Name of the proposed charter school	**Cornerstone Chartered Public School**
Name of the organization sponsoring the charter school, if any	NA
Name of contact person	Lynne Howard
Mailing address:	PO Box 129 Lyme, NH 03768
Primary telephone	(603) 477-9803 (cell)
Alternate telephone	(603) 795-9325 (home)
Email address	director@cornerstone-cs.org
Projected date of school opening	August 28,2026
Proposed school location	Lebanon or the surrounding area

Total projected student enrollment broken out per year for five years listing the following: school year, grade levels, and number of kindergarten students			
School Year	Grade Levels	Total Number of Students	Number of Kindergarteners
2026-2027	K-3	64	16
2027-2028	K-4	80	16
2028-2029	K-5	96	16
2029-2030	K-6	112	16
2030-2031	K-7	128	16

Cornerstone Chartered Public School
Charter Application
August 23, 2024

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Cornerstone Chartered Public School
Charter Application
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I: LETTER OF INTENT

See **Exhibit A** for the Letter of Intent submitted on 5/5/2024 and received by the Department of Education Charter School Office on 5/6/2024.

II: APPLICATION COVERSHEET AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Application Cover Sheet - See Cover Page

B. Technical Requirements

Table of contents, page numbers on each page, one-inch margins, and at least 11point font ☑

Application not to exceed 50 pages, not including appendices, which may include letters of support, a five-year budget, and an expanded curriculum description. ☑

Submit an application comprising of an original, 3 paper copies, and an electronic copy to the Charter School Office at the Department of Education. ☑

The application shall be signed and certified by the sponsoring entity, including title, printed name, and date, stating, "I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that all information contained herein is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocation after aware. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered. The person named as the contact person for the application is so authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application." ☑

Signed Lynne Howard Title Co-Founder /Director

Printed Name Lynne Howard Date 12/20/24

III: INTRODUCTION

A. General description and proposed or potential location

Cornerstone Chartered Public School (Cornerstone) will open as an open-enrollment, K-8 public charter school in September 2026, starting with grades K-3 and adding one grade per year through grade 8 by 2031-2032. Cornerstone's mission is to enhance literacy, especially for at-risk students, with a foundation in the Orton-Gillingham Approach and a science-based, content-rich curriculum. Literacy is our "cornerstone," as it provides the essential foundation for critical thinking and learning across subjects.

Our values include **Educational Equity**, **Innovation**, **Collaboration**, and **Growth**. We are committed to ensuring all students have equitable access to literacy skills in a supportive, research-driven environment. Our goal is to secure a facility in southern Grafton or northern Sullivan Counties, ideally in the Lebanon area. This location offers accessibility to underserved communities. Lebanon is a strategic choice, being an economic hub with strong infrastructure and community resources. We are actively seeking a 5,000–6,000 sq. ft. facility to accommodate approximately 64 students in grades K-3 for the first year, with room for growth as we add grade levels.

Cornerstone - Year One Facility Space Detail				
Type	Quantity	Sq. Ft./Unit	Total Sq. Ft.	
Classrooms	4	575	2300	
Front Office	1	144	144	
Admin Office	1	144	144	
Multipurpose Room	1	1600	1600	
Bathrooms	3	100	300	
SPED/Related Services	2	200	400	
			4888	Year 1
Assume 14% growth per year			5572	Year 2
			6352	Year 3
			7242	Year 4
			8256	Year 5

Our multipurpose room will serve as a library, "specials" classroom (art, music, and P.E.), lunchroom, and assembly room. Our facility will ultimately comply with all federal and state health and safety laws, rules, and regulations, including, but not limited to, the following: 1) Building code, 2) Fire code, 3) Health code (suitable and sanitary building), 4) Asbestos inspection and management, 5) Barrier-free design (ADA compliant), 6) Lead testing and remediation, 7) Emergency operation plan.

The facility must also have ample parking and outdoor space for a playground, and the ideal location is on the home district's bus route. Our school facility will be secure with locked entrances. Staff members will have access via a key, code, biometrics, or other secure means. Visitors will be identified and permitted entry by a staff member. We will use security cameras inside and outside of the building to provide a safe environment.

B. The name, address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address of a contact person.
Lynne Howard, M.Ed., Clinical Supervisor/OGA, 120 E Thetford Rd., PO Box 129, Lyme, NH 03768, (603) 477-9803,
lynne@summit-literacy.com

C. An identification of the eligible person(s) or entity of the applicant from among those listed in RSA 194- B:3, V. Ed 318.05{c)(4)

1) A group of 2 or more New Hampshire Certified Teachers:
    a) Lynne A. Howard - NH Experienced Educator License with two endorsements: #1810 Elementary Education (K-6) and #0037 Reading & Writing Specialist
    b) Lindsay L. Wadleigh - NH Experienced Educator License: #1200 Music Education

D. Education Vision and Mission Statement

Vision

Cornerstone Chartered Public School envisions a safe, nurturing, and equitable community where all are welcomed and valued. Our students grow into confident readers, writers, listeners, and speakers, while our well-supported teachers personalize instruction to help every student succeed. Together, we uphold a positive culture, committed to growth, contribution, and academic excellence.

Mission

Cornerstone's mission is to provide a supportive and accessible environment that fosters literacy for all, especially at-risk students. With a curriculum rooted in the science of reading, our teachers, certified in the

Orton-Gillingham Approach, deliver personalized, evidence-based, multisensory instruction to help each student build knowledge and higher-level thinking skills.

E. A summary of the school's focus, including a description of the characteristics, methods, and goals of the school. Ed 318.05{c}(9)

Focus

Cornerstone Charter School will offer a well-rounded K-8 education with a strong literacy focus, centering on reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Foundational literacy will be taught using the Orton-Gillingham (OG) Approach in whole groups, small groups, and interventions, adhering to Orton-Gillingham Academy standards to ensure professional and ethical excellence.

Characteristics

- *Orton-Gillingham Instruction*: Our priority is literacy, using the evidence-based OG approach to support reading and writing proficiency, especially for at-risk students.
- *EL Education*: We incorporate EL Education's knowledge-rich curriculum, aligning with the science of reading to foster critical thinking.
- *Diverse Student Support*: Using the Equitable Learning Environment Framework, we aim to provide inclusive, high-quality education for all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds or with disabilities.
- *Innovative Classroom Structure*: We use overlapping age-level bands instead of traditional grades, grouping students by age, development, and skill level to best meet their needs.
- *Community Partnerships*: We actively engage with the local community and parents to build a collaborative and supportive environment.
- *Ongoing Teacher Training*: Teachers receive continuous professional development in the OG Approach to support diverse student needs effectively.
- *Planned Growth*: Starting with K-3, the school will expand yearly through eighth grade, allowing sustainable growth.
- *Evidence-Based Practices*: We use a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to tailor interventions and measure effectiveness.

Methods

Cornerstone will provide exceptional teacher training, ensuring all teachers are certified at the Orton-Gillingham Classroom Educator level or higher by the end of their first year. We will collaborate closely with the Stern Center for Language and Learning in Williston, VT, to offer training, practicums, and consultations led by experienced OGA Fellows. The Stern Center, a leader in literacy for over 40 years, provides expert evaluations, instruction, and coaching to bring research-based practices into classrooms.

Cornerstone will use the Stern Center Orton-Gillingham Institute's (SCOGI) diagnostic assessments and scope and sequence for grades K-6, as implemented in Vermont districts like Lamoille South and Addison Northwest. Additionally, we will adopt EL Education, a curriculum developed with Harvard's School of Education, to provide NH standards-aligned, science-based literacy instruction, as used in NH schools like the Lyme School.

Goals & Measures of Progress

Our goal is to improve literacy outcomes for all students, especially those who are at risk, such as economically disadvantaged and those with learning disabilities. We will measure the attainment of this goal through NH's Statewide Assessment (NHSAS and other reliable assessment tools. We also aim to provide an excellent educational experience that supports the growth and success of all students and

engages families as active partners. We will monitor progress through regular assessments of student achievement, feedback surveys from students and families, and ongoing reviews of teaching practices. This approach ensures we continuously adapt and enhance our educational programs to meet the needs of our school community.

Further, Cornerstone will engage in strategies that build strong, collaborative relationships with district schools and the community through joint initiatives, transition support, and open communication. Goals include establishing formal partnerships for shared resources and training, coordinating student transition activities to ease adjustments, and creating reciprocal learning opportunities for teachers to exchange best practices. Additionally, Cornerstone will engage in joint community service projects and maintain clear communication channels with district schools and families. Progress will be monitored through participation tracking, annual reviews, and feedback from partners, staff, students, and families to ensure positive, impactful relationships.

F. Target Population

Cornerstone will offer tuition-free education to all families in New Hampshire. We are focusing on families looking for a structured literacy approach (Orton-Gillingham) or an alternative educational experience for children who are struggling with reading, spelling, or writing. The student body is expected to consist mainly of economically disadvantaged children and children with disabilities who are not thriving in their current educational settings. Cornerstone may also be appealing to families seeking a small school environment. Our students may come from district schools, homeschools, or private schools. Additionally, we would welcome tuition-paying families from Vermont, across the Connecticut River, who are looking for specialized literacy instruction for their children.

Cornerstone will be seeking to enroll students who live within a 40-minute drive of the proposed school location (approximately a 20-mile radius), including 12 school districts and 17 towns in New Hampshire (see **Exhibit D**).

The Upper Valley of New Hampshire experiences significant economic disparities among the towns that Cornerstone aims to serve. In some towns, such as Hanover, Grantham, and Cornish, less than 10% of elementary-age students are economically disadvantaged. However, in other towns like Lebanon (the desired location for Cornerstone), around one-third of the student population faces economic disadvantages.There is also a notable variation in the percentage of students with disabilities, ranging from a high of 30% in Enfield to a low of 16% in one of Lebanon's elementary schools. The median percentage of students with disabilities in the area is 17% (see **Exhibit E**). Economically disadvantaged and disabled students in the Lebanon region have median English language arts (ELA) proficiency levels of 30% and 19%, respectively. Currently, only one in five students with disabilities is reaching proficiency in ELA. Cornerstone's goal is to reach out to underserved students and enhance literacy rates in the Upper Valley region.

G. Goals and Objectives for school opening and a timeline for implementation

	TARGETS
July 2024	☑ Apply for Charter School Program Grant and Supplemental Grants ☑ Secure a CPA to create a budget ☑ Approve a preoperational and 5-year budget ☑ Line up legal counsel ☑ Create a nonprofit organization (Cornerstone Foundation) to support the development and continued operation of Cornerstone Chartered Public School (in process)

	☑ Register with the NH Secretary of State ☐ Apply for tax-exempt status with the IRS ☐ Register with the NH Attorney General Charitable Trusts Unit (RSA 7:21, II (b) ☑ Prepare the charter application for State Board Approval (RSA 194-B:3) ☑ Create a website for Cornerstone Foundation https://www.cornerstone-cs.org/
August 2024	☑ Anticipated CSP grant application approval (received informal notification of funding; awaiting formal notification) ☑ Begin process to complete eligibility requirements to accept grant funding ☑ Cornerstone Foundation Directors begin to create a process for selecting BOT using best practices laid out in "Charter School Governing Board Composition: A Toolkit for Board Members" (National Charter School Resource Center, 2018). ☑ Submit the charter application to NHED for approval ☑ Connect with area realtors and begin the search for an appropriate school facility and visit potential facilities ☑ Begin networking to fill seats on the Board of Trustees
Sept.- Dec. 2024	☑ Line up consultants and trusted advisors to assist with policy and procedure creation, marketing, finances, and compliance. ☑ Identify vendors, create preliminary orders and get quotes for materials, furniture, technology. ☑ Hold three community meetings ☑ Create school website and social media presence ☑ Conduct community survey
January 2025	☑ Anticipated Charter approval ☐ Set up a nonprofit with the NH Secretary of State ☐ Apply for 501(c)(3) ☐ Complete eligibility requirements to accept grant funding ☑ Begin recruiting Board of Trustees ☐ Create draft student application and information packets ☐ Create drafts of staff and student handbooks and bylaws
Feb.-April 2025	☐ Recruit, onboard, and train Board of Trustees ☐ Bylaw approval, election of officers, establish committees ☐ Hire advisors: Legal - Bob Best, Financial - Caitlin Blundell, Fundraising/marketing-Rick Peck ☐ Establish and expand partnerships with LEAs, community groups, and businesses ☐ Create and activate a fundraising and marketing campaign ☐ Review and revise, if necessary, a detailed budget for the school's operations ☐ Secure a school facility and enter into a financial arrangement for the acquisition of the same ☐ Purchase insurance
May-June 2025	☐ Policy development, revision, and approval, in accordance with the following: ☐ Records retention in accordance with RSA 189:29-a ☐ Promoting school safety, including: ☐ Reporting of suspected abuse or neglect pursuant to RSA 169-C:29

	☐ Sexual harassment as detailed in Ed 303.01(j) and (k) ☐ Pupil safety and violence prevention per RSA 193-F ☐ Limiting the use of child restraint practices per RSA 126-U ☐ Emergency Operations Plans per RSA 189:64 ☐ Developmentally appropriate daily physical activity pursuant to Ed 310 and RSA 189:11-a, V-VI ☐ NH Department of Education Rules ☐ Ed 1100, Ed 300, & Ed 306 ☐ Legal review of policies ☐ Final approval of policies ☐ Begin upgrades of facility to meet regulations and codes ☐ Host informational sessions for families
July - Aug. 2025	☐ Approve student and employee handbooks
Sept.-Oct. 2025	☐ Curriculum mapping ☐ Create hiring documents ☐ Host informational sessions for families
Nov.-Dec. 2025	☐ Finalize hiring documents ☐ Hire Executive Director and Assistant Director
Jan.-Feb. 2026	☐ Host informational sessions for families ☐ Open Enrollment period begins on February February 2, 2026 ☐ Purchase curriculum, furniture, and equipment
March-April 2026	☐ Open Enrollment period ends on March 31, 2026 ☐ Blind Lottery, if necessary - **No later than April 15, 2026** ☐ Send notification of admission status to families - with 5 days of lottery drawing ☐ Send Registration forms and request student records ☐ Advertise and hire staff
May-June 2026	☐ Inspections for Certificate of Occupancy- health, safety, and school inspections ***To be completed by June 29, 2026 (60 days prior to opening for students)** ☐ Meet individually with families and provide school tours ☐ Host events for new students/families ☐ Set up classes and schedules ☐ Create MOUs with district schools ☐ Set up federal Title programs ☐ Complete an Emergency Operations Plan and submit it to NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management portal and train staff ☐ Install technology, networking, and security
July-Aug. 2026	☐ Train staff - Professional Development ☐ Set up classrooms and office space ☐ Finalize MOUs with area districts ☐ Assist with transportation needs ☐ Host open house
Sept. 2026	☐ All policies, procedures, handbooks, and contracts are in place and effective.

	☐ School opens for students!

H. Projected student enrollment for each of the first five years of operation. *Ed 318.05(c)(6)*
Projected student enrollment for the first five years is set forth in the chart below. Our plan is to provide a comprehensive kindergarten - grade 8 educational program by the end of year six. By adding one grade level per year after the first year of operation, we will be providing continuity for our students and families up through grade 8 when they will transition to high school. Our enrollment goals are designed to maintain a small school atmosphere with small class sizes to meet the anticipated needs of our students best while meeting the financial needs of the school.

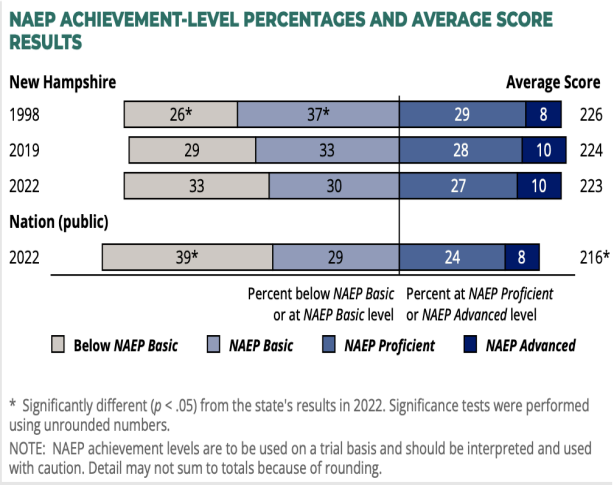
First Five Years of Enrollment										
Year	School Year	K	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	Total
1	2026-2027	16	16	16	16	0	0	0	0	64
2	2027-2028	16	16	16	16	16	0	0	0	80
3	2028-2029	16	16	16	16	16	16	0	0	96
4	2029-2030	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	0	112
5	2030-2031	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	128

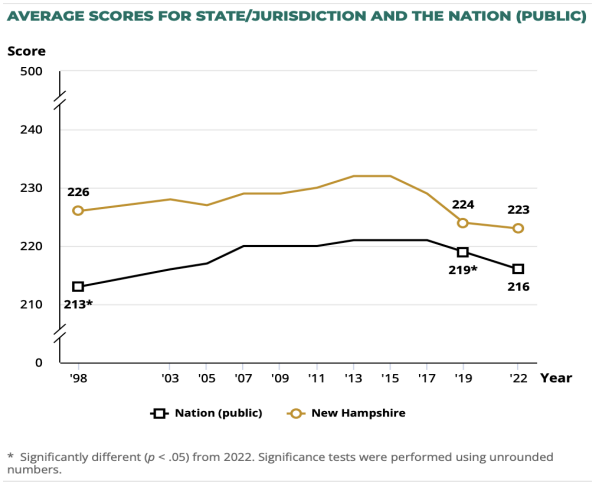
I. Students to be served: grade levels, maximum number, and other information about pupils to be served. RSA 194-B:3, II (e), Ed 318.09 (c)(5)
Cornerstone will start in year one with kindergarten through third grade, gradually expanding to include up to eighth grade. During the first year, we will enroll 64 students and add a maximum of 16 additional students each year. This phased approach allows for sustainable growth and the development of a robust educational program. We will add one classroom teacher per year for an average teacher-to-student ratio of 1:13. We are fully committed to achieving full enrollment each year, so the number of students in each grade level is only an estimate. We reserve the right to adjust the number of students in each grade level with a maximum of 25 students per grade level to ensure complete enrollment. Our total enrollment at year five is 128 students. The Board of Trustees will set tuition and accept out-of-state students as space allows, with preference given to NH students.

J. Educational Need
Providing Orton-Gillingham (OG) instruction in the general education classroom with OG-certified teachers is novel in New Hampshire. Strong Foundations, located in Pembroke, offers OG in the classroom with teachers who have had 30 hours of training. What sets Cornerstone apart is that our teachers will have Classroom Educator certification by the end of their first year of teaching at the school (extensions will granted for emergency situations and will require approval). certification at the Classroom Educator level requires a minimum of 30 hours of coursework, 50 hours of supervised practicum, including five observations, and an approved application to the Orton-Gillingham Academy.

National and statewide reading assessments reveal that too many students are not becoming proficient readers. The chart below shows that only 32% of 4th-grade students nationwide were Proficient or Advanced in reading in 2022. During the same year, 37% of New Hampshire 4th graders were Proficient

or Advanced. Students in our state performed better than the nation, but only by five percentage points. In other words, 67% of NH 4th graders scored Basic or Below Basic. Longitudinal data dispels any assumptions that poor reading scores are the result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The graph below shows that reading scores in New Hampshire and across the country declined before 2020 (Nation's Report Card (NAEP), 2023).





In the Upper Valley region, only 19% of students with disabilities and 30% of economically disadvantaged students scored proficient in ELA (see **Exhibit E**).

NH Department of Education has recognized the need for a change in the way we teach reading in this state. It has partnered with Lexia to offer all NH educators and administrators access to Lexia's LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) suite of professional learning programs designed to provide a deep knowledge of literacy and language expertise in the science of reading. This is an excellent opportunity to improve teacher knowledge about the fundamentals of reading and writing. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ, study 2023), just 25% of teacher training programs address all five components of reading instruction. Further, the report reveals that "[T]oo many teachers are not trained in scientifically based reading instruction during their teacher preparation programs, so they unknowingly enter the classroom well-intentioned but inadequately prepared to teach kids to read" (NCTQ, 2023, p 4). Cornerstone will take teacher knowledge one step further by supporting teachers in the *application* of their knowledge through coaching and mentoring by an OG Fellow, Fellow in Training, or Clinical Supervisor.

Some district schools in the Upper Valley region are changing the way they teach reading and adopting a structured literacy approach. For example, this writer has interviewed the curriculum directors of Lyme and Lebanon school districts. Lyme, a high-performing school in a wealthy town, has been using structured literacy for several years and has experienced an increase in proficiency each year, except in post-COVID 2021. Lebanon school district is in the process of a curriculum change, moving from guided reading and the 3-cueing system to structured literacy. This is a move in the right direction; changing teacher practice takes a great deal of time and effort, especially in a large school district. The goal of Cornerstone is to ensure that every student has access to high-quality structured literacy instruction provided by knowledgeable and skilled teachers, regardless of the town in which they live.

Using the OG Approach in the classroom with OG-certified teachers is a novel approach that is appropriate for all students but necessary for at-risk students, especially those with learning disabilities, such as

dyslexia. Unfortunately, many teachers are ill-equipped to support struggling readers because more than half of teacher preparation programs dedicate fewer than two instructional hours to this task (NCTQ, 2023). Achievement data bears this out.

Cornerstone will be available to families who cannot afford private schools or expensive OG tutors. Nancy Young's (2023) well-researched infographic, "The Ladder of Reading and Writing," shows that 50% of students learn to read, write, and spell with relative ease, requiring only broad instruction; another 40-45% of students need explicit, code-based instruction; and 5-10% require explicit, code-based, intensive instruction with frequent repetition (Young, 2023). This means that with the right approach, the majority of our students can achieve reading proficiency. The fact that some students learn to read despite discredited instructional programs and practices has likely contributed to a belief in their effectiveness. It's time to shift our focus to evidence-based practices that can truly make a difference.

District, charter, and private schools K-8 currently operating in Cornerstone's general area:
District Schools
Canaan Elementary (PK-4), Ray School, Hanover (K-5), Hanover Street, Lebanon (K-4), Mt. Lebanon, Lebanon (PK-4), Enfield Village School (PK-4), Grantham Village (PK-6), Plainfield Elementary (K-8), Cornish Elementary (PK-8), Croydon Village (K-4)
Charter Schools
Currently, there are no charter schools serving K-8 in the Upper Valley region of NH.
Private Schools
Crossroads Academy, Lyme (K-8), Cardigan Mountain, Canaan (6-9) All boys, Claremont Christian Academy (PK-12) Christian, New England Classical Academy, Claremont (K-12) Catholic, Newport Montessori School (PK -8), Mount Royal Academy, Sunapee (PK-12)

K. Any reasons why the prospective board of trustees believes RSA 194-B:3, XII relative to a shortening of deadlines may apply in this case.
We are respectfully requesting that the NH State Board of Education conduct a hearing for the application approval at the next available board meeting following its internal review to facilitate a September 2025 school opening.

IV: GOVERNANCE

A. Governing Board: roles, responsibilities, qualifications, skill set, experience
Development of the Board of Trustees and its membership
Upon the issuance of Cornerstone's charter, Cornerstone Foundation's Board of Directors will engage in a deliberate and strategic recruiting process to create an effective Board of Trustees (BOT). We will strive for diversity on our board by accessing current board members' networks, tapping LinkedIn searches, and connecting with local professional organizations. We will develop a selection and interview process according to best practices (National Charter School Resource Center, 2018).

Roles
The Cornerstone Board of Trustees (BOT) includes several essential roles to ensure effective governance. The Chair leads the BOT, sets agendas, presides over meetings, and serves as the primary liaison to the Leadership Team. The Vice-Chair supports the Chair, often overseeing initiatives and assisting with strategic planning. The Secretary maintains records, meeting minutes, and ensures compliance with NH's Right to Know Law. The Treasurer manages budgeting and financial oversight, working with committees for fiscal sustainability. Committee Chairs lead groups in areas like Finance, Governance, and Academics, while General Trustees participate in decision-making and strategic planning, supporting the school's

mission and vision. Each role is integral to the BOT's effective oversight and alignment with Cornerstone's goals.

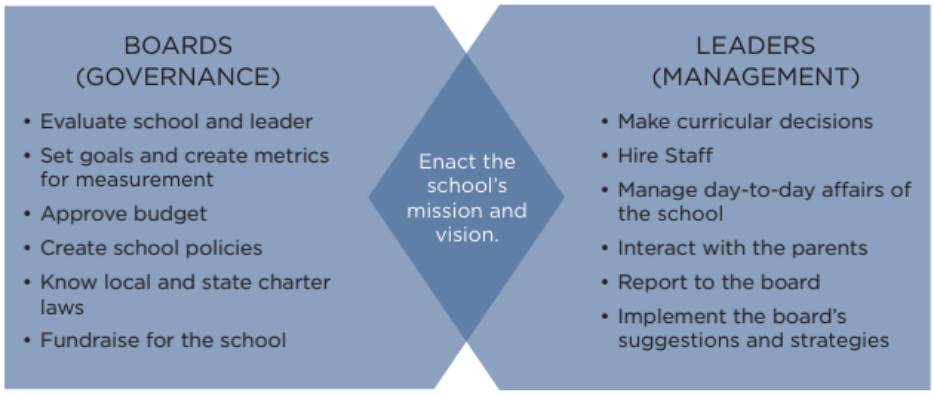
Responsibilities
The Cornerstone Board of Trustees (BOT) is responsible for governance and policy oversight, ensuring the school's mission, vision, and long-term goals are upheld through effective policies. The BOT manages financial sustainability by approving budgets, overseeing audits, and ensuring transparency. They set academic goals, monitor student progress, and ensure curriculum alignment. The BOT hires, supports, and evaluates the Executive Director and Leadership Team, fosters community and stakeholder engagement, and secures resources through development and fundraising efforts. Additionally, they engage in strategic planning and uphold compliance by holding public meetings and maintaining ethical standards, ensuring accountability in all actions to support Cornerstone's mission and growth. Trustees are expected to attend monthly meetings, fulfill board responsibilities, uphold confidentiality, and actively support the school's mission and goals.

Before opening, the BOT will develop and approve policies on budget, fundraising, growth, records retention, school safety, abuse/neglect reporting, sexual harassment, restraint limitations, physical activity, and grievance procedures. These policies will be compiled in a binder and included in the Student-Parent and Employee Handbooks as applicable. Immediate BOT responsibilities also include securing a facility, approving bylaws, and establishing governance policies to set the school's long-term vision and provide oversight for achieving goals.

The BOT will prioritize the following steps after approving the bylaws: 1) election of BOT officers; 2) review and activate a fundraising plan; 3) review and revise, if necessary, a detailed budget for school operations; 4) hire Executive Director and Assistant Director; 5) hire faculty and staff; 6) create and populate committees.

The BOT will establish various committees and provide oversight to ensure they effectively support the school's mission and values. These committees may include Governance, which oversees school leadership and other committees to maintain alignment with the school's mission; Finance, responsible for monitoring the budget and reporting financial issues to the BOT; Human Resources, which develops and maintains policies related to hiring and compensation; Fundraising, focused on creating a fundraising plan and building strategic partnerships; Academic, which oversees curriculum alignment, approves summative testing protocols, and ensures academic accountability; Outreach and Enrollment, dedicated to planning and facilitating outreach events; and Strategic Planning, which creates long-term objectives aligned with the school's mission and vision; and Climate and Culture, which creates policies and procedures to ensure a positive, equitable environment for the entire school community.

The graphic below from "Starting Strong: Best Practices in Starting a Charter School" broadly depicts the relationship between the BOT and LT.



(Cannata, Thomas, & Thombre, 2021)

The BOT will have supervisory authority over Cornerstone's operations as per RSA 194-B:5. Prospective members will undergo governance and financial management training from resources like the NH Center for Nonprofits. Responsibilities include overseeing school organization, ensuring legal compliance, and establishing policies. Core duties cover financial management (budgeting, audits), academic oversight (setting goals, approving curriculum), leadership management (hiring/evaluating the Executive Director), and development (fundraising and resource acquisition). Strategic planning and goal setting guide long-term growth, with subcommittees formed as needed for focused areas like budget and facilities (see Exhibit G for details).

The BOT will hold monthly meetings per NH's Right to Know Law per RSA 91 A:2 (2023). According to RSA 91-A:3, II (2023), the BOT must conduct its meetings in public sessions, except those that can be designated as nonpublic sessions. For purposes of lawful meetings, a quorum is defined as a majority of Trustees physically present or participating through video or voice communication systems. Recordings and meeting minutes will be kept following statutory guidelines. Trustees are expected to attend meetings regularly and may be replaced if they are frequently absent.

To avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of impropriety, any board member who is an employee, agent, or board member for any for-profit organization that contracts with Cornerstone must publicly disclose that fact and recuse themselves from any business Cornerstone may have with that for-profit organization.

Qualifications, Skill Set, and Experience
Board members should bring a complementary skill set that supports the effective operation of the school, including expertise in education, finance, law, governance, development, community engagement, human resources, marketing, technology, data analysis, and a commitment to educational equity. Charter school experience is preferred. Members must be willing to engage actively by preparing for and attending meetings, completing tasks, promoting the school, maintaining confidentiality, and recruiting advisors and volunteers. Essential qualities—honesty, integrity, humility, discipline, compassion, respect, kindness, and a commitment to equity—strengthen our Board's work and the success of our school

B. Method by which trustees and their terms are determined
Upon issuance of Cornerstone's charter, the Cornerstone Foundation's Board of Directors will conduct a strategic recruitment process to form a diverse and effective Board of Trustees (BOT). Utilizing networks, LinkedIn, and local organizations, the Directors will follow best practices for selection and interviewing. A nominating committee may be established to publicize the opportunity, vet candidates, conduct interviews, check references, and make recommendations. The Directors will approve, appoint, and announce the BOT. To ensure continuity, one or more Founding Members or Foundation Directors, all committed to Cornerstone's mission and educational equity, may serve on the BOT. The remaining members will be selected based on their alignment with these values and relevant qualifications.

Number of Trustees
The BOT will consist of between five to eleven members with a broad range of expertise. The creation of the first BOT will be completed within three months of the charter approval date. This is designed to ensure that our school community's diverse perspectives and needs are represented. As per the requirements of RSA 194-B:5-II, at least 25 percent or two parents of pupils attending the school, whichever is greater, will be part of the BOT. This time frame allows for student enrollment and ensures a diverse and representative board is in place.

Term Limits
The school's initial BOT shall be divided into three groups. Each group will be appointed to serve for one, two, or three years to establish staggered terms, ensuring continuity and stability. At each annual meeting after the first year of operation, Trustees will be elected for three-year renewable terms. The BOT, once operating, will select and appoint future Trustees and establish policies for Board governance and filling vacancies.

Qualifications
Cornerstone Charter School seeks individuals who are passionate about education, student success, and community service, valuing diverse backgrounds and perspectives. While experience in education is not required, we encourage professionals from various fields to apply, especially those with charter school governance experience. Board members should be committed to improving literacy, aligning with Cornerstone's mission to enhance literacy and critical thinking through the Orton-Gillingham Approach. Trustees are expected to bring strategic thinking, problem-solving abilities, teamwork, and strong communication skills, as well as collaborate with board members, staff, and the community. They must attend monthly meetings, participate in committees, support school events, and act as ambassadors by advocating for Cornerstone and engaging with local schools, officials, and stakeholders to build community connections.

Specific Roles and Responsibilities - Subject to applicable laws and regulations, the BOT's key responsibilities are listed below.

Cornerstone Directors will appoint the BOT's first officers, including the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer. Subsequently, officers will be elected by a majority vote of the BOT at each annual meeting. If an officer cannot fulfill their term, a replacement will be chosen by majority vote to complete the term of the officer who departed. Officer roles shall rotate every 4 years, so that no position is held in perpetuity.

Chairperson Responsibilities
- Develops the agenda for BOT meetings in consultation with the Executive Director.
- Schedule meetings of the BOT
- Preside over all BOT meetings using Robert's Rules of Order (Robert & Robert, 2020)
- Execute any contracts, deeds, mortgages, bonds, or other legal documents on behalf of Cornerstone.

Vice-Chairperson Responsibilities
- The BOT or the Chairperson shall designate the duties of the Vice-Chairperson.
- Preside over BOT meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.

Treasurer Responsibilities
- Assure proper accounting and reporting policies.
- Maintain the financial records of the organization.
- Create an annual report that includes the accounting of Cornerstones's funds.
- Carry out duties as outlined in New Hampshire statutes related to public schools

Secretary Responsibilities
- Record and maintain records of the proceedings of the BOT.
- Maintain original copies of the school's charter, bylaws, and names and addresses of all Trustees.
- Make required reports to the State of New Hampshire
- Carry out duties as required by law

Skills and Expertise
We seek trustees with expertise in areas such as finance, law, fundraising, marketing, education, real estate, charter school operations, leadership, or non-profit governance. These skills will enhance the board's ability to oversee the school's financial health, navigate legal and operational challenges, and support resource development and infrastructure planning.

Requirements
Our aim is to assemble a Board of Trustees that embodies the following structure. While Board turnover and other circumstances may occasionally result in deviations, we remain committed to ensuring our Board reflects these guidelines:

- Parent Trustees, no fewer than 25% or 2 parents of pupils attending Cornerstone
- Educator, Minimum one - not employed by the school
- Business Professionals, Minimum two– with demonstrated accounting /business experience
- Lawyer, Minimum one
- Founder, Minimum one – from original approved Charter Document
- Major Contributor, Minimum one

Board of Advisors
A Board of Advisors shall be formed to include all prior members of the Board of Trustees, excluding those removed for cause. The intent is to retain and utilize institutional experience. As Ex-Officio Board members, they are granted full access and freedom to attend and participate alongside the Board of Trustees at all public monthly board meetings. As ex-officio board members, however, they do not vote except at each annual meeting, where for that one day only, they shall have full rights and powers of an ordinary trustee.

Decision-Making Process for Trustee Selection
The process for selecting Trustees for Cornerstone will begin with identifying skill gaps and developing criteria based on the school's mission and values. The Board will then recruit candidates through community outreach and screen applicants to ensure alignment with Cornerstone's needs. Selected candidates will be interviewed to assess their experience, commitment, and collaborative abilities. The Board will review feedback and consider each candidate's potential contributions, aiming for a balanced and inclusive team. Final selections will be approved by a Board vote, followed by orientation for new Trustees to prepare them for their roles. This structured approach will ensure a mission-driven, well-rounded Board.

The Directors or existing Trustees will provide orientation and training for new Trustees to familiarize them with the school's mission, bylaws, and governing structure. Trustees will also receive essential documents, e.g., the school's charter, bylaws, budget, and financial statements. The Trustees will formally convene during the first board meeting, electing officers and establishing committees. They will agree on a meeting schedule, set initial goals and priorities, such as reviewing and adopting governance policies and

C. Board of Trustees By-Laws
Draft By-Laws have been created (See **Exhibit H**). The Board of Trustees shall revise or amend (if necessary) and approve the By-Laws no later than April 30, 2025

D. Organizational Structure and Growth Plan
During the period between Cornerstone's charter approval and the official formation of its Board of Trustees, the Directors of Cornerstone Foundation will form committees to accomplish goals according to the established timeline for the school's opening. The Directors may create a Start-Up Committee, which

may include the Founders, Cornerstone Foundation Directors, and non-voting advisors. Their duties may include the following:

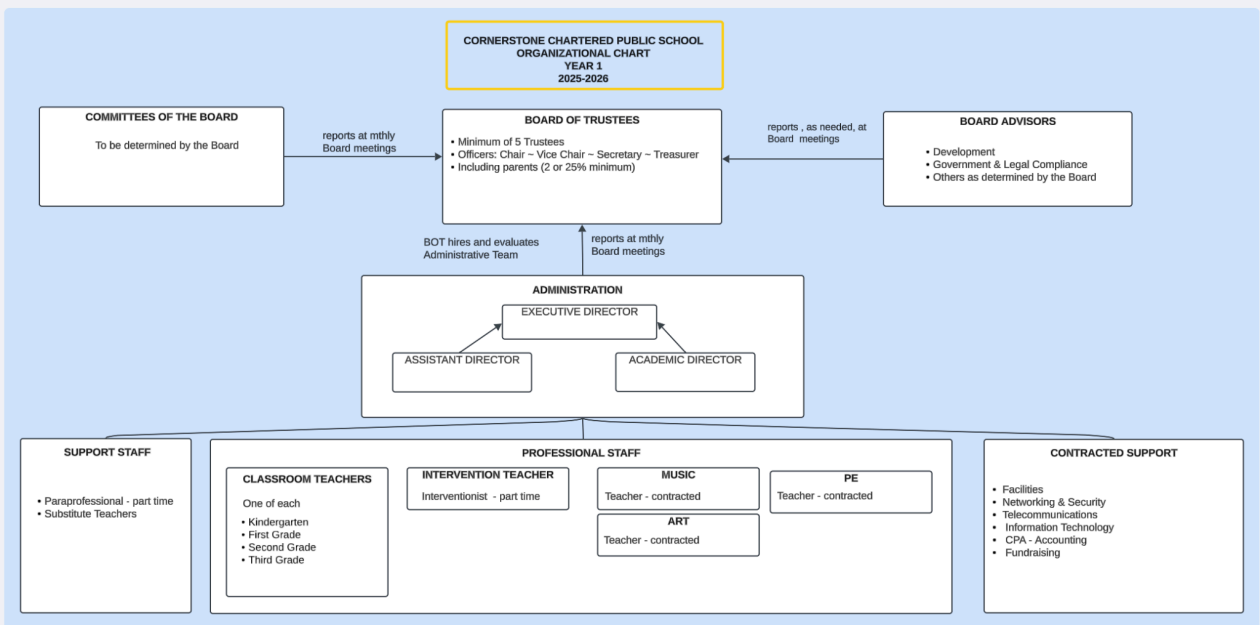
- Completing requirements for nonprofit establishment of the school
- Completing requirements for Charter School Program grant acceptance
- Actively recruiting and vetting individuals to serve on Cornerstone's Board of Trustees (BOT)
- Hire a CPA and review start-up and five-year projected budget
- Hire fundraising consultant
- Hire other consultants, as required
- Securing a school facility and overseeing compliance with all applicable building safety codes, laws, and regulations
- Purchasing insurance
- Developing application packets and marketing materials, including website creation and social media
- Developing job descriptions and hiring documents
- Creating employee and student handbooks
- Purchasing furniture, supplies, and materials for school setup

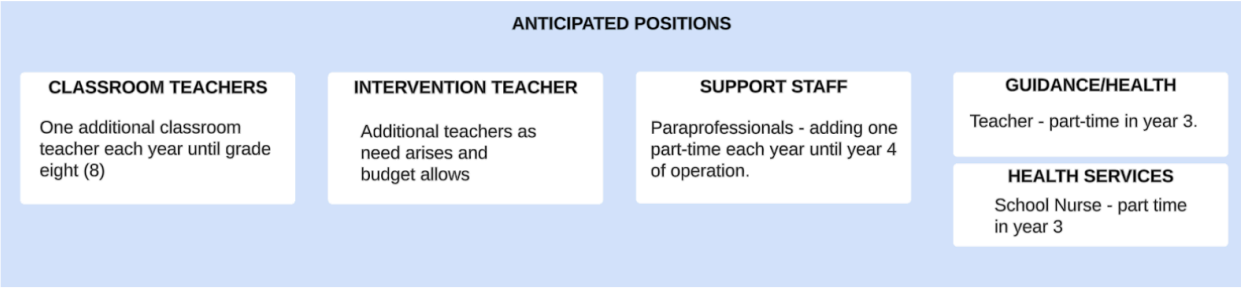
Once the Cornerstone's BOT is officially formed within three months of charter school approval, it will assume full responsibility as the governing body of the school. Once established, the BOT will approve the bylaws and begin meeting monthly to successfully open the school for the 2025/2026 school year. Its initial priorities will include, but are not limited to: 1) election of BOT officers; 2) creation and implementation of a comprehensive fundraising plan; 3) preparation or revision of budget for school operations; 4) create committees; 5) hire the Leadership Team (LT); 6) create, revise, and approve policies and procedures.

Once hired, the Leadership Team will work with the BOT to ensure curriculum alignment with NH standards, hire staff, recruit students, create or revise policies and procedures, create schedules, and other tasks the BOT deems necessary to the opening and operation of the school.

The BOT and LT will focus on reflective practice and a continuous cycle of improvement to create a strong and sustainable school by regularly gathering and evaluating feedback from the school community, following and creating best practices, and consulting with the charter school community, the NH Department of Education, and other support organizations.

Cornerstone's Organizational Chart





E. Fundraising Plan

Cornerstone's Founders and Cornerstone Foundation Directors (the Foundation) understand the importance of a well-structured fundraising plan involving a variety of strategies to ensure a steady flow of resources to provide ongoing support for the charter school. Cornerstone Charter School and Cornerstone Foundation will work together to create a comprehensive fundraising plan by first defining financial goals, setting purposes for funds, and establishing a timeline for achieving these goals with milestones and deadlines. To ensure the successful execution of this plan, we will hire a marketing and development consultant to provide guidance and maximize our fundraising efforts.

We have connected with Richard C. Peck Consulting, LLC, the founder of The Philanthropy Guy, a charitable giving resource hub. Richard (Rick) is a philanthropy advisor who works with nonprofits, potential donors, and professional advisors. He has provided us with a menu of services and a financial quote. Rick has strong ties to New Hampshire and particularly to the Upper Valley region. Among his many credentials, Rick served as Director of Individual Giving and Gift Planning for Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health and the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College and led the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation's philanthropy and donor services team. His website provides more information: https://www.thephilanthropyguy.com/aboutrick.

Under Rick's guidance, our fundraising plan may include the following actions:

- Create a fundraising and development committee (FDC) consisting of Foundation Directors, Trustees, parents, staff, and volunteers. The FDC is accountable to the Board of Trustees.
- Provide training for committee members and delegate specific roles and responsibilities to ensure effective coordination and execution.
- Create a fundraising calendar, which may include 1) Annual fundraising campaign; 2) Special events, such as auctions, galas, walkathons, and community fairs; 3) Grant applications; 4) Capital campaigns for major projects that focus on large donations and major gifts; 5) Online fundraising and social media campaigns.
- Develop fundraising materials such as brochures, flyers, press releases, and presentations, and maintain an updated website and active social media profiles.
- Engage and steward donors using Moves Management, a structured approach to managing relationships with donors, focusing on moving them through five stages of development:
    1. *Identify* potential donors through research and networking to create and prioritize prospects
    2. *Qualify* donors by determining interest and ability; make initial contact and assess interest
    3. *Cultivation* builds relationships through personal meetings and activities.
    4. *Solicitation* develop a proposal and ask for a donation at the right time
    5. *Stewardship* acknowledges donations, report on impact, and continue to engage
- Establish partnerships with corporations for matching gift programs, sponsorships, and employee volunteerism.

In "Year Zero," we have forecasted an estimated $1.5 million in start-up costs associated with acquiring and renovating a facility to meet health and safety codes, furnishings, networking systems, technology, student and assessment management systems, curriculum and program materials, professional development, marketing, hiring consultants, including legal, financial, and fundraising professionals, and additional resources to meet the needs of at-risk students using innovative strategies. We have been approved to receive a Charter School Program grant to cover the cost of establishing the school within the specific limitations of the grant, including limitations on the acquisition and renovation of a facility. We have a proposed five-year budget that covers minimum operating expense,s with a small surplus accumulating each year. One of the first priorities of the BOT will be to analyze the budget, create fundraising goals, organize a fundraising and development team, and engage the services of Rick Peck.

F. Grievance/Complaints Process or Policy

Cornerstone is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for its employees and an educational environment for students and families. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any conflict, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response within the school. Cornerstone strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees, students, and families. All school community members are expected to treat each other with mutual respect and are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism. Internal grievances/disputes arising from within Cornerstone, including all disputes among and between students, staff, parents, volunteers, advisors, partner organizations, and governing board members, will be resolved pursuant to policies and processes developed by the school. The LEA shall not be involved with Cornerstone's internal disputes unless Cornerstone requests LEA involvement or if it is legally required.

If employees disagree with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, they can express their concerns through the conflict resolution procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with Cornerstone in a reasonable, business-like manner or for using the conflict resolution procedure. If a situation occurs when employees believe that a condition of employment or a

decision affecting them is unjust or inequitable, and they do not feel that this can be resolved through informal measures, they are encouraged to make use of the following steps. The employee may discontinue the procedure at any step. 1. Employee presents conflict in written form to the Executive Director after the incident occurs. 2. In cases of conflict of interest, the employee may present the conflict to the chair of the Board of Trustees. 3. The Executive Director or Board Chair responds to the conflict during discussion or after consulting with others, when necessary, and documents the discussion. 4. Any grievance or complaint that is not resolved by the above steps shall be brought before the full BOT for hearing, and the BOT will determine a course of action. If the Board Chair hears the complaint rather than the Executive Director, the Board Chair will recuse themself from the full hearing.

The above process also applies to any parent or student. In situations involving a classroom teacher or other employee, they are encouraged to first bring their complaint to the teacher or employee in question. If they feel the issue is not resolved or it is not appropriate to bring it to that person, they shall bring the concern in writing to the Executive Director or the BOT as above. In the case of grievances and/or complaints against the BOT that cannot be resolved through informal conflict resolution, a neutral third-party mediator shall engage the Parties in a voluntary and non-binding mediation session designed to facilitate the resolution of the dispute. The cost of such mediation shall be split between the parties. If applicable, each party shall bear its own attorney fees that result from the dispute resolution process. Not every conflict can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction, but only through understanding and discussion of mutual conflicts can members of the Cornerstone community develop confidence in each other. This confidence is important to the operation of an efficient and harmonious work environment.

In the case of disputes between the LEA and Cornerstone, an attempt will always be made to resolve them amicably and reasonably without resorting to formal procedures. Cornerstone representatives shall refrain from public commentary regarding any disputes until the matter has progressed through the dispute resolution process unless legally required to do otherwise. In the event of a dispute between Cornerstone and the LEA, the Cornerstone Administrator or Board Chair will frame the issue in a written format and recommend that the LEA do the same. The written documents will be submitted to the Superintendent of the LEA and Cornerstone's Board of Trustees. The Executive Director or Board Chair will contact the the LEA and recommend an informal meeting to attempt to resolve the dispute not later than five business days from receipt of the statement. In the event that this informal meeting fails to resolve the dispute, Cornerstone will recommend that both parties identify two governing board members from their respective boards to jointly meet with the Superintendent and Executive Director and attempt to resolve the dispute within 15 business days from the dispute statement. If this joint meeting fails to resolve the dispute, the Parties may identify a neutral third-party mediator to engage the Parties in a voluntary and non-binding mediation session designed to facilitate the resolution of the dispute. Cornerstone will recommend that the format of the mediation session be developed jointly by the Parties. Mediation shall be held within thirty business days of receipt of the dispute statement. Cornerstone will be responsible for its own costs, including attorney's fees, resulting from the dispute resolution process.

V: EDUCATION PLAN

A. **Curriculum and Instruction that meets or exceeds state standards in the subject areas offered; clearly defined, research-based with evidence of effectiveness.**
Cornerstone provides a comprehensive educational program that meets or exceeds NH state standards, emphasizing literacy development, mathematical knowledge and skills, science, social studies, and the arts, along with critical thinking, character education, and emotional learning. It incorporates teacher-led, explicit, direct instruction blended with inquiry-based learning and exploration, rigorous assessments for data-driven instruction, and ongoing professional development for teachers.

Orton-Gillingham Approach
Cornerstone's central mission is to improve literacy outcomes for all students using the Orton-Gillingham (OG) Approach. OG is best understood as an approach because of its flexibility, adaptability, and reliance upon teacher expertise, training, and professional judgment. Educators are trained to make informed decisions about how best to apply the approach to meet their students' needs. For this reason, all classroom teachers will engage in coursework and a practicum and earn certification at a minimum Classroom Educator level. This level of certification provides teachers with the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach foundational reading, writing, and spelling skills to all students.

The OG Approach is characterized by direct, sequential, cumulative, explicit, and language-based individualized instruction using multisensory techniques. OG teachers focus on the structure of the English language, including phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. This comprehensive focus goes beyond what a typical program might offer, encompassing a wide range of linguistic knowledge. It provides a comprehensive framework based on principles that guide individualized and effective instruction, making it more than just a program or method with a set curriculum or fixed instructional steps. OG instruction meets NH College and Career Ready K-8 English Language Arts Model Competencies, aligned with National Standards for Foundational Reading Skills. OG aligns with the International Dyslexia Association's (IDA) Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (International Dyslexia Association, 2018) and The Orton-Gillingham Academy (OGA) - Principles of the Orton-Gillingham Approach,

Following a high-quality scope and sequence is essential to the implementation of the OG Approach. Systematic and sequential instruction is one of the Principles of the OG Approach; therefore, the scope and sequence must move from simple to complex and more common to less common concepts and skills. We have identified a tried and true OG scope and sequences, which we will use for Tier I instruction:

- Orton-Gillingham for the K-2 Classroom: Weekly Guide and Universal Assessment, Second Edition, created and published by Stern Center Orton-Gillingham Institute.
- Tier I: OG Scope and Sequence for Grades 3-6.

This writer, Lynne Howard, one of the founders of Cornerstone, is a Reading and Writing Specialist and Orton-Gillingham Clinical Supervisor with the Orton-Gillingham Academy and is an experienced OG practitioner who works with the Stern Center for Language and Learning in Williston, VT, to mentor teachers in the OG Approach. Lynne has decades of experience working with students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities. As Executive Director of Cornerstone, Lynne will provide practicum observations, instructional coaching, and ongoing professional development for Cornerstone's teachers.

El Education K-5 and 6-8 Language Arts, Open Up Resources
The OG Approach is easily integrated with similarly aligned curricula, enhancing and supporting other instructional programs rather than replacing them. This integration allows educators to infuse OG strategies into various subjects and teaching styles.

Cornerstone will use EL Education's comprehensive language arts core curriculum or a similarly vetted, researched-based program to provide content-rich, engaging learning experiences for our students. EL Education's Language Arts program is a comprehensive, standards-based curriculum designed to foster deep literacy skills and a love for reading and writing among students. This program integrates reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. It is built on the principles of equity, engagement, and rigor, ensuring that all students have access to high-quality, challenging content. The curriculum includes a diverse selection of texts that reflect various cultures and perspectives, promoting inclusivity and critical thinking. Through project-based learning, students engage in meaningful, real-world tasks that connect

their learning to their lives and communities. The program also incorporates structured, systematic instruction in phonics and vocabulary to support foundational literacy skills. Teachers receive comprehensive professional development and ongoing support, empowering them to effectively implement the curriculum and meet the diverse needs of their students. Overall, EL Education's Language Arts program aims to develop proficient, confident, and thoughtful readers and writers who are prepared for future academic and life success. Lyme School, with one of the highest ELA proficiency levels in the state, uses the EL Education Language Arts curriculum. This writer interviewed Lyme School's curriculum director, who described the successful implementation of the curriculum. Please follow the link to view the El Education Curriculum Maps for K-8: https://eleducation.org/resources/curriculum-maps/. For more information about the EL Language Arts Curriculum, please visit https://eleducation.org/resources/k-5-language-arts-curriculum-overview/.

Reading and writing are mutually supportive; reading enhances writing and vice versa (Graham, 2020). Writing and reading are often taught as separate subjects. At Cornerstone, we bring the reading and writing together to support with an emphasis on expository writing. We also explicitly teach handwriting. Research shows that the ability to produce letters quickly and legibly underlies the achievement of English Language Arts standards (Reitzel, 2020).

Open Up Resources K-5 and 6-8 Math

Cornerstone will use Open Up Resources Math program or another similarly vetted, research-based program. Open Up Resources Math is an innovative and comprehensive mathematics curriculum designed to support educators in delivering high-quality math instruction to students from kindergarten through 8th grade. This curriculum, available for both K-5 and 6-8, is built on the principles of equity, accessibility, and engagement, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to succeed in mathematics. It provides a coherent and rigorous progression of mathematical concepts, aligning with the Common Core State Standards to prepare students for higher-level math. Open Up Resources Math emphasizes deep understanding and problem-solving skills through inquiry-based learning and real-world applications. The curriculum includes a variety of resources, such as detailed lesson plans, interactive activities, and formative assessments to support differentiated instruction and meet diverse learning needs. Additionally, it offers extensive professional development and ongoing support for teachers, empowering them to implement the curriculum effectively and fostering a positive math learning environment. The curriculum offers both print and digital formats and includes a strong family connection component. PBS has produced a number of lesson videos for grades 6-8 to support virtual learning. EdReports reviewed this curriculum and reported an effective alignment with Common Core State Standards (EdReports, 2023) (EdReports, 2024). For more information about Open Up Math 6-8, please visit https://cdn.edreports.org/series/ag9zfmVkcmVwb3J0cy13ZWJyGwsSCVB1Ymxpc2hlchgzDAsSBlNlcmllcxhcDA/publisher-background.pdf

Open Up Math provides Standards to Lessons and Lessons to Standards alignment: Open Up Math provides this note about standards: "There are three kinds of alignments to standards in these materials: building on, addressing, and building towards. Oftentimes, a particular standard requires weeks, months, or years to achieve, and in many cases, it requires building on work in prior grade levels. When an activity reflects the work of prior grades but is being used to bridge to a grade-level standard, alignments are indicated as "building on." When an activity is laying the foundation for a grade-level standard but has not yet reached the level of the standard, the alignment is indicated as "building towards." When a task is focused on grade-level work, the alignment is indicated as "addressing."

https://access.openupresources.org/curricula/our6-8math/en/grade-6/teacher_about_these_materials.html.

Science and Social Studies

To the greatest extent possible, we integrate science and social studies and deliberately weave literacy skills throughout, resulting in a more holistic experience than traditional education. Here is an example from the EL Education program: In a first-grade classroom, students study the sun, moon, and stars in alignment with Next Generation Science Standards (1-ESS1-1). The lesson includes a text set, including both authentic narrative and expository texts, with opportunities for students to engage with key ideas and details and integrate knowledge and ideas. In addition to learning the science content, the students learn about the author's craft, including how authors learn about a subject and use their knowledge to write a story, addressing many of the literature and informational strands in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). This unit of study also meets social studies standards (New Hampshire Curriculum Framework GE:3:Physical Systems). Students investigate how the relationship between the Earth and the sun affects our daily lives.

Students respond in various ways, including keeping a notebook of observations, creating role-plays, and writing narrative, informative, and creative writing pieces. They have choices to create, explore, imagine, or research to extend their learning further, meeting various additional standards, including visual arts, music, and health.

Students complete a performance task to demonstrate their understanding. For this unit, they write and illustrate a poem describing the sun during different times of the day. Throughout this unit and all units, students demonstrate New Hampshire College and Career Ready K-8 English Language Arts Model Competencies and are in keeping with the recommendations of the CCSS: "By reading texts in history/social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas" (National Governors Association Center (NGAC), 2010, p. 10).

The Common Core State Standards emphasize the importance of informational text. As discussed in the "Key Design Considerations" section (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, n.d.), "... the motivation behind the interdisciplinary approach to literacy promulgated by the Standards is extensive research establishing the need for college and career ready students to be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K-12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding."

Unified Arts

In addition to our core curriculum (literacy, math, science, and social studies), we will provide music, art, physical education, health, and guidance for a well-rounded curriculum, adhering to the standards of each discipline. According to the ELA introduction to CCSS, "Students require a wide-ranging, rigorous academic preparation and, particularly in the early grades, attention to such matters as social, emotional, and physical development and approaches to learning" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010, p. 6). We will align instruction to the National Core Arts Standards https://www.nationalartsstandards.org/ and to NH K-12 Physical Education Curriculum Guidelines https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/standards-pe.pdf.

Social and Emotional Learning

We will intentionally create a respectful, equitable, orderly school community to maximize learning and happiness. Inquiry-based learning and exploration allow students to explore their interests and practice collaboration and social skills. In addition, we will teach acceptance and understanding of those who are

different from ourselves. We deliberately choose instructional materials that develop an appreciation for the diverse nature of our world. As stated in the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, 2010, p. 7, "Students actively seek to understand other perspectives and cultures through reading and listening, and they are able to communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds." Using a social-emotional learning curriculum, such as Responsive Classrooms and Equitable Learning Environment Framework, we teach students relationship skills, self-management, self-awareness, social awareness, and responsible decision-making aligned with New Hampshire's Health Education Curriculum Guidelines
https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/2020/standards-health.pdf

Cornerstone will make available information about its curriculum to all persons, parents, and pupils considering enrollment in our school, according to RSA 194-B:2 II. Curriculum information will be available on the school's website.

B. Current research for selecting curriculum

The Orton-Gillingham Approach is a Structured Literacy approach supported by the science of reading and defined by The Reading League's Science of Reading: Defining Guide (2022) as "[T]he 'science of reading' is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. Over the last five decades, this research has provided a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop, why some students have difficulty, and how educators can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through the prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties."

The K-5 and grades 6-8 ELA programs meet EdReports expectations for text quality and complexity, building knowledge, and usability (EdReports, 2017) (EdReports, 2019). EdReports is an independent nonprofit that evaluates K-12 instructional materials. EdReports highlights that the curriculum effectively addresses grade-level topics, follows a logical structure, and supports diverse learners with appropriate instructional strategies. Additionally, it provides strong teacher support and resources for collecting ongoing data about student progress. Anecdotally, this writer has interviewed the curriculum director of Lyme School, a top-rated elementary school, who credited the EL Education program as a component of their success.

Further, Cornerstone's ELA curriculum aligns with the five pillars of effective reading instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as identified by the National Reading Panel and confirmed and extended in 2019 by the Institute of Education Sciences (National Reading Panel (NRP), 2000; Foorman et al., 2016). We incorporate and explicitly teach all components of Hollis Scarborough's Reading Rope (see **Exhibit I**) and Joan Sadita's Writing Rope (see **Exhibit J**). These models illustrate the complex cognitive processes involved in skilled reading and writing. We emphasize oral language and provide ample opportunities for students to improve their listening and speaking abilities.

Cornerstone will use Open Up Resources Math for K-5 and grades 6-8 programs. Both programs meet EdReports expectations for focus and coherence, rigor and mathematical practices, and usability (EdReports, 2023) (EdReports, 2024). Numerous school districts across the United States have adopted Open Up Resources Math, citing its alignment with educational standards and its effectiveness in improving student outcomes. The TeachersFirst review praises Open Up Resources for its comprehensive and accessible materials, which are free to access and use. The review notes that the curriculum includes detailed lesson plans, teacher guides, and student materials that can be used to supplement current teaching practices. TeachersFirst also highlights the inclusion of family materials and tools for differentiating

instruction, making it a versatile resource for various classroom needs https://www.teachersfirst.com/single.cfm?id=18087.

Integrating content area instruction, also known as disciplinary literacy, in K-8 education is valuable for a variety of reasons, including building background knowledge, which has a direct impact on reading comprehension; complex text analysis; academic and content area vocabulary improvement; and evaluating claims by providing evidence (Reading Rockets, n.d.). The National Council of Teachers of English Position Statement on the Role of Nonfiction Literature states, "Nonfiction literature is ideal for reading instruction, as it introduces students to a vast array of topics across subject areas, allowing them to build knowledge, expand vocabulary, and experience different perspectives" (Kiefer, 2009; Wooten & Rowe, 2018, as cited in National Council of Teachers of English, 2023, para. 22).

C. Statement that the school will have available information about its curriculum and policies to all persons, parents, and students considering enrollment.

Cornerstone will provide information about its curriculum and policies to all persons, parents, and students considering enrollment. The school will maintain transparency in all its activities, including the curriculum, which will be on the Cornerstone Charter School website. This will give parents the information they need to support classroom learning at home. All school information will be available in printed form, mailed or distributed on request, on the school's website, and in outreach materials. Every effort will be made to make materials accessible for ESL learners and those with a wide range of reading abilities.

D. Measurable academic goals, objectives, and timeline for accountability

At Cornerstone, literacy is the backbone for learning across the curriculum. We are committed to ensuring that every student learns to read, write, speak, and listen to their full potential. We use the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to define student success and targets. This framework integrates data and instruction to maximize student achievement and support students' social, emotional, and behavioral needs from a strengths-based perspective. The MTSS framework has four essential components: screening, progress monitoring, multi-level prevention system, and data-based decision-making.

We will use valid and reliable assessments to measure student growth and achievement for **all grade levels**, such as NWEA Measures of Academic Progress or Track My Progress. Students in grades 3 - 8 shall take the New Hampshire's statewide summative assessment (NHSAS) as required by RSA 194-B:8 III (V). We have established robust, realistic student achievement targets in literacy and math (These benchmarks for achievement progress each year are determined by grade level and year of entry into our program and include targets specifically for at-risk students. By year 5, most students are expected to perform at or above benchmark levels in reading and math. Success will be defined by our students reaching these benchmarks based on grade level and year of entry. We will track our success every year and use this as the basis to continually assess where we can improve our methods. The chart below defines minimum student achievement targets for the first 5 years of operation for all students and all assessment tools, including NHSAS.

CORNERSTONE CHARTER SCHOOL

Minimum Student Achievement Targets

Percent at or Above Benchmark by Grade Level Cohorts

ALL STUDENTS					
GRADES	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
K	59	60	61	62	63
1	57	61	62	63	64
2	55	59	64	65	66
3	53	57	62	66	67
4	-	55	59	64	69
5	-	-	56	62	67
6	-	-	-	58	64
7	-	-	-	-	60
Average per Year	56	58	61	63	65

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES					
GRADES	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
K	34	35	36	37	38
1	28	35	36	37	38
2	24	29	37	38	39
3	18	25	30	38	39
4	-	19	26	31	40
5	-	-	19	27	33
6	-	-	-	20	28
7	-	-	-	-	20
Average per Year	26	29	31	33	34

OTHER AT RISK STUDENTS*					
GRADES	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
K	40	41	42	43	44
1	38	42	43	44	45
2	36	40	43	44	45
3	33	37	41	45	46
4	-	34	39	43	47
5	-	-	35	40	44
6	-	-	-	36	42
7	-	-	-	-	37
Average per Year	37	39	40	42	44

The charts illustrate the progressive nature of our minimum achievement targets, determined by grade level and year of entry into our program. The top chart shows targets for the entire student population, the middle for students with disabilities, and the bottom chart shows targets for other at-risk students.

Notably, the highest targets are set for students who join us in kindergarten. For instance, in Year 1 on the top chart, the target for kindergarten is 59% at or above the benchmark. However, by Year 5, this target will increase to 63%, reflecting program and procedural enhancements and an increase in teacher expertise. Similarly, the lowest Year 1 target (53%) is for students who initially enter at G3 and gradually increase to 60% by Year 5.

The chart also visually represents our targets for cohorts as they progress through the grade levels. The cohorts are color-coded, allowing for easy tracking of their progress diagonally on the chart. This visual aid is particularly helpful in understanding the trajectory of student performance. On the top chart, the targets increase by 4% per year for kindergarten-G2 and 3% per year for students who entered the school in G3, reflecting realistic expectations for continuous improvement.

The middle and bottom charts are dedicated to our At-Risk Students, indicating our commitment to their success. The growth rate for these students is the same, but initial targets are set to realistically represent this demographic, ensuring that every student is included in our pursuit of excellence.

By Year 5 of our program, most students are expected to perform at or above benchmark levels in reading and math. However, it's crucial to note that these targets are considered minimums, not the ultimate goal. Our program aims to surpass these expectations, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to student success and continuous improvement. We strive for excellence, not just meeting the minimum requirements.

* Other At-Risk students include economically disadvantaged, ELL, homeless and students in foster care

Students in grades 3 - 8 shall take the NH Statewide Assessment (NHSAS). The Minimum Student Achievement Targets outlined above will apply to the NHSAS.

E.Performance standards

Cornerstone has identified performance standards in three key areas: 1) academic achievement, 2) character development, and 3) parental and community involvement.

1. *Academic Achievement* - By the end of year one of Cornerstone's operation, 58% of all students and 34% of at-risk students will perform at or above grade level in math and reading as measured by valid and reliable assessment tool(s), which may include, but are not limited to one or more of the following: NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress, Track My Progress, CBM measures, such as DIBELS, and shall include NHSAS for students in grades 3 - 8. By the end of year five, the percentage of all students and at-risk students at or above grade level will increase to 70% and 42%, respectively. Students' academic growth will be continually monitored with valid and reliable assessment tools, teacher-created assessments, and observations. Achievement will be reported to parents and stakeholders using a standard reporting system, as determined by the Board of Trustees.

   Teachers will measure literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and 21st-century skills competencies using formative and summative classroom assessments tied to these competencies to gauge student progress. Teachers may use rubrics, skills checklists, quizzes, and performance tasks to provide information about each student's mastery level. Teachers will issue quarterly student report cards and hold parent-teacher conferences twice per year.
2. *Character Development* - Students will consistently demonstrate strong character by demonstrating respect, responsibility, and safety in their interactions with peers and staff as continually measured by behavioral assessments, and teacher observations and documented through our Multi-Tiered System of Supports. The key competencies in this domain are self-management, social awareness and relationships, and responsible decision-making.The school will foster a positive and supportive environment where these values are integrated into daily interactions, instruction, and school culture. Teachers will monitor and document the competencies using checklists and disciplinary reports. Social-emotional and behavioral data will be included in the quarterly report cards. We will maintain a positive school climate using the following targets:
   a) 95% of students consistently demonstrate behavior that aligns with the school's core values of safety, responsibility, and respect as measured by behavior reports
   b) Reduce disciplinary referrals by 20% each academic year.
   c) Achieve a 90% or higher satisfaction rate in student, teacher, and parent surveys related to school climate and behavior.

   3. *Parental and Community Involvement* - Cornerstone Charter School will actively engage parents and the broader community as essential partners in the educational process, fostering strong collaboration to support student success and enhance school culture as measured by data sheets, attendance records, and meeting minutes. The specific competencies for this key area are communication, understanding of the school's educational goals and expectations, active participation, and collaboration.

   The school will strive to achieve targeted levels of parent and community participation in key events and initiatives:
   d) 80% of parents will attend key events such as parent-teacher conferences, open houses, and curriculum nights.
   e) 60% of parents will attend educational workshops and family engagement activities.
   f) 50% of parents will volunteer in various school activities.
   g) No fewer than 25% or two parents will serve on Cornerstone's Board of Trustees.
   h) 75% of parents will provide feedback on annual parent satisfaction surveys.
   i) Three local businesses, organizations, or community groups will partner with Cornerstone with measurable contributions to our programs.

j) 20% of community members will participate in school events.

F. Achievement tests to be used to measure academic and other goal achievement, including, but not limited to, objective measures of literacy and numeracy competencies, including spelling, reading, expository writing, history, geography, science, and mathematics.
Measurement of student achievement will comply with RSA 194-B:8, V, which states: "At least annually, and near the end of each school year, a chartered public school shall evaluate the educational progress of each pupil, as specified in RSA 194-B:3 II(h). Such evaluation shall include, but not be limited to, the New Hampshire statewide education improvement and assessment program, as provided in RSA 193-C. The cost of the state assessment program shall be borne by the state." Cornerstone will fully participate in all aspects of the state testing and other assessments required by state statute. Cornerstone is committed to utilizing a comprehensive range of achievement tests to accurately measure and support our students' academic and developmental progress. We also provide alternative assessments for qualified students. The following assessments may be employed to evaluate objective measures of literacy, numeracy, and other core competencies:
Literacy Competencies: We will use valid and reliable screening and progress monitoring tools, which may include, but are not limited to, DIBELS or AIMSweb. Both tools provide a suite of assessments that cover early literacy skills, including alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, phonics, and oral reading fluency. We will also use diagnostic tools, such as Orton-Gillingham Universal Assessment K-2 (Stern Center Orton-Gillingham Institute) or comparable assessments, to assess phonological awareness, alphabet recognition: letter name and sound, handwriting, decoding and sight word recognition, sentence and passage reading, spelling: words in isolation and dictated sentences. Students in grades 3 - 8 shall participate in NHSAS.
English Language Arts (ELA) & Expository Writing: We will assess expository writing using teacher-developed, standards-aligned reading and writing assessments and New Hampshire's Statewide Assessment System (SAS) according to the state's assessment schedule.
Numeracy Competencies: We will use valid and reliable screening and progress monitoring tools, which may include, but are not limited to, AIMSweb Plus, i-Ready, or STAR Math.
Mathematics: We will assess mathematics using teacher-developed, standards-aligned math assessments along with New Hampshire's Statewide Assessment System (SAS).
Science: We will use teacher-developed, standards-aligned science assessments, including objective and performance-based projects. Our students will participate in New Hampshire SAS science assessments according to the state assessment schedule.
History and Geography: We will use teacher-developed, standards-aligned history and geography assessments, including objective and performance-based projects.
Our G4 and G8 students will participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) as required for reading, math, and science. We will continually monitor student progress and adjust instruction according to our Assessment Decision Tree (see **Exhibit L**) within our Multi-Tiered Systems of Support model.

G. For Schools offering High School grade levels, graduation requirements sufficient to ensure that the school has provided an adequate education for its pupils. Cornerstone will not offer a high school program.

H. Student Performance Data Management System
Cornerstone intends to enter into a subscription-based vendor agreement to use a student performance data management system to track important longitudinal data, such as attendance to discipline, contact information, grades, assessments, and reports. PowerSchool and Alma are vendors under consideration.

I. **Daily/weekly Schedule Sample**

Daily/Weekly Sample Schedule - Cornerstone Charter School					
TIME	**MONDAY**	**TUESDAY**	**WEDNESDAY**	**THURSDAY**	**FRIDAY**
8:00-8:20	Morning Routine	Morning Routine	Morning Routine	Morning Routine	Morning Routine
8:20-9:20	EL Education Module Lessons	EL Education Module Lessons	EL Education Module Lessons	EL Education Module Lessons	EL Education Module Lessons
9:20-10:20	Specials	Specials	Specials	Specials	Specials
10:20-11:20	EL Education Skills Block	EL Education Skills Block	EL Education Skills Block	EL Education Skills Block	EL Education Skills Block
11:20-12:05	Lunch/Recess/ Read Aloud	Lunch/Recess/ Read Aloud	Lunch/Recess/ Read Aloud	Lunch/Recess/ Read Aloud	Lunch/Recess/ Read Aloud
12:05-1:20	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
1:20-2:20	EL Education Labs	Science/Social Studies	EL Education Labs	Science/Social Studies	EL Education Labs
2:20-2:30	End of Day	End of Day	End of Day	End of Day	End of Day

Each day includes 5.25 hours of instructional time. School will be in session for 180 days for a total of 945 hours. We will include five additional days in our yearly schedule for inclement weather.

J. Supplemental Programming

We provide literacy instruction based on the science of how all children learn to read. This is especially important for our target population of at-risk students. We use an Equitable Learning Environments Framework, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), professional judgment, and personal relationships to support all students in their learning journey. Supplemental programming needs will be evaluated and implemented based on the individual needs of each student. Individual and group tutoring is provided for students who require academic support. We provide for the use of assistive technology (screen reading, speech-to-text, and other assistive devices) as necessary.

We recognize the need for before and after-school programming to support families and students. As our budget allows, we will incorporate this supplemental programming.

VI: SCHOOL OPERATIONS PLANS

A. Admissions Procedures

Cornerstone is an open-enrollment, no-tuition chartered public school committed to equity and academic excellence through a strong basis in literacy. Admission to Cornerstone is open to any student residing in New Hampshire who desires a strong literacy focus and integrated curriculum. The Board of Trustees shall set a tuition fee for students outside New Hampshire each school year, and acceptance of out-of-state students will be conditional upon available space after NH residents have been admitted. Cornerstone's admission methods will not be designed, intended, or used to discriminate or violate individual civil rights in any manner prohibited by law. The BOT, subject to applicable laws, reserves the right to change or further specify recruiting, admission, or enrollment policies or practices.

Cornerstone has a recruitment plan that is designed to promote the inclusion of all students. Cornerstone will reach out to area organizations to attract at-risk students to the school, including, but not limited to,

government agencies, schools, non-profit organizations, religious institutions, the healthcare industry, and private professional businesses. There are many resources in the Upper Valley that provide services for at-risk children and families. The goal of connecting with the support organizations is two-fold: 1) to create mutually beneficial partnerships that ultimately serve families and children by offering them needed services; 2) to inform organizations and families about our school's mission, vision, and program offerings and locate families who might be interested in enrolling their child or children.

We have identified the following connections in the Upper Valley:

Government Agencies ● Department of Health and Human Services ● Lebanon NH Housing Authority ● Lebanon Recreation, Arts, and Parks ● Libraries - Kilton Library and Lebanon Library	Schools ● District schools - Lebanon School District ● Area childcare, preschools, and kindergartens - Montessori Discovery School, FitKids Childcare at RVC, Children's Center of the Upper Valley	Non-Profits ● LISTEN Community Services ● Granite United Way ● Upper Valley Haven ● Learning Disabilities Association of America - NH Affiliate
Religious Institutions ● Lebanon Methodist Church ● First Congregational Church ● Sacred Heart Parish ● Wellspring Worship Center	Healthcare Industry ● Good Neighbor Health Clinic ● Local Pediatricians ● Dartmouth Hitchcock Hospital	Private Professionals ● Educational Psychologists - evaluators ○ Dr. Atkins, Hartford, VT ○ Stern Center, Williston, VT ○ Dr. Van Santen - Hanover, NH ● Other professional who provide services for children ○ Balanced Speech Therapy

Cornerstone will create a website highlighting our mission and vividly communicating our innovative teaching approach—an integrated, multidisciplinary curriculum featuring the unique Orton-Gillingham approach and Writing Revolution, a small school environment fostering individual growth, and robust social-emotional programming. We will use social media and blog posts to drive traffic to the website, where families can fill out a form to get more information or complete an application.

Other strategies for recruiting students

- Distribute flyers and posters in community centers, libraries, coffee shops, and other high-traffic areas.
- Our school will actively engage with the local community by participating in various events such as fairs, festivals, and farmer's markets. This will allow us to interact with potential students and their families and share our school's unique offerings.
- Ask the local papers to do a feature story about our school, and we will spread the word by talking with friends and neighbors.
- Host informational events for interested families, such as open houses, informational sessions, and school tours.

- Partner with local daycare centers and preschools to provide information to families.
- As part of our commitment to personalized attention, we will personally follow up with families who have shown interest in our school. This approach keeps families engaged and allows us to address any questions or concerns they may have, further demonstrating our dedication to their needs.
- Word of mouth—One of the most effective ways to recruit students is to deliver on our mission and provide them with an outstanding education and school experience.

Cornerstone will follow the basic method of admissions that defines charter schools nationwide: 1) Admission shall be blind; 2) Should the number of applicants exceed capacity, students will be chosen by a lottery system with a waitlist developed from the lottery overflow.

Application Overview

- We recommend that prospective students and their families attend at least one informational meeting to learn about Cornerstone's educational approach and the expectations of students and their families.
- Cornerstone's application packets and admissions policies will be available on its website and in hard copy for prospective families to learn about the school's philosophy and expectations. *In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), our application packets will not inquire about disability status to ensure that students with disabilities are not discriminated against.
- We will hold an open enrollment period between February 1 and March 31 each year prior to each upcoming school year during which interested families may submit applications.
- Application assistance will be made available for families in need of support.

Lottery Policy and Procedures

- Should the number of applicants exceed the number of spaces available, a blind public lottery will be held no later than April 15 on a day and time determined by the Board of Trustees.
- The lottery drawing will be available for live and synchronous online viewing.
- The lottery policy and procedures will be available on Cornerstone's website and read aloud prior to the lottery drawing.
- Lottery-eligible applicant names will be randomly drawn one by one by a disinterested person with no stake in the outcome.
- The name of each applicant will be read aloud by the drawer and read aloud a second time by another person who will record the name in the order in which it was drawn.
- Students who are not accepted in the lottery drawing will be placed on a waiting list in the order determined by the lottery. Should space become available, students will be admitted based on the order assigned by the lottery.
- When a student is admitted through the lottery process, their siblings' names will be automatically drawn for their prospective grades. If there is space, siblings will be admitted as well. If not, they will be placed at the top of the appropriate waitlist as"sibling priority."
- We will admit students from the waitlist should space become available after the lottery.
- Students who are not admitted through the lottery process must reapply each year.
- If a mistake occurs in the lottery process, that drawing will be considered void, and a new lottery drawing will take place immediately.
- Should a dispute arise regarding the lottery process, the person or persons with a claim will have 10 business days to notify Cornerstone's BOT in writing describing the dispute. The BOT will then follow Cornerstone's grievance policy.

Admission Policies

- Admission priority shall be given to children of the founders, charter staff, and teachers, provided that these students are New Hampshire residents and make up a small percentage of the school's total enrollment.
- Admission priority shall be given to siblings of currently enrolled New Hampshire students, provided that the siblings are New Hampshire residents.
- Students with admission priority shall be exempt from the lottery.
- Out-of-state students are permitted to apply on a tuition basis *only* when there is space available. They cannot participate in the enrollment lottery or be placed on the waitlist. The BOT will set a tuition rate each year.

Registration and Enrollment

- Cornerstone will provide written notification of a student's admission status (i.e., accepted for the upcoming school year or wait-listed) no later than five business days after the lottery drawing.
- A parent or guardian of accepted students will be required to sign a Commitment to Attend (CtA) form within two business days of the date on the acceptance notice, whether or not a lottery was held.
- If Cornerstone does not receive a signed CtA within five business days, the seat will be offered to the next student on the list.
- Cornerstone will confirm receipt of the CtA form along with a registration form., which will prompt parents to request their child's records from his or her previous school, if applicable.
- Completed registration forms are due within ten (10) business days of the confirmation date. Receipt of student records from the student's previous school shall constitute proper notification of enrollment by the charter school, according to ED 318.19.
- Following the application and registration process, Cornerstone will review students' academic records, IEPs, and 504 plans to ensure that students are able to receive the necessary services and accommodations mandated by aw.
- Cornerstone will meet with each family individually to make a personal connection, provide more information, and answer questions.
- Cornerstone will offer events to support the transition for new students and their families, including informational sessions and social gatherings to build the school community.
- Cornerstone will also promote Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and other opportunities for parent involvement with the school.

The Board of Trustees reserves the right to change the admission, lottery, or enrollment policies and procedures as necessary for improved school operations in accordance with the applicable laws and regulations.

B. School Calendar and the number and duration of days pupils are to be served.

Cornerstone Chartered Public School will meet or exceed the number of hours required for seat time according to RSA 194-B:8.III. Cornerstone Charter School is committed to a competency-based educational model that prioritizes mastery of skills and knowledge over the traditional measure of time spent in a classroom. While our approach emphasizes students' demonstrated proficiency, we also recognize and adhere to the state-mandated seat time requirements.

To ensure compliance, our instructional design integrates competency-based learning objectives within the framework of required instructional hours. This approach allows us to:

- Foster individualized learning pathways that enable students to progress upon mastery.
- Provide flexibility in pacing while maintaining alignment with state guidelines for attendance and instructional time.
- Uphold rigorous standards for academic achievement, ensuring students meet or exceed expectations.

Cornerstone expects to collaborate with the district in which it resides regarding transportation services in order to coordinate transportation services best and better serve multi-student households. Any school-specific changes to the schedule will be monitored carefully to
ensure that our students meet the required number of attendance hours. Should transportation issues result in lost educational hours, we will address this loss and amend students' school hours. Cornerstone will replicate the yearly schedule of vacations, holidays, and professional development days to ease transportation issues and coordinate the schedules for multischool families. The school day will begin at 8:00 am and end at 2:30.The first day of school will likely be at the end of August (before Labor Day), and the last day of school will be in mid-to-late June with built-in make-up days, parent/teacher conferences and all staff professional development days. See the draft 2025-2026 calendar below.

2025-2026 School Calendar

CORNERSTONE CHARTER SCHOOL

Important Dates

Aug 25-27	Professional Development Days
Aug 28	First Day of School
Sep 1	Labor Day
Oct 1	Early Release: Professional Learning
Oct 13	Indigenous People's Day/Columbus Day
Nov 3	Early Release: Professional Learning
Nov 11	Veterans Day
Nov 26 - 28	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 11	Early Release - Parent Teacher Conferences
Dec 12	No School - Parent Teacher Conferences
Dec 23 - Jan 2	Winter Break
Jan 19	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Feb 16 - 20	February Break
Mar 9	Professional Learning Day
March 19	Early Release - Parent Teacher Conferences
March 20	No School - Parent Teacher Conferences
April 13 - 17	Spring Break
May 25	Memorial Day
June 24	Last Day of School

TEST DATES

Screening	
NHSAS	
Other	

Key

	No School for Students
	Holiday - School Closed
	Early Release Day for Students

August 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

2 days

September 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

21 days

October 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

22 days

November 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

16 days

December 2025

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

15 days

January 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

19 days

February 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

15 days

March 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

20 days

April 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

17 days

May 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

20 days

June 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

13 days + 5 snow days

July 2026

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

C. Staffing Overview, including qualifications sought for professionals and paraprofessionals, administrators, teachers

Cornerstone has identified vital staff positions for optimal school functioning (See **Exhibit H** for Cornerstone's Five-Year Organizational Chart). We have identified the preferred qualifications needed and required licensure. Staffing at Cornerstone will include a highly qualified Executive Director, Assistant

Director, and Academic Director who will work closely with the Board of Trustees (BOT), professional and support staff, contracted staff, students, and parents to fulfill the school's mission. A minimum of 50 percent of teaching staff will be either New Hampshire certified or have at least three years of teaching experience per RSA 194-B:14, IV. The BOT will enact policies the prohibit discrimination against any person because of race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, familial status, or disability, as provided by all applicable state and federal laws. Please See **Exhibit M** for more details.

Executive Director

- Qualifications: Dedicated to school's mission; Master's degree in education or related field; teaching and leadership experience; strong problem-solving, decision-making, and management skills.

Assistant Director

- Qualifications: Committed to mission; Bachelor's degree in education or related field; teaching and leadership experience; strong organizational skills.

Academic Director

- Qualifications: Aligned with mission; Bachelor's degree in education or curriculum; experience in teaching, coaching, data analysis, curriculum development, and leadership experience; strong organizational skills.

Classroom and Intervention Teacher

- Qualifications**:** Commitment to school mission; Bachelor's degree in education or related field; NH teaching certification (preferred); experience in teaching, Structured Literacy, data collection, and assessment. Strong classroom management and supportive teaching skills.

Paraprofessional

- Qualifications: Commitment to school mission; Associate's degree or two years of post-secondary education (preferred); experience with children in educational settings; strong communication skills; Structured Literacy training (preferred); patience and teamwork skills.

D. Employee job description/responsibilities

The responsibilities outlined below are not exhaustive. Employees may be required to take on additional duties or roles as needed to support the needs of the school and its mission.

Executive Director

- Responsibilities: Provide leadership and vision; oversee academics, operations, and compliance; manage budget, staff, and community engagement; implement emergency plans; foster continuous improvement.

Assistant Director

- Responsibilities: Support daily operations and resource management; assist Executive Director; act as Executive Director when absent.

Academic Director

- Responsibilities: Manage curriculum, academic policies, and professional development; monitor student performance; ensure academic compliance and stakeholder communication.

Classroom and Intervention Teacher

- Responsibilities: Plan and deliver standards-aligned lessons; use assessments to guide instruction; maintain a positive, inclusive classroom; support students with a diagnostic approach; communicate with parents; collaborate with colleagues; stay current with best practices; foster diversity and equity.

Paraprofessional

- Responsibilities: Reinforce lessons, prepare materials, support classroom organization, monitor transitions, assist with record-keeping, and maintain resources. Aid in adaptive equipment use as needed; participate in professional development; stay informed on educational best practices; promote diversity and equity.

See **Exhibit M** for detailed job descriptions and responsibilities. In addition to staff, we have identified consultants and contractors. Please see Section XIV, E.

E. The total number of teachers and the average teacher/student ratio for the first five years.
The average teacher-to-student ratio is 1:13 for the first two (2) years of operation and 1:14 for years three - five. The number of teachers reflects classroom teachers and qualified administrators only and does not include interventionists, paraprofessionals, coaches, or specialists.

Year	# of Teachers	# of Students	Average Teacher/Student Ratio
One	5	64	1:13
Two	6	80	1:13
Three	7	96	1:14
Four	8	112	1:14
Five	9	128	1:14

F. A statement that the school shall conduct school employee and volunteer background investigations in accordance with RSA 189:13-a
Cornerstone is committed to conducting school employee and volunteer background investigations in accordance with NH Rev Stat § 189:13-a (2022). As part of this commitment, we will mandatorily complete a criminal history records check on every selected applicant for employment for any position prior to a final offer of employment. Cornerstone's Executive Director shall complete any required training conducted by the NH Department of Education (NHED) concerning the reading and interpretation of criminal history records, maintain the confidentiality of said records, properly notify the NHED as indicated in the law, and destroy the criminal record information within 60 days of receipt. Cornerstone may require the applicant to pay for the actual cost of the criminal history records check.

Cornerstone's Board of Trustees shall create a policy regarding hiring practices based on the results of the criminal history records check. The policy shall state that any person convicted of any misdemeanor, felony, or list of same may not be hired, thereby ensuring the safety and well-being of our school community.

G. Personnel compensation plan, including provisions for leaves and other benefits, if any.
Cornerstone Chartered Public School is deeply committed to supporting teachers with competitive salaries and benefits and understanding the need for disciplined spending. School administration and full-time teachers shall be paid an annual salary on a bi-monthly (around the 15th and 30th) basis. The budget assumes an average starting salary of $42k, and individual compensation may vary depending on qualifications, credentials, and experience. Part-time staff will be paid at an hourly rate for time worked. We expect to offer a 1-3 percent annual salary increase for full-time employees. As the budget allows, we will offer retirement benefits and increase our health benefits package whenever possible. Teachers will be hired to work from mid to late August to the end of June, according to the calendar of the district in which Cornerstone resides. In addition to instructional days required by law, teachers will be expected to participate in in-service days, as determined by the district calendar.
In addition to scheduled school vacations, salaried employees will receive three paid personal leave days and five sick days per year. All teachers who have less than a OGA Classroom Educator, or equivalent, certification are required to participate in appropriate coursework and practictum to obtain said certification.
Cornerstone's Board of Trustees may revise and approve a Training Reimbursement Policy that outlines the conditions under which an employee who resigns from Cornerstone after receiving training funded by

the school will be required to reimburse the school for the cost of the training. A draft of the Training Reimbursement Policy is included in **Exhibit N.**

Full-time faculty and staff and part-time salaried employees are also provided with up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave per year through the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for any of the following reasons: the birth and care of the newborn child of an employee; placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care; to care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition; or to take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition. Employees are eligible for leave if they have worked for Cornerstone for at least 1,250 hours over the past 12 months. Whether an employee has worked the minimum 1,250 hours of service is determined according to FMLA principles for determining compensable hours or work. Cornerstone may choose to follow FMLA rules even though the school will have fewer than 50 employees, and that decision will be made by the Board of Trustees. Cornerstone may offer up to two weeks of paid leave. Employees are also entitled to 3 days of paid leave on the death of an immediate family member defined as spouse, parent, child, brother or sister, grandparent or grandchild, spouse's parent, child, brother or sister, grandparent, and grandchild. Any additional time off will be without pay or applied to PTO days. Employees who sustain work-related injuries are eligible for a medical leave of absence for the period of disability in accordance with all applicable laws covering occupational disabilities. A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the U.S. uniformed services in accordance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

H. Administration Performance Evaluation

The performance of Cornerstone's Leadership Team will be formally evaluated annually to ensure effective leadership that is consistent with the school's goals and focused on continual improvement. The Board of Trustees will consider the following best practices when creating, modifying, or approving administration performance evaluations: 1) goal setting; 2) gathering feedback; 3) focus on key competencies; 4) self-assessment; 5) professional development; 6) open communication; 7) alignment with school values and culture; 8) document and follow up. Please reference **Exhibit O** for a draft of the Leadership Team Performance Evaluation.

I. Teacher Performance Evaluation

The Board of Trustees will work with the Leadership Team to determine a comprehensive evaluation method and may choose to use an established framework, such as Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model, or another research-based framework the BOT deems appropriate.

The performance evaluation tool will align with the school's vision, mission, and values, including respecting teachers as professionals and incorporating best practices, such as the following: 1) use multiple measures to get a complete picture of a teacher's performance; 2) link evaluation to targeted professional development opportunities; 3) provide for consistency across evaluators; 4) provide teachers with ongoing feedback; 5) engage teachers in the process to encourage self-reflection and professional growth.

Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model is based on a comprehensive synthesis of educational research. It focuses on strategies that have the greatest impact on student learning. The domains and elements include four domains: 1) classroom strategies and behaviors, 2) planning and preparing, 3) reflecting on teaching, and 4) collegiality and professionalism.
https://ospi.k12.wa.us/sites/default/files/2023-10/marzano_teacher_evaluation_model.pdf

J. Professional Development

We know that teachers are among the most important in-school influences on student success. Hattie (2009) synthesized findings from over 800 meta-analyses related to student achievement and identified

teacher efficacy and teacher-student relationships among the top influences. Other studies and reports support Hattie's work (Haycock & Hanushek, 2010; McCaffrey et al., 2004). Additionally, Teacher Development Trust (n.d.) and Oganisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2019) report that schools that foster innovative teaching practices and invest in teacher training and coaching report higher teacher satisfaction and effectiveness, positively affecting student learning.

All Cornerstone's teachers will be minimally certified at the Classroom Educator level or its equivalent. OG Classroom Educator certification will provide our teachers with the skills and knowledge they need to be effective literacy teachers for all students. When a student does not demonstrate an understanding of a concept or skill, teachers will be able to recognize it and, more importantly, understand the underlying problem and provide an appropriate solution. Furthermore, our teachers will benefit from one-on-one instructional coaching from a skilled OG Fellow or Clinical Supervisor. To become an OG Classroom Educator, our teachers must apply to the Orton-Gillingham Academy, an independent certifying organization, or another qualifying certification body.

Cornerstone will also provide professional development in the area of research-based writing instruction to empower teachers with tools to help students become strong writers, readers, and critical thinkers. One possibility is Judith Hochman's *Writing Revolution*. The Hochman Method is an explicit set of sequenced strategies for teaching expository writing that can be integrated into any content area.

Finally, our students are more than just learners; they are people with complex social-emotional lives. We recognize the need to relate to our students on a personal level and create a positive school community where all feel welcomed and safe. We will include professional development that enhances teachers' knowledge and skill in creating positive, inclusive, and equitable environments.

Cornerstone will fund and accommodate teachers for mandated Professional Development. If a teacher wishes to pursue other professional development that is aligned with their own professional goals, we are committed to supporting it as long as the budget permits and it aligns with the school's mission.

Professional Development will be reviewed annually to determine current and future needs for each subject, grade, or individual teacher. The Board of Trustees will work with the Leadership Team to create, revise, and approve a Professional Development Plan and review and update, if necessary, on a regular basis. Please see **Exhibit P** for a draft Plan. The plan will be finalized and submitted for approval by the BOT.

K. Philosophy of Student Governance and Discipline

The philosophy of student governance and discipline at Cornerstone focuses on fostering a positive, inclusive, and growth-oriented school culture. An approach to student discipline that emphasizes respect, kindness, and accountability by fostering strong relationships, encouraging open communication, and collaboratively addressing and repairing harm.

Our philosophy of student governance and discipline is rooted in the belief that a positive, inclusive, and supportive school environment is fundamental to student success. We achieve this by integrating Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with a comprehensive Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) program, such as Responsive Classroom. This approach promotes the development of the whole child—academically, socially, and emotionally—while ensuring that all students feel safe, respected, and empowered to take responsibility for their actions and learning. Our core principles include 1) proactive and preventative discipline; 2) social-emotional learning as a foundation; 3) restorative practices and logical consequences; 4) student empowerment and leadership; and 5) equity and inclusivity.

L. Age-appropriate due process procedures to be used for disciplinary matters, including suspension and expulsion.

Cornerstone's disciplinary plan focuses on teaching positive behaviors, reinforcing expectations, and using restorative practices. Clear expectations are established through core values like Respect and Kindness, with simple rules and visual reminders. Positive behavior is reinforced with praise and rewards, such as a "star chart" or group goals. Social-emotional skills are taught through programs like *Second Step*, using role-play and reflection tools like a "calm corner." Consistent consequences include verbal warnings and logical follow-ups, while restorative practices encourage students to reflect on incidents and repair harm. Parental involvement through regular updates and behavior contracts helps reinforce progress, and individualized support plans, including mentorship, address persistent issues. Behavior is tracked to ensure the plan meets student needs, creating a positive, accountable environment.

Cornerstone uses data to identify students in need of additional support, monitor progress, and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions. We draw from various data sources, such as office discipline referrals, attendance records, and academic performance, to inform our decisions. Our approach follows a three-tiered system of behavioral support. Tier I provides universal school-wide strategies to create a positive environment. Tier II offers additional support through social skills groups or targeted behavioral interventions. Tier III is reserved for students requiring individualized, intensive support due to persistent behavioral issues. Interventions may include an individualized behavioral plan or one-on-one support.

Implementing age-appropriate due process procedures for disciplinary matters, including suspension and expulsion, is crucial for ensuring fairness, transparency, and the protection of students' rights. Due process procedures are outlined below and are subject to approval of the BOT.

1. Incident Documentation and Investigation - Documentation: Staff document the details of the incident, including those involved and any witness statements. *Student Perspective:* The student is given a chance to explain their side. For K-5, this is a gentle, supportive conversation to understand the child's view, while in grades 6-8, it involves a more direct conversation about responsibility and understanding consequences.
2. Parent/Guardian Notification - Immediate Contact: For serious incidents, parents are contacted promptly by phone. *Pre-Disciplinary Meeting*: Parents are invited to a conference to discuss the incident, hear their child's perspective, and understand the disciplinary process.
3. Determination of Consequences - Policy Review: Administrators review school policies, the incident's severity, and any relevant context. Students may be suspended from school for no more than 10 consecutive school days for 1) Behavior that is detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of pupils or school personnel or (2) Repeated and willful disregard of the reasonable rules of the school that is not remediated through the imposition of graduated sanctions, including, but not limited to parent conferences, instruction in conflict resolution and anger management, and restriction from extracurricular activities, as outlined in RSA 193:13. *Age-Appropriate Consequences:* For K-5, alternative interventions (e.g., restorative practices, behavior support plans) are prioritized, with suspension as a last resort. For grades 6-8, both in-school and out-of-school suspensions (1-5 days) are more commonly considered, depending on the infraction's severity.
4. Written Notice - Formal Documentation: If suspension or expulsion is warranted, a written notice is provided to parents detailing the incident, the duration, and any re-entry conditions. In the case of expulsion, a separate hearing will be scheduled. The case will be heard by members of the BOT and school administrators not directly involved in the case. During the hearing, the school's staff, student, and family will have the opportunity to present their case. The committee will deliberate privately and provide a written decision to the student and family within three to five business days. The decision will include rationale and student recommendations.

5. Opportunity for Review or Appeal - Review Meeting: Parents can request a review with the Executive Director to discuss the decision. For suspensions longer than 3 days or expulsions, an appeal may be submitted to the BOT for formal review. If expulsion is upheld, the school will provide resources or recommendations to support the student's transition to another educational setting.
6. Re-Entry Meeting and Support Plan - Re-Entry Conference: For all returning students, a re-entry meeting with parents and school staff sets behavior expectations. In K-5, the focus is on additional support, while in grades 6-8, students may agree to a behavior contract. *Ongoing Support:* For both groups, students with persistent issues may receive a behavioral support plan, counseling, or mentoring, with grades 6-8 having more structured monitoring if needed.
7. Restorative Practices - Repairing Harm: Restorative conversations or circles are used to address and repair harm. These practices are tailored to be developmentally appropriate, emphasizing accountability in grades 6-8.

Bullying or cyberbullying will be handled in accordance with RSA 193F.

The Board of Trustees will provide final approval policies regarding student conduct and disciplinary procedures in compliance with NH state law, specifically RSA 193:1,3 and consistent with RSA 186-C. Cornerstone's school discipline policy will be included in our student handbook, on our website, and made available to parents at the beginning of each school year.

M. Student Transportation plan, both inside and outside of district, including reasonable provisions from the charter school's own resources for transportation of pupils residing outside the district in which the charter school is physically located.
Students who live in the school district where Cornerstone is located are entitled to that school district's transportation on the same conditions as provided for non-chartered public schools in the district, utilizing the same regular bus schedules and routes that are provided to pupils attending non-chartered public schools within that district, as outlined in RSA 194-B:2, V.
Cornerstone will coordinate with the host school district to ensure district students are provided with transportation to Cornerstone. Regarding students who reside outside the district in which the charter school is located, we will devote 2% of office staff time to organizing and advertising rideshare opportunities.

N. Student, Staff Handbooks
Please see **Exhibit Q** for an outline of our Student and Staff Handbooks. The Board of Trustees will work with the Leadership Team to create, revise, and approve the Handbooks by March 2025. Handbooks will be posted on Cornerstone's website.

O. Student Information System
Cornerstone will use a comprehensive student information system, such as Powerschool, or a similar system to track all student information.

VII: MEETING STUDENT NEEDS

A. Special Education: Method of coordinating with a pupil's LEA responsible for matters pertaining to any required special education programs or services including method of compliance with all federal and state laws pertaining to children with disabilities
Cornerstone shall comply with all state and federal laws and standards governing Special Education, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), NH RSA 186-C and Ed 1100 the NH Standards for the Education of Children with Disabilities.

As an open-enrollment chartered public school, Cornerstone shall accept applications from any student and shall not ask for any information regarding disability status during the application process. In accordance with RSA 194-B:8, I, Cornerstone, shall not discriminate against any child with a disability as defined in RSA 186-C.

Under New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA194-B:11, III(a), "funding and educational decision-making process for children with disabilities attending a chartered public school shall be the responsibility of the resident district and shall retain all current options available to the parent and to the school district." The resident district is required to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to a child enrolled by his/her parents in a chartered public school. Cornerstone shall respect the LEA's responsibility under the statute for handling special education decision-making and shall provide a liaison as a member of the IEP team, cooperate with district decisions, and coordinate to ensure the provision of services as identified on the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

Cornerstone recognizes the importance of positive, clear communication with resident districts to the successful administration of IEPs. Upon approval of our charter, Cornerstone will reach out to districts within our service area to introduce our school, establish a good working relationship, and discuss the legal requirements and how the resident district may prefer to provide services in accordance with the law.

Once a student with an IEP is enrolled by a parent in Cornerstone, the LEA of the child's resident district shall convene a meeting of the IEP team, the members of which are outlined in Ed 1103.02. The LEA shall invite a representative of Cornerstone to the meeting, during which the team will determine how to ensure the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in accordance with the student's IEP. For all subsequent meetings, the LEA of the child's resident district shall provide prior notice to Cornerstone.

The student's special education and related services shall be provided using any or all of the methods listed below, starting with the least restrictive environment. Cornerstone will cooperate with the district decisions and coordinate to ensure the provision of services as identified on the IEPs for the following:
1. The resident district may send staff to the chartered public school; or
2. The resident district may contract with a service provider to provide the services at the chartered public school; or
3. The resident district may provide the services at the resident district school; or
4. The resident district may provide services at the service provider's location; or
5. The resident district may contract with the chartered public school to provide the services;
6. If the child requires transportation to and/or from the chartered public school before, after, or during the school day in order to receive special education and related services as provided in the IEP, the child's resident district is responsible for transportation of the child.

Cornerstone will initiate the Special Education process for students who were not identified when initially enrolled and coordinate with the LEA in the Special Education Process Sequence outlined in Ed. 1104.01 Sequence of Special Education Process: (a) referral, (b) evaluation, (c) determination of eligibility, (d) development and approval of the IEP, (e) placement; (f) ongoing monitoring of the IEP, and (g) annual review of the IEP. Cornerstone's liaison will contact the LEA of the student's resident district to make the referral, attend subsequent meetings in the process, review IEP requirements with all staff involved with implementation, maintain contact lists, and securely store IEP records.

B. Other educationally disabled and economically disadvantaged/at risk includes: Cornerstone shall provide support services as needed to the following disadvantaged and at-risk students:
(1) Educationally Disadvantaged (2) English Language Learners (ELL) (3) Neglected or Delinquent (4) Homeless Students (5) Migrant and Refugee populations.

C. Additional Academic support and credit recovery: strategies for improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps

Cornerstone will incorporate strategies for improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps through our Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). According to the National Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports:

> A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a proactive and preventative framework that integrates data and instruction to maximize student achievement and support students social, emotional, and behavioral needs from a strengths-based perspective. MTSS offers a framework for educators to engage in data-based decision-making related to program improvement, high-quality instruction and intervention, social and emotional learning, and positive behavioral supports necessary to ensure positive outcomes for districts, schools, teachers, and students. The MTSS framework is comprised of four essential components: screening, progress monitoring, multi-level prevention system, and data-based decision-making. (MTSS Center, n.d.)

Federal title programs will be identified for which the school meets eligibility requirements in order to support our students. Where Federal title monies are not available, we will work to provide supplemental services such as after-school tutoring, support staff in the classroom, and additional learning resources.

D. Federal Title Programs

Cornerstone will seek out and pursue funding from Federal Title programs to enrich students' education and utilize State funding to enhance student learning. We will determine eligibility for specific Federal title programs based on staff and student demographics and needs.

VIII: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

A. Method of Administering Fiscal Accounts and Reporting, including a provision requiring fiscal audits and reports to be performed by an independent certified public accountant.

Cornerstone will adhere to the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) and establish internal accounting controls to safeguard its assets and detect and prevent financial statement misstatements. The school will maintain accurate financial records for non-profit corporations in accordance with the GASB. Cornerstone will follow all accounting guidelines for NH public schools to ensure financial oversight and integrity of the school. The school's Board of Trustees will enact internal accounting controls. It will elect a Treasurer with financial oversight responsibilities to ensure that the school's finances are managed with discipline, integrity, and transparency. To facilitate fiscal oversight by the Board of Trustees, key aspects of the school's financial health will be reviewed at each Board of Trustees meeting. To manage accounting and reporting, we have hired Caitlin Blundell, a third-party service provider who has extensive experience with public charter schools and reporting.

The Board of Trustees will approve accounting policies and internal controls and procedures to be followed by all employees, contractors, and Trustees to ensure proper tracking and use of school funds. A bank account will be established, and the Treasurer, Executive Director, Assistant Director, and designated Trustees will have the authority to write checks. A fidelity bond will cover each individual with check-writing authority in accordance with the guidelines of the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration. Except for emergency purchases approved by authorized personnel (up to a maximum amount determined by the Board of Trustees), all expenditures and contracts will be processed through an approved system of internal control and procedures to monitor account balances.

Cornerstone will comply with all reporting requirements specified in the law (RSA194-B: 10-V): an annual report, annual financial audit and report, program audit, and participation in the annual school budget process. The school will also adhere to all requirements set forth in ED 318 regarding the contents of its annual report.

As mandated by law, the annual report will be provided to the state board and any individual who requests it. Additionally, a summary version of the annual report and periodic reports will be made available to parents or guardians of each student at WCS, as well as the general public. The Board will select an external, independent auditor on an annual basis to perform the required annual audit and prepare a report. The audit will encompass accounting practices and review the school's internal controls, following applicable generally accepted accounting principles. It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within four months of the fiscal year's conclusion. The Board of Trustees will review and address the audit report, if necessary, and incorporate the audit results into its annual report.

B. Annual Budget: including all sources of funding (also include a proposed five-year budget containing revenue and expenditures)

Please see **Exhibit R** for the proposed pre-operations and 5-year budget in line-item detail. *Note: Lease payments on facility are only eligible for reimbursement through the Charter School Program grant in the months prior to opening.

C. Budget Narrative: providing a justification for the budget

The budget presented in this application is grounded in realistic enrollment and fundraising targets while maintaining a conservative approach to estimating expenditures. We acknowledge that circumstances beyond our control may result in shortfalls in either fundraising or enrollment. Our operating plan and budget have been developed with a clear understanding that certain components hold higher priority than others. If our fundraising or enrollment goals are not met, Cornerstone will identify and eliminate lower-priority items from the operating budget, ensuring a high-quality education within our financial means.

Cornerstone's projections include revenue from the State of New Hampshire Charter School Per Pupil Aid for the 2025-2026 academic year, currently at $9,364 for grades K-12. These figures are accurate as of this application submission and will be updated annually in compliance with RSA 194-B:11.

The budget reflects the growth of staff over the initial five years of operation and includes what we believe are realistic fundraising, development, and enrollment goals. Accounting, Payroll, Benefits, IT, and Legal services will be contracted through third parties. As the budget allows, we will offer retirement benefits and increase our health benefits package whenever possible.

Cornerstone plans to lease a suitable building for the school's needs. The lease costs are based on an acceptable industry standard, assuming a 10-year lease agreement with a triple net lease with options to renew. The operational costs are based on expenses from other charter school facilities similar in size.

We intend to minimize cash expenditures during the initial setup by seeking donated equipment and furnishings whenever possible. We expect to provide further support to faculty, staff, and students with the efforts of community volunteers.

The Executive Director and Assistant Director will develop a balanced yearly budget in partnership with the finance committee. The Board of Trustees will review and approve each budget by June 30th of the prior fiscal year. These annual budgets will aim to include sufficient reserves and will be submitted to the approprate State Offices and any other mandated entities.

IX: SCHOOL CULTURE

A. School Environment: culturally inclusive

At Cornerstone, we are committed to fostering a culturally inclusive school environment where diversity is not only respected but celebrated. Our approach is rooted in the belief that every student's cultural background enriches our school community and contributes to a broader understanding and appreciation of the world. We understand that building strong, trusting relationships with students and their families is essential to student learning. We integrate culturally responsive teaching practices into our curriculum, ensuring that students see themselves reflected in what they learn and that they are exposed to a wide range of perspectives. For example, teachers will learn about their students' cultures, languages, and life experiences and use this knowledge to inform their teaching practices. Inclusive practices may also include a variety of instructional strategies, such as incorporating multicultural literature, inviting students to share their traditions, foods, language, or stories, and creating projects that allow students to connect with their community. Our students will be expected to respect their peers at all times. Disrespect, bullying, or exclusionary behaviors will be dealt with immediately.

Our faculty and staff maintain high expectations for all students, regardless of their backgrounds. We are aware of and counteract any bias or stereotypes that could lower expectations for certain groups of students, including economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities. This inclusive environment promotes equity, empowers students from all backgrounds to succeed, and prepares them to thrive in a diverse society. We want all students to succeed academically while developing a positive sense of their cultural and personal identity and a sense of belonging to the broader community.

B. Establishment and maintenance of School Culture

At Cornerstone, establishing and maintaining a positive school culture involves a holistic approach that integrates the physical environment, core values, positive behavioral reinforcement, and strong relationships within the school community. The physical environment will be designed to be welcoming, inclusive, and conducive to learning, with classrooms arranged for collaboration, flexible seating, and visuals that reflect learning and positive values. The strategic use of color and natural light enhances the atmosphere, promoting a sense of calm and creativity. At the same time, outdoor spaces like gardens and play areas encourage hands-on learning and physical activity.

This physical environment complements our commitment to core values such as respect, responsibility, and inclusivity, which are consistently reinforced through Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs. These values are embedded in daily interactions, school-wide celebrations, and restorative practices that focus on accountability and relationship-building. Additionally, strong relationships are cultivated through open communication channels such as parent and community engagement.

Cornerstone also prioritizes staff development and support, ensuring that teachers and staff have the tools they need to contribute positively to the school culture. Community involvement is fostered through partnerships with local organizations and schools, creating a network of support that extends beyond the classroom. By integrating these elements—physical environment, core values, behavioral reinforcement, relationships, and community involvement—Cornerstone creates a vibrant, inclusive, and supportive culture where students and staff alike can thrive.

X: STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

A. Philosophy of parent (Family) involvement and related plans and procedures

Family involvement is essential to the success of our students and the overall effectiveness of our educational program. Our philosophy is rooted in the understanding that parents and guardians are our partners in education, and their active participation is crucial in creating a supportive and enriching

learning environment. To foster this partnership, we have established clear expectations and actionable plans for parent involvement.

We expect parents to engage regularly with the school through participation in school events, volunteer opportunities, and consistent communication with teachers and staff. Our plans include regular parent-teacher conferences and workshops designed to help parents support their children's learning at school and home. We encourage parents to take advantage of volunteer opportunities that support the school and its mission, as determined by the Board of Trustees and the Leadership Team. All designated volunteers who will be on-site with students in a one-on-one capacity or with students unsupervised will be required to complete a criminal history records check and fingerprinting in accordance with RSA 189:13-a.

Additionally, the Board of Trustees may establish a Parent Advisory Council to provide input on school policies and programs, ensuring that parent voices are integral to decision-making processes. Parents are also encouraged to serve on the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or the Board of Trustees (According to RSA 194-B:5, "a chartered public school board of trustees shall include no fewer than 25 percent or two parents attending the . . . school, whichever is greater."). Cornerstone aims to create a collaborative community where parents are empowered to contribute to their child's educational journey, reinforcing the school's commitment to academic excellence and student well-being.

B. Community Involvement Plan

At Cornerstone, our community involvement plan is integral to fulfilling our mission of fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and equitable learning environment to improve literacy outcomes for all students. We understand that strong community ties enrich the educational experience, and we are committed to building meaningful partnerships with local school districts, organizations, businesses, and community leaders. Our purpose is to create a network of support that extends beyond the school walls, providing students with access to diverse resources, mentorship opportunities, and real-world experiences that enhance their academic and personal growth.

We have identified several organizations, businesses, and clubs in the Upper Valley for community outreach: 1) Lebanon School District; 2) Upper Valley Business Alliance; 3) Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center; 4)AVA Gallery and Art Center; 5) Lebanon Recreation and Parks Department; 6) Kilton and Lebanon Public Libraries; 7) Upper Valley Land Trust; 8) Grafton County Economic Development Council; 9) Rotary Club; 10) Boys and Girls Club of Central and Northern New Hampshire.

We plan to work closely with community leaders to ensure that our school reflects the values and needs of the community it serves. Through regular community forums, partnerships, and collaborative projects, Cornerstone aims to be a hub of educational and civic engagement where the entire community is invested in the success of our students.

C. LEA Partnerships

Cornerstone's plan for partnership development with surrounding school districts is focused on creating collaborative relationships that enhance educational opportunities for all students in the region and identify areas of mutual interest, such as professional development for teachers, student enrichment programs, and joint initiatives that address common challenges in education. We will actively engage with surrounding school districts and the charter school community to establish positive relationships, share best practices, and collaborate on initiatives that benefit all students in the region and statewide. We have connected directly with the Lebanon School District (SAU #88), whose administrators expressed an eagerness to maintain a positive relationship. We have a strong relationship with the administrators of Lyme School (SAU #76), who have expressed enthusiasm for the establishment of a relationship with Cornerstone. We

have also connected with Strong Foundations Charter School, whose director has offered support and guidance. We plan to reach out to more districts within our service area and to the charter school community as early as January 2025 to introduce our school and establish good relationships and referral partnerships to best meet the needs of our students.

Our mission of improving literacy outcomes for all students aligns with the State's initiatives and the local school district's goals. Cornerstone's staff expertise and experience will allow us to contribute to the broader educational ecosystem. We also appreciate the opportunity to learn from LEAs and the charter school community. We will seek opportunities to engage and create mutually beneficial partnerships for the benefit of all students.

XI: FACILITIES

A. Whether the applicant has access to a facility suitable for the school and, if not, how the applicant intends to provide a physical location for the school.
Cornerstone is actively seeking a facility and working with two local realtors to identify available properties in the Upper Valley region, preferably in Lebanon, suitable for our student body and equipped to support our campus. We have looked at five potential sites thus far. Two locations have previously operated as schools: School Street School and an old middle school located on Bank Street, both in Lebanon. Basement space is available at both locations. Our goal for Cornerstone is to have a facility that has natural light and a healthy exchange of air. Neither of these locations was able to provide that. We have also viewed a space on Etna Road, which is now under contract. We looked at three other facilities in Lebanon, none of which had any outdoor space for a playground. We remain diligent in our search for a facility.

B. Description of school requirements
Cornerstone is committed to a safe and secure facility that aligns with state educational standards and building codes. In accordance with RSA 194-B:8, II, Cornerstone's facility shall comply with all federal and state health and safety laws, rules, and regulations, including, but not limited to 1) fire safety; 2) heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC); 3) plumbing; 4) electrical; and 5) requirements of Ed 321.23 (u) regarding construction or renovation of food service facilities, and Ed 321.23 (v) regarding installation or renovation of a well or septic system.

Ideally, our school facility will be located on an established district bus route to provide convenience to our families. Because Lebanon is the hub in the Upper Valley region, we anticipate that many parents will work or go to school in the area. We will consider our facility location in relation to major employers. According to 2021 census data, the population in most towns and cities in the Upper Valley are projected to grow.

Based on projected enrollment and future growth of our school population, we require an initial lease of approximately 5,000 - 6,000 square feet to accommodate 64 students in K-3. Since we plan to double our student enrollment by year five, we will eventually need at least 10,000 - 12,000 square feet of indoor space.

C. Classroom, Offices, Athletics, Outdoor Needs Plan

For year one, we will require four classrooms, a front office, an administrator's office, an intervention/special services room, a multipurpose room, and bathrooms. Please refer to Section III for a chart detailing our indoor space requirements. In addition, we will create space for the proper storage of

cleaning supplies, tools, etc., required for custodial and maintenance activities. We will also require ample outdoor space for a playground, adequate space for traffic flow, and ample parking.

D. Plans for the facilities lease or purchase

When Cornerstone is granted a charter, the Board of Trustees will take action to finalize a financially viable lease or mortgage for a suitable facility aligned with Cornerstone's needs. The Board of Trustees will make a determination, along with the Leadership Team, in consultation with our CPA to determine whether we lease or purchase a facility.

XII: SCHOOL SAFETY MANAGEMENT PLAN

A. Emergency Operations Plan
Cornerstone will complete an Emergency Operations Plan and submit it to the NH Homeland Security and Emergency Management portal prior to school opening. The Emergency Operations Plan will educate staff, faculty, students, and other key stakeholders on their roles and responsibilities before, during, and after an incident. The plan will empower employees to act quickly and effectively in case of an incident. WCS will work with local law enforcement and the fire department to design plans specific to our facility. Before the start of classes, and at least annually thereafter, all teachers and staff will participate in emergency preparedness training with the state and local authorities, as well as private vendors, as needed. The plan will be annually reviewed and updated as needed.

B. A statement that, the school facilities shall comply with all federal and state health and safety laws, rules, and regulations, including, but not limited to: Fire safety; HVAC, Plumbing, Electrical, and Food Service.
Cornerstone shall comply with all federal and state health and safety laws, rules and regulations, including, but not limited to: fire safety, HVAC, plumbing, electrical, food service, and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and removal of hazardous materials.

XIII: COMMUNICATION PLAN

A. A plan to develop and disseminate information to assist parents and pupils with decision-making about their choice of school.
Cornerstone will reach out to area organizations to attract at-risk students to the school, including, but not limited to, government agencies, schools, non-profit organizations, religious institutions, the healthcare industry, and private professional businesses. There are many resources in the Upper Valley that provide services for at-risk children and families. The goal of connecting with the support organizations is two-fold: 1) to create mutually beneficial partnerships that ultimately serve families and children by offering them needed services; 2) to inform organizations and families about our school's mission, vision, and program offerings and locate families who might be interested in enrolling their child or children.

Our plan will be written prior to our Open Enrollment period and will include the use of various marketing strategies to connect with community resources, including cold calls and emails, informational meetings on relevant topics, workshops, blogs, school websites, social media, brochures, and posters.

Cornerstone will meet with families of accepted students to establish a supportive partnership that sets each student up for success. These meetings will allow the school to understand each student's unique strengths, needs, and goals, ensuring that staff can tailor support and interventions effectively. It will also be a chance to review school expectations, share Cornerstone's mission and values, and explain the curriculum and programs, helping families feel connected and involved in their child's educational journey.

Additionally, these meetings will create open lines of communication, fostering trust and collaboration between the school and families, which will be vital for building a positive, cohesive school community.

B. A plan to develop and disseminate best practices to charter schools, LEAs, and the wider community

Cornerstone will develop best practices by researching evidence-based strategies, reviewing existing literature, and analyzing successful models in high-impact areas: attracting and retaining teachers, curriculum and instructional methods, assessment, and equitable learning environments. We recognize the importance of engaging all stakeholders to understand and incorporate diverse perspectives as we develop best practices. We will form committees, use surveys, or hold meetings as needed to let all voices be heard. We will develop a "Best Practices Library," a comprehensive collection of best practices, lesson plans, templates, assessments, and resources. Finally, we regularly review and update our best practices and will encourage staff to share new ideas and approaches for further research and development.

We intend to share best practices with all of Cornerstones' stakeholders and the wider community, including district and charter schools regionally and nationally. Our "Best Practices Library" will be easily accessible on Google Drive and our website, ensuring that valuable resources are just a click away. We will regularly publish blogs and newsletters showcasing best practices, success stories, and innovative approaches. We will connect with the school community through established organizations, conferences, and professional learning engagements.

C. A plan for timely and regular communication with families and school stakeholders about ongoing school business, events, student performance.

Cornerstone prioritizes frequent, honest, and transparent communication. We will communicate on a regular basis with families and school stakeholders about ongoing school business, events, student performance, and any other necessary topics through, but not limited to, the following practices: 1) monthly board meetings, 2) regularly published newsletters, 3) school website; 4) student information system, e.g., PowerSchool; 5) parent-teacher conferences; 6) surveys; 7) email; and 8) scheduled meetings. We will publish school closings through established media outlets and through text, phone calls, or email.

Our Board of Trustees and Leadership Team will establish a communication plan by the end of March 2025. The plan will be included in the Student and Staff Handbooks.

XIV: ASSURANCES, PROVISIONS, POLICIES

A. Global hold-harmless clause

Cornerstone Chartered Public School, its successors and assigns, covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless the host school district and any other school district that sends its students to Cornerstone Chartered Public School, and their school boards, officers, directors, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources, and their successors and assigns, (the "indemnified parties") from any and all claims, demands, actions, and causes of action, whether in law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses, and expenses, including but not limited to reasonable attorney's fees and legal costs, for any action or inaction of Cornerstone Chartered Public School, its board, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils.

B. Severability Provisions and Statement of Assurance

In accordance with RSA 194-B:3,II(y), if any part of the charter contract is determined to be invalid or illegal by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidation or illegality shall not affect the remaining portions of the charter contract, which shall remain in full force and effect. Any provision of the charter

school contract is found by competent authority to be contrary to applicable law, rule, or regulation shall not be enforceable.

C. Statement of Assurances Related to Nondiscrimination
Cornerstone Chartered Public School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, socioeconomic, familial, or marital status in the selection of students or staff or in the administration of the school or in any other way prohibited by state or federal laws.

D. Provision for Providing Continuing Evidence of Adequate Insurance Coverage
Cornerstone will procure and provide evidence of adequate insurance coverage as required by the State, including but not limited to general liability for the School in accordance with RSA 194-B:3, II(t).

E. Identity of consultants to be used for various services, if known, or the qualifications or certifications of consultants not identified by name.
Financial Services: Caitlin Blundell, CPA - Blundell Accounting Solutions, will prepare the budget and financial statements, manage grants, develop written financial policies and procedures in compliance with state and federal requirements, and perform bookkeeping, accounting, payroll, and bookkeeping services.
Development and Fundraising: Richard C. Peck Consulting, LLC will help us create a gift acceptance policy and gift protocol manual and work on projects such as Moves Management and volunteer management.
Legal Services: Robert L. Best, Esquire, an attorney with Sulloway and Hollis, PLLC in Concord
Marketing: Benjamin Thresher, a Graphic Designer in Claremont, will create the school logo and marketing materials
Curriculum and Instruction: Peggy Price, Fellow/OGA - Stern Center for Language and Learning, Orton-Gillingham Institute, will provide training and guidance as we develop our curriculum and implement instruction.
MTSS and Equity Advisor: Maura Hart, Ed.D. - REAL Consulting, LLC will guide our MTSS and equity policies and procedures.
Trauma-Informed Policies and Professional Guidance: Kerry Rochford Hague, Turning Points Network
Custodial and Building Maintenance Services: To be determined

The BOT and LT will oversee, manage, and work closely with the external consultants and reserves the right to contract with the named providers/consultants or with others of similar qualifications.

F. A Policy and Procedure that either sets forth the guidelines for the optional contracting of services with the host school district in sharing transportation, athletic, maintenance, and other services and facilities, or states how and why the school declines to choose the option.
Cornerstone students who reside in the host school district shall have the option to ride transportation provided by that host district. Because Cornerstone anticipates that students may come from different communities in the region, the school will assist in connecting families who wish to coordinate personal shared transportation to and from school, e.g., arrange carpools. Students wishing to participate in athletic or extracurricular activities have the option to do so in the district where they reside. Transportation to and from athletic or other extracurricular activities is the responsibility of the family. Cornerstone will either employ directly or contract with a local maintenance and custodial services provider and, therefore, declines to contract with the host SAU for these services. All contracted services shall be defined by purchase order or written contract in advance of such service being provided. Any contractor shall provide proof of adequate professional liability insurance.

G. Statements that the school will develop prior to opening

Cornerstone will develop prior to opening policies regarding records retention; promoting school safety, including reporting of suspected abuse or neglect, sexual harassment, pupil safety, and violence prevention; limiting the use of child restraint practices; and developmentally appropriate daily physical activity in accordance with Ed 318.08(j)(7).

H. Provision for Dissolution of the Charter School, including disposition of its assets or amendment of its program plan, and a plan for the education of the school's pupils after the charter school may cease operation

If Cornerstone faces closure, the BOT will consult with an attorney and the New Hampshire Department of Education to ensure that contractual and financial obligations are met. Dissolution will follow all applicable state and federal laws applicable to non-profit dissolution and work with the NH Charitable Trust Unit and NH Department of Education as part of that process.

The following provisions will ensure an efficient and organized process. Key steps include:

1. *Notification of Stakeholders*: The BOT will inform all stakeholders—families, staff, and community partners—of the impending closure, detailing the timeline and reasons.
2. *Establish a Closure Committee:* Form a committee, including school leadership and BOT members, to oversee and coordinate all aspects of the closure.
3. *Communication Plan:* Develop a communication strategy to keep stakeholders informed throughout the process, with updates on timelines, student transition support, and final steps.
4. *Student Transition Support:* Collaborate with local school districts to facilitate student transfers. Assist families with the enrollment process, provide necessary records in accordance with RSA 194:31-a and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), and offer guidance on finding suitable school placements.
    a. *Student Records Transfer Process:* Student records will be managed securely and made accessible to students and future schools as follows:
        i. *Notification to Families*: Families will be promptly informed of the closure and transfer process, including access instructions and timeline.
        ii. *Secure Collection:* All records (transcripts, attendance, disciplinary, IEPs will be gathered, organized, and handled confidentially per FERPA requirements.
        iii. *Transfer to Receiving Schools*: Records will be sent directly to the new school upon request, ensuring continuity of education.
        iv. *State Submission:* Any remaining records will be sent to the New Hampshire Department of Education for students not yet enrolled elsewhere.
        v. *Archiving:* Records not immediately transferred will be securely archived with a designated custodian for future access.
        vi. *Compliance Audit:* A final audit will confirm that all records have been transferred, archived, or disposed of per FERPA and state laws.
5. *Asset Disposition:* Catalog all assets and distribute them in accordance with state and federal regulations under the guidance of the NH Department of Education and the NH Charitable Trust Unit. Remaining assets will be transferred to another educational institution or a charitable organization.
6. *Staff Transition Assistance:* Support staff with employment transition resources, including references, job search assistance, and networking.

I. In the case of the conversion of a public school to a chartered conversion school, provision for alternative arrangements for pupils who choose not to attend and teachers who choose not to teach at the charter school. This section is not applicable to Cornerstone Chartered Public Schools.

J. Plan for the Education of the School's Pupils after the Charter School May Cease Operation
In the event that the school shall cease operation for any reason, Cornerstone's Board of Trustees, in conjunction with faculty, will act immediately to place students in appropriate educational settings. Cornerstone's faculty will assist in student transition.
1. Families will be informed of the dissolution of the School at least 90 days in advance.
2. A committee comprised of school faculty and parents will create a list of carefully researched educational options for students.
3. The parent/guardian will provide a written release of information.
4. The receiving school for each student will be notified, and files will be forwarded.
5. New schools will be advised that School personnel are available for consultation.
6. Information, including all appropriate student records, will be mailed to each home.

K. A statement that a chartered public school providing the only available public education services at a specific grade level in a school district shall offer those educational services to all resident pupils of that grade level.
If Cornerstone provides the only available public education services at a specific grade level within its home school district, the School shall offer those educational services to all resident pupils of the grade level in accordance with RSA-B:8, IV and ED 318.07(b)(5).

L. An outline of the proposed accountability plan which clarifies expectations for evaluating the school's program and which contains an acknowledgement that a full accountability plan shall be developed and ready to implement prior to the date of opening.
Cornerstone Chartered Public School is committed to achieving excellence in education through a rigorous accountability plan that evaluates the effectiveness of our programs monitors progress toward our goals, as required by New Hampshire state law (RSA 194-B:3(dd)). Our proposed plan includes organizational, programmatic, and educational goals and objectives, along with accountability measures and a timeline for implementation.
Our school's accountability plan may include but is not limited to, the following domains and goals.

To support Cornerstone's accountability plan, here are specific measures and timelines:

1. *Organizational Goals*
    - *Board Operations*: Biannual Board self-assessments in December and June to evaluate governance and strategic direction.
    - *Financial Accountability:* Monthly budget reviews; annual audit completed by October 1.
2. *Programmatic Goals*
    - *Literacy Integration*: Quarterly lesson plan reviews, aiming for 80% integration of literacy activities across curriculum by year-end.
    - *Early Literacy Development:* Benchmark assessments in September, January, and May to monitor progress.
    - *Professional Development:* Two literacy-focused PD sessions each semester by November and April; survey teachers post-training.
3. *Partnerships and Communications Goals*
    - *Community Partnerships*: Establish three active partnerships by January, evaluating impact by June.
    - *Family Engagement:* Host quarterly family events by October, January, March, and May, with post-event feedback.
    - *Communication:* Monthly newsletter; weekly website and social media updates.
4. *Educational Goals*

- *Academic Performance:* Assess core subject proficiency each fall, winter, and spring, using NHSAS and other assessment tools, targeting graduated proficiency by year-end in accordance with Cornerstone's Achievement Targets, as outlined in Section V:D.
- *Social-Emotional Learning:* Social-Emotional learning will be integrated into daily lessons, with quarterly surveys in October, January, March, and June to measure progress.

This plan ensures regular assessments, adjustments, and targeted actions across each goal area.

M. A proposed policy to adopt and implement the code of conduct for New Hampshire educators as adopted by the department in administrative rule.
In accordance with RSA 194-B, II(ee), Cornerstone will adopt and implement the Code of Conduct for New Hampshire educators Employee Performance, Conduct, and Disciplinary Action (Ed 510). Formal adoption will be conducted by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees and Leadership Team will jointly oversee implementation and enforcement.

XV: LETTERS OF SUPPORT

A. From business and community leaders, elected officials, local school districts, parents.
Please see **Exhibit S**. for a sample of letters. We have created a link on our website and used social media to generate interest in the school and gather letters. We have had interest and support, but have not received all letters as of this application submission.

XVI: CHARTER SCHOOL OPENING

Cornerstone has drafted a timeline for school opening, which will be reviewed, amended and adopted once the Board of Trustees is formally convened. Please see Section III, Part G in this document.

XVII: SIGNED AND CERTIFIED APPLICATION

A. Complete Application

B. Signed by all members of the Development Team

This application has been prepared by a team of three founding members, two of which are certified NH educators, and one is a business exective.

Lynne Howard	Lindsay Wadleigh	Adam Bristol
Lynne Howard	Lindsay Wadleigh	Adam Bristol

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Exhibit A
Letter of Intent

New Hampshire Charter School Office

Charter Schools Program (CSP) Grant

Intent to Submit

Please complete the following form to register your plan to submit an application for a CSP Grant under the current competition. This form is critical to our planning for the review and scoring of the applications received as we use it to check eligibility, plan the size of the peer review team, and notify your authorizer of your intent to submit an application. Failure to submit this form may result in an ineligible designation. This form is **due no later than noon, May 8, 2024.**

Return this form to doe.nhcsp@doe.nh.gov.

Date:	5/5/24
School Name:	Cornerstone Chartered Public School
Location/Region (planned if not known):	Lebanon/Upper Valley
Please provide the name of your school leader(s):	Lynne Howard & Lindsay Wadleigh
Primary Contact Name:	Lynne Howard
Primary Contact Phone Number:	603 477-9803
Email Address for Primary Contact:	lynne@summit-literacy.com
Alternate Email Address for Competition Updates:	llwadleigh@gmail.com
Who is your authorizer? *This form will be used to notify your authorizer of your application.*	NH State Board
Type of Application You Are Likely Seeking:	☑ Start-Up/New School ☐ Expansion ☐ Replication
FOR EXPANSION ONLY:	Have you filed an amendment to your charter for your project? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Exhibit B
Equitable Learning Environments Framework Infographic

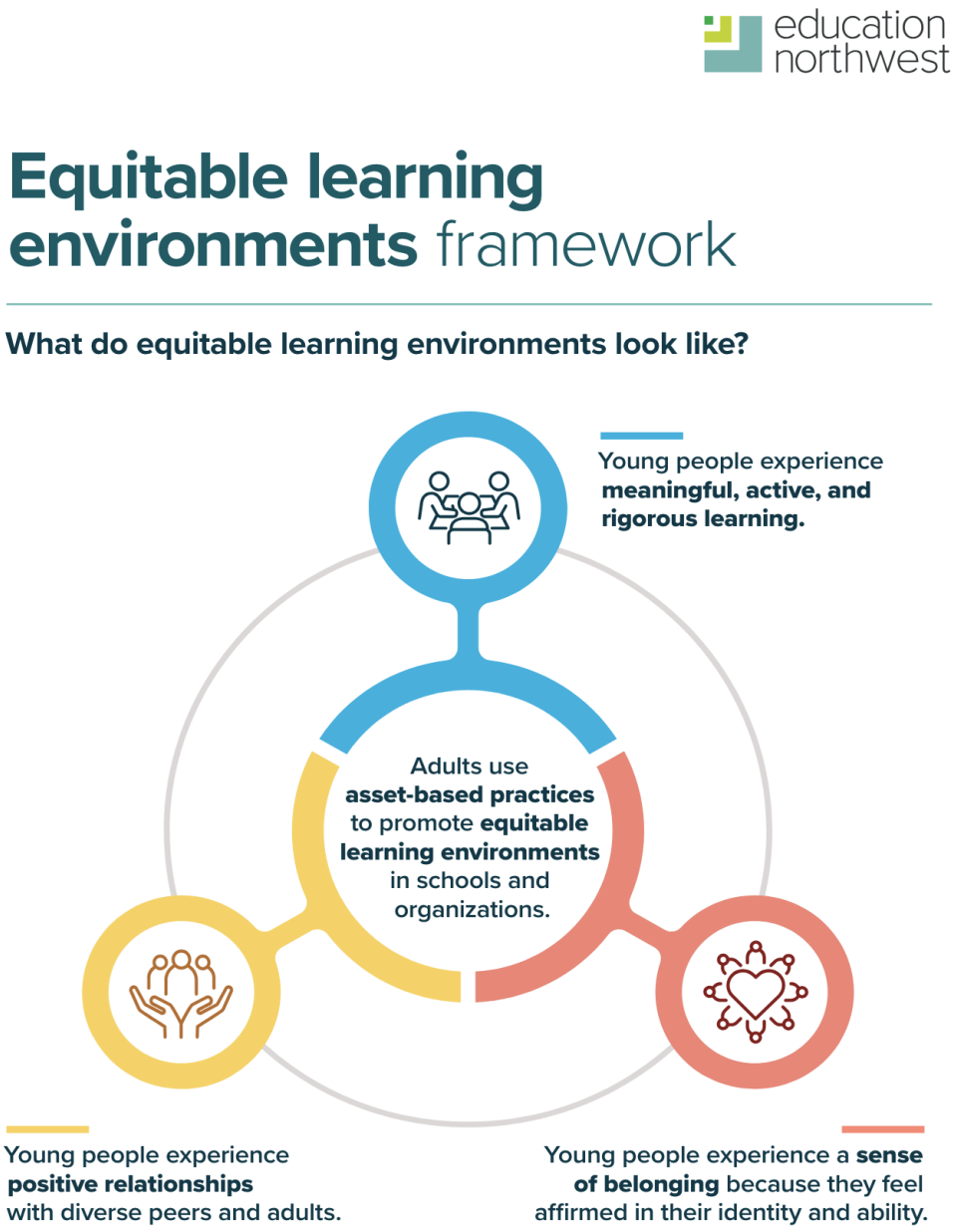


Exhibit B (cont.)

Equitable Learning Environments Framework Infographic

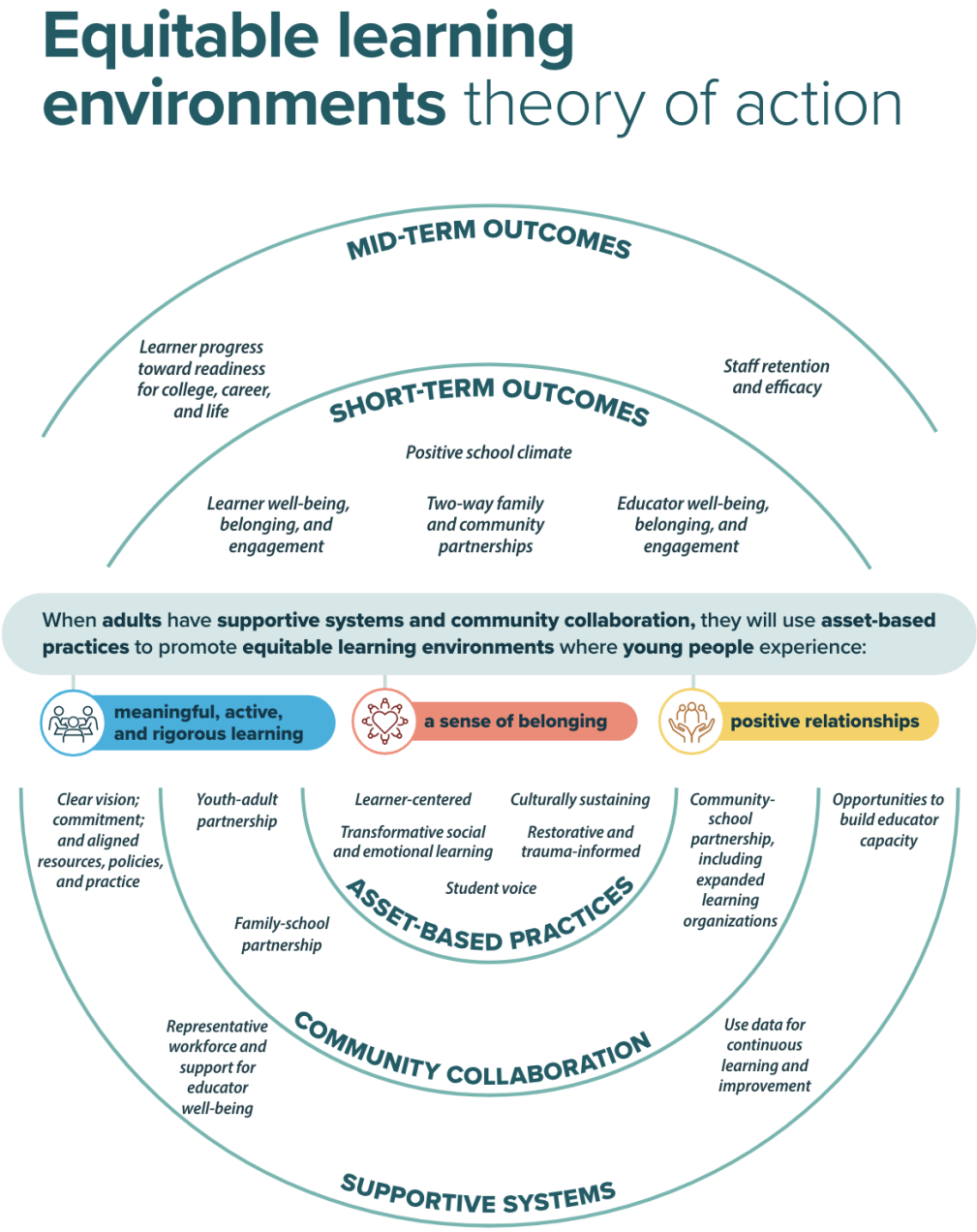


Exhibit C
Multi-tiered System of Supports

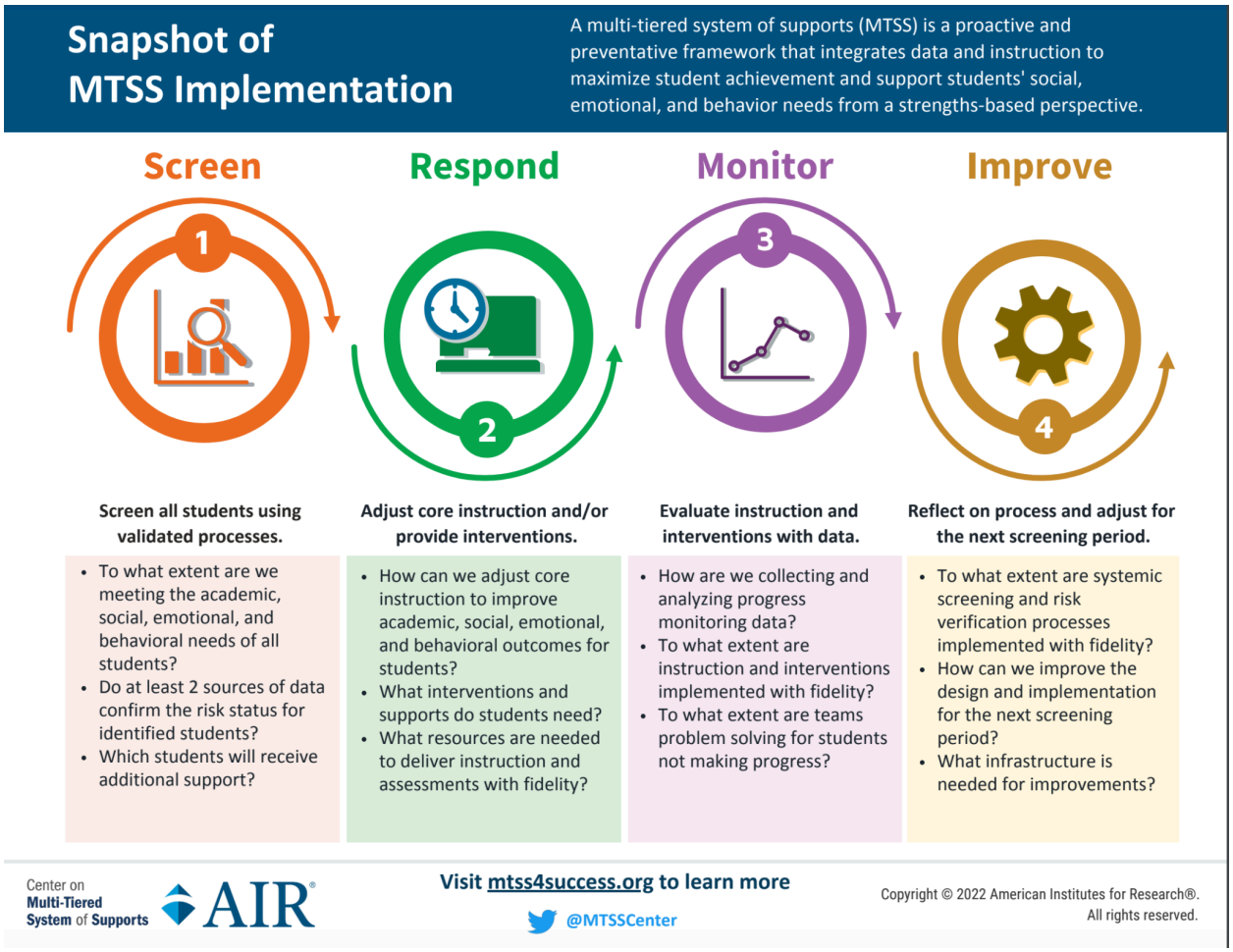


Exhibit D
Enrollment Zone

Cornerstone's Enrollment Zone		
School District (SAU)	**Town**	**Commute Time (minutes)**
Lebanon (SAU 88)	Lebanon	Proposed Location
Hanover (SAU 70)	Hanover	10
Mascoma Valley Regional (SAU 62)	Enfield	10
Plainfield (SAU 32)	Plainfield	14
Grantham (SAU 75)	Grantham	18
Croydon (SAU 99)	Croydon	20
Mascoma Valley Regional (SAU 62)	Canaan	25
Lyme (SAU 76)	Lyme	25
Sunapee (SAU 85)	Sunapee	25
Claremont (SAU 6)	Claremont	30
Mascoma Valley Regional (SAU 62)	Grafton	30
Kearsarge Regional (SAU 65)	New London	30
Newport (SAU 43)	Newport	30
Kearsarge Regional (SAU65)	Springfield	30
Mascoma Valley Regional (SAU 62)	Dorchester	35
Kearsarge Regional (SAU 65)	Wilmot	35
Newfound Area (SAU 4)	Danbury	40

Exhibit E
2023 ELA and Math Achievement Data for Elementary Schools
Northern Sullivan and Southern Grafton Counties

2023 ELA and Math Achievement Data for Elementary Schools in Northern Sullivan and Southern Grafton Counties

Data Source: NH DOE iReport

	SCHOOL	GRADES	AVE. CLASS SIZE	ENROLLMENT			ELA PROFICIENT %			ELA Growth (MGP)			Math Proficiency		
				Total	% disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged	All	Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged	All	Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged	All	Disabilities	Economically Disadvantaged
Canaan	Elementary School	PK-4	16.2	225	27.79	37.5	34	15	21	45	37	40	51	26	50
Hanover	Ray	K-5	17.9	455	16.92	<10	85	49	*N	64	58	*N	51	46	*N
Lebanon	Hanover St	K-4	16.5	328	15.55	30.79	58	18	37	54	*N	49	57	26	42
Lebanon	Mt. Lebanon	PK - 4	13.8	234	22.33	34.62	52	16	23	45	*N	*N	49	17	5
Enfield	Village School	PK-4	15.9	214	29.91	23.36	59	38	45	55	57	50	86	69	73
Grantham	Village School	PK -6	19	271	14.76	<10	82	19	*N	63	43	*N	82	32	*N
Plainfield	Elementary	K-8	14.5	206	17.48	*N	66	27	*N	56	42	*N	49	14	*N
Cornish	Elementary	PK-8	11.8	125	13.6	<10	47	*N	*N	49	*N	*N	56	*N	*N
Croydon	Village	K-4	4.8	28	*N	*N	64	*N	*N	*N	*N	*N	55	*N	*N
AVERAGE			**14**	**232**	**20**	**32**	**51**	**22**	**32**		**47**	**46**	**60**	**33**	**43**
MEDIAN			**16**	**225**	**17**	**33**	**59**	**19**	**30**	**55**	**43**	**49**	**55**	**26**	**-**

Exhibit F
Founding Members Biographies

Lynne A. Howard, M.Ed., Clinical Supervisor/OGA, Co-Founder
Lyme, NH
Lynne is an enthusiastic school educational leader and has been in the field of education her entire adult life. She holds a B.S. in Education and Training focused on Applied Technology and an M.Ed. specializing in K-12 Reading and Writing. She is also an Orton-Gillingham practitioner, certified through the Orton-Gillingham Academy. A New Hampshire Experienced Educator, she holds two current endorsements: K-6 Elementary Education and K-12 Reading and Writing Specialist.
Ms. Howard is a devoted educator and a natural systems thinker. Throughout her career, she has focused on systems development and alignment. During her early work as a certified Montessori educator, she successfully designed, established, and led a lower elementary program for a New Hampshire Montessori school. Appreciating and incorporating ideas from various stakeholders was one of the most rewarding aspects of this endeavor.
During her tenure as a reading specialist, data coach, and Professional Learning Community leader at Charlestown Primary School, Lynne was a key member of the building leadership team and a recognized presenter. Her expertise led her to be chosen as a key member of the team during its work with the SWIFT Center, which partnered with schools to create systems for equitable access to learning. She was honored to present at the 2017 National MTSS Professional Learning Institute in Costa Mesa, California, a testament to her ability to effectively communicate her knowledge and insights.
As a Structured Literacy Coach with the Stern Center for Language and Learning, Lynne has demonstrated her leadership prowess. She has led administrators and educators in implementing systems change initiatives around literacy practices and coaching. Her contributions include creating a project management system for the Lead to Read program and facilitating the creation of its purpose, mission, and vision statements, highlighting her ability to drive meaningful change.
Ms. Howard exemplifies service, continual personal growth, life-long learning, and collaboration. She loves nonfiction books; her favorite topics include personal development and history.
One of her treasured quotes comes from Steven Covey: “Trust is the glue of life. It’s the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It’s the foundational principle that holds all relationships.”
Ms. Howard lives in Lyme, NH, with her husband and three rescue dogs on a hill overlooking the Connecticut River. There, she loves to walk the trails, climb the mountains, boat on the river, practice yoga, and watch the sunset.

Lindsay L. Wadleigh, B.M., Co-Founder
Newport, NH
Lindsay Wadleigh is an accomplished music teacher with thirteen years of experience teaching general music and chorus to students in preschool through 8th grade. She graduated from the University of New Hampshire with a Bachelor of Music Education in 2010 and has taught in both New Hampshire and Vermont, bringing her dynamic teaching style and passion for music to diverse classrooms. Lindsay is known for using a variety of modalities to engage her students, ensuring that each child can connect with and enjoy the learning process. In recognition of her exceptional dedication and impact, she was awarded the Vermont Outstanding Teacher of the Year award in 2022. Her commitment to fostering a love for music has made a significant impact on the lives of many young musicians.
Lindsay's versatility is one of her greatest strengths. She has excelled in multiple roles, including serving as an adjudicator for the New England Music Festival Association and demonstrating her leadership as the Music Director for the Hartford Performance Arts Camp. Additionally, she has effectively mapped curriculum to national standards for music programs in the Hartford and Newport School Districts. Lindsay's diverse training in Orff Schulwerk, Drumming for Success, and Conversational Solfege,

combined with her experience in leading numerous concerts, showcases her ability to thrive in various environments. Her expertise also extends to Responsive Classrooms and her participation on the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) team, further highlighting her adaptability and breadth of skills.
Residing in Newport, NH, Lindsay enjoys a fulfilling personal life with her husband and two daughters. In her free time, she likes reading, playing the ukulele, and spending quality time with her family.

Adam P. Bristol, Co-Founder
Lyme, NH
Adam Bristol began his post-collegiate career as a licensed Master Electrician and electrical contractor in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine and has subsequently been an entrepreneur in Northern New England for over thirty years. Today, Adam is a business executive who owns and runs two tech companies, Current-Concepts Corporation and Current-Tel.
Current Concepts is a data, voice, and video networking corporation that specializes in network performance, CIPA-compliant network security, and data privacy. It designs, builds, and supports network infrastructure systems, including connectivity, Ethernet switches, security firewalls, WIFI, telephone systems, overhead paging systems, building access control systems, and camera systems.
Current-Tel is an Internet phone company that provides cloud-based and Internet-hosted telecommunications services, including VoIP, SMS, MMS, video conferencing, E911 registration, emergency notification, and evacuation systems.
Current-Tel is a predominant telecom and emergency communication services provider to the education sector in the Upper Valley of New Hampshire, Vermont, and beyond, servicing many foundations, libraries, schools, and school districts, such as The Mountain School (Vershire VT), the Mountain Views Supervisory Union (Woodstock, VT), the Orange East Supervisory Union (Bradford VT), the Rivendell Interstate School District (Orford NH), SAU #3 (Berlin NH), and SAU #76 (Lyme NH).
Adam also has a longstanding background in community service and leadership, having served as a Rescue Specialist for Collinsville VFD (CT), founder of Moosehead Search and Rescue (Greenville ME), President of Bristol's Farm (c1870—Canton CT), vice-president and on the Board of Trustees for Lebanon Opera House (NH), Worshipful Master and Past Master of Franklin Lodge No. 6, NH F&AM, and President of the Lebanon Masonic Association.
Adam is a 32nd-degree Scottish Rite Freemason, a third-degree Martinist practitioner, and a legally ordained minister who enjoys studying comparative theology, metaphysics, and Western Esotericism. Adam spends his free time with his wife, four daughters, two 'bonus daughters', and their families, and with them enjoys family gatherings, travel, offroading, kayaking, boating, camping, hiking, summiting, and exploring the Great Outdoors.

Maura A. Hart, Ed.D., Founding Member
Plainfield, NH
Dr. Maura Hart is the Assistant Director of Capacity Development for the SWIFT Education Center at the University of Kansas. She began her career as a middle and high school Language Arts and English teacher in New Hampshire and Vermont and has over 25 years of experience supporting schools and districts with the implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, evidence-based classroom, and leadership practices, including distributed leadership constructs, and the navigation of a continuous cycle of improvement. Dr. Hart is an Adjunct Faculty member in the Education Department at Antioch University in Keene, NH, and an independent consultant with REAL Consulting. She is passionate about supporting teachers and administrators to ensure that they are providing equitable access to education for their students and has focused her work on this objective throughout her career.
She lives on a small farm (which is really just an expensive petting zoo) in Plainfield, NH, with her husband and three daughters (well, ok, when they come home from college). She enjoys being outdoors,

hiking, skiing (Alpine and Nordic), dancing, reading, and spending time at the ocean on Prince Edward Island.

Frank Perotti, Jr., Ed.D., Founding Member
Plainfield, NH
Dr. Frank Perotti is currently the Superintendent of Schools for the Croydon and Lyme New Hampshire School Districts. He previously served as the Superintendent of Schools for SAU 32, Plainfield, NH, and SAU 100, Cornish, NH. Before returning to New Hampshire, he served as Superintendent for 16 years in Vermont in several districts. He has been recognized by peers for serving the children of Vermont as an innovative/progressive/pioneering educational leader and child advocate. Most recently, he has been responsible for the development of universal pre-k programs in the Rutland Windsor Supervisory Union and the Springfield School District. Dr. Perotti led the education transformation effort in Springfield, reorganizing the District's schools, increasing test scores, and achieving increased graduation rates. He has worked as an Educational consultant for the Vermont Community Preschool Collaborative, The Permanent Fund for Vermont's Children, Let's Grow Kids, and Building Bright Futures.
Prior to his work in New England, he was a teacher, school administrator, and community advocate for many years in New York State. He also was a Program Specialist with the Northeast Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities, United States Department of Education for three years. He has worked as an adjunct faculty member at UVM, Castleton State College, and Antioch University New England.Committed to using advocacy as an effective vehicle for change, he has been invited as a frequent witness before the Vermont Senate and House Education Committees and was a member of an advisory committee to the Springfield Area Parent and Child Center. At the American Association for School Administrators National Conference in New Orleans, he presented on the importance and the strategic development of early education preschool programs in rural schools. He has served as a trustee of the Vermont Superintendent's Association for six years, with a special focus on the Legislative and Professional Development Committees. Dr. Perotti has also served his local community as a member of the Plainfield Environmental/Energy Committee and his local church as a trustee.
Dr. Perotti received his Bachelor's Degree from Cornell University, a Master's Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Nebraska/Omaha, an Advanced Master's Degree, and a Doctorate in Special Education and School Administration from Teachers College, Columbia University.
Frank Perotti is married and the father of five children. He resides in his family home on Stage Road in Plainfield with his wife, Maura, their two daughters, Audrey and Grace, his niece Deliah, and an assortment of pets and farm animals.

Hollace L. Bristol, Ed.D., Founding Member
Canton, CT
Hollace has an earned doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction, which brings a deep and broad understanding of the philosophical grounding of educational models and educational program design and development. She is a former Professor of Mathematics, having taught for 23 years in the community college system in Connecticut. She served as the Associate Superintendent of Schools for Coconino County, AZ, and directed the County Education Services Agency (ESA), which provides federally-funded professional development opportunities in math and science to K-12 educators in Northern Arizona. Administratively, she collaborated with ESA directors state-wide, the AZ Dept. of Education, higher education partners, and school districts throughout Northern Arizona. She represented Coconino County on AZ state-wide committees, including the Common Core Standards Review Team and the Math Science Partnership Grant Award Review Team. As Math/Science Program Coordinator for Coconino County, she acquired federal grants to provide mathematics and science professional development to K-12 teachers; administered program development; engaged in budget management, partnership administration with

higher education faculty, teacher recruitment, systemic capacity building for reformed mathematics instruction and delivered mathematics content and pedagogy.

Exhibit G
Responsibilites of the Board of Trustees

Governance, Oversight, and Policy

- Exercise full authority to determine the school's organization, methods, and goals, according to RSA 194-B:3, I(b), including annual performance reviews, adoption of curriculum and assessment tools, and teacher performance evaluation system.
- Ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- Create and oversee policies in alignment with federal and state laws and Cornerstone's charter, bylaws, policies, and mission statement.
- Evaluate and update policies on an annual basis to ensure compliance with RSA 194 B:5
- Approve and oversee memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with resident districts of students with disabilities to ensure compliance with the law - RSA 194-B:11, III(c).
- Create subcommittees for specific tasks such as budget, facilities, educational programming, and governance.

Financial Management

- Create, approve, and oversee the annual budget and long-range growth plans.
- Receive and disburse funds for school purposes.
- Oversee an annual audit and prepare a report.
- Maintain financial oversight and control.
- Enter into contracts with outside organizations, including financial institutions.

Academic Oversight

- Set goals and evaluate student achievement.
- Approve curriculum and ensure alignment with state standards and the school's mission.
- *Leadership Management*
- Hire and oversee the Executive Director, including issuing annual goals and duties, evaluating performance, and setting compensation. Hire faculty and staff upon recommendation of the Executive Director.

Development and Fundraising

- Secure grants, donations, and partnerships to keep the school financially viable.
- Develop and implement a fundraising plan.

Long-term Goal Setting and Monitoring

- Set long-term strategic goals to guide the school's growth and development.

Exhibit H
DRAFT Proposed Board of Trustees Bylaws

Cornerstone Chartered Public School Bylaws

Article I: Name and Location

1. Name: The name of the school shall be Cornerstone Chartered Public School (hereinafter referred to as "the School").
2. Location: The principal office of the School shall be located at [insert address], in the city of [insert city], New Hampshire. The Board of Trustees may change the location of the principal office as necessary.

Article II: Purpose and Mission

1. Purpose: The School is organized exclusively for educational purposes, as described in its charter, and in compliance with applicable state and federal laws.
2. Mission Statement: The mission of Cornerstone Chartered Public School is to Cornerstone's mission is to provide a safe, nurturing, equitable, and accessible school to cultivate strong readers, writers, speakers, and listeners. We are exceptionally dedicated to ensuring all students, especially the at-risk population, achieve their potential. We are unwavering in our commitment to providing a curriculum based on the science of reading. In our classrooms and small intervention groups, we implement the Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach, a well-researched, evidence-based approach. Our Orton-Gillingham certified teachers skillfully use the Orton-Gillingham approach to diagnostically and prescriptively provide personal, explicit, sequential, and multisensory instruction., providing a high-quality education that prepares students for academic and personal success.

Article III: Board of Trustees

1. General Powers: The Board of Trustees shall have full power to manage the business and affairs of the School, subject to the laws of the State of New Hampshire and the provisions of the charter.
2. Number of Trustees: The Board shall consist of not fewer than five and not more than eleven Trustees, as determined by the Board.
3. Selection and Term of Office:
    - Trustees shall be elected by the Board for a term of three year terms, with staggered terms to ensure continuity.
    - Trustees may be re-elected for consecutive terms.
4. Meetings:
    - Regular Meetings: The Board shall hold regular meetings at least monthly to conduct the business of the School.
    - Special Meetings: Special meetings may be called by the Chairperson or by any two Trustees with at least [insert notice period] days' notice to all Trustees.
    - Quorum: A quorum for the transaction of business shall be 50% of the Trustees then in office.
5. Duties and Responsibilities:
    - Oversee the implementation of the School’s mission and ensure adherence to its charter.
    - Approve the annual budget, financial policies, and audit reports.
    - Hire, evaluate, and support the School’s Executive Director.

- Ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

6. Removal and Resignation:
    - Any Trustee may be removed from office for cause by a two-thirds vote of the entire Board.
    - A Trustee may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Board.

Article IV: Officers

1. Officers: The officers of the Board shall include a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer, and such other officers as the Board may designate.
2. Election and Term:
    - Officers shall be elected annually by the Board of Trustees at the first regular meeting following the election of Trustees.
    - Each officer shall hold office for one year or until a successor has been duly elected.
3. Duties:
    - Chairperson: The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Board and perform all duties incidental to the office of Chairperson.
    - Vice-Chairperson: The Vice-Chairperson shall perform the duties of the Chairperson in their absence.
    - Secretary: The Secretary shall keep accurate records of all Board meetings and ensure that all notices are duly given.
    - Treasurer: The Treasurer shall oversee the financial affairs of the School, including the preparation of financial reports.

Article V: Decision Making Process

Decisions will be made using the following stage process:

- *Proposal Stage* - The issue that needs to be addressed is clearly defined, relevant data is gathered and presented, potential solutions are presented along with a proposed solution. The proposal shall be presented to all board members for discussion.
- *Discussion Stage* - The proposal and summary of the key points is included on an agenda for an upcoming meeting. During the meeting, the proposal is presented and the floor is open for discussion. Requests may be made for additional information at this time.
- *Voting Stage* - After all Trustees have had an opportunity to speak, a motion for a vote may be made and seconded. The vote is conducted according to the BOT established by voting procedures (e.g., majority rule, two-thirds majority). The vote is documented and recorded in the meeting minutes.
- *Implementation Stage* - The decision is communicated to all relevant stakeholders, responsibilites are assigned, a process for monitoring and reviewing progress is established, and the outcome is evaluated.
- A quorum of the BOT shall be authorized to select and name committee chairpersons. No opinion, decision, or commitment on behalf of the BOT can be made by a representative or committee without Trustee authorization.

Article VI: Committees

1. Standing Committees: The Board may establish standing committees as needed, such as Finance, Governance, and Academic Committees.
2. Ad Hoc Committees: The Board may establish ad hoc committees for specific tasks or projects as necessary.
3. Committee Membership: Each committee shall have at least one Trustee as a member, and the Board may appoint non-Trustees with relevant expertise to serve on committees.

Article VII: Fiscal Management

1. Fiscal Year: The fiscal year of the School shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.
2. Budget: The Board shall approve an annual budget prepared by the School's administration before the start of each fiscal year.
3. Financial Audits: The Board shall ensure that an independent audit of the School's financial statements is conducted annually by a certified public accountant.

Article VIII: Amendments

1. Amendments to Bylaws: These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the Trustees present at any regular or special meeting, provided that the proposed amendment has been submitted in writing to all Trustees at least [insert notice period] days before the meeting.

Article IX: Indemnification

1. Indemnification: The School shall indemnify and hold harmless its Trustees, officers, employees, and agents to the fullest extent permitted by law, against any and all liabilities and expenses incurred in connection with the School.

Article X: Dissolution

1. Dissolution: Upon the dissolution of the School, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the School, the Board shall dispose of all the assets of the School in accordance with applicable laws and the School's charter.

Article XI: Miscellaneous

1. Non-Discrimination Policy: The School shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.
2. Conflict of Interest: Trustees shall disclose any conflict of interest and recuse themselves from voting on matters in which they have a personal interest.

Article XII: Adoption of Bylaws

1. Adoption: These Bylaws shall be adopted by a majority vote of the Board of Trustees and shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

Exhibit I
Scarborough's Reading Rope

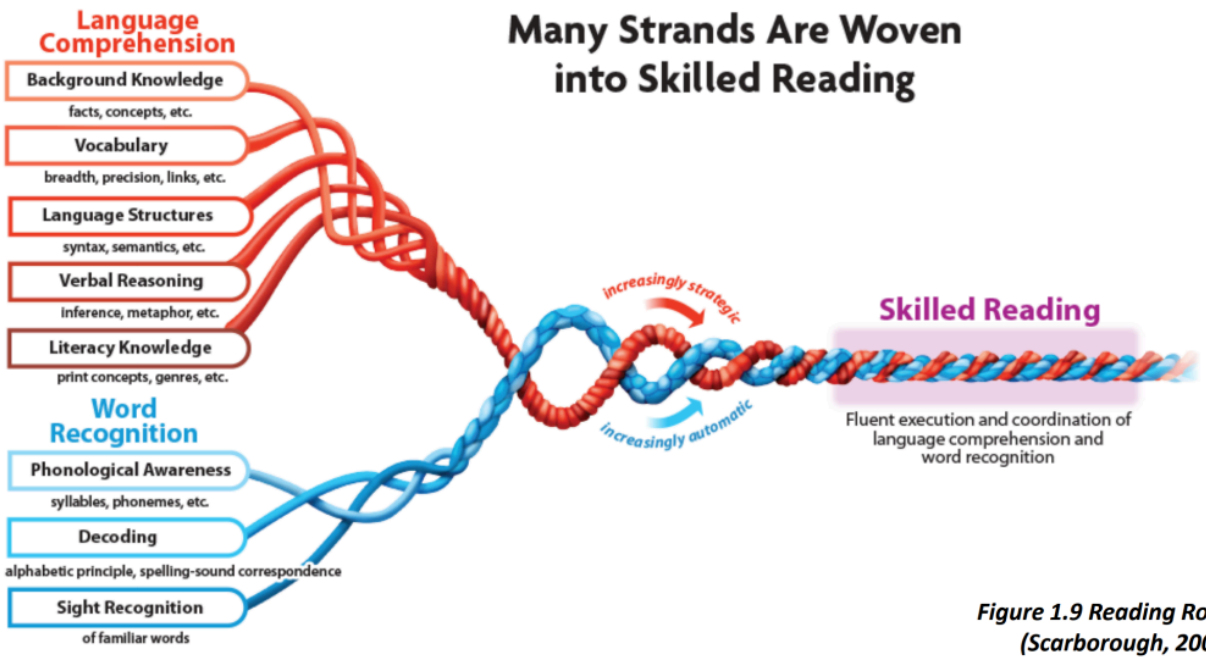
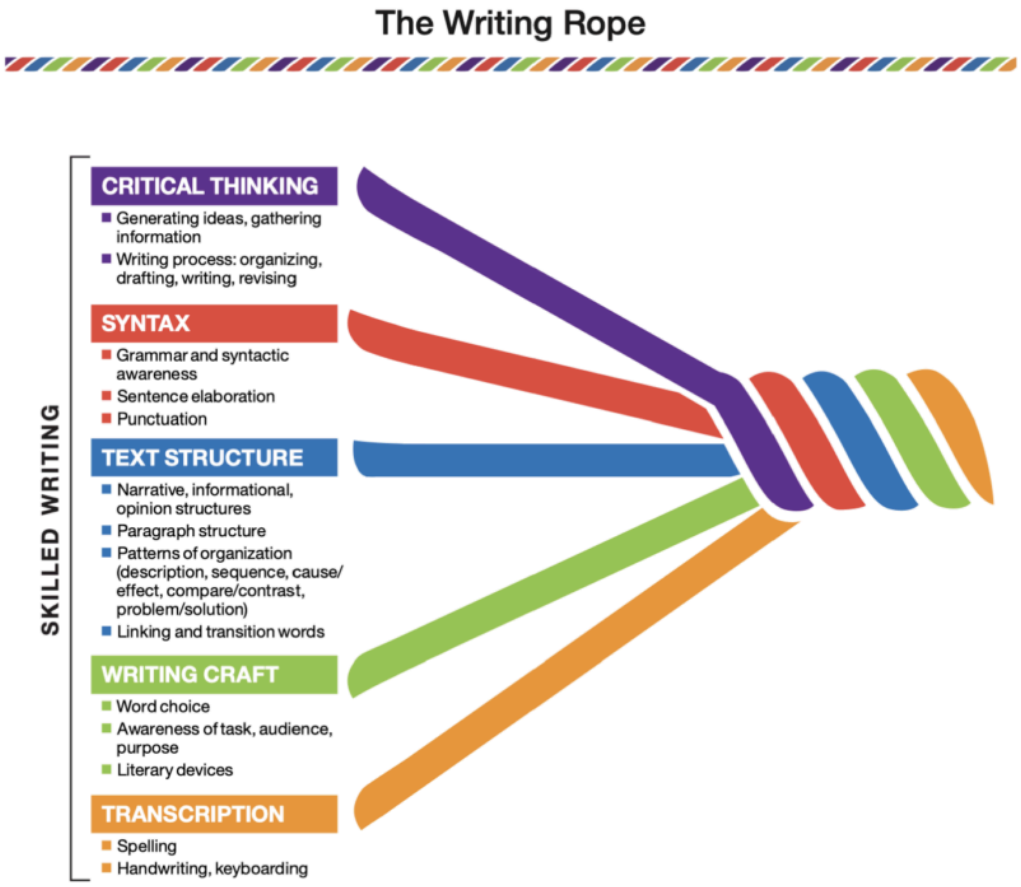


Figure 1.9 Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001)

Exhibit J
Sadita's Writing Rope



From *The Writing Rope™: The strands that are woven into skilled writing* [online article].
(https://284ivp1abr6435y6t219n54e-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Article-The-Strands-That-Are-Woven-Into-Skilled-Writing.pdf); adapted by permission. © 2019 by Joan Sedita, www.keystoliteracy.com. All rights reserved.
In *The Writing Rope: A Framework for Explicit Writing Instruction in All Subjects*, by Joan Sedita. (2023; Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co., Inc.)

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Exhibit K
Minimum Student Achievement Targets

CORNERSTONE CHARTER SCHOOL

Minimum Student Achievement Targets

Percent at or Above Benchmark by Grade Level Cohorts

ALL STUDENTS					
GRADES	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
K	59	60	61	62	63
1	57	61	62	63	64
2	55	59	64	65	66
3	53	57	62	66	67
4	-	55	59	64	69
5	-	-	56	62	67
6	-	-	-	58	64
7	-	-	-	-	60
Average per Year	56	58	61	63	65

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES					
GRADES	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
K	34	35	36	37	38
1	28	35	36	37	38
2	24	29	37	38	39
3	18	25	30	38	39
4	-	19	26	31	40
5	-	-	19	27	33
6	-	-	-	20	28
7	-	-	-	-	20
Average per Year	26	29	31	33	34

OTHER AT RISK STUDENTS*					
GRADES	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
K	40	41	42	43	44
1	38	42	43	44	45
2	36	40	43	44	45
3	33	37	41	45	46
4	-	34	39	43	47
5	-	-	35	40	44
6	-	-	-	36	42
7	-	-	-	-	37
Average per Year	37	39	40	42	44

The charts illustrate the progressive nature of our minimum achievement targets, determined by grade level and year of entry into our program. The top chart shows targets for the entire student population, the middle for students with disabilities, and the bottom chart shows targets for other at-risk students.

Notably, the highest targets are set for students who join us in kindergarten. For instance, in Year 1 on the top chart, the target for kindergarten is 59% at or above the benchmark. However, by Year 5, this target will increase to 63%, reflecting program and procedural enhancements and an increase in teacher expertise. Similarly, the lowest Year 1 target (53%) is for students who initially enter at G3 and gradually increase to 60% by Year 5.

The chart also visually represents our targets for cohorts as they progress through the grade levels. The cohorts are color-coded, allowing for easy tracking of their progress diagonally on the chart. This visual aid is particularly helpful in understanding the trajectory of student performance. On the top chart, the targets increase by 4% per year for kindergarten-G2 and 3% per year for students who entered the school in G3, reflecting realistic expectations for continuous improvement.

The middle and bottom charts are dedicated to our At-Risk Students, indicating our commitment to their success. The growth rate for these students is the same, but initial targets are set to realistically represent this demographic, ensuring that every student is included in our pursuit of excellence.

By Year 5 of our program, most students are expected to perform at or above benchmark levels in reading and math. However, it's crucial to note that these targets are considered minimums, not the ultimate goal. Our program aims to surpass these expectations, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to student success and continuous improvement. We strive for excellence, not just meeting the minimum requirements.

* Other At-Risk students include economically disadvantaged, ELL, homeless and students in foster care

Exhibit L
Decision Tree - Literacy and Math Assessment & Instruction

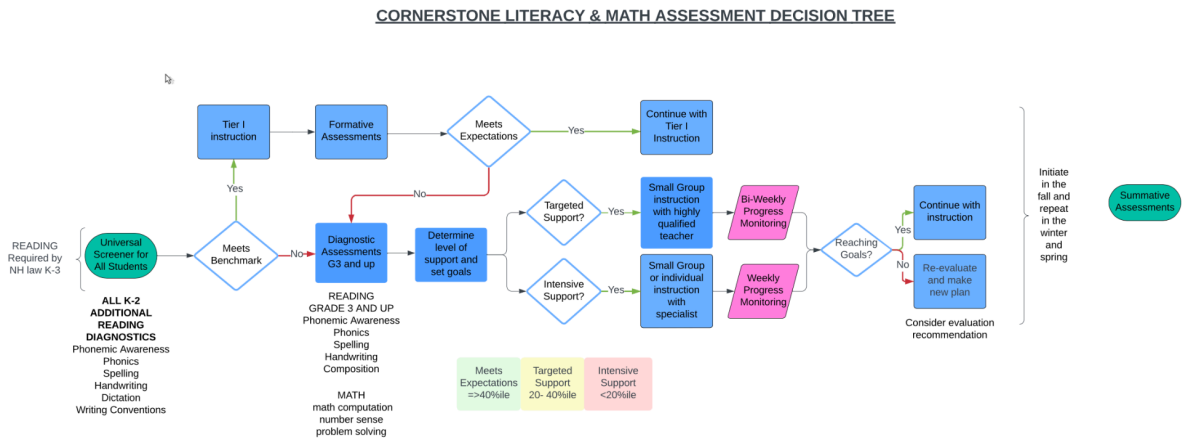

Exhibit M
Staff Qualifications and Responsibilities

Executive Director

Qualifications

- Commitment to the school's mission, vision, and goals
- Master's degree or higher in education, educational leadership, or related field
- Teaching experience
- Experience with school operations and leadership
- Strong problem-solving, decision-making, and time-management skills
- Ability to create a positive, inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environment

Responsibilities

- Provide leadership and vision for the staff, students, and families
- Support the school's vision, mission, and goals
- Provide academic oversight, instructional leadership
- Monitor student achievement, including mandatory testing and reporting
- Oversee all operational, administrative, organizational, budgetary processes
- Work with Board of Trustees to create the budget, policies and procedures, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations
- Recruit, hire, train, supervise, evaluate staff
- Serve as the primary liason between the Board of Trustees and the staff
- Engage with families and the community through various channels
- Develop and implement emergency procedures and crisis management plans
- Foster a culture of continuous improvement

Assistant Director

Qualifications

- Commitment to the school's mission, vision, and goals
- Bachelor's degree or higher in education, educational leadership, or related field
- Teaching experience
- Experience with school operations and leadership
- Strong problem-solving, decision-making, time management skills
- Ability to create a positive, inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environment

Responsibilities

- Assist and support the Executive Director in overseeing daily school operations, including scheduling, facilities management, and logistical support
- Support the school's vision, mission, and goals

- Support the Executive Director to ensure proper allocation of resources, crisis management, staff training, and professional development.
- Act as a key advisor to the Executive Director
- Serve as Executive Director in the their absence

Academic Director

Qualifications

- Commitment to the school's mission, vision, and goals
- Bachelor's degree or higher in education, curriculum and instruction, or related field
- Teaching and instructional coaching experience
- Data analysis and data coaching experience
- Experience with curriculum development and assessment practices
- Strong problem-solving, decision-making, time management skills
- Ability to support teachers in a positive, inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environment

Responsibilities

- Oversee the creation, implementation, and evaluation of the curricula
- Enforce academic policies and procedures
- Oversee ongoing professional development
- Monitor student performance
- Allocate academic resources
- Communicate with stakeholders about academic programs and initiatives
- Ensure compliance with regulations related to academics

Responsibilities

- Provide leadership for the staff, students, and families
- Support the school's vision, mission, and goals
- Work with the Board of Trustees to create the budget, policies, and procedures, and ensure compliance with laws and regulations
- Recruit, hire, train, supervise, evaluate, and support staff
- Oversee all administrative and organizational support processes, including human resources

Classroom and Intervention Teacher

Qualifications

- Commitment to the school's mission, vision, and goals
- Bachelor's degree or higher in education or related related field
- NH Teaching certification, preferred
- Teaching experience, preferred
- Training and experience with Structured Literacy
- Experience with data collection, assessment practices, and data-based decision-making
- Strong classroom management and time management skills
- Ability to support teachers in a positive, inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environment

Responsibilities

- Plan and implement lessons that align with state standards
- Deliver engaging and effective instruction
- Administer assessments and use data to inform instruction
- Create and maintain a positive learning environment
- Support student learning diagnostic and prescriptive approach
- Communicate with parents
- Work collaboratively with peers
- Stay current with teaching best practices
- Promote and respect diversity and create an equitable learning environment

Paraprofessional

Qualifications

- Commitment to the school's mission, vision, and goals
- Associates degree or at least two years of post-secondary education, preferred
- Previous experience working with children in an educational setting
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Training and experience with Structured Literacy, preferred
- Experience working effectively as part of a team
- Patience, understanding, and supportive attitude toward students.
- Ability to support teachers in a positive, inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environment

Responsibilities

- Support students during lessons by reinforcing material taught by the teacher
- Prepare instructional materials and classroom displays
- Assist in maintaining a positive and orderly classroom environment
- Monitor students during transitions, such as moving between classrooms or during recess
- Assist with record-keeping tasks, such as grading, attendance, and tracking student progress.
- Organize and maintaining classroom supplies and resources.
- Support the teacher with general classroom organization and management.
- Assist in the use of adaptive equipment or technology for students who require it.
- Participate in professional development opportunities provided by the school to enhance skills and knowledge.
- Stay informed about best practices in education and instructional support.
- Promote and respect diversity and create an equitable learning environment

Exhibit N
DRAFT: Training Reimbursement Policy
Pending review and approval of the Board of Trustees

Purpose: This policy outlines the conditions under which an employee who resigns from Cornerstone Charter School after receiving training will be required to reimburse the school for the cost of that training.

Scope: This policy applies to all employees who receive training funded by Cornerstone Charter School that exceeds [insert threshold amount] and who resign voluntarily within five years of completing the training.

Reimbursement Schedule: Employees who resign within the following time frames after completing training will be required to reimburse Cornerstone for the training costs according to the following schedule:

1. **Resignation Within Year 1**:
    - **Reimbursement**: 100% of training costs.
2. **Resignation Within Year 2**:
    - **Reimbursement**: 80% of training costs.
3. **Resignation Within Year 3**:
    - **Reimbursement**: 60% of training costs.
4. **Resignation Within Year 4**:
    - **Reimbursement**: 40% of training costs.
5. **Resignation Within Year 5**:
    - **Reimbursement**: 20% of training costs.
6. **Resignation After Year 5**:
    - **Reimbursement**: 0% (No reimbursement required).

Conditions:

- The reimbursement amount will be calculated based on the total cost of the training, including any fees, materials, and travel expenses covered by Cornerstone.
- The employee will be required to sign an agreement acknowledging this policy before commencing the training.
- If an employee is terminated by Cornerstone for reasons other than misconduct, the reimbursement requirement will be waived.
- The school reserves the right to deduct any owed reimbursement from the employee's final paycheck, subject to applicable laws.

Exceptions:

- Exceptions to this policy may be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to approval by the Executive Director or the Board of Trustees.

Procedure:

- Upon resignation, the Executive Director will calculate the amount owed by the employee based on the schedule above.
- The employee will be notified of the repayment amount and the due date for repayment.

- The school may offer repayment plans or other accommodations depending on the circumstances of the employee's resignation.

Effective Date: This policy is effective as of [insert date] and applies to all training provided after this date.

Key Considerations:

- The policy will be clear and communicated to all employees before they receive training.
- The policy will comply with state and federal labor laws, particularly regarding wage deductions.
- The BOT will consider the costs and benefits of enforcing this policy to ensure it does not negatively impact employee morale or retention.

This policy helps protect Cornerstone's investment in its employees while providing a clear and fair structure for reimbursement should an employee leave shortly after receiving training.

Exhibit O
DRAFT: Leadership Team Performance Evaluation Process
Pending review and approval of the Board of Trustees

1. Set Clear and Measurable Goals:
   a. SMART Goals: Ensure that performance goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART). These goals should be directly aligned with the school's strategic objectives and educational mission.
   b. Individual and Team Goals: Establish both individual goals for each leader and collective goals for the leadership team as a whole. This promotes accountability and teamwork.

2. Use a 360-Degree Feedback Process:
   a. Comprehensive Feedback: Gather input from a variety of sources, including peers, direct reports, the Executive Director, the school board, and possibly parents and other stakeholders. This helps to provide a well-rounded view of each leader's performance.
   b. Anonymous Surveys: Use anonymous surveys to collect honest feedback. This can encourage more open and constructive criticism.

3. Focus on Key Competencies:
   a. Leadership Competencies: Evaluate leaders on key competencies such as decision-making, communication, strategic thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to inspire and motivate staff.
   b. Educational Impact: Assess how effectively each leader supports educational outcomes, including student achievement, teacher development, and curriculum implementation.

4. Regular and Ongoing Evaluation:
   a. Annual Reviews: Conduct formal performance evaluations at least once a year, but supplement these with regular check-ins, such as quarterly reviews or bi-annual feedback sessions.
   b. Continuous Improvement: Use these evaluations as part of a continuous improvement process, rather than a one-time event. Encourage leaders to set development goals and revisit progress regularly.

5. Include Self-Assessment:
   a. Self-Reflection: Have each leader complete a self-assessment as part of the evaluation process. This allows them to reflect on their own performance, identify areas for improvement, and set personal goals.
   b. Alignment of Perspectives: Comparing self-assessments with feedback from others can highlight gaps in perception and areas for growth.

6. Tie Evaluation to Professional Development:
   a. Development Plans: Use the evaluation results to create tailored professional development plans for each leader. Identify specific training, mentoring, or coaching opportunities to address any identified weaknesses or to build on strengths.
   b. Leadership Development: Encourage participation in leadership development programs, workshops, or courses that align with the school's goals and the individual's career aspirations.

7. Foster Open Communication:

a. Constructive Dialogue: Ensure that the evaluation process includes a constructive and open dialogue between the evaluator and the leader. Focus on positive reinforcement as well as constructive criticism.
b. Actionable Feedback: Provide specific, actionable feedback that leaders can use to improve their performance.

8. Align Evaluation with School Values and Culture:
   a. Mission Alignment: Ensure that the evaluation criteria reflect the school's core values, mission, and vision. Leaders should be evaluated on how well they embody and promote these values in their work.
   b. Cultural Fit: Assess how effectively each leader contributes to and strengthens the school's culture.

9. Use Data-Driven Metrics:
   a. Quantitative Measures: Incorporate data-driven metrics where applicable, such as student performance data, teacher retention rates, budget management, and progress towards strategic goals.
   b. Qualitative Measures: Balance these metrics with qualitative assessments, such as feedback from stakeholders and observations of leadership behavior.

10. Document and Follow-Up:
   a. Thorough Documentation: Document the entire evaluation process, including the goals, feedback, and agreed-upon action steps. This ensures transparency and accountability.
   b. Follow-Up Actions: Regularly review progress on any development plans or goals that were set during the evaluation. Provide ongoing support to help leaders succeed.

Exhibit P
DRAFT Professional Development Plan
Pending review and approval of the Board of Trustees

Overview

The Professional Development (PD) plan for Cornerstone aims to enhance instructional practices, leadership capabilities, and overall school culture to ensure high-quality education and continuous improvement. This plan is aligned with Cornerstone's goals of fostering an environment of excellence and supporting both teachers and leaders in their professional growth.

Goals and Objectives

1. Enhance Instructional Practices: Improve the quality of teaching through research-based instructional strategies.
2. Strengthen Leadership Skills: Develop leadership capabilities to support instructional excellence and school-wide improvements.
3. Promote Collaborative Culture: Foster a culture of collaboration and shared best practices among educators.
4. Support Data-Driven Instruction: Use data to inform instructional decisions and personalize learning for students.

Focus Areas

1. Instructional Strategies: Implement and refine evidence-based instructional strategies (e.g., Orton-Gillingham Approach and The Hochman Method).
2. Student-Centered Learning: Emphasize student engagement, differentiation, and personalized learning.
3. Leadership Development: Equip school leaders with skills to lead instructional improvements and manage change effectively.
4. Assessment Literacy: Enhance teachers' abilities to use formative and summative assessments to guide instruction.

Professional Development Activities

1. Mission Focused: All approved professional development activities will align with the school's vision, mission, values, and goals.
2. Instructional Coaching: Provide personalized coaching for all teachers as part of the school culture of continuous improvement, not for remediation.
3. Cornerstone will fund and accommodate teachers for mandated Professional Development.

Leadership Development

1. Leadership Seminars: Periodic seminars for school leaders on topics such as instructional leadership, data-driven decision-making, and change management.
2. Goal-Focused Performance Evaluation: Performance evaluations include goals to improve in specific areas, such as leadership skills, student performance, or communication.
3. Action Research Projects: Encourage leaders to engage in action research projects to address specific challenges in their schools, fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

Collaborative Culture

1. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs): Establish PLCs where teachers regularly meet to discuss student data, share instructional strategies, and develop common assessments.
2. Collaborative Planning Time: Allocate dedicated time for teachers to plan together, ensuring alignment in instructional approaches and assessments.

Data-Driven Instruction

1. Data Analysis Workshops: Provide training on analyzing student data, including formative assessments, standardized test results, and classroom assessments, to inform instruction.
2. Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) Training: Train teachers on creating and using SLOs to set measurable goals for student growth and guide instructional planning.

Implementation Timeline

Year 1:

1. OG Certification: All teachers will be certified in the OG Approach through a combination of coursework and year-long practicum. To be completed by the end of year one. Extensions will be provided with approval from the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees.
2. Establish PLC's for teacher collaboration and data analysis
3. Establish instructional coaching cycle
4. Responsive Classroom Training: All teachers will participate in training to create positive learning environments.

Year 2:

1. Writing Revolution Training: To be completed by the end of year two. Extensions will be provided with approval from the Executive Director and the Board of Trustees.
2. Deepen the focus on student-centered learning and personalized instruction.
3. Expand action research projects for leaders.
4. Refine data analysis workshops with more advanced techniques.

Year 3:

1. Evaluate the impact of the PD plan on student outcomes and teacher effectiveness.
2. Adjust focus areas based on feedback and outcomes from the first two years.

Evaluation and Feedback

1. Ongoing Monitoring: Collect feedback after each PD session and adjust future sessions based on participant needs.
2. Annual Review: Conduct an annual review of the PD plan's effectiveness, using teacher and student performance data as key indicators.
3. Surveys and Focus Groups: Use surveys and focus groups to gather in-depth feedback from teachers and leaders about the PD program's impact and areas for improvement.

Resources

1. Partnerships: Collaborate with educational experts and institutions (e.g., Stern Center Orton-Gillingham Institute) to provide high-quality training.
2. Online Learning: Utilize online platforms for professional development to offer flexibility and access to diverse resources.
3. Community Expertise: Leverage the expertise of seasoned teachers and leaders within charter school community to lead PD sessions and share best practices.

Sustainability

1. Leadership Buy-In: Ensure that school leaders are committed to the PD plan and actively participate in leadership development activities.
2. Teacher-Led Initiatives: Encourage teachers to take ownership of their professional growth by leading PLCs and other collaborative efforts.
3. Continuous Improvement: Regularly update the PD plan based on new research, feedback, and evolving school needs.

Exhibit Q
Student and Staff Handbook OUTLINES

Cornerstone Student Handbook

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1. Welcome to Cornerstone
2. Vision and Mission
3. Non-Discrimination Policy
4. Academic Policies
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    - Grading and Assessment
    - Homework Policy
5. Student Conduct
    - Code of Conduct
    - Dress Code
    - Bullying and Harassment Policy
6. Discipline Policy
    - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
    - Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Integration
    - Discipline Procedures
    - Due Process for Disciplinary Actions
7. Attendance and Tardiness
    - Attendance Expectations
    - Procedures for Absences
    - Tardiness Policy
8. Technology Use
    - Acceptable Use Policy
    - Cyberbullying
9. Extracurricular Activities
    - Eligibility Requirements
    - Code of Conduct for Activities
10. Health and Safety
    - Emergency Procedures
    - Health Services
11. Parent and Family Engagement
    - Communication Guidelines
    - Volunteering Opportunities
12. Rights and Responsibilities
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    - Parent/Guardian Rights
    - School Responsibilities
13. Annual Notifications
    - FERPA
    - Title IX

Cornerstone Staff Handbook
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1. Welcome to Cornerstone
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    - Anti-Discrimination and Harassment
    - Employee Classifications
    - Code of Conduct and Professionalism
4. Professional Responsibilities
    - Teaching and Instructional Standards
    - Planning and Preparation
    - Classroom Management
    - Student Engagement and Assessment
5. Staff Development and Evaluation
    - Professional Development
    - Teacher Evaluation Process
    - Growth Plans and Support
6. School Operations
    - Attendance and Leave Policies
    - Communication Protocols
    - Safety and Emergency Procedures
7. Technology Use and Data Privacy
    - Acceptable Use Policy
    - Confidentiality and Data Protection
8. Student Interaction Policies
    - Student Discipline and Support
    - Child Abuse Reporting
    - Parent-Teacher Communication
9. Health and Safety
    - Workplace Safety Guidelines
    - Health Services
    - Mental Health Resources
10. Community and Culture
    - Inclusivity and Diversity
    - Community Engagement and Outreach
    - Staff Collaboration
11. Compensation and Benefits
    - Salary Structure
    - Health and Retirement Benefits
    - Additional Benefits
12. Complaint Resolution and Grievance Procedures
    - Internal Complaint Process
    - External Resources
13. Legal and Ethical Guidelines
    - Confidentiality and FERPA
    - Compliance with Laws and Regulations