/>

on the MCA exams for 6th grade students in its first year of implementation³². Results of this program have been validated in many schools across the country³³. This program aims to enable all teachers and students to reason and communicate proficiently in mathematics by providing materials that are rich in connection and deep in understanding and skill.

This curriculum is structured around skill development and “big ideas” in mathematics. “Skill”, in the Connected Mathematics curriculum, is a student’s ability to use mathematical tools, resources, procedures, knowledge, and ways of thinking developed over time to make sense of new situations. “Big Ideas” are clusters of important, related concepts, processes, ways of thinking, skills, and problem solving strategies. The curriculum emphasizes significant associations across multiple mathematical topics as well as connections to other disciplines. Mathematical concepts are embedded in the curriculum in the context of interesting problems including real-world applications.

The curriculum develops six mathematical strands—number, geometry, measurement, probability, statistics, and algebra. The units are organized into several investigations exploring multiple problems. This problem-centered teaching model consists of three key phrases: launching the problem, exploring the problem, and summarizing the problem. Extensive problem sets help students practice, apply, connect, and extend these understandings. Each investigation then concludes with a Mathematical Reflection in which students articulate their understandings and connect “big ideas.” Assessment resources incorporated in the Connected Mathematics curriculum include check-ups, partner quizzes, projects, unit tests, self-assessments, and question

³² http://assets.pearsonschool.com/asset_mgr/legacy/200922/CMP2_MN_Hopkins_22269_1.pdf

³³ <http://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PSZgKo#MW>

banks. Connect Mathematics or similarly designed investigations will constitute the core of the middle school math instruction at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud.

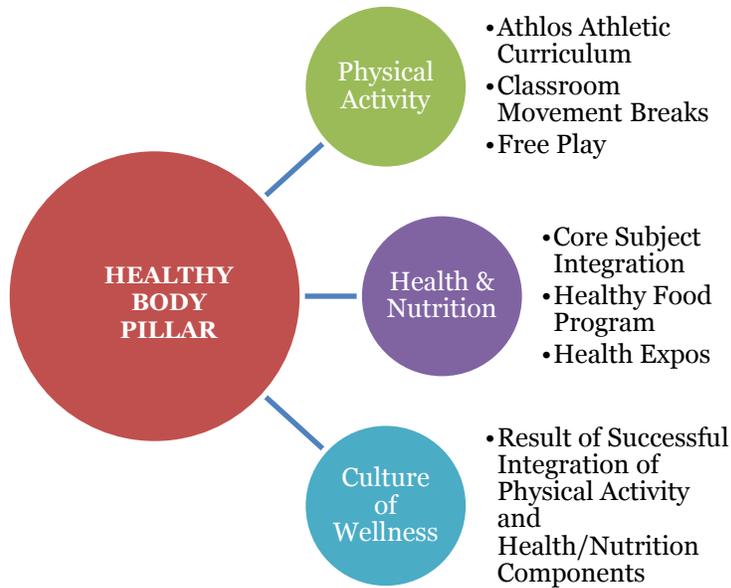
Supplementary Resources - other resources will be made available to teacher to assist with facilitating teaching and learning, including Khan Academy. Khan Academy provides engaging resources that can help teachers meet the needs of both excelling and struggling students.

Khan Academy³⁴ is an online and open source, personalized mathematics learning resource for students. It offers practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard. Khan empowers students to study or practice skills at their own pace and outside of the classroom. The math missions guide learners from kindergarten all the way through middle and high school via an adaptive technology that identifies student strengths and learning gaps. Teachers and students at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will have access to Khan Academy as a supplement to the core math curriculum.

CURRICULA AND TOOLS: HEALTHY BODY

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is dedicated not only to the academic development of students; we are also passionate about fulfilling our commitment to helping them develop healthy bodies. At Athlos Academy of St. Cloud, the Healthy Body Pillar consists of three main components, including physical activity, healthy and nutrition, and a culture of wellness. Each of these three elements is composed of specific curricula, events, and programs. The charter below reflects this relationship.

³⁴ www.khanacademy.org



1. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – includes the Athlos Academies Athletic Curriculum, Movement Breaks, and Free Play.

Athlos Academies Athletic Curriculum - Four days a week, students will spend dedicated time participating in physical activity sessions led cooperatively by the Athlos Academy of St. Cloud Physical Education teacher and a specialized Sports Performance Coach. In this curriculum, grade levels are grouped by ability and age, and all lessons are scoped and sequenced accordingly. The curriculum will also meet all state P.E. requirements.

The Athletic Curriculum is ultimately designed to do the following: 1) Provide activities for students that address fundamental coordinative and physiological developmental windows in order to provide appropriate physical challenges and activities. 2) Keep students engaged in the program by providing challenges that are within the scope of their physical and cognitive abilities. 3) To provide an approach of long term athletic development that focuses not just on physical education participation but provides a framework of fundamental movement and sports

skills that will give each student opportunity to engage in physical activity throughout his or her entire life. The Athlos Academies Athletic Curriculum is based on a series of FUNdamentals and Application in each grade level grouping:

- 👤 Movement FUNdamentals, K-2nd Grade include, Body Control Skills such as coordination and transitions, Body Awareness Skills such as proprioception and stability, Travelling Skills such as fundamental plyometric and rhythmic movements, and Interpretation Skills such as moving over and around objects.
- 👤 FUNdamentals of Sports Skills, 3rd-5th Grade include, Throwing and Catching Skills such as throwing underhand and overhand, Dodging and Chasing Skills such as jumping and mirroring, Dribbling Skills such as hand dribbling and volleying, and Kicking and Striking Skills such as passing with the foot.
- 👤 Sport Application, 6th-12th Grade include three types of sessions:
 - Pure Movement Sessions in which students will rehearse the proper mechanics associated with acceleration, multi-directional movement, and maximum velocity. The primary focus is biomechanical competency of the movement focus. Activities might include sprinting, shuffling, bounding, skipping, etc.
 - Sport Integration Sessions: Students will be exposed to different team sports while connecting the movement skills needed to execute the fundamental activities associated with each sport. Students will learn the skills and strategies specific to each sport such as throwing, catching, dribbling, kicking, etc.

- **Competition Sessions:** Students will showcase their movement skills and sports skill proficiency in a dynamic and competitive environment. The goal is that students demonstrate both gained athletic skills and developing performance character.

Classroom Movement Breaks - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud teachers will look for opportunities to take time for these “movement breaks” regularly throughout the day.

Movement breaks are brief intervals in which students are encouraged to get up from their seats and move around. These breaks might be unrelated to the classroom task at hand, but ideally, teachers will look for ways to incorporate these moments into their lessons engaging students physically.

Free Play and Unstructured Physical Activity - While structured physical activity time supports the development of gross motor skills, object control skills, self-confidence, etc., free play is also essential to student growth. It is in these moments that Athlos Academy of St. Cloud students will develop creativity, self-expression, and cooperation as they explore their environment freely and navigate the social skills necessary to invent games and engage in play with others.

- 2. HEALTH AND NUTRITION** – is composed of emphasis on health and nutrition through regular curriculum standards, a healthy approach to school meals, and a quarterly community Expos.

Subject Integration - Health and nutrition content will be interwoven into regular classroom curriculum in places where natural connections exist. Teachers will integrate grade-level nutrition topics into one or more core subject units each year.

School Meal Program - The school meal program will reflect the healthy body focus of the school and thus be high quality. Appropriate funds will be allocated to ensure students have healthy school lunch options.

Health Expo - Students will also participate in regular health “Expos” in which they will have the opportunity meaningfully engage in healthy living learning opportunities and showcase these experiences for the benefit of their parents and other community members. Community health and nutrition experts will be invited to speak at these expos as well.

3. **CULTURE OF WELLNESS** - This is the final component of the Healthy Body Pillar.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud defines wellness as an active process of becoming aware of and making positive choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life. Our school will create a culture that embraces this ideal. Through core subject integration, culminating campus events, increased daily physical activity, and a conscious campus effort to emphasize healthy lifestyle choices, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will foster and grow a culture that places a spotlight on what it means to live a healthy lifestyle.

CURRICULA AND TOOLS: PERFORMANCE CHARACTER CURRICULUM

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will utilize the Performance Character program developed by Athlos Academies. This program was inspired by the work of such scholars as Angela

Duckworth³⁵, Paul Tough³⁶, and Martin Seligman³⁷, and is the basis of school culture at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud. The program promotes 12 key character traits each of which is delivered through multiple instructional opportunities, spiraling throughout the school year. The 12 traits are visually present throughout the school, are exemplified by staff, and are common language among all members of the Athlos Academy of St. Cloud school community.

-  Grit
-  Focus/Self-Control
-  Optimism
-  Curiosity
-  Leadership
-  Energy/Zest
-  Courage
-  Initiative
-  Social Intelligence
-  Humility
-  Integrity
-  Creativity

Each of the 12 traits is introduced through a Trigger lesson. A Trigger lesson is a 20-30 minute lesson delivered by homeroom teachers with the objective of activating students' prior knowledge and supporting development of background knowledge around the trait. Students then participate in three huddle lessons over the next three weeks. Huddles take place “on the turf” and are facilitated by the PE teacher and Sports Performance Coach collaboratively. These lessons ask students to observe or demonstrate a particular trait with the goal of engaging students in multi-sensory learning and higher levels of thinking. A Huddle may include a video clip, a role playing activity, or a group “challenge course” style activity.

³⁵ Duckworth, Angela, and Peterson, Christopher. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 92 (6). 1087-1101. www.sas.upenn.edu/~duckwort/images/Grit%20JPSP.pdf

³⁶ Tough, Paul. (2013). *How children succeed: Grit, curiosity, and the hidden power of character*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

³⁷ Seligman, Martin, PhD. (2006). *The optimistic child: A proven program to safeguard children against depression and build life-long resilience*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

After three Huddles, students engage in writing a brief reflection about how they experience the trait in their own lives. Reflections utilize a variety of graphic organizers to help students articulate their thoughts in developmentally appropriate ways. Student reflections are collected throughout the year and are reviewed with families at conferences. At the end of the cycle, students attend a community celebration (grade level assembly) which may feature a guest speaker, a story read-aloud, or a team presentation that celebrates the trait in question as well as student learning through the regular curriculum. In this way the community celebration ties the academic program and the performance character program together.

Growth of Performance Character is assessed for each student at the end of each cycle.

Performance Character scores are understood to be subjective and are valued for their ability to initiate conversation rather than for the numerical value attached to each trait. Because we see character growth as an ongoing conversation, evaluations of student achievement are determined collaboratively by the classroom teacher, the turf coach, parents, and students.

At the end of each cycle, all four stakeholders are invited to log into the “Athlos Tools” portal and assign the student a score (1-5). The scores from each of the four stakeholders are averaged to create an overall score for each Performance Character trait, creating the Performance Character Report Card. Parents and teachers are encouraged to include comments as part of the evaluation. This provides opportunity for families and teachers to work together to keep students on track through open conversation.

Instructional Methods and Techniques - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will employ a variety of research-based teaching methods and instructional practices including inquiry and project-based learning, active learning, cooperative learning, technology based instruction, differentiated instruction, and backward design.

Inquiry and Project-Based Learning - Researcher John Thomas³⁸, identified five key components of effective project-based learning: 1) centrality to the curriculum, 2) driving questions that lead students to encounter central concepts, 3) investigations that involve inquiry and knowledge building, 4) processes that are student driven, rather than teacher driven, and 5) authentic problems that people care about in the real world. At Athlos Academy of St. Cloud, teachers will utilize inquiry and project-based learning to encourage students to think critically and problem solve while exploring real-world problems; project-based learning also encourage a student's social development as they collaborate in small groups. This type of instruction lends itself to more flexible summative assessments³⁹ that ask students to incorporate their gained skills and knowledge in a relevant, meaningful way.

Active Learning - Active Learning approaches to teaching encourage students to be engaged participants in their own learning and encouraged daily to take part in a classroom culture where they investigate and take responsibility for their education. It fosters creativity, real-world application, and social interaction and is easily paired with project-based, inquiry learning.

³⁸ Thomas, J.W., Ph.D. (2000). A Review of Research on Project Based Learning.

³⁹ Buck Institute for Education. (2013). 21st century success: Teaching critical thinking, collaboration, communication and creativity. BIE.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud teachers will be prepared to provide an active learning platform where students are invested in their learning and feel safe to try new things.

Cooperative Learning - Cooperative learning is not only successful in improving student academic achievement; it also contributes to social and emotional development. In this method, small groups of students work together on common tasks. The complexity and time-length of these tasks may vary. Cooperative learning encourages students to work together, actively listen, navigate positive communication, maintain individual and group accountability, take risks, etc. This requires a classroom environment where risk-taking is encouraged and students feel safe to share out-of-the box thinking. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud teachers will use cooperative learning strategies to prepare students for realistic situations they will encounter in future schooling, career, and life.

Technology Based Instruction - In order to prepare students to both participate and contribute to a society increasingly saturated by digital influences, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will integrate technology in the classroom in relevant, meaningful ways. Technology is most effectively incorporated when it is used to support already existing curricular goals, and it should encourage active engagement, participation in groups, frequent interaction and feedback, and connection to real-world experts. Technology in the classroom is an excellent way to engage students by linking them to a global audience, inviting them to create digital media, and helping them develop collaboration and communication skills that will prepare them for the future. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud teachers will incorporate technology in conjunction with other teaching methods; in other words, technology will be used to inform, support, and advance other forms of instruction.

Differentiated Instruction - Teachers at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will recognize that all students do not learn in the same way and must be met where they are at in the learning process in order to authentically meet their learning needs and foster growth. Differentiated instruction is based around student interests, talents, strengths, and struggles. Teachers at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will be prepared to provide multiple learning modalities which will help students digest information and make sense of new concepts and skills. They will provide increased challenges or opportunities for advanced students and appropriate challenges or opportunities for struggling students rather than simply “teaching to the middle students.”

Backward Design and Unit Design - The idea of backward design stems from the research of Wiggins and McTighe and suggests that starting with the end in mind is key to purposeful instruction. Wiggins and McTighe suggest “One starts with the end in mind—the desired results, goals, or standards—and then derives the curriculum from the evidence of learning (performances) called for by the standard and the teaching needed to equip students to perform⁴⁰.” Teachers at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will use backward design to drive unit planning and inform instruction. By first planning assessments that drive the unit and then laying out all the essential questions critical to guiding learning throughout the unit, teachers will ensure students have the opportunity to apply new knowledge and skills to new situations and real-world experiences. Backward design will drive all other forms of instructional practice.

Teachers at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will uniquely design or modify existing backward designed units aligned with Minnesota State Academic Standards. These units will incorporate key elements reflected in the teaching methods reflected above: inquiry, real-world connections,

⁴⁰ (Wiggins & McTighe, 2000)

learning communities, technology, etc. Fully developed unit plans will identify and outline essential questions, key content, learning objectives, standards/skills and associated learning experiences, formative assessments, opportunities for differentiation, teaching methods, and other resources. Professional development and guidance from administrators and instructional coaches will support teachers as they learn how to design creative units and pair effective instructional strategies in order to meet high academic standards.

Alignment to Minnesota State Academic Standards - Curriculum at the school will be aligned to the Minnesota State Academic Standards and will meet the content requirements as outlined in state statute. While chosen curriculum is aligned to the Common Core, as part of the school's annual checks and balances procedures, the school administrator will begin a full analysis of the academic curriculum to ensure alignment to Minnesota standards. Any gaps will be identified and curriculum will be developed by teacher experts to address these gaps. Vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment will be reviewed regularly through PLC meetings to ensure all standards are covered and that curriculum strategically prepares students for deeper learning.

Contribution to Educationally and/or Economically Disadvantaged Students –The resources and training provided to teachers in support of literacy and mathematics instruction are intended to support their efforts in ensuring that all students succeed academically, providing support for at-risk students and special education students alike. Additionally, the athletic program provides a system of health and wellness that prepares students for learning and also helps to combat the obesity crisis. The performance character program adds an additional aspect of support by developing a strong sense of school culture. The educational opportunities offered at Athlos



Athlos Academy of St. Cloud engage whole families in developing a healthy body, prepared mind, and performance character. The educational programs offer opportunities not otherwise available to many educationally or economically disadvantaged students.

SPECIAL EDUCATION - Any student, who has an objectively identified disability which substantially limits a major life activity including, but not limited to, learning, is eligible to receive special education services.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will comply with all applicable State and Federal law including, but not limited to, Section 504 (504) of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) as well as applicable Minnesota law. As a public school, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will provide Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). A statement of non-discriminatory enrollment procedures and compliance with state and federal law will be included in employee and student handbooks, will be provided to parents with registration paperwork, and will be placed on the school's website. All teachers and administrators will receive specific training on the Child Find and RtI processes and procedures and student rights under these laws. Regular education teachers will work closely with the special populations team to ensure all accommodations, modifications, and other services are provided appropriately.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud recognizes the legal responsibility to ensure that no student who is in need of accommodations, services, or support be excluded from participation in, be denied the

benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program at the school based on those needs. It is understood and agreed that all children will receive an equal educational opportunity and have access to the school, and that no student shall be denied admission nor counseled out of the school due to the nature, extent, or severity of his/her disability or due to the student's request for, or actual need for other student support services.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will employ a Special Educational Director to ensure compliance with Federal and Minnesota special education law. The school will ultimately employ a school counselor and designate a 504 coordinator who will each be trained appropriately. All special populations services at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will be delivered by individuals or agencies licensed and qualified to provide such services. All Athlos Academy of St. Cloud teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals shall participate in ongoing professional development on the legal obligations and rights of students. Athlos Academy will maintain documentation of the employee qualifications on site, and documentation will be available upon request to the VOA and the MDE. Physical facilities will meet federal and Minnesota accessibility requirements.

Child Find and RtI - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will implement both Child Find and Response to Intervention (RtI) procedures to best support the learning needs of each child in the school and to ensure that a formal process is utilized to identify student support needs. This process includes applying research-based interventions, collecting data, and monitoring student progress. While Child Find and RtI are not special education programs themselves, the processes put in place will help to identify students who may qualify for Special Education or 504 services and accommodations.

Process by which Services are Provided in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - The

Special Education Director will be responsible to ensure compliance with federal and state laws and will ensure the school is in compliance with legal requirements, including prompt evaluation and determination of a students' eligibility, the development of students' Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the implementation and regular review of IEPs, the maintenance of student files, and preparation of all reports. The Director is also responsible for ensuring that curriculum used in pull-out or resource situations is research-based and that accommodations and modifications to regular education curriculum make the curriculum both accessible to students and assessable by teachers based on key curriculum standards.

Once a student is determined eligible for services, the Special Education Director will oversee each child's IEP Team to ensure that each student is educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and receive the most appropriate services for his or her needs. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will provide a full continuum of services, which may include instruction in regular education classrooms, instruction in special education classrooms, pull-out tutoring, or supplemental services as determined by the IEP Team. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will engage professional service providers, such as a school psychologist, speech pathologist or occupational therapist, should such services be necessary. The school will provide students with supplementary materials and services as determined by the IEP Team.

Parental consent will be obtained prior to the administration of any evaluations as part of the eligibility determination process. Evaluations will include research-based, validated exams, such

as the Woodcock-Johnson or Stanford and Binet tests. All exams will be administered by trained and licensed personnel as required by applicable law. Tests and other evaluation materials will include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need, and will not be limited to those which are designed to provide a single general intelligence quotient.

Once an IEP has been developed, the Special Education Director will work with regular education teachers to ensure that the IEP is implemented appropriately. The Special Education Director and his or her team of paraprofessionals will actively monitor each IEP by collecting pre-determined data points over a period of time. Student progress will be evaluated through scheduled IEP Team meetings, and student eligibility will be re-evaluated every three-years via standardized evaluations.

Other Support Services - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will employ a school counselor to assist students with social and emotional needs and to ensure that teachers are properly trained in handling sensitive situations such as bullying, suicide prevention, or mandatory reporting. The school counselor will maintain student confidentiality according to law and best practices and will work closely with families to ensure the best learning opportunities for students. Other support services will be contracted or referred out as necessary.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will employ a sufficient number of teachers with English Language Learner (ELL) certifications to support the needs of students and to provide training and support to other staff members. Students will be identified using a Home Language Survey (HLS) at registration or through a referral process.

The registration paperwork will disclose that a student's primary language is not a consideration for enrollment, and that the information is used solely to identify students who may need ELL support to appropriately access the curriculum. To determine ELP (English Language Proficiency) growth and progress, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will use WIDA Access exams. Services will be provided, as appropriate, using a Sheltered English program and based on a three-tier continuum that includes mainstream in-class support, small group instruction, and individual tutoring.

If a student is identified as potentially needing ELL services, they will be screened using the W-APT screening tool. To determine ELP (English Language Proficiency) growth and progress, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will use WIDA ACCESS. The school will monitor all students' progress toward English Language Proficiency pursuant to state and federal mandates. Students will be monitored and tracked while receiving services and for two years after exiting the program. Records will be kept on all students documenting English acquisition, and will be kept in compliance with state and federal law. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will evaluate the effectiveness of its ELL program annually using a common rubric.

ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Assessment Philosophy - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is a data-driven institution, employing a robust system of both formative and summative assessment to inform school wide goals, instructional practices, and the development of intervention programs for struggling and excelling students. Students will be assessed in each of the core academic skill areas by a range of valid and reliable methods. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will participate in and comply with

all mandated testing with a goal performing at or above district and state levels in all categories.

In addition to the MCA assessments, students will participate in the OLPA mathematics and reading assessments at strategic points during the school year. These assessments will help teachers identify learning gaps and will give students risk-free opportunities to engage with computer adaptive testing as they prepare for the MCA exams in the spring.

The school will also implement a system of frequent formative assessments that accompany the school’s chosen curricula in order to help teachers track student progress toward meeting standards on a regular basis. During PLC time, teachers will evaluate baseline data to set measurable year-end goals. The overall assessment plan at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud allows for frequent analysis of data and resulting adjustment of instructional and organizational practice. This plan will help ensure that each student is provided with an academic program to support his performance at or above grade level by the end of each school year.

Assessment Tools

MCA Reading	Spring	3 rd -8 th and 10 th grades
MCA Math	Spring	3 rd -8 th and 11 th grades
MCA Science	Spring	5 th , 8 th and High School
EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT +Writing	Spring	8 th , 10 th , 11 th , respectively
OLPA Mathematics	2 opportunities	3 rd -8 th Grade (11 th future)
OLPA Reading	1 opportunity	3 rd -8 th , and 10 th Grades
Writing Workshop Assessments (Lucy Calkins)	Quarterly Benchmark	K-8
Bridges and Connected Math Benchmarks	Quarterly Benchmark	K-8
Words Their Way Spelling Exams	Bi-Monthly	K-8

Performance Character Evaluation	3 week intervals	K-8
Athletic Exams (Fitness Gram)	Quarterly	1-8
WIDA Access - English Language Proficiency exams	Annually	K-12
MTAS Alternate or MCA-II will be utilized by students based on their IEP needs	Spring	K-12

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud recognizes that students will enter the school with varying skill sets and past experiences. Thus, the school will strive to provide all students with learning experiences that aide them in performing well on standardized tests, encourage the development of healthy lifestyle habits, and promote the growth of strong performance character traits.

Teachers at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will acknowledge that each student brings a unique learning style to the table and will differentiate instruction accordingly in a student-centered instructional environment.

Teachers will draw upon current professional development as they prepare lessons, deliver instruction, and assess student performance. As student data is evaluated by administrative data teams and by teachers in PLCs, teachers and administration become aware of areas needing remediation or reinforcement or if a student needs additional rigor. Professional development activities and presentations will be planned and presented according to school needs. Ultimately, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will remain accountable to high standards and high performance through:

- Assessment reports presented at board meetings
- Proficiency reporting annually on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA)
- Regular communication with families regarding assessment data
- Annually updated action plans to meet school improvement goals

MISSION SPECIFIC GOALS

Healthy Body		
 Goal: Students will develop and maintain Healthy Bodies  Vehicle: Athlos Academies Athletic Curriculum		
Metric	Frequency	Measure
Athlos Academies physical fitness and performance exam.	Annually	80% of all students will achieve 80% or better on the Fitness Gram National Standards. 90% students will achieve 90% or better on the Fitness Gram National Standards after 3 years of operation.
Attendance and participation records	Quarterly	90% of students in grades 1-8 participate in at least 3 athletic training sessions each week.
Performance Character		
 Goal: Students will develop skills in Grit, Leadership, and Social Intelligence  Vehicle: Athlos Academies Performance Character Education Program		
Metric	Frequency	Measure
Family Engagement	Quarterly	80% of all Athlos Academy of St. Cloud families will participate in evaluating their student by the end of year 1. 90% of all Athlos Academy of St. Cloud families will participate in evaluating their student beyond year 1.
Student Portfolio	Quarterly	90% of all students present their character reflection portfolios at parent teacher conferences.
Prepared Mind		
 Goal: Students will meet high achievement goals and develop a Prepared Mind  Vehicle: Academic Curriculum		
Metric	Frequency	Measure
MCA Reading	Spring 3rd-8 th grades and 10 th Grade	80% of student population will score at or above state average in the first year. 85% of student population will score at or above state average in the second year. 90% of students will score at or above state average in the 3 rd year and beyond.
MCA Math	Spring 3 rd -8 th grades and 11 th Grade	
MCA Science	Spring 5 th and 8 th grades and High School	

E. ALIGNMENT WITH VOA HALLMARKS AND SERVICE LEARNING

Provide High Quality Educational Opportunities - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is committed to providing high quality educational opportunities in academics, physical fitness, and performance character. Research suggests that academic performance is leveraged by physical fitness. By providing a high quality Healthy Body program alongside a robust academic program, students are better able to achieve their potential. Similarly, the Performance Character program will help to instill qualities such as grit and leadership in students, qualities that research suggests lead to greater levels of long term student success.

Focus on Underserved Communities - The school's athletic program resonates with families who are active in athletics already as well as with families who recognize the need to provide their children with positive physical fitness experiences. The Center for Disease Control reports a higher prevalence of obesity in communities with higher levels of low-income families⁴¹. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is committed to recruiting a diverse student population and to reaching out to underserved communities as part of the marketing and recruitment plan.

In effort to reach out to underserved populations and to develop partnerships in the community, the Board of Directors and the Athlos Academies marketing team are developing a list of community organizations to include in the recruitment process. This list includes, but is not limited to, organizations such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, YMCA, Girl Scours, 4H clubs, local

⁴¹ Center for Disease Control. (2014). Overweight and Obesity: Childhood Obesity Facts. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>

preschools, such as Little Innovators and Especially for Children, Family Pathways and Catholic Charities.

Demonstrate a Commitment to Racial, Ethnic, and Socio-Economic Diversity - Athlos

Academy of St. Cloud expects to attract a diverse student population that mirrors the demographics of the local community. The school's marketing and recruitment plan includes specific outreach to underserved populations through community organizations to pursue this commitment.

Encourage Small School Environments - Although each campus will host approximately 1300 students, the culture of the school maintains a small community feel. Students and teachers work together in smaller groups organized by grade level: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. These small groups meet in assembly to kick off new character traits, participate in peer-tutoring experiences with each other, and eat and play together. Grouping students socially in this manner encourages students to develop a positive school culture centered on small learning communities that promote caring for each other.

Maintaining a small community feel for students requires that the school day be carefully organized, that teachers meet with their grade-group team to plan group experiences, and that teacher leaders from each grade level grouping meet regularly to ensure coordination of facilities. The thoughtful organization of the school day helps to create a small school feel for students while allowing the whole facility to operate at a level that ensures all students' needs are

being met through shared resources and developmentally appropriate opportunities for social and emotional growth.

Promote Community Engagement and Service Learning - As evidence of the school's commitment to both community engagement and service learning, health and wellness "Expos" will be hosted quarterly by various grade-level groups. These Expos will provide opportunity for students to meaningfully engage in providing learning opportunities and experiences for the benefit of the larger community that align with the school's goal of promoting healthy living habits. Teachers and administrators will develop quarterly themes that align with Minnesota State Academic Standards, and reach out to relevant community organizations to prepare for the event.

For example, a fall expo may be themed around the harvest. 1st graders may be available as experts on various vegetables, reflecting their learning of plant life cycles, while 2nd graders prepare pamphlets presenting gardening basics and reflecting their learning around the interconnectedness of natural systems. Guest speakers may include nutritionists, and a small scale farmers market may be set up with proceeds benefitting a local food bank.

Similarly, a spring expo may be hosted by the middle school focused on promoting engagement in regular physical activity throughout the community. 7th grade students may present their understanding of human body systems, while 8th graders may present research-based compositions, and 6th graders may guide guests through simple exercise stations. Guest speakers might include local a variety of health professionals and students may set up an event such as a "zumbathon" or 5K. In this way, every student is working toward a meaningful interaction with

the community that promotes the healthy living culture of the school. These expos will provide a service to the community, but will also provide an authentic audience to students for their regular coursework.

As families and community members rotate through stations, they will have the opportunity to celebrate student learning, hear from local experts, and engage in the Athlos Academies Healthy Body Pillar alongside their students. Our hope is that these quarterly health and wellness expos become an exciting addition to the local community.

III. PRE-OPERATIONAL PLANNING

A. SCHOOL FOUNDERS

Jacqueline Reineke holds a Master's degree in Nursing from Walden University and currently works as the Coordinator for Neuroscience Support Services at St. Cloud Hospital. In addition to ensuring that the department provides exceptional care for patients with respect to budgetary requirements, she works to set department wide goals and ensure that policies and standards are followed. This work in managing budgets carefully and with respect to intricate policies and standards will be an important skill set for the founding board of directors. Additionally, her work in neuroscience has helped to develop her passion around the connections between physical activity and academic achievement.

Josh Hirschfeld is president, owner, and broker of Hirschfeld Real Estate and Investment. In this capacity, Mr. Hirschfeld has successfully managed over \$100,000,000.00 in sales. His experience in real estate and in business management offers important insights to a new school as it balances the importance of managing an educational program with business start-up. Additionally, Mr. Hirschfeld is passionate about supporting high-quality educational opportunities as evidenced by his volunteer work with at-risk high school students and as Chair of the Stride Program. His work as a Rotary member for over a decade offer important community connections to support the success of the school.

Lee Hoyhtya holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Management and has spent the past 10 years working for companies such as IKON, Toshiba, and is currently employed by Eaton Corporation

as the Retail Aftermarket Account Manager. Lee has significant experience managing large scale budgets and overseeing large-scale projects from inception to delivery. This project management skill set will be of particular importance once the school charter is approved. The pre-opening timeline outlines the many large scale projects that must be ready to launch on day one of school operation, and while the work of completing these projects will fall largely to the school lead administrator, strong board governance will be required to ensure that all projects are on track for delivery date.

Stephanie Gardner holds a Bachelor's degree in Marketing and another in Human Resources Management. She has significant experience as an Account Executive in sales and service with IKON Office Solutions, exceeding goals regularly. Her experience in these areas will serve the Board of Directors of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud in assisting with developing strong HR policies and practices and with developing and maintaining strong community relationships. She is also the parent of toddler quadruplets for whom she hopes to actively engage in developing strong educational opportunities in the local community. She is committed to the school's focus on integrating healthy lifestyle choices into the daily learning experiences of students, and is excited to be part of the Athlos Academy of St. Cloud team.

B. GOVERNANCE

Board Composition - The Board members listed above are parents, community members, and professionals in the fields of business administration and education who share a passion to see Minnesota students excel in academics and health. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud believes that a well-functioning board includes members who represent a variety of professional expertise and

who bring important stakeholder points of view to the table. This board truly represents a group of people with the collective professional capacity to launch and govern a high quality charter school.

The Board of Directors are stewards of the mission and vision of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud and will promote this by fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as described below. The Board of Directors recognize their responsibility for governance including financial oversight and operational development. Working together, the Board of Directors will collectively hold the administration accountable for achieving the mission of the school.

Roles and Responsibilities - The governance structure of the school includes governance and oversight by duly elected Board members as well as participation of standing and special advisory committees as necessary. The Board will be composed of five to seven qualified members who are passionate about the school's success and demonstrate professional expertise in curriculum, instruction, assessment, finance, facilities, law, business management, governance, administration, management, and experience in working with targeted student population. Additionally, the Board will be composed of officers including Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. Standing committees may include Budget and Finance, Audit, Marketing and Recruitment, and Academic Performance. The Board Chair will convene special advisory committees as deemed necessary by the Board.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will be non-sectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and all other operations. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud shall not charge tuition, and shall not

discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, national origin, ability, or disability. The Board of Directors shall ensure the school's fidelity to the material elements of its charter contract with Volunteers of America – Minnesota and ensure performance aimed at fulfilling the school's mission and vision.

The school will be a Minnesota non-profit corporation pursuant to Minnesota law Chapter 317A and it will benefit from the 501(c) (3) status recognized by the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Current founders will incorporate the school and compose the Interim Board along with newly recruited Board members. An ongoing Board will be elected prior to the end of the school's third year of operation as required by statute. The school will be governed pursuant to its adopted Bylaws, as subsequently amended from time-to-time, but only in compliance with Minnesota law and consistent with its Charter. The school will maintain in effect general liability of its member's errors and omissions insurance policies. The school is currently pursuing its incorporation with the State of Minnesota, and will complete its IRS 501(c) (3) application within 30 days of approval of this application. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will not enter into any contracts or legal agreements prior to incorporation. School developers will incorporate as the Interim Board and will assume the governance duties described in this application.

The school will operate autonomously from the chartering agency, with the exception of the supervisory oversight as required by law and other contracted services as negotiated between the chartering agency and the school. The school will operate as an organization with specific goals, measurable objectives, and the managerial flexibility to achieve them, and the Board will ensure accountability to those targets.

Upon submission of this application, school developers will research, review and adopt its initial Bylaws based upon best practice in charter school governance. At a minimum the Bylaws shall contain the following: The means by which Board members are to be nominated, selected, and removed from office; The duration of each Board's term of office; The method by which Board meetings will be held; Officer position descriptions; Standing committee descriptions; The means by which parents, teachers, students, and other members of the community may communicate with the Board; and The procedures by which the Bylaws may be amended.

Duties of the Board

- Provide and maintain strong record of leadership, stability, and fiscal responsibility;
- Recruit, hire, and evaluate the Principal;
- Ensure legal, ethical and effective financial and operational management;
- Maintain and communicate complete historical records of Board proceedings and action;
- Conduct all meetings and Board activities in compliance with the Open Meeting Law;
- Adopt the annual financial budgets and regularly review financial performance;
- Oversee receipt of operating funds by the school in accordance with the terms and procedures of Minnesota law;
- Create personnel policies and evaluate the effectiveness;
- Approve of hiring and dismissal recommendations made by the Principal;
- Approve all contracts above \$5,000.00. (The Board gives authorization to the Principal to approve contracts under \$5,000.00).
- Select the auditor through committee and coordinate the response to audit findings, if any;
- Maintain positive relations with the chartering entity;
- Consider matters related to charter approval, amendment, or revocation; and
- Defend the School from any adverse legal actions.

The Board may initiate and carry on any program or activity, or otherwise act in any manner which is neither in conflict with, nor inconsistent with, nor preempted by, any law and which are not in conflict with the purposes for which charter schools are established. The Board may execute any powers delegated to it by law and will discharge any duty imposed by law upon it and may delegate to any employee any of those duties. The Board, however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated. The Board will address program concerns regarding the operation and improvement of the school. The Board is the final policy-making authority for the school. The Board will approve programs, policies, and schedules designed to meet the evolving educational needs of the school's students, parents, and teachers. The Board meetings will be held in compliance with the Bylaws and will comply with Open Meetings Law.

Board Recruitment - The Board will consist of five to seven voting members. The Board will be comprised of parents, teachers and community members as required in Minnesota statutes 124d.10. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will recruit Board members that possess an array of the following expertise: curriculum, instruction, assessment, finance, facilities, business management, governance, administration, management, and experience in working with targeted student population. Recruitment and development of the Board shall occur according to the Bylaws with the commitment to secure Board members with the education and experience to provide and maintain a strong record of leadership, stability, and fiscal responsibility. The Board also recognizes that there will be a need to hire expertise that is lacking on the Board and will aggressively seek contractors who can provide affordable expertise in areas in which they may be unfamiliar.

The first wave of Board recruitment was centered on identifying a strong and committed group of founders with experience developing and operating charter schools in Minnesota in order to develop this concept. The founders will embark on a second wave of recruitment that will focus on identifying, recruiting and obtaining commitments from community and business leaders in the targeted area who demonstrate skills in the areas listed above. This focus, combined with an already strong core of founders will help the school develop increased credibility and community excitement about our program, and this will help to demonstrate the school's commitment to being an active, vibrant member of the community in addition to the economic development benefits of bringing a school to the community. This will also help the Board to successfully execute the community partnerships component of our marketing and recruitment program that is articulated later in this application.

Board Training - Initial and On-going - Founders will create a governance culture that ensures ongoing Board training in accordance with Minnesota statute 124.D.10. All board members will participate in an initial orientation led by the current board chair, that will cover topics such as roles and responsibilities of board members, appropriate communication procedures. This orientation will introduce high quality board training materials, such as the work of Brian Carpenter and/or Marci Cornell-Feist, as well as online resources.

The Board will conduct internal trainings on a regular basis, covering key topics in board governance, such as quality policy writing practices, open meetings law, and utilizing committees effectively. Each year, the ongoing Board will engage Minnesota Department of Education approved trainers to continue development in the areas of roles and responsibilities, personnel policies and procedures. Finally, the Board will conduct annual strategic planning that is centered on developing strong governance policies

and practices, establishing performance targets for the school and envisioning a stronger future for the school.

Parent, Family, and Community Involvement - The Board will use a range of methods to consult with and receive parental input. These methods include parent/student/teacher conferences, open houses, email and phone communication, parent and student surveys, parent participation on committees, parent participation on the Board, stakeholder surveys, and public comments sections of all open meetings.

In the early stages of the school's development and as a part of a marketing strategy (further detailed below), school staff will be available to all stakeholders to answer questions or concerns. During the planning year, parents that demonstrate a strong interest and commitment to the school will be engaged as part of our student recruitment efforts. Founders recognize the powerful impact that committed parents can have as recruitment ambassadors, and we will work closely with them to organize efforts to generate interest and commitment from other parents. This is a key component to the word of mouth recruitment strategy articulated later in this application. This strategy will be continued throughout the operation of the school, as parental involvement will always be a key determinant in the school's ability to maintain full enrollment.

During all years of operation, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will survey all parents to determine their levels of satisfaction and to obtain their input on how the school can improve annually. The school will utilize "satisfaction surveys" to provide a high quality survey instrument and the ability to compare our results with other schools. Students will also be surveyed, using satisfaction surveys. The survey results will be reviewed annually by the faculty, administration, and the Board.

Plan for Fulfilling Board Obligations - Policy development will be an immediate focus for the Interim Board, and we recognize the need to quickly develop effective policies related to personnel policies, procurement and vendor contract policies, conflict of interest policies and travel and reimbursement policies.

Founders will investigate the appropriateness of joining the Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) to gain access to their sample policies and procedures which have been used widely by Minnesota charter schools to establish effective policies. These examples will help the Interim Board to effectively fulfill all of its legal obligations. In addition, the school will investigate the appropriateness of membership in the Minnesota Association of Charter Schools to receive access to their best practices in governance and build relationships with other schools to investigate their policies as well.

The interim Board will work diligently in the 60 days that follow the approval of this application to develop strong position descriptions for all positions that identify the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to successfully serve in each role. We will work with contracted business management to help determine the appropriateness of these position descriptions, and we will seek the examples of other successful organizations to determine appropriate candidates and salaries, run fair and open hiring processes, select effective candidates and finalize an at will agreement. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will also work with business management service providers and/or other contractors to develop a clear and comprehensive plan for evaluating the performance of the Principal.

The Interim Board will seek to develop procurement policies that establish an open and fair process for contracting with service providers, including open solicitation of at least three proposals for all major

contracts, prior to signing any service contracts. The avoidance of real and perceived conflicts of interest will be essential to effective procurement policies. Within 30 days of approval of this application, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will develop a conflict of interest policy that all Board members will sign each year. In the event that there are real or perceived conflicts of interest between Board members and a contracted service provider, that Board member will recuse themselves from any vote pertaining to that contract. Formal records of school proceedings will effectively recognize this fact.

Process the Interim Board Will Use - Within 30 days of receiving charter approval the Board will establish a standing Budget and Finance Committee which will be tasked with ensuring the school's financial plans are prepared for launch. This committee will also be responsible for staffing or contracting start-up business management services to determine appropriate budget targets for the next fiscal year. Important budget considerations include enrollment and demographics, state holdbacks, lines of credit, cash flow, current fund balance, and staffing/programmatic needs. The school's fiscal year will run from July through June each year, and the final budget will be approved no later than the June Board meeting annually. Budgets will be designed to yield positive net income each year to strengthen the school's fund balance. The Board will consider first and updated drafts of the annual budget at early spring board meetings each year in order to give ample time for review of the assumptions and feasibility of the budget as presented.

Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the financial condition of the school will be a focus of the interim Board. Initially, the Board intends to contract with a business management service provider to handle receivables and payables, provide monthly balance sheets, income statements and cash flow

that track the financial performance of the school. Income statements will articulate monthly, year-to-date and comparison to budget performance to give a well-rounded view of the school's financial position. The Budget and Finance Committee will review monthly statements in depth, and the entire Board will review monthly statements as part of ongoing monitoring of the budget and financial performance. The Budget and Finance Committee will make appropriate recommendations to the Board regarding any adjustments or decisions that need to be made throughout the course of any fiscal year that will ensure the fiscal health of the organization. Additionally, an Audit Committee will review any findings of the auditor and make appropriate recommendations to the Board to address any shortcomings in financial operations.

The interim Board will seek to hire contracted business managers, rather than develop an internal business office. We believe this will generate efficiencies in dollars and leadership focus, and we will benefit from firms that have significant charter school specific experience in budgeting, financial management and reporting, audit preparation, human resources and payroll processing.

The school will conduct an open and fair bidding process for contracted business management and audit services. Final determinations on contracts will be made by the Board and based on recommendations from current clients, demonstrated ability to deliver timely and accurate results, scope of services and price.

C. MARKETING, OUTREACH, ENROLLMENT, & ADMISSIONS

Marketing and Outreach - Building effective community partnerships is a key component of a successful marketing strategy. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will develop important partnerships with the local the school district, parent, student, and business community. The Board of

Directors will contract with Athlos Academies to provide significant marketing efforts on behalf of the school prior to opening and throughout each recruitment season thereafter. These efforts include providing professionally developed marketing materials such as brochures and flyers, assisting with social media efforts, ongoing branding and messaging for Athlos Academy of St. Cloud, and providing materials for presentations.

Athlos Academies' professional marketing team will work closely with the school to ensure that recruitment targets are met and community outreach efforts build long term positive relationships. Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will engage in outreach efforts with community entities that serve at-risk and underserved families to ensure that these families are informed about school choice opportunities for their children.

Once the Charter petition is approved, school leadership will begin working immediately on recruitment efforts based on an established pre-opening timeline. In addition to community partnerships that evidence organized effort to reach out to underserved populations, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will use the following marketing strategies, among others, to notify the public, recruit families, and achieve enrollment goals:

- Billboard
- Staffed Admissions Trailer on the Construction Site
- Construction Signs
- Public Parent Meetings
- Direct Mailings
- School Website
- Press Releases and Advertising
- Word of Mouth
- Social Media
- Facility Tours

K-8 Enrollment Projections

Operating Year	K-2 Community			3-5 Community			Middle School Community			High School Community				Total Enrollment
	k	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
2016	108	108	108	112	112	112	224	0	0	0	0	0	0	884
2017	100	108	108	112	112	112	112	201	0	0	0	0	0	989
2018	100	100	108	112	112	112	112	100	181	0	0	0	0	1045
2019	100	100	100	112	112	112	112	100	100	162	0	0	0	1118
2020	100	100	100	100	112	112	112	100	100	90	145	0	0	1171
2021	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	90	80	130	0	1200
2022	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	90	80	70	60	1200
2023	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	90	80	70	60	1200

Enrollment Assumptions -

1. The school intends to enroll a double sized 6th grade class in year one only. This will assist with achieving the required minimum number of enrollments to balance the budget. The school will roll up this class through graduation.
2. Natural Attrition is assumed after year one. Elementary grades will gradually drop to 100 per grade. Natural attrition is also assumed in the middle and high school communities. Rates are based on national averages.
3. Should enrollments reflect greater retention rates, the Board of Directors will consider requesting an expansion before year 4 of operation.
4. 2023, represent the ideal enrollment situation for each grade.

Admissions Process - Enrollment will be open to all students regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, gender, income level or proficiency in the English language.

Admission to the school shall not be determined by intellectual ability, measures of achievement aptitude, athletic ability, or any other criteria.

Upon notification of authorization, the school will begin marketing efforts in the community.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will ensure that enrollment information is disseminated in the primary attendance area of the school at least 3 months in advance of the enrollment deadline as established by the school's Board of Directors. Enrollment policies will be compliant with §124D.10 Subd. 9 and will be posted to the school's website prior to opening the enrollment window. Information shall be disseminated with regard to the language demographics of the primary attendance area.

Should the number of students who submit an enrollment application prior to the advertised deadline be less than the number of students the school is authorized to accommodate, all students will be offered seats in the order in which they applied. However, should the number of student applications be greater than the number of available seats, all students will be lotteried on the advertised date and students will be offered seats based on the order in which they are randomized by the lottery process. Once all available seats are full, any remaining students will be placed on waiting lists in each grade and seats will be offered to students based on the order in which they appear on the waitlist.

In accordance with MN 124.D10(9)(c), enrollment preference shall be given to siblings, foster children who live with enrolled students, and the children of the school's staff before accepting other students by lot.

Waiting lists will be developed at the time of the lottery, organized by grade, and will reflect preference categories described above. Waiting lists will be expanded on at the end of the enrollment period each year, and will be renewed annually.

D. SCHOOL CALENDAR

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud intends to open its first campus in August of 2016, a second in 2017, and a third in 2020. In compliance with Minnesota Code §120A.41, the school calendar will include no fewer than 165 instructional days and will meet the following hours of instruction requirements: 935 hours for grades K-6; and 1020 hours for grades 7-12. The draft calendar presented here includes 170 instructional days. It includes 1020 hours of instructional time for grades K-6, and 1034 hours of instructional time for grades 7-12. This leaves sufficient room in the calendar for unexpected events such as snow days.

Students at Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will engage in a robust educational experience. The calendar and schedules included showcase several of the unique aspects of the school's curriculum and culture. Professional Development days are identified in the school calendar.

In the K-8 schedule, time is specifically allocated each day to incorporate the Performance Character program and the Athletic curriculum. Free play, fine arts, nutrition, and a unique program that encourages personal exploration of the social studies standards through Roots,

utilizing Ancestry.com, called Roots, are all included in the Athlos Academy of St. Cloud academic program. Additionally, time is allocated for extended “lab” like classes in the afternoon; these may be used to extend learning in any discipline. Final products, assessments, and benchmarks listing standards and checkpoint dates for quarterly projects will be detailed as part of the curriculum map at the beginning of the school year to ensure both breadth and depth of learning as well as alignment to state standards and preparation for the community Expo events.

The high school curriculum shows the additional Athlos Academies Athletic courses as well as allocated time for project work and intended AP offerings. Assemblies and community meetings will take place during the time allotted for homeroom around rotational lunch schedules.

School Calendar Events – the following events will be added to the final school calendar:

August Events	New Teacher Orientation Teacher Training Parent /Student Orientation Back to School Night
Fall Events	Student Led Conferences Family Picnic/ Fall Health and Wellness Expo Veteran’s Day Service Event State of the School Address
Winter Events	Winter Health and Wellness Expo Holiday Service Event Science Fair
Spring Events	Student Led Conferences Spring Health and Wellness Expo/ Fundraising Event Spring Clean Community Service Event
Monthly Events	Board Meetings Parent Teacher Organization Meetings Recruitment Meetings/ Open Houses Monthly PD Dates

Annual School Calendar Draft

New Teacher Orientation	August 17 th -21 st 2016
Workshops / Professional Development	August 24 th -27 th , 2016
Student Orientation	August 31 st - September 3 rd , 2016
First Day of School	September 8, 2015
Workshop – No School	October 9
Conference Release Days	October 23-24, 2016
Thanksgiving – No School	November 25-27, 2016
Grade Reporting – No School	December 2, 2016
Trimester II Begins	December 7, 2016
Winter Break Begins – No School	December 21, 2016
School Resumes	January 4, 2017
MLK Day – No School	January 18, 2017
Workshop – No School	January 29, 2017
Conference Release – No School	February 19, 2017
President’s Day – No School	February 21, 2017
Grade Reporting – No School	March 11, 2017
Trimester III Begins	March 14, 2017
Spring Break Begins – No School	March 28, 2017
School Resumes	April 4, 2017
Conference Release Day – No School	April 15, 2017
Workshop – No School	April 18, 2017
Memorial Day – No School	May 30, 2017
Last Day of School	June 8, 2017
Grade Reporting	June 10, 2017

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE
8:00-8:30	Morning Meeting w/Homeroom Teacher— <i>Performance Character trigger lessons may take place during this time.</i>
8:30-9:15	English Language Arts
9:15-10:00	Free Play
10:00-10:15	Math
10:15-11:00	Physical Activity Session and Performance Character Huddles
11:00-11:45	Health Body Lunch/Free Play
11:45-12:30	Science/Social Studies
12:30-1:15	Art, Music, or Roots
1:15-2:30	Application Projects— <i>Time to work on ongoing projects that put the skill sets students are learning during core curriculum time into practice. These projects might be subject-area investigations, cross-disciplinary explorations, nutrition integration projects, health expo inquiry, etc. Guest speakers or experts may be included in this time. Movement breaks will be incorporated as needed.</i>
2:30-3:00	Clean-up, Agenda, and Closing Circle w/ Homeroom Teacher— <i>Performance Character trigger lessons may take place during this.</i>
Note	Classroom movement breaks will be regularly incorporated into core subject instruction.
Athlos Academy of St. Cloud	MIDDLE SCHOOL SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE
8:00-8:30	Morning Meeting w/Homeroom Teacher— <i>Performance Character trigger lessons may take place during this time.</i>
8:30-9:15	English Language Arts
9:15-10:00	Physical Activity Session and Performance Character Huddles
10:00-10:45	Math
10:45-11:30	Science/Social Studies
11:30-12:15	Healthy Body Lunch/Free Play
12:15-1:00	Art, Music, or Roots
1:00-2:30	Application Projects— <i>Time to work on ongoing projects that put the skill sets students are learning during core curriculum time into practice. These projects might be subject-area investigations, cross-disciplinary explorations, nutrition integration projects, health expo inquiry, etc. Guest speakers or experts may be included in this time.</i>
2:30-3:00	Clean-up, Agenda, and Closing Circle w/ Homeroom Teacher
Note	Classroom movement breaks will regularly be incorporated into core subject instruction.

Note	Classroom movement breaks will regularly be incorporated into core subject instruction.
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Athlos Academy of St. Cloud	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SAMPLE WEEKLY SCHEDULE				
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Assembly K-5
8:30-9:15	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	Choice Reading
9:15-10:00	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play	Free Play
10:00-10:15	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
10:15-11:00	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Physical Session/PCT Huddles	Rotational Electives: Creative Writing, Typing, etc.
11:00-11:45	Health Body Lunch/Free Play	Health Body Lunch/Free Play	Health Body Lunch/Free Play	Health Body Lunch/Free Play	Health Body Lunch/Free Play
11:45-12:30	Science	Social Studies	Science	Social Studies	ELA
12:30-1:15	Art/Music	Roots	Art/Music	Roots	Art/Music
1:15-2:30	Application Projects	Application Projects	Application Projects	Application Projects	Application Projects
2:30-3:00	Clean-up, Agenda, and Closing Circle	Application Projects	Application Projects	Application Projects	Application Projects
Athlos Academy of St. Cloud	MIDDLE SCHOOL SAMPLE WEEKLY SCHEDULE				
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00-8:30	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Assembly 6-8
8:30-9:15	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	Choice Reading
9:15-10:00	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Rotational Electives: Creative Writing, Computer, etc.

10:00-10:45	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
10:45-11:30	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Physical Activity /PCT Huddles	Physical Session/PCT Huddles	Rotational Electives: Creative Writing, Typing, etc.
11:30-12:15	Science	Social Studies	Science	Social Studies	ELA
12:15-1:00	Health Body Lunch/Free Play				
1:00-2:30	Art/Music	Roots	Art/Music	Roots	Art/Music
1:15-2:30	Application Projects				
2:30-3:00	Clean-up, Agenda, and Closing Circle				

9-12 Educational Program

Category	Credits Required for Graduation
English Language Arts	4.0
Mathematics	3.0
Science	3.0
Social Studies	3.5
Arts	1.0
Elective	7.0

Schedule

8:00-8:55	Period 1
9:00-9:55	Period 2
10:00-10:55	Period 3
11:00-11:55	Period 4
11:55 -12:25/ 12:30-1:00	Lunch/ Homeroom 1
12:00 -12:30/ 12:30-1:00	Homeroom 2/ Lunch
1:05-2:00	Period 5
2:05-3:00	Period 6

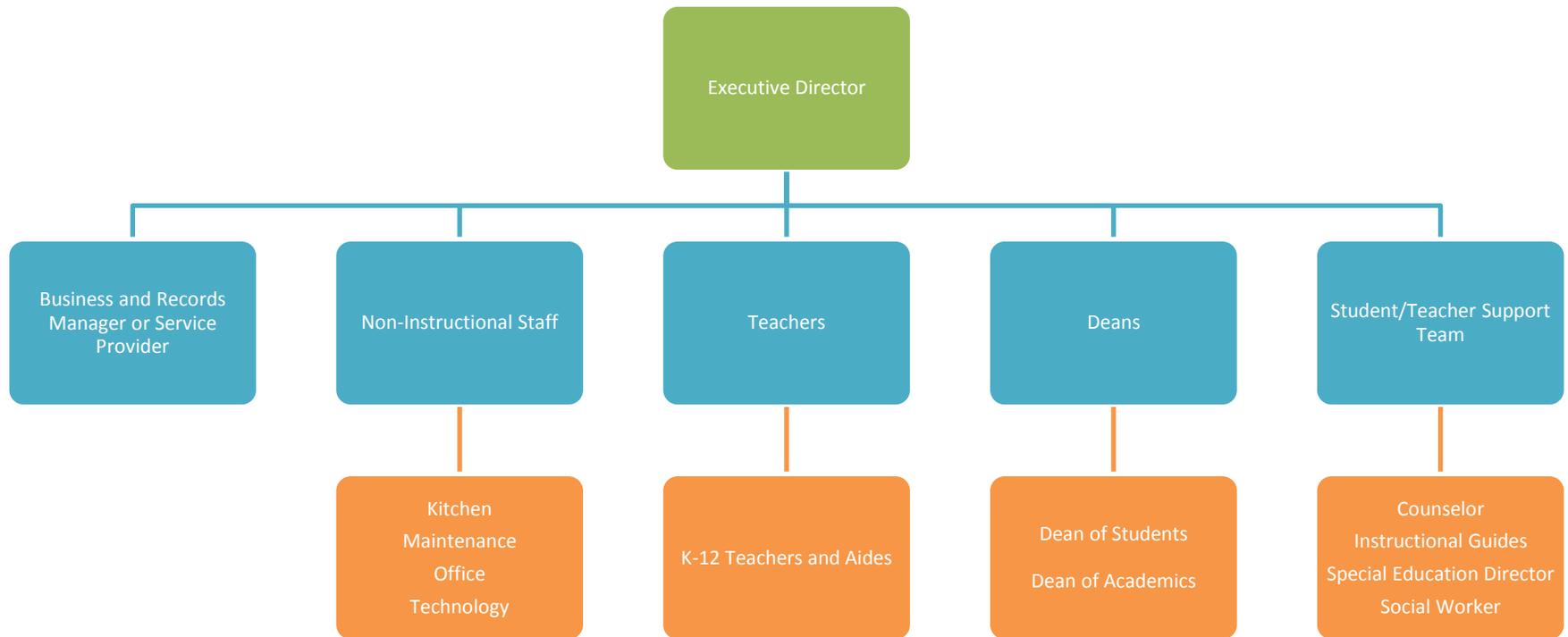
9th Grade	
Fall Semester	Spring Semester
English 9A	English 9B
Algebra 1A or higher	Algebra 1B or higher
Biology A	Biology B
Geography A	Geography B
Elective – Athlos Academies Athletic 1A	Elective – Athlos Academies Athletic 1B
Elective	Elective

10th Grade	
Fall Semester	Spring Semester
English 10A	English 10B
Geometry A or higher	Geometry B or higher
Career Technology Education (CTE) - Anatomy and Physiology A	Career Technology Education (CTE) – Anatomy and Physiology B
US History A (or AP)	US History B (or AP)
Elective – Athlos Academies Athletic 2A	Elective – Athlos Academies Athletic 2B
Elective	Elective

11th Grade	
Fall Semester	Spring Semester
English 11A	English 11B
Algebra 2A or higher (AP CalcB)	Algebra 2B or higher (AP CalcB)
Chemistry or Physics (or AP)	Chemistry or Physics (or AP)
Government and Citizenship	World History
Elective – Athlos Academies Athletic 3A	Elective- Athlos Academies Athletic 3B
Elective	Elective

12th Grade	
Fall Semester	Spring Semester
English 12A (AP Lang. and Comp)	English 12B (AP Lang and Comp)
Fine Arts	Fine Arts
Economics (or AP)	Elective
Elective – Athlos Academies Athletic 4A	Elective – Athlos Academies Athletic 4B
Elective	Elective

E. STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT



Staffing Plan Single School

Grade	Certification	FTE Yr. 1	FTE Yr. 2	FTE Yr. 3
		880 students	1122 students	1257 students
K	Elementary	3	3	4
1-2	Elementary	10	10	10
3-5	Elementary	12	15	15
6-8	Mathematics	2	3	4
6-8	Language Arts	2	3	4
6-8	Social Studies	1	2	3
6-8	Science	1	2	4
6-8	Spanish/Elective	0	1	1
K-8	Visual Arts	2	2	2
K-8	Music	1	1	1
K-8	5 th Music and Middle School Band	1	1	1
K-8	Health Physical Education	4	5	6
K-8	Sports Performance Coaches	4	5	6
	Total Educators FTE	43	53	61
	Special Education Teachers	7	9	10
	Special Education Director	1	1	1
	Total Educators FTE	4	5	6
	Executive Director	1	1	1
	Deans	2	2	2
	Instructional Guides (teacher coaches)	2	2	3
	Athletic Director	1	1	1
	Guidance Counselor	1	1	2
	Business and Records Manager	1	1	1
	Maintenance	1	1	1
	Maintenance Assistants (PT)	.5	1	2
	Office Staff (registrar, reception, records)	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Kitchen Manager	1	1	1
	Kitchen Staff (PT)	2.5	4	6
	Nurse	1	1	1
	SpecEd Para-Professionals (PT)	7	9	10
	Total Non-Educator FTE	21.5	24.5	30

Alignment with Mission and Vision

The school's staffing plan is aligned with the mission and vision of the school. The plan includes sufficient administrative staff, sports performance coaches, and instructional guides to support teachers' needs as they implement a new program in a new school. Additionally, a Business and Records Manager, Special Education Director, and School Counselor will help to ensure that the school runs smoothly and all student needs are met.

The organizational structure supports a commitment to small school community by providing sufficient administrative capacity to manage a start-up school at this scale. This plan includes executive administration, elementary and secondary principals, and ample non-instructional support. In addition, ongoing professional development services will be provided by Athlos Academies for board members, administrators, teachers and general school operations staff as needed to help ensure that the school launches and runs smoothly. The organizational structure also evidences a commitment to high quality teaching as evidenced by a team of full time instructional guides who will implement a research-based system of teacher coaching cycles, based on work of such researchers as Diane Sweeny⁴² and Elena Aguilar⁴³.

The school intends to start as a K-6 campus. Waiting lists for surrounding schools are greatest in elementary grades, thus evidencing opportunity for greater success in recruitment at these grade levels. The student enrollment growth plan shows evidence of the school's commitment to provide a successful k-12 educational experience for all students as the school's first 6th grade class will also be its first graduating class. The enrollment projections reflect an anticipation of

⁴² Sweeny, Diane R. (2010). Student Centered Coaching: A Guide for K-8 Coaches and Principals.

⁴³ Aguilar, Elena. (2013). The Art of Coaching: Effective Strategies for School Transformation.

attrition rates that mirror national averages as reported by the National Alliance for Charter Schools. However, should retention rates exceed expectations, the Board of Directors will consider requesting an expansion by year 3 of operation in order to ensure sufficient space to meet the needs of its student body.

School Administrator Recruitment Process

The Board of Directors will begin the search for a school leader immediately upon authorization with a goal of having this position filled within 60 days of authorization. The job description for this position which will include 3 years' administrative experience and MN administrative certification as a minimum. A standardized interview process will be developed and used to ensure consistency for all candidates. A Board vote will indicate a final decision.

This position will be posted on recruitment sites such as SchoolSpring, and the Board will reach out to local and national teacher training organizations. Additionally, Board members will utilize their network of contacts as well as the resources of Athlos Academies to further recruit a broad array of candidates. Once hired, the school leader will be tasked with developing the recruitment and interview process for all other positions.

Instructional and Non-Instructional Staff Recruitment

All hiring processes for Athlos Academy of St. Cloud faculty and staff will be open and competitive. Candidates for all positions will be interviewed at least twice prior to the extension of a job offer. The school leader is responsible for hiring and managing all employees, providing for their coaching and development, and terminating employment should that become necessary.

Athlos Academies will assist with identifying and making recommendations of candidates qualified for the Sports Performance Coaches, Instructional Guides, and School Leadership positions.

All teachers must hold appropriate certification in the state of MN or be engaged in pursuing certification through a state approved method. All employees must pass a background check and participate in an orientation and ongoing training.

Orientation and Ongoing Training

All employees are required to participate in an intake process that includes completing all required documentation for the personnel file, attending a school culture orientation that will cover topics such as emergency procedures, communication norms, and other HR aspects of the work. All employees will also be required to participate in an Athlos Academies orientation to the implementation of the three pillar program.

Teachers will participate in extensive training prior to the opening of the school as well as ongoing training aimed at implementing curriculum and instructional strategies with integrity. Training topics will include: school goals, effective use of data in the classroom, best practices in assessment, instructional strategies related to various disciplines, special education, mandatory reporting, to name a few.

Ongoing training will take place in PLC structures for the purpose of data analysis and curriculum development and alignment, contracted training presented by third party professionals, and inservice training provided by teacher leaders or administrators.

IV. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AND BUDGET

A. Facility Plan

An outline of the facility parameters (subject to location and site constraints) is below:

Total building size approx. 90,000 s.f.

- 162 parking spaces;
- 10 bicycle spaces;
- 30 classrooms
- 30 classrooms
- 1 cafeteria
- 1 kitchen
- 20 single restrooms
- 2 gang restrooms.

Specialty Classrooms:

- 2 science rooms
- 3 special education rooms
- 1 art room
- 1 media room
- 1 music room
- 1 library/media center

Admin Space:

- 9 offices
- 7 storage/janitor rooms
- 1 workroom

- 1 teacher lounge/work room
- 1 nurse room

Gym/Auditorium/Outside Space:

- 1 gym with hardwood floors and bleachers
- 1 athletic training room with indoor turf
- 1 weight training space
- 2 locker rooms
- 1 soccer field
- 1 football field
- 1 baseball field
- 2 basketball courts (with cross court hoops)

Playgrounds:

- 1 play structure (for grades K-3)
- 1 play structure (for grades 4-8)
- Four square and Tetherball courts
- Swing set (3 bay)
- 1 stage (and stage area)

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud intends to partner with The Charter School Fund LLC (“TCSF”), a social-venture that specializes in providing responsible financing and facilities acquisition to top-tier charter schools. The Governing Board of Directors of Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will negotiate any contract with the TCSF at arms-length. Additionally, the lease agreement will be negotiated separately from any other services. TCSF has recently served as the financier, builder and landlord for Athlos Leadership Academy (located in Brooklyn Park, MN), and has offered to own and lease facilities to Athlos Academy of St. Cloud. The intended lease structure will provide affordable lease payments and a purchase option favorable to the school, intended to allow the school to exercise its purchase option and refinance the facilities through either traditional financing or bond issuance. TCSF is currently locating suitable property, will purchase the property, construct and own “class A” purpose built school facilities. Upon completion Athlos Academy of St. Cloud takes possession and leases the facilities with the aforementioned purchase option.

All terms of the lease agreement will be negotiated at arms-length, by an independent board, with advice from professionals (i.e., financial advisors, legal counsel, real estate professionals and other professionals as appropriate). No pre-operational funding is required for site selection, construction, fixturing or financing under the model and financing is generally provided by TCSF and/or leveraged through its relationships with national banks. This provides Athlos Academy of St. Cloud and other schools with access to responsible financing and true affordability compared to other “developers” in the charter school market. The TCSF facility model has been previously vetted by independent financial advisors, legal counsel and bond counsel for other charter schools, and the Board is informed that the model is an effective, viable and affordable option to provide a start-up charter school and students with Class A school facilities pending the ability to secure either traditional financing or issue bonds.

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is seeking approval to open a K-12 campus in 2016, enrolling only K-6 in the first year. The proposed facility will mirror that of Athlos Leadership Academy in Brooklyn Park, MN.

B. Transportation Plan

Athlos Academy of St. Cloud is committed to providing solutions for its families that guarantee the safe and timely transportation of students to the school. At the time of this application, and in compliance with MN §124D.10 Subd. 16, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud intends to provide general transportation for students who live within the St. Cloud School District boundaries independent of the school district.

Transportation services will be provided for all students whose IEP's indicate transportation as a necessary accommodation. Students who live outside the St. Cloud School District boundaries will be offered transportation solutions for a fee.

Upon approval of this application, school developers will reach out to several reputable local bus companies, including First Student, Metro Transportation and Sunburst Transportation, to determine the parameters of an acceptable contract for services and to solicit bids. Throughout the development year, founders will maintain a dialogue with these companies to communicate any changes that may affect our requirements.

Timelines for decisions on a contractor will be based largely on enrollment information that we collect throughout the development year. Enrollment forms will ask families to identify their transportation preferences and will also collect information related to any special transportation needs.

Once Athlos Academy of St. Cloud has received enrollment forms equaling approximately one half of its targets, final routes and schedules will be negotiated. In any event, a contract for busing will be signed,

routes and schedules will be established and communication made to parents no later than 30 days prior to the beginning of the school year. Final decisions will be made after careful consideration of the track record of safe and timely service, price, scope of services, flexibility and reputation based on conversations with current charter school clients.

While the developers' strong preference is to maintain its instructional integrity by providing its own transportation solutions, Athlos Academy of St. Cloud recognizes that the costs of providing transportation can have a significantly negative effect on the school's financial position. If it is determined throughout the development of the school that those costs become prohibitive for responsible fiscal management, the school will work on a timeline with the St. Cloud School District to provide workable transportation solutions for the school and effectively communicate any changes to families.

Transportation Policies - Athlos Academy of St. Cloud will have a transportation policy in place prior to the first lottery date. This policy will include a statement of eligibility and a list of bus stops and planned routes (subject to change). This policy will also include an explanation of services provided for students whose IEPs indicate transportation as a necessary accommodation, and families will be directed to work with the Special Education Director to develop a plan that meets the students specific needs.

Additionally, in compliance with Minnesota Statute §124D.10(16) this policy will include options available for students who live outside of the transportation boundary and any associated fees or fee waiver options.