



**VALOR COLLEGIATE**  
*Academy*

**A proposed Metropolitan Nashville Public K-8 Charter School  
Application for Charter  
April 1, 2014**

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# VALOR COLLEGIATE *Academy*

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# PART I – ACADEMIC PLAN DESIGN

## SECTION I – MISSION AND GOALS

**Describe the mission and goals of the proposed school.**

### Vision

Valor Collegiate Academy (VCA) will be a key contributor in helping MNPS be the highest performing urban school District in the nation. VCA is committed to developing and running world-class schools within MNPS, and also to being a collaborative partner in thinking systemically about how to help create District-wide success for all scholars in Nashville.

### Mission

VCA prepares a diverse student population for success in college and to live inspired and purposeful lives. Our scholar's will graduate with academic skills, social-emotional skills, and positive character strengths that rival the outcomes of the best schools in the world.

### Executive Summary

Valor Collegiate Academy Southeast (VCASE) will be a K-8 college preparatory charter school located in South Nashville that will build on the strengths of three highly successful charter organizations: Summit Public Schools in Redwood City, CA, High Tech High in San Diego, CA and the Denver School of Science and Technology in Denver, CO. VCASE will be operated by the charter management organization Valor Collegiate Academies (VCA), which aims to be the first organization of college preparatory charter schools in Nashville that serves a truly diverse background of students.

**Academic Overview:** The academic focus of VCASE will be a rigorous, college preparatory program in which students of all previous preparation levels will find success. In addition, significant time and resources will be invested into programs that develop student's social-emotional skills, character strengths, and physical health. A few of the **key features** of the academic program:

1. **Diverse Community:** We believe in truly diverse schools where all students are challenged and supported to meet rigorous standards that will prepare them all for college and life in mind, body, and spirit. We believe that strong public schools must be more than simply demographically diverse in the hallways: they must also be diverse in the classrooms.
2. **Community Based Expeditions:** Students at VCASE will participate in in-depth elective courses that are run in collaboration with community organizations. (In the early years of the model student will take part in shorter Expedition sessions). Students have the opportunity to explore an area of passion, guided by trained teachers and experts from the field. In addition, students who are struggling academically use these Expedition periods to get focused remediation assistance in order to continue on a positive, college ready trajectory.
3. **World-class professional development for teachers:** VCASE faculty will have an enormous opportunity to grow as educators in the VCASE model, especially during Expeditions, as they have those six weeks to focus on developing as professionals. VCASE will coordinate personalized educator plans for each teacher, and will support each teacher to grow into a world-class educator during these nearly 620 hours of development time per year (120 before school starts, 250 during Expedition, and 250 in the afternoons of academic semesters), about 10x more time than a typical school spends developing great teachers.
4. **World-class use of data:** VCASE will be a leader in collecting, analyzing, presenting, and acting upon rich data with teachers, students, school leaders, and parents to optimize and accelerate learning for all stakeholders.

Capitalizing on the leadership team's deep ties and experiences in Silicon Valley, we will partner with various leading education technologies companies to provide world-class data to our stakeholders.

5. **Mentoring:** Every VCASE family will be paired with a school educator, who will stay with the family throughout their 9 years at the school. The mentor's goal for their 16 students in their mentor group will be to a) make a deep, personal connection with the student and family, b) to be the main point of contact for the student and family throughout their time at VCASE, and c) to ensure that the student stays on the college ready trajectory. The mentor meets with their mentor group for approximately 2 hours per week, and conducts Personalized Learning Plan meetings 2x year with each family to map out personal body, mind, and spirit goals for each student.

**Articulate clear guiding purposes and priorities and how the school will know it is achieving them.**

## **Organization Goals**

VCA will be governed by a non-profit Board of Directors who will ensure the long-term success of the organization. In order to best steward the vision and mission of the school, the VCA Board will have the responsibility of defining, communicating, monitoring, and ultimately ensuring the success of the following Key Goals.

The Key Goals are a subset of goals/metrics from the VCA Board of Directors Scorecard which guides the performance management of the organization. These Key Goals are aligned with the MNPS Academic Performance Framework:

Both the VCA Board and the leadership at VCASE have very high expectations for performance for the school. It will be the goal of VCASE to be the first MNPS school that is rated as **Excelling** on all measurements of the Academic Performance Framework, as noted below in Table 1:

**Table 1: Key Indicators and Measures for VCA (from the MNPS Academic Performance Framework)**

Table IV Key Indicators and Measures for VOA (from the NIPAS Academic Performance Framework)				
Valor Collegiate Academy				
School Name:	Valor Collegiate Academy			
Address:	4527 Nolensville Rd Nashville, TN 37211			
Website:	<a href="http://www.valorcollegiate.org">www.valorcollegiate.org</a>			
Phone:	415-515-1133			
Profile			Demographics	
Principal	Todd Dickson		African-American	20%
Opened	2014-15		Hispanic	20%
Current Grades	5		White	40%
Approved Grades	5 - 12		Asian	20%
Enrollment	140		FARM	50%
			SWD	12%
			EL	20%
			LEP	20%
Academic		Goal	Rating	
Achievement Increase	100%	Excelling		
TVAAS (NCE)	> 8	Excelling		
TCAP (PA)/PARCC*	75% P/A	Excelling		
Achievement Gap	10%	Satisfactory		
Teacher Survey	90%	Excelling		
ACT (21+)	75%	Excelling		
Overall APF		Excelling		
			Organization	
			Educational Program	MS
			Financial Management	MS
			Governance	MS
			Students/Employees	MS
			Environment	MS

			Obligations	MS	Excelling
Financial	Goal	Rating			
<b>Near Term:</b>			<b>Diversity</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Current Ratio	> 1.1	Excelling	Racial	Meets All	Excelling
Unrestricted Days Cash	60+ days	Excelling	Exceptional Ed	> 10%	Excelling
Enroll Variance	95%	Excelling	English Learners	> 30%	Excelling
Default	None	Excelling	Economically Disadvantaged	> 45%	Excelling
Sustainability	Goal	Rating			
Total Margin	+	Excelling	Other Data		
Debt/Asset Ratio	<.9	Excelling	Attendance Rate	98%	Excelling
Cash Flow	+	Excelling			
Debt Service Ratio	> 1.1	Excelling			
<b>Overall Financial</b>		<b>Excelling</b>			

\* Will make new prediction when PARCC data is more readily available

### Potential Barriers to Scholar Achievement

**Identify specific barriers and/or school needs that may impact student achievement. Explain how your school will help students overcome those specific barriers.**

The VCA Board, through research into similar charter school models, knowledge of the local Nashville context, and experience in the field of education, has identified the following potential barriers to scholar achievement:

#### **1. Family conditions outside of school**

- a. **Families living in poverty:** Large numbers of research studies have shown a direct link between a scholar's socio-economic status and their likelihood of finding academic success in school<sup>1</sup>. Poverty has a large, negative impact on academic outcomes. Much of the charter application explains how VCA intends to help scholars and families overcome the effects of poverty as they strive for a world-class education.
  - i. **Attendance and transportation:** VCA understands that transportation to and from school can be an inhibitor that affects attendance and learning for families living in poverty and for those attending schools of choice.<sup>2</sup> VCA will provide bussing service for all scholars who need it.
  - ii. **Hunger:** Many scholars, particularly low-income scholars, come to school hungry. Trying to learn effectively on an empty stomach is very difficult<sup>1</sup>: VCASE intends to ensure that all scholars are fed nutritious, well-balanced meals at breakfast and lunch in order that they are ready for optimal learning.
  - iii. **Physical and emotional safety:** Many scholars come to school feeling emotionally and physically unsafe due to their home and/or community environment. This charter application will detail many of the ways that VCASE will ensure that all VCASE community members feel physically and emotionally safe at all times.
- b. **Racial and socio-economic integration:** Creating a school that is socio-economically, racially, and culturally diverse is part of the VCASE mission. This is a challenging goal and must be done

<sup>1</sup> While hundreds, maybe thousands of research studies have been conducted, showing the link between various socio-economic factors and academic performance, in his book *Teaching with Poverty in Mind*, Eric Jensen explains that the stressors related to the myriad challenges of living in poverty, including hunger, lack of adult supervision, exposure to abuse and neglect, insecure housing, low levels of parental education and more build up in children, making it very difficult to prepare and learn. The American Psychological Association lists studies linking low-SES to low academic performance here: <http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/factsheet-education.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Lack of transportation is frequently listed as one of the major barriers to school attendance for families living in poverty in myriad studies, including those conducted by Attendance Works, located here: <http://www.attendanceworks.org/?s=transportation>.

exceptionally well in order to have the desired positive effects on all community members. Unfortunately, too many scholars today attend diverse schools that may *reinforce* the negative stereotypes that scholars and communities have about people that look different than them. It is VCASE's goal to demonstrate that thoughtfully designed, well-executed integrated schools can in fact breakdown stereotypes for scholars and communities. The charter application will detail the many structures and cultural pieces that will be in place to ensure a successful diverse school.

## 2. Pipeline of excellent leaders and teachers

- a. **Teachers:** Schools are only as good as their teachers. Finding great teachers is every school's biggest obstacle to success. VCASE is confident that it will execute a great talent attraction and development strategy to ensure that we attract, develop, and retain a world-class teaching faculty.
- b. **Leaders:** Even with great teachers, a great school needs to have clear, consistent, and inspiring leadership in order to ensure stable, long-term success for scholars. As research confirms, to learn well, students need access to high-quality instruction and a well-crafted curriculum. After that, they benefit most of all from the positive effects of strong school leadership.<sup>3</sup> VCASE is confident that its attraction, development, and retention plan for faculty will lead to a strong pipeline of internal leaders for the organization. In addition, we will utilize the large national network of high performing charter schools and support organizations to find and recruit top talent from schools around the country.

## Needs Assessment / Rationale for Grades Served

**Explain how the mission and vision of this school addresses any priorities set by the chartering authority**

### Priorities of MNPS district

MNPS has identified the following areas of need in their 2014 Request for Proposals from charter schools: 1) academic excellence, 2) commitment to Diversity, 3) location in areas of growth and overcrowding of current MNPS schools, and 4) ability to personalize the educational experience for students. VCASE will be an excellent match with all of these priorities, as well as multiple other priorities that were set last year.

### RFP Priorities

**1. Academic excellence** - VCASE will be modeled after highly successful academic models for K-4 and 5-8. If VCASE is able to meet its aggressive academic goals it will be amongst the top performing K-8 schools in the State. The unique structures of the school allow for both middle-income students and low-income students the ability to flourish and learn from each other, ultimately providing a higher quality academic experience for all.

**2. Commitment to diversity** – VCASE will aim to replicate the demographic population of our current 5-12 charter school, which is listed in Table 2:

**Table 2: Diverse Student Population at Valor Collegiate Academy**

Goals and Actuals		
	Recruitment Goal	Recruitment Actual
<b>Total Apps</b>	300	302

<sup>3</sup> Leithwood, K. A., & Riehl, C. (2003). *What we know about successful school leadership*. Philadelphia, PA: Laboratory for Student Success, Temple University.

<b>Male</b>	50%	53%
<b>Female</b>	50%	47%
<b>Black</b>	15 +- 5%	19%
<b>White</b>	40 +- 5%	38%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	20 +- 5%	20%
<b>Kurdish and Other</b>	15 +- 5%	15%
<b>Asian</b>	5 +- 2%	7%
<b>FRL</b>	50 +- 10%	51%

**Valor aims to be the first school in MNPS that is rated as Excelling on both the Academic and the Diversity measures of the Performance Framework.**

**3. Locate in SE Nashville** - VCASE hopes to locate on the Thompson Lane site of the Boys and Girls Club, which is in the Glencliff cluster. This cluster has shown significant growth and is overcrowded at the ES and MS level. In addition, the Overton, Antioch, Cane Ridge, and Hillsboro clusters have shown significant retention issues for students between ES and MS. Table 3 shows a summary of the potential students that would need seats in SE Nashville using MNPS data projections for growth, and a conservative approximation of retaining 10% of the students who currently leave the system between ES and MS with higher quality school options such as VCASE.

**Table 3: Projected Seats needed in SE Nashville in 2017-18\***

<b>5-8 Growth</b>	<b>13-14</b>	<b>17-18</b>	<b>Growth</b>
Cane Ridge	1493	2063	570
Glencliff	1397	1706	309
Hillsboro	1220	1400	180
Overton	2121	2797	676
Antioch	2046	2347	301
			<b>2036</b>

<b>K-4 Growth</b>	<b>13-14</b>	<b>17-18</b>	<b>Growth</b>
Cane Ridge	2958	4314	1356
Glencliff	3306	4176	870
Overton	3952	5043	1091
Antioch	3797	4494	697
Hillsboro	1560	1800	240
<b>Total</b>	<b>15573</b>	<b>19827</b>	<b>4254</b>

<b>Retention Issue</b>	<b>ES 2017-2018</b>	<b>MS 2017-2018</b>	<b>Student Attrition</b>
Antioch	4400	2245	2155
Cane Ridge	3550	1850	1700
Glencliff	4005	1750	2255
Hillsboro	3020	1220	1800



Overton	4765	2580	2185
		# students lost ES to MS	10095
		10% Retention	1009.5
<b>MNPS Total Need</b>			<b>7299.5</b>

Valor Growth Plan	2015	2016	2017
Valor MS1	260	370	480
Valor MS2	260	370	480
Valor ES1		220	320
<b>Valor Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>1280</b>

**\* Data taken from MNPS 5 Year Student Enrollment Projections 2012-13 for each Cluster**

The data clearly shows that there is great need in the Southern MNPS Clusters for additional ES and MS seats. Even with Valor's 1280 seats provided, the District will need to have a strategic plan for both new growth and additional retention in the MNPS system as quality continues to improve across the system (Note: with current approved charter applications much of this need is being addressed). VCASE believes that strategically partnering with high quality charter organizations to help manage this growth is both cost-effective and quality conscious and we are excited to partner with MNPS in SE Nashville.

**Priorities from 2013-14 RFP**

As detailed in the Academic Program, much of the academic program for Valor Collegiate will be based on the highly successful Summit Public Schools charter in Redwood City, CA, where our Founder and CEO was as a founding teacher and served as Executive Director for the past six years. Summit Prep has demonstrated impressive results in the following MNPS priority focus areas:

- 1) **Focus on diversity:** The VCASE vision for Nashville is to show that truly integrated public schools that have high academic outcomes for all scholars are possible.<sup>4</sup> Summit Prep serves a student body that is approximately 35% Caucasian and 65% scholars of color.<sup>5</sup> Approximately 45% of scholars come from low-income families. Despite the wide variety of backgrounds and preparation levels, all scholars are expected to meet rigorous college preparation standards. Over the past 10 years, Summit has successfully sent scholars from all different backgrounds on to success in college. The acceptance rate to four-year colleges of low-income scholars is nearly equal to that of their higher income partners (93% to 98%).
- 2) **Success with ELL learners:** Summit Public Schools traditionally has served an ELL population of about 15-30% each year (ELL and LEP). These scholars have thrived in the model, with all of them taking AP courses by their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade year, and 94% of them being accepted to a four year college or university after spending four years at Summit Prep. With eight years of preparation time in both a middle school and high school, we intend to improve upon these results in the VCASE model here in Nashville.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Kahlenberg, often referred to as "the intellectual father of the economic integration movement", in "*From All Walks of Life: New Hope for School Integration*", published in American Educator, discusses myriad research proving that total integration can work, notably, he explains, "...integration is not a zero-sum game: low-income students can benefit from economically integrated schools, and middle-class achievement does not decline so long as a strong core of middle class children is present".

<sup>5</sup> As cited in Kahlenberg (2012), "...one of the largest studies analyzing school integration and achievement used math exams required under the NCLB Act from 22,000 schools enrolling 18 million students. The study [conducted by David Harris for the Center for American Progress in 2006] found minority students have greater gains in racially integrated schools..."

- 3) **Proven success with limited resources:** Summit Prep has thrived in what many public education experts believe is the most difficult financial location in the country – the Bay Area in CA. In California, human capital costs are almost 40% higher and public education funding was almost 40% less than Tennessee, which has prepared the leadership of VCASE to run high quality schools on a very tight budget. These experiences have produced innovative staffing models, use of time, and mission based budgeting strategies that will be used as models for Valor Collegiate Academy in Nashville and possibly as scalable solutions for MNPS.
- 4) **Closing the achievement gap for scholars with disabilities:** Summit Public Schools generally serves an equal or higher Special Education population than neighboring schools (on average 12% versus 10% the past two years). Through innovative use of mainstreaming, resource classes, and school-wide support systems, the SPED population at Summit Prep thrives. As Thomas Hehir has found through extensive research, “...in general, most kids with disabilities do better in inclusive settings, particularly if they get the supports they need, [they do] significantly better”. (Hehir & Sanchez, 2012) The idea is to be inclusive to all, no matter what challenges a scholar may face. Nearly all Summit Prep SPED scholars (about 96%) take the mainstream college prep course load, and they have the same college acceptance rate (96%) as their fellow Summit graduates. We are excited to continue this tradition of exceptional SPED service in our school model at VCASE in Nashville, and aim to improve upon those outcomes with the addition of grades 5-8 to the model.

The mission and vision of VCASE states that it intends to provide a world-class college preparatory education to scholars of all backgrounds. This includes scholars with learning and language challenges. We also intend to be a model for how to produce outstanding results for a diverse group of learners on the state funds allowed for public education. As evidenced by the results of Summit Public Schools in CA, we are confident that schools are currently in existence that are able to address the priorities areas identified by MNPS, and VCASE intends to use the blueprint from these schools in order to ensure similar successes.

## **General Needs Assessment**

**Include a rationale for the grades served. Identify the targeted student population and the demographics of the community to be served.**

The following section describes District-wide need for elementary and middle schools that serve a diverse student body. VCASE specifically does not target one specific type of student in our needs analysis. Instead, we hope to address the need for high-performing, diverse schools that serve all types of students well. In addition, VCASE does not target one specific target community to serve. Instead, we hope to serve a slice of South Nashville that is representative of the richly diverse group of community members that reside there.

Nearly all education experts agree that the United States has fallen behind the rest of the industrialized world in providing world-class public education to its citizens. Forty years ago, graduating with a high school diploma in the United States meant a middle-class job for 75% of graduates; however, in less than 9 years, 2/3 of all jobs will require post-secondary education or training (Litow, 2012). By most international measures the U.S. is somewhere in the middle to lower range of the 40+ industrialized countries in the world in academic achievement for our K-12 public schools (Programme for International Student Assessment, 2009). Within the United States, the state of Tennessee is often ranked in the bottom 5 States in most academic measures, as documented in National studies including Annie E. Casey’s *Kids Count* Data Book and the *Nation’s Report Card*. In the most recent National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) results for math, reading, and writing, Tennessee was ranked 48 out of 51 states (including the District of Columbia). Specifically, every sub-category of scholar demographic ranked (i.e., White, African-American, Low-Income, etc.) ranked near the bottom of the national rankings. (See Table 4 for results for Math and Reading). It is important to note that even outcomes for scholars in Tennessee *who are not low-income* are among the lowest in the nation.

**Table 4: 2011 TN NAEP Results for Math and Reading (Ranking out of 51 States)**

	Grade 4 Math	Grade 4 Reading	Grade 8 Math	Grade 8 Reading	Sub-Group Avg.
All	47	42	46	42	44.25
White	51	50	50	50	50.25
Black	40	38	43	42	40.75
Hispanic	32	43	38	20	33.25
FRL	43	40	47	40	42.5
Non FRL	49	40	46	42	44.25
Average	43.67	42.17	45	39.33	42.54

Within Tennessee, there are 135 school Districts. Of these Districts, Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) ranks in the bottom 25% in performance in nearly all demographic categories. Table 4 shows results for MNPS in comparison to other Districts within Tennessee. VCASE will help create a nationally leading District that, within 10 years, has risen to become one of the leading urban Districts in the country (in the top 10%), as measured by scholar achievement on nationally normed assessments such as the NAEP. This will only be possible if we set our collective sights at the highest international levels of performance for all scholars within the MNPS District and then provide well designed and well executed school models for teachers and families.

**Table 5: Data for TN School District Results in Math and English (out of 135 Districts)**

	Davidson	Rank	Williamson	Rank
% Prof Adv. Math	39%	109	74%	1
% Prof Adv. ELA	42%	119	83%	2
% Adv. Math	13%	96	38%	1
% Adv. ELA	8%	84	29%	1

## **Local Needs Assessment**

Valor Collegiate intends to target scholars in the Cane Ridge, Overton, Antioch, Glencliff, and Hillsboro clusters. The ideal location for the school will be in the Glencliff cluster near Nolensville and Thompson Lane.

Listed below are three areas of need within MNPS we believe Valor Collegiate can prove to be an effective partner in addressing:

1. **Low academic achievement**
2. **Diverse Schools**
3. **Overcrowding**

### **Low Academic Achievement**

When compared nationally and internationally, all middle schools within MNPS (except the academic magnets) are achieving low academic results. Table 5 below shows data for MNPS middle schools from GreatSchools.org, a national resource that collects data on public schools around the country. Great Schools evaluates schools on their performance on all State assessments in all subgroups (TCAP for TN) and then gives a single value to each school on a scale of 1 to 10. While a single number certainly does not tell the complete story of a school, it is a useful tool for an overall academic comparison of schools, especially in different states. Listed are all of the middle schools in the Overton, Cane Ridge, Glencliff, and Hillsboro clusters of Nashville.

**Table 6: GreatSchools.com Rating for MNPS Middle Schools in SE Nashville**

School	Great Schools Rating
--------	----------------------

Oliver Middle School	6
Croft Middle School	6
McMurray Middle School	2
JT Moore Middle School	7
Wright Middle School	2
Marshall Middle School	2
Apollo Middle School	2
Antioch Middle School	2
<b>Average MS</b>	<b>3.6</b>
<b>MNPS Overall Rating</b>	<b>4</b>

**GreatSchools.com Rating for MNPS Elementary Schools in SE Nashville**

School	Great Schools Rating
Glenclyff Elementary	3
Glengarry Elementary	4
Glenview Elementary	3
Paragon Mills Elementary	3
Whitsitt Elementary	2
Tusculum Elementary	2
Crieve Hall Elementary	9
Granbery Elementary	9
Haywood Elementary	2
Norman Binkley Elementary	3
<b>Average SE ES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MNPS Overall Avg. ES Rating</b>	<b>3</b>

As shown, the average score for middle schools in these 4 clusters is 3.6 out of 10, and for elementary schools the average is 3 out of 10. Unfortunately, these clusters are among the higher rated clusters within the MNPS District. Table 7 below shows some comparison charter school organizations in the United States.

**Table 7: Average GreatSchools.com Ratings for top CMO Organizations**

School	Great Schools Rating
Summit Public Schools	9
DSST Schools	9
Noble Street	8
UnCommon Schools	9
Achievement First	8
YES Prep	9
<b>Average CMO Rating</b>	<b>8.3</b>

In general, the very best charter organizations greatly outperform typical urban school Districts like MNPS. Using a simple measure such as GreatSchools, it can be seen that a few great charter organizations have generally been able to produce over double the achievement results of typical urban public schools systems. VCASE intends to produce similar ratings in MNPS, and to help collaboratively solve the difficult questions and dilemmas around how to take the successes in the charter world to scale in an urban school system.

### **Diverse Schools**

The MNPS School Board passed a resolution last year to encourage diversity in their schools. VCASE applauds this important effort. VCASE intends to be a model for how to execute an integrated school model that provides a college preparation education for all scholars. Running excellent diverse schools is challenging because so many scholars and families come having very different needs to address in order to ensure their success. In less diverse settings a school can focus its efforts on fewer strategies, therefore increasing their likelihood of success. Educating a truly diverse population does not afford this type of simplification. Instead, diverse public schools must execute a wide range of strategies well. Unfortunately, most public schools are not able to do this effectively. In MNPS, there are approximately 28 middle and high schools with a truly diverse mixture of scholars (defined as having more than 40% low-income scholars, and at least 33% of more than two races). In these schools, the average GreatSchools.com ranking for low income versus non-low income scholars is 8 and 2, respectively. For White scholars versus minority scholars, the average ranking difference is very similar: 9 and 2. In general, diverse public schools do a good job with the White and middle income scholars, and do poorly with low-income and minority scholars. This type of large achievement gap is particularly worrisome for low-income scholars, as they are often achieving as poorly as their colleagues in less heterogeneous schools (i.e., 80%+ low-income scholars), but because the overall school's results are not as poor they are not considered as high a priority in most reform and improvement efforts within Districts.

VCASE intends to show that it is possible to have diverse schools that provide outstanding educations to all scholars. At Summit Public Schools and Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST), the two charter organizations that VCASE will be modeled after, the average GreatSchools.com ratings are compared to the most diverse MNPS schools in Table 8 below:

**Table 8: GreatSchools.com Ratings for MNPS Clusters and SPS/DSST Charters**

<b>Cluster</b>	<b>Low Income</b>	<b>Non Low Income</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Minority* (Avg.)</b>
Overton	3	7	6	2.5
Hillsboro	2	7	9	3.5
Glenclyff	3	5	5	2
<b>Cluster Average</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>2.67</b>
<b>Summit Public Schools</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DSST</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Charter Average</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7.5</b>

\* Minority = average of all minorities with subgroup data

As the data reveals, Summit and DSST have found ways to raise academic achievement of all scholars. **They have found effective strategies that allow them to educate low income and minority scholars at a level equal to most public schools' White and non-low-income scholars, as well as raising the academic levels of achievement for their non-low-income and White scholars.**

VCASE intends to achieve similar or better results, and is committed to partnering with MNPS to share effective strategies and lessons learned. It is our sincere desire to help MNPS become the national leader in creating world-class integrated schools.

## Grades Served and Enrollment Growth Plan

**Include a rationale for the grades served, grades upon opening and an enrollment growth plan**

The proposed enrollment growth plan for the school is detailed in Table 9 below:

**Table 9: Enrollment Growth Plan for VCASE**

Grade	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
5	145	145	145	145	145	145	145
6	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
7		115	115	115	115	115	115
8			105	105	105	105	105
<b>MS Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>485</b>
Grade	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
K		120	120	120	120	120	120
1		115	115	115	115	115	115
2			110	110	110	110	110
3				105	105	105	105
4					100	100	100
<b>ES Total</b>		<b>235</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>550</b>
<b>School Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>830</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>1035</b>	<b>1035</b>

VCASE is interested in serving a K-8 population with its second school for multiple reasons: 1) there is a need in SE Nashville for both middle and elementary schools, 2) there is strong demand from parents in SE Nashville for an additional VCA school, as evidenced by our 300 applications for our first school (enough to fill two middle schools), 3) VCASE has attracted top tier elementary school talent necessary for operating a high quality elementary school, and 4) our partner on our facility plan, the Boys and Girls Club, is a particularly strong partner for a K-8 school as their “sweet spot” of service is in 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade.

## SECTION II – SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

### **Model Development**

**Describe how the concept of your proposed school emerged and detail the process/steps taken to develop your plan from abstract idea to concrete proposal**

The core principles and design elements for the Valor Collegiate model are based on multiple successful charter school models: Summit Preparatory Charter High School (Redwood City CA), Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST): Stapleton (Denver CO), High Tech High Elementary (San Diego, CA), and Rowe Elementary (Chicago, IL). For over 10 years, VCA CEO and Founder Todd Dickson worked as a teacher, mentor, school leader, and CMO level leader for Summit Public Schools. During that time, he learned in depth all of the strengths and areas of opportunity of the highly successful Summit Prep model, which is best known for its extraordinary success at getting a diverse population of scholars prepared for success in college and life.

Sarah Giblin, Valor Director of Curriculum and Instruction, has been a Founding teacher and school leader in the high performing K-8 Rowe Elementary in Chicago for the past six years. Ms. Giblin brings strong expertise in school design, curriculum and instruction, and school leadership at the Elementary and Middle school level and will be the school leader for the K-8 school model proposed in this application.

**Detail who participated on the design team and explain the specific roles, responsibilities and contributions of each design team member**

In July 2012, Mr. Dickson began a Senior Fellowship with the Tennessee Charter School Incubator. The fellowship allowed Mr. Dickson to visit over 20 high performing schools around the country in order to further develop the VCA model. Over the course of the fellowship, a VCA Design Team was formed in order to get expert input on the academic plan. The Design Team spent hundreds of hours from Aug 2012 until April 2014 developing the academic plan for the VCA model. Listed in Table 10 below are the names of the members of the Design Team as well as the areas of the design in which they most contributed.

**Table 10: Design Team for Valor Collegiate Academy**

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Organization</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Main area of contribution</u></b>
Todd Dickson	Valor Collegiate Academies	CEO	Integrated high schools
Alex Hernandez	Charter School Growth Fund	Partner – Next Generation Schools	Achievement gap, blended learning
Adam Carter	Summit Public Schools	Chief Academic Officer	ELA, competency based learning
Bill Kurtz	DSST	CEO	Charter leadership, school culture
Jeff Greenfield / Vince Durnan	USN	MS and HS Principals	MS/HS rigor, Nashville context
Melissa Zaikos	Intrinsic Schools (Chicago)	CEO	Next generation school design
Jason Grissom	Peabody, Vanderbilt	Professor	School leadership
Linda Darling Hammond	Stanford University	Professor	Common Core assessment
Claude Goldenburg	Stanford University	Professor	English Language learning
Kieran McMillen	Summit Public Schools	Director of Math Instruction	Competency Based Math, Next generation learning
Mary Catherine Bradshaw	LEAD	Dean of Instruction	IB, Common Core, TN TEAM, Nashville context
Anthony Kim	Education Elements	CEO	Blended learning

Rachel Lotan	Stanford University	Director of Teacher Education Program	Heterogeneous classrooms
Seneca Rosenberg	PhD Michigan		Professional Development, ELL
Rebecca Lieberman	Tennessee Charter School Incubator	Director of Talent	Talent Recruitment
Justin Testerman	Tennessee Charter School Incubator	COO	General model design
Yetta Lewis	Gestalt Memphis	CAO	Blended learning model
Bob Hannon	Valor Board	Lawyer, BABC	Legal structure
Dave Goetz	Valor Board	Former Finance Dir for Bredezen	Finances, organization structure
Katherine Cigarran	Valor Board	Parent	Parent engagement
Sylvia Flowers	Valor Board	Director of Talent, TN Department of Education	Organizational structure, Talent pipeline development
Keith Meacham	Valor Board	Parent / Fund For Public Schools NYC / Ex-ED Harlem Day School	Community Engagement
Malika Anderson	Valor Board	Chief Portfolio Officer Achievement School District	Organizational culture, assessment design



## SECTION III – ACADEMIC FOCUS AND PLAN

### Academic Program – Key Design Elements and Curriculum

Describe the academic focus of the school. Tennessee law describes an academic focus as “a distinctive, thematic program such as math, science, arts, general academics, or an instructional program such as Montessori or Paideia.” T.C.A. § 49-13-104.

Outline the school’s academic plan, defined by the law as “a platform that supports the academic focus of the charter school and will include instructional goals and methods for the school, which, at a minimum, shall include teaching and classroom instruction methods, materials and curriculum that will be used to provide students with knowledge, proficiency and skills needed to reach the goals of the school.” T.C.A. § 49-13-104. In your outline,

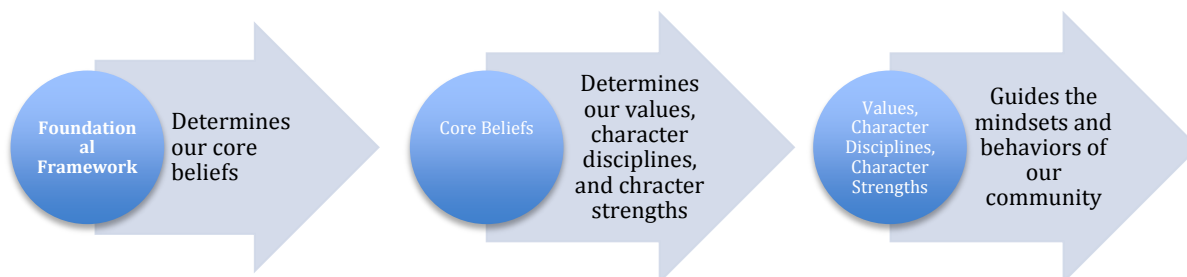
- Articulate how the academic focus supports the school’s mission.
- Describe research supporting the academic plan.
- Detail the proposed instructional goals and methods.
- List specific requirements for implementing the particular approach.
- Explain why the strategies are appropriate for the targeted student population.
- Explain how the program aligns with CC Standards and TN Performance Indicators.
- Describe the proposed class size and structure for the plan.

#### Overview

The Academic Program will be detailed in the following order:

1. **Outcomes:** the Outcomes for Valor scholars will be the central guiding framework for the academic program and is, therefore, described first through the over-arching High School Readiness (HSR) framework.
2. **Educational Philosophy:** the Educational Philosophy is detailed next, as it comprises the necessary beliefs, values, and character strengths that we believe the VCA community will need to develop and embody in order to meet the desired Outcomes for our scholars.
  - a. **Foundational Framework:** The Valor Foundational Framework provides a balanced set of principles to guide the mindsets and behaviors of educators as leaders, educators as teachers, students as leaders, and students as learners—in order to optimize their ability to fulfill the purpose of education.
  - b. **Core Beliefs:** the underlying beliefs of the VCA community
  - c. **Core Values, Character Disciplines, and Character Strengths:** guides the mindsets and behaviors of our community.

Figure 1: Core Beliefs, Values, and Character Strengths



### **VCA Framework of Desired Outcomes**

*Understanding by Design* asserts that quality instruction always “begins with the end in mind” (McTighe & Wiggins, 2005). Similarly, a quality academic design must start with the desired outcomes for its scholars. The VCA Design Team spent considerable hours researching and debating what VCA graduates should be able to do and know upon graduation. The VCA High School Readiness Framework (HSR) was developed by drawing upon research from many top scholars and organizations, visits to many of the highest performing schools in the nation, personal experience in the field, and feedback from parents, scholars, and teachers here in Nashville. We used Valor’s Collegiate Academy’s College and Career Ready Outcomes (CCR) framework (detailed in Valor’s initial charter submitted in April 2013) to backwards plan and guide what outcomes scholars must achieve by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade to be high school ready and by the end of 4<sup>th</sup> grade to be middle school ready.

**Table 11: High School Readiness Framework**

High School Readiness Framework		
	Outcomes	Descriptors
<b>I. Knowledge</b>	Content knowledge in three domains	Content knowledge in three domains
<b>A. Core Subject areas</b>	Content Outcomes Measured by:  Common Core Exams (PARCC)  TN End of Course Exams (social studies and science)  NWEA Measures of Academic Progress for Primary Grades (MPG) and NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)  ACT Aspire (3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Core academic content as defined by TN State Standards, Common Core Standards, ACT Aspire standards  Core subjects: English (Reading, Writing, Word Study) Math Science Social Studies foreign language  Basics within each: Key terms and terminology Factual information Linking ideas organizing concepts
<b>B. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Knowledge: global, civic, environmental, financial, health, and media literacy</b>	Content Outcomes Measured by:  VCA Rubric based on SPARK Fitness Standards  VCA Rubric and Badge System	Themes critical to effective participation in local, national, and global society that cross subject area and career areas  Understand the following issues: global civic environmental

		financial health media
<b>II. Skills</b> Academic and 21st Century skills needed for success, best learned in the context of academic, thematic, or career technical disciplines and through application		
<b>A. Academic skills in core disciplines</b>		
Core academic skills as defined by the Common Core and TN State academic standards, enabling scholars to pursue be prepared for rigorous high school course work, therefore allowing them to pursue the full range of postsecondary education and career opportunities and providing the foundation for further learning and skill development	Content Outcomes Measured by: Common Core Exams (PARCC) TN State Exams NWEA Measures of Academic Progress for Primary Grades (MPG) and NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) ACT Aspire (3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> grade)	<u><b>English</b></u> Reading comprehension, including using text based evidence  <u><b>Early Literacy Skills</b></u>  Phonemic Awareness – the ability to hear , identify, and manipulate phonemes (sounds) through rhyming, segmenting, and blending  Phonics – the ability to link sounds (phonemes) to spelling patterns (graphemes)  Decoding  Handwriting and Writing ability  Mathematics  Science  History (Government, Economics, Geography)  Visual art, dance, music, drama
<b>B. 21st Century Skills:</b> Skills identified as essential in the knowledge economy that characterizes work in the 21st Century		
<b>1. Metacognition and knowing how to learn</b>	To be integrated into academic courses, Connections curriculum, and VCA Badge system	Includes following concepts: Understanding and applying strategies for learning Applying and adapting new knowledge and skills in both familiar and changing situations, using learning theory Involves self-awareness, the ability to dedicate time to learning, autonomy, discipline, perseverance, and information management in the learning process; the ability to concentrate for extended and short periods of time; the ability to reflect critically on the object and purpose of learning; the ability to communicate as part of the learning process
<b>2. Creativity and Innovation</b>	To be integrated into academic courses, Connections curriculum, and VCA Badge system	Use a wide range of idea creation techniques Creation of new and worthwhile ideas

		<p>(both incremental and radical concepts)</p> <p>Elaboration, refinement, analysis, and evaluation of one's own ideas to improve and maximize creative efforts</p> <p>Demonstration of originality and inventiveness in work; communication of new ideas to others; integration of knowledge across disciplines</p>
<b>3. Critical thinking and problem solving</b>	To be integrated into academic courses, Connections curriculum, and VCA Badge system	<p>High level thinking skills exercised in the course of authentic knowledge work</p> <p>problem formulation</p> <p>sound reasoning and analytical thinking; use of knowledge, facts, and data to solve school-based problems</p> <p>making judgments and decisions; solving unfamiliar problems</p>
<b>4. Systems Thinking</b>	To be integrated into academic courses, Connections curriculum, and VCA Badge system	<p>Understanding complex interrelationships</p> <p>Analysis of how parts of a whole interact to produce overall outcomes in complex systems</p> <p>Understanding roles within teams, work units, departments, organizations, inter-organizational systems, and the larger environment</p> <p>Identifying how key organizational systems affect organizational performance and the quality of products and services</p> <p>Understanding the global context of industries and careers</p>
<b>5. Communication: listening, speaking, writing, nonverbal</b>	To be integrated into academic courses, Connections curriculum, and VCA Badge system	<p>Using active listening skills to obtain and clarify information</p> <p>Articulating thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively</p> <p>public speaking skills</p> <p>Written communications, including memos, letters, and complex technical reports that are clear and effective</p>
<b>6. Collaboration and working with diversity</b>	To be integrated into academic courses, Connections curriculum, and VCA Badge system	<p>Building collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers</p> <p>Ability to work with diverse teams, negotiate and manage conflicts, and learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, races, ages, gender, lifestyles, and viewpoints</p>
<b>7. Information management and digital media applications</b>	To be integrated into academic courses, Connections curriculum, and VCA Badge system	<p>Accessing and evaluating information efficiently (time) and effectively (sources)</p> <p>Evaluating information critically and</p>

		<p>competently Using information accurately and creatively for the issue or problem at hand Managing the flow of information from a wide variety of sources Applying a fundamental understanding of the ethical/legal issues surrounding the access of use of information Using technology as a tool to research, organize, evaluate, and communicate information</p>
<b>III. Emotional and Physical Health:</b> Health encompasses both physical and emotional health, and also defines the productive behaviors and dispositions that are indicators of a healthy lifestyle		
<b>A. Valor Foundational Framework:</b> provides a balanced set of principles to guide the mindsets and behaviors of educators as leaders, educators as teachers, students as leaders, and students as learners—in order to optimize their ability to fulfill the purpose of education. The Valor Foundational Framework provides a rigor and intentionality to the development of school culture and community.	<p>Informed by the CASEL competencies, Six Seconds SEI Assessment Standards, PERMA model of well-being theory, Illinois Learning Standards for Social/Emotional Learning Second Step Early Learning - 8</p>	<p><b>Foundational Character Disciplines</b></p> <p>Mastery in each foundational dimension is achieved via the Foundational Character Disciplines. All of the activities of the school are aimed at cultivating the following in every member: Noble Purpose Sharp Minds Open Hearts Aligned Actions Strong Relationships</p>
<p><b>B. Character Strengths:</b></p> <p>For each Foundational Character Discipline, there are character strengths and behaviors that we believe support the development of that discipline. While all character strengths are valued and nurtured, there are 15 specific strengths that are intentionally developed in all members of the school community through practice and learning.</p>	<p>To be integrated into academic courses, Connections curriculum, and VCA Badge system</p>	<p>Noble Purpose: [Transcendence and Temperance] <b>Purpose</b>, Hope, <b>Gratitude</b>, <b>Joy</b>, Humor, Humility, Appreciation of Beauty (7) Sharp Minds: [Wisdom and Temperance] <b>Curiosity</b>, Love of Learning, Judgment, <b>Ingenuity</b>, <b>Perspective</b>, Self-Control, Prudence (4) Open Hearts: [Love and Courage] <b>Kindness</b>, <b>Valor</b>, <b>Forgiveness</b> (4) Aligned Actions: [Courage and Justice] <b>Grit</b>, <b>Integrity</b>, <b>Citizenship</b>, Leadership (4) Strong Relationships: [Wisdom and Justice and Transcendence] <b>Social Intelligence</b>, <b>Fairness</b>, Playfulness, <b>Love</b></p>
<p><b>C. Citizenship Questions:</b></p> <p>Each Foundational Character Discipline can be thought of as the pursuit of an answer to a Citizenship Question</p>	<p>To be integrated into academic courses, Connections curriculum, and VCA Badge system</p>	<p>Noble Purpose - [Conviction] Why do I want to be of service? Open Hearts - [Compassion] What are world's needs? Sharp Minds - [Clarity] Which of these needs am I best suited to meet? Aligned Actions - [Competence] How</p>

		can I best contribute? Strong Relationships - [Community] Who do I need to build community with in order to succeed?
<b>D. Eating habits</b>	Internally developed VCA Standards	Ability to plan and self-manage a healthy diet
<b>E. Physical fitness</b>	SPARK Fitness standards	Ability to plan and self-manage a healthy fitness routine
<b>F. Expeditions</b>	Content outcomes measured by standards related to the content area; Connections curriculum and VCA Badge system	ability to develop skill in, and pursue a personal passion

The VCA HSR will be the heart of the academic program and overall experience at VCA. **All courses, non-academic time, community building, and culture decisions will be aligned with the goal of all scholars leaving 8<sup>th</sup> grade having achieved mastery of the High School Readiness Framework, which include and exceed the Common Core and TN State Standards.**

## **Educational Philosophy**

In order to achieve our goal of having all scholars achieve mastery of the outcomes on the HSR, the following **Core Beliefs** will be the driving force of the VCA community:

## **Valor Foundational Framework**

We believe that the foundational purpose of Valor is to help every member of the Valor community to:

- Discover who they are, what their purpose and gifts are, and how to bring those gifts to the world.
- Learn to live from a place of integration and balance.
- Gain the competencies needed to participate in and contribute to society.
- Gain the mindsets necessary to develop positive, resilient, growth-oriented relationships to others and the world.
- Flourish.

The Valor Foundational Framework provides a balanced set of principles to guide the mindsets and behaviors of educators as leaders, educators as teachers, students as leaders, and students as learners—in order to optimize their ability to fulfill the purpose of education. The Valor Foundational Framework provides a rigor and intentionality to the development of school culture and community.

## **Foundational Dimensions**

The Foundational Framework as a system is built on the most fundamental dimensions of the natural world. These dimensions are the basic building blocks of our everyday experience and can be defined as the mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, and relational dimensions. At Valor, we see each of these dimensions as fundamental and irreducible. We believe that true value and effectiveness depends on balanced and integrated mastery in each of these dimensions.

- spiritual
- mental
- emotional
- physical
- relational

## **Foundational Values**

Valor's foundational values are aligned with the foundational dimensions and represent the balanced and integrated aspirations of the school:

- Purpose
- Wisdom

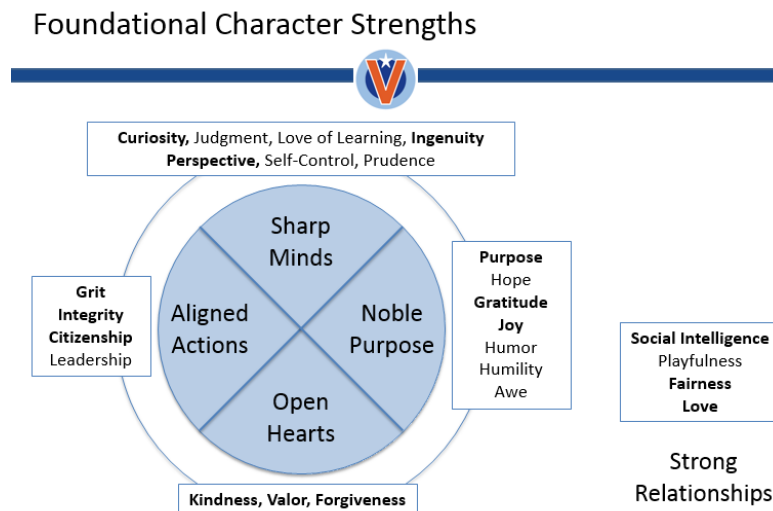
- Kindness
- Excellence
- Diversity

### Character Strengths

For each Foundational Character Discipline, there are character strengths and behaviors that we believe support the development of that discipline. While all character strengths are valued and nurtured, there are 15 specific strengths that are intentionally developed in all members of the school community through practice and learning.

- (7) Noble Purpose: [Transcendence and Temperance] Purpose, Hope, Gratitude, Joy, Humor, Humility, Appreciation of Beauty
- (7) Sharp Minds: [Wisdom and Temperance] Curiosity, Love of Learning, Judgment, Ingenuity, Perspective, Self-Control, Prudence
- (4) Open Hearts: [Love and Courage] Kindness, Valor, Forgiveness
- (4) Aligned Actions: [Courage and Justice] Grit, Integrity, Citizenship, Leadership
- (4) Strong Relationships: [Wisdom and Justice and Transcendence] Social Intelligence, Fairness, Playfulness, Love

**Figure 2: Valor Foundational Framework**



### Social and Emotional Intelligence and Learning

The Valor Foundational Framework is philosophically aligned with the SEL/SEI movements in education that aim to develop the needed emotional and social competencies in students alongside traditional academic competencies. The five CASEL competencies align with the Valor Foundational Character Disciplines in the following manner:

- Noble Purpose - Self-Awareness (Recognizing one's emotions and values as well as one's strengths and limitations)
- Sharp Minds - Responsible Decision Making (Making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior)
- Open Hearts - Self-Management (Managing emotions to achieve one's goals)
- Aligned Actions - Self-Management (Managing behaviors to achieve one's goals)
- Strong Relationships - Social Awareness (Showing understanding and empathy for others) + Relationship
- Skills (Forming positive relationships, working in teams, dealing with conflict)



The Six Seconds model of Emotional Intelligence aligns with the Valor Foundational Character Disciplines in the following manner:

- Noble Purpose - Know Yourself
- Sharp Minds - Choose Yourself
- Open Hearts - Choose Yourself
- Aligned Actions - Give Yourself
- Strong Relationships - Give Yourself

Citizenship Questions - The C's

Each Foundational Character Discipline can be thought of as the pursuit of an answer to a Citizenship Question:

- Noble Purpose - [Conviction] Why do I want to be of service?
- Open Hearts - [Compassion] What are world's needs?
- Sharp Minds - [Clarity] Which of these needs am I best suited to meet?
- Aligned Actions - [Competence] How can I best contribute?
- Strong Relationships - [Community] Who do I need to build community with in order to succeed?

The Foundational Beliefs:

- We believe lasting greatness is only achieved by developing our community and ourselves in a balanced and integrated way across all the foundational dimensions of humanity.
- We believe that everyone is a student and a teacher.
- We believe we should only seek to teach what we embody in our own lives.
- We believe that our mindsets determine the quality and substance of our experience.
- We believe that "culture happens" and that positive culture happens intentionally.

## **Core Beliefs**

**We believe in consistent, daily excellence:** A common term that will be used throughout the VCA culture will be "world-class". It is the mission of VCA to produce scholars that are among the best in the world. We believe that the United States has allowed itself, over time, to lower its expected outcomes for its scholars to an unacceptably low level. VCA will aim to be a leader in the United States in setting the bar of expectations for excellence at the International level. Therefore, when the VCA community talks about excellence and greatness, we will set our goals high: we believe that with great expectations, great systems, great leaders, great teachers, and hard work, we can achieve at the highest levels. We believe that MNPS has an opportunity to become one of the highest achieving diverse school Districts in the world and VCA will be a leader in pursuing that goal. Striving for excellence will be a daily expectation for all members of the VCA community. In addition, we believe that excellence is obtained through consistent daily practice, and we will all commit to learning to excel at being consistently great each day.

**We believe in the power of the individual and the community:** A common theme throughout the VCA community experience will be how to develop autonomous, self-directed, high-achieving individuals while simultaneously developing scholars who are deeply committed to being part of a community and feel connected and passionate about helping to improve the various communities they are part of. We reject the idea that one (individual) needs to be developed at the expense of the other (community member). Instead, we will work to develop both the individual and the community in the academic programs and culture of the school. Scholars will therefore have multiple opportunities throughout their experience to grow as autonomous individuals and will also have many opportunities to be part of groups and communities. We believe that the strongest communities are filled with confident, independent individuals who commit to their communities for common worthy causes and we intend to create that type of community at VCA.

**We believe growth happens best from deep, authentic relationships:** Research consistently shows that one of the highest predictors of K-12 completion for middle and high school scholars is having at least one authentic relationship with an adult at school and feeling connected to the school. (Demaray, Lazarus, & Sulkowski, 2012) At VCA, it will be a key part of the school culture and academic program that teachers build deep, authentic relationships with their scholars. In order to be able to expertly coach scholars, teachers must know them well –



what makes them tick, their learning profile, their “story” outside of the classroom. Equally important is that scholars know their teachers well as human beings beyond the classroom. In addition, authentic relationships between scholars will be a focus of the program. Middle and high school scholars do not always naturally build healthy, authentic relationships with their peers: VCA recognizes this and will make it an explicit goal of the academic program to coach scholars in how to build healthy, strong peer relationships. When these types of relationships are carefully and professionally developed, trust is built within a culture, and authentic trust creates an emotionally safe environment where scholars are willing to take the risks necessary to accelerate their learning.<sup>6</sup> It will be a key goal of the VCA community to constantly provide opportunities for every scholar to have multiple authentic relationships with adults and peers in the VCA community.

**We believe growth happens best when a community is both joyful and disciplined:** It is the belief of the VCA community that learning and growth should be a challenging but joyful process. VCA’s model promotes joyful learning and aims to avoid what Judy Willis describes, “...when we scrub joy and comfort from the classroom, we distance our students from effective information processing and long-term memory storage. Instead of taking pleasure from learning, students become bored, anxious, and anything but engaged. They ultimately learn to feel bad about school and lose the joy they once felt.” (Ellis, 2007) VCA will bring joy to our work as educators, and we will strive to be models of joyful learning for our scholars.

We will also hold this belief closely as we develop academic programs, curriculum, and culture systems. We also believe that in order to provide an optimal learning environment for all community members, those environments should be highly structured. Highly structured learning environments allow for a sense of urgency and use of learning time that is critical for ensuring that all scholars are able to achieve at high levels. We also believe that as scholars grow older and have internalized many of the disciplined character strengths that a highly structured environment promotes, the need for the highly structured environment lessens, and it in fact begins to be a hindrance towards the development of autonomous, self-directed scholars. Therefore, the VCA model will be a “gradual release” model, with the early grades having a highly structured and disciplined learning environment, and the older grades having a more and more unstructured learning environment that demands that each scholar utilizes their own internal discipline in order to be successful. Throughout this gradual release process, the constant will be the joy of learning that community members strive for and value.

**We believe scholars and communities excel when they are innovative and creative:** Research and opinion from many top educators, economists, and talent recruiters all reach a strikingly similar conclusion regarding what high school graduates need upon graduation in order to compete in today’s global economy: to be innovative and creative critical thinkers. (Batey, 2011) VCA graduates will be well prepared to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century colleges and job marketplace because the VCA model will develop strong foundational skills and content knowledge while also giving scholars many opportunities to apply creative and innovative problem solving to real world problems. The unique structure of the VCA school year and gradual release model allows for both time and specific opportunities for scholars to develop strong foundational academic strengths AND also to apply these strengths in authentic, real world situations.

**We believe that excellence and life-long learning occur best with a strong Growth Mindset:** Growth mindset is a simple idea discovered by world-renowned Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck in decades of research on achievement and success.<sup>7</sup> With a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like their intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They also believe that talent alone creates success – without much effort. In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work – brains and talent are just the starting point. Virtually all people who have demonstrated excellence in any area of life have had these qualities. It is a core belief in the VCA community that great ability is developed over time, through hard work, great feedback, and through experiencing and learning from failure. The VCA program will also specifically teach the core principles of Dweck’s growth mindset theory, described fully in her book, *Mindset: The New*

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<sup>6</sup> In their research study, *Friendships, Peer Acceptance, and Group Membership: Relations to Academic Achievement*, Kathryn R. Wentzel and Kathryn Caldwell, found a link between group membership and other aspects of peer relationships and academic achievement of students they followed from 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1132301>

<sup>7</sup> Here, Carol Dweck’s Mindset philosophy is summarized: <http://chronicle.com/article/Carol-Dwecks-Attitude/65405/>

*Psychology of Success* (2006), to scholars and families so that families understand and embrace the value of a growth mindset.

**We believe great schools enroll Families, not just scholars:** It is a VCA belief that we enroll families into our program, not simply scholars. Research shows that even the most effective schools in the world have a smaller effect on scholars' academic success than their family.<sup>8</sup> In order to help ensure our mission, we understand and look forward to teaming with each unique family and finding ways to help succeed in school and outside of school. We will rely on the expertise gained from the Design Team's research and experience in "wrap-around services" – services that respond to each families' needs and appropriately coach them in key areas that will help them in best supporting their scholar's, and their families', success. VCA will also create a culture at school where scholars and faculty will often refer to their school as "home". Great academic outcomes can only be accomplished by groups of scholars who feel safe and trusted and the VCA culture will be one that feels like a healthy family dynamic: lots of love and emotional support, but also very clear and high expectations.

**We believe Literacy is Key:** Research shows that possibly no other skill is as important to academic success as literacy. In fact, besides socio-economic factors, nothing predicts college success better than literacy scores. In 2005, only 51% of ACT-tested high school graduates were ready for college-level reading, setting too many kids up for failure in college.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, VCA will operate under the belief that coaching all scholars to read and write is the highest priority academic mission of the school. All academic roads are paved with excellent literacy skills. The VCA community will be one where everyone reads a lot and where reading growth is carefully measured, deeply valued and celebrated. Reading will be cool, and all community members will take pride and take part in regular academic and enjoyment reading. This basic cultural value will extend beyond scholars to teachers, leaders, and families. Everyone will value and celebrate literacy at VCA.

**We believe that scholars are best prepared for life in diverse schools:** The ability to deeply understand multiple perspectives is a hallmark of being able to think critically and to be prepared for college and life success. In order to truly understand and value multiple perspectives, scholars must be in diverse academic environments. In fact, "Many families now believe, as do virtually all leading colleges and universities, that racial, ethnic, and income diversity enriches the classroom" (Kahlenberg, 2012). Unfortunately, many schools may appear to be diverse from their demographic data, but when examined more closely it becomes evident that they do not have much academic diversity, meaning that scholars of different socio-economic and racial backgrounds are not interacting meaningfully in rigorous academic courses. A Core Value of VCA will be to create academic and non-academic experiences for scholars to interact in positive, meaningful ways with scholars who bring a wealth of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences to VCA. Valuing diversity will be the fabric of the VCA experience, woven into everything that we do as a school. From faculty hiring, scholar recruitment, family orientation, to the scholar experience, VCA will deeply value the advantages that having a diverse community brings. Beyond the value given to the VCA families and faculty, VCA also believes the long-term value of creating high performing diverse schools within Nashville is significant. Highly successful integrated schools are a civil rights and economic imperative for helping to make Nashville a world-class city. VCA will deeply value being a leader in Nashville in raising awareness and focusing support towards great public, integrated schools.

## **Pedagogy and Instructional Methods**

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<sup>8</sup> Numerous studies have found links between parental involvement and engagement and student academic success are strong, in fact, this link has now been deemed "undisputed". An example of these critical links includes the U.S. Dept. of Ed's 1995 report, *Strong Families, Strong Schools*, listed, "Three factors over which parents exercise authority- student absenteeism, variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching - explain nearly 90 percent of the difference in eighth-grade mathematics test scores across 37 states and the District account Columbia on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Thus, controllable home factors account for almost all the differences in average student achievement across states (Barton & Coley 1992). Additional researchers, including Kellaghan, Sloane, Alvarez, and Bloom (2003), and Beth Simon (1999) have also well-documented and synthesized research on this topic.

<sup>9</sup> ACT, Inc. (2006). *Reading Between the Lines: What the ACT reveals about college readiness in reading*. Iowa City, IA: ACT, Inc.

### Four Stages of Gradual Release

In order to outline the various pedagogical methods to be used at VCA it is important to understand the gradual release “Stages” of the nine-year program. Table 12 has a brief overview of the Stages. In general, the four Stages of gradual release are a research-based approach to providing the correct type of pedagogy and instructional methods to scholars as they grow through adolescence. Using research on child and adolescent development, each Stage is designed to best meet the needs of the scholars at each age level. In the earlier years, theory and practice tends to be more teacher centered and structured. As scholars mature through the program the theory and practices tend to become more scholar centered and less structured. The gradual release also is designed to ensure scholars are best prepared for the rigors of high school and college and career by thoughtfully building self-disciplined, self-directed, and self-confident learners over a nine-year period.

**Table 12: Valor Collegiate Academies Four Stages Overview**

	Elementary School		Middle School	
	Stage 1:	Stage 2:	Stage 3:	Stage 4:
	Foundations 1	Middle School Prep	Foundations 2	High School Prep
Grades	K – 2	3 - 4	5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Pedagogical Focus</b>				
	Teacher centered	Teacher centered	Teacher Centered	Teacher Centered
	Student centered	Student centered	Student Centered	Student Centered
	Co-teaching*	Co-teaching	Team Teaching	Team Teaching
	Self-directed	Self-directed	Self-Directed	Self-Directed
	Individual exploration	Individual exploration	Competency Based (Unit)	Competency Based (Unit)
			Project Based	Project Based
<b>Typical Instruction</b>				
	Small group and One-on-One Instruction (30%)	<b>Workshop (40%)</b>	<b>Direct Instruction (60%)</b>	<b>Direct Instruction (40%)</b>
	<b>Rotational Model &amp; Independent Exploration (30%)</b>	Small group and One-on-One Instruction (20%)	Technology enhanced personalization (20%)	Technology enhanced personalization (30%)
	<b>Inquiry and Problem Based Learning (30%)</b>	<b>Inquiry and Problem Based Learning (40%)</b>	Group-work (20%)	Group-work (30%)
	Direct Instruction (10%)			
<b>BOLD = dominant mode of instruction</b>				
*In Stage 1, all methods of typical instruction will be executed through the co-teaching pedagogical focus.				

Each type of instructional practice will be explained in more detail below. In general the main focus of the instructional practices move from teacher centered direct instruction towards more scholar centered instruction, as scholars get older. It is important to note that while a type of instructional practice is more dominant during a certain Stage, each of the instructional practices may be used during each Stage in some capacity.

### Pedagogy and Instructional Methods – Basics Overview

In order for our scholars to achieve the high standards outlined in the High School Readiness Framework (HSR) and guided by our Core Values and Character Strengths, VCA will implement a mixture of research-based pedagogical choices and instructional methods. Each category is explained briefly below.

### **Elementary School Typical Instructional Methods**

At the elementary level, each stage will have dominant instructional methods that reflect developmental needs of scholars, proven research about the effectiveness of instructional methods, and match the range of instructional levels we can expect from scholars. In general, instruction will be highly differentiated to match both scholars who need remediation and acceleration. Additionally, our co-teaching model in K – 2 offers maximum flexibility and differentiation options to ensure that all academic gaps are closed before scholars move to third grade.

### **Stage 1**

#### **Collaborative Teaching (100%)**

In grades K – 2, VCA will employ a two-teacher per classroom collaborative teaching model. Through Valor’s partnership with Vanderbilt, apprentice teachers will serve as the second teacher in K – 2 classrooms. Friend and Cook explore six approaches to co-teaching in their text “Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals” and define co-teaching as two or more certified professionals who share instructional responsibility for a single group of students for specific content and objectives with mutual ownership and shared accountability.<sup>10</sup> At VCA, we intend to utilize each of the approaches to co-teaching that Friend and Cook describe to effectively utilize every minute of the school day and to maximize student results. VCA will attract and partner with Vanderbilt to attract strong candidates who are positioned to be Apprentice teachers and capitalize on their talent and instructional expertise. Apprentice teachers will have distinct responsibilities that connect deeply to both instruction and to classroom management and culture during all instructional components of the school day. Typically, one teacher will provide whole group component to the lesson, and during independent practice, each teacher will provide small group instruction and one-to-one feedback. This allows for highly differentiated small group practice and remediation. Having two teachers allows for scholars to have double the face-time with a teacher, thus accelerating their learning. Additionally, it also reduces the student to teacher ratio to 1:15. Two teachers allows for a high level of flexibility in which teachers can determine based on analysis of assessment data the needs of their scholars and tailor their instructional approach to best meet scholars’ needs. Ultimately, our goal in providing two teachers per classroom is to mitigate for some of the additional challenges that we know we can anticipate, like the vocabulary gap explored by Hart and Risley in their 2000 study and to ensure that all scholars leave third grade with strong decoding skills, comprehension skills, and textual analysis skills, which is a critical signpost for scholars’ future school success.<sup>11</sup>

Table 13 shows possible instructional responsibilities for each teacher by content block. Several types of co-teaching as described by Friend and Cook are proposed here.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 13: Collaborative Teaching Responsibilities**

	<b>Lead Teacher</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lead teaching approximately 65% of the school day</li> </ul>	<b>Apprentice Teacher</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>will build to lead teaching approximately 35% of the school day due to Apprentice Teachers developing competence</li> </ul>
<b>Interactive Read Aloud</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching lesson</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting lesson through accommodations and modifications</li> <li>Parallel teach lesson to small group</li> </ul>
<b>Shared Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting lesson through accommodations and modifications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teaching lesson</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> Friend, Marilyn and Lynne Cook. *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals*. 2000.

<sup>11</sup> The National Research Council concluded: “Academic success, as defined by high school graduation, can be predicted with reasonable accuracy by knowing someone’s reading skill by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.”

<sup>12</sup> Friend, Marilyn and Lynne Cook. *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals*. 2000.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative teaching</li> </ul>	
<b>Guided Reading &amp; Phonics/Phonemic Awareness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead teaching guided reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead teaching phonics/phonemic awareness instruction</li> </ul>
<b>Math</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead teaching lesson</li> <li>Differentiated small group instruction during independent practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting lesson through accommodations and modifications</li> <li>Parallel teach lesson to small group</li> <li>Alternative teaching</li> <li>Differentiated small group instruction during independent practice</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead teaching lesson</li> <li>Station teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting lesson through accommodations and modifications</li> <li>Station teaching</li> </ul>
<b>Social Studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting lesson through accommodations and modifications</li> <li>Station teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead teaching lesson</li> </ul>

### **Rotational Model (30%)**

Scholars will also spend time in a rotational or centers/station model. In K – 2, Scholars will rotate or move throughout the classroom during math and literacy to different instructional applications. Scholars will engage with a variety of center activities that are aligned to scholars' needs based on teacher analysis of assessment data.<sup>13</sup> Scholars will often have choice of the modality and materials they will use to practice (i.e. scholars can choose between letter ID practice using magnetic letters or a sand board). Additionally, scholars will often engage in work with their peers at centers. This meets both scholars' differentiated instructional needs but also their readiness for engagement in a particular task.<sup>14</sup> This rotational model will primarily be used for the independent practice component of literacy and math, but also allows for scholars to engage in technology enhanced personalization through use of laptops or tablets for one rotation or "center." A rotational model also supports Valor's overall gradual release of responsibility over kindergarten through eighth grade with one content block mirroring the gradual release of responsibility developed over nine years of study at Valor.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> After each round of assessment, teachers will engage in in-depth analysis of assessment data to determine scholar needs and appropriate instructional groupings. For example, from analyzing a sample of literacy assessment from the STEP Early Literacy Assessment, a kindergarten teacher may create three groups of scholars who need additional practice in rhyming, letter name identification, and letter sound identification.

<sup>14</sup> According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children, "At the same time, children are active constructors of their own understanding of the world around them; as such, they benefit from initiating and regulating their own learning activities from and interacting with peers. Developmentally appropriate teaching practices provide an optimal balance of adult-guided and child-guided experiences. 'Adult guided experiences proceeds primarily along the lines of the teacher's goals, but is also shaped by the children's active engagement; child-guided experience proceeds primarily along the lines of children's interest and action, with strategic teaching support.' Teacher arrange firsthand, meaningful experiences that are intellectually and creatively stimulating, and engage children's active, sustained involvement. They do this by providing a rich variety of materials, challenges, and ideas that are worthy of children's attention...Teachers organize the daily and weekly schedule to provide children with extended blocks of time in which children engage in sustained play, investigation, exploration, and interaction (with adults and peers)." See <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/position%20statement%20Web.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> VCA's Gradual Release model is based on:

Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2008). *Better learning through structured teaching: a framework for the gradual release of responsibility*. Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

**Table 14: Example of Rotational Model in Literacy Independent Practice**

This is just one example of how a rotational model will be executed, but will be up to both classroom teachers to determine the best use of time and scholar groupings to meet scholars' instructional needs.

	Station 1	Station 2	Station 3
<b>Station Type (scholars will rotate through the stations during the Literacy Block)</b>	Guided reading w/ Lead Teacher	Phonics/Phonemic Awareness Lesson w/Collaborative Teacher	Differentiated Stations (i.e. Letter name ID/letter sound ID, rhyming practice, blending, segmenting, technology enhanced personalization, or independent reading)
<b>Description of Station</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strategic grouping of scholars based on literacy assessment data</li> <li>teacher provides before, during, after reading support</li> <li>formative assessment using running records</li> <li>optional word work aligned to developmental spelling inventory</li> <li>scaffolded support for scholars tackling a text at their instructional (90 – 94% accuracy) reading level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>strategic grouping of scholars based on literacy assessment data</li> <li>phonics and phonemic awareness support aligned to phonemic awareness screener and developmental spelling inventory</li> <li>apprentice teacher provides direct instruction using a scripted phonics/phonemic awareness program like Heggerty's phonics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>scholars will participate in differentiated station activities based on literacy assessment data, these could include:</li> <li>letter name practice: scholars use magnetic letters to name the letter, scholars then write the letters using different writing utensils in their word study or stations notebook</li> <li>sand board: scholars form letters out of sand, scholars write simple sight words using sand</li> <li>sight words 3 ways: scholars read sight words from sight word rings, write sight words using pencil, pen, crayon or shaving cream/sand</li> <li>letter sound: scholars identify letter sounds, sometimes incorporating in a computer based program</li> <li>sight word BOOM: scholars pull sight words written on popsicle sticks from a BOOM cup and read the sight word, the goal is to read all sight words before pulling a BOOM stick</li> </ul>
<b>Amount of Time</b>	18 minutes	18 minutes	18 minutes
<b># of scholars</b>	4 – 6 scholars	4- 6 scholars	18 scholars split across 3 – 4 differentiated stations
<b>Responsible teacher</b>	Lead Teacher	Apprentice Teacher	Scholar centered independent exploration



### **Direct instruction (10%)**

Direct Instruction (DI) is an explicit, scientifically based model of effective instruction<sup>16</sup> with three main components: (a) program design, (b) organization of instruction, and (c) teacher/scholar interactions. Guiding principles of DI include: every child can learn if we teach him or her carefully and all teachers can be successful when given effective programs and instructional delivery techniques. Ultimately, it is the teacher's responsibility for scholar learning; scholars are not blamed for their failure to learn. Scholars learn more if instructional presentations are clear, which rules out misinterpretations and helps scholars generalize skills in different contexts.

The goal of DI is to "do more in less time"—accelerating scholar learning by carefully controlling the features of curriculum design and instructional delivery.

At VCA, Direct Instruction will be used in stage 1 primarily for phonics and phonemic awareness instruction as described in Patricia Cunningham's *Systematic Sequential Phonics They Use* and in programs like SRA's *Reading Mastery*. It will be reintroduced in Stage 3. The major advantages of direct instruction are its efficiency and its ability, when done well, to allow scholars to learn from an expert in a subject. VCA will spend significant time ensuring that all VCA teachers are experts in delivering high quality direct instruction, and will use the methods described in Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* (2010) in order to have a consistent, quality approach to direct instruction.

### **Stage 1 & Stage 2**

#### **Small Group and One-on-One Instruction (30% in Stage 1, 20% in Stage 2)**

During literacy, math, and science, VCA will rely heavily on small group and one-on-one instruction. In K-2 literacy, this will take the form of guided reading and systematic sequential phonics instruction and well as strategic tutoring (i.e. additional letter name/letter sound practice)<sup>17</sup> while in 3-4 this will primarily entail guided reading, guided writing, and conferences.<sup>18</sup> During math, small group and one-on-one instruction will mostly take place during independent practice, allowing teachers to provide tutoring on foundational math skills and strategic re-teaching on concepts scholars have demonstrated they need additional practice (identified through analysis of formative and summative assessment data). In science, this will often entail guided experiments and engagement with science materials that are related to the unit concept. In all of these small group and one-on-one settings, the opportunities for feedback are a primary goal and aimed to "reduce discrepancies between current understanding/performance and a desired goal."

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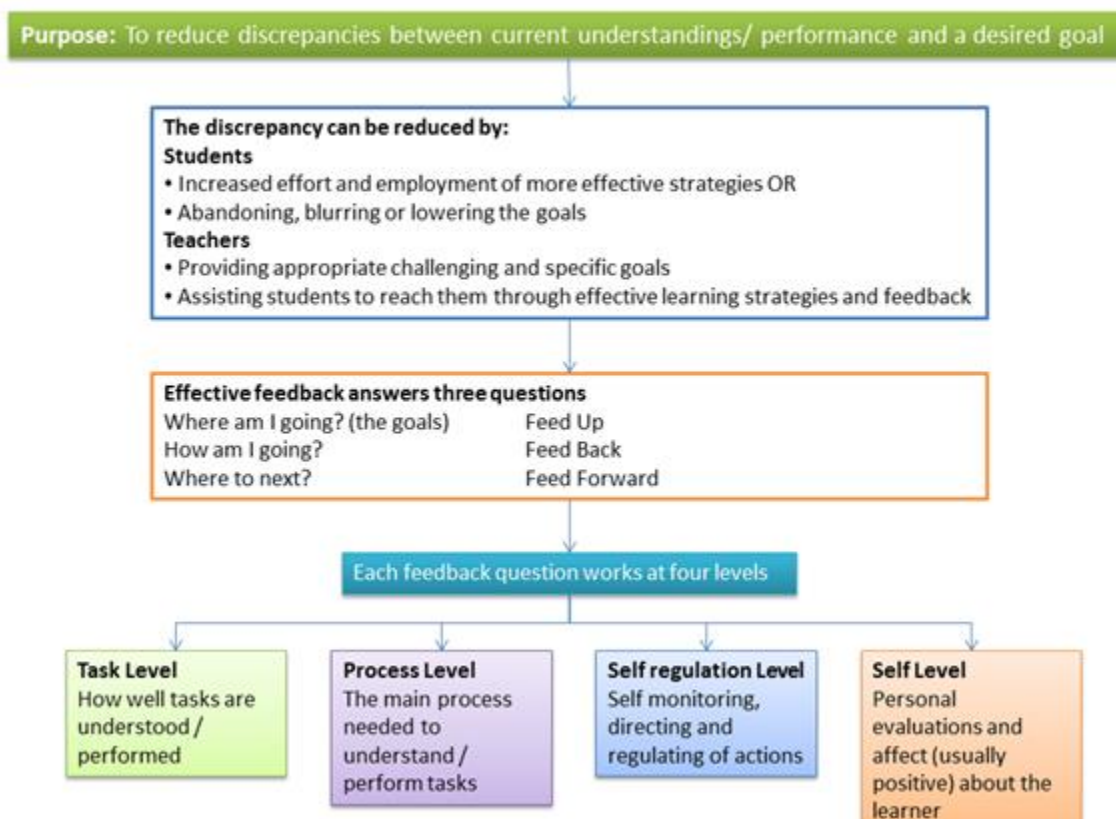
<sup>16</sup> Since its development in the 1960's, Direct Instruction has been proven time and again effective as a comprehensive school reform model that improves academic success for all students. In 2010, Guido Schwerdt and Amelie Wupperman, of the University of Munich, in an empirical study, found that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students learned 3.6% of a standard deviation more in math and science if the teacher spent 10% more time on direct instruction, rather than problem-solving teaching methods. Their research findings can be downloaded here: [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG10-15\\_Schwerdt\\_Wuppermann.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG10-15_Schwerdt_Wuppermann.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> VCA's approach to Guided Reading will be modeled after top researchers and practitioners like Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell as described in "Guided Reading." Phonics and Phonemic Awareness instruction will be modeled after Patricia Cunningham and Isabel Beck who recommend teaching phonics and phonemic awareness in a systematic manner. Small group instruction will look as described in Cunningham's "Systematic Sequential Phonics They Use" and Isabel Beck's "Making Sense of Phonics" as well as Michael Heggerty's "Phonemic Awareness: The Skills They Need to Help Them Succeed!"

<sup>18</sup> In 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> grade, guided reading and guided writing will be modeled after the methods researched and practiced by The Teacher's College Reading and Writing Project, led by Lucy Calkins. Conferring will be modeled after Lucy Calkins' research and implemented by conferring experts like Amanda Hartman as detailed in "One to One: The Art of Conferring with Young Writers" (2005).

Small group and one-on-one instruction allows for the maximum differentiation for all learners, flexibility of class structure, tremendous opportunities for instructional feedback, and is deeply connected to VCA's collaborative teaching model. It ensures that scholars are spending the majority of the school day working within their Zone of Proximal Development because each content block, scholars are strategically grouped (both heterogeneously and homogeneously) with consideration to the task at hand and abilities of scholars within the group. The Apprentice program with Vanderbilt will allow VCA to reap these benefits within budget.

**Figure 3: A Model for Effective Feedback by Hattie & Temperly (2007)<sup>19</sup>**



## Stage 2

### Workshop Model (40%)

In Stage 2, another instructional method used will be a workshop model. This instructional method will be used for reading and writing instruction.<sup>20</sup> A workshop model follows a predictable structure with a mini-lesson (connection, teach, active engagement, link), ample time for independent reading and writing at scholars' independent level, and

<sup>19</sup> Hattie, John and Helen Temperly. "The Power of Feedback." Review of Educational Research; March 2007; 77, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Workshop modeled after the research and recommendations of experts like Lucy Calkins, Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell, and Kathy Collins. One prime feature of the Reader's Workshop is time spent in what is called "eyes on print reading." As described by Calkins, Ehrenworth, and Lehman, the shift to Common Core State Standards "forwards an image of literacy instruction that involves students in reading lots of books and documents of all sorts, meeting in small groups to engage in heady, provocative conversations about what they have read, taking stances for and against views they find in books, and in engaging in accountable-talk interactions" and "in order for students to make the necessary progress, they need at least forty-five minutes in school and more time at home to read books that they can read with 96% accuracy, fluency, and comprehension," Calkins, Lucy and Mary Ehrenworth. "Pathways to the Common Core State Standards. 9 – 10, 18 Heinemann 2012



a group share/evaluation. Interspersed throughout this approximately hour-long structure is frequent opportunities for conversation and debate in pairs, small group, and whole class, guided reading/writing, and individual and group reading conferences. Through a structure like Reader's and Writer's Workshop, teachers are able to provide maximum differentiation to a diverse group of scholars through guided reading/writing and highly specific academic feedback through individual conferences. Additional benefits of a well-executed workshop model include:

- 1) explicit, strategic, and scaffolded instruction in reading and writing skills and strategies
- 2) scholars are highly engaged in reading due to choice and personalization
- 3) scholars gain exposure to vastly different genres of text (literature and informational text which is a significant priority due to CCSS)
- 4) Frequent opportunities for whole group, small group, and one-on-one instruction
- 5) Allows readers and writers to be working at their independent level within their ZPD

Not to mention, prominent Education Professor and former president of the International Reading Association (IRA) Richard Allington advances that scholars must have what he describes as "successful" reading experiences where scholars can read a text with greater than 95% accuracy<sup>21</sup>. As he said in 2002 "You can't learn much from books you can't read." The Workshop model is assessment reliant and scholars are familiar with the level of texts they can read for both independent (above 96% accuracy and with satisfactory or excellent comprehension) and instructional purposes (between 90 – 94% accuracy and with satisfactory comprehension) and in writing, scholars are able to articulate their precise area of growth.

Within Valor's diverse model, a workshop model will allow teachers to meet the needs of a diverse group of learners in a highly engaging and challenging setting while also meeting the demands of CCSS.

#### **Inquiry and Problem-Based Learning (40%)**

Valor will also rely on an inquiry and problem-based learning approach for much of our instruction in Stage 2. Inquiry or problem-based learning is characterized as exposing scholars first to a novel problem, situation, or scenario. Inquirers (scholars), will identify and research issues and questions to develop their knowledge, enable them to propose solutions, or explain phenomena. This instructional method really lends itself to the focus of the Common Core Math Standards, in particular, the standards for mathematical practice and Next Generation Science Standards Scholars. It also allows scholars to explore a problem first, propose solutions or methods to solve the problem, and teaches critical thinking while promoting the transfer of concepts.<sup>22</sup> Finally, it teaches students to develop self-directed learning, which is a developmentally appropriate practice for scholars within this stage.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Middle School Typical Instructional Methods**

##### **Direct Instruction (60%)**

Direct Instruction (DI) is an explicit, scientifically based model of effective instruction<sup>24</sup> with three main components: (a) program design, (b) organization of instruction, and (c) teacher/scholar interactions. Guiding principles of DI include: every child can learn if we teach him or her carefully and all teachers can be successful

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<sup>21</sup> Articulated by Marie Clay, the developer of Running Records as an observational assessment tool in *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 1993a) as the accuracy threshold for a scholar being able to successfully read a text independently.

<sup>22</sup> Wiggins and McTighe discuss the idea of "transfer" as the ultimate goal of understanding in *Understanding by Design*.

<sup>23</sup> According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children, it is a developmentally appropriate teaching method to provide "experiences, materials, and interactions to enable children to engage in play that allows them to stretch their boundaries to the fullest in their imagination, language, interaction, and self-regulation as well as to practice their newly acquired skill. To stimulate children's thinking and extend their learning, teachers pose problems, ask questions, and make comments and suggestions...to extend the range of children's interest and the scope of their thought, teachers present novel experiences and introduce stimulating ideas, problems, experiments, or hypotheses." See <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/positions/position%20statement%20Web.pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Since its development in the 1960's, Direct Instruction has been proven time and again effective as a comprehensive school reform model that improves academic success for all students. In 2010, Guido Schwerdt and Amelie Wupperman, of the University of Munich, in an empirical study, found that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students learned 3.6% of a standard deviation more in math and science if the teacher spent 10% more time on direct instruction, rather than problem-solving teaching methods. Their research findings can be downloaded here: [http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG10-15\\_Schwerdt\\_Wuppermann.pdf](http://www.hks.harvard.edu/pepg/PDF/Papers/PEPG10-15_Schwerdt_Wuppermann.pdf)

when given effective programs and instructional delivery techniques. Ultimately, it is the teacher's responsibility for scholar learning; scholars are not blamed for their failure to learn. Scholars learn more if instructional presentations are clear, which rules out misinterpretations and helps scholars generalize skills in different contexts.

The goal of DI is to "do more in less time"—accelerating scholar learning by carefully controlling the features of curriculum design and instructional delivery.

At VCA, Direct Instruction will be used as a main staple throughout stage 3. The major advantages of direct instruction are its efficiency and its ability, when done well, to allow scholars to learn from an expert in a subject. VCA will spend significant time ensuring that all VCA teachers are experts in delivering high quality direct instruction, and will use the methods described in Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* (2010) in order to have a consistent, quality approach to direct instruction.

### **Technology enhanced personalization (20%)**

Differentiated instruction is a framework or philosophy for effective teaching that involves providing scholars with different avenues to acquiring content; to processing, constructing, or making sense of ideas; and to developing teaching materials and assessment measures so that all scholars within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability or preparation level. Teachers can differentiate in four ways: 1) content, 2) process, 3) product, and 4) learning environment based on the individual learner.<sup>25</sup>

At VCA, we will utilize differentiated instruction in multiple ways throughout the academic program in order to personalize instruction for each student. The most common use will be through the use of technology. VCA will be a one-to-one laptop environment (starting in 6<sup>th</sup> grade), meaning that every scholar will have the opportunity to access high-quality online academic content at any time. In addition, scholars will be able to access online networks of peer and tutorial support. Lastly, scholars will be able to access rich data sets that help them track their progress towards mastery of course standards. This will allow VCA educators greater range and flexibility in designing highly effective differentiated experiences for scholars. A few common examples of technology-enhanced differentiation that will be used in VCA classrooms:

### **Group-work (20%)**

Group work will be used throughout the VCA experience. VCA will most often use **Complex Instruction** when having scholars work in groups.

**Complex Instruction** is a specific form of group-work that evolved from over 20 years of research at the Stanford School of Education.<sup>26</sup> The goal of this instruction is to provide academic access and success for all scholars in heterogeneous classrooms by using multiple ability curricula and specific instructional strategies including the treatment of status problems to equalize group interactions. Generally there are four scholars in each group. In most cases the scholars are in mixed ability (or mixed preparation level groups). Tasks are designed so that all scholars in the group will have multiple access points into the curriculum. Group members are also assigned specific roles within the group (i.e., facilitator, recorder, materials manager, and timekeeper). All scholars are responsible for an individual summative assignment or product at the end of the task to demonstrate their own learning from the experience. The advantages for Complex Instruction, and group-work in general, for scholars are mainly in learning how to work well in teams, how to communicate their ideas to others, and how to help others understand ideas, and to better understand complex processes and ideas by hearing and working with scholars who approach tasks in ways different than their own.

### **Alternate Methods**

#### **Team-Teaching**

A central part of the VCA academic program is having teachers work in groups of 2-3 to teach an academic course. In Stage 3 – 4 (middle school) teachers will work as a team of 2 in English, Math, and Science. In general they will

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<sup>25</sup> Ministry of Education. (2007). *Differentiated instruction teacher's guide: Getting to the core of teaching and learning*. Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

<sup>26</sup> <http://cgi.stanford.edu/group/pci/cgi-bin/site.cgi?page=index.html>

be responsible for approximately 25-30 scholars per teacher. Therefore, a team of 2 teachers will have 50-60 scholars at any given time during a class.

Table 15 shows the progression of team teaching across the programs:

**Table 15: Team Teaching Overview**

	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<b>Courses team-taught</b>	Remedial Math	Math	Math	Math
	Remedial Science	Science	English	English
	English		Science	Science History

In an ideal facility setting, there will be collapsible walls between classrooms, so teachers will have the flexibility to a) teach scholars separately as a group of 30, b) teach together as a group of 60, or c) split the scholars in some other variation (i.e., 45 with teacher A and 15 with teacher B) in a large classroom or separately. Nearly all of the team teaching advantages can be obtained, however, with traditional classrooms by having groups of scholars transition between adjacent classrooms as part of their team-teaching rotations.

Team teaching offers the following advantages<sup>27</sup>:

### 1. Specialization

- a. **Lesson Planning** – teachers will have, on average, 2.5 hours of common planning time with their teaching team. When two teachers plan together, they have the ability to allow teachers to write sections of the lesson plans that fit their strengths. For example, two Science teachers may split up the week’s lesson plans where Teacher A writes the labs and assessments and Teacher B creates the graphic organizers for notes and the questioning strategies.
- b. **Topic/Skills** – similar to lesson planning, teachers can devise rotations where 30 scholars see Teacher A for topic 1 and then see Teacher B for topic 2. This allows teacher A to change from teaching two different topics in a day to teaching a single topic twice.
- c. **Teaching Strength** – allows teachers who are better at lecture or group work or small group remediation more time in their area of strength. For example, if Science Teacher A is an expert in Direct Instruction they may take 45 scholars on Monday for a DI lesson on Acceleration. Teacher B is excellent with struggling scholars, especially ELL scholars, and takes the 15 lowest performing scholars for the period on Monday and delivers the same lesson in a different format (i.e., small group, inquiry based).

### 2. Personalization / Differentiation

- a. **Choice** – teachers have increased flexibility on choice. For example, Teacher A may teach 2 books for a Unit in English, and Teacher B may teach 2 different books. All 60 scholars now have four choices for a book to read and analyze instead of two, essentially doubling the amount of possible personalization.
- b. **Big / Small groupings** – teachers can choose to group scholars in Big/Small groups to best address needs in the classroom. For example, teachers may have 45 scholars learn a new concept in Math with Teacher A for part of a class period, and 15 scholars who showed on a pre-assessment they already understood this concept would work with Teacher B on an interesting extension project of this concept.
- c. **Preparation Level** – teachers can split scholars by preparation level for all or parts of lessons.

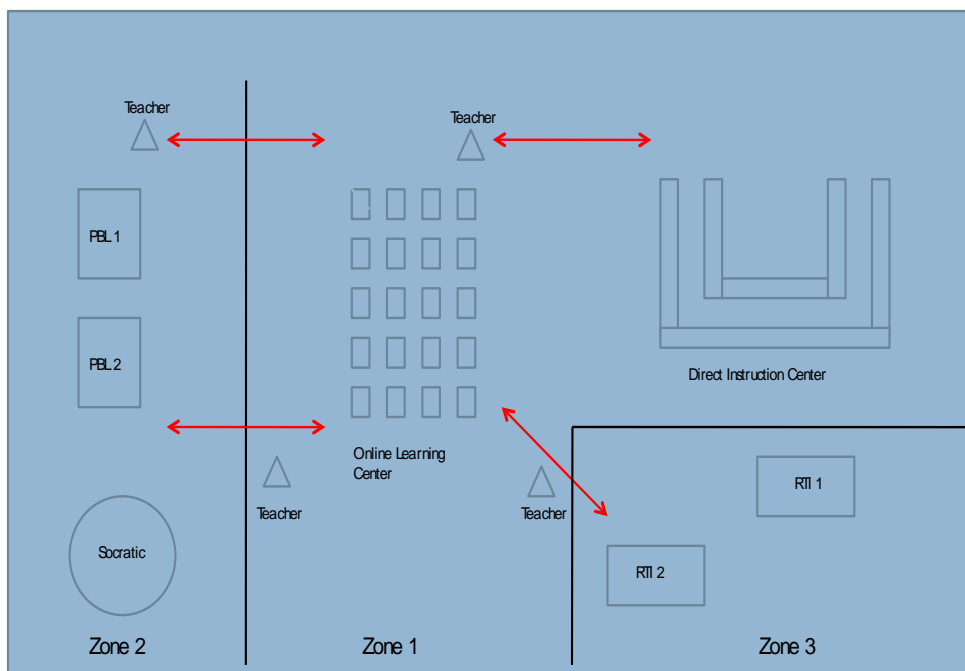
<sup>27</sup> Team teaching has been found beneficial particularly within inclusive classrooms. Students benefit from being a part of a dynamic learning environment, gaining exposure to multiple and diverse viewpoints and teaching strategies, the modeled collaboration amongst teachers, and the varied approaches to different learning styles. See: [http://sydney.edu.au/staff/fye/before\\_semester/leading\\_teaching\\_team/team\\_teaching.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/staff/fye/before_semester/leading_teaching_team/team_teaching.shtml)

### 3. Teacher coaching and training

- a. **Observation and Feedback** – Teacher A can observe Teacher B teach a 10 minute Hook lesson to all 60 scholars in Block A, and then Teacher B can observe Teacher A teach the same Hook lesson to all 60 scholars in Block B. Both teachers then provide feedback to each other on their observations. This is an incredibly powerful PD opportunity for teachers.
- b. **Co-planning** – teachers will plan, analyze data, and make action plans for their 60 scholars together. This co-process is especially powerful for younger, emerging teachers who are paired with experienced, master teachers. This is also excellent experience for Master teachers – learning to coach, and learning to be reflective on their own practice and what makes it successful.
- c. **Data analysis** – teachers can do in-class data analysis to increase personalization. For example, Teacher A and B have 60 scholars do a silent warm-up in Math class on their laptops. Scholars submit the warm-up data on their laptops, and while Teacher A conducts a 15 minute lesson introduction on a new objective, Teacher B analyzes the data and creates groups for the second half of the period that will best personalize the application of the lesson for scholars.

Figure 4: Example of Team Teaching Flex Model

## Team Teaching Flex Model: 100 students, 4 teachers



This is one of many possible variations for teaching and learning in the team teaching setting. Having excellent technology and data systems within a flexible team teaching system allows for scholars to have exceptionally personalized learning experiences. They will have multiple options to do so (Teacher D small group, Teacher A lecture, online video explanation, online content reading, online tutoring, or peer help from their classmates).

All of these options can be effective, and the scholar will be coached (by their mentor, teachers, and grade level coach) on how to make the best decisions in order to excel. By building self-discipline and metacognition as scholar's progress through the program, it is intended that scholars will learn to thrive in this type of self-directed environment. Scholars will have the opportunity to use technology to accelerate and personalize their learning to a great extent in the high school Stages of the program.

**Competency based mastery:** As scholars progress through the program, they will move from a cohort-based model that focuses on the values of community, striving for common goals, and reaching common assessments and benchmarks in conjunction with an individual approach that will allow for students to master standards at their own pace. For example, students will be “capped” by the Unit that they are studying in Stage 3 (5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade), meaning that they will all move together as a class from Unit to Unit, although if a student does easily understand a Unit they may be challenged to extend their learning on some deeper topic related to that Unit as other students master the standards. As students get older, they will no longer be “capped” by a Unit, instead the “capped” unit will be the Course (meaning students can move as quickly or slowly as they need through a course).

Both the cohort model and the competency based model bring different strengths and types of motivation to students and VCA believes that scholars will be best equipped to excel in a competency based model if they are first part of a strong, disciplined cohort in their middle school years.

## Standards and Curriculum

VCA will utilize a standards-based curriculum that is aligned to the most rigorous college ready standards, including the Common Core and Tennessee State Standards and Performance Indicators. **VCA intends to rely on several sources of the most rigorous and vetted standards that are necessary for scholars to be successful in and beyond college.** Table 16 below lists the various standards that are incorporated into the VCA High School Readiness Framework:

**Table 16: Standards used to build VCA High School Readiness Framework:**

	<b>Stage 1: K – 2 Foundations 1</b>	<b>Stage 2: 3 – 4 Middle School Prep</b>	<b>Stage 3: 5 – 6 Foundations 2</b>	<b>Stage 4: 7 – 8 High School Prep</b>
<b>English</b>	Common Core Foundational Framework	Common Core ACT Aspire Foundational Framework	Common Core ACT Aspire Foundational Framework	Common Core ACT Aspire Foundational Framework
<b>Math</b>	Common Core Foundational Framework	Common Core ACT Aspire Foundational Framework	Common Core MYP IB Foundational Framework	Common Core MYP IB ACT Aspire Foundational Framework
<b>Science</b>	Next Generation Science Standards TN State Standards CCSS Literacy Standards CCSS Math Standards	Next Gen SS TN State Standards CCSS Literacy Standards CCSS Math Standards MYP IB Foundational Framework	Next Gen SS TN State Standards CCSS Literacy in Science Standards CCSS Literacy Standards CCSS Math Standards MYP IB Foundational Framework	Next Gen SS TN State Standards CCSS Literacy in Science Standards CCSS Literacy Standards CCSS Math Standards MYP IB Foundational Framework
<b>History</b>	TN State Standards CCSS Literacy Standards	TN State Standards CCSS Literacy Standards	TN State Standards CCSS Literacy in History standards	TN State Standards CCSS Literacy in History

	Foundational Framework	Foundational Framework	Literacy MYP IB Foundational Framework	standards Literacy MYP IB Foundational Framework
<b>Electives</b>	State and National Standards for course Foundational Framework	State and National Standards for course Foundational Framework	State and National Standards for course Foundational Framework	State and National Standards for course Foundational Framework
<b>Social-Emotional Learning</b>	Foundational Framework: SEI: Six Seconds Kansas SECD Illinois State Standards Second Step Early Learning – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Foundational Framework: SEI: Six Seconds Kansas SECD Illinois State Standards Second Step Early Learning – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Foundational Framework: SEI: Six Seconds Kansas SECD Illinois State Standards Second Step Early Learning – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Foundational Framework: SEI: Six Seconds Kansas SECD Illinois State Standards Second Step Early Learning – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<b>Character Strengths</b>	Foundational Framework: Six Seconds SEI Kansas SECD Character Education Quality Standards	Foundational Framework: Six Seconds SEI Kansas SECD Character Education Quality Standards	Foundational Framework: Six Seconds SEI Kansas SECD Character Education Quality Standards	Foundational Framework: Six Seconds SEI Kansas SECD Character Education Quality Standards

## **Curriculum Development and Alignment**

The curriculum development process that we intend to adopt is based upon Roxbury Preparatory Charter School - one of the highest performing urban charter schools in the country. This process was further refined over the past five years at Summit Public Schools where it has proven to result in very high quality, standards-based curriculum. As documented in the previous section, multiple assessment standards will guide VCA's curriculum and instruction. The Curriculum Alignment Development process is based on the work of Wiggins and McTighe in *Understanding by Design*. The Curriculum Alignment Development process is based on the understanding that teachers must be able to answer the following three questions with uncompromising clarity and specificity in order to get scholars to achieve at high levels:

**1. What do my scholars need to know or be able to do at the end of the year? What are my desired results? (Standards and Objectives)**

**2. How do I make sure that scholars have really learned the concepts I wanted them to know? What is acceptable evidence of mastery? (Assessment)**

**3. What is the most effective way for me to teach scholars these important concepts? What learning activities will lead to mastery of these concepts? (Curriculum and Instruction)**

The Curriculum Alignment and Development process is designed to ensure that teachers have a deep understanding of the answers to those questions for an entire course of study before instruction begins. By knowing this, they can make fully informed decisions about assessments, scope and sequence and instructional delivery.

It is a philosophical belief that VCA educators must play an integral role in the development and alignment of the curriculum with the VCA HSR standards, and both external and internal assessments. This process is among the most important professional development that educators at VCA undertake each year. However, it is acknowledged that a dilemma of teacher development is answering the question "How much of the curriculum should be developed by teachers (which is great PD but takes large time investments) versus how much of the curriculum should be given to teachers (which saves time and ensures quality across a school/organization/District)?" We recognize this dilemma and generally fall on the side of using curriculum development as a powerful professional development tool with teachers.

However, VCA's goal is that all educators are provided with a curriculum alignment template for their course, rather than develop their own each year.<sup>28</sup> This is especially true for educators new to the VCA organization, as they will have a steep learning curve in acclimating to a new organization. The template will have, in the first year, the suggested sequence, assessments, and instructional methods for a course as determined by VCA leadership. The professional development for educators will then focus on studying the current version of the course template and developing suggestions about how to take the current best-of-class template and improve upon it, especially for the current group of scholar's preparation level and also for that educator's strengths.

In subsequent years the course template will have the additional advantage of having improvements and suggestions from the educator who taught the course that year. Over time, the course templates will be living documents that represent the best of the community learning over time of how to effectively teach a course to VCA scholars.

By January 2015, the VCA board will select the K-8 school leader. In the fall of 2015, VCA will open 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade and in the fall of 2016, VCA will open K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade. For a full description of VCA's proposed growth plan, page 14.

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<sup>28</sup> In 2011, Colorado's District Sample Curriculum Project worked with 500 educators from 61 schools to compile a bank of 670 standards-based curriculum samples created by teachers – for teachers, utilizing a template as a starting point, much like VCA envisions. In just a few months, Colorado teachers created hundreds of new curriculum samples that are accessible and can be modified by any teacher in the state. Colorado curriculum samples and templates can be found here: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/StandardsAndInstruction/SampleCurriculumProject.asp>



The school leader will oversee the writing of the fifth and sixth grade curriculum. This will involve a detailed analysis of the curriculum from VCA's first middle school (opening in the fall of 2014), determine strengths and areas to improve, and update the curriculum. In the spring of 2016, the school leader will oversee the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction (DCI) in writing the curriculum for kindergarten and first grade.

The School Leader and CAO will oversee the curriculum development process, beginning with professional development training for teachers during the extended multiple-week summer orientation and professional development. Before each summer orientation, to identify the precise areas of content knowledge and skills our scholars should master in each course at each grade level, the DCI will perform a detailed item analysis of all standardized assessments that our scholars will take with the Chief Academic Officer. The DCI also guides the instructional team in this same type of detailed analysis so that teachers have a crystal clear understanding of what scholars must know and be able to do.

Once thoroughly analyzed and identified, those specific, measurable areas of skills and content are combined with the standards of the VCA College and High School Readiness framework to create the specific, rigorous and measurable internal academic standards for each course in each grade. The instructional team then carefully considers the best methods for teaching and assessing these standards. In order to best maximize the first summer professional development sessions, VCA leadership will write the middle school curriculum in spring 2015 and elementary school curriculum in spring 2016 (see Attachment 1 – Start-Up Plan). These Curricular documents will then be reviewed and improved upon during the initial professional development sessions in the summer of 2015 and summer of 2016.

## **Overview of Course of Study**

### **Stage 1**

Stage 1 of the VCA program focuses on developing foundational skills in reading, while also building a strong foundation for the high level comprehension work demanded by the Common Core State Standards. In reading, scholars will read a variety of informational and literature texts and focus on craft and structure, key ideas and details, and integration of knowledge and ideas. In writing, scholars will write narrative, opinion, and informational text while going through the writing process. The development of oral language will be a focus, too, with scholars engaging in collaborative conversations, asking and answering questions about text, and expressing one's ideas clearly. In math, scholars will write and count numbers to 20 (in kindergarten), add and subtract up to 20, work with equal groups to develop a foundation for multiplication, understand and represent place value to 1000, conduct measurements using standard units, work with time to five-minute intervals, and solve real world problems involving money. Finally, scholars will recognize and draw shapes with simple attributes. In science, scholars will focus on forces and interactions, relationships in ecosystems (plants and animals), weather and climate, light and sound waves, structure, function, and information processing, patterns and cycles within space systems, and begin to observe structures and properties of matter. In social studies, scholars will begin to understand the world around them, Tennessee's place in America, and life in the United States.

### **Stage 2**

Stage 2 of the VCA program builds on the foundational literacy and math skills developed during stage 1. Instructional approaches change significantly during Stage 2 to promote greater scholar independence. In literacy, scholars will continue to read a variety of informational and literature texts focusing on craft and structure, key ideas and details, and integration of knowledge and ideas. They will begin to compare accounts of similar topics, and accounts written by the same author, determine main idea and explain how it is supported by details, use evidence from text to support statements and inferences. Scholars will engage in collaborative conversations with diverse partners, expressing their own ideas and building on the ideas of others. Scholars will also report on a topic or texts, expressing their ideas clearly. In math, scholars will focus on multiplication and division of whole numbers and fractions, and build understanding of the concepts, skills, and problem solving. In science, scholars will again focus on forces and interactions but this time examine balanced and unbalanced forces, examine ecosystems and habitats, begin to look at traits of animals and examine their life cycles, climates in different parts of the world and design a device that converts energy to another form. In social studies, scholars will examine world geography and cultures

and the history of America to 1850.

### **Stage 3 & Stage 4 (Foundations & High School Prep)**

Stages 3 and 4 of the VCA program focus on building a solid foundation of literacy and mathematics skill and content knowledge, along with experience in applying this foundation in authentic settings. We believe that scholars ultimately need to master critical thinking skills and apply them in a wide array of contexts to demonstrate deep mastery of a subject, but we also believe that we must be deliberate in achieving that end goal. The development of real-world problem solving and critical thinking skills must first involve the creation of a solid foundation of basic skills upon which all advanced learning rests. Because of this, Valor Collegiate designs the Stage 1 program around a rigorous, core literacy, mathematics, and science curriculum. We begin by building a solid foundation of literacy with scholars demonstrating fluency at comprehension on or above grade level and clear, organized, and detailed writing of five- paragraph essays so that scholars are prepared for a demanding Literature and Composition course by ninth grade. We build and strengthen scholars' numeracy skills so that by the end of Stage 2, scholars complete a rigorous, full-year Algebra I course and are prepared to excel in Geometry and/or Algebra II classes upon entering high school.

For each course, what follows below is a course progression, instructional approaches differentiated by stage, and finally the curriculum used.

**Table 17: Course progression for ELA.<sup>29</sup>**

Foundations 1	Middle School Prep	Foundations 2	High School Prep
K – 2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Balanced Literacy</b> <i>Interactive Read Aloud:</i> Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Text  <i>Shared Reading:</i> Reading Standards Foundational Skills  <i>Guided Reading:</i> Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Text Reading Standards Foundational Skills  <i>Systematic Phonics Instruction</i> Reading Standards Foundational Skills  <i>Independent Stations:</i> Interactive Read Aloud: Reading Standards for Literature and Informational Text Reading Standards Foundational Skills Writing Standards	<b>Reader’s Workshop:</b> Reading Standards for Literature Reading Standards for Informational Text Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration	<b>Reader’s Workshop:</b> Reading Standards for Literature Reading Standards for Informational Text Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration	<b>English 1: Literature</b> Reading Standards for Literature Writing Standards
<b>Writer’s Workshop:</b> Writing Standards Language standards: Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language	<b>Writer’s Workshop:</b> Writing Standards Language standards: Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language	<b>Writer’s Workshop:</b> Writing Standards Language standards: Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language	<b>Writer’s Workshop:</b> Writing Standards Language standards: Conventions of Standard English, Knowledge of Language
	<b>Language and Word Study:</b> Reading: Foundational Skills Language Standards: Vocabulary	<b>Non-Fiction Reading:</b> Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration, Presentation of	<b>English 1: Non-Fiction Reading</b> Reading Standards for Informational Text

<sup>29</sup> see attachment 4 for the total number of instructional minutes per block

	Acquisition and Use Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas Reading Standards for Informational Text Writing Standards	Knowledge and Ideas Reading Standards for Informational Text Writing Standards	Writing Standards
		<b>Language and Word Study</b> Reading: Foundational Skills Language Standards: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas Reading Standards for Informational Text Writing Standards	<b>Language and Word Study</b> Language Standards: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use Speaking and Listening Standards: Comprehension and Collaboration, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas Reading Standards for Informational Text Writing Standards

**Table 18: English Instructional Methods**

Foundations 1	Middle School Prep	Foundations 2	High School Prep
K – 2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup>
<p>A <b>balanced literacy</b> model using the gradual release of responsibility:</p> <p>Interactive Read Aloud: teacher led comprehension work on literature and informational text</p> <p>Shared Reading: apprentice teacher led concepts about print work and grade level word study</p> <p>Guided Reading: teacher led word study, reading skills and strategies on literature and informational text</p> <p>Systematic Phonics Instruction:</p>	<p><b>3-block Literacy Framework</b>, including:</p> <p>Reader’s Workshop</p> <p>Writer’s Workshop: narrative, opinion, informational/explanatory writing</p> <p>Language and Word Study: grade level and differentiated word work, non-fiction reading, non-fiction writing, collaborative discussion groups and Socratic Seminar, interactive vocabulary</p>	<p><b>4-block Literacy Framework</b>, including:</p> <p>Reader’s Workshop</p> <p>Writer’s Workshop: narrative, argumentative, explanatory/informational writing</p> <p>Non-Fiction Reading: non-fiction reading of informational and opinion text, non-fiction writing, collaborative discussion groups and Socratic Seminar</p> <p>Language and Word Study: grade level and differentiated word work,</p>	<p><b>4-block Literacy Framework</b>, including:</p> <p>English 1: Literature: reading of literature, response to literature through writing, textual analysis</p> <p>Writer’s Workshop: narrative, argumentative, explanatory/informational writing</p> <p>English 1: Non-Fiction Reading: non-fiction reading of informational and opinion text, non-fiction writing, collaborative discussion groups and Socratic Seminar</p>

apprentice teacher led phonics instruction Independent Stations: scholar independent practice to cement concepts about print, reading foundational skills, phonemic awareness and phonics skills		interactive vocabulary	Language and Word Study: grade level and differentiated word work, interactive vocabulary
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**Table 19: Curriculum utilized in English**

Grade	Block	Curriculum	Descriptor	Rationale
<b>Stage 1: Foundations 1</b>	Interactive Read Aloud	Literature and Informational Text Sets	Sets of high quality literature and informational text on diverse themes and topics that meet the demands of the CCSS text complexity rubric for K – 2 grade levels	Scholars need exposure to diverse literature (stories, dramas, and poetry) and informational texts (biographies, autobiographies, books about history, science) within complexity of their grade level.
	Shared Reading	Literature and Informational Text Sets	Sets of high quality literature and informational text on diverse themes and topics that meet the demands of the CCSS text complexity rubric for K – 2 grade levels	Scholars need exposure to diverse literature (stories, dramas, and poetry) and informational texts (biographies, autobiographies, books about history, science) within complexity of their grade level.
		Time For Kids	Informational text periodical with highly engaging, age-appropriate diverse types of informational writing (explanatory, opinion, surveys, data visualization);	Provides scholars the opportunity to engage with “real” and current informational text and topics that are relevant to their daily life (i.e. use of media in school)
	Guided Reading	Scholastic Guided Reading Library  Words Their Way	Expansive selection of leveled literature and informational text on diverse themes and topics  Integrated phonics, spelling, and vocabulary program aligned to the developmental aspects of spelling	Scholars need tremendous exposure to high quality literature and informational text at their instructional level. Scholastic Guided Reading library offers a wide range of leveled text selection for teachers to choose from based on scholars’ instructional needs.  Research indicates that spelling is developmental and that there are three layers of English orthography – alphabet, pattern, and meaning. Each layer builds on the previous layer. Therefore, instruction needs to support scholars’ developmental trajectory.

	Systematic Phonics Instruction	<p>Michael Heggerty's: The Skills They Need to Help Them Succeed</p> <p>Patricia Cunningham: Systematic Sequential Phonics They Use</p>	<p>Scripted sequential phonemic awareness program aimed at developing isolating sounds, manipulating sounds, blending and segment sounds into spoken and written words</p> <p>Sequential and kinesthetic phonics scope and sequence aimed at developing a link between spoken phonemes to written graphemes.</p>	Both programs aim at building the reading foundational skills. Scholars will learn that words work in predictable ways and build the auditory training (phonemic awareness) and the letter/sound correspondence (phonics). Scholars need both explicit phonics and phonemic awareness to be able to successfully blend, segment, and decode during reading and apply this to their writing and spelling.
	Independent Stations	<p>Words Their Way</p> <p>Handwriting without tears</p>	<p>Integrated phonics, spelling, and vocabulary program aligned to the developmental aspects of spelling</p> <p>Flexible instructional program includes handwriting mini-lessons and aligned scholar practice sessions.</p>	<p>Research indicates that spelling is developmental and that there are three layers of English orthography – alphabet, pattern, and meaning. Each layer builds on the previous layer. Therefore, instruction needs to support scholars' developmental trajectory.</p> <p>Research supports the active teaching of handwriting. Recent findings demonstrate that writing by hand improves creative writing skills and fine motor skills. Additionally, children need explicit instruction to achieve legible and fluent handwriting.<sup>30</sup></p>
	Writer's Workshop	Lucy Calkins Units of Study in Writing	Writing units of study aligned to CCSS. Includes units of study on narrative, informational, and opinion writing. Each unit guides scholars through the writing process in which they write several pieces within the genre of study.	Highly scaffolded and explicit, direct instruction with a clear focus for teachers and exceptional professional development. Balanced focus on narrative, opinion, and informational writing. Ample time for scholars to spend honing their writing craft.
<b>Stage 2: Middle School Prep</b>	Reader's Workshop	Lucy Calkins Units of Study in Reading	Reading units of study aligned to CCSS. Includes units of study on literature and informational text.	Highly scaffolded and explicit, direct instruction with a clear focus for teachers and exceptional professional development for teachers. Relies on assessment and data driven decision-making. Balanced focus on reading literature and informational text, ample time for "eyes-on-print" reading time and time to talk about books.
	Writer's Workshop	Lucy Calkins Units of Study in Writing	Writing units of study aligned to CCSS. Includes units of study on narrative, informational, and opinion writing. Each unit guides scholars through the writing process in which they write several pieces within the genre of study.	Highly scaffolded and explicit, direct instruction with a clear focus for teachers and exceptional professional development. Balanced focus on narrative, opinion, and informational writing. Ample time for scholars to spend honing their writing craft.

<sup>30</sup> Handwriting Without Tears website. accessed 3/13/14 <http://www.hwtears.com/hwt>

	Language and Word Study	<p>Junior Great Books</p> <p>Time For Kids</p> <p>Words Their Way</p>	<p>Combines outstanding literature and shared inquiry to build critical thinking, independent reading, and independent thinking skills.</p> <p>Informational text periodical with highly engaging, age-appropriate diverse types of informational writing (explanatory, opinion, surveys, data visualization);</p> <p>Informational text periodical with highly engaging, age-appropriate diverse types of informational writing (explanatory, opinion, surveys, data visualization);</p>	<p>Research shows gains in reading comprehension, critical thinking, and writing. Comprehension work is tightly aligned to requirements of using textual evidence from CCSS</p> <p>Provides scholars the opportunity to engage with “real” and current informational text and topics that are relevant to their daily life (i.e. use of media in school)</p> <p>Research indicates that spelling is developmental and that there are three layers of English orthography – alphabet, pattern, and meaning. Each layer builds on the previous layer. Therefore, instruction needs to support scholars’ developmental trajectory.</p>
<b>Stage 3: Foundations 2</b>	Reader’s Workshop	<p>Literature and Informational Text Sets</p> <p>Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School</p>	<p>Sets of high quality literature and informational text on diverse themes and topics that meet the demands of the CCSS text complexity rubric for K – 2 grade levels</p> <p>Grade level appropriate mini-lessons on reading skills and strategies</p>	<p>Scholars need exposure to diverse literature (stories, dramas, and poetry) and informational texts (biographies, autobiographies, books about history, science) within complexity of their grade level.</p> <p>Supports teachers in selecting appropriate mini-lessons aligned to reader’s greatest needs</p>
	Writer’s Workshop	<p>Lucy Calkins Units of Study in Writing</p> <p>Nancie Atwell’s Lessons That Change Writers</p>	<p>Writing units of study aligned to CCSS. Includes units of study on narrative, informational, and opinion writing. Each unit guides scholars through the writing process in which they write several pieces within the genre of study.</p>	<p>Highly scaffolded and explicit, direct instruction with a clear focus for teachers and exceptional professional development. Balanced focus on narrative, argumentative, and informational writing. Ample time for scholars to spend honing their writing craft.</p>
	Non-Fiction Reading	<p>Time For Kids</p> <p>National Geographic</p> <p>Informational Text Sets</p>	<p>Informational text periodicals with highly engaging, age-appropriate diverse types of informational writing (explanatory, opinion, surveys, data visualization);</p> <p>Sets of high quality informational text on diverse themes and topics that meet the demands of the CCSS text complexity rubric for grades 5 – 6.</p>	<p>Provides scholars the opportunity to engage with “real” and current informational text and topics that are relevant to their daily life (i.e. use of media in school)</p> <p>Scholars need exposure to diverse informational texts (biographies, autobiographies, books about history,</p>



				science) within complexity of their grade level.
	Language and Word Study	Wordly Wise	Grade level aligned vocabulary lists	Rigorous vocabulary choices, aligns to Vocabulary Acquisition and Use CCSS standard
<b>Stage 4: High School Prep</b>	English 1: Literature	Literature Text Sets	Sets of high quality literature text on diverse themes and topics that meet the demands of the CCSS text complexity rubric for 7 – 8 grade.	Scholars need exposure to diverse literature (stories, dramas, and poetry) within complexity of their grade level.
	English 1: Non-Fiction Reading	Time For Kids  National Geographic  Informational Text Sets	Informational text periodicals with highly engaging, age-appropriate diverse types of informational writing (explanatory, opinion, surveys, data visualization);  Sets of high quality informational text on diverse themes and topics that meet the demands of the CCSS text complexity rubric for grades 5 – 6.	Provides scholars the opportunity to engage with “real” and current informational text and topics that are relevant to their daily life (i.e. use of media in school)  Scholars need exposure to diverse informational texts (biographies, autobiographies, books about history, science) within complexity of their grade level.
	Writer’s Workshop	Lucy Calkins Units of Study in Writing <sup>31</sup>  Nancie Atwell’s Lessons That Change Writers	Writing units of study aligned to CCSS. Includes units of study on narrative, informational, and opinion writing. Each unit guides scholars through the writing process in which they write several pieces within the genre of study.	Highly scaffolded and explicit, direct instruction with a clear focus for teachers and exceptional professional development. Balanced focus on narrative, argumentative, and informational writing. Ample time for scholars to spend honing their writing craft.
	Language and Word Study	Wordly Wise	Grade level aligned vocabulary lists	Rigorous vocabulary choices, aligns to Vocabulary Acquisition and Use CCSS standard

<sup>31</sup> The anticipated release for 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade Writing Units of Study is spring 2014.

**Table 20: Course Progression for Mathematics**

Stage 1: Foundations 1			Stage 2: Middle School Prep		Stage 3: Foundations 2		Stage 4: High School Prep	
K	1	2	3	4	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
Counting and Cardinality	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Ratios and Proportional Relationships	Ratios and Proportional Relationships	The Number System
Operations and Algebraic Thinking	Number and Operations in Base 10	Number and Operations in Base 10	Number and Operations in Base 10	Number and Operations in Base 10	Number and Operations in Base 10	The Number System	The Number System	Expressions & Equations
Number and Operations in Base 10	Measurement and Data	Measurement and Data	Number and Operations - Fractions	Number and Operations - Fractions	Number and Operations – Fractions	Expressions & Inequalities	Expressions & Equations	Functions
Measurement and Data	Geometry	Geometry	Measurement and Data	Measurement and Data	Measurement and Data	Geometry	Geometry	Geometry
Geometry				Geometry	Geometry	Statistics and Probability	Statistics & Probability	Statistics and Probability

**Table 21: Mathematics Instructional Methods**

Stage 1: Foundations 1	Stage 2: Middle School Prep
Kindergarten – 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<p>In Stage 1, scholars spend time developing their understanding of counting and cardinality, that counting tells the number of object and that each successive number refers to the number of objects. Once scholars have an understanding of counting and cardinality, scholars then focus almost exclusively on addition and subtraction and place value to 1000s. Highlights of instructional features in stage 1 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade level aligned fluency practice – approx. 10 minutes</li> <li>• Math mini-lesson – approx. 20 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ co-taught by lead teacher and apprentice teacher</li> <li>○ parallel teaching by lead teacher and apprentice teacher</li> <li>○ big group taught by lead teacher; apprentice teacher utilizes alternate teaching to teach lesson to small group</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Small group work – approx. 60 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Re-teaching of concept from current unit with lead teacher</li> <li>○ Foundational skill practice with apprentice teacher</li> <li>○ Strategic skill practice aligned to skills from the NWEA MPG instructional continuum</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Independent Stations – approx. 60 minutes (runs concurrently with small group work) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ independent exploration of foundational math concepts</li> <li>○ tech enhanced personalization</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>In stage 2, scholars spend the bulk of their time on multiplication and division of whole numbers and then of fractions. They explore the concepts and skills related and do plenty of problem solving. The standards for mathematical practice are interwoven throughout stage 2, with a daily problem solving block in addition to daily fluency practice aligned to the major work of the grade level. Highlights of instructional features in stage 2 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade level and differentiated fluency practice - approx. 15 minutes</li> <li>• Problem of the Day - 15 minutes</li> <li>• Math Lesson – 60 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interactive-based problem learning (novel situation where scholars begin to grapple with today’s lesson concept)</li> <li>○ Debrief discussion – question-based &amp; scholar driven, scholars articulate what strategies or concepts they relied on, begin to identify day’s key ideas and vocabulary</li> <li>○ Introduction of Day’s Lesson</li> <li>○ Independent Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ teacher-led small group instruction occurs during this time</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Debrief &amp; Writing in Math – scholars justify their reasoning, rely on evidence and precise math background, cement the day’s key ideas and vocabulary and connect learning to previous strategies/concepts</li> <li>○ Exit Ticket</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Stage 3: Foundations 2	Stage 4: High School Prep
5 <sup>th</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade
<p>In stage 3, scholars spend the bulk of their time on performing multiplication with whole numbers and decimals to hundredths, use equivalent fractions to add and subtract decimals, multiply and divide fractions, and understanding concepts of volume to and relate volume to multiplication and addition. They also explore ratios and proportional relationships, and early expressions and equations. Highlights of instructional features in stage 3 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• grade level fluency practice – approximately 5 minutes</li> <li>• Problem of the Day – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Math Lesson – 55 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Problem of the day</li> <li>○ modeling of new skill</li> <li>○ independent practice</li> <li>○ small group instruction</li> <li>○ 10 minutes problem of the day (discussion and modeling)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Exit Ticket – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Written Reflection and Lesson Debrief – 10 minutes</li> </ul>	<p>In stage 4, scholars explore ratios and proportional relationships, arithmetic of rational numbers, linear algebra, and linear functions. By the end of eighth grade, all scholars will complete Algebra I class, setting them up to begin high school in Geometry. In middle school, the problem solving class complements the skills/computation class; the same concepts are taught using word problems, scenarios, and real world context to ensure that scholars are ably to apply their mathematical skills and develop their critical thinking skills through logical reasoning. This focus on mathematics allows for accelerated remediation of scholars who lack basic skills and preparation for a college preparatory focus in high school. Highlights of instructional features in stage 4 includes:</p> <p>Fluency Practice: 10 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade-Level Fact Fluency &amp; Skill Fluency Practice:</li> <li>• Fact fluency practice only as needed</li> </ul> <p>Cumulative Review: 30 minutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholar Generated Problem of the Day: investigation or exploratory based, PARCC aligned</li> <li>• Scholar Led Math Discussion Group: novel problems are presented by scholar groups; scholars use mathematical reasoning to justify strategies to use in attacking a problem</li> <li>• Session 4 Math Task Based Learning: scholar design a real-world task connected to the class concept, research and design this, present task and findings to class</li> </ul> <p>Lesson: 50 minutes – in session 3 and 4, scholars who may choose to take most advanced math track may spend this time in computer-based, self-guided practice of Algebra content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interactive-based problem learning (novel situation where scholars begin to grapple with today’s lesson concept)</li> <li>• Debrief discussion – question-based &amp; scholar driven, scholars articulate what strategies or concepts they relied on, begin to identify day’s key ideas and vocabulary</li> <li>• Develop Key Ideas and Vocabulary – teacher &amp; scholar led, link as much as possible to debrief discussion, traditional presentation of new material &amp; 1 illustration of the day’s concept</li> <li>• Partner Practice</li> <li>• Debrief &amp; Mid-Practice Feedback</li> <li>• Independent Practice AND Teacher-Led Small Group Instruction AND Scholar-selected practice aligned to personalized learning plans (scholars self-select based on their understanding of the day’s lesson)</li> <li>• Debrief &amp; Writing in Math – scholars justify their reasoning, rely on evidence and precise math background, cement the day’s key ideas and vocabulary and connect learning to previous strategies/concepts</li> <li>• Exit Ticket</li> </ul>

**Table 22: Curriculum utilized in Mathematics**

<u>Course</u>	<u>Curriculum</u>	<u>Descriptor</u>	<u>Rationale</u>
<b>Stage 1: Foundations 1</b>	Engage NY Modules	Complete Curricular Modules aligned to the major work of CCSS for the grade	Comprehensive curricular modules with assessments tasks, rubrics, and practice sets
	EnVision	Comprehensive curricular program with tier 1 – tier 3 support and digital component	Problem and novel situation based approach, strong alignment to CCSS, digital component allows for scholars to re-do lessons based on mastery
<b>Stage 2: Middle School Prep</b>	Engage NY Curriculum Modules	Complete Curricular Modules aligned to the major work of CCSS for the grade	Comprehensive curricular modules with assessments tasks, rubrics, and practice sets
	EnVision	Comprehensive curricular program with tier 1 – tier 3 support and digital component	Problem and novel situation based approach, strong alignment to CCSS, digital component allows for scholars to re-do lessons based on mastery
<b>Stage 3: Foundations 2</b>	Engage NY Curriculum Modules	Complete Curricular Modules aligned to the major work of CCSS for the grade	Comprehensive curricular modules with assessments tasks, rubrics, and practice sets
	KIPP National Math Curriculum	Classroom instruction built around KIPP and Singapore curriculum	Excellent 5th/6th grade math curriculum, particularly for struggling students
	Math in Focus: Singapore Math	Supplemented with blended options (i-Ready, Achieve 3000, Compass, Khan, and ST)	Excellent alignment with Common Core; rigorous
	i-Ready		Used for personalized remediation and extension
<b>Stage 4: High School Prep</b>	Achieve 3000 / Compass Learning / Khan Academy / ST Math		
	Engage NY Curriculum Modules	Complete Curricular Modules aligned to the major work of CCSS for the grade; classroom instruction built around Engage NY/KIPP/ Singapore curriculum	Comprehensive curricular modules with assessments tasks, rubrics, and practice sets
	KIPP National Math Curriculum	Supplemented with blended options (i-Ready, Achieve 3000, Compass, Khan, and ST)	Good 7th/8th grade math curriculum, particularly for struggling students
	Math in Focus: Singapore Math		Excellent alignment with Common Core; rigorous
	i-Ready		Used for personalized remediation and extension
	Achieve 3000 / Compass Learning / Khan Academy / ST Math	ACT preparation will use Grockit (in 8 <sup>th</sup> grade)	Excellent adaptive learning platform for ACT Prep

## Science

**Table 23: Course Progression for Science**

Foundations 1			Middle School Prep		Foundations 2		High School Prep	
K	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup> Conceptual Understanding Model	7 <sup>th</sup> Conceptual Understanding Model	8 <sup>th</sup> Conceptual Understanding Model
Forces and Interactions: Pushes and Pulls	Waves: Light and Sound	Structures and Properties of Matter	Forces and Interactions	Energy	Structures and Properties of Matter	Matter and Its Interactions	From Molecules to Organisms	Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity
Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: Animals, Plants, and their Environments	Structure, Function, and Information Processing	Interdependent Systems in Ecosystems	Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems	Waves and Information	Matter and Energy in Organisms and Ecosystems	Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions	Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits	Earth Systems
Weather and Climate	Space Systems: Patterns and Cycles	Earth's Systems: Processes that Shape the Earth	Inheritance and Variation: Life Cycles and Traits	Structure, Function, and Information Processing	Earth's Systems	Energy	Ecosystems, Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics	Earth and Human Activity
			Weather and Climate	Earth's Systems: Processes that Shape the Earth	Space Systems: Stars and the Solar System	Earth's Place in the Universe	Waves and Their Applications in Technology for Information Transfer	

**Table 24: Science Instructional Methods**

Foundations 1	Middle School Prep	Foundations 2	High School Prep
Kindergarten – 2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> (Conceptual Understanding Model)	7 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> (Conceptual Understanding Model)
<p>In stage 1, scholars engage in units that explore Life, Earth and Space, and Physical Sciences. The co-teaching model is really maximized in stage 1 to ensure that scholars have ample time to explore the science concepts in a hands on manner and have the opportunity to apply the science and engineering process standards in a guided manner. Instructional highlights in stage 1 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unit Aligned Science Conundrum – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Mini-Lesson – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Independent Exploration – 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Small group guided by lead teacher</li> <li>○ Small group guided by apprentice teacher</li> <li>○ Science play station</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>In stage 2, scholars engage in units that explore Life, Earth and Space, and Physical Sciences. Scholars spend even more time on the science and engineering practices, through defining design problems, generating and compare multiple possible solutions to problems, and plan and carrying out fair tests in which variables are controlled. Instructional highlights in stage 1 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genius Time – 20 minutes (scholars define and explore a design problem and generate possible solutions)<sup>32</sup></li> <li>• Mini-Lesson – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Independent exploration – 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Guided by teacher</li> <li>○ Small group exploration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>In middle school, the curriculum for science is informed directly by the State of Tennessee Curriculum Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. As a result, scholars complete a course in Science encompassing Life, Earth and Space, and Physical Science in grades 5-8. Scholars utilize standard safety practices, analyze data proficiently, communicate scientific ideas, and conduct scientific inquiry experiments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genius Time – 30 minutes (scholars define and explore a design problem related to their science content and generate possible solutions)<sup>33</sup></li> <li>• Science novel problem – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Science lesson – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Independent exploration – 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Guided by teacher</li> <li>○ Small group exploration</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Science Reflection – 10 minutes</li> </ul>	<p>In middle school, the curriculum for science is informed directly by the State of Tennessee Curriculum Standards and Next Generation Science Standards. As a result, scholars complete a course in Science encompassing Life, Earth and Space, and Physical Science in grades 5-8. Scholars utilize standard safety practices, analyze data proficiently, communicate scientific ideas, and conduct scientific inquiry experiments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genius Time – 30 minutes (scholars define and explore a design problem related to their science content and generate possible solutions)<sup>34</sup></li> <li>• Science novel problem – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Science lesson – 10 minutes</li> <li>• Independent exploration – 30 minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Guided by teacher</li> <li>○ Small group exploration</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>32</sup> Modeled after Google’s 20% time idea and explored in the article: “Genius Hour: What kids can learn from failure.” Accessed Friday, March 14, 2014.

<sup>33</sup> Modeled after Google’s 20% time idea and explored in the article: “Genius Hour: What kids can learn from failure.” Accessed Friday, March 14, 2014.

<sup>34</sup> Modeled after Google’s 20% time idea and explored in the article: “Genius Hour: What kids can learn from failure.” Accessed Friday, March 14, 2014.



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Science Reflection – 10 minutes</li> </ul>
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**Table 25: Curriculum utilized in Science**

Course	Curriculum	Descriptor	Rationale
<b>Stage 1</b>	STC Carolina Curriculum	A combination of STC and FOSS kits linked to science units and selected based on alignment to Next Generation Science Standards	Excellent hands-on / inquiry based science
	FOSS (Full Option Science System)		
<b>Stage 2</b>	STC Carolina Curriculum	A combination of STC and FOSS kits linked to science units and selected based on alignment to Next Generation Science Standards	Excellent hands-on / inquiry based science
	FOSS (Full Option Science System)		
<b>Stage 3</b>	EScience3000	A combination of STC and FOSS kits linked to science units and selected based on alignment to Next Generation Science Standards  EScience3000 differentiated by Lexile level  VCA curriculum supplemented with FOSS and/or EScience3000	Excellent personalization by Lexile  Excellent hands-on / inquiry based science
	STC Carolina Curriculum		
	FOSS (Full Option Science System)		
<b>Stage 4</b>	FOSS (Full Option Science System)	A combination of STC and FOSS kits linked to science units and selected based on alignment to Next Generation Science Standards  VCA curriculum supplemented with FOSS and/or EScience3000  EScience3000 differentiated by Lexile level	Excellent hands-on / inquiry based science  Excellent personalization by Lexile
	STC Carolina Curriculum		
	EScience3000		

## History

**Table 26: Course Progression for History**

Foundations 1			Middle School Prep		Foundations 2		High School Prep	
K	1	2	3	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
The World Around Us	Tennessee's Place in America	Life in the United States	World Geography and Cultures	The History of America (to 1850)	Social Studies I (Geography)	Social Studies II (World History)	Social Studies (Comparative History and Civilization)	Social Studies (American History)

**Table 27: History Instructional Methods**

Foundations 1			Middle School Prep		Foundations 2		High School Prep	
K	1	2	3	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Stage 1 and Stage 2</b>  Social studies content will be taught through the social studies standards, reading standards for informational text, the writing standards, and the speaking and listening standards. Teachers will rely heavily on primary sources, historical documents, and secondary sources, with some reliance on text books.  The new Tennessee standards call for two shifts in how social studies content is taught: significant scaffolding and support needs to be provided to help scholars access the complex texts that are non-negotiable and scholars must do more of the heavy lifting, focusing much more on analyzing, comparing and contrasting, evaluation, and creation as opposed to simply identifying. To meet these shifts, teachers will ensure that texts are accessible to scholars through chunking, selecting relevant excerpts, developing background knowledge, and providing vocabulary and language support.  Teachers will design year-long essential questions that include questions around historical topics but also include questions stemming from the reading, writing, speaking and listening standards (i.e. how does an author convey her point of view of a historical event? How does an author's position influence her perspective?) All scope and sequences, unit plans, and lesson plans will include both the Tennessee social studies standards as well as the reading standards for informational text, writing standards, and speaking and listening standards. Units are framed with unit specific essential questions that frame the basis for exploration, debate, and understanding of the historical content.  Teachers will infuse writing as an assessment method as well as a learning activity to align to social studies assessment, PARCC, and the standards.					<b>Stage 3 and Stage 4</b>  Social studies content will be taught through the social studies standards, reading standards for informational text, the writing standards, and the speaking and listening standards. Teachers will rely heavily on primary sources, historical documents, and secondary sources, with some reliance on text books.  The new Tennessee standards call for two shifts in how social studies content is taught: significant scaffolding and support needs to be provided to help scholars access the complex texts that are non-negotiable and scholars must do more of the heavy lifting, focusing much more on analyzing, comparing and contrasting, evaluation, and creation as opposed to simply identifying. To meet these shifts, teachers will ensure that texts are accessible to scholars through chunking, selecting relevant excerpts, developing background knowledge, and providing vocabulary and language support.  Teachers will design year-long essential questions that include questions around historical topics but also include questions stemming from the reading, writing, speaking and listening standards (i.e. how does an author convey her point of view of a historical event? How does an author's position influence her perspective?) All scope and sequences, unit plans, and lesson plans will include both the Tennessee social studies standards as well as the reading standards for informational text, writing standards, and speaking and listening standards. Units are framed with unit specific essential questions that frame the basis for exploration, debate, and understanding of the historical content.  Teachers will infuse writing as an assessment method as well as a learning activity to align to social studies assessment, PARCC, and the standards. Teachers will also include identifications of concepts and their historical significance to align to AP style tests.  In 5 <sup>th</sup> grade and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade, teachers will design assessments that require scholars to evaluate evidence from 2 – 3 documents and will be expected to write on demand 2 paragraphs (introduction and body) in 5 <sup>th</sup> grade and 3 paragraphs by the end of 6 <sup>th</sup> grade (introduction, body, conclusion).			

In 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, teachers will design assessments that require scholars to evaluate evidence from 3 – 5 documents and will be expected to write on demand 3 – 4 paragraphs in 7<sup>th</sup> and 4 – 5 paragraphs in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The greatest differentiation of teaching methods in 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> and from stage 3 to stage 4 will occur in the level of text complexity taught, and the shifts in demands as dictated by the RI, writing, and speaking and listening standards

**Table 28: Curriculum utilized in History**

Course	Curriculum	Descriptor	Rationale
<b>Stage 1 – Stage 2</b>	Informational Text Sets	Sets of high quality informational text on diverse themes and topics that meet the demands of the CCSS text complexity rubric for K – 4 grade levels	Scholars need exposure to diverse informational texts (biographies, autobiographies, books about history) within complexity of their grade level.  New Tennessee Social Studies link very closely to the CCSS Literacy Standards and offer opportunities for significant integration and teaching literacy through social studies.
	Scott Foresman	Literacy based, comprehensive curricular social studies program	Scott Foresman provides a rigorous, literacy-based social studies program, such as for scholars to learn unfamiliar content and access new information. The program provides a solid base of social studies content knowledge, which enables scholars to engage in meaningful discussion as they access new content and make connections with the world around them.
<b>Grade 5</b>	Core Knowledge sequence History Alive! Achieve3000	VCA will develop core curriculum using Core Knowledge sequence Supplement with History Alive and Achieve3000	Rigorous, specific; aligned to Common Core  Excellent supplement; inquiry based  Personalized by Lexile level
<b>Grade 6</b>	Core Knowledge sequence History Alive! Achieve3000	VCA will develop core curriculum using Core Knowledge sequence Supplement with History Alive and Achieve3000	Rigorous, specific; aligned to Common Core  Excellent supplement; inquiry based  Personalized by Lexile level
<b>Grade 7</b>	Core Knowledge sequence History Alive! Achieve3000	VCA will develop core curriculum using Core Knowledge sequence Supplement with History Alive and Achieve3000	Rigorous, specific; aligned to Common Core  Excellent supplement; inquiry based  Personalized by Lexile level
<b>Grade 8</b>	Core Knowledge sequence History Alive! Achieve3000	VCA will develop core curriculum using Core Knowledge sequence Supplement with History Alive and Achieve3000	Rigorous, specific; aligned to Common Core  Excellent supplement; inquiry based  Personalized by Lexile level

### Foreign Language

Foreign language will not be part of the regular course progression in middle school; however, scholars will have the opportunity to take a Foreign Language as an elective course during their Personalized Learning Lab. If they choose, scholars can take an online language course through Compass Learning: Middlebury Powerspeak12 World

Languages language learning, as determined by their family and mentor in their Personalized Learning Plan. Scholars will also be given the opportunity to choose HTML coding as a Foreign Language.

In high school, scholars will be required to take at least 2 years of Foreign Language. They will take this course during their Personalized Learning Lab via online software (Compass Learning: Middlebury Powerspeak12 World Languages).

**Table 29: Course Progression for Foreign Language**

Stage 2		Foundations		High School Prep	
3	4	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
Optional in Core Discipline	Optional in Core Discipline	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional

**Table 30: Additional Curriculum utilized in Foreign Language Course Progression**

Course	Curriculum	Descriptor	Rationale
Grade 5	Optional: Powerspeak12 World Language	Scholars will have option of self-study	Currently best reviewed online language program; Middlebury College
Grade 6	Optional: Powerspeak12 World Language	Scholars will have option of self-study	Currently best reviewed online language program; Middlebury College
Grade 7	Optional: Powerspeak12 World Language	Scholars will have option of self-study	Currently best reviewed online language program; Middlebury College
Grade 8	Optional: Powerspeak12 World Language	Scholars will have option of self-study	Currently best reviewed online language program; Middlebury College

The curriculum for each course in grade 5 and 6 will be completed by June 2015. The documents in Attachment 18 are the templates that are used in order to store curriculum in a common manner on the VCA data management system. The common storage and writing of curriculum across the school will allow for effective coaching and development in designing high quality courses for VCA scholars.

## **Structures to Support Academic Program**

Listed below are 9 key structures that will support the academic program at VCA. Each of these structures and supports are essential to providing a world-class growth experience for each VCA scholar and family.

### **1) Expeditions**

Expeditions is one of the most unique and powerful aspects of the Valor Collegiate model. In general, Expeditions is the time each year that scholars take their elective courses. Instead of taking these courses each day (or a few times per week) during the academic year, scholars instead take them for a shorter portion of time during the school day (stage 1 – 2) and then in-depth 3 to 4 times per year for 1 week (stage 1) and 2 weeks (Stages 2-4) at a time. Expeditions achieves multiple goals of the academic program:

- 1) Expeditions allows for scholars to pursue their true passions in a much more authentic and meaningful way than a traditional elective course
- 2) Expeditions allows for scholars to apply their academic learning in authentic ways

- 3) Expeditions allows for scholars who are struggling in their course work large amounts of time for remediation so that they do not fall behind their peers
- 4) Expeditions allows for faculty to spend large amounts of time in high quality professional development so that they can meet the VCA expectations of having a world class teacher in every classroom everyday

**Table 31** below shows the basic information for Expeditions in each of the four Stages of the program.

**Table 31: Expeditions Stage Development**

Stage	Length	Dates	Sample Courses
<b>Foundations 1 (K – 2)</b>	2, 30-minute Expeditions blocks daily  3 one week sessions	Session 1: Mid-Oct Session 2: Early Jan Session 3: Late May	All scholars take the same courses aligned to VCA’s foundational framework: Music, dance, drama, visual art, physical education
<b>Middle School Prep ( 3 – 4)</b>	2, 30-minute expeditions blocks daily  3 two week sessions	Session 1: Mid-Oct Session 2: Early Jan Session 3: Late May	Scholars have the choice to: a) continue a more in-depth study of music, dance, drama, visual art, physical education  OR  b) select courses that align to their personal interests, i.e. foreign language, baking
<b>Foundations 2 (5/6)</b>	3 two week sessions	Session 1: Mid-Oct Session 2: Early Jan Session 3: Late May	Expeditions courses aligned to character strengths within Valor’s Foundational Framework:  1) Design Thinking 2) Creativity 3) Diversity 4) Coding  Additional other Expeditions courses may include: “Failing Forward” through Fitness, Musical Theater, Martial Arts, Debate, Chess, Jazz Band, Math Remediation, Literacy Remediation
<b>High School Prep (7/8)</b>	3 two week sessions	Session 1: Mid-Oct Session 2: Early Jan Session 3: Late May	Same as above, plus Outward Bound, Community Service Projects, Language Immersion

#### **Expeditions elective courses:**

In Stage 1, a survey style approach will be applied to Expeditions courses. Scholars will be exposed to several different courses to learn foundational knowledge and skills in the arts as well as develop their personal interests, skills, strengths, and preferences. In Stage 2, scholars can continue to explore the courses they experienced in Stage 1, or scholars have the choice to take a newly offered Expeditions course.

In Stage 3, scholars will take expeditions courses that are aligned to the Foundational Framework and are aimed at developing Valor’s character strengths like grit, empathy, diversity, etc. In Stage 4, scholars will again have more choice in selecting the Expeditions courses they take. Part of scholar choice will be guided by their Expedition plan. Starting in middle school, scholars will map out an eight-year plan for their Expeditions experiences with their school mentor (to be discussed on page 63) and their family. This plan will be in place for their middle school years

and their high school years at VCA. The plan will be revisited and revised each year as the scholar moves through the program. The goal of the eight-year experience is that scholars will:

- 1) Remediate any gaps in learning so that they graduate from VCA college ready and college accepted
- 2) Take a variety of courses of interest in-depth in order to explore and find areas of passion
- 3) Apply their academic learning in authentic, real-world settings
- 4) Learn the joy and discipline of committing to long-term, intentional Core Discipline
- 5) Build a strong capability for excelling on high level performance based assessments

In Stage 1 -2, Expeditions courses will take place daily for 2, 30-minute blocks. This is essential in stages 1 – 2 because scholars at this age need opportunities to play and engage in diverse activities during the academic day. However, scholars will also have opportunity to participate in a more in-depth study of their expeditions courses. In Stage 1, there will be 3 weeks throughout the school year where scholars will participate in a more in-depth version of their Expeditions courses. This time will be used to really build upon the daily work scholars have been doing. For example, in drama, this may be the time where scholars rehearse for the winter showcase, and then on the final day of Expeditions, scholars perform during the winter showcase.

In stages 3 – 4, Expeditions courses will generally be broken into half-day courses, meaning that scholars will take two courses each Expeditions – one in the morning and one in the afternoon. In the middle school Stages the majority of the courses will be taught on campus. Expeditions is modeled after Summit Prep’s successful model in California. Summit Prep currently offers over 30 different Expeditions courses to scholars through partnerships with local community organizations. The courses offered in the first year will depend on the quality of teachers VCA can locate, as well as from student and parent input. The current plan for 5<sup>th</sup> grade in year one will be to offer Design Thinking, Creativity, Diversity in Ecology and Debate, and Coding. VCA will contract for an Expeditions Coordinator to oversee the program. In addition, Attachment 13 has a copy of the Summit Prep Expeditions Course List for 2013 to give an idea of the vision that VCA will be building towards over the next 8 years.

### Response to Intervention Expeditions

Expeditions is used as a means for successfully remediating scholars who are below grade level, or who may be at grade level but behind in courses due to illness or other medical reasons.<sup>35</sup> Expeditions is one of the main levers in the VCA Response to Intervention framework, which will be discussed in more depth on page 63. In general, when scholars come to VCA below grade level, the three – six weeks of Expeditions can be used to specifically target these scholars for personalized, small group support. Scholars who are identified as needing additional support through the RtI framework are placed in a literacy and/or math course. These courses are taught by VCA educators and are offered in small, personalized groups to ensure that each scholar receives personalized remedial instruction. To best meet scholars’ individual needs, scholars may also use technology-enhanced differentiation. As discussed in Section XIII: Professional Development, these remedial courses are always taught by two VCA teachers, as part of our Professional Development training for educators.

We expect that the largest amount of scholars who need to access our remediation support will fall in the beginning of Stage 1 (kindergarten) and the beginning of Stage 3 (5<sup>th</sup> grade) due to an influx of new Valor scholars. The use of Expeditions to provide focused, remediated instruction by expert instructors in small groups to the most at-risk scholars is a major component of our plan to reach this goal. Table 32 lays out the impact of our Expeditions remediation units across stages.

**Table 32: Expeditions Course Offerings**

	Course offerings	Number of additional minutes/year	% of scholars who take RtI Expeditions
Stage 1	Literacy AND Math	2700	25% - 30%
Stage 2	Literacy OR Math	2700	10 % - 30%
Stage 3	Literacy AND Math	5400	10% - 30%
Stage 4	Literacy OR Math	5400	10% - 30%

<sup>35</sup> RtI Expeditions, occurring for 3 weeks through the school year, paired with the daily RtI Expeditions block will provide a comprehensive approach to intervening with scholars who are below grade level. For more information about this two-pronged approach to early identification and remediation, please see VCA’s Response to Intervention framework.



### **Stage 3 – 4 Expeditions Extended Semesters:**

In addition to remediation courses provided for the most at-risk scholars, Expeditions also has mini-courses from 3-5pm each day for scholars who are at or near grade level, but have not shown mastery in a sub-set of standards from a specific course. In these cases, scholars are requested to attend school for these “extended semester courses” in order to demonstrate mastery prior to the start of the next trimester. For example, if Johnny is struggling with one Unit in Math, two Units in History, and one spiraled standard in English, he will be assigned to stay at school three afternoons a week during Expeditions (after his elective course is completed for the day) in order to continue to work on mastery of these standards. His actual VCA academic instructor will run the classes for the small group of scholars who need more time to demonstrate complete mastery of the course. These extended semester courses are both powerful motivators for scholars to ensure they have reached mastery in their courses prior to Expeditions (“Yeah! I don’t have any academic extended courses this Expeditions! I get to just focus on my Guitar and Debate courses for two weeks!”), and also a very important support for scholars who are working diligently toward mastery in a course but need more time. These courses are, again, modeled after the successful program at Summit Prep in California, where upon introduction; the number of scholars failing a course in 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Summit fell from 35% to 5%. We intend to have similar results at VCA – with our goal to improve upon those numbers by 7<sup>th</sup> grade because of our high quality remediation programs in Stages 1 and 2 of the program.

### **Professional Development in Expeditions:**

The final important aspect of the Expeditions program is that it allows VCA educators the opportunity for extended periods of professional development. When scholars are taking their elective courses the VCA faculty are immersed in high quality professional development. In general, this allows a typical VCA teacher to spend about 10 times more hours<sup>36</sup> developing as a professional than in typical private and public schools. The following is a brief overview of how Expeditions will be used for VCA educators:

#### **Expeditions for Educators:**

For approximately 30 professional working days per year, VCA faculty will spend their time during Expeditions doing:

- 1) In depth analysis of data from previous teaching cycle
- 2) Meeting as grade level and vertical teams to derive data-driven action plans for next teaching cycle
- 3) Meeting in professional learning teams working on common goals from Personalized Educator Plans (PEP) (developed with Principal in summer) – discussed on page 89
- 4) Team teaching remedial courses with observation and feedback protocol aimed at receiving large amounts of feedback on instruction with most at-risk scholars
- 5) Visiting other high-performing schools and teachers who have been targeted to help build specific skills aligned with their VCA Personalized Educator Plan (PEP)

#### **2) Data-driven instruction**

One of the Core Values of VCA is that of striving for Continuous Growth both as individuals and as an organization. We believe that the first step towards meaningful growth is having meaningful and accurate data. VCA intends to be a leader in measuring, collecting, analyzing, and making growth towards our goals based on high quality data. Data will be rigorously and thoughtfully collected on all aspects of the organization, and it will be presented in ways that allow for all stakeholders to be able to analyze it and make high quality mission driven decisions for how to best continue our growth.

Nowhere will this data-driven quest for growth be more apparent than with academic instruction.<sup>37</sup> From our hiring process to our professional development training, from our choice of technology to our approach to assessment, all decisions at VCA will be grounded in trying to always allow for stakeholders (especially scholars and faculty) to access the simplest, highest quality data possible in order to make their next step towards meeting mastery of our

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<sup>36</sup> In 2009, MNPS High School teachers participated in an average of 9.46 professional development hours, while middle school teachers participated in an average of 9.97 hours. *An Analysis of MNPS Professional Development Activities by All Employees, Administrators, and Teachers* (2010).

<sup>37</sup> Since NCLB, there has been an overall increase in the use of data in schools and districts. Often the use of data has been heavily results-based, rather than used for continuous academic improvement, as proposed at VCA. The Oregon DATA Project, which began in 2007, aimed to harness all of the data floating around for the benefit of classrooms and student achievement. As a result of the 4 year project that included 140 of the state’s 200 schools, classroom instruction became differentiated and student achievement increased. See: <http://www.educase.edu/ero/article/oregon-data-project-building-culture-data-literacy>



academic standards the best one. The VCA Assessment approach will be discussed in Section VI - Assessments. In general, the following approach to data-driven instruction will be taken at VCA:

- 1) All courses will be **standards based**
- 2) All courses will be **backwards planned** to align with the **most current and rigorous college ready standards** (currently believed to be Common Core, AP, IB, and ACT standards)
- 3) All courses will be assessed on **common interim assessments** every **4 weeks**
- 4) All interim assessments will have a **balanced approach to question and format-type** (multiple choice, open response, essay) that best prepares scholars for success in college
- 5) All courses will use **formative assessment daily** to measure scholar's learning of the daily objective, usually through technology so that data can be stored
- 6) All courses will use **formative assessment weekly** that uploads scholar data to a centralized data system to track scholar growth on course standards
- 7) All educators will receive **significant professional development and coaching** on how to analyze daily, weekly, and interim assessment data in order to make personalized instruction plans for each scholar that both remediates and extends scholars in their areas of concern and growth
- 8) The **ultimate goal of data driven instruction is to teach scholars how to analyze their own data and make wise decisions about their learning**

VCA faculty and leadership will co-develop backwards-planned curriculum and assessments for each course. Each faculty member will then receive coaching on how to both teach each objective in their course, but more importantly, how to measure if scholars learned each objective and what to do if not all scholars learned the objective. This cycle of assessing, analyzing, and re-teaching with high quality data is the central piece of the VCA educator development plan and we intend to be leaders in the field in executing this cycle. By designing the school year to have Expeditions breaks after every 8 weeks of instruction (in addition to 1-2 days after each 4 weeks of instruction) for teachers to analyze and plan with their data, we believe that we will be able to set educators (and scholars) up for maximum success in taking the theory of data-driven instruction and making it a practical, efficient reality across the organization.

### 3) Technology

To best prepare scholars for success in college and life, VCA believes that scholars must learn at a deep level how to interact successfully with technology.<sup>38</sup> In addition, we believe that having regular access to student data allows for all VCA community members to provide a truly personalized learning experience for each scholar.

#### Stage 1 – 2: Classroom Based Technology

Scholars will have access to stations of laptops and/or tablets in stage 1 – 2. Each classroom will have a combination of 10 laptops/tablets, which would allow for 1/3 of each class to be engaged in personalized learning at a time. This will help to support VCA's independent exploration block for literacy and math.

#### Stage 3 – 4: One to One laptop program

In stage 3 – 4, the VCA program will be a one to one laptop program. VCA plans to model our program after the highly successful Denver School of Science and Technology program. Starting in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, each scholar will be given a leased laptop at the beginning of the year. (5<sup>th</sup> graders will be trained over the course of the first year on the tools and technology used at VCA) 6th graders will be given training in the summer prior to entry into the program on the basics of their laptops. Subsequent training on the laptops will occur within the structures of their academic courses. Laptops will be used for the following purposes and activities, among others:

- 1) Taking assessments (daily, weekly, interim, summative)
- 2) Taking surveys (weekly, interim, summative)
- 3) Receiving graphic organizers for notes and assignments
- 4) Turning in class notes and assignments
- 5) Taking class notes
- 6) Using online content (i.e., Khan Academy, LearnZillion, Accelerated Reader)
- 7) Track mastery of standards and grades in courses (i.e., PowerSchool, Illuminate)
- 8) Communicating with peers, parents, and faculty
- 9) Creating multi-media performance assessments
- 10) Completing homework assignments

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<sup>38</sup> *1:1 Laptop Initiatives: A summary of research findings across six states*, conducted by the NC State University in 2011, confirms that, when properly introduced, supported, and integrated, 1:1 laptop initiatives have been found to: increase scholar engagement (especially for special needs, disabled, at-risk, and low-achieving students), improve academic skills, improve technology skills for both scholars and teachers, and promote the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills for scholars, including innovation, creativity, problem-solving, and higher-order thinking.

The one to one laptop program will allow for scholars to become highly proficient in using technology over their eight years in the VCA academic program. In addition, it will allow for VCA to better execute our data driven instruction strategies by allowing teachers the ability to quickly upload assessment information, even from daily assessments. Lastly, the one to one program allows for our ultimate goal of having scholars become successful self-directed learners through consistent access to high quality data on their personal progress and multiple tools, content, and peers to aid in their continued growth. VCA recognizes that not all scholars will have internet access at home and intends to work with families to get discounted internet services through programs such as Connect2Compete and has budgeted accordingly to help with those costs when necessary.

#### **4) Mentor program (begins in Stage 3)**

While all of the structures in the VCA academic program are important to the success of our scholars, perhaps none is more so than the mentoring program. In Stage 1 – 2, the scholars’ classroom teacher will function as a mentor and the scholars’ class will function as their mentor group. In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, each scholar will be assigned to a mentor group. The mentor group will be a heterogeneous group of approximately 16-20 same-sex scholars that is overseen by one of the VCA faculty members. The VCA faculty member stays with the mentor group for four years (and possibly eight!). The mentor group meets for 15 minutes each morning, and for 40 minutes on Fridays. The mentor group is also the main grouping for scholars on school trips, school celebrations, and on school study trips. The mentor has the following responsibilities for his/her mentor group:

- 1) Coach mentee and family on developing a Personalized Learning Plan
  - a. Coach mentee and family on academic progress
  - b. Coach mentee and family on non-academic progress
- 2) Main point of contact with family re: successes and concerns
- 3) Teach Connections Curriculum to mentees on Fridays (Connections is a curriculum for mentors covering Academic Literacy, Health, Adolescent Issues, Community Building written by Summit Prep. VCA will write a new version by June 2015.)

The VCA mentor-mentee relationship will be a special point of emphasis. In order for VCA’s mentoring program to positively impact scholars, research and our experience confirms that we must ensure the program, “...establishes close, enduring connections that promote positive development change.” (DeBois & Rhodes, 2008) To this end, VCA will conduct professional development with all faculty members to ensure that scholars are able to build trusting, authentic relationships with both their mentor and their fellow mentees. The mentor will also build strong relationships with the mentee family, making communication with the school and the family a very personal, authentic experience. The mentor program will be modeled after the highly successful model used at Summit Public Schools. Because of the length of time of the relationship (four years) and the amount of time spent together (on average over 50 hours over Stages 3 and 4), the mentor gets to know their mentees (and their mentees family and life outside of school) at a very personal level, and is able to help coach them through the challenging times of adolescence.

In addition, some of the strongest bonds and friendships for scholars naturally emerge from these diverse scholar groups – allowing for scholars to get to know scholars from all different backgrounds in a thoughtful, carefully planned manner, and also during less structured trips and celebrations. For each grade level at VCA, a grade level Coach (certificated Special Education teacher) will oversee the mentoring program: writing the curriculum for the Connections program, training the faculty on how to be effective mentors, and spending time as needed with scholars and families who are in need of more specific, professional assistance. The overall result of the mentoring program is essentially the strong foundational glue of the VCA model: scholars, families, and faculty all experience a powerful, personal connection to the VCA family, and through these high-trust personal relationships the ability to really challenge scholars to grow to their full potential is made possible.

#### **5) Personalized Learning Plans**

The personalized learning plan (PLP) is the document at the heart of the VCA mentoring program. The PLP document is provided in Attachment 17. The PLP document is the product of a goal setting process that each VCA scholar and family is coached through by his or her mentor. Each August the mentor, scholar, and scholar’s parents meet for about 1-2 hours to develop the document. The PLP document starts with the end in mind. In stages 1 and 2, scholars will be part of developing the PLP, though it will be an abbreviated version. Scholars and families will develop goals for the end of elementary school. The classroom teacher will conduct these PLP meetings with scholars and families. Beginning in stage 3, scholars and their family start by discussing and setting goals for what type of life they envision for themselves. What type of job? Where are they going to live? What qualities will they be known for? How will they give back to the world? To their community? From these questions, possible colleges are chosen, and then goals are set that need to be met in order to attend those colleges. Goals are then backwards planned to “what does your weekly schedule in 5<sup>th</sup> grade need to look like in order to obtain this kind of life?” The PLP also pushes the scholar and family to set goals around character strength development, healthy

living, and family relationships. The PLP document becomes a living document that is constantly re-visited by scholar, mentor, faculty, and family.

Several times a year the document is formally re-visited, and the best examples of the PLP being used successfully will be when it hangs on the scholar's refrigerator at home, evoking constant discussion and evaluation within the family. The effect over time for both families and scholars is significant: VCA scholars will become excellent goal setters, and will deepen their relationships with their families and their mentor as they use the PLP to help guide them towards goals that they find inspiring and meaningful. The PLP is also used as an extension of the 504 and IEP process, which will be discussed in Section IV: At-Risk Scholars and Scholars with Special needs. The PLP and mentor program will be modeled after the highly successful Summit Prep program. In a 2012 survey of scholars at Summit Prep, 94% answered 'Strongly Agree' to the question "the mentor program at Summit Prep was important to my growth as a scholar and a person" – the highest positive answer on the annual scholar survey.

#### **6) Valor Collegiate Badge System**

VCA will design a system of "Badges" that scholars can earn throughout their time at VCA by completing various cognitive and non-cognitive challenges, or for demonstrating Core Values and Character Strengths. The incorporation of the badge system is based on the idea that, "students must derive some sense of personal reward from specific tasks before they can be expected to generate any significant motivation to carry out the task". (Renchler, 1992) The Badge system will become a highly valued and celebrated part of the VCA culture. Scholars will receive actual Badges that will be sewn onto their school uniforms for the various accomplishments. Some Badges will be relatively easy to obtain, while others will be very difficult and rare to earn. When Badges are earned, the VCA faculty and scholars will have public ceremonies to celebrate community members' accomplishments. In addition to being a visual cultural badge of honor, the Badge system will also be an important part of the VCA report card – page two of the report card will contain a comprehensive list of each Badge earned by a scholar. These Badges will be particularly helpful to college admissions teams as they evaluate VCA graduates. Over a nine-year period of time it is expected that a scholar's list of Badges will paint a very clear picture of that scholar, especially in their accomplishments outside of the classroom.

Table 33 below lists a sample of possible Badges that the VCA faculty will design:

**Table 33: Sample Badge Overview**

Badge Name	Core Value or Strength	Requirement
Socrates	Integrity	Demonstrated great integrity at difficult moment
Mother Teresa	Kindness	Demonstrated unusual kindness in a difficult moment
Apollo 13	Innovation	Completed Expeditions Challenge of building a rocket launch that successfully landed in pool 100 meters away
Joaquin Tovar	Engagement / Leadership	Spoke at a legislative hearing re: future of public education
Cal Ripken Jr	Excellence	Perfect Attendance for the Year!
Valor	Personal Bravery	Acted as a leader in the community in a very difficult moment; embodied personal bravery to overcome a difficult challenge
Read Baby Read!	Excellence / Growth	Grew more than 2 years in Lexile reading scores in one year!

#### **7) Morning meeting**

One of the most powerful drivers of culture and academics in many high-performing schools is the morning meeting. In stage 1 – 2, four days a week the morning meeting will take place in a scholar's classroom and Friday will be a whole school meeting, while in stage 3 – 4, VCA will have an all-school morning meeting. VCA will have a Morning Meeting each day to set a positive, focused tone for all community members. In Stage 1, the meetings will be based off of the structures designed by Responsive Classroom and explored in the book "The Morning Meeting Book." In Stage 3 – 4, the meetings will be based off of the meeting structure used at the Denver School of Science and Technology (DSST).

VCA intends to have vibrant, joyful, structured Morning Meetings that set the tone for greatness every day in the school. Below is a list of typical events that occur at Morning Meetings:

#### **Stage 1 – 2**

- greeting
- share
- activity
- morning message

### **Stage 3 - 4**

- Celebrations of community and individual accomplishments (Badge Ceremonies, Core Value and Character Awards, College Acceptance, etc.)
- Public apologies and ownership of mistakes by faculty and scholars
- Stories and examples of Core Values and Character Strengths in action
- Shout-outs and appreciations of fellow community members
- Affirmation of positive intentions for day

In stage 1, morning meeting will last for 20 minutes while in Stage 2, morning meeting will last for 12 minutes. It will include highly structured routines for how to celebrate, shout-out, apologize, listen, and generally show high levels of kindness for all community members.

### **8) Core Discipline (begins in stage 3)**

In order for VCA scholars to be successful in college and life, they need to develop skill-sets and mindsets beyond the academic classroom. The High School Readiness Framework sets standards in the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills that go beyond the typical academic skills tested on the ACT and AP course exams. Possibly the most important of these non-academic skills is the ability to self-manage, which has been identified as such by prominent world-wide bodies including the APEC Education Network.<sup>39</sup> In the HSR at VCA, developing strong Self-Management skills is an important aspect of the academic program. Self-Management contains the following skill areas and mindsets:

- Ability to set and track goals
- Ability to establish priorities based on goals
- Ability to manage time based on priorities
- Ability to execute tasks with precision and accuracy
- Ability to persist
- Ability to complete tasks and projects
- Ability to commit to learning a difficult task over an extended period of time

In order for VCA scholars to master these important skills and mindsets, they will all undertake a Core Discipline while at VCA. The Core Discipline program will not begin until Stage 3. Prior to Stage 3, VCA will use a “survey” approach, meaning the goal will be to expose scholars to as many different courses so that scholars can begin to develop their personal passions and interests. Scholars should be able to identify what they enjoy doing, where they excel, and what they find challenging. The intent of this survey approach is so that scholars feel equipped to select a Core Discipline by the start of Stage 3. Each scholar’s Core Discipline of choice will be discussed with their mentor and family during their PLP. Scholars will have stages 3 and 4 of the VCA experience to experiment with different possible Core Disciplines and then will commit to a Core Discipline by the start of high school. Possible Core Discipline choices might be:

- Martial Arts
- Chess
- Debate
- Computer Programming
- Dance
- Musical Instrument
- Writing
- Running
- Foreign Language
- Meditation/Yoga

The objectives of the Core Discipline commitment for all VCA scholars are:

- 1) To develop a deep appreciation of having a growth mindset

<sup>39</sup> The APEC Education Network consists of 21 international economies, including the U.S. [www.apec.org](http://www.apec.org).

- 2) To learn persistence and self-discipline in consistently working towards growth in a practice over a period of many years
- 3) To experience the joy and self-confidence derived from experiencing substantial growth over long periods of time due to specific, intentional practice of a set of skills

Scholars:

1. Will commit to 4 years of exploring potential Core Disciplines
2. Will spend 6 of 12 Expeditions courses practicing their Core Discipline commitment (or an equal amount of time outside of school hours in lieu of Expeditions courses)
3. Will study and practice the ideas of Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset (a key idea in high quality practice) in the Summer Bridge program and also in academic classes
4. Will commit to continuing their Core Discipline by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade

The intent of this approach and layout is so that scholars have time to both pursue their core discipline (beginning in stage 3), but also get to experience and develop other passions that fall outside of their core discipline. For example, Adrian may choose long-distance running as his Core Discipline because he enjoys the clarity and strength he gains from running and has exceptional endurance. He will dedicate approximately 50% (at least six) of his Expeditions to studying this Core Discipline. But, Adrian may also really enjoy gaming and cooking, so Adrian will have the choice to take courses during Expeditions that are outside of his Core Discipline but still mean he is pursuing a personal passion. This represents real world experiences that college students and successful adults have. Scholars will ensure they are selecting their Expeditions courses carefully and being mindful of VCA's requirement of taking at least 6 Expeditions courses within their Core Discipline.

Not all scholars will follow this course outline exactly. Some scholars will choose to pursue their Core Discipline outside of school, and will therefore use their Expeditions courses learning about other areas of passion. Expeditions' course progression is personalized for each scholar's needs and development. Each scholar's Expeditions progression will be discussed in their Personalized Learning Plan meeting with their family and mentor. Overall, however, each scholar will set goals in their PLP to commit to spending greater than 150 hours per year practicing a personal passion. This passion will be developed over a minimum of four years of time, leading to over 600 hours of committed time spent deeply practicing a set of skills. Scholars will demonstrate their growing mastery of their Core Discipline commitment in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The cumulative Core Discipline Badge will be one of the most valued of the cultural Badges at VCA.

In summary, the VCA community will value and celebrate commitment to passions that require long-term investment in building skills for mastery. It is our belief that because of this unique focus and development, VCA scholars will be especially well prepared to meet the mission of the school: to lead inspired and purposeful lives upon graduation from college.

## **9) Social-Emotional Development**

VCA recognizes that the development of scholar's social and emotional skills are as important to their future success and happiness as their academic skills. VCA graduates will need both sets of skills to be able to truly thrive. VCA will approach the development of social-emotional skills, using both student-centered and environment-focused approaches<sup>40</sup>, in the following ways:

### **1) KMS system with SEI data**

<sup>4040</sup> In the book, *Foundations for Social and Emotional Learning*, (2004) Zins, Bloodworth, Weissbert, and Walberg, suggest concentrating on SEL is more impactful when it is a whole-school effort. The book cites the 2003 review conducted by the Collaborative Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), of the 80 national programs reviewed that integrated SEL with the academic program, 83% realized academic gains when combined with effective teaching practices. CASEL offers abundant research on the benefits of SEL: [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org).

<sup>22</sup> Illuminate is a Knowledge Management System used by Summit Public Schools that VCA intends to partner with to use in our school. Illuminate combines gradebook, assessment system, parent portal, attendance, data management, report cards, Special Education system, scheduling, grades, discipline, Medicaid billing, IEP writing, and analytical reporting in one tool.

<sup>23</sup> Six Seconds is a non-profit organization in Palo Alto CA that was founded by Anabel Jensen, the leader of the famed Nueva School. Six Seconds has developed a social-emotional learning curriculum that is being used at Nueva School, Synapse Schools, and Connect Community Charter School. Ms. Jensen and Mr. Dickson from VCA are working on a grant to take the Six Seconds model and create a digital mapping tool for individual students that will be linked to Illuminate so that students and teachers can access both academic AND social-emotional information about each student.



VCA intends to partner with Illuminate<sup>22</sup> and Six Seconds<sup>23</sup> to build an online, standards based Knowledge Management System (KMS) that includes social-emotional intelligence (SEI) data. This SEI data will be standards based and scholars will work towards mastery of the standards throughout their VCA experience. The scholar's mentor and grade level counselor will oversee the monitoring and development of growth towards mastery of the SEI standards. Growth will be tracked through the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). All community members will have access to progress towards these standards via simple to understand School Outcomes.

**2) Academic course integration**

VCA will have a thoughtful, backwards planned map for each course that includes SEI standards within courses. As a simple example, in order to develop persistence, a scholar may use the diligent writing of multiple drafts of a persuasive essay as evidence of growth on this SEI standard. VCA intends to write this integrated curriculum over the course of the next year with Six Seconds leadership as a partner in the work.

**3) Connections curriculum in mentor groups**

The Connections curriculum mentors teach each week will integrate SEI standards. As an example, one of the three standards of the EQ-in-Action model (the Social-Emotional learning standards in the HSR framework) is the 'Know Yourself by Recognizing Patterns'. A Connections lesson would involve having scholars list and share areas of their life where they consistently get into a pattern of bad habits using a reading from *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg. A heavy emphasis of the Connections curriculum in regard to SEI learning will be faculty modeling and on using culturally relevant role models as inspiration for living with high SEI.

**4) Personalized Learning Plan**

Developing high character, social-emotional intelligence, and the VCA core values will be an important parts of the PLP process. Scholars will set goals around each of these areas and will meet with their mentor, grade level counselor, peer mentor group, and their parents about their growth in these areas. Over the course of a school year, a scholar will meet at least three times to review progress on their goals, and they will be available online at all times for the scholar and the scholar's family.

**5) Badge challenges**

Multiple Badge challenges will include standards for SEI and character development, as well as the VCA Core Values. For example, the highly celebrated and valued 'Kindness Badge' may be earned through undertaking a community service project that demonstrates exceptional empathy and service – two standards from the HSR SEI standards.

**6) Cultural value and celebration**

The VCA community will value growth and achievement in SEI and character development equally along with academic growth and achievement. This placement of high status on being kind, high character human beings will be reflected in all cultural celebrations, and throughout the general culture of the community.

**7) VCA discipline system**

The VCA discipline system will be detailed in Section VIII: School Culture. The discipline system will be defined by the question "how does this opportunity allow us to develop this scholar?"<sup>41</sup> Every discipline action will be through the lens of having the consequence for each community member's action being carefully structured to push that scholar's growth in SEI and character development. A scholar's success and missteps will be part of the evidence that is used to show their growth towards the HSR standards in these areas.

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<sup>41</sup> In 2006, the American Psychological Association recommended an end to zero tolerance discipline policies, citing the fact that zero tolerance does not improve school safety or culture, and such programs ignore mitigating or extenuating circumstances and miss an opportunity to teach children respect and inspire their trust in adults. See: [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

## SECTION IV – SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND AT-RISK STUDENTS

### **Accessible for All Scholars**

Pursuant to state and federal law, charter schools are required to serve the needs of special student populations, including hiring licensed and endorsed special educators and licensed ESL instructors. School personnel shall participate in developing and implementing the Individualized Education Programs (IEP); identify and refer students for assessment of special needs; maintain records; and hire appropriate personnel as are required in an IEP (ex. Speech/language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, etc.).

- Detail a comprehensive plan to serve students with special needs including but not limited to those students with federally recognized disabilities; students with IEP's or Section 504 Plans; students identified as intellectually gifted; and students at risk of dropping out.

- Identify the special populations the school plans to serve, whether through data related to a specifically targeted school or neighborhood or more generalized analysis of the population to be served.

- Discuss how the course scope and sequence, daily schedule, staffing plans and support strategies will meet or be adjusted for the diverse needs of the students.

- Explain specifically how you will identify and meet the needs of students with mild, moderate or severe disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible. Specify the research based programs, strategies and supports you will provide, including the following:

- Methods for identifying students with special needs (and avoiding misidentification).

- Specific instructional programs, practices, and strategies the school will employ to provide a continuum of services; ensure students' access to the general education curriculum; and ensure academic success for special needs students.

- Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of special education students, including coordination with the LEA's monitoring and evaluation.

- Plans for promoting graduation for students with special needs (high school only)

- Plans to have qualified staffing adequate for the anticipated special needs population including budgetary assumptions

It is the mission of Valor Collegiate that all scholars will be provided with a world-class education, including being high school ready upon graduation. There are no exceptions for this mission: it is our belief that it is the VCA community adults' responsibility to coach and inspire every VCA scholar to achieve this goal. In order to be successful with all scholars we must be especially thoughtful about how to support the most at-risk learners and gifted scholars. The following sections describe how VCA intends to support these special populations.

### **Overview of Support Model for All Scholars**

#### **Define:**

VCA will generally categorize our special populations as follows:

1. **Below grade level academically and/or behaviorally**
2. **Current scholar with an IEP**
3. **English Language Learner**
4. **Gifted Scholars**

Scholars will potentially fit into multiple categories. These categories are flexible and dynamic and highly responsive to scholar needs and data.

#### **Approach**



The following sections will describe VCA's approach to successfully addressing the needs of these special populations to ensure they are able to successfully meet the mission of the organization, specifically: to be accepted to a four year college or university and to develop the non-academic skills listed in the HSR that will ensure and purposeful and inspired life.

The most important systems for best supporting special populations are 1) **identification**, and 2) **response to intervention (RtI)**. Struggling scholars must be identified quickly and accurately, and then effective responses to their struggles must be determined, delivered, and monitored with equal speed and accuracy.

### **Tiered-Service Model**

Table 34 shows the overview of the Tiered-Service model for all scholars in the VCA academic program. This model is based off of the successful Summit Prep and DSST models. We anticipate approximately 50% (Level 1) of the scholars who go through the VCA program will access Level 1 supports. Approximately 20% (Level 2) of the scholars will use the additional supports. The remaining 30% of the scholars will require more intensive supports (Level 3, 4, 5). These supports are listed in the Scholar Experience Column of the table. Experiences, expectations, and resources that are unique to Stages 1 and 2 are highlighted in **light blue** and supports that are unique to Stages 3 and 4 are highlighted in **yellow**.

**Table 34: Valor Collegiate Tiered Service Model Overview**

Scholar Experience	Faculty Expectations	Resources
<b>Level 1: 50% of scholars are prepared through basic mainstream program</b>		
Daily classroom experience	Course content is VCA standards based	30 days for professional development, collaborative planning and scholar logistics
Illuminate data School Outcomes posts and tracking	Gradual Release Teacher to Scholar centered pedagogy	2.5 hours of common planning time with vertical team daily (6 <sup>th</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup> grade)
Homework completion	Vertically and interdisciplinary planned curriculum for skill development – includes spiraling	1 hour grade level team meetings weekly
Regular Connections participation	Differentiated instruction	2 sections only (6-8 grade)
PLP development and annual meeting	All scholars are engaged	Class size of 30 (23 in 5 <sup>th</sup> )
Final exam review sessions	Homework is limited to 30 minutes per day per class	105 minutes of prep daily
Personalized Learning Lab time	Homework is meaningful and extends learning	60 scholars max
Extensive small group differentiated instruction	Longer assignments are chunked with frequent checks	Looping and/or teaching same subject two or more years in a row
	100% extended time for all on tests and exams	Uninterrupted teaching time (no assembly schedules, minimum days, announcements, etc...)
	Connections teaches academic literacy skills	Peer coaching
	Extensive scaffolding is used to support skill development	Induction mentors
	No assigned work during vacation	Existing / developed curriculum for each course (available to all)
	Scholars are assessed using multiple modes	25% time administrator for connections coordination
	Assessments are designed to allow scholars to demonstrate mastery of course content standards	Existing / developed curriculum for connections
	SDAIE / SIOP methodology	Personalize Educator Plans (PEPs) connected to professional

		development
	Common behavior norms / expectations with consistent follow-through	Decision-making authority in school policy and procedure
Level 2: 20% of scholars require level one program plus additional mainstream supports to be prepared		
Office Hours	Two hours of office hours per week	A clear system for supporting assignment completion, resulting in ability to plan classes accordingly
Study Hall	Consistent expectations for delivery of work on time	Culture of revision and redemption
Mandatory Peer Tutoring	Plan and deliver highly differentiated “double-dose” small group	
Additional small group participation during school-day		
Level 3: 15% of scholars required level one, level two supports, and level three mainstream supports to be prepared		
Daily RtI Expeditions block	10 days per Expeditions (30 hours) of small group remediation in English and Math	Scheduled, coordinated time with scholars needing additional support
Remediation Expeditions	6 hours of Extended Semester sessions per Expeditions	Designated grading days
Extended Semester	Email and phone contact with home	
Personal Tutor	Teaches daily RtI Expeditions block to mixed scholar groupings	
Saturday School		
Additional mentor support		
Level 4: 8% of scholars required level one, two, and three, plus level four mainstream supports to be prepared		
504 or IEP plan with accommodations		10 to 15% of administrators’ time
Extensive personal mentor support		Intervention documentation template
Grade level interventions / plans		504 plan template
Level 5: 7% of scholars require all mainstream supports, plus special education to be prepared		
<input type="checkbox"/> IEP with services	Write Present Levels of Performance as needed	1 full-time resource specialist per grade level
Resource support	Attend IEP meetings as needed	1 full-time counselor per grade level
Speech and language therapy	Implement modifications / accommodations	Contracted school psychologist
Occupational therapy		Contract therapists
Hearing		10 to 15% of administrators’ time
County mental health		
Modifications to program / curriculum		

As noted above, VCA will provide extensive support to all scholars in Level 1, 2, and 3. It is a philosophical belief that all scholars benefit most from being part of mainstream classrooms, with the mainstream, academic expectations, whenever possible. (Hehir & Sanchez, 2012) It is also a general philosophical belief of VCA that world-class teaching incorporates most supports that are generally considered “additional supports for struggling/at-risk scholars”. For example, VCA courses will all be highly personalized with data and access to technology (1-to-1 laptops in MS), differentiated instruction, and small group tutoring after school and on Saturdays. In addition, the

Expeditions sessions allow for extended time for scholars who need it, and also allow for intensive small group remediation and extension. All of these supports would generally be considered part of a program to assist special populations in a traditional school; however, these are supports that are available to all scholars at VCA that could benefit from them.

This philosophy essentially allows scholars from special populations the opportunity and challenge to be considered part of the “normal” system at a VCA school. We believe this is healthy for scholars’ self-confidence and ultimately allows them to be able to reach higher academic and non-academic goals over time. It is important to know that we do not intend this philosophy to be a means for not providing great services to special populations (i.e., the “we mainstream SPED kids” plan some charter schools offer because they do not have a thoughtful SPED plan that fits their model). Instead, we believe that the strongest services for special populations must first begin with world-class supports for all scholars in mainstream classes, and that these supports when executed well can provide an amazing amount of support for the most at-risk scholars.

### **At-Risk Identification**

In order to serve struggling scholars well, they must be identified quickly and reliably. Table 35 details the Response to Intervention (RtI) process used to identify and support struggling scholars with the correct targeted interventions of each tier of the model.

**Table 35: Response to Intervention Model**

<b>RtI Level</b>	<b>Identification Process</b>	<b>Intervention additions</b>	<b>Approximate % of students</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	Stages 1 & 2: classroom teacher administers universal screeners	Level 1 supports	100	Classroom teachers and Grade Level Faculty
	Stages 3 & 4: Grade Level Faculty administers universal screeners			
<b>Level 2</b>	Stages 1 & 2: classroom teachers will place scholars in Level 2 as needed; decision made by grade level team using formative assessment data	Above + “Double Dose” small group + Office Hours + MASH + Peer Tutoring + Saturday School	20	Classroom teachers and Grade Level Faculty
	Stages 3 & 4: Grade Level Faculty will place students to Level 2 as needed; decision made by Grade Level Team using classroom assessment data			
<b>Level 3</b>	Stages 1 & 2: classroom teachers will move scholars to Level 2 as needed; decisions made by Grade Level Team and School Admin using intervention data	Above + Intervention Plan + Extended Semesters + Remediated Expeditions	15	Faculty + Admin
	Stages 3 & 4: Grade Level Faculty will assign students to Level 3 as needed; decisions made by Grade Level Team with School Admin			
<b>Level 4</b>	Stages 1 & 2: classroom teachers will implement interventions for scholars still struggling; referrals for 504 made by joint Grade Level, SPED, and Admin decision	Above + 504 Plan (if deemed appropriate) OR IEP	8	Classroom teachers + SPED + Admin
	Stages 3 & 4: Grade Level Faculty will hold Interventions for students still struggling; referrals for 504 made by joint Grade Level, SPED, and Admin decision			
<b>Level 5</b>	Stages 1 & 2: classroom teachers will hold Interventions for students still struggling; referrals for 504 made by joint Grade Level, SPED, and Admin	Above + IEP (if deemed appropriate)	7	Classroom teachers + SPED + Admin

	decision			
	Stages 3 & 4: Grade Level Faculty will hold Interventions for students still struggling; referrals for 504 made by joint Grade Level, SPED, and Admin decision			

Each grade level will have a team of educators (Stages 1 & 2: usually 9 adults: 4 classroom lead teachers, 4 apprentice teachers, 1 SPED teacher; Stages 3 & 4: usually 7.5 adults: 6 academic teachers, 1 SPED teacher, and .5 Counselor/Coach). This team meets every week for one hour on Wednesdays after school. During this weekly grade level meeting, the first agenda item will be to collect data from teachers on scholars who are struggling academically or behaviorally. Scholars are identified who are a) falling below grade level benchmarks (Stages 1 - 4) b) failing multiple classes (stages 3 & 4 only), or b) are having consistent behavior. The grade level team then moves students from Level 1 to Level 2 as needed (i.e., matching scholars to appropriate interventions like “Double Dose” small group, Office Hours, After School Study Hall, and Peer Tutoring). **As students move levels, their mentor teacher and their family are notified of the move.**

If a student is still not responsive in Level 2, the grade level may then opt to move the student to Level 3 of the RtI Tiered Service model. **When a student is moved from Level 2 to Level 3, an Intervention Meeting is scheduled.**

The scholar’s mentor is notified, and the mentor arranges a meeting with the grade level teachers, the scholar, and the scholar’s family. Attachment 17 has an example document that will be used in these Intervention meetings. This process continues as described above until the scholar is either successful, or they move to have more supports put in place until they eventually are successful in the model. The process is overseen by the grade level SPED teacher, and is supported by the grade level teachers and grade level mentors. This RtI model is based on the successful model used at Summit Prep Charter.

As noted in Table 35 the Response to Intervention model adds the following interventions for struggling students:

#### **Additional Supports for Scholars**

1. “Double Dose” small group (Stages 1 & 2)
2. Daily RtI Expeditions Block (Stages 1 & 2)
3. Office Hours
4. Study Hall – quiet homework completion (Stages 3 & 4)
5. Saturday School
6. Extended Semester
7. Expeditions Remediation
8. Summer Bridge

The grade level academic teachers, counselor, SPED teacher, scholar mentor, and one school administrator make the decisions for adding these supports for a struggling scholar. While the logical progression of the model works for most students, the best progression may vary for each student, depending on their specific needs. Decisions will be made based on what is best for each individual scholar, and the Tiered Service Model will be used as a guideline for the approximate number of scholars who will need various supports within the school. It is the responsibility of VCA leadership and the SPED grade level leaders to predict when a level of the tiered service delivery model may exceed the predicted number of scholars (and thus need resource adjustments). These support structures are modeled after Summit Prep and were highly effective with a similar scholar population to the scholars we will target here in Nashville.

## **Scholars with Disabilities**

Valor Collegiate will provide scholars with disabilities with a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) possible. We will comply with all regulatory special education requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any other civil rights enforced by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Likewise, we will fully comply with additional regulations and policies of the state of Tennessee and Metro Nashville Public Schools.

### **Special Education Program Structure**

Our special education program will be spearheaded by a certified Special Education Coordinator (“SPED Coordinator”), directly responsible for ensuring that Valor Collegiate is in compliance with all applicable special education laws and requirements. There will be a SPED teacher for each grade level, and one SPED teacher who will oversee the team of (at scale) twelve SPED teachers in all Stages. The planned ratio of teachers per SPED student will not exceed 24:1. If that is the case then additional SPED teachers may be added. Experienced and certified special education teachers will be employed to ensure that the unique needs and learning styles of all scholars are being met. Whenever possible, we will educate all scholars within the regular education classroom, unless the nature of the disability requires a scholar’s removal.

Special education teachers (“SPED teachers”) will coordinate the direct instruction and inclusion of Special Education scholars. Classroom teachers will be informed of their responsibilities for particular scholars, trained and guided by the SPED Coordinator, SPED teachers and/or the Principal on how to successfully meet those responsibilities, and will implement any modifications or accommodations in their classes in accordance with the scholars’ Individualized Education Plans (“IEPs”). As required (outside of the classroom) tutoring, counseling, physical, occupational, speech and language therapy services will be provided (either by VCA certified staff or specially contracted expert professionals) for those with special needs. Our special education staffing structure through full enrollment is outlined in **Table 31** below.

**Table 36: Special Education Staffing**

K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
1 SPED	1 SPED	1 SPED	1 SPED	1 SPED	1 SPED* *SPED MS Leader	1 SPED	1 SPED	1 SPED

### **Identifying Scholars with Special Needs**

#### **Prior to School Year**

When scholars are admitted to the school, we will use the information on the application regarding IEP identification as the first mode of identifying scholars joining us who may need additional support. This process will look different for scholars entering Valor in Stage 1 versus scholar entering in Stage 3 or have been at Valor for some time. All scholars who enter Valor in Stage 1 will progress through the RtI levels described above. We will continually assess scholars, collect data, and use this to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions implemented. We will use this data to determine if a scholar should move up/down in levels or progress to conduct a full and comprehensive evaluation and determine if the scholar could benefit from an IEP.

For all scholars who self-identify during the application process either in Stage 1 or Stage 3 (in our experience this is about 5% of incoming families in stage 1 and 85% of incoming families in Stage 3) we will set up a transitional IEP meeting with the scholar and family in the Spring and Summer leading up to the start of the school year. In most years this will cover 95% of scholars who have already been through the IEP process before enrolling at Valor.

#### **Personalized Learning Plan**

If the scholar files have not been obtained by the start of school, they will be identified at the latest at the scholar Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) meeting in August and the mentor will take responsibility with the Office Manager of obtaining any missing records.

Parents and teachers of scholars with special needs will attend a meeting led by our Special Education Coordinator to determine appropriate services to be delivered. We will comply with all laws and provisions regarding scholars with IEPs. We will implement IEPs as written, and if a child’s IEP needs to be reviewed for updated goals and services or to determine continued eligibility for special education, the IEP team will convene for a review of the IEP.

#### **In-School Year Identification**

Throughout the school year, VCA’s frequent internal assessment program described in the Response to Intervention section, as well as the RtI process described above, provides an efficient means to identify scholars who are

struggling academically in compliance with the Child Find requirements of IDEA. Weekly, each teacher will review the progress of his/her scholars based upon their performance on homework, class work, tests, quizzes and projects. The Principal and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction (Year 2) will monitor scholar assessment data at regular intervals. This will allow scholars who are struggling with the course material to be identified quickly. If a scholar is not making sufficient academic progress, the Special Education Coordinator, in consultation with the Principal, will develop a pre-referral strategy that may include tutoring and/or other supports (this is part of level 4 detailed above in the RtI process). The effectiveness of the pre-referral strategy on the scholar's progress will be carefully monitored for up to six (6) weeks. In addition, other information will be gathered to determine if a scholar may have a learning disability, such as parent questionnaires, classroom observations, analysis of work samples, and teachers' anecdotal data.

### **Evaluating Scholars with Special Needs**

If pre-referral strategies are unsuccessful, the scholar is not progressing academically, and classroom teachers or special education faculty believe a disability may exist, the scholar will be referred, in writing, to the Special Education Coordinator for individual evaluation and determination of eligibility for special education programs and services. Referrals may be made by any professional faculty member of VCA or a request for referral can be made by a scholar's parents. Such referrals will (1) state the reasons for the referral and include any test results, records or reports upon which the referral is based; (2) describe any attempts to remediate the scholar's performance prior to the referral, including any supplementary aids or support services provided for this purpose; and (3) describe the extent of parental contact or involvement prior to the referral. A copy of such referral along with the procedural safeguards notice described in 34 CFR §300.504 will be sent to the scholar's parents. The Special Education Coordinator and the Principal will convene a meeting with the scholar's parents to discuss the option of psycho-educational testing to determine the child's special education eligibility and to secure written parental consent to conduct such testing. VCA will then conduct such testing, either in-house or via the services of an expert consultant. Once the tests have been conducted and the results are received, an eligibility meeting will be reconvened with the parents, the Special Education Coordinator, the scholar's advisor, and other appropriate faculty. At that time, a decision will be made as to the scholar's eligibility for special education services. If the scholar is eligible for special education services, an IEP for that scholar will be developed. All IEPs will be evaluated and revised as needed at least annually. All assessments and evaluations will be repeated at least once every three years. The IEP will be legally managed by the SPED grade level teacher, but will also be supported by the mentor of the scholar.

### **Section 504**

Section 504 requires schools receiving federal funds to provide scholars with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such scholars to the same extent as the needs of scholars without disabilities are met. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. VCA will adhere to all obligations under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) and Section 504. We will immediately evaluate and identify any scholars protected under Section 504. This includes any scholar determined to: 1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, 2) have a record of such impairment, or 3) be regarded as having such impairment.

The Special Education Coordinator will serve as the Section 504 coordinator to ensure that the legal rights of such scholars are met and that their special needs are effectively served.

The process for identifying and developing plans for scholars with 504 plans is the same as described above for IEP scholars. Monitoring of the 504 plan will be overseen by the scholar's mentor. For a typical elementary school mentor, they have approximately 30 scholars in their classroom, meaning statistically they will have about 3 – 4 scholars who have an IEP or 504 plan. For a typical middle school mentor, they will have 16-18 scholars in their mentor group, meaning statistically they will most likely have about 2 scholars who have an IEP or 504 plan. By dispersing responsibility across all teachers for the monitoring and overseeing a small number of scholar's with special needs the quality and in-depth knowledge of the scholar's needs increases.

### **Resource Class for IEP and Struggling Scholars**

VCA will attempt to keep scholars mainstreamed whenever possible. However, we will provide a Resource class for scholars that may benefit from smaller class instruction, who may need additional support and time to master the mainstream content, who may have resource minutes detailed in a scholar's pre-existing IEP, or in rare cases may need time before they access the mainstream curriculum at all.

The Resource class will be provided as determined in each scholar's IEP meeting. If it is determined that a scholar will require the Resource class in order to successfully master the content standards, the following options will be



considered:

1. Scholar takes regular course load and takes the Resource class instead of their Personalized Learning Lab (53 minutes per day)
2. Scholar does not take History and instead takes Resource class (possibly for two periods a day if in lieu of PLL as well – 106 minutes per day)
3. Scholar does not take History or Science (extreme cases) and instead takes up to 190 minutes of Resource class
4. Scholar does not take any mainstream class. Instead, they have an individualized day that incorporates as much of the mainstream course work as possible but is essentially an inclusive service in the Resource Room.
5. Scholar takes core class through resource blend of push in and pull out.

Scholars who need additional support will be provided with outstanding, small group attention with a SPED expert teacher through this model. It is anticipated that approximately 10-15% of scholars will have IEPs in a given VCA grade level. Of these scholars who have an IEP, approximately 75% will require a Resource class in addition to their mainstream classes.

The Resource classes will focus on the following objectives:

1. Provide content and skill support for mainstream classes
2. Provide remediation as needed to build towards access to mainstream classes
3. Provide behavior and life-skill coaching to build towards access to mainstream classes
4. Meet additional IEP goals not addressed

Summit Prep ran this highly successful SPED Resource model with great success and we are confident that VCA will be able to provide outstanding SPED service to all learners. In 2010, the Special Education Director of the Bay Area SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Areas) called Summit Prep's Special Education program "the best model of Special Education that I have seen in my 35 years of work in education." VCA will take great pride in giving world-class support to scholars with special needs.

#### **Discipline for SPED/504 Students**

As detailed in Attachment 5 – Student Discipline Policy, careful attention and care will be taken with students with special needs when they interact with the Expectations and Consequences at VCA. While we will always seek to treat them as similar to our scholars whom do not have a diagnosed disability, we will also be careful to not treat them unfairly in our system due to their disability. While in the extreme cases we expect this to be handled effectively by always having a manifestation hearing in the cases of lengthy suspensions (3+ days) and expulsions, we also we will be very careful and compassionate when dealing with behavioral incidents that are considered minor or moderate offenses. In these cases, the scholar's mentor will be involved so that someone who knows the scholar well is able to help all parties understand the student, and we will try whenever possible to also involve the parent. In general, we will always follow all Federal and State laws to ensure that student's rights are upheld, but we will also commit to going beyond that to ensure that we treat every student in a personalized way – pushing them to grow while also being compassionate for their disability. There is no perfect system to handle this well; instead, we will seek to train our faculty and leadership so that they make wise decisions in tough moments when they value both the clear expectations and consequences of the school and the growth of an individual student. This training, which involves being aware of the different types of student diagnoses that we have at VCA that year, will take place during the Summer Orientation as well as during the weekly Grade Level team meetings.

#### **Hiring Licensed SPED personnel**

The VCA model includes a large amount of SPED and Coach positions (defined as counselors). In fact, we believe that SPED and Coach positions are extremely valuable to both the SPED and ELL learners in the school, but also generally to all students. SPED teachers are generally very strong at knowing how to break learning down into smaller pieces, and have in-depth knowledge about how students learn because they have worked so closely with students who sometimes struggle greatly with acquiring knowledge. Faculty who are licensed as counselors or therapists (who we call "Coaches" in the VCA model) are very talented in understanding behavior management, emotional intelligence, and group dynamics. Because the VCA model values the development of the whole child, we purposeful have a staffing model that is heavier on SPED and Counselor faculty, especially as the students grow older. We therefore will spend significant time developing relationships with strong SPED and counseling programs in Nashville, Tennessee, and the country. We will include the attraction, development, and retention of great SPED and Coach faculty positions as one of the highest priorities in our hiring process.

#### **Service Providers**



VCA intends to work with MNPS on getting appropriate services for their IEPs. Examples include but are not limited to, speech therapy, occupational or physical therapy, interpreters, medical services (such as a nurse to perform procedures the child needs during the day, for example, catheterization), orientation and mobility services, parent counseling and training to help parents support the implementation of their child's IEP, psychological or counseling services, recreation services, rehabilitation, social work services, and transportation. VCA understands that it is too small as a single school to house full-time FTE positions for these roles, but is confident that they will be able to work out quality agreements with the District to provide these services as needed. As noted in Attachment 10 – Budget Narrative, the VCA Board will always have a contingency plan ready in the case that the costs of an IEP student (or multiple IEP students) increases the expenses on the budget. VCA will be prepared for a \$100k increase in budget in a single year due to unexpected costs due to a student's IEP services.

## **Scholars who are English Language Learners (ELLs)**

**Explain how the school will meet the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students, including the following:**

- **Methods for identifying ELL students**
- **Specific instructional programs, practices and strategies the school will employ to ensure academic success and equitable access to the core academic program for these students**
- **Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of ELL students, including exiting students from ELL services**
- **Means for providing qualified staff for ELL students, including budget assumptions.**

We are committed to providing a challenging and high quality education for all of our scholars. We will serve any and all scholars with limited English proficiency (English Language Learners or “ELL”) using structured English language immersion so that they receive appropriate support and achieve proficiency in the academic English language as quickly as possible. Our ELL program is designed exclusively to meet our mission. We estimate an ELL population of approximately 10-30% based on the data analysis listed in Table 32 below.

**Table 37: ELL and SPED students for Middle and High Schools in Target Areas**

<b>School</b>	<b>ELL</b>	<b>SPED</b>
Glencliff Elementary	44.5%	11.6%
Glengarry Elementary	50.3%	9.4%
Glenview Elementary	57.8%	6.4%
Paragon Mills Elementary	38.2%	9.0%
Tusculum Elementary	55.9%	10.3%
Crieve Hall Elementary	20.9%	11.9%
Granbery Elementary	10.2%	10.3%
Haywood Elementary	54.6%	10.0%
Norman Binkley Elementary	41.3%	12.2%
<b>Average</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>10%</b>

VCA will serve English Language Learners based on the U.S. Department of Education's six steps of progression through an ELL program: 1) enrollment in school, 2) identification of potential ELLs, 3) assessment determining need for ELL services, 4) provision of appropriate ELL services, 5) transition from ELL services, and 6) monitoring ability to participate meaningfully. In implementing our ELL program, VCA will comply with all applicable laws including Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) and the federal Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974.

Scholars with limited proficiency in English will achieve proficiency in the English language through the use of VCA's services and teaching methods. We will ensure that scholars who are ELLs are not excluded from curricular

and extracurricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction, and that ELL scholars are not assigned to special education because of their lack of English proficiency. Parents whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and information from VCA in their native language. Parental outreach will also be conducted through home visit by a school representative and an interpreter.

### **Identification of Scholars who are ELLs**

We will use the following process for identifying scholars who are ELL: (1) Home Language Surveys will be used to screen all new enrollees for potential limited English proficiency; (2) If the home language is other than English or the scholar's native language is other than English, appropriate VCA faculty or a hired interpreter will conduct an informal interview in the scholar's native language and English; (3) If the scholar speaks a language other than English and/or the scholar speaks little or no English, we will administer the TELPA for ELLs. Results from these assessments will be used to inform instruction and ensure all scholars are able to access the academic content and master performance and content standards. (Note: VCA will coordinate TELPA testing with the District)

The RtI identification process will also be used to identify scholars with limited English proficiency. In addition, the PLP meeting with mentor and family will be an opportunity in August for the family and school to discuss potential English language acquisition issues.

Between the Home Language Survey, RtI process, and PLP meetings we are confident that all ELL scholars will be identified quickly and accurately.

### **English Immersion Program and Services**

#### **General Support and Overview**

All ELL scholars will receive the same academic content as those scholars who are native English speakers. VCA will use the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) as the main strategy within mainstreamed classrooms.<sup>42</sup> Per the SIOP model, all instruction at VCA will be in English. However, the level of English used for instruction—both oral and written—will be modified appropriately for each ELL scholar. This does not mean that the content will be “watered down.” Instead, teachers will incorporate a variety of strategies to make the content more comprehensible. For example, use visuals and diagrams, provide many opportunities to practice key vocabulary, and utilize graphic organizers. General education teachers of English language learners will adapt lessons, assignments, and instructional groups to reduce language barriers and to assist ELLs to participate fully in the educational program. Faculty will participate in professional development opportunities in these areas each year during their development, as determined by their Personalized Educator Plan. Scholars will never be prevented from speaking in their native language, either inside or outside of the classroom. We will create the most accepting cultural atmosphere possible, such that scholars of all backgrounds and languages feel welcome and valued.

VCA will be prepared to address the needs of scholars who are struggling with the structured English immersion program by providing, if it is determined to be the best course of action, pull-out instruction and/or assignment of a certified aide, teacher or qualified consultant under contract who speaks that child's native language. Pull-out instruction will focus on increasing basic English - including vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing - so that scholars can perform and participate in their regular classes. In the VCA staffing model, either the Grade Level coach or SpEd teacher will be an EL endorsed faculty member, and, along with the Grade Level SPED teacher, will oversee the Resource class that will serve students who VCA determines need both sheltered instruction and structured immersion.

When possible, in order to minimize disruption to the scholar's daily schedule, these services will take place outside of normal class time (usually during a scholar's Personalized Learning Lab period, as described in more detail below). We will actively recruit at least one full-time teacher who speaks the foreign language that is most common among our scholars. We believe that in order to have meaningful relationships with parents and scholars who do not speak English as a first language, we must be proactive in our communication styles and techniques. This may

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<sup>42</sup> Co-Developers of the SIOP model for teaching ELL students, MaryEllen Vogt, Deborah Short and Jana Echevarria, along with other researchers, have conducted and analyzed the impact of their sheltered instruction model since its inception nearly 14 years ago. SIOP has been validated as a model of instruction that improves the achievement of students whose teachers use it. As Jana Echevarria explains in CREATEBrief, October 2012, as recent as 2011, a high school in Texas and elementary school in Washington restructured their ESL programs into comprehensive SIOP models and were met with astounding results for their ELLs, with ELL's at Tiffany Elementary, WA, scoring 20% better in reading than other ELL students in the state and ELL's at Pasadena Memorial High School, TX, increasing passage rates on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills annually since SIOP was adopted.

require us to be creative through the involvement of translators, community organization support, or friends of VCA. We will make sure that all home-school correspondences are translated using a document service company. During the planning year, we will secure ELL experts to help design and review our ELL services.

### **ELL 1, 2, 3**

Every Spring VCA will administer the ELDA to all scholars who either scored a 1 or 2 on the TELPA on entry into the school in the fall, or students who scored a 1, 2 or 3 on the ELDA the previous year at VCA or their last school. For students who score a 1, 2, or 3 VCA will determine the optimal services to provide to each scholar in order to maximize their success. The most common option will be to use the scholar's Personalized Learning Lab time to be in the Resource Room with our ELL trained Coach who will work with the student on a structured English language acquisition curriculum. If a scholar is determined to need additional support, they may also have an additional Resource class period during the day so that they are receiving up to 150 minutes of instruction in English language acquisition. [S1] In addition, a "Sheltered English Instruction" approach, which emphasizes access to academic content and English language development simultaneously, will be taken through the remainder of the day.

### **ELL 4, 5**

For ELL learners who test at or above a 4 on the ELDA the supports provided in the mainstream program (including RtI Level 3: namely SIOP trained mainstream teachers, differentiation, personalized learning, daily RtI Expeditions, specific identification and pre-teaching of vocabulary, Reader's Workshop, extended semesters, Expeditions remediation, Summer Bridge) are likely to provide appropriate support. These students are determined to be in Transition year 1 (T1) and their progress will be closely monitored by their mentor teacher and the VCA RtI process through T1 and T2. If an ELL 4 or above shows signs of struggling to access the curriculum the options for ELL 1-3 will be considered.

### **Exit Criteria**

The proficiency of an identified ELL scholar receiving pull out services will be measured at least twice a year to determine whether continued special services are warranted. All pull-out and special services will continue until a scholar attains fluency in English language proficiency as measured by the ELDA. In addition, we will evaluate each scholar's performance in academic content areas to measure the scholar's progress in core subjects. If an ELL scholar continues to struggle in these academic areas, modifications to the instructional program may be made. Any scholar classified and receiving educational services as an ELL, who subsequently tests high enough to exit the program, will mark an end to ELL services for that particular scholar. No scholars will exit the ELL program unless they can read, write, and comprehend English well enough to participate fully in VCA's academic program.

### **Accountability and Evaluation of the ELL Program**

In order to ensure that the ELL program is achieving the desired results (scholars are making progress in the acquisition of the English language and making progress academically) and to determine the need for programmatic modifications, VCA will evaluate the progressive growth of its ELL scholars on standardized assessments and non-standardized assessments in comparison to that of non-ELL scholars. VCA will also track scholars longitudinally throughout their matriculation to determine if there is significant variation in the academic achievement of scholars who were once classified ELL and non-ELL scholars as measured by standardized assessments and non-standardized assessments. VCA will track how many scholars are declassified as ELL and the number of instructional years it takes for this declassification to occur.

### **Gifted Scholars**

**Explain how the school will identify and meet the needs of intellectually gifted students, including the following:**

**Specific research-based instructional programs, practices, strategies and opportunities the school will employ or provide to enhance their abilities**

**Plans for monitoring and evaluating the progress and success of intellectually gifted students**

**Plans for hiring qualified staff for intellectually gifted students, including budget assumptions.**

We anticipate serving a small population of scholars who qualify as Gifted and Talented under TN qualifications. We will utilize the application process, scholar cumulative file, and PLP meeting similar to IEP and ELL identification in order to identify such scholars. For these scholars, the VCA commitment to personalized, differentiated courses will be the main support. In addition, the following supports will be provided:

1. **Personalized Learning Plan** – the PLP meeting is the ideal time for Gifted scholars to map out a challenging and rewarding schedule for the year, including many of the options listed below.
2. **Reader's Workshop** - will provide opportunities for Gifted scholars to read at their appropriate level.
3. **Expeditions** – Gifted scholars will have a wide variety of options to choose from during Expeditions to pursue challenging courses that fit their personality and learning style. At Summit Prep, some Gifted scholars designed their own Expeditions courses that included working at Berkeley Laser Lab, programming HTML at Apple, learning Italian and traveling to Italy.
4. **Personalized Learning Lab** – for Gifted scholars, using their PLL period each day to take an additional course of their choosing is an excellent option. Computer programming, Model United Nations, Advanced Math or Science, etc. are all interesting and challenging options that a Gifted scholar may choose to add to their VCA course load.
5. **Badge system** – there will be a wide variety of challenging and inspiring Badge challenges that Gifted scholars may choose to undertake at VCA. For example, a scholar may decide to take on a Leadership, Community Service, Rocket Design, Language Acquisition, or Body Mass Index challenge that best fits their growth goals. Often scholars who are Gifted in one area of their life may have challenges or gaps in other areas. The PLP meeting is an ideal time to identify areas of growth for Gifted scholars, and Badge challenges are an excellent way to either build on strengths or work on areas of challenge.

## SECTION V – ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The most important aspect of Valor Collegiate Academy is encouraging great effort in our scholars to achieve outstanding academic achievement. We will set very high academic goals for all scholars and we will work tirelessly in order to coach and inspire scholars to reach these goals. Listed below are the Academic Goals of Valor Collegiate Academy. It should be noted that we include non-academic goals in our School Goals. VCA includes these goals because we believe that without achieving these goals, we cannot be confident that our scholars will be able to meet our mission of being world-class scholars who graduate from college and lead purposeful and inspired lives.

**Describe the proposed charter school's annual and long-term academic achievement goals, in measurable terms.**

### Academic Goals

#### Board Level Valor Collegiate School Outcomes

Table 38 below shows the overall VCA School Outcomes that oversees the major goals of the school. The VCA School Outcomes is maintained by the CEO and School Leader, and is presented three times per year to the Board of Directors. The first column of the School Outcomes has the Outcomes that VCA will meet in order to ensure that each VCA graduate is ready for success in college and life. The Key Performance Indicators are the indicators that will tell the leadership of VCA if we are on target with meeting our mission. In general these indicators will not change significantly over time. The metrics are measurements that VCA will collect in order to provide feedback on the key indicators. These metrics may change, and will be set using input from school leadership and school faculty. The goals for each of these metrics will be set prior to each school year, most often in the summer (although a few goals may need data from the start of the year in order to make wise goals).

**Table 38: Valor Collegiate Academy Board Level School Outcomes**

Outcome	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Metric	Valor Collegiate Goals 2014-5
College Ready Graduates	Scholars remain at Valor Collegiate	% incoming 5th grade scholars graduating from Valor Collegiate middle school on time	80%
		# of scholars in each grade level on TN Attendance Measurement	5th: 140 6th: 125 7th: 115 8th: 110
	Scholars attend school consistently and on time	Average Daily Attendance	96.5
		% tardies	<3% per day average
	Scholars demonstrate mastery in their classes	% scholars who are Proficient or Advanced on their PARCC exams	Set by CEO and school leader
		% scholars who receive an A/B or above AND a Adv./Prof or higher on PARCC exam	80%
		% alignment of faculty predictions in April with PARCC exams	90%
	Scholars are prepared for success in college	% scholars who believe they can go to and be successful in college	5th: 75%; 6th: 80%; 7th: 90%; 8th: 95%

	Scholars demonstrate academic growth each year towards mastery of VCA HSR standards	% Growth each year ACT Aspire	Set by school leader and CEO in June 2015
		% Growth on TN EOC Exams	Set by school leader and CEO in June 2015
		% Growth on Internal Assessments (Pre-Post each year)	Set by school leader and CEO in June 2015
		% Growth each year on MPG/MAP	Set by school leader and CEO in June 2015
		% scholars meeting growth goals each year on MPG/MAP	Set by school leader and CEO in June 2015
		% Growth on Fountas and Pinnell level K – 6) and Lexile Reading (6 – 8)	Set by school leader and CEO in June 2015
	Scholars demonstrate VCA's Foundational Character Strengths	% scholars agreeing to the statement "Valor Collegiate scholars typically demonstrate Valor Collegiate's Character Strengths."	80%
		% scholars receiving a "BASIC or above" in all Character Strengths by the evaluation of their mentor and teachers	60% mid-year, 75% end of 5th 85% end of 6th 95% end of 7th 100% 8th
	Scholars demonstrate mastery of all HSR standards by graduation	% scholars receiving a "BASIC or above" in all HSR standards	100% seniors; add metric for 5-11
		% faculty that can state the Core Values and key HSR categories and identify how/where their curriculum addresses them	100% by Dec each year
<b>High Achieving Teams</b>	Valor Collegiate attracts and retains the "right fit" teachers	# of high quality applicants/faculty job opening	5
		# faculty leaving Valor Collegiate/VCA after 2 or fewer years that are a cultural, philosophical, and skill fit	< 10%
		# faculty leaving Valor Collegiate/VCA that are a not a cultural, philosophical, and skill fit	Less than 2 or 7.5% per year (depending on year of school)
		Faculty average years as a classroom teacher at Valor Collegiate	4 years
		% Faculty who "buy-in" to mission, vision, and non-negotiables as measured by a FIT assessment rubric	100%
	Faculty are	% Faculty who reach Bonus Goals	85%

	consistently high performing	% high performing faculty (combination of Continuum Levels and FIT assessment)	80%
		% of faculty that agree with the statement "VCA Home Office provides high quality products and/or services"	90%
		% of scholars who agree "my classes this year are engaging and motivating"	90%
		% scholars agreeing to the statement "My mentor provides valuable help in my college planning"	90%
		% scholars agreeing to the statement "My mentor helps me be successful at Valor Collegiate"	90%
		% parents agreeing to the statement "My scholar's mentor provides valuable coaching and guidance to help him/her achieve his/her potential at Valor Collegiate"	90%
		% parents agreeing to the statement "My scholar's mentor provides sufficient coaching and guidance in his/her college planning"	90%
<b>Strong Culture</b>	Community culture is productive, positive, and high trust	% community (faculty, scholars, parents, and Board) agreeing to focused culture questions on community survey	90%
		% faculty that agree faculty meetings are productive and useful	90%
		% board members that agree board meetings are productive and useful	90%
		Valor Collegiate scholars can state the mission of the school	9th:75%; 12th:100%
		Valor Collegiate culture is consistent in monthly walk-throughs	"Excellent" average
	Valor Collegiate community is diverse	# of total applicants from each targeted demographic	150% # of targeted seats
		% enrolled scholars in various ethnic & groups and income categories	near District average
		% applicants in various ethnic groups & income categories	near District average
		% scholars/faculty agreeing to statement "I feel I am accepted for who I am at Valor Collegiate"	90%
		% scholars/faculty agreeing to the statement "I appreciate being in a school with people who are different than me"	90%
		% scholars agreeing to the statement "I have sufficient opportunity to take leadership roles in Valor Collegiate clubs, class projects and other school activities"	75%
	Valor Collegiate community is emotionally and physically safe	% scholars/faculty agreeing to statement "My teachers care about me"	95%
		% community members agreeing to the statement "I felt physically safe at Valor Collegiate"	95%
		% community members agreeing to the statement "I felt emotionally safe at Valor Collegiate"	95%



		% suspensions and expulsions	< 1% expulsions; <10% suspensions
	Valor Collegiate has a clean, orderly environment that helps ensure the mission of the school	% Community members agreeing with the statement "Valor Collegiate is clean and orderly"	90%
		Clean/orderly measure in culture walk-throughs	Need to set after tool development
	Community members are ambassadors for Valor Collegiate mission and vision	% parents who fulfill volunteer hours	90% complete > 5 hours
		% parents who return community survey	75%
		% community agreeing to the statement "I have recommended Valor Collegiate to other parents"	90%
		Valor Collegiate graduates are satisfied with Valor Collegiate	90%
	Finance and Operations	Organization is fiscally and operationally sound and viable	Valor Collegiate runs a balanced budget
Valor Collegiate has an independent annual audit and receives a “clean” opinion with no significant findings			
Budget versus Actual			Variance within 5%
% Fundraising target raised			Meet school fundraising goal by June 1
Forecasted budget versus actual (w/ net income)			
End-of-year Fund Balance			3% reserve
% faculty agreeing to statement "I had the opportunity to make authentic input into the Valor Collegiate budget"			100%

### Promotion Criteria

**Explain how students will matriculate through the school (i.e., promotion/retention policies and graduation requirements). Tell how parents will be informed and educated about these standards.**

Stage 1 and Stage 2 Criteria

#### *Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration Policy*

Valor's promotion policy guides the promotion and retention of scholars at the end of the academic year. Valor intends to follow MNPS policy for promotion, retention, and acceleration of all scholars.

VCA has outlined a set of criteria that are used to determine promotion and retention for all of Valor's scholars in line with MNPS' policy. This criteria is applied across scholars, though when making decisions specific to promotion, this depends greatly on the individual scholar and their progress across several goal areas.

Benchmark grade levels for retention are in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and scholars can be retained \*only\* two times in K – 8 without the appropriate Assistant Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction from MNPS.

The criteria used to determine promotion used in the MNPS policy shall apply to scholars with disabilities. Scholars who meet the goals of their IEP should not be considered for retention, but may be considered at risk and eligible for interventions. If a scholar is an English Language Learner, and is making adequate progress, the scholar will not be considered for retention but may be eligible to receive interventions.

Promotion Criteria (i.e. scholars are promoted to the next grade when the following is true) for all scholars:

- Academic Performance – The scholar has a final grade of C- or better in reading and math on the final report card. In order for a scholar to earn a C- or better in reading and math on the final report card, he/she must meet both of the following criteria:
  - Earn satisfactory unit test scores in reading and math; consistently complete homework assignments during the year.
  - Meet Valor benchmarks for Goal Assessments including the STEP and Fountas and Pinnell Literacy assessment for reading and the NWEA MPG/Map assessment for English Language Arts & Math. See Valor benchmarks detailed in the table below.\*
- Attendance – The scholar has no more than 9 unexcused absences (no more than 1 unexcused absence per month)

If a scholar is recommended for retention while at Valor, the following must happen:

- The teacher must develop a personal learning plan for each scholar that may include appropriate in-school, after-school, year-round components and other interventions developed by teachers in conjunction with the principal, the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction, the Special Education Teacher, the grade level coach, and the scholar's parents.

#### Benchmarks for Goal Assessments

Scholars will earn a C- or better in the following subject areas:

#### Reading<sup>43</sup>

- Grade Level Benchmark
  - Valor considers if a scholar met the grade level benchmark for the time of the year based on the NWEA and F & P Benchmarks as shown in table 39.
- Growth Goal –
  - Please note that for Fountas and Pinnell, for promotion and retention purposes, scholars are considered on grade level for growth if they are on pace to grow 1 year in reading within the academic year
  - Please note that for NWEA, for promotion and retention purposes, scholars are considered on grade level for growth if they met their NWEA individualized growth goal as shown in table 40.

Table 39: Grade Level Benchmarks for Reading Level

Fountas and Pinnell Benchmarks				
Grade Level	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
K	A	B	C	D
1	D, E, F	E, F, G	G, H, I	I, J
2	J, K	K, L	L, M	M, N
3	M, N	N, O	O, P	P, Q
4	P, Q	Q, R	R, S	T, U

Table 40: Grade Level Benchmarks for MPG/MAP Reading Performance

NWEA MPG/MAP Reading			
Grade Level Benchmark	Beginning of the year	Middle of the year (quarter 2)	End of year (quarter 4)
Kindergarten	142.5	151	157.7
First	160.3	170.7	176.9
Second	175.9	183.6	189.6
Third	189.9	194.6	199.2
Fourth	199.8	203.2	206.7

#### Math

- Grade Level Benchmark
  - Valor considers if a scholar met the grade level benchmark for the time of the year based on

<sup>43</sup> All benchmarks are based on meeting the benchmark criteria for Independent levels.

the NWEA Benchmarks as shown in Table 41.

- Growth Goal –
  - Please note that for NWEA, for promotion and retention purposes, scholars are considered on grade level for growth if they met their NWEA individualized growth goal for that point in the year

Table 41: Grade Level Benchmarks for MPG/MAP Math Performance

NWEA MPG/MAP Math			
Grade Level Benchmark	Beginning of the year	Middle of the year (quarter 2)	End of year (quarter 4)
Kindergarten	143.7	150.7	159.1
First	162.8	172.4	179
Second	178.2	185.5	191.3
Third	192.1	198.5	203.1
Fourth	203.8	208.7	212.5

#### Notification Process

Parents/guardians of scholars at risk of retention shall be notified in writing on a quarterly basis if their child is in danger of retention. They will be notified at the end of each academic quarter at Report Card Pick-Up Day. Valor will err on the cautionary side and will notify parents that their scholar is at risk for retention if their child meets EITHER of the following criteria:

If their scholar is receiving a failing grade (below a C-) grade in reading or writing

If a scholar has accumulated more than 1 unexcused absences for each month school has been in session

If a parent/guardian does not attend Report Card Pick-Up, all retention notification letters will be mailed home via USPS (with receipt confirmation).

#### *Dean's List and Growth Award*

At Valor we recognize scholars for various reasons that they have been successful. One way to do this is through a formal Dean's List at the end of each academic quarter. In the 2016 – 2017 school year, there will be two Dean's Lists. Scholars make the Dean's List if:

Principal's List – scholars earn grades of 'As' or 'Exemplary' in all subjects on report card

Dean's List – scholars earn no more than 3 'Bs' or 'Proficient' on report card

Growth Award – scholars who make exceptional growth in a quarter will earn a growth award. This is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Scholars will be celebrated via the quarterly awards ceremony, and a quarterly Dean's List luncheon.

#### *Grading Policy*

Valor's grading system is designed to fairly and accurately represent a scholars' learning within a quarter. It includes both summative assessments which show a scholars' mastery of grade level standards (Fountas and Pinnell, NWEA MAP) and more formative assessments that represent both scholars' developing mastery and effort toward meeting grade level standards (weekly quizzes, projects, exit tickets, etc.)

Scholars' grades are a combination of both performance on grade level assignments (Fountas and Pinnell, NWEA MAP, unit assessments) and more effort based assignments. This is to strike the balance between the fact that many Valor scholars fall below grade level AND are still held to high grade level standards.

For the 2013 – 2014 school year Valor will use CPS' IMPACT system for web-based gradebooks and report cards. Training will be provided on this system.

## Grading Guidelines

### Stage 1 and Stage 2

#### Reading

- K – 2
  - 1 grade per category aligned to the F & P benchmark for the quarter:
    - Fluency – 20%
    - Accuracy – 20%
    - Comprehension – 20%
    - Reading Readiness Benchmarks – 20%
  - Formative Literacy Grade – 20%
    - includes effort
  - includes any other assignments (unit tests, sight word quizzes, word work quizzes) that teachers want to grade scholars on
- 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>
  - 1 grade per category aligned to the F & P benchmark for the quarter:
    - Fluency – 15%
    - Accuracy – 15%
    - Comprehension – 15%
    - Word Work – 15%
      - based off of work formative work and spelling assessments during Words Their Way
    - Formative Literacy Grade – 40%
      - includes effort
      - includes any other assignments (unit tests, sight word quizzes, word work quizzes) that teachers want to grade scholars on
- Grading Scale:
  - K – 2: all grades are based on a 5 point scale; above target receives a 5, at target receives a 4, below target receives a 3.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>:
    - Independent above the quarter's benchmark – A – 10 points
    - Independent at the quarter's benchmark – A – 9 points
    - Independent 1 level below the benchmark – B – 8.5 points
    - Independent 2 levels below the benchmark – C – 7.5 points
    - Independent 3 or more levels below the benchmark – D – 6 points

#### Math

- Grade Requirement: 1 grade per week
- Categories:
  - Unit Tests – 65%
  - Formative Math Grade (formerly assignments) – 25%
  - Participation – 10%
- Grading scale: all Formative Math Grades should be scored on a consistent scale within a grade level; either a 5 point scale or a 0 – 100% point scale. Teachers should utilize a consistent scale to ensure formative grades are weighted equally.

#### Science and Social Studies

- 1 grade per week
- Categories:
  - Unit Tests – 65%
  - Formative Science/Social Studies Grade (formerly assignments) – 25%
  - Participation – 10%
- Grading scale: all Formative Science and Social Studies Grades should be scored on a consistent scale within a grade level; either a 5 point scale or a 0 – 100% point scale. Teachers should utilize a consistent scale within the formative category to ensure formative grades are weighted equally.

#### Writing

- Categories:
  - End-of-Unit On Demand: 60%
    - 1 End-of-Unit On Demand piece per unit
  - Formative Grade: 40%
    - 1 formative grade per week
- Goals: writing grades are based off a 4-point scale. Each Unit of Study has a corresponding rubric.

Table 42: Kindergarten Writing Rubric

Kindergarten Rubric		
Number of Points	Scaled Score	Grade
2 – 22	1 – 2	D
22.5 – 27.5	2.5	C
28 – 33	3	B
33.5 – 44	3.5 – 4	A

Table 43: 1<sup>st</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Rubric

1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>h</sup> Grade Rubric		
Number of Points	Scaled Score	Grade
1 – 16.5	1 – 1.5	D
17 – 27.5	2 – 2.5	C
28 – 33	3	B
33.5 – 44	a. – 4	A

#### Expeditions Courses

- 1 grade per week

#### Miscellaneous

- Homework completion

### Stage 3 and Stage 4 Criteria

In order to be promoted to the next grade level in August, each VCA scholar must:

1. Pass all their academic courses with a C- or higher
2. Pass all their Expeditions courses with a C- or higher
3. Scholars have demonstrated progress on the behavior growth metrics.
4. Have not missed more than 15 days of school without a medical reason

Scholars who are not passing a class at the end of a trimester (each 8 week session leading up to an Expeditions session) will be required to attend the extended semester sessions for that class. The extended semester sessions will be held from 3:00-5:00pm during Expeditions. At the end of the second and third Expeditions sessions, a final grade for each course will be determined by the teacher of the course. If a scholar has not passed a course at this time with a C- or higher they will be given an F for the course. **(There will be no D grades at VCA, as D grades are not accepted by colleges).** In order to continue on to the next grade level, a scholar must pass all courses prior to the following August. In order to pass classes that they have failed during the course of a year, the following options will be supported:

1. **Academic Boost Course** - Scholars may be placed in the ABC Expeditions course to work on their courses that they have not mastered to a C- level in a course called **Academic Boost Course (ABC)**. For example, a scholar who has a 57% in Math and a 44% in English may, upon consultation with their mentor and family, be given the opportunity to not take their Elective Expeditions course in January and instead take the ABC course. During ABC, scholars will work with a VCA teacher and individually to complete coursework and take mastery assessments in order to achieve a C- in the courses that they have not mastered. We anticipate that about 5-10% of scholars will opt for this option each Expeditions.
2. **Summer Bridge** – Scholars who are not passing 1-2 courses at the end of the year may choose to attend Summer Bridge. The scholars will be given additional coursework and assessments during Summer Bridge in order to demonstrate mastery at a C- level in a course. We anticipate that less than 5% of scholars in a class will need some extended time in the summer to pass a course.

3. **Independent Online Recovery** – Scholars may also choose, with their family and mentor, to take online replacement courses for a class they have failed at VCA. Courses must be approved by VCA school leadership as equivalent in rigor to a VCA course. Scholars may submit a transcript of a passing grade (again C- or higher, even if the online course allows a D grade as passing) to VCA prior to the beginning of school the following August.
4. **Repeat Grade Level** – If a scholar is failing more than 2 courses at the end of a school year in June they will be retained in that grade level the following year. VCA will work very hard to create a positive culture where retention is viewed as meaning that some scholars need more time to master material and is respected for the grit and courage it takes to value education and college readiness above social impact.

VCA will work incredibly hard with scholars and families in order to ensure that scholars are able to master the content and skills necessary to be successful each year. However, we do believe that promoting scholars who are not prepared for the next level is a disservice to the scholar and will eventually lead to their academic failure. We intend to build a culture where mastery of concepts is paramount: being prepared for success in college and life will be more important to scholars and families than graduating in eight years. If it takes some scholars nine, or even rarely ten years, to graduate but they are will prepared for college and life we believe this is the type of courageous decision by that scholar should be celebrated and valued within the VCA community. This promotion model is based on Summit Prep in CA which had very high levels of success in keeping the majority of scholars moving forward in a rigorous curriculum (about 85-95% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders moved onto to 10<sup>th</sup> grade each year, the highest risk year for retention).

### **Parent Communication - Promotion and Exit Standards**

Parent communication at VCA will be conducted in the following ways:

1. **Parent Information Nights** – as will be discussed in Section X: Community Engagement VCA will hold information nights for potential parents. At these events, the graduation and promotion requirements of the school will be first introduced. VCA will start the education process early in our relationship with families so that everyone is clear about the expectations of the school before even deciding to apply to have their child attend.
2. **Parent University** – VCA will hold three 90 minute Parent Orientation sessions for new families in July each year. These will be called Parent University and they will give families a comprehensive overview of what to expect, and how to engage with VCA. Promotion and graduation requirements will be reviewed at these sessions.
3. **Personalized Learning Plan** – By far the most important session for communication regarding graduation requirements and promotion will be the PLP meeting, held in August/September each year with the scholar, family, and mentor. The mentor will explain the graduation requirements with the scholar and family, and will set a plan to ensure that the scholar is moving forward towards graduation.
4. **Intervention Meetings** – As discussed in the Response to Intervention (RtI) section for special populations, when a scholar is struggling academically or behaviorally an Intervention meeting will be held with the family, mentor, and grade level teachers. These meetings will occur for all scholars who are failing two or more classes in a semester, one to two weeks prior to the end of a semester. It is preferred to have the meetings in person, but they may be done via phone if a parent cannot attend in person. An academic or behavior plan will be created during this meeting to help guide the scholar towards success, and the plan will always include a reference to how any decisions made affect the scholar's path towards graduation.
5. **Online Standards-Based Tracking System** – As discussed in the next session, parents and scholars will have real-time access of their progress towards mastery of the VCA standards defined in the HSR. Parents and scholars will be trained on how to view the information online, and will be able to communicate with their mentor at any time for help in determining their progress.
6. **Phone/Texting** – the online system will also email/text/call (parent choice) with warnings and updates regarding their scholars progress towards graduation and the standards of each course. Again, parents will be trained and also supported via their scholar mentor in how to use this system.

As stated in the Board Level Goals, communication with VCA families will be a high priority and strength of the VCA model.<sup>44</sup> We believe that the personal connection that is created between each family and their mentor is the key to having outstanding, trusting, and continual communication with VCA families. When combined with great training, orientation, and technology we hope to be an example for excellent communication with families.

## **Exit Standards**

**Provide the school's exit standards for students. These should clearly set forth what students in the last grade served will know and be able to do.**

In order to graduate from VCA, the criteria in Table 44 must be met. (Note: These requirements are established to ensure that scholars enter high school with the necessary prerequisite coursework to be successful in their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year)

**Table 44: 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation Requirements for Valor Collegiate (grades 5 – 8)**

<b>Course or Requirement</b>	<b>Years (or Explanation)</b>
English	4 years
Math	4 years
Science	4 years
Social Studies	4 years
Fine Art	1 year
Physical Education	4 years minimum of Basic on Spark Fitness rubric; 100 hours of physical activity completed on PLP each year
Expeditions	Successful completion of Expeditions coursework in MS (completion of 12 expeditions courses)
Social Emotional Learning	Basic or above on Foundational Framework in all categories by graduation
Foreign Language	2 years
Core Discipline	Scholars select core discipline for high school
VCA Badges	8 badges earned
VCA Character Strengths	Basic or above on Character Strength Rubric in all categories
PLP goals	Scholars make acceptable growth on all PLP goals

<sup>44</sup> While most would agree and research bears out, family involvement impacts schools. However, according to Amy Reschly for the RTI Network, some of the most effective family-school partnerships have been found to include: communication and dialogue between family and school, joint monitoring of student progress, and parent intervention centered on specific outcomes, all hallmarks of the VCA family partnership model.



## SECTION VII – ASSESSMENTS

### Assessment System

Identify the primary interim assessments the school will use to assess student learning needs and progress throughout the year. Explain how these interim assessments align with the school's chosen curriculum, performance goals and state standards.

Explain how the organization will measure and evaluate academic progress – of individual students, student cohorts, sub-groups, and the entire school – throughout the school year, at the end of the academic year, and for the term of the charter agreement.

Explain how the school will collect and analyze student academic data, use data to inform and improve instruction, and report that data to the school community. Identify the person/persons or positions that will be responsible for the collection and analysis of assessment data.

Describe the process for collecting data, interpreting it for classroom teachers, and leading or coordinating professional development to improve student achievement.

Explain the training and support that school leadership and teachers will receive in analyzing, interpreting, and using performance data.

Describe the school's approach to help remediate students' academic underperformance. Detail the interventions and remediation to be implemented and how they will be chosen. Cite the research/rationale for the chosen methods.

VCA believes that a world-class assessment cycle is one of the most important features of outstanding teaching and learning. VCA even extends this theory beyond scholar teaching and learning to include the entire VCA organization. In order to be a great learning organization, everyone within the organization must be clear on what the expected outcomes are, and must be given regular, meaningful data on progress towards those outcomes. Outstanding training must be given so that everyone can develop the capacity to analyze that data in order to make wise decisions about how to best proceed towards the agreed upon outcomes. This cycle should ultimately include the most important person in the organization: the scholar. By the end of the VCA experience, it is the intention that each VCA scholar will be able to self-manage their own learning data in order to achieve their academic and non-academic goals. This section will detail the overall VCA data assessment system, including how we intend to use our gradual release model to transition the assessment system from teacher and parent centered to scholar centered.

### Data Assessment System

VCA sets out to be a leader in collecting, analyzing, and acting on data in order to maximize both student and teacher learning. We will use data in order to personalize the learning experience for all community members. The following section describes an overview of the data and assessment systems that VCA will utilize.

A brief description of each component of the system:

1. **Knowledge Management System** – VCA will use Illuminate for its Knowledge Management System (KMS). Illuminate is actually a few different products in a single sign-on:
  - a. **Student Information System** – scholar demographics, grades, attendance, State reporting, Special Education and discipline are all tracked in the SIS portion of Illuminate
  - b. **Data and Assessment** – the data and assessment capabilities of Illuminate are excellent. State Standards, Common Core Standards, and Internal Standards can be uploaded into the Illuminate system. Assessments can then be linked to these Standards. Assessments can be easily uploaded via video scanning, making data uploading nearly real-time.
  - c. **Activate** – Illuminate has partnered on a grant with Summit Public Schools in CA to develop an additional tool called Activate. Valor Collegiate will be able to access this exciting tool. Activate provides functionality to leaders and teachers to further analyze scholar data and to make “smart” suggestions to scholars for lessons, readings, and online videos depending on the results of their assessments. In addition, the tool helps make suggestions for differentiated groupings based on mastery of standards. For example, if scholar's A, B, and C all have weak mastery of finding the slope of a line, but scholars D, E, and F have mastered that skill, Activate can suggest “tutor pairing” where a student

who has mastered the material works with a student who hasn't (i.e., A with D, B with E, etc.), OR Activate can suggest a remediation activity for students A, B, C and an extension activity for students D, E, and F.

## 2. Additional Assessment Management

- a. **Mastery Connect** – in addition to Illuminate/Activate, VCA will use Mastery Connect (MC). MC integrates with Illuminate, but enhances teachers and leaders ability to design and analyze great assessments. Mastery Connect links with the Student Information System and allows for teachers to track mastery of the TN State Standards and the Common Core. It also has formative assessments on these standards, and easy-to-use digital uploading of these assessments in order to get data on student performance back in real-time. In addition, it allows teachers and leaders access to a national network of teachers who are working on Common Core, AP, and TN State assessments.
- b. **Online / Blended Content and Assessment** – VCA will utilize multiple online content and assessment providers for various courses and grade levels. Many of these providers have data from their online assessments that will be incorporated into the VCA KMS. In order to create a “single sign-on” for each scholar and teacher that essentially combines the VCA KMS with these various online content and assessment providers, VCA will partner with Education Elements (a Silicon Valley organization that specializes in developing blended learning solutions for schools). Ed Elements and VCA will build a customized Data Management System that combines with Illuminate and will be on the leading edge of collecting and analyzing scholar data from multiple systems.
3. **Behavior Tracking System** – VCA intends to use Kickboard or Live School for their behavior tracking system. Both systems link with Illuminate and will allow for behavior and discipline assessment data to be tracked efficiently. Again, VCA will work with Education Elements to combine this data into a “single sign-on” for VCA community members, including scholars and families.
4. **Community School Outcomes** – By partnering with Education Elements, VCA intends to have easy to access and understand Community School Outcomes for parents, scholars, teachers, and leaders that have all the important information they need in order to track scholar's progress towards the VCA mission.
5. **Teacher and Leader Development** – VCA intends to use Bloomboard for dynamically managing teacher and leader development, as will be discussed in more detail in Section XIII: Professional Development. Bloomboard is a very exciting new data management system from Silicon Valley that VCA believes has the opportunity to really accelerate the way teachers are trained.

## External Assessments

VCA will use a combination of external and internal assessments in order to measure progress towards the VCA mission and goals. Table 45 shows the external tests that will be used at each grade level:

**Table 45: External Assessments used at VCASE**

	<u>Assessment Purpose</u>	<u>K</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>
English	Reading Level	Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System								
	Benchmarking to PARCC, national comparison	NWEA MPG			NWEA MAP		NWEA MAP ACT Aspire			
	CCSS	n/a			PARCC					
Math	Benchmarking to PARCC, national comparison	NWEA MPG			NWEA MAP		NWEA MAP ACT Aspire			
	CCSS	n/a			PARCC					
Science	Standards mastery	n/a			EOY PARCC					
Social Studies	Standards mastery	n/a			EOY PARCC					

VCA will work to have enough external assessments each year so that the VCA community is well informed about the progress of our scholars as compared to other scholars in TN, the Nation, and the World. However, we will also

be aware that high stakes external tests, while important, also take time to administer and can have taken an emotional toll on scholars; therefore, they can be a liability to the overall learning process and ultimate goals of our mission and must be used judiciously.

### **Internal Assessments**

VCA will administer common unit assessments across courses at the end of each unit of study. VCA will also administer cumulative interim assessments at the end of each semester of learning. Unit and interim assessments will be internally developed, although we will contract for assistance in developing the multiple choice sections so that they are accurate representations of the external assessments that our scholars will take (i.e. PARCC, NWEA MPG/MAP, ACT Aspire). We will use Intell-Assess to develop the multiple choice sections of our internal assessments. The development of internal assessments is considered one of the key components of the teacher development cycle; therefore, internal assessments will always be at least partially developed within the VCA organization. The VCA Internal Assessment Cycle is shown below in Table 46.

**Table 46: Internal Assessment Schedule & Data Analysis**

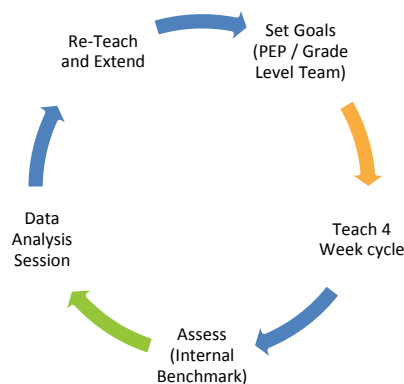
	Mid Quarter 1	End of Quarter 1	Mid Quarter 2	Quarter 2	Mid Quarter 3	Quarter 3	Mid Quarter 4	End of Year
Week	Week 4	Week 9	Week 14	Week 21	Week 27	Week 31	Week 38	End of school
Number of days	2 days	10 days	2 days	10 days	2 days	2 days	2 days	10 days
Assessments Administered	Units 1, 2 assessment	Unit 2 assessment	Unit 3 assessment MPG/MAP	Unit 4 assessment MY interim assessment Reading level assessment	Unit 5 assessment	Unit 6 assessment PARCC PBA	Unit 7 assessment MPG/MAP	Unit 8 assessment EOY interim Reading Level Assessment EOY PARCC
Data Sources	Unit assessments	Unit assessments	Unit assessments MPG/MAP	MY interim Reading Level Assessment	Unit assessments	Unit assessment	Unit assessment MPG/MAP	EOY interim Reading Level Assessment

As shown, a large amount of time is spent analyzing internal and external data. **40 days of time during the regular school year are devoted to professional development time for teachers, with at least 20% of that time spent on analyzing scholar data and developing action plans for ensuring excellent personalized instruction for each scholar.** We are not aware of any model that devotes as much time towards analysis, planning using scholar assessment data and VCA believes that this unique use of time and focus on data analysis and planning will allow both the scholars and the teachers to excel in this model.

### **Data Assessment Cycle**

The data assessment cycle at VCA is shown in Figure 2. In order to capitalize on the large amounts of time for analysis and teacher development that are created by the use of the Expeditions schedule, the data analysis sessions must be very well organized, and differentiated for each teacher and grade level. The process that we envision for these days is outlined below:

**Figure 5: VCA Data Assessment Cycle**



### **Data Analysis Session 1, 3,5,6,7**

**Duration:** 2 days

#### **Overview:**

These sessions are after a four-week cycle, which usually coincides with approximately one Unit of instruction. Teachers will have the following objectives for the two-day sessions:

1. Grade any short answer, open-ended responses with rubrics and upload data into KMS
2. Analyze scholar data and identify each scholar's strengths and challenges with the standards of the Unit(s)
3. Identify trends across scholars/classes with respect to standards
4. Reflect on lesson planning and execution of lessons; draw conclusions about how each affected scholar outcomes
5. Decide upon and document changes to lesson plans and execution for next year
6. Create an action plan for each scholar and class to ensure they learn standards from previous four week Unit, including possible options of:
  - a. Re-teach to entire class
  - b. Re-teach to small groups / Extension for others
  - c. Re-teach outside of class time (Office Hours, tutoring, Saturdays, Expeditions)
  - d. Spiral key themes into upcoming Unit
7. Review KMS for all mentees and call/email each scholar and their parent for discussion of current academic standing
8. Review upcoming Internal Assessment (usually a large 8 week assessment, or year-end assessment) – make changes if appropriate
9. Modify / create lesson plans for next four week Unit based on data and review of upcoming assessment

The basic analysis sessions will have the following key steps:

1. Upload all assessment data to KMS prior to Data Analysis Days
2. Work in content teams to analyze data
3. Reflect and present data to VCA leadership (DCI or Principal)
4. Work in content teams to create action plans
5. Reflect and present action plan to VCA leadership
6. Present action plan to grade level team
7. Work in content team to design lesson plans for next Unit
8. Present lesson plans to VCA leadership

### **Data Analysis Session 2, 4**

**Duration:** 10 days – Expeditions periods 1 and 2

#### **Overview:**

The same basic objectives and overview will occur during these sessions. The biggest difference is that each step of the process is allowed considerably more time. The points of emphasis with the expanded time will be:

1. More in-depth collaboration and sharing of teachers around successes and challenges
2. More in-depth work with school leadership on reflection and action plans
3. More cross grade level and vertical team time to look for patterns across courses, and also to see gaps and strengths across years (i.e., for 6<sup>th</sup> grade Science teachers to share with 5<sup>th</sup> grade Science teachers that scholars are showing gaps in their knowledge of Cells – these teachers can then work

- together on improving the 5<sup>th</sup> grade lessons on Cells, or discuss how to spiral Cells more frequently into the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum)
4. Time for visits to great schools/teachers outside of the VCA organization. For example, 5<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher identifies that her scholars are struggling with Grammar and her school leader helps her coordinate to go observe a world-class teacher at Nashville Prep who is very strong in grammar instruction.
  5. School-wide sharing of key learnings, successes, and challenges – faculty will commit to being a powerful learning community that shares successes and struggles

## **Data Analysis Session 8**

**Duration:** 10 days – final Expeditions period

### **Overview:**

The final Expeditions Data Analysis session is during the last two weeks of school. It will feel very similar to the other two 10 day sessions, but will have less focus on planning for the next session. Instead, there will be increased focus on detailed reflection and sharing of what worked and what we need to improve for the following year. The steps are, again, similar, but heavy emphasis is placed on analyzing the data from the entire year in teams of teachers, and then documenting what to change for the following year, especially in terms of assessments. School leadership and Master Teachers will then use this information in the summer to improve upon the assessment cycle and curriculum.

## **Professional Development for Data Analysis**

In order to ensure that the Data Analysis days described above are effective, VCA will ensure that faculty members are highly skilled in data analysis. VCA will utilize the following approach for training all faculty in effective data analysis:

1. **Leadership data analysis training** – School leaders must be experts in data analysis, classroom instruction, and coaching in order for the data analysis cycle to be effective. The school leader for VCA will spend an entire year leading up to opening the school working with the CEO of VCA, traveling to see world-class leaders in action and practicing data analysis. In addition experienced teachers in the VCA system have the opportunity to become Master teachers. One of the strands on the Continuum for growth towards a Master teacher is successfully undergoing 160+ hours of data analysis and 160+ hours of data analysis coaching, or approximately 5 years of data work in the VCA system. These Master teachers will be key leaders in guiding emerging teachers through the VCA process.
2. **Technology training** – Many data analysis processes are not effective because either a) the data is too complicated and therefore overwhelming, or b) the data is too difficult to access/process because the leaders and teachers are not experts in the technology tools. In order to avoid these pitfalls, VCA will make it a point of emphasis in hiring to find faculty and leaders who are technology savvy and excited about the potential of data and technology to revolutionize education. In addition, a significant part of each data analysis session will be on training all educators on how to use the technology tools to manipulate data. Every data analysis session (whether in the summer, the two day sessions, or the full ten day Expeditions sessions) will include differentiated sessions on the technology tools that will be overseen by the Chief Technology Officer and executed by school leadership and Master teachers.
3. **Guided practice with data** – the main strategy for developing excellent data analysis skills among the faculty at VCA will be to have teachers receive considerable amounts of guided practice with a data expert, especially as they are developing as emerging instructors. School leadership (DCI and/or Principal) and Master teachers will work closely with newer teachers (year 1-3) during the Data Analysis Sessions in order to guide them with daily, consistent feedback on collecting, uploading, analyzing, reflecting, and creating action plans based on their data. For example, a year 1 teacher will be teamed with a Master Teacher (year 5+) and will teach the same Math course to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. All teachers in common courses will give the same internal assessments and therefore will co-design the assessments. When the Data Analysis sessions arrive, the Master teacher will lead the analysis sessions, guiding the emerging teacher through the process. School leadership will have regular check-ins with the team, and will provide differentiated feedback to both teachers on how to improve assessments, lesson plans, and execution of instruction.
4. **Collaborative sharing and feedback** – A core teacher (and scholar) development belief at VCA is in order to develop a high capacity faculty, each faculty member must have the courage and

desire to commit to a public, collaborative growth process. By committing publicly to improving as educators we will create an environment where growth amongst our educators is valued and expected each year. One of the key strategies VCA will use to build capacity and trust among the faculty is to have regular collaboration around strengths and challenges in each other's teaching and learning. As part of each professional development session, faculty will regularly share successes and failures with each other, as a way to build trust and communal knowledge around what is working (and not working) in our model. Faculty will also regularly practice giving and receiving feedback with each other, with the cultural belief being that compassionate feedback is a gift that helps everyone grow. A typical VCA professional development session will be startling to observe for those not used to such a high trust, courageous environment: teachers and leaders will all show courage, vulnerability, humility, and passion for growth as they share and analyze their data together. Failure and successes will both be celebrated as important aspects of continual growth in the Core Discipline of teaching.

### **School-wide and Sub-group Assessment**

VCA will utilize the Expeditions periods to also analyze data at a school-wide level. Data will be compared against other schools, and will also be compared for growth against previous years. This data will be shared with faculty, students, parents, and the general public. VCA aims to have high transparency with all of our data, and will be forthcoming in our areas of strengths and also our weaknesses. In addition, sub-group assessment will be part of every level of data analysis at VCA. Because we aim to have a richly diverse set of scholars at the school we anticipate having multiple sub-groups large enough for data sets, and we will use those sets at all levels of data analysis.

**Describe the school's approach to help remediate students' academic underperformance. Detail the interventions and remediation to be implemented and how they will be chosen. Cite the research/rationale for the chosen methods.**

### **Remediation for Academic Underperformance**

Remediation for academic performance is undertaken in the following tiers at VCA:

1. **Classroom Level** – VCA teachers have a unique opportunity to review data every 4 weeks for 2 days, and every 8 weeks for 10 days. Out of these analysis sessions teachers will design action plans for all students, but especially for struggling students. Most common remediation actions for struggling students will include:
  - a. Re-teaching key concepts in small groups during class time
  - b. Office Hour assignment with student to re-teach key concepts
  - c. Saturday School assignment with student to re-teach key concepts
  - d. Peer tutoring assignment for student to re-learn key concepts
2. **Expeditions** – For students who need additional support (as per data analysis), they are assigned to additional remediation support during Expeditions
  - a. **Extended Semester** – Students who have not learned all concepts from an 8 week cycle will be assigned to Extended Semester from 3-5pm during Expeditions and will be taught key concepts
  - b. **Expeditions Remediation Course** – Students who need considerable extra time to learn key concepts from Math and English will be assigned an Expeditions Remediation Course (actually called ABC – Academic Boost) that meets in the mornings during Expeditions for 3 hours each day and focuses on the key skills and concepts in Math and English that a scholar is struggling with. These courses are taught in teams by VCA faculty as part of their Professional Development process.
3. **Summer Bridge** – Some scholars will need additional support beyond Office Hours, Extended Semester, and Academic Boost in order to pass their courses may be assigned to Summer Bridge (Summer School) at year's end. These courses will be three weeks in length and will be taught in June each year.
4. **Grade Level Retention** – For a small number of scholars it may be determined by VCA leadership, faculty, mentor, and family that the best decision for keeping a scholar on the path towards college is having them spend another year in the current grade before moving onward. These decisions are made very judiciously and compassionately.



## SECTION VIII - School Culture

**Describe the desired school culture or ethos of the proposed school and how it will promote a positive academic environment and reinforce the charter school's mission, goals and objectives.**

**Explain how you will create, implement and sustain this culture for students, teachers, administrators and parents starting from the first day of school. Describe the plan for acculturating students who enter mid-year.**

**Explain how the school culture will embrace students with special needs, including students with disabilities, English language learners and students at risk of academic failure.**

In our visits to the highest performing public and private schools in the country, the most common predictor of outstanding academic achievement was a focused, positive culture that had clear, high expectations for every scholar. VCA believes that having a strong scholar and faculty culture is the most important ingredients of a world-class school. While it is tempting to focus on academic achievement first, great schools invest first and foremost in school culture. Without a strong school culture, consistent long-term academic achievement is very difficult to achieve. As Ron Berger stated in *An Ethic of Excellence*, students' achievement and character are shaped by the culture around them (2003). Strong cultures need to be carefully constructed: every detail needs to be carefully thought about and planned for in order to develop the type of culture that promotes positive growth in all community members.

VCA intends to have a culture that embodies our Core Values, and works to develop and celebrate our Character Disciplines and Character Strengths. We intend to clearly communicate that every community member of VCA, which includes all VCA faculty, leadership, scholars, and families, will be held to the same high standards and expectations for being positive stewards of the VCA culture.

### **Foundational Values**

Valor's foundational values are aligned with the foundational dimensions and represent the balanced and integrated aspirations of the school:

- Purpose
- Wisdom
- Kindness
- Excellence
- Diversity

### **Foundational Character Disciplines**

Mastery in each foundational dimension is achieved via the Foundational Character Disciplines. All of the activities of the school are aimed at cultivating the following in every member:

- noble purpose
- sharp minds
- open hearts
- aligned actions
- strong relationships

### **Character Strengths**

For each Foundational Character Discipline, there are character strengths and behaviors that we believe support the development of that discipline. While all character strengths are valued and nurtured, there are 15 specific strengths that are intentionally developed in all members of the school community through practice and learning.

- (7) Noble Purpose: [Transcendence and Temperance] Purpose, Hope, Gratitude, Joy, Humor, Humility, Appreciation of Beauty
- (7) Sharp Minds: [Wisdom and Temperance] Curiosity, Love of Learning, Judgment, Ingenuity, Perspective, Self-Control, Prudence
- (4) Open Hearts: [Love and Courage] Kindness, Valor, Forgiveness
- (4) Aligned Actions: [Courage and Justice] Grit, Integrity, Citizenship, Leadership
- (4) Strong Relationships: [Wisdom and Justice and Transcendence] Social Intelligence, Fairness, Playfulness, Love



A good summary of the VCA Core Values is “We will work hard every day because we want to grow. We will be kind to everyone in our diverse community every day. We will celebrate our individuality and we will embrace our community. We will support each other joyfully in order to be one of the best schools in the world!”

In order to live these Core Values every day, we will work on developing the following Character Strengths in each community member.

In order to make these Core Values and Character Strengths come alive in the daily culture of the school, the following systems and strategies will be utilized:

### 1. Scholar Orientation

- a. **Home Visit** – in kindergarten, every scholar will have a home visit by their mentor and/or school leadership in the summer before school starts. At this meeting, every family will be welcomed to the VCA community in a joyful manner. Scholars will receive a t-shirt for the year. The school mission, Core Values, and Character Strengths are first introduced at this meeting.
- b. **Summer Bridge (beginning in stage 3) - approximately 75%+ of incoming 5<sup>th</sup> graders** will attend the Summer Bridge program in June. The program will run for three weeks in July. Part of the program will include an introduction of the VCA mission, Core Values, and Character Strengths. The scholars who attend Summer Bridge will become scholar leaders when the August Sessions for all VCA scholars begin.
- c. **Valor Institute** – scholars will have a 4-day Orientation prior to the first day of academic school. This Orientation session will be led by school leadership, parent volunteers, and in later years predominantly by older VCA scholars. The sessions will focus on:
  - i. **VCA Mission** – through stories and vivid examples, scholars will be introduced to the school mission
  - ii. **Core Values introduction** – through stories and experiences the Core Values will be introduced
  - iii. **Character Strengths** – again, through stories and vivid examples, our expectations of living the VCA Character Strengths will be clearly explained
  - iv. **Expectations and Consequences** – all school expectations and consequences will be carefully detailed and **practiced**. For example, how scholars sit in Morning Meeting, how scholars walk in the Hallways between classes, how scholars eat lunch and clean-up, how scholars greet faculty and fellow scholars, how scholars enter and exit the building, etc. Great detail and focus will be spent on making sure that every scholar is 100% clear on how they are supposed to behave as a VCA scholar. All expectations and consequences will be carefully tied back to explanations for how they develop the Character Strengths and support the Core Values of the School
  - v. **Community Building** – ice-breaker games and get-to-know you sessions will be lead to show that we will break through the normal “cool/uncool” paradigm of adolescence and will inspire scholars (and teachers and parents!) to find joy in school, and to equate kindness with a “cool” way to behave.
- d. **First two weeks of school**
  - i. **Orientation Reinforcement** - Morning Meetings, and a small portion of each class period (about 5 minutes) will be spent reinforcing all of the lessons introduced during the August Orientation.
  - ii. **Classroom Expectations and Consequences** – A strength of nearly all high performing schools is the shared commitment across classrooms to the exact same set of expectations and consequences.<sup>45</sup> VCA will have a shared set of expectations and consequences for each VCA classroom, and for non-classroom time. These classroom expectations will be carefully detailed and practiced in the first two weeks of school in every classroom. A list of the kindergarten and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Expectations and Consequences is listed in Attachment 5 – Student Discipline Policy. As the scholars progress through the Gradual Release model at VCA, the expectations and consequences will become more and more internally based. The exact Expectations and Consequences for classrooms in these later Stages will be developed in the year prior to that Stage opening.

<sup>45</sup> Shared consequences and expectations have been identified as key components of prevention programs in schools that accelerate academic achievement, diminish problem behaviors, and increase readiness for learning. See, *Prevention Strategies That Work*: <http://cecp.air.org/preventionstrategies/textonly.htm>

## 2. Faculty Orientation

- a. **August session** – VCA will conduct a differentiated 10-12 day Orientation for new faculty in the three weeks leading up to the start of school. The session will include culture building (described here) as well as the previously discussed assessment and curriculum development sessions. VCA believes that having a strong, high trust faculty culture is equally important to having a strong scholar culture, and in fact is a necessary ingredient for the latter. Attachment 27 details a draft Calendar for these sessions.
  - i. **High Trust Culture** – faculty will be led through sessions on what a high trust culture looks like, how to develop a high trust culture, and how to ensure its continual growth. The book *The Speed of Trust* by Stephen Covey will be used as the basis for the sessions, as well as *Drive* by Daniel Pink, and *Practice Perfect* by Doug Lemov. A high trust culture has the following characteristics that all VCA faculty will aspire to:
    1. **Common mission and clear expectations**
    2. **Positivity**
    3. **Consistent, honest feedback**
    4. **Minimal water cooler talk**
    5. **Humility**
  - ii. **Mindset** – all faculty must have a deep understanding of Carol Dweck’s theory of mindset. Her book *Mindset* will be an assigned summer reading, and multiple sessions will be led by faculty members on how VCA will live and incorporate this critical Core Value into the culture of both the scholars and the faculty.
  - iii. **Sweat the Small Stuff** – in order to be an effective faculty, we must have crystal clear understanding and agreement on all of the expectations and consequences that we will have for our community. The Expectations and Consequences (E&C) for scholars will be introduced, with time for discussion, feedback, and input for changes. Once the E&C has been determined for the year, faculty will spend considerable time *practicing* how to effectively deliver clear expectations, and how to handle fair and compassionate delivery of consequences. Faculty will work in teams and practice real scenarios of giving feedback to real scholars (and sometimes faculty playing the role of scholars). Clear, bite sized feedback will be given for each scenario from school leadership, the grade level Coaches, and Master teachers. Faculty will also practice giving feedback to each other re: common issues that affect faculty, including parent interactions. In short, VCA faculty will be incredibly well prepared to handle all the “small stuff” in a consistent manner because they will practice, practice, practice. The practice builds trust in the faculty culture, builds deep familiarity with the expectations, and builds skill in delivering consequences that are fair, consistent, compassionate, and always tied to growth towards the VCA Character Strengths.
  - iv. **Practice Perfect** – Faculty will also have a summer reading assignment to read Doug Lemov’s *Practice Perfect*. Many of the suggested skills and strategies from the book will be utilized as part of the faculty orientation, especially around taking skills that are essential to running great schools (and classrooms) and breaking them down into small, practicable skills. Leadership at VCA will present a small number of skills that all faculty will practice together, and will also suggest specific skills for each faculty member to develop in their Personalized Educator Plans (described below).
  - v. **Core Discipline commitment** – As part of the orientation sessions, faculty will publicly commit to their Core Discipline for the school year. This practice can be simply “teaching”, i.e., they are going to put significant energy into becoming a deeply committed education practitioner. However, they may also commit to another Core Discipline. A secondary passion will be more common with more experienced educators, but not always. For example, a faculty member may choose to run a marathon, become fluent in Spanish, or become an expert in ELL strategies. Faculty and scholars will be taught the same theory and process for working on a Core Discipline, and will periodically share their triumphs and struggles with each other throughout the school year.
  - vi. **Personalized Educator Plan (PEP)** – every faculty member at VCA will also have a PEP. A copy of the PEP Document is shown in Attachment 20 and will be discussed in more detail in Section XIII: Professional Development. The

PEP meeting with school leadership will occur during the Faculty Orientation sessions.

- b. **Expeditions sessions** – Expeditions is a rare 30-day opportunity to develop teachers. As discussed in the Assessment Section, about 30% of this time will be spent developing teachers through the Data Analysis Cycle. While this cycle is focused mainly on analyzing scholar data, it really is an extensive opportunity for teachers to develop as excellent classroom teachers. By using the data cycle as the central focus, teachers and leaders are able to discuss and work on all aspects of world-class teaching: assessment, curriculum design, lesson planning, classroom execution, and emotional intelligence (especially self-management and relational awareness and management). The remaining time in Expeditions will include a focus on scholar and faculty culture. Some of the possible topics that will be addressed/developed:
    - i. **Scholar culture** – any relevant scholar culture issues will be discussed, and strategies for addressing them will be developed and planned. For example, if bullying is an issue in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level team will spend time developing an effective plan to address and deal with the issue in a way that builds the Character Strengths of all of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade scholars. If academic integrity is a worry in 6<sup>th</sup> grade then the 6<sup>th</sup> grade team will develop a plan for the upcoming 8 week session to address it. If a school-wide issue is noticed (i.e., lack of joy in the classrooms) then the entire faculty will schedule a session to address the culture issue. By having time and consistent breaks in the schedule to address these types of culture issues, we will never allow culture to drift too far from our ideal.
    - ii. **Faculty culture** – similar to scholar culture, if issues in faculty culture need to be addressed, sessions will be schedule during this time. For example, if there appears to be inconsistent execution of Expectations and Consequences across content areas or grade levels they would be addressed here.
    - iii. **Courageous conversation** – faculty will be trained in how to have Difficult Conversations, especially with fellow faculty members, and also parents. *Difficult Conversations* (Stone & Patton, 1999) will be used as the model. Strong cultures are not devoid of problems, but instead are defined by how they pay attention to and address problems as they occur. VCA will regularly train faculty and encourage them to have open, honest conversations with fellow faculty members in order to promote a healthy, transparent culture.
  - c. **Leadership Team meetings** – LT meetings will be held from 2:05-4:05pm on Wednesdays. These meetings will be mainly for professional development, but will also work to build positive culture among the faculty. A few of the culture building aspects are listed below:
    - i. **Shout-outs** – all meetings will start with a 3 minute rapid fire session of “shout-outs” to fellow VCA community members for actions that represented the Core Values or Character Strengths of the School
    - ii. **Appreciations** – multiple times per year (usually at notoriously difficult stretches in a school year – i.e., late October) faculty will do specific Appreciation sessions where they spend 20 minutes either writing or verbally appreciating their fellow faculty members
    - iii. **Failure celebrations** – one time per week faculty will do a rapid fire “celebration” of failures. Faculty will volunteer areas or examples where they have failed recently. Faculty will acknowledge their courage and growth in the areas.
3. **Parent Orientation** – It is a belief at VCA that parent culture is a critical ingredient in successful schools. It is also a belief the vast majority of parents want to be involved and part of the school culture, but have not been taught how or given the right type of opportunities. In order to ensure that the VCA parent community is engaged, knowledgeable, and supportive of the VCA mission for their scholars, we will use the following culture building strategies.
- a. **Recruiting sessions** – from the very start of the recruiting process, VCA will work to make all parents feel welcomed and inspired by the VCA culture. Recruiting sessions will involve current scholars and parents (after year 1) who will detail the school culture.
  - b. **Home Visit** – the home visit described above is a very important step in engaging parents in the VCA community. Volunteer opportunities are described to parents at this meeting, and they are encouraged to find opportunities that fit their lifestyle.
  - c. **Summer Bridge** – one of the many volunteering options for parents is during the Summer Bridge programs. During these sessions, parents are invited to attend the culture

classes that introduce the VCA mission, Core Values, and Character Strengths of the school. Parents are also invited to attend the sessions on Mindset.

- d. **Parent University** – VCA will have three 90-minute sessions during Summer Bridge (at night and on Saturdays) that will be a comprehensive introduction to the VCA culture for families. We will do our very best to get all parents to attend these sessions so that they can start to build a trusting relationship with the school, and so that VCA can begin to understand each family. As part of Parent University, parents will be asked to attend an evening Orientation Meeting (7-9pm) and a Saturday Orientation Session (either 9-12pm or 1-4pm). Ideally parents will attend both the evening session and one of the Saturday sessions. Parents will be personally called by their mentor and invited to each event, and the importance of the events will be explained to them. We aim to have 100% attendance at these events, and will be very persistent in order to get all parents to attend. The home visit often makes getting 100% attendance at these events possible, because the mentor has already started to create a personal relationship with the family.
  - i. **Mindset** – one of the key sessions at these events is a parent version of Mindset, which explains the key idea that by working hard we get smarter, and that intelligence is not a fixed number, but can be developed through hard work. This message is often an inspiring and well received one by parents, both for themselves and their children.
  - ii. **Technology Training** – parents are trained on how to use their laptop to check on scholar progress at school. VCA realizes that parents who are not tech savvy will need multiple coaching sessions throughout the year in order to build the skills necessary to be partners in their scholars educational growth and will schedule multiple sessions throughout the year.
- e. **First two weeks of school** – again, parents are encouraged to volunteer during the first two weeks, helping with attendance, lunch, welcoming, room decorating, camping trip planning, and laptop check-outs. We especially like to have parents attend the Morning Meeting sessions to get a sense of the VCA culture, expectations, Core Values, and Character Strengths.

- 4. **Clear Expectations and Consequences** – VCA will have very clear expectations and consequences (E&C) for behavior, especially for the Stage 1 scholars who enter in Kindergarten and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade in 2015. We believe the E&C are critical at this stage of adolescent development, and properly set the stage for the gradual release model at VCA that carefully develops college ready scholars. Very clear and consistent E&C are also a critical component of the VCA culture. It is a core belief at VCA that every E&C is directly tied to the support of a VCA Core Value, or helps develop a VCA Character Strength. Therefore, all E&C are designed solely for the purpose of helping our scholars grow and meet our mission. When developing any type of strategy or system at a VCA school, the question “is this good for our scholars’ growth?” must be answered in the affirmative in order for the strategy or system to be acceptable. In other words, systems or strategies that simply make life easier for adults are not acceptable at VCA. A few of the highlights of the systems that support the E&C (see **Attachment 5a: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Student Discipline Policy**):

- a. **Stage 1 and Stage 2: positive behavior support:** At Valor, we utilize a positive behavior support approach to discipline. We believe that all scholars can learn the skills necessary to be successful in school, to demonstrate VCA’s core values and character strengths, and to use these skills and values to become successful college students. A positive behavior support system approaches behavior from an educational, proactive perspective that requires positive relationships and a preventative approach, rather than a reactive approach. Therefore, Valor’s Code of Discipline defines expected behaviors first; then school rule infractions; followed by possible strategies for correcting the behavior. As with academics, we believe that Scholars should be praised and rewarded for meeting behavior expectations. For this reason, we have a number of creative opportunities for Scholars to receive rewards. Some of these opportunities include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. **Valor Tickets:** scholars are given Valor tickets to signify that they are meeting expectations, particularly in shared spaces like hallways, the cafeteria, and restrooms. These tickets are used in a daily raffle drawing in the classroom. At the end of each week, the tickets are again used for a school-wide raffle at our Morning Meeting.
  - 2. **Valor Fuel:** When an entire class is meeting expectations, they are rewarded with bright blue Valor Fuel to acknowledge a whole group

effort. Valor Fuel can also be earned in Expeditions classes to let classroom teachers know when scholars are continuing to show core values and character strengths outside of the classroom. During Friday's school wide Morning Meeting, Valor Fuel awards for the week are tallied and the winning class will have its college flag proudly displayed at the school entrance.

3. **Awards Assemblies:** Twice each year, families and scholars gather for an awards assembly, during which teachers select one scholar for each of the focus character strengths in the classroom. The principal and deans also award Deans' Awards to recognize exemplary scholars in the areas of leadership, social and emotional competency, academic achievement, and model behavior.
- b. **Stage 1 and Stage 2 Logical Consequences<sup>46</sup>:** In addition to acknowledging behavior expectations, we respond to repeated misbehavior using a system of Logical Consequences. Using logical consequences combines our high level of behavior expectations with a climate that is responsive to the social and emotional development of scholars. The goal is to help scholars notice and reflect on the connections between their actions and the consequences of those actions. Logical consequences are always respectful, relevant to the scholar's actions, and realistic.
- i. **Relax and Return:** Relax and Return is a consistent, calm, and non-punitive strategy for helping scholars develop self-control while preserving the smooth flow of the classroom. When scholars are lacking focus – maybe talking to a friend during instruction, or unable to track the teacher who is speaking – we allow the scholar to go to Relax and Return. This is a designated spot in the classroom with a timer and sometimes an object to help relax, where the scholar takes time away from the group to refocus. This Relax and Return spot is always separate from the group but close enough that the scholar is still engaged in instruction rather than being isolated and missing out on any learning opportunity.
  - ii. **Reparation:** A second Logical Consequence is what we call Reparation, or “You broke it, you fix it.” Reparation gives scholars the opportunity to take responsibility by fixing the damage they have caused. If a scholar loses control and knocks something over, makes a mess, or damages someone else's property, they are expected to fix what they broke. This can mean “fixing” it when a scholar has damaged someone's feelings, or paying to replace a book that a scholar has torn. Repairing what has been broken ensures that the scholar understands the consequences of his or her actions and internalizes the importance of the rules and expectations we have in school.
  - iii. **Loss of Privileges:** Finally, when scholars are behaving irresponsibly, they Lose a Privilege. Privileges are opportunities to learn to be reliable, to take responsibility for following the expectations when acting autonomously. For example, if a scholar is splashing water at the drinking fountain, they lose the privilege of getting a drink with their peers. They will need to get a drink at another time with adult supervision. Or, if a scholar is running outside the safety boundaries at recess, the scholar loses the privilege of playing that game at recess and needs to sit next to an adult until recess is over.
- c. **Stage 3 and Stage 4: Graduated Discipline System** – for each Stage of the VCA model there will be a Graduated Discipline System. The GDS describes the levels of action taken by VCA as a scholar progresses through the year in relationship to the Expectations and Consequences (E&C). The GDS for Stage 3 is shown in **Attachment 5: Student Discipline Policy**. A high-level description of each GDS, by Stage:
- i. **Stage 3** – in Stage 3 the E&C and the GDS do not give much room for error or choice for scholars. Scholars are given very clear expectations and

<sup>46</sup> Stage 1 and Stage 2 logical consequences are based on intervention strategies identified in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system and Love and Logic. [www.loveandlogic.com](http://www.loveandlogic.com); <http://www.pbis.org/>



consequences, and the GDS consequences generally focus on individual consequences (usually detention and loss of Paycheck points).

- ii. **Stage 4** – as scholars progress to Stage 4 they have begun to develop self-discipline and have responded well to the clear E&C of Stage 3. The Expectations are therefore less specific in Stage 4. For example, instead of “there will be no talking in the hallways between classes” the expectation is “classes in session and faculty working will not be disturbed by scholars changing classes in the hallways”. In short, scholars will be given expected outcomes rather than expected behaviors, and as part of their consequences they will be expected to discuss how they decided to achieve a certain outcome and how that decision/behavior did or did not work to achieve that outcome. The general consequences are similar at Stage 4, except that detention time is spent in more dialogue discussing their behavior choices in order to develop self-awareness around their behavior choices.

- d. **Stage 3 and Stage 4: Merit / De-Merit System** – VCA will use the LiveSchool Merit/De-Merit system to enforce E&C within the classroom and in non-academic settings. We will use this system as a paycheck system where scholars are awarded Character Currency for exceeding expectations, and will lose Character Currency when they do not meet clear expectations. All faculty will have laptops and will have the capability (and expectation) to note both positive and negative behaviors for scholars in real time. Faculty will be incredibly consistent in following their grade level E&C. Building on and celebrating the positive behaviors will always be a focus at VCA, and when negative behaviors are identified, the consequence will always be tied to the growth of a particular Character Strength or Core Value (i.e. Johnny, I am noting that you did not raise your hand so that you can continue to improve in your growth of Kindness towards your fellow classmates). The tracking of the system will be the responsibility of each mentor, and will be overseen by the grade level Coach.
- 5. **Mentor Groups** – Strong mentor program is critical to developing a strong culture. Many of the culture building activities are run during Connections class (in Stage 1 and Stage 2 taught throughout morning meeting across the week; in Stage 3 and Stage 4 taught by each mentor to their 16-18 mentees each Friday afternoon). In addition, whenever school-wide issues are addressed or discussed it will often be in the mentor group.
  - 6. **Morning Meeting** – The Morning Meeting will be a central hub for monitoring, reinforcing, celebrating, and discussing culture. It will be the most visible aspect of the strong VCA culture on a daily basis.
  - 7. **Scholar of the Week/Month** – In Stage 1 and Stage 2, during whole school Morning Meeting classroom teachers will award a scholar of the week. In Stage 3 and Stage 4, one Morning Meeting a month will be to give Awards to outstanding scholars in each class that embody as our expectations for academics and/or Core Values and Character Strengths.
  - 8. **Scholar Leadership Team (stage 3 and stage 4)** – A volunteer team of ambassadors and “culture leaders” who will work with Principal and DCI to keep a pulse on the scholar culture and will be leaders at key moments when the school culture needs to be addressed. Will have one member from each mentor group, plus any other scholars who wish to join.
  - 9. **Core Values and Character Strengths Box** – the Core Character Box gives all community members an opportunity to Shout-Out Fellow VCA community members for being a positive force within the culture.

### **Mid-Year Acculturation**

For scholars who enter VCA during the school year, the following strategies will be used in order to get them up to speed as quickly as possible on the school culture.

- 1. **Shadow Day** – scholars who wish to enroll will be given the opportunity to Shadow during one of our VCA Shadow Days. These days are run 2x per month and are designed to give scholars a clear idea of the VCA program. Scholars who wish to transfer to VCA will be requested to attend a VCA Shadow Day to ensure that they feel the school is a good fit for them and their family.
- 2. **Mentor PLP** – in the first week of a new scholar’s enrollment they will have their PLP meeting with their mentor. This will be the main source of information and acculturation for the new scholar and their family.

3. **Scholar Leadership Team** – part of the role of the SLT will be to appoint a current VCA scholar to be a “buddy” for the new scholars. Ideally this scholar will share a mentor group with the new scholar and will be responsible for checking in on the scholar daily for the first month (usually during mentor time) and communicating with their mentor if any issues arise.
4. **Saturday Orientation with parents** – One Saturday per month will include a Parent Saturday Orientation session that will be run by current parents, and will include a culture session run by school leadership.

### **Culture: Special Populations**

VCA intends to be an exceptional school for including all scholars in the positive, kind culture of the school. A saying that was used frequently at Summit Preparatory Charter was “We Leave no Husky Behind” (the Summit school mascot was “Husky”). This saying was deeply respected and embodied in the Summit Prep culture by scholars, faculty, and parents. It was used regularly in conversations, award ceremonies, discipline discussions, and, most telling, in conversations among scholars themselves. The positive impact on the entire culture was in many ways transformative. It is for this reason that We Leave No Patriot Behind (assuming the mascot is the Patriots) will be one of the Key Beliefs of the school. It is the responsibility of every member of the VCA community to always look out for their fellow community members. This important belief, coupled with the Core Value of Kindness, will be critical to developing a welcoming and supportive culture for all scholars, but especially for scholars who may have had difficult experiences in schools in the past. The scholar leaders at VCA will be the models for how to treat all scholars with kindness and respect, and the school community will expect all community members to live these basic expectations every day.

Some specific strategies that will be used for scholars with exceptional special needs:

1. **Mentor group coaching** – the mentor group will be held to exceptionally high standards of Leaving No Patriot Behind for all of its members. Even in a school that will be as emotionally and physically safe as VCA, adolescents can still stumble at times, and it will be the mentor group responsibility to be especially watchful for their fellow mentees, and to talk with their mentor if they see any bullying or unkindness happening, especially to scholars who may have difficulties in social settings, or have disabilities that can make them possible targets for unkind behavior.
2. **PLP** – when developing the Personalized Learning Plan, the mentor, scholar, and family will all look to set goals that will help the scholar grow in all areas of their life. For example, a scholar with Asperger’s Syndrome may have a 504 Plan that specifies how teachers should interact with them during class time, and perhaps a Resource Class is assigned two times a week with the grade level Coach to develop skill in recognizing facial expressions. The PLP may be used to set goals around making friends, and taking risks in class. Typical goals on the PLP in this case may be: “I will introduce myself to 1 new scholar per week this fall and ask them to eat lunch with me. I will ask Jade in my mentor group for help with choosing scholars to introduce myself to”, and “I will raise my hand at least once in every class”. These goals are monitored by the mentor and family and are often publicly shared within the mentor group so that they can all help each other grow.
3. **Scholar Leadership Team** – as with new scholars, the SLT will often help when requested by mentors. An example might be the one given above, where the Asperger’s scholar has set a goal to eat lunch with new people this Fall. The mentor may ask for the help of the SLT, who may find volunteers to eat lunch with the scholar. A careful balance of acting kindly and joyfully while not acting out of pity will be coached with all scholars at VCA.



## Section IX - Enrollment, Recruitment, Marketing

**Describe how parents and other members of the community will be informed about the school and how students will be given an equal opportunity to attend the school.**

**Specifically describe any plans for outreach to: families in poverty, academically low-achieving students, students with disabilities, English Language learners, and other students at risk of academic failure. If your school has a specific area of focus, describe the plan to market that focus.**

**Where are the families located you are trying to reach? What outside groups would you target for marketing and recruitment?**

VCA will strive to recruit a scholar population that will be reflective of the general population of the Overton, Cane Ridge, Glenclyff, and Hillsboro clusters, as shown in Table 47 below:

**Table 47: Demographics for Targeted Clusters Middle Schools**

School	Black	Hispanic	White
McMurray Middle School	15.20%	45.60%	20.20%
Antioch Middle School	26.90%	46.60%	23.00%
Apollo Middle School	43.00%	30.10%	23.10%
Croft Middle Design Center	23.50%	26.10%	47.40%
Thurgood Marshall Middle School	53.20%	23.10%	18.90%
William Henry Oliver Middle School	34.70%	11.50%	45.20%
Wright Middle School	25.70%	44.30%	24.20%
Glenclyff Elementary	13.40%	58.90%	26.40%
Glengarry Elementary	22.70%	56.00%	19.00%
Glenview Elementary	14.40%	45.20%	39.10%
Paragon Mills Elementary	28.90%	49.10%	16.40%
Tusculum Elementary	13.30%	46.20%	21.60%
Crieve Hall Elementary	11.40%	22.50%	58.50%
Julia Greene Elementary	15.60%	2.60%	75.40%
Granbery Elementary	16.30%	11.40%	60.70%
Shayne Elementary	34.60%	5.70%	51.20%
Percy Priest Elementary	7.50%	4.50%	83.30%
Glendale Elementary	7.70%	6.00%	83.10%
<b>Average</b>	<b><u>22.67%</u></b>	<b><u>29.74%</u></b>	<b><u>40.93%</u></b>

VCA will engage in a variety of means and strategies to try to achieve this type of racially and ethnically diverse scholar population. These strategies will include:

- 1. Family room events** – VCA has been conducting events in living rooms of potential VCA parents since the Summer of 2012. These events typically have 6-10 parents or guardians who are invited to a friend's house who might be interested in the VCA model. VCA leadership has already conducted over 50 family room events.
- 2. Community center and church events** – VCA has been holding larger information sessions for our first school over the past year. At the date of this application we have completed 10+ information sessions at various churches and community centers (Lake Providence, Salahadeen Center, Casa Azafran, Edmondson Pike Library).

3. **Elementary School information events** – VCA will contact every local elementary school in the targeted clusters and request to have a short informational event at the school for parents and scholars. These events have been very helpful at Summit Prep in CA as they helped to build understanding among local public schools about charter school models, and allowed charter school leaders to better understand the local context in which they work. We hope that we are able to make this types of events happen.
4. **Targeted marketing**
  - a. **Mail** – VCA will direct mail all families in the targeted cluster with scholars entering K and 5<sup>th</sup> grade with information about the model as well as information about community events being held in their area. We hope to be able to get mailing lists from MNPS for these scholars.
  - b. **Media** – VCA will use varied local media outlets to get information out to possible families and supporters re: upcoming community events. Over the past year multiple positive news stories have been reported by Channel 5 News, the Tennessean, and NPR (local and national).
  - c. **Email** – VCA will build an ongoing email list of interested families and supporters of the model. As of the submission of this charter application, we already have approximately 1200 supporters on our email list. We will continue to build the list throughout the next (and upcoming years). We recognize that many low-income families do not have access to email lists so we do not plan on this being our only communication source with potential families.
  - d. **Door to Door** – One of the most effective methods of meeting potential families is talking to them face to face at their houses. VCA will employ a large door to door recruitment process in targeted areas. In the past year we have knocked the door of every rising 4<sup>th</sup> grader in SE Nashville, and we plan to do this again in the Fall and Winter of 2015. We will target specific areas that will help to ensure that our application pool reflects the diversity that we desire in the model.
5. **Adaptive marketing** – as applications begin to be processed in the Fall of 2014, we will do a weekly demographic analysis, looking at ethnicity and zip code. We will employ an adaptive marketing strategy that will be dictated by the demographics of the application pool. If we are low in Hispanic scholars we will alter our marketing strategy to increase the Door-to-Door and Direct Mail campaigns to neighborhoods with a higher percentage of Hispanic families. VCA was highly successful in 2013-2014 with this strategy for our first middle school and we anticipate having similar success in future years.
6. **Special Populations** – VCASE understands that it can be particularly challenging to effectively market to low-income parents. In order for the above strategies to be effective with low-income families, VCA will do the following additional items:
  - a. **Diverse Board** – VCASE is committed to having a diverse Board that represents that student body they wish to attract. To this end, we have recruited an excellent Founding Board that includes a mixture of race, gender, and socio-economic status.
  - b. **Specialized Marketing** – VCA is excited that Danielle Austen is on the Founding Board. Mrs. Austen is the CEO of Ignition Marketing which specializes in multi-cultural marketing and will be a great asset in ensuring that VCA is effective in reaching a diverse group of families.
  - c. **Community Partnerships** – VCA has already created strong relationships with Gatluak Thach (NICE), Remziya Suleyman (ACR), Fabian Bedne (Hispanic Councilman), and Renata Soto (Conexion) in order to ensure that we are able to effectively reach refugee families, the Muslim population, and the Hispanic families in the South Nashville area. All of the respected leaders are excited about the VCA model and VCA plans on engaging them throughout our recruitment process for advice and strategy on ensuring we achieve a truly diverse student population.

### **Enrollment Policy**

**Provide as an attachment the school Enrollment Policy, which should include the following:**

**Tentative dates for the application period and enrollment deadlines and procedures, including an explanation of how the school intends to receive and process application forms.**

**A timeline and plan for student recruitment/engagement and enrollment.**

**An explanation of the purpose of any pre-admission activities for students or parents; and**

**Policies and procedures for student waitlists, withdrawals, re-enrollment and transfers.**

Valor Collegiate hopes to market the school successfully enough to receive a large number of applications from a richly diverse group of families. The Enrollment Policy details the specifics of the enrollment plans for the first

class of scholars (Attachment 21). VCA will comply with all TN requirements regarding legal, fair and equitable treatment of all families interested in applying to VCA.

**Provide the Student Handbook and/or forms that will be provided to or required of students and families, including any “contracts” with students and parents.**

**Student Discipline Policy Scholar Handbook (Contracts)**

- The discipline policy that will be part of the Valor Scholar Handbook is in Attachment 5 – Student Discipline Policy. In addition, the DRAFT Valor Student Handbook is Attachment 22 – Student Handbook. As can be seen there is no signed “contract” between families and VCA, although there will a review of the Valor Commitments and the scholar, family, and VCA leadership/mentor agree via eye contact and a handshake that everyone will do their very best to live up to these commitments to ensure that their child is accepted and successful in a four year college.

**What school zones within the LEA will the school target? Consider schools both at your tier level and in the tier level below. Why were these schools selected?**

**Target Zones** – As mentioned previously in the charter application, VCA hopes to target students from the Antioch, Overton, Cane Ridge, Hillsboro, and Glencliff clusters. By locating in the South Nashville area, and by strategically marketing to a wide range of families we are hopeful that we will reflect the rich diversity of these clusters. These clusters were chosen, as discussed on page 8, because they have low academic achievement results for low-income students, they are richly diverse, and they are areas that generally have expanding student populations.

# SECTION X – COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT

## Community Involvement and Parent Engagement

**Describe how parents and community members were engaged and contributed to the development of the proposed school.**

**Parent involvement** – As previously mentioned, over 500+ parents attended events at parent’s homes over the past 20 months to hear about the VCA school model. In addition VCA intends to do extensive outreach over the next 14 months to parents in South Nashville in order to build positive momentum for the school.

- **Email list** – over the past 9 months VCA has built an email list with over 1200 supporters for the VCA model here in Nashville. We are excited and inspired by the number of diverse families that are interested in the Valor model.
- **Letters of support** – Attachment 14 includes 17 letters from a broad range of Nashville community members who support Valor Collegiate, including Mayor Karl Dean, Activist Remziya Suleyman, NICE CEO Gatluak Thak, Councilwoman Jacobia Dowell, and Latino leader Fabian Bedne. Valor has worked tirelessly to garner the support of all of the varying constituencies in South Nashville and are proud of the broad based support they have received from political leaders, community leaders, and parents.

**Community involvement** – VCA understands that great schools are part of the social fabric of the communities where they reside.

In order to become part of the community, VCA will focus on three areas:

- **Student Recruiting** – having students from the South Nashville community attend the school is the highest leverage way to become an important part of the local community. VCA will therefore spend much of its energy in community engagement around marketing the school to local families. These efforts are documented above in Enrollment, Recruitment, and Marketing.
- **Community involvement with VCA** – VCA hopes to partner with the local community primarily through the **Expeditions programs**. VCA will begin work this summer on developing relationships with businesses, local Universities, and community centers that will be able to contract with VCA to offer a wide range of Expeditions courses to students. Using the model developed at Summit Prep in CA, we hope to build the program to 25+ different learning opportunities for VCA scholars in the community. We have already begun this process and have identified over 40 different potential partners (see Attachment 16 – Community Partner List).
- **VCA in the community** – VCA also envisions being involved in the community in acts of service. As part of each scholar’s Personalized Learning Plan they are asked to set goals around community service each year. In addition, each mentor teacher is given a goal of doing one community service project with their mentor group over the course of the year. This means that each year there will be hundreds of VCA students who pick individual service commitments to undertake over the course of the year in the community. These can include things such as Habitat for Humanity, cleaning graffiti, going to Capitol Hill to advocate for issues important to the local community, working at local retirement centers, aiding local elementary schools, etc. Many of the VCA Badges will be focused on students and mentor groups that excel in community service.

**Outline how the school will engage parents and community members in the life of the school (in addition to any proposed governance roles). Explain the plan for building family-school partnerships that strengthen support for learning and encourage parent involvement. Describe any commitments or volunteer opportunities the school will seek from, offer to, or require of, parents.**

**Parent Engagement** – VCA believes having engaged parents (and guardians, which we include when we refer to parents in this application) is critical to the mission and vision of the organization. One of the most successful aspects of the Summit Prep culture in CA was the strong parent engagement. VCA will model our parent engagement after the Summit Prep model.

**Mentor relationship** – as documented in multiple areas, the mentor-family relationship is the singularly most effective tool for great parent engagement. Each family is connected to one VCA faculty member for

the 4 years they are at the school, creating a personal, high-trust relationship in order that parents feel comfortable communicating and being involved at the school.

**Family-school partnerships** – VCA purposely runs a thin administration model so that resources are focused on teaching and learning. In order to make this model effective, parent partnerships are important. By effectively recruiting parents to be “part of the VCA team” they naturally feel more part of the community. A few examples:

- **Parent University** – all parents will be encouraged to attend the three 90 minute sessions in the summer of 5<sup>th</sup> grade (and in 2016 Kindergarten as well) for new parents to VCA (transfer parents as well in later years). Parent University will be a comprehensive overview of the VCA program, and also a key way to engage parents in the VCA culture, building trust and common mission.
- **Parenting classes** – the VCA CEO will conduct a series of parenting classes each year that are based on Carol Dweck’s *Mindset* and Daniel Coyle’s *The Talent Code*. The classes will also include key pieces of the VCA educational philosophy.
- **Computer classes** – VCASE will have Saturday computer classes that run concurrently with Saturday school for parents. These classes will teach parents the basics of computers in general, but also the Learning Management System at VCA so that parents can engage in their scholar’s learning more effectively.
- **Camping / Study Trips** – VCASE will have camping and study trips on which they encourage families to take part. VCASE families will help cook, set-up tents, run activities, and drive students to and from the camping trip. For the annual Study Trip, parents will be asked to volunteer to drive students on the trip. We will assign parents to students they do not know so that they can get to know the entire grade level of students over the course of their 9 years at VCASE. We envision the annual camping trip and Study Trip to be one of the best bonding experiences for VCA parents.
- **Expeditions** – Expeditions is an excellent area where parents are encouraged to either volunteer to help coordinate, or to actually teach an Expeditions course. At Summit Prep, parents taught courses on Psychology, Spanish Literature, Soccer, and Computer Programming.
- **Tutoring** – VCASE will have a strong tutoring program after school from 4-5pm each day. Along with partnering with local Universities, we have found that some of the strongest tutors are parents. We will encourage parents to help with tutoring during these times, and also during Saturday School
- **Student Recruitment** – Parents are encouraged to help with student recruitment in various ways, most often as part of our Saturday Door to Door events where current parents and students walk their neighborhoods to tell their community about the VCA experience.
- **Data Entry / Front Desk** – VCASE believes in having a parent at the Front Desk along with the Office Manager who can focus on helping other parents with navigating the VCA system effectively.
- **Athletic Program** – VCASE will build a strong sports program over time but in the early years we will rely on parent engagement. Parents will be encouraged to help coach teams, and to aid the Athletic Director.

**Discuss the community resources that the school will cultivate for students and parents. Describe any partnerships the school will seek to establish with community organizations, businesses, or other institutions. Specify the nature, purposes, term, and scope of each partnership, including any fee based or in-kind commitments from community organizations or individuals that will enrich student learning opportunities. Include any documentation of pledged support from prospective partners as an Attachment.**

**Community Resources** – Listed below are a few examples of community resources that VCA will be able to bring to VCASE families. VCA will work very hard in the upcoming years to continue to expand our community partnerships in order to help every VCASE scholar have the opportunity to come to school ready to learn each day.

- **Tennessee Charter School Center** – TCSC will continue to be a resource to VCA through its first two years of existence. TCSC will be an excellent aide to the faculty and leadership at VCA especially in providing a high quality facility to our families.
- **NICE (Nashville International Center for Empowerment)** – CEO Gatluak Thach has been very helpful in advising VCA on how to best reach immigrant and refugee families. VCA would like to partner with NICE in the coming years to aide refugee VCA families in coming to school each day ready to learn.
- **American Center for Outreach** – Remziya Suleyman and the ACR are very well connected to the Muslim community in South Nashville. VCA intends to continue to develop this relationship in order to find ways to connect Muslim VCA families with the supports they need in the community.

- **Casa Azafran** – an excellent community resource for families in South Nashville. VCA is excited about the possibilities of partnering with Casa Azafran on possible Expeditions courses (they have an excellent culinary kitchen that could be great for a Culinary Arts course).
- **Martha O-Bryan Center** – VCA will have a strong relationship with MOB. The Director of Family Services, Daren Dickson, is the twin brother of VCA CEO Todd Dickson and they both envision a strong relationship evolving in the upcoming years between the organizations. MOB is an expert in how to provide partnerships and community support for families and VCA anticipates learning a great deal from their leadership. CEO Marsha Edwards is very supportive of VCA as well (see Letters of Support).
- **Vanderbilt University, Lipscomb University, Belmont University** – one of the best community supports that VCA can provide to scholars and families is tutoring. VCA plans to work over the next 12 months to develop relationships with these Universities (and possibly more) so that they can help to provide excellent after-school tutors to our scholars.

**Include, as an Attachment, letters of support, memoranda of understanding, or contracts that indicate the proposed school is welcomed by the community in which the school intends to locate, is viewed as an attractive educational alternative, and reflects a community's needs and interests.**

**Community Support** - VCA is excited about the amount of community support that has been generated for the proposed school. Attached in Attachment 14 are letters of support from the following individuals and organizations.

**Table 48: Individual and Organizational Support for VCA**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Jacobia Dowell	Councilwoman, District 32
Gatluak Thach	CEO, NICE (Nashville International Center for Empowerment)
Alice Randall	Author, Professor at Vanderbilt
Fabian Bedne	Councilman, District 31
Remziya Suleyman	Director of Policy, American Outreach Center
Karl Dean	Mayor of Nashville
Bill DeLoache	Board Chair, TN Charter School Incubator
Marsha Edwards	CEO, Martha O-Bryan
Eric Dewey	CEO, United Way
Chris Harmon	Councilman, District 26
Rogers Hall	Director of Teaching and Learning, Vanderbilt
Lauren Lunsford	Education Professor, Belmont
Emily Evans	Councilwoman, District 23
Jason Potts	Councilman, District 30
Jon Meacham	Author
Brock Kidd	VP, Pinnacle Finance
Taylor Hummel	Director, Stand for Children
David Owens	Professor, Vanderbilt
Ethan Fesperman	Professor, Vanderbilt
Ross Brown	Board Chair, Summit Prep
Bill Kurtz	CEO, DSST



# **PART II – OPERATIONS PLAN AND CAPACITY**

## **SECTION XI – GOVERNANCE**

**Describe the legal status of the proposed school, including whether the entity proposing the school is already incorporated as a nonprofit and whether you have obtained federal tax-exempt status.**

Both the previously approved Valor Collegiate Academy (VCA) and Valor Collegiate Academy Southeast (VCASE) (the “School”) will be governed by the Valor Collegiate Academies Board of Directors (the “Board”), which is currently incorporated as a Tennessee Not-for-Profit Public Benefit Corporation. In addition, VCA has applied for federal 501(c) 3 tax exempt status. See **Attachment 3** for the VCA’s Articles of Incorporation and application for federal tax exempt status.

Upon approval of the charter application, the Board would oversee and manage a Chief Executive Officer, who would be responsible for day-to-day management of the organization and the supervision and management of two Principals, who would be responsible for day-to-day operations of VCA and VCASE. The founders of the school envision applying for authority to open additional schools in the future following the successful launch of the proposed schools.

**Explain the governance philosophy that will guide the board, including the nature and extent of involvement by key stakeholder groups. Describe how you will select a parent to serve on the governing board.**

The Board firmly believes in and subscribes to a philosophy of policy governance and accountability. The Board understands that the School organization is best able to meet its mission by empowering a strong Chief Executive Officer with the autonomy to make decisions in pursuit of its mission, with appropriate accountability structures in place to ensure organizational effectiveness and success. The Board shall be ultimately responsible for the operation and activities of the School and will be governed in its operations and its actions by its corporate By-laws, included within **Attachment 3**, which shall be consistent with the charter agreement and in compliance with applicable law. The primary methods for executing its responsibilities will be to create, adopt and monitor school policies, provide financial oversight, and to hire and evaluate the Chief Executive Officer. Additional detail regarding specific powers and duties of the Board are outlined below.

The founders of the school understand the value of contributions and involvement of a variety of key stakeholder groups in the governance process. Importantly, the Board will comply with Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-13-104 (3), and include at least one parent representative, whose child is enrolled at the School, who will be appointed to the Board of Directors within six months of the opening of the School. In addition to the parent representative’s voice and contributions, the Board will regularly seek feedback from various stakeholders in a variety of ways, including surveys, family forums, or meetings, from central constituents of the school, including parents and community members, in developing and implementing policies and in providing overall governance for the school organization.

**Describe the composition and size of the governing board. Explain how the proposed governance structure and composition will ensure there will be active and effective representation of key stakeholders.**

The Board is comprised of a diverse set of ten (10) passionate professionals that are committed to the mission and vision of the CMO and collectively possess the integrity, skills, experience and expertise to properly exercise their roles. Consistent with its corporate by-laws, the Board is composed of a minimum of five Directors and can legally have a maximum of fifteen Directors. Each Director will serve a two year term and are not be permitted to serve more than three consecutive terms, with the exception of current or former Officers, who can serve a maximum of five consecutive terms. The Board of Directors may elect Advisory Members from time to time, including without limitation employees of the School. Advisory Members shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors and shall advise and counsel the Board of Directors on appropriate matters as determined by the Board. The Chief Executive Officer shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board for the duration of his/her employment as Chief Executive Officer. See **Attachment 3** for an organizational chart that outlines the structure of the board and biographies and/or resumes of founding Directors.

The leadership of the Board is organized according to the Officer positions below and include a President, Secretary, Treasurer and Chief Executive Officer.



- The **President** will be the principal officer of the Board and serve as the liaison between the Board and the Chief Executive Officer. He or she will, when present, preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors. The President appoints the members of each standing or ad hoc committee of the Board, and may serve on any standing or ad hoc committee of the Board.
- The **Secretary** will keep the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Directors, see that all notices are properly given in accordance with applicable law and maintain appropriate financial information pertaining to the Board.
- The **Treasurer** will be responsible for all funds and securities of the School, receive and give receipts for monies due and payable, disburse the funds of the School in accordance with the directives of the Board of Directors, and provide an accounting of financial information to the Board.
- The **Chief Executive Officer** will serve at the pleasure of the Board as an ex-officio, non-voting Member, report directly to the Board as illustrated in **Attachment 2**, be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the School, and will provide regular reports to the Board regarding the performance of the School.

**Discuss the powers and duties of the governing board. Identify key skills, areas of expertise, and constituencies that will be represented on the board.**

The Board's legal powers include maintaining responsibility for the business and affairs of the School. The board will exercise all of the rights and privileges legally exercisable by the School as a corporate entity, except as may otherwise be provided by law, the Charter, or Bylaws. The Board will have the authority to receive, administer, invest and distribute property on behalf of the School. Generally speaking however, the Board's functional role will be to set overall strategic direction; establish and approve school policies; select, set the compensation for and evaluate the performance of the Chief Executive Officer; and oversee the selection of an annual financial auditor and appropriately review the results of the audit report. More specifically, some of the primary duties the Board is likely to fulfill include:

- To elect and remove Directors;
- To select and remove Officers, agents and employees of the School; to prescribe powers and duties for them, and to fix their compensation;
- To conduct, manage and control the affairs and activities of the School, and to promulgate policies, rules and regulations;
- To enter into contracts, leases and other agreements which are, in the Board's judgment, necessary or desirable in obtaining the purposes of promoting the interests of the School;
- To acquire real or personal property and to dispose of such property;
- To borrow money and incur debt;
- To indemnify and maintain insurance on behalf of any of its Directors, Officers, employees or agents.

From time to time, as the Board deems necessary, it may delegate to an employee of the School any of its duties, with the exception of the selection and removal of directors, budget approval, approval of the fiscal audits, and the adoption of Board policies. The Board however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated.

The board was strategically constructed of individuals with diverse backgrounds and skill sets in order to effectively govern the school. Members of the board must also demonstrate a commitment to the mission and vision of the School and to fulfilling the role of the board as outlined above. Specific expertise contained on the Board includes, but is not limited to non-profit leadership, finance, instruction and assessment, public charter school leadership, legal, real estate, health care and education reform. **Attachment 3** provides additional information about the background, expertise and credentials of each member of the founding Board. In addition, the matrix below illustrates the collective skills of the founding board which are discussed in detail herein and throughout various attachments. It is important to note that the board was constructed with key skills in mind, both individually and as a functioning group.

**Table 49: Valor Collegiate Board of Directors Skills Matrix**

	Curriculum	Instruction	Assessment	Finance	Facilities	Business Management	Organization	Governance	Administration	Political/Policy	Legal	Fundraising	Marketing	Community Outreach
Dickson, Todd														
Cigarran, Katherine														
Meacham, Keith														
Goetz, Dave														
Hannon, Bob														
Flowers, Sylvia														
Hooper, Tom														
Austen, Danielle														
Anderson, Malika														

**Explain how this governance structure and composition will ensure the school will be an educational and operational success.**

For a number of reasons, the governance structure and composition described above will ultimately ensure the School will be an educational and operational success. The Board is keenly aware of the distinction between governance and management, one key factor in ensuring the School's success. The Board will not interfere with the day-to-day authority of the Chief Executive Officer and his/her designees, yet will provide the necessary support when needed and the accountability necessary to maintain a thriving organization. The Board will involve key constituents when developing policy and setting strategic priorities and thereby ensure that parents and other key stakeholder voices are effectively integrated into the governing process. Finally, using the process and tool below, the Board will hold the Chief Executive Officer accountable for the overall performance of the School, including up to termination, ensuring the School's continued success.

**Describe how the board will evaluate the success of the school, the school leader and its own performance**

The Chief Executive Officer will be supported and evaluated throughout the year by the Board using both formative and summative assessment gathered from faculty, students, and parents. The process will be led by the Governance Committee. A member of the Board will be chosen each year to lead the process. The Board believes that evaluation is not a one-time event; rather, it is an ongoing and reflective process. The lead Board member will deliver the assessment feedback to the Chief Executive Officer throughout the year as part of the evaluation process described below.

**Process:**

- In April of each year, one member of the Board will be appointed to be the lead of the team, with responsibilities including:
  - Overseeing the process and ensuring the following timeline is followed;
  - Collecting the data from all stakeholders and summarizing it for the Committee, full Board and Chief Executive Officer; and
  - Meeting with the Chief Executive Officer to review the data and to build a development plan based on that data.
- The Evaluation Team (Governance Committee) will oversee the following two areas:
  - Chief Executive Officer Vision and Goals for school year;
  - Formative feedback process; and

- Final Evaluation.
- Chief Executive Officer Goals
  - Chief Executive Officer and the Evaluation Team will develop a high level set of goals (3-7 goals) that the Chief Executive Officer will present to the Evaluation Team prior to each school year for approval (Clearly defined academic achievement goals will always be part of the high level set of goals); and
  - The Evaluation Team will oversee a year-end survey to identified stakeholders focused on the Chief Executive Officer goals for the year.
- Formative feedback
  - The Chief Executive Officer and Evaluation Team develop a set of specific areas to collect feedback for the Chief Executive Officer that are aligned with the Chief Executive Director Leadership Rubric;
  - Evaluation Team will personally interview each faculty member for about 15 minutes to gather input on the focus areas. The interviews will take place evenly over the course of the school year; and
  - The lead on the Evaluation Team will collect the formative data and will regularly share it with the Chief Executive Officer as well as develop support plans to assist in areas of growth as needed.
- Final Review
  - Evaluation Team will collect data at year-end related to Chief Executive Officer Goals and Formative Feedback and share it with the Chief Executive Officer;
  - Evaluation Team will develop and propose a support plan for the Chief Executive Officer that reflects the needs identified in the data;
  - Evaluation Team will make a recommendation to the Board concerning the Chief Executive Officer's employment status and performance bonus.

**Table 50: Timeline for Board Process**

April	Evaluation Team lead appointed at Board retreat
July	Chief Executive Officer and Evaluation Team develop Goals for the year and Focus Areas based on the Chief Executive Officer Leadership Rubric
August	Chief Executive Officer presents Goals and Focus Areas for year to the Board for discussion and the Evaluation team assigns faculty members while establishing an interview schedule
September	Evaluation Team approves Chief Executive Officer Goals for the year, begins faculty interviews concentrating on Focus Areas and Evaluation Team lead begins monthly feedback sessions with the Chief Executive Officer
October – April	Evaluation Team continue faculty interview concentrating on Focus Areas and Evaluation Team Lead continues monthly feedback sessions
May	Evaluation Team summarizes faculty feedback in Focus Areas
May – June	Evaluation Team collects year-end feedback on Chief Executive Officer Goals
June	Evaluation Team summarizes Focus Area and Goal feedback and meet with the Chief Executive Officer to review feedback and develop an appropriate support plan
July	Evaluation Team makes recommendation to the full Board regarding Chief Executive Officer employment status and performance bonus

In addition to the important responsibility of evaluating the performance of the Chief Executive Officer, the board also values reflective practice and self-evaluation of its own performance. The success of the School will depend greatly on the Board's effectiveness in carrying out essential roles and responsibilities. Therefore, board self-evaluation is vital in determining how well the board is performing, and the steps that can be taken for continued improvement. Board self-evaluation refers to a set of practices used to examine and evaluate performance against a set of defined standards and will:

- Have the enthusiastic support of Board leadership;
- Be based on standards and best practices that characterize effective board performance;
- Be formal, conducted on a regular, agreed-upon basis, including a written assessment tool; and
- Include an assessment implementation plan to set goals for board improvement.

Given the accountability measures contained within the application, the Board evaluates itself against specific performance measures annually. The Board will use a tool developed by The High Bar, who provides expertise, training and powerful web-based tools to assist boards to improve public education. Additional information about The High Bar can be located at [www.reachthehighbar.com](http://www.reachthehighbar.com).

**List all current and identified board members and their intended roles on the table below (adding rows as needed).**

Valor Collegiate Academies is excited about the breadth and depth of experience, commitment and expertise that the founding board brings to the important work of governing the proposed school. Individuals were carefully considered and selected to serve on the founding board. Among the most important considerations were the need for each member to exhibit the core principles of and commitment to the VCA mission, a range of skill sets, overall diversity and the ability to properly fulfill their role as a member of the Board of Directors as outlined above. Below is a list of initial members of the VCA Board, detailed in Table 51.

**Table 51: VCA Board Members**

Full Name	Current Job and Employer	Position
Malika Anderson	Chief Portfolio Officer, Achievement School District	Board Director
Danielle Austen	CEO, Team Ignition	Board Director, Treasurer
Katherine Cigarran	Community Volunteer and Parent	Board Director
Todd Dickson	Senior Fellow, Tennessee Charter School Incubator	Chief Executive Officer and Advisory Member of the Board of Directors
Sylvia M. Flowers	Executive Director, Educator Talent, Tennessee Department of Education	Board Director
Dave Goetz	Vice President, State Government Solutions, Optum Government Solutions	Board Director, President
Bob Hannon	Partner, Bradley, Arant, Boult and Cummings, LLP	Board Director, Secretary
Tom Hooper	Vice President, Jones Lang LaSalle	Board Director
Margaret Keith Meacham	Education and Marketing Consultant, Homer Learning	Board Director

**Summarize members' interests in and qualifications for serving on the school's board.**

The fundamental interest of each member of the Board listed above is to bring the VCA mission and vision to reality through effective governance practices. As the VCA Board Skill Set Matrix outlined above, and in **Attachment 3 – Governing Board Documents (Founding Team Bios)** demonstrates, each member of the founding Board brings a unique set of skills and experiences. As a result, these individuals have varying strengths that they will apply while exercising their collective governance role, briefly summarized below.

**Ms. Malika Anderson** is the Chief Portfolio Officer of the Achievement School District (ASD), where she leads the authorization and start-up support of charter school operators and the assessment and accountability system for all ASD schools. Ms. Anderson has 15 years of strategy, leadership development, performance management and operational redesign experience. She has led and consulted organizations undergoing significant transformation efforts in education, social service, healthcare, and commercial fields. Ms. Anderson is an alumnus of the Broad Residency in Urban Education, earned her bachelor's degree in economics from Spelman College, and earned a master's degree in business administration from the Anderson Graduate School of Management at UCLA. Her

strengths as a board member include curriculum, assessment, instruction, finance, business management, organizational leadership, governance and community outreach.

**Ms. Danielle Austen** brings a wealth of leadership and communications skills to the founding board. She is currently the Chief Executive Officer of Team Ignition, an advertising and marketing firm that acts as a single-source solution for its client-partners in developing communications plans for African American, Asian American, United States Hispanic and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender consumers. She has been instrumental in advising the founding Chief Executive Officer on matters related to marketing, communications and strategy development. As an executive leader, Ms. Austen is also keenly aware of the distinction between governance and management and will provide strong leadership support for the VCA's Chief Executive Officer. Overall, the primary governance skills she brings to the Board include finance, business management, administration, marketing and community outreach.

**Ms. Katherine Cigarran** brings an extensive background as a community volunteer and organizer to the founding Board. She has made invaluable contributions to a large number of community-based organizations, including public schools, and also serves as a volunteer tutor. Her experience volunteering for and working with non-profit organizations will provide additional expertise while she serves on VCA's Board. Also important to Ms. Cigarran's expertise is her role as a mother of two. Her primary governance strengths include fundraising, marketing and community outreach.

**Mr. R. Todd Dickson**, VCA's founder and Chief Executive Officer, will serve as an Advisory Member of the Board. In this capacity, he will not have voting authority but will report to and serve at the pleasure of the Board. He has had an extensive and extremely successful career as a visionary leader in the education reform movement, and has produced dramatic results while improving student achievement. Early in his career, he launched a successful independent commercial real estate company but always knew his true calling was in public education. Following a successful teaching career, he most recently served as Executive Director of Summit Preparatory Charter School, whose accolades are impressive and outlined in **Attachment 3 – Governing Board Documents** (Founding Team Resumes). Mr. Dickson's primary strengths include curriculum, instruction, assessment, facilities, business management, organizational leadership, governance, administration, fundraising, marketing and community outreach.

**Ms. Sylvia M. Flowers** currently serves as Executive Director of Educator Talent at the Tennessee Department of Education, where she focuses on executing the state's strategy to improve recruitment and retention of effective teachers and manages a portfolio of strategic compensation pilot projects in approximately 18 public school districts in Tennessee. Ms. Flowers was a chemical engineer early in her career and later transitioned into a number of impactful roles in leadership, non-profit management and education reform. She brings important skills to the Board, including curriculum, instruction and assessment.

**Mr. Dave Goetz** is Vice President for State Government Solutions at Optum Government Solutions, where he is responsible for advising state government clients to define needs and solutions around managing health care. He has had a distinguished career in state government, non-profit and advocacy-based leadership and previously served in a journalism capacity. Among the strengths he brings to the Board are finance, business management, organization leadership, governance, administration, policy and legal.

**Mr. Bob Hannon** is an attorney and Partner at Bradley, Arant, Boulton, Cummings, LLP where he focuses his practice on the commercial banking industry. Mr. Hannon also served as a teacher early in his career and has remained passionate about providing all students with a high quality education. In addition, he has served a number of non-profit boards and will provide necessary policy and governance expertise to the Board. Other skills he brings to the Board include finance, business management, organizational leadership, legal affairs and fundraising.

**Mr. Tom Hooper**, currently Vice President of Jones Lang LaSalle, provides leadership for functions related to brokerage, tenant representation and agency representation. He has been recognized by a number of professional associations in providing exemplary service to his clients. His work ethic, market knowledge and attention to detail provide savings to his clients in terms of time and money expended on every project. He brings expertise in facilities, governance and legal affairs to the Board.

**Ms. Keith Meacham** brings a wealth of education, charter school and other leadership, and management to the board. She currently serves as an Education and Marketing Consultant for the Homer Group where she advises education technology start-up organizations on marketing, social media, website design and language. She brings a wide variety of expertise to the Board, including curriculum, instruction, assessment, business management, organizational leadership, governance, administration, policy, fundraising, marketing and community outreach.

**Explain the procedure by which current board members were selected, and how they will be replaced and/or re-elected. How often will the board meet? Discuss the plans for any committee structure.**

The distinguished members of the proposed Board presented above were selected strategically and carefully. Through the gracious support of the Tennessee Charter School Incubator, Mr. Dickson recruited members of the founding Board while completing a Senior Fellowship where he had the opportunity to travel across the county enhancing his knowledge and expertise as a charter school leader. During that time, he met with many government officials, community leaders, partners in education reform and parents in order to assemble the most effective governing Board possible. Mr. Dickson met and interviewed at least 100 individuals in and around Nashville during his board recruitment efforts.

It is important to note that the founding Board will serve as the VCA Governing Board. All current members have acknowledged this and committed to service beyond the start-up phase of the proposed school. As the VCA By-laws included in **Attachment 3 – Governing Board Documents** outlines, the Board will consist of between five (5) and fifteen (15) Directors, who will serve two-year terms. Directors will not be permitted to serve more than three consecutive terms, with the exception of Officers, who may serve up to five consecutive terms. As a result, new members will need to be recruited and selected.

New members will be nominated to the Board by an ad hoc or standing committee, as determined by the Board and in compliance with its By-laws. A two-thirds majority vote of existing and sitting Board members is required to elect new members and re-elect existing ones. The nominating process for new Board members will be a progressive one. On an ongoing basis in general, and at least 6 months in advance of a known departure of a Board member in particular, prospective new members will meet with the existing Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer to initially discuss the roles and responsibilities of the board and mission of the school, as well as the prospective members interest, background and relevant expertise. If the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer determine that a nomination would benefit and strengthen the overall board, the prospective member will meet with one to two additional members of the Board. Following successful interactions with these additional Board members, the candidate's prospects will be discussed by the full Board. A formal nomination would then come from the ad hoc or standing committee referenced above and would be considered by the Board thereafter. It is anticipated that the Board will initially recruit and nominate a member with extensive expertise in technology and systems analysis based on a reflective review of existing Board member strengths, which are outlined in the matrix presented above.

The VCA Board of Directors will meet monthly in order to effectively fulfill its governing role. One way the Board will conduct its business is through an efficient committee structure. The VCA By-laws provide the Board with the authority to establish ad hoc and standing committees. While specific committee designations are not included in the By-laws, the Board anticipates creating two initial standing committees in order for it to properly exercise its fiduciary and governance roles.

The **Governance Committee** of the VCA Board will likely be chaired by the Chair of the full Board. The Governance Committee's primary responsibility will be to provide oversight, monitoring and evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer and to serve as a liaison to the full Board. The Governance Committee will serve as the Evaluation Committee and draft the annual evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer, with the input of other members of the Board and present it to the full Board for approval.

The **Finance Committee** will coordinate the Board's financial oversight responsibilities by recommending policy to the Board and monitoring its implementation. The committee will also provide Board oversight of the organization's financial audit. The Treasurer of the Board will serve as chair, and the Committee will monitor the organization's financial records; review and oversees the creation of accurate, timely, and meaningful financial statements to be presented to the Board; review the annual budget and recommends it to the full Board for approval; monitor budget implementation and financial procedures; monitor assets, ensure compliance with federal, state, and other financial reporting requirements; and help the full Board understand the organization's financial standing.

Depending on the evolving needs of VCA, other committees may include: (1) the **Resource Development Subcommittee**, (drawn from membership of the Finance Committee) which may plan and implement the school's fundraising programs; (2) the **Facilities Committee**, which assesses the short and long term facilities needs and presents a long range facility plan to the board; (3) and a **Strategic Planning Committee**, which develops a 3-5 year blueprint for the school's future.

**Public charter schools are subject to the provisions of T.C.A. § 12-4-101 and 102 regarding conflicts of**



**interest. Describe the board's ethical standards and procedures for identifying and addressing conflicts of interest. If you have a completed conflict of interest policy, submit it with the governing body attachments.**

The founding VCA Board is aware that it will provide necessary governance and oversight of a public charter school. As such, it will be subject to provisions of T.C.A. § 12-4-101 and 102 regarding conflicts of interest. Due to the need to minimize conflicts of interest, the Board has already developed a draft Conflict of Interest Policy, which is included in **Attachment 3** – Governing Board Documents (Conflict of Interest Policy). In addition, the following general standards of conduct will be expected of all members of the Board and are included in the VCA By-laws. A Director or an Officer of the School shall discharge his or her duties as a Director or as an Officer, including duties as a member of a Committee:

- (a) In good faith;
- (b) With the care an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances; and
- (c) In a manner he or she reasonably believes to be in the best interest of the School.

The purpose of the conflict of interest provisions in the VCA By-laws is to protect the School's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an Officer or Director or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. These provisions are intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

Interested persons, for the purposes of the conflict of interest policy, are any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person. A person will be considered to have a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family: (1) an ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the School has a transaction or arrangement; (2) a compensation arrangement with the School or with any entity or individual with which the School has a transaction or arrangement, or (3) a potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the School is negotiating a transaction or arrangement. Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

The Board has established clear and effective procedures for dealing with conflicts of interest and the appearance of such conflicts. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Directors and members of Committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the Board of Directors or Committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

An interested person may make a presentation at the Board of Directors' or Committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest. The Board of Directors or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement. After exercising appropriate due diligence, the Board of Directors or Committee shall determine whether the School can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

A transaction in which a Director or Officer of the Board has a conflict of interest may be approved if: (1) a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Board of Directors or Committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the School's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. It shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement; or (2) approval is obtained from the Attorney General of the State of Tennessee, or from a court of record having equity jurisdiction in an action in which the Attorney General is joined as a party.



If the Board of Directors or Committee has reasonable cause to believe a person has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the person of the basis for such belief and afford the person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the person's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board of Directors or Committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

**Describe plans for increasing the capacity of the governing board. Is the current board the founding board only or will it transition to a governing board upon approval? How will the transition take place? Provide a specific timeline by which the transition will occur. How and on what timeline will new members be recruited and added, and how will vacancies be filled? What training will be offered to the board and when? Tennessee law requires at least one board training per year to be certified by the Tennessee Charter School Association. How will this board handle complaints? The draft complaint policy should be clear and follow an appropriate route for resolution of concerns raised by students, parents and/or stakeholders.**

The Board is also aware of the need to continue to refine and improve its ability to provide effective governance. In addition to ongoing reflection and an annual board self-evaluation described above, the Board will seek formal governance training and development from some of its organizational partners. In compliance with applicable law, the Board will participate in at least one board training per year that is certified by the Tennessee Charter School Association. The Board has carefully chosen The High Bar, led by Marci Cornell-Feist, to provide governance training and to assist the Board in developing its annual self-evaluation tool. Ms. Cornell-Feist is considered a national expert on charter school governance. She founded her charter school consultancy Meetinghouse Solutions in 2001, and has focused on charter school governance since the mid-1990s. After working with 200+ charter schools, she created The High Bar to implement the most effective strategies and practices of her many clients, and as a means of spreading this information to a wider audience of charter schools. She is author of the Charter School Trustees Guide and numerous articles, including two issue briefs for the National Association of Charter School Authorizers, and is a frequent keynote speaker at major charter school conferences. She is also a co-founder of The Achievement Network, which helps schools use data-driven strategies to raise student achievement. Additional information about The High Bar is available at [www.reachthehighbar.com](http://www.reachthehighbar.com).

Finally, with respect to governing practices, the VCA Board has developed a Complaint Policy found in **Attachment 3** – Governing Board Documents, and will abide by it to properly handle complaints from a variety of school stakeholders. The Board holds ultimate responsibility for the School's success, but as described throughout the charter application subscribes to a policy governance philosophy. It believes that the school is best managed by a strong Chief Executive Officer given appropriate levels of autonomy. Consistent with that belief, the VCA Complaint Policy provides a clear avenue to ensure that the School is in compliance with applicable law and that school stakeholders have an opportunity to express their concerns in appropriate ways to the Board. All formal complaints must first be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer, who will have a reasonable amount of time to respond to them. The School's ongoing parental communication and community outreach efforts will undoubtedly reduce the amount and frequency of such formal complaints. However, if an individual or group of individuals is not satisfied with the response of the Chief Executive Officer, they may file a formal complaint directly with the Board in writing, who will respond to each and every such complaint. Because the VCA Board of Directors is ultimately responsible for school governance, the complaint process ends at the Board level. However, if a complainant alleges a violation of the law or the School's Charter, and is not satisfied with the Board's response, it may file a formal complaint in writing to the School's authorizer. The School is committed to providing prompt, thorough and accurate information to the Tennessee Department of Education in such cases and will abide by any prescribed corrective action it deems necessary.

## SECTION XII – PERSONNEL / HUMAN CAPITAL

### Personnel/Human Capital

Valor Collegiate Academies deeply understands that any organization, especially those serving the public good, is only as good as its people. To that end, VCA has developed an ambitious strategy to ensure that the school attracts only the best in all areas of operation. The VCA leadership team will continue to work closely with its partner, the Tennessee Charter School Incubator, to ensure that the founding team and future pipeline of human capital will allow the school to meet its mission. What follows is additional detail about the schools plans for personnel structures and human capital strategies.

**Explain the relationship that will exist between the proposed school and its employees, whether the employees will be at-will and whether the school will use employment contracts. If the school will use contracts, explain the nature and purpose of the contracts.**

**Attach a copy of the school's draft personnel policies and draft copy of the employee manual if developed.**

All school employees will serve on an at-will basis. Employees will be offered employment positions that will be individually negotiated based on the credentials of the applicant, relevant experience and overall merit for the position. Employment offers will be renewed on an annual basis following satisfactory performance as measured by the Personalized Educator Plan (PEP). The primary purpose of the employment offer will be to set clear performance expectations for the employee and employer. Please refer to **Attachment 3** - Valor Collegiate Academies draft Personnel Policies and Employee Handbook for additional information.

**Will any positions be grant funded? What will be the purpose of these positions and how will they be sustained following the grant period?**

As the budget included as **Attachment 9** illustrates, all positions will be funded by regular public funding allocations that the School will receive by Year 4 of the school. The CMO organization, VCA, has received grant funding from the Gates Foundation, The Broad Foundation, The Charter School Growth Fund, and Tommy Frist totaling approximately \$3.1M. These funds will be used to fund the start-up years of the Charter Management organization, facilities start-up costs, and start-up needs for both VCA and VCASE as they grow to full enrollment.

**Outline the proposed salary ranges and employment benefits, as well as any incentive or reward structures that may be a part of the compensation system.**

**Explain the school's proposed strategy for retaining high-performing teachers. Note that State law requires full-time charter school staff to participate in the same insurance and benefits programs "in the same manner as teachers and other full-time permanent employees of the LEA." T.C.A. § 49-13-119.**

Because VCA understands that its human resources are its most valuable commodity, it has developed a compensation structure and personnel strategy that measures performance, acknowledges significant contributions and rewards performance.

First, VCA will comply fully with T.C.A. § 49-13-119 and provide staff with health care, other insurance, and fringe benefits "in the same manner as teacher and other full-time permanent employees of the LEA." The budget projections in **Attachment 9** support these plans, which include a comprehensive and competitive health care package and participation in the Tennessee Teachers Retirement System.

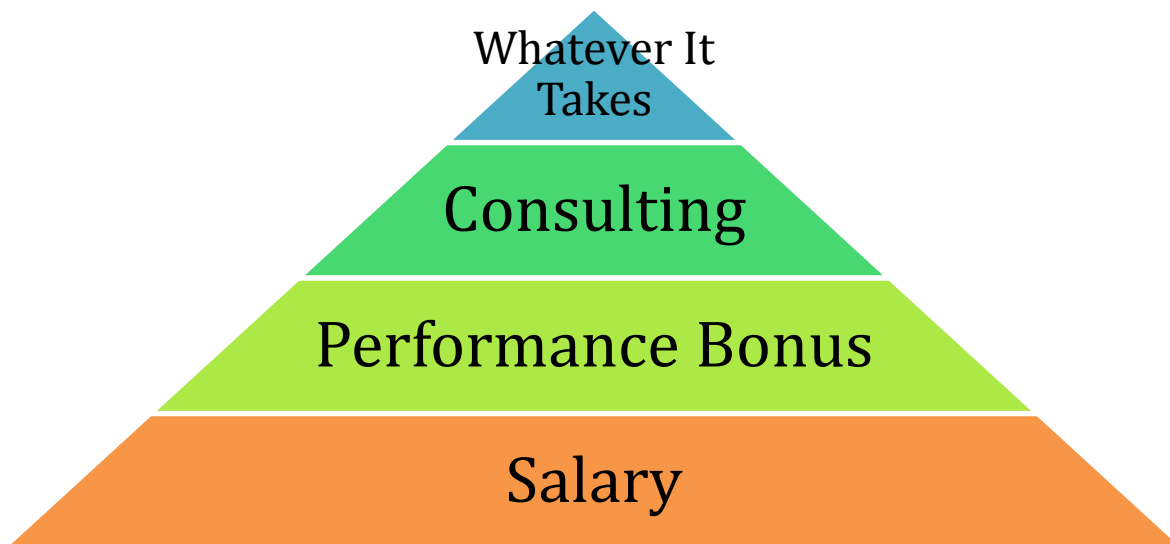
To attract and retain high-performing teachers, VCA recognizes that high quality teachers need and deserve a thriving learning community, which will be established in part by implementing the professional development plan described below. In addition, because compensation also matters, every employee of VCA will have a consistent compensation and evaluation structure. The structure will:

- Be clear and transparent;
- Provide an objective framework, but allow for subjectivity when appropriate;
- Be consistent with the school's philosophical beliefs;
- Reinforce the school's values; and
- Empower the employee to increase his/her personal compensation.

The compensation framework, as displayed in Figure 7, for every employee, displayed visually below will include the following elements:

- Base Salary;
- Additional, permanent, compensation for mastering higher levels of skill and knowledge;
- An annual performance bonus;
- Opportunities to earn additional compensation through consulting; and
- Opportunities to earn one time, responsive compensation known as “Whatever It Takes.

**Figure 7: Compensation Framework**



### **Salary**

Every employee’s base salary should meet the following criteria:

- Be competitive for the education industry.
- Reflect the current level of demonstrated skills, knowledge and performance of the employee.

For classroom-based employees, the VCA Continuum of Performance defines levels of skill, knowledge and performance, and allows for the transparent and objective assessment and evaluation of them. Thus, the Continuum should be the tool used to determine starting salaries and increases to the salary.

- There will be six levels of performance that correlate to base salary compensation. Under this model, teachers performing at a specific level would receive base salary compensation within a defined band that would be competitive in the industry with a commensurate level of performance.
- The levels are related to placement on the seven following strands of the continuum.

<b>(1) Emerging</b>	<b>1 or more Basic</b>
<b>(2) Accomplished</b>	<b>4 of 7 Highly Proficient</b>
<b>(3) Master</b>	<b>7 of 7 Highly Proficient and National Board Certification</b>
<b>(4) Expert</b>	<b>7 of 7 Expert</b>

- Any teacher who demonstrates a higher level of proficiency by January 30<sup>th</sup> of a school year will receive a salary increase consistent with the range for his/her new level of performance. The increase will be reflected in the salary beginning in September of the following school year.

For administrative employees, the Educational Leadership Continuum defines levels of skill, knowledge and performance, and allows for the transparent and an objective assessment and evaluation of them. Thus, the

Leadership Rubric should be the tool used to determine the starting salaries and increases to the salary of administrative employees.

- There will be six levels of performance that correlate to base salary compensation. Under this model, administrators performing at a specific level would receive base salary compensation within a defined band that would be competitive in the industry with a commiserate level of performance.
- The levels are related to placement on the seven strands of the continuum.

(1) <b>Emerging</b>	<b>1 or more Basic</b>
(2) <b>Accomplished</b>	<b>4 of 7 Highly Proficient</b>
(3) <b>Master</b>	<b>7 of 7 Highly Proficient and National Board Certification</b>
(4) <b>Expert</b>	<b>7 of 7 Expert</b>
- Any administrator who demonstrates a higher level of proficiency by January 30<sup>th</sup> of a school year will receive a salary increase consistent with the range for his/her new level of performance. The increase will be reflected in the salary beginning in September of the following school year.

VCA acknowledges that a continuum or its equivalent will need to be developed for other non-classroom based employees, for whom the Leadership Rubric is inappropriate.

### **Performance Bonus**

The performance bonus for all employees will be based upon student and school performance, as a reflection of each individual's imperative role in reaching the School's collective student and school performance goals. Bonuses will be awarded in two parts based upon the availability of data. The first part will be awarded at the end of June and the second at the end of August. Performance bonuses will be earned in three categories with the following weights and as measured by the following metrics:

- **50% School Goals**
  - State and National Testing Results
  - Surveys
- **25% Grade Level Team Goals (teaching faculty only)**
  - State, National, and Internal Testing Results or AP Equity and Excellence
  - Surveys
- **25% Individual Goals (50% for non-teaching faculty)**
  - State Testing Results
  - AP Equity and Excellence
  - Surveys
  - Specific job related outcomes (non-teaching faculty)

### **Consulting**

One of VCA's strategic priorities is to develop a consulting practice that allows members of the VCA team to earn additional income by consulting on elements of the VCA Model. All employees who have reached a level four of performance are eligible to, but not required to participate in consulting activities.

### **Whatever It Takes**

This type of performance based incentive is intended to reward significant and extremely impactful behavior that goes above and beyond the call of duty. Bonuses in this category will range in value from \$100 to \$1,000, and be given either in cash or in-kind award.

The criteria for this type of compensation include the following:

- Immediate;
- Public;
- Unexpected;
- Every employee should have the ability to earn it; and
- It should be both objective and subjective.

The objective framework for these bonuses is that an employee has done something that exudes a "whatever it takes" attitude and:

- Has a lasting or profound impact on another individual in the community;
- Has a lasting or profound impact on a group individuals in the community;

- Has achieved a profound improvement in the community or organization that will have a lasting positive impact; or
- Results in the individual performing far and above any previous or anticipated performance on school measures and metrics

**Describe your strategy, plans and timeline for recruiting and hiring the teaching staff, including the school's plan for hiring appropriately licensed "highly qualified" staff in accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Explain other key selection criteria and any special considerations relevant to your school design.**

VCA understands that schools are only as great as their teachers. VCA endeavors to have a world-class educator in every classroom, every day. In order to make this intention a realistic reality, the School will focus on three key areas for education talent: Attraction, Development and Retention. While Development and Retention are discussed in more detail below in the section on Professional Development, the School will work closely with its institutional partners and networks to attract exemplary teachers by creating a pipeline of top notch, right fit talent from the following sources.

#### Local Talent

- Partnerships with local Universities
- Teach for America
- The New Teacher Project
- Private Schools
- Ed Pioneers

#### National talent

- National Universities and the STEP program
- Relay Graduate School
- Charter School Growth Fund

VCA believes that it is critically important to attract and hire right fit talent. As a result, the founding team has carefully established the following criteria for teacher selection.

### **Mission and Vision of the School**

All faculty and staff of VCA must have a deep, focused alignment and commitment with the mission and vision of the school. There are a series of basic beliefs upon which the school will base its culture and a shared understanding of these beliefs is essential. These include:

- Every child deserves a demanding, high-quality, college-preparatory education.
- Accountable community develops character.
- Great teachers are essential for academic excellence.
- All students, of all races, socioeconomic backgrounds, and life circumstances, can achieve at very high academic levels.
- High expectations are essential for academic success. Students will perform to meet the level of expectation set by the staff, in both academic classes and with regard to behavior.
- Data drives decisions. Decisions about the classroom and the school are informed by the actual student achievement data.

### **Professional Qualifications**

In addition to appropriate alignment with the school's mission, excellent candidates for employment at VCA will share critical professional qualifications, which include:

- Instructional skills
- Content knowledge
- Experience with classroom teaching, mentoring, and tutoring
- Resilience
- Work ethic
- Teamwork and collaboration skills
- Professionalism in behavior and language
- Verbal fluency and writing skills

### **Employee Qualifications**

- Successful manager of a classroom who has used structure, incentives, and high expectations to drive student success.

- Experienced classroom teacher with demonstrated quantifiable and objective student performance gains that surpass state or local averages.
- Ability to work with a variety of learning abilities, including those with disabilities and low skill level in a heterogeneously grouped classroom setting.
- Demonstrated ability to work well in a team, especially with parents and community members.
- Analytical problem solver.
- Basic understanding of data analysis.
- Minimum three years of urban teaching preferred.
- Appropriate certification in the subject area to be taught preferred.
- Professional demeanor.
- Highly qualified as defined by No Child Left Behind.

The School will ensure that all teachers are appropriately licensed “highly qualified” staff in accordance with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as it would with any other applicable law, rule or regulation.

To ensure that the school will be a success and meet its mission, the founding team has developed the following timeline for hiring the initial teaching faculty, as shown in table 52.

**Table 52: Hiring Timeline for Teaching Faculty**

<b>5<sup>th</sup> &amp; 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Middle School Hiring Timeline</b>	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Date Range</b>
Charter Application Submitted	April 1, 2014
Potential Approval of Charter Application	July 1, 2014
Recruitment Efforts Begin (ongoing until all positions are filled)	July 1, 2014
Multiple Rounds of Interviews for Lead Math and English Teaching Positions*	November, 2014
Reference and Background Checks for final Lead Math and English Teaching Candidates*	December, 2014
Lead Math and English Teachers Hired*	January, 2015
Multiple Rounds of Interviews for all Remaining Teaching Positions	February, 2015 – April, 2015
Reference and Background Checks for all Remaining Teaching Positions	April, 2015 – May, 2015
All Teachers Hired	June 1, 2015
Opening of 5 <sup>th</sup> , 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	September, 2015

<b>Kinder and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Hiring Timeline</b>	
<b>Task</b>	<b>Date Range</b>
Charter Application Submitted	April 1, 2014
Potential Approval of Charter Application	July 1, 2014
Recruitment Efforts Begin (ongoing until all positions are filled)	July 1, 2014
Multiple Rounds of Interviews for Lead Math and English Teaching Positions*	November, 2015
Reference and Background Checks for final Lead Math and English Teaching Candidates*	December, 2015
Lead Math and English Teachers Hired*	January, 2016
Multiple Rounds of Interviews for all Remaining Teaching Positions	February, 2016 – April, 2016
Reference and Background Checks for all Remaining Teaching Positions	April, 2016 – May, 2016
All Teachers Hired	June 1, 2016
Opening of Kinder, 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	September 2016

\* Assumes external funding to support development of long-term growth plan, including the creation of a network of multiple high quality charter schools as discussed in various sections of this charter application.



**Define and elaborate on the draft procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel, including conducting criminal background checks.**

**Describe how the proposed school intends to handle unsatisfactory leadership or teacher performance, as well as leadership/teacher changes.**

VCA has developed a set of draft procedures for hiring and dismissing school personnel. The hiring process for teachers will include:

- (1) Initial screen of application materials for minimum qualifications
- (2) First round of interviews with the selection team, to take place in person or by phone if needed
- (3) Second round of interview with the selection team, as well as additional rounds if needed, as well as the review and analysis of a demonstration lesson
- (4) Complete and thorough reference checks, credentials confirmation and additional due diligence as necessary
- (5) Offer of employment, contingent upon the completion of any background checks required by applicable law.

Unfortunately, from time to time an employee does not exhibit the type of performance necessary to maintain employment in a school. Of course, VCA hopes that this is never the case, but is prepared to address underperformance if and when it arises. In general, the Personalized Educator Plan (PEP) will be the instrument used to facilitate the evaluation process, including up to termination if necessary. The basic steps in the dismissal process will include the following, notwithstanding the at-will nature of employment at VCA and the authority of the School to terminate employment for any reason, particularly if staff exhibit serious behavior detrimental to the School. Additional information about the school's personnel policies and a draft Employee Manual are available in **Attachment 3**.

- (1) Employee will be provided immediate verbal feedback when exhibiting unsatisfactory performance of any kind.
- (2) Employee will be provided a written explanation of the unsatisfactory performance and suggested steps for corrective action.
- (3) Supervisor will develop a Performance Improvement Plan.
- (4) Supervisor will monitor the employee's progress toward meeting the goals and objectives contained in the Performance Improvement Plan.
- (5) After ample opportunity for improvement, employment is terminated.

**Give a thorough description of the process for hiring the school leader. Explain how the school leader will be supported, developed, and provide a draft evaluation instrument for the school leader.**

The lead applicant, Mr. R. Todd Dickson will serve as the School's founding Chief Executive Officer. As his resume and biography in **Attachment 3** demonstrate, Mr. Dickson is an accomplished educational leader with exemplary results. Most recently, under his leadership, Summit Preparatory Charter School (Summit Prep) was named the #118 best public high school in America for the first time in 2008, and the #76 best public high school in 2009. In 2010, Summit Prep was named one of the Top 10 Transformational Schools in the country by Newsweek (using comparative graduation rates, SAT scores, AP performance, and number of low-income students). 100% of Summit Prep's graduates exceed the entrance requirements for the UC/CSU system and 96% of the four graduating classes have been accepted to at least one four year college, over three times the rate of similar students and high schools in California. For low-income students (over 40% of Summit Prep's student body), Summit Prep sends almost eight times as many students to four year colleges as similar schools in California. Summit has been featured as an education solution in the nationally acclaimed documentary *Waiting for Superman*.

VCA will be able to hire a Principal as outlined in **Attachment 2** to run the day-to-day operations of the School with oversight, strategy and development from Mr. Dickson. The ideal candidate will be hired by July 2014 and will have a development year, working in concert with Mr. Dickson, to prepare to open the school. The development year will include a comprehensive and structured leadership development experience currently being developed by Mr. Dickson in collaboration with TCSI. Additional detail regarding the role and responsibilities of the Principal, organizational relationship, and qualifications are outlined below.

### **The Founding Principal Role**



VCA is currently in serious discussion with Ms. Sarah Giblin to be the Founding Principal at Valor Collegiate. Ms. Giblin currently works for the Valor team as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Ms. Giblin began her career as an educator in 2005 as a Teach For America Miami-Dade corps member. She taught 6th, 7th, and 8th grade reading and writing in one of most sunny, but educationally divided cities in the country. Ms. Giblin also worked on staff at Teach For America, where she served as an instructional coach for new teachers and piloted a Literacy professional learning community that led all teachers to nearly double their impact on scholar learning.

A graduate of Loyola Chicago, Ms. Giblin moved back to the Windy City in 2009 to join the founding leadership team of Rowe Elementary School, a college-prep elementary charter school, where she spent five years as a teacher and Academic Dean. During that time, she also completed graduate coursework at Dominican University to deepen her instructional knowledge. Ms. Giblin joined the Valor team because she loves being part of founding school teams and because of the exceptional reputation and potential of Valor in Nashville. As the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Valor, she is applying all the lessons she learned in opening Rowe to develop a world-class academic curriculum.

### **Ms. Sarah Giblin Qualifications**

#### **Teacher**

- Has taught Kindergarten – 8<sup>th</sup> grade, with the majority of her experience within 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- As a middle school reading teacher, led students to 2.4 years of reading growth according to the FCAT state standardized test; on the Florida Writes assessment, students averaged a 4.0 and outscored the school average of 3.6 and district average of 3.8.
- As a reading interventionist, taught small group reading interventions to the lowest 20% of scholars in 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade, yielding the following results:
  - Led scholars to exceptional reading growth through small-group, intensive reading interventions (over 1.5 years of reading in 1 academic year)
  - Manage Response to Intervention (RtI) school-wide; leading to an 18% decrease in the percentage of scholars who qualify to receive intensive interventions

#### **Coach and Instructional Leadership**

- Served on the founding leadership team of Rowe Elementary School, a charter school Ms. Giblin opened in 2009.
- Managed a team of 18 teachers within 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Rowe Elementary School. Manage training, development, and retention of instructional staff. Oversee all core academic initiatives including: data presentation and analysis, teacher coaching and development, performance management, academic rubrics, curriculum and assessment development, curriculum budget, and professional development.
  - Illinois Standard Achievement Test (ISAT) results exceed neighborhood, district, and state scores in the 2011 – 2012 school year:
    - Reading: 82.1% scholars meet/exceed standards
    - Math: 92.7% scholars meet/exceed standards
    - Composite: 83.8% scholars meet/exceed standards
- As an instructional coach for Teach For America, exceeded performance goals by leading 77% of second year teachers and 60% first year teachers to achieve rigorous classroom goals. More than tripled results from previous school year where 24% of second year corps members and 7% of first year corps members led students to significant/solid academic gains.

#### **Principal**

- Served as Summer School Principal at Teach For America’s summer institute. Led school team to exceptional results as indicated on Teach For America’s institute wide survey. Institute data shows:
  - Set Philadelphia Institute “Institute High” for 10/12 survey metrics, including 100% of corps members agree/strongly agree that:
    - that they feel part of a welcoming environment
    - they feel a sense of partnership with Teach For America staff
    - they feel valued as a person by Teach For America staff

#### **Organizational Relationships**

The Founding Principal will be the instructional leader of the school and will report to the Chief Executive Officer. This Principal position will require establishing and maintaining strong working relationships with parents and community members, in addition to teachers and students. The school will eventually be part of a small, local network of charter schools, and will provide opportunities to work with school leaders at other VCA sites as they open.

### **Key Responsibilities**

#### **Educational Leadership**

- Own, as leader of the school, responsibility for world-class student academic achievement, character strength development, and social-emotional development;
- Provide instructional leadership, coaching and support to teachers who are working with a diverse student body, drawing on best practices and methods that ensure the proper amount of differentiation and support to ensure all students are performing at high levels and developing as critical thinkers;
- Recruit, hire, retain, support and supervise talented teaching staff and outside consultants in implementing an educational program that is consistent with Valor Collegiate Academies core philosophies, including differentiation, blended learning, balanced literacy, and social-emotional intelligences;
- Facilitate the use of a wide array of assessments that, together, reflect the educational philosophy of VCA that also prepare students to excel on standardized measures. Use multiple sources of data to develop a plan for the ongoing improvement of student achievement by overseeing the collection, analysis, and utilization of this data in relationship to specific students, teachers and curricula. This will include analyzing the data by various sub-groups including English language learners, special education, and cultural groupings; and
- Supervise and lead site-based teacher professional development (including a 2-3 week summer institute), and external professional development opportunities. Create and support ongoing professional development plans and opportunities for each individual educator in the school.

#### **Communication, Outreach and Community-Building**

- Facilitate the development of supportive communities among students, faculty, staff and external stakeholders to ensure that all members are engaged and valued;
- Communicate the school's vision and goals in a way that ensures understanding and commitment from a racially, culturally, and socio-economically diverse community of parents, students, faculty, staff and board members;
- Oversee the development of regular family education workshops, town hall meetings, newsletters and other forms of communication with families, ensuring that all such communication and work with families is accessible and understandable to all families; and
- Maintain positive relationships with Metro Nashville Public Schools and other charter organizations, serving as an active leader in the Nashville community and sharing VCA's best practices.

#### **School Management**

- Oversee the day-to-day management of the school site with a commitment to ensuring the health and safety of students, faculty and staff, including supervision of janitorial/custodial staff;
- Manage non-teaching support staff, including office personnel, business manager, resource specialists, etc.;
- Collaborate with the Chief Executive Officer on school budgets, fundraising, charter renewal, outreach, partnerships and other duties as required; and
- Report on activities, organizational development progress and student achievement to the Board.

#### **Qualifications**

- A strong personal commitment to ongoing learning and growth;
- At least 5 years of relevant teaching experience, with demonstrated student results;
- Masters or Ph.D. degree in Education;
- Experience selecting, training and supervising highly effective teachers, ideally in a charter, independent or public school setting that has a record of high achievement;
- A sophisticated understanding of and experience with differentiation, balanced literacy, social-emotional intelligence theory, backward design, Teach Like a Champion, and the creation of project-based curriculum;
- Demonstrated experience in data-based assessments and incorporating learning goals beyond the state standards;

- Experience with diverse student populations, including English learners, special education and GATE;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
- Experience motivating and working with a variety of diverse stakeholders and local community members;
- Experience with school finance, budgets and organizational management; and
- Maturity, humility, strong work ethic, sense of humor and a can-do attitude.

**Attach a copy of the school's organizational chart and highlight the areas of this organizational structure that relate directly to the school's vision, mission.**

**Attachment 2** has the Organizational Chart for VCA along with a description of how the structure relates to the vision and mission.

**Fill out the staffing chart below outlining your staffing projections. Adjust or add functions and titles as needed to reflect variations in school models.**

**Table 53: Staffing Projections**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Elementary School Staff</b>					
Principals			1	1	1
Dean of Students				1	1
Dean of Instruction			1	1	2
Coach			1	2	3
Student Supports			2	3	4
Classroom Teachers (Core Subjects)			8	12	16
Apprentice Teachers			8	12	16
Office Manager			1	1	1
<b>Total FTEs at elementary schools</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Middle School Staff</b>					
Principals		1	1	1	1
Dean of Students		1	1	1	1
Dean of Instruction		1	1	1	1
Coach		1	2	2	2
Student Supports		2	3	4	4
Classroom Teachers (Core Subjects)		13	19	25	25
Apprentice Teachers		7	10	13	13
Office Manager		1	1	1	1
Business Manager			1	1	1
<b>Total FTEs at middle schools</b>		<b>27</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>

## SECTION XIII – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Professional Development

**Describe the proposed school’s professional development plan and opportunities and how they relate to the chosen academic focus and plan. Explain career growth and development opportunities for staff to maximize the contribution and retention of highly effectively employees**

**Describe the core components of your plan and how those components will support effective implementation of the academic plan.**

**Provide a schedule and overview of professional development that will take place prior to school opening. Explain the topics that may be included during the induction period and how teachers will be supported in delivering unique or particularly challenging aspects of the chosen curriculum.**

**Describe the expected number of days and hours for professional development throughout the school year and explain how the school’s calendar, daily schedule, and staffing structure support this plan. Include time scheduled for collaborative planning and how such time will typically be used.**

**Describe how the school’s culture and leadership team will support professional growth.**

**Describe the plan to cultivate future leadership capacity**

**Explain how the school’s staff will demonstrate a spirit of collaboration to share innovative practices across the entire district**

**Describe the policies and procedures for evaluating staff, providing feedback and celebrating excellence.**

**Detail who is involved in the evaluation process, how constructive feedback will be provided and how often.**

VCASE understands that schools are only as great as their teachers and leaders. VCASE will have a goal to have a world-class educator in every classroom every day, as well as a world-class school leader. In order to make this intention a realistic reality, we intend to focus on three key areas for education talent:

1. **Attraction** – creating a pipeline of top notch, right fit talent
2. **Development** – developing talented educators efficiently and effectively
3. **Retention** – ensuring that our best educators have a career ladder and development plan that keeps them long-term

VCASE will focus on these three areas for our talent management strategy. Each area is discussed in detail below.

### Attraction

**Pipeline:** Having a strong, consistent, and varied pipeline of talent is the key first step in a talent strategy. VCASE will work very hard at developing a world-class talent pipeline as follows:

1. **Local talent**
  - a. **Partnerships with local Universities:** VCASE intends to build strong relationships with the local university teaching programs. Candice McQueen, Dean of Education at Lipscomb University, visited with Mr. Dickson in California for two days to study the unique partnership that he helped develop for Summit Prep Charter and Stanford University. Lipscomb and Valor are interested in developing a similar type of relationship. In addition, Mr. Dickson has presented his school model to the faculty at the Center for Teaching and Learning at Vanderbilt University and Director Rogers Hall is helping to coordinate an event in September 2013 where Mr. Dickson and the VCASE team will present to a wider audience of Vanderbilt faculty and students. In addition, Mr. Dickson has built a good relationship with the Belmont education school, particularly Lauren Lunsford. Letters of support from Rogers Hall and Lauren Lunsford can be found in the attachments.
  - b. **Teach for America:** VCASE intends to have a very strong relationship with Teach For America. Director Shani Dowell’s letter of support is attached in Attachment 14.
  - c. **The New Teacher Project:** VCASE also intends to have a strong relationship with TNTP. Director Bailey Cato’s letter of support is attached in Attachment 14.
  - d. **Private Schools:** At Summit Prep in CA, we were very successful at attracting excellent talent from the private schools. Many were interested in the mixed-income, high expectations

environment, as well as the intense professional development opportunities. We hope that VCASE will be a similarly inviting place to work for talented teachers currently working in private schools.

- e. **Ed Pioneers and Broad Fellows:** VCASE is currently in discussions with both Education Pioneers and the Broad Fellowship about securing fellows starting in the 2014 school year. Both programs are renowned for attracting top notch talent into the education field. They would serve in leadership roles within the schools.

## 2. National talent

- a. **National Universities:** Mr. Dickson has developed strong relationships with many of the best teacher education programs in the country, especially Stanford, Berkeley, UCLA, Harvard, and Columbia. VCASE intends to leverage these strong relationships in order to attract top talent from these education schools here to Nashville.
- b. **Tennessee Charter School Incubator:** Due to this Fellowship with TCSI, Mr. Dickson has access to their talent pool of candidates interested in becoming school leaders and teachers in Nashville. The Incubator has a Director of Talent, Rebecca Lieberman, who is in regular contact with Mr. Dickson regarding top talent that they are recruiting.
- c. **Charter School Growth Fund:** The Charter School Growth Fund is one of the premier charter organizations in the country and they have very deep and expansive ties to talent in the education field. The Growth Fund is actively helping Valor locate talent.

**Right Fit:** Finding talent that is a great organizational fit is critically important. VCASE intends to create a transparent and rigorous hiring process that allows both VCASE and the candidate to evaluate if working at VCASE will be a great philosophical and career fit.

- 1. **Core Beliefs, Values, and Character Strengths:** No matter how talented in other areas, if a candidate is not an excellent fit in regards to their alignment with the common beliefs and values of the organization it will inevitable be a poor decision to hire them. VCASE will use the following hiring process to help maximize the chance that we find candidates who are a great fit for the organization.
- 2. **Hiring Process:** In the first year of the organization VCASE will partner with Nashville Prep Charter School in order to have the following process work without a building and classrooms. We may potentially partner with LEAD Public schools as well.
  - a. **Initial Screening:** VCASE will use iApplicant to manage our application process. iApplicant allows for organizations to organize and track their incoming resumes and hiring process. The initial screener will look for technical qualifications necessary, and then rate the candidate as red, yellow, or green. The CEO and Principal will then read all yellow and green candidates.
  - b. **Initial Interview:** The CEO and Principal will conduct a first round interview with select candidates. The initial interview will be focused nearly exclusively on if the candidate is a good philosophical fit for the organization. iApplicant will track the opinion of VCASE on how well the candidate is aligned with the various Beliefs, Values, and Character Strengths that are the foundation of the VCASE organization.
  - c. **Pedagogical Interview:** For candidates that are deemed a great fit in the initial interview, a second interview is scheduled that focuses nearly all on their content and pedagogical knowledge. As part of this interview candidates bring a backwards planned unit if they are an experienced teacher, or are asked to complete an outline of a backwards planned unit if they are new teachers. The Principal will conduct these interviews in year 1 – in subsequent years either teachers or other VCASE faculty (Dean of Curriculum and Instruction) that are knowledgeable in the candidate's content area will conduct this interview. iApplicant will again track the results of each candidate on their depth of content and pedagogical knowledge.
  - d. **Teaching Demonstration:** In year 1, candidates that make it to the Teaching Demonstration will teach a demo lesson at Nashville Prep. Candidates will be asked to prepare a 15 minute lesson on a topic, and to send their lesson plan to the Principal the night before the activity. The candidate will then receive feedback on the lesson from the CEO and Principal and will then re-teach the lesson to a second group of students. As VCASE matures these demo lessons will take place at VCASE.
  - e. **Final Interview:** A final interview is conducted with all members of the VCASE team. This group interview is meant to gauge how well the candidate will work with the current faculty. The candidate will be given various short scenarios by faculty and staff and will be asked to role play their responses. At the end of the final interview current faculty will have a 24 hour window to communicate directly with the CEO with input about the candidate.
  - f. **Offer:** For the select candidates that have made it through this rigorous process, the CEO and Principal will make a consensus decision on whether to offer each candidate a job.

## **Development**

Once we have attracted the right talent, where we hope to differentiate VCASE from other high performing school organizations is in our ability to develop that talent into world-class educators. We will utilize the following development plan for our educators:

### **Teacher Development Cycle**

#### **1. Personalized Educator Plan:**

Each faculty member will have a PEP that will guide their personalized learning plan as educators while at Valor. A copy of the PEP is shown in **Attachment 20**. The PEP document has a thoughtful mixture of academic goals at the school, grade, and classroom level, development goals that are aligned with the Valor Professional Continuum (to be described shortly), and personal goals that help to maintain teacher's resiliency. Table 54 below shows the basic timeline for developing and reviewing the PEP.

**Table 54: PEP Meeting Schedule**

Meeting Type	Date	Involved
Initial PEP	July	Principal and Teacher
PEP Peer Review	October	Buddy Teachers
PEP Mid-Year Review	January	Principal and Teacher
PEP Peer Review	March	Buddy Teachers
PEP Year-End	May	Principal and Teacher

There are 5 opportunities each year for teachers to update and reflect on their PEP document. Buddy teachers are chosen during Summer Professional Development with partners ideally complimenting each other in ways that are deemed advantageous to both teachers development. All members of the VCASE organization will have a PEP and Buddy (even non-teaching employees).

- 2. Bloomboard – online talent management:** VCASE will most likely use Bloomboard, an excellent online talent management system to manage our faculty development.
  - a. PEP rubrics:** All employee PEP documents will be tracked electronically through Bloomboard. As changes and updates are made to the document they are stored in the cloud, including across years.
  - b. Observation tracking:** The VCASE observation cycle will be described shortly. All observation data is stored within Bloomboard.
  - c. Coaching tracking / video tracking:** An exciting part of Bloomboard (and other emerging teacher development tools) is their addition of video tracking. Video of teachers will be uploaded to Bloomboard as both evidence for faculty PEPs, as well as for Professional Development for other faculty members.
- 3. Schedule of PD for School Year:** The VCASE professional development Calendar is shown below in Table 55. VCASE will spend 57 days per year developing teachers and leaders. This is an incredible amount of time dedicated to developing great teachers and is made possible by Expeditions Calendar where students take elective course with contracted community organizations.

**Table 55: VCASE Professional Development Calendar**

Month	Dates	Type	Total Days
July	15-19	New Teacher Orientation	5
July	21-31	All School Orientation	8
September	1,2	Data Days 1	2
Sept/Oct	29,30, 1-10	Expeditions 1	10
November	6,7	Data Days 2	2
December	8,9	Data Days 3	2
January	5,6-10	Expeditions 2	10
February	5,6	Data Days 4	2
March	9,10	Data Days 5	2
April/May	27-8	Expeditions 3	10
June	8,9	Data Days 6	2



**Weekly Professional Development:** Teachers will also meet for 1.5 hours per week (in the afternoon on shortened Wednesdays). These meetings will mostly be on school culture, RtI check-ins, and grade level team check-ins.

4. **Typical Teacher Schedule / Collaboration Time:** In order to grow as educators, teachers need time to analyze data, collaborate with colleagues, get coaching from leadership and peers, write lessons plans and curriculum, and grade assessments. In order to ensure that VCASE faculty have this time, the schedule has been created in order to give faculty large amounts of planning time each day. The teacher schedules for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade are shown below in **Attachment 25**. While the actual number of minutes varies by grade level and content area, on average in Stage 1 of the VCASE model teachers have about **150 minutes of planning time per day**. This is a large amount of planning each day compared to most school models, and VCASE budgets for this by having a relatively thin administration structure. Instead, many of the aspects of leading the school are distributed across the faculty, allowing for teachers to have more authentic input into the leadership of the school.
5. **Summer Orientation:** In order to ensure a high performing teaching faculty, VCASE will have a very detailed summer orientation session for all teachers and leaders. In year 1 the orientation will be 13 days long. In subsequent years the orientation will be 13 days for new teachers, and 10 days for returning teachers. The Professional Development Calendar for these sessions is shown in Attachment 27. Listed below are a few of the topics covered in the Summer Orientation sessions.
  - a. **VCASE Culture:** Faculty will be given a clear and vivid introduction to what they VCASE culture for faculty and students looks and feels like. VCASE leadership will use video, role playing, students, and parents to describe the VCASE culture. In the first year VCASE will use students and families from DSST and Summit Prep (we will fly them out for the first day, and also use videos of faculty, students, and parents describing the cultures at these schools). Faculty will also role play certain situations and be given feedback by VCASE leadership.
  - b. **Special Education Development:** VCASE leadership will conduct SPED training along with Martha O'Bryan expert Daren Dickson on best practices with IEP students, including reviewing and practicing the VCASE RtI system, referral system, Grade Level team agendas, and typical high-yield strategies that are effective in the classroom.
  - c. **ELL Development:** Teachers will be trained for 2 days on the SIOP ELL model. This training will be integrated into the next two sessions (i.e., as faculty develop their assessments and curriculum for the school year, they will practice embedding high quality SIOP strategies into their lesson plans and curriculum – VCASE leadership will give feedback on their implementations of the SIOP strategies.
  - d. **Assessment and Curriculum Development:** Faculty will be led by the Principal and CEO through an extensive build out of each faculty member's assessment and curriculum for the year. It will be the major goal of the Summer Orientation that every faculty member will have worked with the Leadership team and fellow teachers for 6-8 days on developing their year-long curriculum.
  - e. **Execution of Lessons:** Faculty will practice and receive feedback on their execution of lessons. Faculty will work as a group and role-play classroom settings where each teacher will practice a select group of common classroom management techniques that will be used across the grade level. VCASE leadership will introduce these common techniques and then give feedback and coaching on their implementation.
  - f. **Non-classroom time:** Having crisp, safe, and organized transitions during non-classroom time is very important. VCASE will practice every non-classroom time transition with the faculty and ensure that everyone is clear on their responsibilities at all times during the school day.
  - g. **Mentor 101:** The VCASE SPED team will lead the faculty through 2 sessions on how to be an excellent mentor, mostly training faculty on the Social-Emotional models that they will use to coach students in their non-cognitive growth.
  - h. **Technology/Blended:** Faculty will be trained on their laptops and all technology software that will be used at VCASE.
6. **Observation Cycles:** VCASE will use the following observation cycle, which is based off of Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's *Leverage Leadership*:
  - a. Teachers will be **observed by VCASE leadership at least 1x per week**.
  - b. Teachers will have a **20-30 minute debrief meeting each week** with VCASE leadership. These sessions will be focused on bite-sized, quickly implementable steps that will have high leverage



- impacts on student learning. Most of the actions will involve classroom management techniques, systems/transitions improvements, warmth and joyful culture, and rigor of questioning and lesson.
- c. Teachers will have **12 Data Days** (6 separate sessions after 4 weeks of teaching) that will be focused on student learning as measured by internal and external assessments. These sessions will be focused on analyzing student work and assessment results. Teachers will work independently, on teacher teams, and with VCASE leadership to analyze their data, reflect on instruction, and plan for the next cycle of instruction.
  7. **Leadership Team meetings:** VCASE leadership and faculty will meet for 1.5 hours per week (on shortened Wednesdays as an entire faculty for 45 minutes, and on Tuesday and Thursdays in Math/Science (Tu) and English/History (Th) for 45 minutes). These meetings will be focused on school culture and relevant timely professional development.
  8. **Expeditions:** As shown in Table 38, teachers have approximately 30 days during the school year to focus on professional development. This time will be used developing teachers in the following areas:
    - a. **Data analysis and planning:** teachers will work with each other and VCASE leadership to analyze student data, reflect, and plan upcoming teaching cycles.
    - b. **Continuum:** teachers will each set goals around development in certain areas on their PEP document. Workshops and opportunities for development in these areas will be designed for teachers so that they may receive coaching in their major goal areas for the year. For example, if a teacher is focusing on classroom management then they will work with other teachers who also have this as a goal. This group will work with VCASE leadership (and perhaps outside advisors from other schools or Universities) to develop in this area.
    - c. **Small group teaching:** part of the Continuum development will include teaching small groups of students who are using Expeditions to continue to master the standards of various courses. Teachers will spend part of days teaching these students in small groups – giving those students very focused remediation from all teachers, but also giving teachers a chance to teach with a partner so that they can receive feedback on their performance.
    - d. **School-wide decisions:** Teachers at VCASE will have considerable input into major decisions made at VCASE. A Decision Grid will be used in order to give clarity to whether teachers have Input or Decision making power over certain decisions. In both cases faculty will be informed of likely decisions that will affect the school and will have structured opportunities to discuss as a faculty the Pros and Cons of those decisions. These opportunities are valuable to VCASE because they give real voice to teachers, they allow teachers to feel more invested in the school, and they allow VCASE to promote grass-roots innovation by allowing teachers to tell leadership what is working/not working on the ground.

**Professional Educator Continuum:** The Professional Educator Continuum is the central development tool that will be used at VCASE for teachers. A copy of the current version is in **Attachment 24**. We anticipate improving upon this over the next year and will have an updated version ready by June 2014. The Continuum is currently based off of the National Board Certification Standards, with the addition of Emotional Intelligence and Mentoring Strands, as we believe that in order to be a great VCASE educator you must excel in these areas as well as more traditional strands such as Curriculum and Instruction.

1. **Compensation Strategy:** Teachers at VCASE will be paid about the same as teachers in MNPS when they first start teaching at VCASE. However, instead of being paid each year using a traditional Step and Ladder format, VCASE will instead utilize a **Skill Based Step and Ladder** system for its employees. Teachers will be base-lined as one of four categories when they are first hired at VCASE (Resident, Emerging, Accomplished, and Master). Once base-lined, they will set goals each year in the Personalized Educator Plan (PEP) around certain strands in the Continuum upon which both they and VCASE leadership agree would be the most useful areas to develop. Teachers then will have opportunities and professional development that is focused on helping ensure that they develop in these goal areas.

For example, a teacher may choose to develop from Basic to Proficient in differentiation. They will propose this goal to the VCASE Principal in their July PEP meeting and they will come to agreement that it is an appropriate goal. The teacher then refers to the Continuum Rubric to see evidence and data that they will need to show by the end of the year in order to demonstrate they have indeed grown from Basic to Proficient in Differentiation. They will focus on this goal over the course of the year, and collect evidence that they will share with VCASE leadership throughout the year. VCASE leadership will track what areas teachers are developing in that year (in Bloomboard) and will create Expeditions and year-long experiences that support each teacher in meeting their goals. At year end the teacher and VCASE leadership meet to analyze the evidence and then make a decision as to whether the teacher has grown on the Continuum. When teachers move up a Level they are paid a higher Base Salary starting the following school year. The tentative salary bands for each Level are shown in **Attachment 26**.

Overall, VCASE intends to be a leader in developing great teachers. By spending large amounts of time in thoughtful, teacher-friendly ways we hope to attract high quality teachers, and subsequently develop them into great teachers.

### **Retention**

Being great at attracting and developing teachers is only helpful if you are able to successfully retain a large percentage of your teachers. VCASE's strategy for retention of great teachers is described below:

1. **Teacher as Professional:** VCASE's primary strategy for retaining great teachers is to treat teachers as true professionals. VCASE teachers are given large amounts of time to develop, large amounts of time to collaborate with Leadership and their peers, significant input into the major decisions of the school, and a compensation structure that values growth and performance. VCASE teachers are also expected to be leaders: they coach younger teachers and take on some of the leadership roles usually done by administration in typical schools such as scheduling for their grade level, tracking student performance in their grade level, and designing and organizing curriculum and assessments. As a result, VCASE anticipates being a place that great teachers love to be: surrounded by similar teacher-leaders who desire to be in this type of high-trust environment.
2. **Career lattice:** VCASE will have dual development tracks for teachers. The **Master Teacher** track will be for teachers who want to make teaching in a classroom a career. The second track will be the **Emerging Leader** track – for teachers that would like a leadership role outside of the classroom.
  - a. **Master teacher** – the Master teacher track will be developed by June 2014 and will be closely tied to the new Valor Professional Continuum.
  - b. **Emerging leader** – the Emerging leader track will be part of the LaunchTN Leadership Program that is currently being developed by the leadership at VCASE, Nashville Prep, the Tennessee Charter School Incubator, and the Office of Innovation at MNPS. This program (pending funding from the TNDOE through the TNLead Grant we submitted March 2013) will take young leaders with promise and given them a “medical residency” experience by working in various District and Charter schools as well as high quality workshop sessions over the course of a development year. VCASE anticipates sending the Principal of VCASE and possibly the Assistant Principal of VCASE through this program (if funded) for the 2013-2014 school year.
3. **High Trust, Joyful Culture:** VCASE will aim to be a high-trust organization, and will work tirelessly to ensure that all decisions have input from key stakeholders and are communicated transparently. Faculty and leadership will be trained yearly by the CEO on having “courageous conversations” and on the elements of high-trust organizations. In addition, VCASE will work hard to ensure that faculty feel valued and truly enjoy their working experience at VCASE. Careful attention will be paid to ensure that VCASE faculty work extremely hard, but also relax and rest extremely hard in a thoughtful cycle throughout the year.
4. **Meeting the Mission:** One of the best retention strategies of great organizations is that employees feel successful. To that end, VCASE intends to retain great talent by ensuring that we successfully meet our ambitious vision of graduating all scholars college accepted and college ready.

## SECTION XIV – OPERATIONS CAPACITY

### Operations Capacity

**Describe the capacity of school leadership (current or proposed) in terms of skills, experience, and available time to identify and respond to the needs of the staff and also balance the needs of the school and students.**

Founding team members, Mr. Dickson in particular, have demonstrated great capacity to identify and respond to the needs of the staff and also balance the needs of the school and students. Sarah Giblin, the Founding Principal for VCASE, brings a strong teaching and leadership background in a highly successful K-8 model school.

The organizational structure outlined in **Attachment 2** also provides clear lines of authority and responsibility, which is necessary in order to balance the needs of everyone in the school community. From the onset of school launch, the Principal will be supported by the CEO with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction. In year 2, when Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are added, a Lower School Principal will be added. Both the Upper School and Lower School Principals will be directly managed by the CEO. The VCA CMO staff will also provide ample support, as detailed in the Valor Replication application. This thoughtful approach to growth and staffing will provide the foundation to be able to meet the needs of staff.

**If you intend to contract with specific educational service providers, such as a charter management organization (CMO), please include: Selection process and criteria, Division of roles between the board and the service provider, How performance of the provider will be measured, Conditions for renewal and termination of the agreement, and How you will check for and manage any potential conflicts of interest.**

VCA does not intend to contract with an educational service provider. However, as referenced in several areas of this application, the founders do envision applying for authority to open additional schools and to create a network of high-performing public charter schools and the creation of a CMO at a later date.

# PART IV - ATTACHMENTS

## Attachment 1: Start-Up Plan

A proposed timeline highlighting the major action items that must be addressed prior to the opening of the school is found on the following below. The timeline also highlights the general timeframe for each action item. This timeline will be reviewed periodically to ensure timely progress on all action items and will be revised, as needed, to ensure the successful start-up of the school. The timeline and our working assumptions are based on our current beliefs and expectations, as well as on the experience of our advisors. As part of the development process for Valor Collegiate Academies, the founding team has attempted to identify the most significant action items and to provide reasonable timing estimates. We expect, however, that the process and timing of many of these items will need adjusting as the school periodically evaluates and updates the working assumptions. Upon receipt of a charter, VCA will undertake a more specific and comprehensive action plan, detailing each action step, responsible party, and deadline. Please see the following pages for a timetable for commencing.

Valor Collegiate Academies Start-Up Plan			
ORGANIZATION			
Timeframe	Project Description	Important Dates/Notes	Manager
<b>Phase I</b>  <b>Upon Approval of Charter – Summer and Early Fall 2014</b>	Initial financing secured	Submit grants for new charter funding	Board, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
		Identify other grant sources	
		Organize fundraising events and solicit contributions from individual donors	
	CEO recruits/hires Principal	Goal to Hire Principal by July 1	CEO
	Community outreach; student and teacher	CEO and Principal presents at community organizations; launch website/social media	CEO, Principal, Board
<b>Phase II</b>  <b>November-December 2014</b>	Community outreach; student recruitment	Open houses; conduct information sessions at the school we will transform; community orgs, feeder schools, churches; advertising and marketing materials	CEO, Principal, Board
	Recruitment and Hiring of Initial Staff (pending external funding)	Assistant Principals and/or English and Math Lead Teachers	CEO, Principal
<b>Phase III</b>  <b>January – March 2015</b>	Recruiting/hiring additional key personnel	Director of Operations, Teachers, Support Staff	CEO, Principal
	CEO and key personnel identify and hire qualified faculty and staff	Recruiting/interviewing at existing school; extensive outreach for candidates; interviews	CEO, Principal

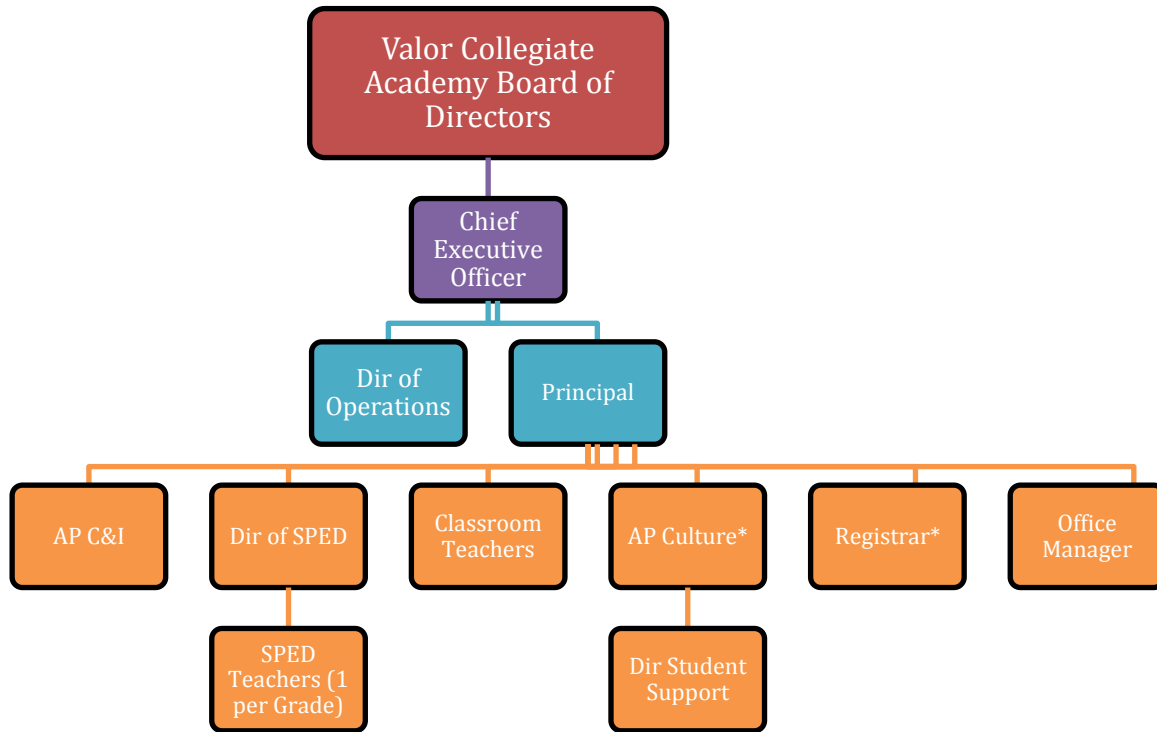
	Review, update, and approve all policies	Finance, enrollment, grievance, discipline, education, HR & personnel, operations, etc.	Board, CEO
	Complete student and employee handbooks; conduct legal review		CEO, Principal Board
	Complete uniform policy		CEO, Board
	Continue community outreach; student recruitment	Open houses; conduct information sessions existing school; community orgs, feeder schools, churches; advertising and marketing materials	CEO, Principal, Board
<b>Phase IV</b>  <b>March-May 2015</b>	Identify eligible suppliers and vendors; order office equipment; lease copiers, phone service, IT support		CEO, Principal
	Plan teacher orientation & training; develop summer and year-long professional development plan		CEO, Principal
	Develop family involvement policies, family contract, and family surveys		CEO, Principal
	Community outreach; student recruitment	Continue open houses, recruiting at community events; newspaper radio advertising	CEO, Principal
	Distribute information to families regarding dates of information night and back to school night		Principal and Lead Teachers
	School safety plan; schedule fire drills and crisis drills		Principal, Ops Director
	Hire custodians and office support staff		Principal, Ops Director
	Identify community partners		CEO, Principal
	Order uniforms		Ops Director

	Ready student database for records, test scores, grades, attendance, tardy students, discipline	PowerSchool\PowerGrade	Principal, Ops Director
	Prepare for DOE and Title I reimbursements and entitlements; conduct search for independent auditor		CEO, Principal, Ops Director, Treasurer
<b>Valor Collegiate Academies Start-Up Plan</b>			
<b>FACILITIES/OPERATIONS</b>			
<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Important Dates/Notes</b>	<b>Manager</b>
<b>Phase I</b>  <b>Upon Approval of Charter – Summer to Early Fall 2014</b>	Secure facility using either lease option or purchase option outlined in Attachment 6 – Facilities Plan		CEO, Board
	Secure all permits and approvals for occupancy		CEO, Board
<b>Phase II</b>  <b>Fall –March 2015</b>	Conduct needs analysis – classroom furniture, technology, office equipment, books		CEO, Principal, Ops Director
	Identify transportation vendor. Develop a detailed transportation plan, including types of vehicles, authorized drivers and student eligibility.		CEO, Ops Director
<b>Phase III</b>  <b>March-May 2015</b>	Order all classroom furniture, technology, accessories, and equipment	Conduct needs/assessment of existing furniture, technology. LCD projectors and screens, computers, tables, desks, chairs, shelving, white boards	CEO, Principal, Ops Director
	Prepare building for opening – paint rooms and halls, order cleaning supplies		CEO, Principal, Ops Director
	Order/install signage for inside and outside of building		ED, Principal, Ops Director
<b>Phase IV</b>	Develop an arrival and dismissal plan, including traffic flow	Consult with local police and adjacent schools	Principal, Ops Director



<b>June - July 2015</b>	Inventory and tag all computers, monitors, projectors; ensure network and technology are functional		Principal, Ops Director
	Order student and classroom and office supplies		Principal, Ops Director, Office Manager
	Schedule final health and safety inspections; secure approval of crisis plan		Principal, Ops Director

## Attachment 2: Organizational Chart



\*Positions to be added in year 3 of operation. Director of Student Support will report directly to the Principal in Years 1 and 2.

The Valor Collegiate Academy organizational chart above illustrates how core functions and personnel will be managed in order for the school to meet its mission. In particular, the overall leadership structure will allow the Principal, who will serve as the instructional leader of the school, to focus on teaching and learning. The Chief Executive Officer will provide overall leadership, while the Chief Operating Officer will lead all functions related to operations and finance.

Additional personnel will be added in year 3 as the school continues its growth projections, including a second Assistant Principal focusing on school culture and a Registrar. Further yet, in year 2 a Lower School Principal will be added with the same organizational structure under him/her that is outlined for the founding Middle School Principal in Year 1.

Assistant Principals will have varying levels of supervisory duties over some teachers in their respective areas of focus. They will contribute to the teacher evaluation process as appropriate, yet the Principal will remain the primary supervisor.

## Attachment 3: Governing Body Documents

### Attachment 3A: Non-Profit and Exempt Status



BILL GARRETT, Davidson County

Trans: T20120078995 CHARTER

Recvd: 10/17/12 13:00 6 pgs

Fees: 7.50 Taxes: 0.00



20121017-0095296

STATE OF TENNESSEE

Tre Hargett, Secretary of State

Division of Business Services

William R. Snodgrass Tower

312 Rosa L. Parks AVE, 6th FL

Nashville, TN 37243-1102

Valor Collegiate Academies  
STE 416  
209 10TH AVE S  
NASHVILLE, TN 37203-0772

October 16, 2012

### Filing Acknowledgment

Please review the filing information below and notify our office immediately of any discrepancies.

<b>SOS Control # :</b>	<b>698059</b>	<b>Formation Locale:</b>	<b>TENNESSEE</b>
<b>Filing Type:</b>	Corporation Non-Profit - Domestic	<b>Date Formed:</b>	10/16/2012
<b>Filing Date:</b>	10/16/2012 2:35 PM	<b>Fiscal Year Close:</b>	12
<b>Status:</b>	Active	<b>Annual Report Due:</b>	04/01/2013
<b>Duration Term:</b>	Perpetual	<b>Image # :</b>	7106-2534
<b>Public/Mutual Benefit:</b>	Public		
<b>Business County:</b>	DAVIDSON COUNTY		

### Document Receipt

Receipt # : 836542	Filing Fee:	\$100.00
Payment-Check/MO - BRADLEY ARANT BOULT CUMMINGS LLP, Nashville, TN		\$100.00

**Registered Agent Address:**  
ROBERT C. HANNON  
STE 700  
1600 DIVISION ST  
NASHVILLE, TN 37203-2771

**Principal Address:**  
STE 416  
209 10TH AVE S  
NASHVILLE, TN 37203-0772

Congratulations on the successful filing of your **Charter** for **Valor Collegiate Academies** in the State of Tennessee which is effective on the date shown above. You must also file this document in the office of the Register of Deeds in the county where the entity has its principal office if such principal office is in Tennessee. Visit the TN Department of Revenue website ([apps.tn.gov/bizreg](http://apps.tn.gov/bizreg)) to determine your online tax registration requirements.

You must file an Annual Report with this office on or before the Annual Report Due Date noted above and maintain a Registered Office and Registered Agent. Failure to do so will subject the business to Administrative Dissolution/Revocation.

Tre Hargett  
Secretary of State

Processed By: Kathy Sherrell

Phone (615) 741-2286 \* Fax (615) 741-7310 \* Website: <http://tnbear.tn.gov/>

**STATE OF TENNESSEE**  
**CHARTER**  
**OF**  
**VALOR COLLEGIATE ACADEMIES**

**FILED**

**ARTICLE I: NAME AND FILING**

The name of the nonprofit corporation is Valor Collegiate Academies (the "Corporation"). The Charter is being filed pursuant to the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, as amended from time to time (the "Act").

**ARTICLE II: NOT-FOR-PROFIT PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATION**

The Corporation is a nonprofit public benefit corporation. It is intended that the Corporation shall have the status of a corporation that is exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or any corresponding provisions of any future federal tax laws (hereinafter referred to as the "Code"), as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code.

**ARTICLE III: OFFICE, REGISTERED AGENT AND INCORPORATOR**

The initial principal office of the Corporation is located at 209 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Suite 416, Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee 37203, Attention: Todd Dickson.

The registered agent of the Corporation is Robert C. Hannon, and the initial registered office of the Corporation is 1600 Division Street, Suite 700, Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee 37203.

The incorporator of the Corporation is Robert C. Hannon whose mailing address is 1600 Division Street, Suite 700, Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee 37203.

**ARTICLE IV: MEMBERS**

The Corporation shall not have members.

**ARTICLE V: PURPOSE**

The Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, scientific, literary and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code including operating a charter school management organization specializing in grade 5 – 12 junior and high schools.

The Corporation is organized to engage in any activity, and to exercise any and all powers, rights and privileges afforded a nonprofit corporation under the Act. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Charter, the Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted

7/2981571.1

as a result of the Proceeding or any appeal thereof, reasonable expenses actually incurred with respect to the Proceeding, all fines, judgments, penalties and amounts paid in settlement thereof, subject to the following conditions:

(a) The Proceeding was instituted by reason of the fact that such person is or was a director or officer of the Corporation; and

(b) The director or officer conducted himself or herself in good faith, and he or she reasonably believed (i) in the case of conduct in his or her official capacity with the Corporation, that his or her conduct was in its best interest; (ii) in all other cases, that his or her conduct was at least not opposed to the best interest of the Corporation; and (iii) in the case of any criminal proceeding, that he or she had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent is not, of itself, determinative that the director or officer did not meet the standard of conduct herein described.

2. Permissive Indemnification of Employees and Agents. The Corporation may, to the maximum extent permitted by the provisions of Section 48-58-501, *et seq.*, of the Act, as amended from time to time (provided, however, that if an amendment to the Act in any way limits or restricts the indemnification rights permitted by law as of the date hereof, such amendment shall apply only to the extent mandated by law and only to activities of persons subject to indemnification under this paragraph 2 which occur subsequent to the effective date of such amendment), indemnify and advance expenses in a Proceeding to any person who is or was an employee or agent of the Corporation, or to such person's heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives, to the same extent as set forth in paragraph 1 above, provided that the Proceeding was instituted by reason of the fact that such person is or was an employee or agent of the Corporation and met the standards of conduct set forth in subparagraph 1(b) above. The Corporation may also indemnify and advance expenses in a Proceeding to any person who is or was an employee or agent of the Corporation to the extent, consistent with public policy, as may be provided by its Bylaws, by contract, or by general or specific action of the Board of Directors.

3. Non-Exclusive Application. The rights to indemnification and advancement of expenses set forth in paragraphs 1 and 2 above are contractual between the Corporation and the person being indemnified, and his or her heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives, and are not exclusive of other similar rights of indemnification or advancement of expenses to which such person may be entitled, whether by law, by this Charter, by a resolution of the Board of Directors, by the Bylaws of the Corporation, by the purchase and maintenance by the Corporation of insurance on behalf of a director, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation, or by an agreement with the Corporation providing for such indemnification, all of which means of indemnification and advancement of expenses are hereby specifically authorized.

4. Non-Limiting Application. The provisions of this Article IX shall not limit the power of the Corporation to pay or reimburse expenses incurred by a director, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation in connection with such person's appearing as a witness in a Proceeding at a time when he or she has not been made a named defendant or respondent to the Proceeding.



5. Prohibited Indemnification. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article IX, the Corporation shall not indemnify or advance expenses to or on behalf of any director, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation, or any such person's heirs, executors, administrators, or legal representatives:

(a) If a judgment or other final adjudication adverse to such person establishes his or her liability for any breach of the duty of loyalty to the Corporation, for acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, or under Section 48-58-304 of the Act; or

(b) In connection with a Proceeding by or in the right of the Corporation in which such person was adjudged liable to the Corporation; or

(c) In connection with any other Proceeding charging improper personal benefit to such person, whether or not involving action in his or her official capacity, in which he or she was adjudged liable on the basis that personal benefit was improperly received by him or her.

6. Repeal or Modification Not Retroactive. No repeal or modification of the provisions of this Article IX, either directly or by the adoption of a provision inconsistent with the provisions of this Article, shall adversely affect any right or protection, as set forth herein, existing in favor of a particular individual at the time of such repeal or modification.

#### **ARTICLE X: NO PRIVATE INUREMENT**

No part of the net earnings of the Corporation shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its directors, officers, or other private persons. However, the Corporation shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered to it or on its behalf, pay reimbursements for expenses incurred on its behalf, and make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article V hereof.

#### **ARTICLE XI: NO LEGISLATIVE OR POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation; and the Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

#### **ARTICLE XII: PRIVATE FOUNDATION LIMITATIONS**

In the event the Corporation is a private foundation within the meaning of Section 509 of the Code for a taxable year, the Corporation:

(a) shall make distributions at such time and in such manner as not to subject the Corporation to tax under Section 4942 of the Code;

(b) shall not engage in any act of self-dealing, as defined in Section 4941(d) of the Code;



(c) shall not retain any excess business holdings, as defined in Section 4943(c) of the Code;


(d) shall not make any investments in a manner that would subject it to tax under Section 4944 of the Code; and

(e) shall not make any taxable expenditures, as defined in Section 4945(d) of the Code.

### **ARTICLE XIII: DISTRIBUTIONS ON DISSOLUTION**

Upon the dissolution of the Corporation, after paying or making provision for the payment of all liabilities of the Corporation then outstanding and unpaid, the Board of Directors shall distribute the assets of the Corporation exclusively for the charitable, scientific, literary and educational purposes of the Corporation within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, in such manner as the Board of Directors shall determine. Any assets not so distributed shall be distributed to one or more governmental units then described under Section 170(c)(1) of the Code, or to one or more organizations then described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code and Section 170(c)(2) of the Code, as the Board of Directors shall determine. Any assets not so disposed of by the Board of Directors shall be disposed of by a court having equity jurisdiction in the county in which the principal office of the Corporation is then located, with the distribution of assets to be made for such charitable purposes, or to such governmental units then described under Section 170(c)(1) of the Code, or to such organization or organizations then described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Code and Section 170(c)(2) of the Code, as such court shall determine.

This Charter shall be effective upon the filing with the Secretary of State of the State of Tennessee.

  
Robert C. Hannon, Incorporator



Bill Garrett

Davidson

CUSTOMER RECEIPT - RECORDING SERVICES

Receipt Number: T20120078995

Date/Time: 10/17/2012 13:00:51

Method Received: Walk-In

Clerk: aduncan

Customer Name : CHARLES

HOLD AT COUNTER

Transaction Detail

Instrument Number	Instrument Type	Gen. Fee	Equip. Fee	Transfer Tax	Mortgage Tax	Copy	Cert. Copy	Total Copy Fee	# Pgs	Consideration	Subtotal
201210170095296	CHARTER	\$5.50	\$2.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	N	N	\$0.00	6		\$7.50
First Party Name STATE OF TENNESSEE											
Second Party Name VALOR COLLEGIATE ACADEMIES											

Payment Information

Method of Payment	Payment Control ID	Authorized Agent	Company	Amount
Check	156330			\$7.00
Escrow	00425	record shortage	z-OVERAGE / SHORTAGE ACCOUNT	\$0.50

AMOUNT PAID:	\$7.50
LESS AMOUNT DUE:	\$7.50
CHANGE RECEIVED:	\$0.00

10/17/2012 1:01PM

Davidson County Register of Deeds \* 501 Broadway \* Nashville, TN 37203

Page 1 of 1  
Customer Receipt

## Attachment 3A: Receipt of Submission to IRS of 1023 for Non-Profit Exemption

VCA submitted its 1023 paperwork to the IRS on March 29, 2013. We expect to hear back from the IRS in the next 8 weeks on our status.

USPS TRACKING # 9114 9010 7574 2391 4514 88  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE  
Amount (Written Out) /100 Dollars \$ 5.00  
Purpose Postage  
Is any Portion of this Sale a Charitable Tax Deduction? ☒ Yes ☐ No  
If "Yes," the fair market value of the postage portion of the foregoing stamp equals the First-Class postage rate.  
By (Signature and Title) Samuel Wright Date 03-29-13  
PS Form 1096, April 1998

Todd Dickson  
209 10<sup>th</sup> Ave S, STE 416  
Nashville, TN 37203  
March 28, 2013  
Internal Revenue Service  
201 West Rivercenter Blvd  
ATTN: Extracting Stop 312  
Covington, KY 41011  
RE: Valor Collegiate Academies ("VCA")  
EIN: 46-1413472  
Dear Sir or Madame:  
Please find an Application for Recognition of Exemption under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code (Form 1023) for Valor Collegiate Academies ("the Company").  
The following documents are enclosed:  
1. Form 1023 checklist  
2. Check for \$850 to cover the application fee.  
3. Form 1023  
4. Schedule B attachment  
5. Certificate signed by Secretary of the Company with Charter of the Company filed with the Tennessee Secretary of State and the Bylaws of the Company  
6. Attachment A - Explanation of professional advisory services (Part 1, 8 of Form 1023)  
7. Attachment B - Narrative Description of Activities (Part IV of Form 1023)  
8. Attachment C - Board Member names (Part V, 1a of Form 1023)  
9. Attachment D - Compensation and other financial arrangements (Part V, 1b of Form 1023)  
10. Attachment E - Job Qualifications for Highest Compensated Individuals (Part V, 1b of Form 1023)  
11. Attachment F - Conflict of Interest Policy (Part V, 5a of Form 1023)  
12. Attachment G - Non-fixed payments (Part V, 6a and 6b of Form 1023)  
13. Attachment H - Description of Services Provided (Part VI, 1a of Form 1023)  
14. Attachment I - Fundraising Plan (Part VIII, 4a of Form 1023)  
15. Attachment J - Itemized Budget (Part IX)  
16. Attachment K - Attachment to Schedule B (Schedule B, Section I, Line 2a)  
Please feel free to contact me with any questions.  
Sincerely,  
Todd Dickson

## Attachment 3B: Bylaws

### BYLAWS

### OF

### VALOR COLLEGIATE ACADEMIES

## ARTICLE II

### NAME

The name of the nonprofit corporation is Valor Collegiate Academies (the “**Corporation**”). It is intended that the Corporation shall have the status of a corporation which is exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended, or any corresponding provisions of any future federal tax laws (hereinafter referred to as the “**Code**”), as an organization described in Section 501(c) (3) of the Code.

## ARTICLE III

### OFFICES

**Section 3.1 Corporate Office.** The principal office of the Corporation shall be located at 1600 Division Street, Suite 700, Nashville, Davidson County. The Corporation may have such other offices, either within or without the State of Tennessee, as the Board of Directors may designate or as the affairs of the Corporation may require from time to time.

**Section 3.2 Registered Office.** The registered office of the Corporation required to be maintained in the State of Tennessee by the Tennessee Nonprofit Corporation Act, as amended from time to time (the “**Act**”) may, but need not, be identical with the principal office in the State of Tennessee; and the address of the registered office may be changed from time to time by the Board of Directors.

## ARTICLE IV

### PURPOSE AND USE OF FUNDS

**Section 4.1 Purpose.** The Corporation is organized exclusively for charitable, scientific, literary and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code (hereinafter referred to as “**Charitable Purposes**”), including operating a public charter school management organization specializing in grade 5 – 12 junior and high schools.

The Corporation is organized to engage in any activity, and to exercise any and all powers, rights and privileges, afforded a nonprofit corporation under the Act. Notwithstanding any other provision of these Bylaws, the Corporation shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by a corporation organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Tennessee, which is exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Code, contributions to which are deductible under Sections 170(c)(2), 2055(a) or 2522(a) of the Code.

**Section 4.2 Use of Funds.** In making distributions to effectuate the religious, charitable, scientific, literary and educational purposes of the Corporation, as delineated in Section 3.1 above, the Board of Directors shall have the authority to make distributions of both income and principal in such proportions and amounts as the Board of Directors, in its discretion, determines advisable, provided that all such distributions are consistent with all applicable federal tax laws and regulations, as herein provided. The Corporation is not formed for financial or pecuniary gain; and no part of the assets, income, or profits of the Corporation shall be distributable to, or inure to, the benefit of its directors or officers or any other private person, except as provided in Section 5.11, Section 6.10 and Article XI as reimbursement for expenses or reasonable compensation for services rendered to the Corporation, and except to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the Charitable Purposes of the Corporation, as set forth in the Charter and Section 3.1 above. No substantial part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation; and no part of the activities of the Corporation shall be the participation in, or intervention in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

**Section 4.3 Administration of Funds.** In the event the Corporation is a private foundation within the meaning of Section 509 of the Code for a taxable year, the Corporation: (a) shall distribute its income for each tax year in such manner so that it will not become subject to the tax on undistributed income imposed by Section 4942 of the Code; (b) shall not engage in any act of self-dealing, as defined in Section 4941(d) of the Code; (c) shall not retain any excess business holdings, as defined in Section 4943(c) of the Code; (d) shall not make any investments in a manner that would incur tax liability under 4944 of the Code; and (e) shall not make any taxable expenditures, as defined in Section 4945(d) of the Code. In order fully to effectuate the provisions of this Section, the Corporation shall adopt such procedures, and shall otherwise adhere to such administrative requirements as may from time to time be necessary, in order fully to comply with all applicable federal tax laws and regulations.

**Section 4.4 Termination of Corporation.** The Board of Directors shall have the authority to terminate the Corporation at any time that, by a unanimous vote, it deems such termination appropriate or advisable. In such event, after paying, or making provision for the payment of, all liabilities of the Corporation then outstanding and unpaid, the Board of Directors shall distribute the assets of the Corporation exclusively for Charitable Purposes. Any assets not so distributed shall be distributed to one or more Qualified Beneficiaries, as the Board of Directors shall determine. Any assets not so disposed of by the Board of Directors shall be disposed of by a court having equity jurisdiction in the county in which the principal office of the Corporation is then located, with the distribution of assets to be made for such Charitable Purposes, or to such Qualified Beneficiaries, as such court shall determine.

## ARTICLE V

### MEMBERS

**Section 5.1 Members.** The Corporation shall not have members.

## ARTICLE VI

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Section 6.1 General Powers.** The business and affairs of the Corporation shall be supervised by its Board of Directors (sometimes referred to herein as the Board), which shall exercise in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation all of the rights and privileges legally exercisable by the Corporation as a corporate entity, except as may otherwise be provided by law, the Charter, or these Bylaws. The Board of Directors, as the governing body of the Corporation, shall have the authority to receive, administer, invest and distribute property on behalf of the Corporation in accordance with the provisions set forth in these Bylaws.

**Section 6.2 Number, Tenure, Qualifications and Election.** The number of the members of the Board of Directors shall be not less than five (5) nor more than fifteen (15). The initial members of the Board of Directors shall be appointed by the Incorporator and thereafter shall be elected by a majority of the Directors then in office. Directors shall serve for two (2) year terms with the initial term commencing on the first July 1<sup>st</sup> after appointment (or election); provided that directors may serve on the Board as a director, with all duties and powers arising therefrom, prior to commencement of initial term. Directors may not serve more than three (3) consecutive terms; provided that current or former Officers of the Board may serve up to five (5) consecutive terms. Directors shall be natural persons who have attained the age of twenty-one (21) years, but need not be residents of the State of Tennessee. Directors shall be natural persons who have attained the age of twenty-one (21) years, but need not be residents of the State of Tennessee.

**Section 6.3 Advisory Members.** The Board of Directors may elect advisory members from time to time, including without limitation employees of the Corporation, who may attend, without vote, all meetings of the Board of Directors. Advisory members shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors and shall advise and counsel the Board of Directors on appropriate matters.

**Section 6.4 Ex-Officio Non-voting Members.** The Chief Executive Officer shall be an Ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board of Directors. The CEO will partake in all Board activities but will not having voting rights.

**Section 6.5 Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held within or without the State of Tennessee as close as practicable to the end of the Corporation's fiscal year. The purpose of the annual meeting shall be to approve the budget for the upcoming fiscal year, elect Officers, and address such other business matters as may be pertinent at such time.

**Section 6.6 Special Meetings.** Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by the President, or at the request of any director. The President shall fix the time and place, either within or without the State of Tennessee, of any special meeting.

**Section 6.7 Notices.** Notice of any special meeting shall be given at least three (3) business days prior thereto. The attendance of a director at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting was not lawfully called or convened. The business to be transacted at, or the purpose of, any special meeting of the Board of Directors must be specified in the notice of such meeting and no other business shall be transacted at that meeting.

**Section 6.8 Quorum.** A majority of the total number of directors in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Directors.



**Section 6.9 Participation in Meeting.** Each director, other than an advisory member, shall be entitled to one (1) vote upon any matter properly submitted for a vote to the Board of Directors. The affirmative vote of a majority of the directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors, except as may otherwise be specifically provided by law, by the Charter, or by these Bylaws. Members of the Board of Directors absent from any meeting shall be permitted to vote at such meeting by written proxies. The members of the Board of Directors, or any committee designated by the Board of Directors, may participate in a meeting of the Board of Directors, or of such committee, by means of conference telephone or similar communications equipment by means of which all persons participating in the meeting can hear one another; and participation in a meeting pursuant to this provision shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. The directors shall be promptly furnished a copy of the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Directors.

**Section 6.10 Action Without a Meeting.** Any action required or permitted to be taken at a meeting by the Board of Directors, or by any committee thereof, may be taken without a meeting if all members of the Board of Directors or committee, as the case may be, consent in writing to taking such action without a meeting. If all members entitled to vote on the action shall consent in writing to taking such action without a meeting, the affirmative vote of the number of votes that would be necessary to authorize or take such action at a meeting shall be the act of the Board of Directors. The action must be evidenced by one (1) or more written consents describing the action taken, signed in one (1) or more counterparts by each member entitled to vote on the action, indicating each signing member's vote or abstention on the action taken. All such written consents and actions shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Directors or committee. A consent signed under this Section shall have the same force and effect as a meeting vote of the Board of Directors, or any committee thereof, and may be described as such in any document.

**Section 6.11 Compensation and Reimbursement of Expenses.** No director shall be entitled to receive compensation for services rendered to the Corporation in the person's capacity as a director. Each director may be paid his or her reasonable expenses incurred by the director directly related to the affairs of the Corporation upon prior approval by the Board of Directors and proper substantiation of such expenses.

**Section 6.12 Presumption of Assent.** A director of the Corporation who is present at a meeting of the Board of Directors at which action on any Corporation matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to the action taken, unless his or her dissent shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting, or unless he or she shall file his or her written dissent to such action with the person acting as the secretary of the meeting before the adjournment thereof, or forward such dissent by registered mail to the Secretary of the Corporation immediately after the adjournment of the meeting. Such right to dissent shall not apply to a director who voted in favor of such action.

**Section 6.13 Removal.** Any or all of the directors may be removed for cause or without cause by vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the total number of the voting directors in office. Removal of a director shall also constitute removal as an officer of the Corporation and as a member of all committees of the Board of Directors.

**Section 6.14 Resignation.** A director may resign his or her membership at any time by tendering his or her resignation in writing to the President or, in the case of the resignation of the President, to the Secretary. A resignation shall become effective upon the date specified in such notice or, if no date is specified, upon receipt of the resignation by the Corporation at its principal place of business.

## ARTICLE VII

### OFFICERS

**Section 7.1 Number.** There shall be a President, Treasurer, Secretary and Chief Executive Officer (subject to timing qualifications set forth below) of the Corporation, each of whom shall be elected in accordance with the provisions of this Article. The Board of Directors may also elect such additional officers as the Board of Directors may from time to time deem necessary or appropriate. Any two or more offices may be held by the same person, except for the offices of President and Secretary.

**Section 7.2 Election and Term of Office.** The initial officers of the Corporation shall be appointed by the Incorporator for a term of office expiring at the first annual meeting of the Corporation. The officers of the Corporation shall be elected annually by the Board of Directors at its annual meeting. If the election of the officers shall not be held at such meeting, such election shall be held as soon thereafter as may be convenient. Each officer shall hold office for a term of one (1) year expiring immediately following the annual meeting at which he or she was elected and until his or her successor shall have been duly elected and qualified, or until his or her earlier death, resignation, or removal from office in the manner hereinafter provided. A retiring officer may succeed himself or herself in his or her office.

**Section 7.3 President.** The President shall be the principal officer of the Corporation and shall serve as the principal liaison between the Board and the Chief Executive Officer. He or she shall, when present, preside at all meetings of the Board of Directors. The President shall be charged with the responsibility of appointing the members of each standing or ad hoc committee of the Board, and the President shall be entitled to serve on any standing or ad hoc committee of the Board. The President may sign, with the Secretary or any other proper officer thereunto authorized by the Board of Directors, deeds,



mortgages, bonds, contracts, or other instruments which the Board of Directors has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Board of Directors or these Bylaws to some other officer or agent of the Corporation, or shall be required by law to be otherwise signed or executed. The President shall have such other powers and perform such other duties as may be assigned by the Board.

**Section 7.4 Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all funds and securities of the Corporation; receive and give receipts for monies due and payable to the Corporation from any source whatsoever, and deposit all such monies in the name of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected in accordance with the provisions of Article VIII of these Bylaws; disburse the funds of the Corporation in accordance with the directives of the Board of Directors, taking proper vouchers for such disbursements, and render to the Board of Directors, at its annual meeting and at such other times as may be requested by the Board of Directors, an accounting of all the transactions of the Treasurer and of the financial condition of the Corporation; and in general perform all duties incident to the office of Treasurer and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him or her by the President or by the Board of Directors.

**Section 7.5 Secretary.** The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the proceedings of the Board of Directors in one or more books provided for that purpose; see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or as required by law; be custodian of the corporate records and of the seal, if any, of the Corporation and see that the seal is affixed to all documents, the execution of which is duly authorized on behalf of the Corporation under its seal; keep a register of the post office address of each member of the Board of Directors, which address shall be furnished to the Secretary by each director; and in general perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as may from time to time be assigned to him or her by the President or by the Board of Directors.

**Section 7.6 Removal.** Any member of the Board of Directors removed from office pursuant to Section 5.13 shall be automatically removed as an officer. The Board of Directors may by a two-thirds (2/3) vote remove any officer when, in its judgment, the best interests of the Corporation will be served thereby.

**Section 7.7 Vacancies.** A vacancy in any office, because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification, or otherwise, may be filled by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

**Section 7.8 Resignation.** An officer may resign his or her office at any time by tendering his or her resignation in writing to the President or, in the case of the resignation of the President, to the Secretary. A resignation shall become effective upon the date specified in such notice, or, if no date is specified, upon receipt of the resignation by the Corporation at its principal place of business.

**Section 7.9 Salaries and Expenses.** The officers of the Corporation shall not be entitled to receive compensation for services rendered to the Corporation in the person's capacity as an officer. Reasonable expenses incurred by all of the officers of the Board of Directors in the course of coordinating the affairs of the Corporation shall be reimbursed by the Corporation upon proper substantiation.

**Section 7.10 Chief Executive Officer.** In addition to the other officers described herein, the Corporation shall, at all times after approval of any initial public charter school application and during the operation of any such, or subsequently approved, public charter school, have a Chief Executive Officer, who shall be an employee of the Corporation, shall serve at the pleasure of the Board, shall report directly to the Board, and shall not be subject to the limitations set forth in Section 6.9 hereof. The Chief Executive Officer shall be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Corporation. The Chief Executive Officer shall perform such other duties as may from time to time be prescribed by the Board. The Chief Executive Officer shall be an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Board of Directors, as described within Section 5.4 hereof. At each meeting of the Board of Directors, the Chief Officer shall report to the Board on the operations of the Corporation for which he or she has direct responsibility.

## ARTICLE VIII

### COMMITTEES

**Section 8.1 Standing Committees.** The Board of Directors may maintain such standing committees as it may determine from time to time to be necessary or desirable for its proper functioning. Such committees shall consist of at least one (1) Director, and may include advisory members as contemplated by Section 5.3 hereof, as appointed by the President, shall be under the control and serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors, shall have charge of such duties as may be assigned to them by the Board of Directors or these Bylaws, shall maintain a permanent record of their actions and proceedings, and shall regularly submit a report of their actions to the Board of Directors, which shall ratify the actions of each committee. The President shall serve on each committee as a non-voting member, unless specifically designated by the Board as a voting member. Such standing committees shall have such authority as the Board of Directors may stipulate.

**Section 8.2 Ad Hoc Committees.** The President, with the approval of the Board of Directors as evidenced by resolution, may from time to time create such ad hoc committees as the President believes necessary or desirable to investigate matters or advise the Board of Directors. Ad hoc committees shall limit their activities to the accomplishment of the tasks for which created and shall have no power to act except as specifically conferred by resolution of the Board of Directors. Such committees shall operate until their tasks have been accomplishment or until earlier discharged by the Board of Directors. Members of ad hoc committees do not need to be members of the Board of the Board of Directors.

## ARTICLE IX

### CONTRACTS, LOANS, CHECKS, DEPOSITS, INVESTMENTS

**Section 9.1 Contracts and Employment of Agents.** The Board of Directors may authorize any director, officer, or agent to enter into any contract, or execute and deliver any instrument, in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation. The Board of Directors shall be specifically authorized, in its sole discretion, to employ and to pay the compensation of such agents, accountants, custodians, experts, consultants and other counsel, legal, investment, or otherwise, as the Board of Directors shall deem advisable, and to delegate discretionary powers to, and rely upon information furnished by, such individuals or entities. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

**Section 9.2 Loans.** No loans shall be contracted on behalf of the Corporation, and no evidences of indebtedness shall be issued in its name, unless authorized by a resolution of the Board of Directors. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

**Section 9.3 Checks, Drafts, etc.** All checks, drafts, or other orders for the payment of money, notes, or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents, of the Corporation, and in such manner, as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors.

**Section 9.4 Deposits.** All funds of the Corporation not otherwise employed shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation with such banks, trust companies, brokerage accounts, investment managers, or other depositaries as the Board of Directors may from time to time select.

**Section 9.5 Investment Authority.** The Board of Directors shall be authorized to retain assets distributed to the Corporation, even though such assets may constitute an over-concentration in one or more similar investments. Further, the Board of Directors shall have the authority to make investments in unproductive property, or to hold unproductive property to the extent necessary until it can be converted into productive property at an appropriate time, provided the retention of such property is in the best interest of the Corporation and does not in any way jeopardize the tax-exempt status of the Corporation.

## ARTICLE X

### STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

**Section 10.1 Standards of Conduct.** A director or an officer of the Corporation shall discharge his or her duties as a director or as an officer, including duties as a member of a committee:

- (a) In good faith;
- (b) With the care an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances; and
- (c) In a manner he or she reasonably believes to be in the best interest of the Corporation.

**Section 10.2 Reliance on Third Parties.** In discharging his or her duties, a director or officer is entitled to rely on information, opinions, reports, or statements, including financial statements and other financial data, if prepared or presented by:

- (a) One or more officers or employees of the Corporation whom the director or officer reasonably believes to be reliable and competent in the matters presented;
- (b) Legal counsel, public accountants, or other persons as to matters the director or officer reasonably believes are within the person's professional or expert competence; or
- (c) With respect to a director, a committee of the Board of Directors of which the director is not a member, as to matters within its jurisdiction, if the director or officer reasonably believes the committee merits confidence.

**Section 10.3 Bad Faith.** A director or officer is not acting in good faith if he or she has knowledge concerning the matter in question that makes reliance otherwise permitted by Section 9.2 unwarranted.

**Section 10.4 No Liability.** A director or officer is not liable for any action taken, or any failure to take action, as a director or officer, if he or she performs the duties of his or her office in compliance with the provisions of this Article, or if he or she is immune from suit under the provisions of Section 48-58-601 of the Act. No repeal or modification of the provisions of this Section 9.4, either directly or by the adoption of a provision inconsistent with the provisions of this Section, shall adversely affect any right or protection, as set forth herein, existing in favor of a particular individual at the time of such repeal or modification.

**Section 10.5 No Fiduciary.** No director or officer shall be deemed to be a fiduciary with respect to the Corporation or with respect to any property held or administered by the Corporation, including, without limitation, property that may be subject to restrictions imposed by the donor or transferor of such property.

**Section 10.6 Prohibition on Loans.** No loans or guarantees shall be made by the Corporation to its directors or officers. Any director who assents to or participates in the making of any such loan shall be liable to the Corporation for the amount of such loan until the repayment thereof.

## ARTICLE XI

### CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

**Section 11.1 Purpose.** The purpose of the conflict of interest provisions is to protect the Corporation's interest when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or director of the Corporation or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. These provision are intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

#### **Section 11.2 Definitions.**

(a) **Interested Person.** Any director, principal officer, or member of a committee with governing board delegated powers, who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.

(b) **Financial Interest.** A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:

1. An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement,
2. A compensation arrangement with the Corporation or with any entity or individual with which the Corporation has a transaction or arrangement, or
3. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the Corporation is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

#### **Section 11.3 Procedures.**

(a) **Duty to Disclose.** In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the directors and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.

(b) **Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists.** After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the Board of Directors or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.

(c) **Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest.**

1. An interested person may make a presentation at the Board of Director's or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.
2. The Board of Directors or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.

3. After exercising due diligence, the Board of Directors or committee shall determine whether the Corporation can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.

(d) **Manner of Approval.** A transaction in which a director or officer of the Corporation has a conflict of interest may be approved if:

1. A more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the Board of Directors or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested directors whether the transaction or arrangement is in the Corporation's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement; or

2. Approval is obtained from the Attorney General of the State of Tennessee, or from a court of record having equity jurisdiction in an action in which the Attorney General is joined as a party.

(e) **Violations of the Conflicts of Interest Policy.**

1. If the Board of Directors or committee has reasonable cause to believe a person has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the person of the basis for such belief and afford the person an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

2. If, after hearing the person's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the Board of Directors or committee determines the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

**Section 11.4 Records of Proceedings.** The minutes of the Board of Director's meetings and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

(a) The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the Board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.

(b) The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

### **Section 11.5 Compensation.**

(a) A voting member Board of Directors who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

(b) A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.

(c) No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the Corporation, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

## **ARTICLE XII**

### **INDEMNIFICATION AND ADVANCEMENT OF EXPENSES**

**Section 12.1 Mandatory Indemnification of Directors and Officers.** To the maximum extent permitted by the provisions of Sections 48-58-501, *et seq.*, of the Act, as amended from time to time (provided, however, that if an amendment to the Act in any way limits or restricts the indemnification rights permitted by law as of the date hereof, such amendment shall apply only to the extent mandated by law and only to activities of persons subject to indemnification under this Section which occur subsequent to the effective date of such amendment), the Corporation shall indemnify and advance expenses to any person who is or was a director or officer of the Corporation, or to such person's heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives, for the defense of any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, and whether formal or informal (any such action, suit or proceeding being hereinafter referred to as the "**Proceeding**"), to which such person was, is or is threatened to be made, a named defendant or respondent, which indemnification and advancement of expenses shall include counsel fees actually incurred as a result of the Proceeding or any appeal thereof, reasonable expenses actually incurred with respect to the Proceeding, all fines, judgments, penalties and amounts paid in settlement thereof, subject to the following conditions:

(a) The Proceeding was instituted by reason of the fact that such person is or was a director or officer of the Corporation; and

(b) The director or officer conducted himself or herself in good faith, and he or she reasonably believed (i) in the case of conduct in his or her official capacity with the Corporation, that his or her conduct was in its best interest; (ii) in all other cases, that his or her conduct was at least not opposed to the best interests of the Corporation; and (iii) in the case of any criminal proceeding, that he or she had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of a proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or upon a plea of *nolo contendere* or its equivalent is not, of itself, determinative that the director or officer did not meet the standard of conduct herein described.

**Section 12.2 Permissive Indemnification of Employees and Agents.** The Corporation may, to the maximum extent permitted by the provisions of Section 48-58-501, *et seq.*, of the Act, as amended from time to time (provided, however, that if an amendment to the Act in any way limits or restricts the indemnification rights permitted by law as of the date hereof, such amendment shall apply only to the extent mandated by law and only to activities of persons subject to indemnification under this Section which occur subsequent to the effective date of such amendment), indemnify and advance expenses in a Proceeding to any person who is or was an employee or agent of the Corporation, or to such person's heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives, to the same extent as set forth in Section 11.1 above, provided that the Proceeding was instituted by reason of the fact that such person is or was an employee or agent of the Corporation and met the standards of conduct set forth in subsection 11.1(b) above. The Corporation may also indemnify and advance expenses in a Proceeding to any person who is or was an employee or agent of the Corporation to the extent, consistent with public policy, as may be provided by the Charter, by these Bylaws, by contract, or by general or specific action of the Board of Directors.

**Section 12.3 Non-Exclusive Application.** The rights to indemnification and advancement of expenses set forth in Sections 11.1 and 11.2 above are contractual between the Corporation and the person being indemnified, and his or her heirs, executors, administrators and legal representatives, and are not exclusive of other similar rights of indemnification or advancement of expenses to which such person may be entitled, whether by contract, by law, by the Charter, by a resolution of the Board of Directors, by these Bylaws, by the purchase and maintenance by the Corporation of insurance on behalf of a director, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation, or by an agreement with the Corporation providing for such indemnification, all of which means of indemnification and advancement of expenses are hereby specifically authorized.

**Section 12.4 Non-Limiting Application.** The provisions of this Article XI shall not limit the power of the Corporation to pay or reimburse expenses incurred by a director, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation in connection with such person's appearing as a witness in a Proceeding at a time when he or she has not been made a named defendant or respondent to the Proceeding.

**Section 12.5 Prohibited Indemnification.** Notwithstanding any other provision of this Article XI, the Corporation shall not indemnify or advance expenses to or on behalf of any director, officer, employee, or agent of the Corporation, or such person's heirs, executors, administrators or legal representatives:

(a) If a judgment or other final adjudication adverse to such person establishes his or her liability for any breach of the duty of loyalty to the Corporation, for acts or omissions not in good faith or which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, or under Section 48-58-304 of the Act; or

(b) In connection with a Proceeding by or in the right of the Corporation in which such person was adjudged liable to the Corporation; or

(c) In connection with any other Proceeding charging improper personal benefit to such person, whether or not involving action in his or her official capacity, in which he or she was adjudged liable on the basis that personal benefit was improperly received by him or her.

**Section 12.6 Repeal or Modification Not Retroactive.** No repeal or modification of the provisions of this Article XI, either directly or by the adoption of a provision inconsistent with the provisions of this Article, shall adversely affect any right or protection, as set forth herein, existing in favor of a particular individual at the time of such repeal or modification.

## ARTICLE XIII

### NOTICES AND WAIVER OF NOTICE

**Section 13.1 Notices.** The notices provided for in these Bylaws shall be communicated in person, by telephone, facsimile or email transmission, telegraph, teletype, or by mail or private carrier. Written notice is effective at the earliest of (a) receipt, (b) five (5) days after its deposit in the United States mail, if mailed correctly addressed and with first-class postage affixed thereon, (c) on the date shown on the return receipt, if sent by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, and the receipt is signed by or on behalf of the addressee, (d) twenty (20) days after its deposit in the United States mail, if mailed correctly addressed, and with other than first-class, registered, or certified postage affixed, or (e) in the case of facsimile or e-mail

transmission, when successfully sent to the email address or fax number shown on the records of the Corporation. Whenever any notice is required to be given to any director, officer, or committee member of the Corporation under the provisions of the Charter, these Bylaws, or the Act, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice.

## **ARTICLE XIV**

### **FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall end on June 30<sup>th</sup>, or on such other date as may be fixed from time to time by the Board of Directors.

## **ARTICLE XV**

### **AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws and the Charter may be altered, amended, or repealed, and a new Charter or Bylaws adopted, upon the affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3) members of the Board of Directors at any annual or special meeting, except to the extent that such alteration, amendment, or repeal is inconsistent with Article XV hereof.

## **ARTICLE XVI**

### **EXEMPT STATUS**

The Corporation has been organized and will be operated exclusively for exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Code and, as such, will be exempt from taxation under Section 501(a) of the Code. The Corporation intends to apply for recognition of its exempt status by filing Internal Revenue Service Form 1023 within the time prescribed under Section 508 of the Code and Treasury Regulation Section 1.508-1(a)(2). Any provision of these Bylaws or of the Charter which would in any manner adversely affect the Corporation's tax exempt status shall be void and shall be deleted or modified as necessary to comply with all applicable federal and state requirements for the maintenance of the Corporation's tax exempt status.



# Attachment 3C: Complaint Policy

## VALOR COLLEGIATE ACADEMIES

### COMPLAINT POLICY

#### **I. ADOPTION AND INTRODUCTION**

Any individual or group who believes a charter school has violated its charter, the Tennessee Charter Schools Act 2002, or any other law relating to the management or operation of the charter school, can bring a complaint to the charter school's board of trustees (the "charter school's board"). If the individual making the complaint, after presenting the complaint to the charter school's board, is unsatisfied with the charter school's board's response, then he or she has the right to present the complaint to the entity which authorized the charter school: The Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) Board of Education, as the Charter Authorizer, upon being presented with a complaint, has the right to issue remedial orders when appropriate and necessary. As such, the MNPS will both receive and review complaints on behalf of its Board of Education, and make determinations and issue appropriate remedial orders.

In compliance with the Charter Schools Act of 2002, Valor Collegiate Academies (VCA) hereby adopts this Complaint Policy ("Policy").

#### **II. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

Governance of a charter school is the sole province of the school's Board of Directors. The MNPS, on behalf of the MNPS Board of Education cannot undertake the review of a complaint until the complainant has presented his or her complaint to the Valor Collegiate Academies Board of Directors, that Board has had the opportunity to respond to the complaint, and the complainant has determined that it has not adequately addressed the complaint. All complaints must minimally include the following:

1. The specific nature of the complaint;
2. Any employee, officer, representative, volunteer or other individual, or group of individuals involved in the nature of the complaint;
3. The date and time in which the nature of the complaint occurred;
4. Explicit reference to any applicable law or reference to the School's Charter that the complainant alleges violation of; and
5. The complainants requested resolution to the complaint.

In general, a group or individual should not file with the MNPS until after the VCA Board of Directors has acted on the complaint and provided a written response to the complainant and if the complaint alleges a violation of applicable law or VCA's Charter. VCA has established a process under which complaints must be reviewed by its Board of Directors. All school stakeholders have the right to be provided with a copy of that policy upon request.

#### **III. COMPLAINT PROCESS**

1. All interested parties are encouraged to find resolution to complaints by first verbally bringing such a complaint to the attention of the appropriate school personnel in order to seek immediate resolution.
2. All complaints must first be filed in writing with the Principal of the School. Such complaints must be filed at the school's principal location, the address for which is provided below:  
Valor Collegiate Academies  
Address to be determined  
-----  
Nashville, TN
3. Individuals or groups who file a written complaint must allow the Chief Executive Officer of the School ten (10) business days to respond in writing to such a complaint before proceeding through the remainder of the process outlined herein.
4. If the complainant is not satisfied with the Chief Executive Officers response, or a response is not provided within ten (10) business days, the complaint shall be filed in writing to the Valor Collegiate Academies Board of Directors at its principal business address, which is provided below:

Valor Collegiate Academies Board of Directors  
Address to be determined  
-----  
Nashville, TN

5. The Valor Collegiate Academies Board of Directors will respond to each complaint filed with it, following the process outlined herein, within 30 days. If the complainant is not satisfied with such a response, and is not alleging a violation of applicable law or the School's Charter, the complaint process ends due to the authority of the Board to address such complaints.
6. If the complainant either 1) does not receive a written response from the Valor Collegiate Academies Board of Directors within the timeframe identified above, or 2) is not satisfied with the written response of the Board and is alleging a violation of applicable law or the School's Charter, shall file the complaint with the School's authorizer, the MNPS on behalf of the MNPS Board of Education at the address listed below:

Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools  
Attn: Office of Innovation  
2601 Bransford Avenue  
710 James Robinson Parkway  
Nashville, TN 37204

## Attachment 3D: Founding Board of Directors Biographies

### **Ms. Malika Anderson, Valor Collegiate Academies Board Director**

Malika Anderson is the Chief Portfolio Officer of the Achievement School District (ASD), where she leads the authorization and start-up support of charter school operators and the assessment and accountability system for all ASD schools. Ms. Anderson has 15 years of strategy, leadership development, performance management and operational redesign experience. She has led and consulted organizations undergoing significant transformation efforts in education, social service, healthcare, and commercial fields. Prior to becoming the ASD's Chief Portfolio Officer, Ms. Anderson was the Director of School Turnaround for the District of Columbia Public Schools. In this role, she led school improvement planning and progress monitoring processes for all schools, and shaped the district's program management model for turning around low performing schools. In a previous role, Ms. Anderson facilitated leadership development for school leaders through a Principals' Academy and created the district's first leadership development academy for assistant principals. Ms. Anderson is an alumnus of the Broad Residency in Urban Education, earned her bachelor's degree in economics from Spelman College, and earned a master's degree in business administration from the Anderson Graduate School of Management at UCLA.

### **Ms. Danielle Austen, Valor Collegiate Academies Board Director**

Danielle Austen is a founder and the Managing Partner, CEO of Team Ignition. Team Ignition is an advertising and marketing firm that acts as a single-source solution for its client-partners in developing communications plans for African American, Asian American, US Hispanic and LGBT consumers.

Prior to starting her own company, Danielle worked on the corporate and ad agency sides of marketing with both the general and multicultural markets. She has held several marketing and leadership positions working with strong brands including: Nissan North America, GlaxoSmithKline, Bombay Sapphire, Mercedes-Benz, Sony Electronics, Jaguar Cars and Nordstrom.

Danielle holds a Bachelor's degree from Emory University and a Master's degree from Northwestern University. She currently serves as an Executive Committee Member for the AAF's Mosaic Council and its Advertising Hall of Achievement. Danielle was born and raised in Chicago, but currently resides in Nashville, TN.

### **Ms. Katherine Cigarran, Valor Collegiate Academies Board Director**

Katherine Cigarran, a Community Volunteer and proud mother of two, moved to Tennessee via New York and Colorado to happily make Nashville her home. With a background in Advertising, Promotions, and Sales, Katherine joined The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee as a Donor Services Coordinator in 2002. Working with professionals, donors, and volunteers, she helped increase donor participation and raise support for a variety of charitable funds including The Women's Fund and The Tomorrow Fund. Since then she has Co-Chaired The AWA event for the YWCA, Co-chaired several school auctions, annual campaigns, and volunteered her time with numerous organizations. Currently her greatest interest is working to improve education for all and volunteers as a tutor with the Pencil Foundation.

### **Mr. Todd Dickson, Founder of Valor Collegiate Academies, Chief Executive Officer and Advisory Member of the Valor Collegiate Board of Directors**

Mr. Dickson came to the field of education as a second career in 2000 after successfully building the Melton Group, a residential real estate company in Colorado, from 1995-2000. After attending Stanford for a Master's degree in education, he taught physics for five years at the nationally acclaimed public Hillside High School, the private International School of Lisbon, and Summit Preparatory Charter School (Summit Prep) before taking the role of Executive Director at Summit Prep.

Under his leadership, Summit Prep was named the #118 best public high school in America for the first time in 2008, and the #76 best public high school in 2009. In 2010, Summit Prep was named one of the top 10 Transformational Schools in the country by Newsweek (using comparative graduation rates, SAT scores, AP performance, and number of low-income students). 100% of Summit Prep's graduates exceed the entrance requirements for the University of California and California State University system and 96% of the four graduating classes have been accepted to at least one four year college, over three times the rate of similar students and high schools in California. For low-income students, Summit Prep sends almost eight times as many students to four year colleges as similar schools in California. Summit has been featured as an education solution in the nationally acclaimed documentary *Waiting for Superman*.

Mr. Dickson is a guest lecturer in the Stanford Education and Business schools, and an inaugural member of the Stanford Principal Fellow program. He has presented nationally on differentiation, teacher development, and school leadership.

Mr. Dickson holds a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Denver where he was named the Colorado Engineering Student of the Year amongst all Colorado colleges. He was also was an All-American lacrosse player and team captain. In addition, he holds a Master's degree in Electrical Engineering from Cornell University.

When not thinking about how to transform public education, Mr. Dickson enjoys spending time with his wife of 12 years and their three young children, ages 5, 3, and 1. He also enjoys running, surfing, and watching all things Colorado sports. Mr. Dickson's full resume is provided below.

**Ms. Sylvia M. Flowers, Valor Collegiate Academies Board Director**

Sylvia Flowers currently serves as Executive Director of Educator Talent at the Tennessee Department of Education. In this role, she focuses on executing the state's strategy to improve recruitment and retention of effective teachers and manages a portfolio of strategic compensation pilot projects in approximately 18 districts in Tennessee. Previously, she served as Director of Technical Assistance at the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), a nonprofit and non-partisan advocacy and research institution, founded by former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist. Motivated to connect her personal passion with her leadership and management expertise, Sylvia joined the prestigious Broad Residency in Urban Education in 2004, a leadership development program that places qualified participants into high-level managerial positions in urban school districts and CMOs to help strengthen and transform public schools. Before joining the movement to improve public education, Sylvia spent approximately eight years in the private sector, working as a chemical engineer at Monsanto and as a finance professional at Duke Energy. A native of St. Louis, Sylvia holds a B.S in Chemical Engineering from the University of Missouri-Columbia and an M.B.A. from the Darden School of Business at the University of Virginia. Ms. Flowers full resume is provided below.

**Mr. Dave Goetz, Valor Collegiate Academies Board Director**

Dave Goetz currently is Vice President, State Government Solutions for Optum Government Solutions. In that role he works with state government clients to define needs and solutions around managing health care.

From 2003 through 2010, Mr. Goetz served as Commissioner of Finance and Administration and in that role was the chief fiscal officer and administrative official for the State of Tennessee. The Department of Finance and Administration is responsible for preparing and executing the spending authorized by the state budget each year. It also oversees the state's information infrastructure, accounts payable, payroll, contracting and capital building projects. In that role, he was also responsible for the state's Medicaid program, TennCare, as well as the state employee health plan and a member of several state financial oversight boards.

Prior to entering State Government, Mr. Goetz served as President of the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry, formerly the Tennessee Association of Business. From 1990 to 1996, he served as Executive Director of the Tennessee Business Roundtable, a Nashville-based association of business executives. From 1988 to 1990 he was Director of Government Affairs for the Tennessee Association of Business. Before that, he was the chief political reporter for WTVF-TV in Nashville. He has been a member of the Vestry of Christ Church Cathedral, and also served two terms on the Board of the Tennessee Hospital Association. A Nashville native, he is a graduate of Montgomery Bell Academy and received his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. Goetz and his wife Katy have two children.

**Mr. Bob Hannon, Esq., Valor Collegiate Academies Board Director**

Mr. Bob Hannon is a partner with Bradley Arant Boult Cummings, LLP, who specializes in representing commercial banks in connection with a wide range of commercial finance transactions. Mr. Hannon received his B.A. from Vanderbilt University in 1993 with a major in English and minor in Business Administration and his J.D. from Vanderbilt University in 1998. In between undergraduate and law school, he taught 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades at Barnard Elementary School in the Washington, D.C. public school system through Teach for America. Mr. Hannon has served on both the McNeilly Center for Children's board (where at different times he served as Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Chair of the McNeilly in May fundraising event) and the Belcourt Theatre's board (where he served as Chair of Membership Committee). He is married to Lloyd Hannon (who is currently finishing her Masters in Library Science from the University of Tennessee and plans to become a school librarian) and is the father of Murray Hannon (a 13 year old girl who attended Eakin Elementary and West End Middle School and is now an 8<sup>th</sup> grader at Harpeth Hall) and Ivey Hannon (an 11 year old boy who attended Eakin Elementary and West End Middle School and is now a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Meigs Magnet Middle School).

**Mr. Tom Hooper, Valor Collegiate Academies Board Director**

As Vice President of Jones, Lang, and LaSalle, Mr. Hooper provides local leadership and with his partner, Bo Tyler oversees the Middle and East Tennessee region. With over ten years of diversified experience in general brokerage, tenant representation and agency representation, Mr. Hooper has a broad understanding of the important principles that must be incorporated into successful transactions. His work ethic, market knowledge and attention to detail provide savings to his clients in terms of time and money expended on every project.

In 2005, Mr. Hooper was named a "Rising Star" in the Commercial Real Estate Industry by the *Nashville Business Journal* (NBj). He earned his CCIM designation in 2006, and in 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011 was named a "Heavy Hitter" in the NBj's list of office brokers. In 2009, Mr. Hooper was named a Commercial Real Estate MVP by the NBj. The Nashville Post named him to their "CRE Top 50" in 2010, 2011, and 2012. CoStar Group, Inc. named Mr. Hooper as one of their Nashville Power Brokers five times.

Mr. Hooper has worked with many companies and Landlords in the Nashville area, such as, TBWA/Chiat Day, Baird, the National MS Society, NaviHealth, My Patient Credit, HealthTeacher, Hearing Planet, Amstar Group and DZL Management.

Mr. Hooper is a native of Brownsville, TN and graduated from Washington and Lee University in Lexington, VA. Upon graduation from college, he joined the Tennessee Republican Party, serving as campaign manager for a State Senate race and then as Deputy Political Director. He and wife Collins have three young daughters.

#### **MEMBERSHIPS, RECOGNITION & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP**

##### ***Current:***

Chairman, West End United Methodist Church Board of Trustees

Member, NAIOP Gov't. Affairs Committee

NBJ 2011 Office Broker Heavy Hitter

Nashville Downtown Rotary

##### ***Past:***

Chairman, 2005-06, Delta Waterfowl Dinner

President, 2006, Washington and Lee Alumni

Board Member, Rooftop

Board Member, First Steps, Inc.

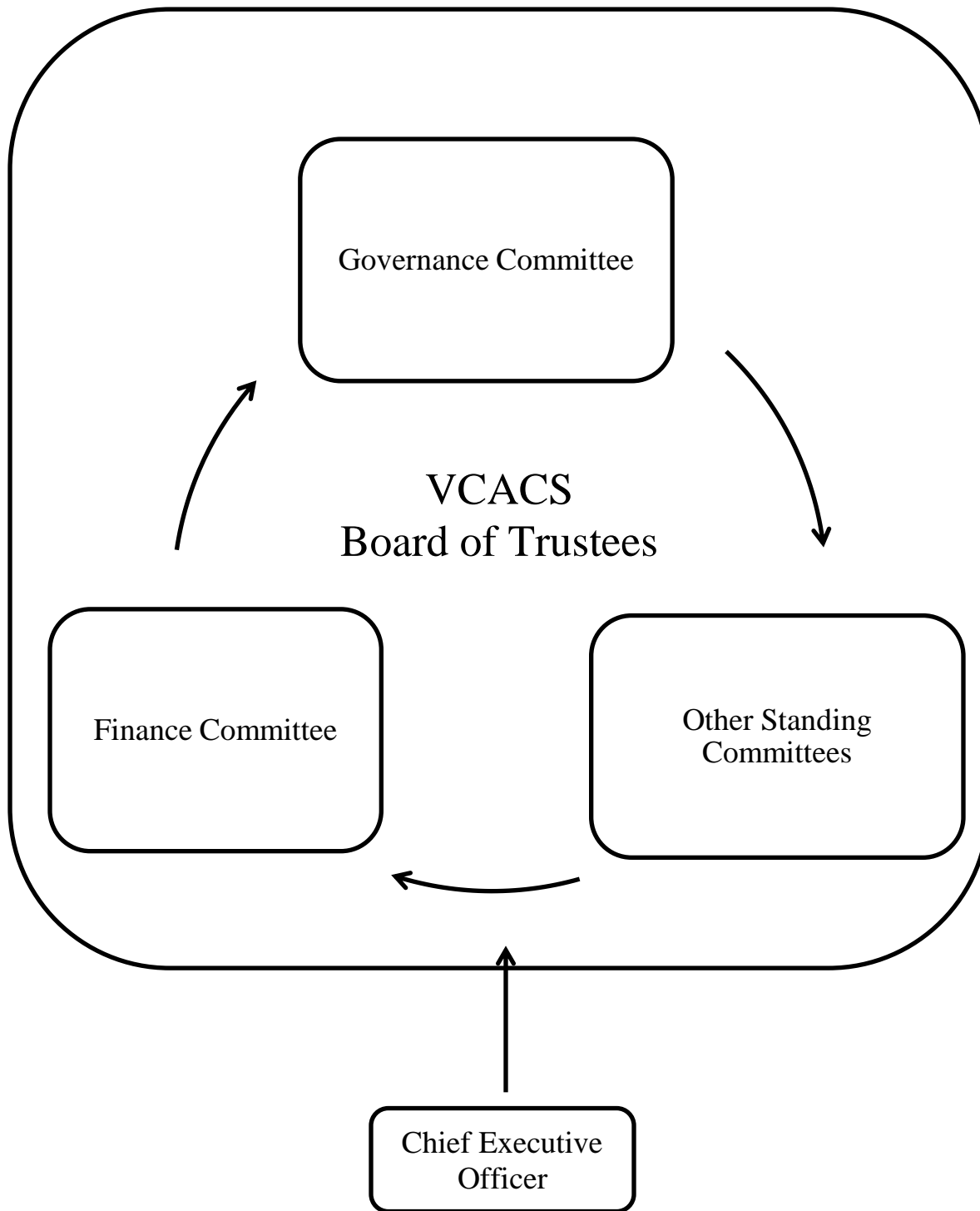
Volunteer, Boy Scouts of America

#### **Ms. Margaret Keith Meacham, Valor Collegiate Academies Board Director**

Ms. Keith Meacham has an extensive background in education, consulting and fundraising/development efforts. She is currently an Education and Marketing Consultant for Homer Learning where he advises technology start-up organizations with marketing, social media and website design. She previously served as a Senior Consultant for Student Achievement Partners in New York City and an Independent Consultant advising the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on strategic technology efforts. Ms. Meacham also led private fundraising efforts to seed reform projects within the New York City Department of Education as the Director of The Fund for Public Schools.

Ms. Meacham is also familiar with charter school leadership challenges as a result of serving as the Director of Operations and Development, and later Interim Executive Director, at the Harlem Prep Charter School. Early in her career he served as an English and French teacher. Ms. Meacham holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English *magna cum laude* from the University of Virginia and a Master of Arts Degree in Educational Leadership from Columbia University's Teachers College.

### Attachment 3E: Governance Organizational Chart



The governance structure employed by Valor Collegiate Academy (VCA) is intended to support the Board of Directors' belief that its main duty is to ensure financial stability of the organization and to be stewards of the school's mission and vision. To that end, the diagram above illustrates how the Board will ensure the school meets its mission and the rigorous academic goals contained in its charter application, remain financial sound and in operate in compliance with applicable law. As outlined in the VCA By-Laws, the following standing committees will be utilized in order for the board to best meet its roles and responsibilities:

- A. Governance Committee: Chaired by the President of the VCA Board of Directors, the primary responsibilities of the Governance Committee include, but are not limited to providing overall leadership for the board and its annual strategic activities, drafting the annual performance evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer for the consideration of the full board and manage communication on behalf of the board.

- B. Finance Committee: Chaired by the Treasurer of the VCA Board of Directors, the primary responsibilities of the Finance Committee include, but are not limited to the oversight of the annual budgeting process, development of financial policies and oversight of the annual audit.
- C. Other Standing Committee: At its discretion, the board may add additional standing committees in order to carry out its overall responsibilities and obligations. Examples of standing committees that may be established Governance, Fundraising/Development, External Relation and Facilities.

As the VCA By-Laws indicate, the board may delegate any of its authority to a respective committee, with the exception of the following: the election of directors; filling vacancies on the board or any committee; the amendment or repeal of By-Laws, or adoption of new By-Laws; and the appointment of new committee or members of committees.

The governance philosophy of the VCA Board of Directors is clear and includes a belief that it should not dictate the processes that the Chief Executive Officer and leadership team choose to use to achieve the mission of the school. In this respect, however, a core responsibility of the board will be the annual evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer will then be responsible for the oversight of the school organization, either directly or indirectly through the leadership team. Additional information about process by which the board will use to evaluate the Chief Executive Officer can be found in the governance responses within the application.



## Attachment 3F: Open Meetings and Public Records Policy

### VALOR COLLEGIATE ACADEMIES

#### OPEN MEETINGS AND PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY

##### **I. ADOPTION AND INTRODUCTION**

The Tennessee Open Meetings Act declared it to be the policy of the state that the formation of public policy and decisions shall not be conducted in secret. Because the Valor Collegiate Academies (VCA) will make public decisions, meetings of its Board of Directors and its records, as appropriate, will comply with Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-13-105 and 111.

##### **II. OPEN MEETINGS DEFINED**

"Meeting" means the convening of the VCA Board of Directors for which a quorum is required in order to make a decision or to deliberate toward a decision on any matter. "Meeting" does not include any on-site inspection of any project or program. Nothing in this policy shall be construed as to require a chance meeting of two (2) or more members of the VCA Board of Directors to be considered a public meeting. No such chance meetings, informal assemblages, or electronic communication shall be used to decide or deliberate public business in circumvention of the spirit or requirements of this part.

##### **III. NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Notice of Regular Meetings: Any regular meeting of the VCA Board of Directors will be posted not less than five (5) business days prior to its commencement at the principal business location of the VCA Board of Directors and on the VCA website.

Notice of Special Meetings: Any special meeting of the VCA Board of Directors not scheduled by statute, ordinance or resolution, or for which notice is not already provided by law will be posted not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to its commencement at the principal business location of the VCA Board of Directors and on the VCA website.

Notices of Regular and Special Meetings will minimally include the following: date of the meeting, time of the meeting, location of the meeting, purpose of the meeting and instructions on how to inspect public records that result from the meeting.

The notice requirements of this part are in addition to, and not in substitution of, any other notice required by law.

##### **IV. MEETING MINUTES**

The minutes of a meeting of the VCA Board of Directors will be promptly and fully recorded, and be open to public inspection, and shall include, but not be limited to, a record of persons present, all motions, proposals and resolutions offered, the results of any votes taken, and a record of individual votes in the event of roll call. The minutes of any meeting will be available for public inspection not less than fifteen (15) business days following their approval by the VCA Board of Directors.

All votes of any such meeting of the VCA Board of Directors will be by public vote or public ballot or public roll call. No secret votes, or secret ballots, or secret roll calls will be allowed. A "public vote" is defined for the purposes of this policy as the "aye" faction vocally expresses its will in unison and in which the "nay" faction, subsequently, vocally expresses its will in unison.

Any action taken at a meeting in violation of this policy shall be void and of no effect; provided, that this nullification of actions taken at such meetings shall not apply to any commitment, otherwise legal, affecting the public debt of the entity concerned.

##### **V. PARTICIPATION IN OPEN MEETINGS BY ELECTRONIC AND OTHER MEANS**

The VCA Board of Directors may, but is not required to, allow participation by electronic or other means of communication for the benefit of the public and the VCA Board of Directors in connection with any meeting authorized by law; provided, that a physical quorum is present at the location specified in the notice of the meeting as the location of the meeting.

If a physical quorum is not present at the location of a meeting of the VCA Board of Directors, then in order for a quorum of members to participate by electronic or other means of communication, the VCA Board of Directors must make a determination that a necessity exists. Such determination, and a recitation of the facts and circumstances on which it was based, will be included in the minutes of the meeting.

"Necessity" means that the matters to be considered by the VCA Board of Directors at that meeting require timely action by the body, the physical presence by a quorum of the members is not practical within the period of time requiring action, and that participation by a quorum of the members by electronic or other means of communication is therefore necessary.

##### **VI. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

The VCA Board of Directors can, but is not required to, allow electronic communication between members by means of a forum over the Internet only if the Board:

- (1) Makes sure the forum through which the electronic communication is conducted is available to the public at all times other than that necessary for technical maintenance or unforeseen technical limitations;
- (2) Provides adequate public notice of the Board's intended use of such electronic communication forum;
- (3) Controls who may communicate through the forum;
- (4) Controls the archiving of the electronic communications to ensure that the electronic communications are publicly available for at least one (1) year after the date of the communication; provided, that access to the archived electronic communications is user-friendly for the public; and
- (5) Provides reasonable access for members of the public to view the forum at the local public library, the building where the governing body meets, or other public building.

Electronic communications posted to a forum shall not substitute for decision making by the VCA Board of Directors in a meeting held in accordance with this policy. Communications between members of the VCA Board posted to a forum complying with this policy shall be deemed to be in compliance with the open meetings laws. Prior to the VCA Board of Directors initially utilizing a forum to allow electronic communications by its members which meets the requirements of applicable law, the VCA Board of Directors shall file an appropriate plan with the office of open records counsel.

## Attachment 3G: Draft Employment Handbook

### INTRODUCTION TO HANDBOOK

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This Handbook is designed to help employees get acquainted with Valor Collegiate Academies (hereinafter referred to as “VCA” or “School”). It explains some of our philosophies and beliefs, and describes in general terms, some of our employment guidelines. Although this Handbook is not intended to be an official policies and procedures manual, we hope that it will serve as a useful reference document for employees throughout their employment at the School. Employees should understand, however, that this Handbook is not intended to be a contract (express or implied), nor is it intended to otherwise create any legally enforceable obligations on the part of the School or its employees. In no way does the Handbook replace the official plan documents (i.e., health insurance, retirement plan, etc.) or insurance contracts, which will govern in all cases. This Handbook supersedes and replaces all previous personnel practices, and guidelines.

Because the School is a growing and changing organization, it reserves full discretion to add to, modify, or delete provisions of this Handbook, or procedures on which they may be based, at any time without advance notice. The School also reserves the right to interpret any of the provisions set forth in this Handbook in any manner it deems appropriate.

No individual other than the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of the Board of Directors has the authority to enter into any employment or other agreement that modifies the guidelines and practices outlined in this Handbook. Any such modification *must* be in writing.

This Handbook is the property of the School, and it is intended for personal use and reference by employees of the School.

Employees should sign the acknowledgment form at the back of this Handbook, tear it out, and return it to the Personnel Manager. This will provide the School with a record that each employee has received this Handbook.

### CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

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#### Equal Employment Opportunity Is Our Policy

VCA is an equal opportunity employer. It is the policy of VCA to afford equal employment and advancement opportunity to all qualified individuals without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, citizenship status, medical condition, or any other legally protected status. This policy extends to all employees and to all aspects of the employment relationship, including the hiring of new employees and the training, transfer, promotion, compensation and benefits of existing employees.

To comply with applicable laws ensuring equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with a disability, VCA will make reasonable accommodations for the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified individual with a disability who is an applicant or an employee unless undue hardship would result.

Any applicant or employee who requires an accommodation in order to perform the essential functions of the job should contact a VCA representative with day-to-day personnel responsibilities and request such an accommodation. The individual with the disability should specify what accommodation he or she needs to perform the job. VCA then will conduct an investigation to identify the barriers that interfere with the equal opportunity of the applicant or employee to perform his or her job. VCA will identify possible accommodation, if any, that will help eliminate the limitation. If the accommodation is reasonable and will not impose an undue hardship, VCA will make the accommodation.

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#### Employment At Will Policy

Except if stated expressly otherwise by employment contract, it is the policy of VCA that all employees are employed at the will of School for an indefinite period. Accordingly, either VCA or the employee can terminate this relationship at any time, for any reason, without cause, and with or without notice.

Nothing contained in this Handbook, employment applications, VCA memoranda or other materials provided to employees in connection with their employment shall require VCA to have “cause” to terminate an employee or otherwise restrict VCA right to terminate an employee at any time for any reason. Statements of specific grounds for termination set forth in this Handbook or elsewhere are not all-inclusive and are not intended to restrict VCA’s right to terminate at will. Other than the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of the Board of Directors or designee, no VCA representative is authorized to modify this policy for any employee.

No VCA representative is authorized to modify this policy for any employee or to make any representations to employees or applicants concerning the terms or conditions of employment with VCA that are not consistent with VCA policy on “at will” employment.

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## **Policy Against Harassment**

All employees should be able to work in an atmosphere free of sexual harassment. VCA will not condone or tolerate harassment of any type by any employee. This policy applies to all employee actions and relationships, regardless of position or gender. VCA will promptly and thoroughly investigate any complaint of harassment and take appropriate corrective action, if warranted.

Verbal or physical conduct of a nature constitute harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment.
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for personnel decisions, including but not limited to appraisals, promotion, salary increases, and termination.
3. Such behavior has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's performance on the job or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

Management, ultimately the Chief Executive Officer, has the responsibility to maintain a work place free from any form of harassment. Consequently, should a manager or department head become aware of any conduct which may constitute harassment or other prohibited behavior, immediate action should be taken to address such conduct.

Employees are expected to act in a positive and professional manner and to contribute to a productive work environment that is free from harassing or disruptive activity.

While in most situations a personal relationship is a private matter, these relationships are not appropriate in a professional setting, particularly where one of the parties has management or leadership responsibilities.

Any employee who has experienced or is aware of a situation, which is believed to be harassing, has a responsibility to report the situation immediately to the individual's manager and/or to the Chief Executive Officer, or his designee. A Harassment Complaint Form may be obtained from the office. The Chief Executive Officer and the individual's manager will conduct an immediate investigation into the allegation(s) and determine whether the allegations have merit. A written report, including findings related to the allegations, will be completed. In all cases, when the allegation(s) is determined to be valid, appropriate remedial action will be taken immediately and may include disciplinary action up to and including termination.

If the alleged harassment involves the employee's manager or department head, or if the employee is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, the employee should bring the matter to the attention of the VCA Board of Directors.

All complaints of harassment will be investigated promptly, objectively and as-confidentially as possible. Employees are required to cooperate in any investigation. Retaliation against any employee for filing a complaint or participating in an investigation is strictly prohibited and shall be cause for termination.

All matters regarding the investigation will be treated with confidentiality and on a need-to-know basis.

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## **Drug-Free Workplace**

VCA is committed to providing a drug- and alcohol-free workplace and to promoting safety in the workplace, employee health and well-being, customer confidence and a work environment that is conducive to attaining high work standards. The use of drugs and alcohol by employees jeopardizes these goals, since it adversely affects health and safety, security, productivity, and public confidence and trust.

The bringing to the work place, possession or use of intoxicating beverages or drugs on any VCA premises is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

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## **Attendance and Tardiness**

If you find it necessary to be absent or late, you are expected to email the faculty including the direct manager and Chief Executive Officer the evening prior or at the very latest one-hour before school starts. If you are absent from work longer than one day, you are expected to keep your supervisor sufficiently informed of your situation.

As noted in the section of this Handbook concerning prohibited conduct, excessive or unexcused absences or tardiness may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination. Absence for more than (3) consecutive days without notifying the manager and Chief Executive Officer will be considered a voluntary resignation from employment.

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### **Use of E-Mail, Voicemail and Internet Access**

VCA will permit employees to use its electronic mail, voicemail systems and Internet access subject to the following:

1. Minimal personal use as long as it does not interfere with timely job performance and is consistent with law and appropriate protocols.
2. The E-mail system and Internet access is not to be used in any way that may be disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale. For example, sexually explicit images, ethnic slurs, racial epithets, or anything else that may be construed as harassment or disparagement of others based on their race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, religious beliefs or political beliefs may not be displayed or transmitted.
3. Employees should not attempt to gain access to another employee's personal file of E-mail or voicemail messages without the latter's express permission.
4. VCA staff will not enter an employee's personal E-mail files or voicemail unless there is a business need to do so. VCA retains a copy of all passwords; passwords unknown to VCA may not be used. System security features, including passwords and delete functions, do not neutralize VCA's ability to access any message at any time. Employees must be aware that the possibility of such access always exists.

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### **Personal Business**

VCA's facilities for handling mail and telephone calls are designed to accommodate VCA business. Please have your personal mail directed to your home address and limit personal telephone calls to an absolute minimum. Personal calls should not be made outside your immediate dialing area. Do not use VCA material, time or equipment for personal projects.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

All employees must avoid situations involving actual or potential conflict of interest.

An employee involved in any relationships or situations which may constitute a conflict of interest should immediately and fully disclose the relevant circumstances to his or her immediate supervisor, or the board of directors, for a determination about whether a potential or actual conflict exists. If an actual or potential conflict is determined, the School may take whatever corrective action appears appropriate according to the circumstances. Failure to disclose facts shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

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### **Personal Appearance**

Employees are expected to wear clothing appropriate for the nature of our business and the type of work performed. Because each employee is a representative of VCA in the eyes of the public, each employee must report to work properly groomed, wearing appropriate clothing and maintaining a professional appearance.

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### **Smoking**

All VCA buildings, activities and facilities are no-smoking facilities.

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## **THE WORKPLACE**

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### **Health and Safety Policy**

The School is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe work environment for all employees.

You are required to know and comply with the School's General Safety Rules and to follow safe and healthy work practices at all times. You are required to report immediately to the Chief Executive Officer any potential health or safety hazards, and all injuries or accidents.

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### **Security Protocols**

VCA has developed guidelines to help maintain a secure workplace. Be aware of unknown persons loitering in parking areas, walkways, entrances and exits and service areas. Report any suspicious persons or activities to your manager or department head. Secure your desk or office at the end of the day. When called away from your work area for an extended length of time, do not leave valuable or personal articles around your work station that may be accessible. You should immediately notify your supervisor when keys are missing or if security access codes have been breached.

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## **Occupational Safety**

VCA is committed to the safety of its employees, students, parents, vendors, contractors and the public.

The prevention of accidents is the responsibility of every VCA employee. It is also the duty of all employees to accept and promote the established safety regulations and procedures. Every effort will be made to provide adequate safety training. If an employee is ever in doubt how to perform a job or task safely, assistance should be requested. Unsafe conditions must be reported immediately.

It is the policy of VCA that accident prevention shall be considered of primary importance in all phases of operation and administration. Failure to comply with or enforce VCA safety and health rules, practices and procedures could result in disciplinary action up to and including possible termination.

## **EMPLOYEE WAGES AND HEALTH BENEFITS**

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### **Payroll Withholdings**

VCA is required by law to withhold Federal Income Tax, State Income Tax, Social Security (FICA) and State Disability Insurance from each employee's pay as follows:

1. Federal Income Tax Withholding: The amount varies with the number of exemptions the employee claims and, of course, the gross pay amount.
3. Social Security (FICA): The Federal Insurance Contribution Act requires that a certain percentage of employee earnings be deducted and forwarded to the federal government, together with an equal amount contributed by VCA.
4. State Disability Insurance (SDI): This state fund is used to provide benefits to those out of work because of illness or disability.

Every deduction from your paycheck is explained on your check voucher. If you do not understand the deductions, ask the Personnel Manager to explain them to you.

You may change the number of withholding allowances you wish to claim for Federal Income Tax purposes at any time by filling out a new W-4 form and submitting it to the Personnel Manager. The office maintains a supply of these forms.

All Federal, State, and Social Security taxes will be automatically deducted from paychecks. Federal Withholding Tax deduction is determined by the employee's W-4 form. The W-4 form should be completed upon hire and it is the employee's responsibility to report any changes in filing status to the Personnel Manager and to fill out a new W-4 form.

At the end of the calendar year, a "withholding statement" (W-2) will be prepared and forwarded to each employee for use in connection with preparation of income tax returns. The W-2 shows Social Security information, taxes withheld and total wages.

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### **Overtime Pay**

Whether an employee is exempt from or subject to overtime pay will be determined on a case-by-case basis and will be indicated in the employee's job description. Generally, teachers and administrators are exempt. Non-exempt employees may be required to work beyond the regularly scheduled workday or workweek as necessary. Only actual hours worked in a given workday or workweek can apply in calculating overtime for non-exempt employees. VCA will attempt to distribute overtime work load evenly and accommodate individual schedules. All overtime work must be previously authorized by your supervisor. VCA provides compensation for all overtime hours worked by non-exempt employees in accordance with state and federal law. (This explanation of how overtime works is not specific enough, so do not include it as part of the handbook. Have another more complete form available for those employees that are non-exempt)



Exempt employees may have to work hours beyond their normal schedules as work demands require. No overtime compensation will be paid to these exempt employees.

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### **Paydays**

Paydays are scheduled on the last working day of each month. If you observe any error in your check, please report it immediately to the Personnel Manager.

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### **Wage Attachments and Garnishments**

Under normal circumstances, VCA will not assist creditors in the collection of personal debts from its employees. However, creditors may resort to certain legal procedures such as garnishments, levies or judgments that require VCA, by law, to withhold part of your earnings in their favor.

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### **Medical Benefits**

#### Eligibility

You are eligible for medical coverage if you are a full-time regular employee working for VCA or if you are a part time employee who works a minimum of twenty-five (25) hours per week. Temporary, and internship employees are not eligible to participate in the plans.

Employees who go from part-time to full-time employment become eligible for full benefits on the first day of the month following the effective date of the change.

The VCA plan covers employee, domestic partner and dependent coverage up to total of 75% of total costs per month per employee.

#### When Coverage Starts

Your coverage will begin on the first day of employment or if hired mid-month it will start on the first day of the next month. Your enrollment form must be submitted to the Personnel Manager as soon as possible. This form serves as a request for coverage, and authorizes any payroll deductions necessary to pay for your coverage.

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### **COBRA Benefits**

#### Continuation of Medical and Dental

WHEN COVERAGE UNDER ANY OF SPCHS'S HEALTH PLANS ENDS, YOU OR YOUR DEPENDENTS MAY CONTINUE COVERAGE IN SOME SITUATIONS.

When your coverage under VCA's medical and/or dental plans ends, you or your dependents can continue coverage for 18 or 36 months, depending upon the reason benefits ended. To continue coverage, you must pay the full cost of coverage - your contribution and SPCHS's previous contribution plus a possible administrative charge.

Medical coverage for you, your spouse and your eligible dependent children can continue for up to 18 months if coverage ends because:

- Your employment ends, voluntarily or involuntarily, for any reason other than gross misconduct; or
- Your hours of employment are reduced below the amount required to be considered a full-time employee or part-time, making you ineligible for the plan.

This 18-month period may be extended an additional 11 months if you are disabled at the time of your termination or reduction in hours if you meet certain requirements. This 18-month period also may be extended if other events (such as a divorce or death) occur during the 18-month period.

Your spouse and eligible dependents can continue their health coverage for up to 36 months if coverage ends because:

- You die while covered by the plan;

- You and your spouse become divorced or legally separated;
- You become eligible for Medicare coverage, but your spouse has not yet reach age 65; or
- Your dependent child reaches an age which makes him or her ineligible for coverage under the plan (age 19 or if a full-time student age 25).

Rights similar to those described above may apply to retirees, spouses and dependents if the employer commences a bankruptcy proceeding and those individuals lose coverage.

VCA will notify you or your dependents if coverage ends due to termination or a reduction in your work hours. If you become eligible for Medicare, divorced or legally separated, die, or when your child no longer meets the eligibility requirements, you or a family member are responsible for notifying VCA within 30 days of the event. VCA will then notify you or your dependents of your rights.

Health coverage continuation must be elected within 60 days after receiving notice of the end of coverage, or within 60 days after the event causing the loss, whichever is later.

There are certain circumstances under which coverage will end automatically. This happens if:

- Premiums for continued coverage are not paid within 30 days of the due date;
- You (or your spouse or child) become covered under another group health plan which does not contain any exclusion or limitation with respect to any pre-existing condition you (or your spouse or child, as applicable) may have;
- SPCHS stops providing group health benefits;
- You (or your spouse or child) become entitled to Medicare; or
- You extended coverage for up to 29-months due to disability and there has been a final determination that you are no longer disabled.

## **PERSONNEL EVALUATION AND RECORD KEEPING**

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### **Employee Reviews and Evaluations**

All employees will be reviewed on an annual basis for performance beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> and concluding June 30<sup>th</sup>.

The Chief Executive Officer will be evaluated by the Board of Directors. All other employee will be evaluated by the Chief Executive Officer and/or his/her designee.

The Personalized Educator Plan (PEP) document will be used to communicate the official written evaluation.

For each employee who is eligible for an annual performance bonus, the awarding of his/her bonus will be based upon the written PEP evaluation.

### **Personnel Files and Record Keeping Protocols**

At the time of your employment, a personnel file is established for you. Please keep your supervisor advised of changes that should be reflected in your personnel file. Such changes include: change in address, telephone number, marital status, number of dependents and person(s) to notify in case of emergency. Prompt notification of these changes is essential and will enable the School to contact you should the change affect your other records.

You have the right to inspect certain documents in your personnel file, as provided by law, in the presence of a VCA representative, at a mutually convenient time. You may add your comments to any disputed item in the file. VCA will restrict disclosure of your personnel file to authorized individuals within VCA. A request for information contained in the personnel file must be directed to your supervisor. Only the Director or designee is authorized to release information about current or former employees. Disclosure of information to outside sources will be limited. However, VCA will cooperate with requests from authorized law enforcement or local, state or federal agencies conducting official investigations or as otherwise legally required.

## **HOLIDAYS, VACATIONS AND LEAVES**

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## Holidays

Non-exempt employees may receive the following annual paid holidays:

- New Year's Day
  - Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday
  - President's Day
  - Memorial Day
  - July 4th
  - Labor Day
  - Thanksgiving
  - Friday after Thanksgiving
  - Day before and after Christmas
  - Christmas Day
- Other days during the school year such as days during the School's "Spring Break" shall be paid time for all non-exempt employees in active status.
  - Religious Holidays - Recognized religious holidays may be taken off by an employee whose religion requires observance of the particular day. Employees must request the day off in advance by written notice to the employee's supervisor.
  - When a holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday will be celebrated as the holiday; if it falls on Sunday, the following Monday will be celebrated as the holiday. When Christmas falls on a Saturday, the Day before Christmas will be celebrated on Thursday. If Christmas falls on a Sunday or Monday, the day before Christmas will be celebrated on the preceding Friday.
  - Employees on any leave of absence do not earn holiday pay.

## Personal Days

Regular full-time employees shall receive 2 paid personal days each year. Part-time employees will earn personal days on a pro-rated basis.

While the School recognizes the importance of personal time as a period of rest and rejuvenation away from the job, personal days must be scheduled with due consideration for "peak traffic periods" in the school.

Any personal time taken during the school year or otherwise should be coordinated and cleared by the Chief Executive Officer, subject to scheduling.

An employee whose employment terminates will not be paid for unused personal days. Personal days will not carry over from one year to the next.

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## Unpaid Leave of Absence

VCA recognizes that special situations may arise where an employee must leave his or her job temporarily. At its discretion, VCA may grant employees leaves of absence.

The granting of a leave of absence always presumes the employee will return to active work by a designated date or within a specific period.

If you are currently covered, medical, and dental coverage will remain in force during a medical or worker's compensation leave of absence, provided you pay the appropriate premiums. Whether you are required to pay your own premiums will depend upon the length of your leave of absence. During a family/medical leave, your medical and dental benefits will remain in force provided you pay the appropriate premiums. Benefits are terminated the day any other type of leave begins.

**No personal days are accrued during any type of unpaid leave of absence.**

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## Sick Leave

Sick leave is a form of insurance that employees accumulate in order to provide a cushion for incapacitation due to illness or injury. It is intended to be used only when actually required to recover from illness or injury; sick leave is not for "personal" absences. The School will not tolerate abuse or misuse of your sick leave privilege.

The School offers paid sick leave to regular full-time employees. You will receive paid sick leave at the rate of five (5) days allotted to each school year. Sick leave does not carry over from year to year and the School does not pay employees in lieu of unused sick leave.

If you are absent longer than three (3) days due to illness, medical evidence of your illness and/or medical certification of your fitness to return to work satisfactory to the School will be required before you can return to work and before the School honors any sick pay requests.

Once an employee has exhausted sick leave, the employee may continue on an unpaid medical leave depending upon the facts and circumstances of the employee's basis for leave beyond accrued sick leave.

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## **Family Care and Medical Leave**

VCA complies with the federal Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA") which requires VCA to permit each eligible employee to take up to 12 workweeks of FMLA leave in any 12-month period for the birth/adoption of a child, the employee's own serious illness or to care for certain family members who have a serious illness.

### **Pregnancy Disability Leave**

This policy explains how VCA complies with the California Pregnancy Disability Act, which requires VCA to give each female employee an unpaid leave of absence of up to four (4) months, as needed, for the period(s) of time a woman is actually disabled by pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. The California Pregnancy Disability Act is more comprehensive than TN and VCA believes strongly in supporting employees considering having children and will therefore use the following guidelines:

- **Employee Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for pregnancy disability leave, the employee must be disabled by pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition and must provide appropriate medical certification concerning the disability.

- **Events That May Entitle an Employee to Pregnancy Disability Leave**

The four-month pregnancy disability leave allowance includes any time taken (with or without pay) for any of the following reasons:

1. The employee is unable to work at all or is unable to perform any one or more of the essential functions of her job without undue risk to herself, the successful completion of her pregnancy, or to other persons because of pregnancy or childbirth, or because of any medically recognized physical or mental condition that is related to pregnancy or childbirth (including severe morning sickness); or
2. The employee needs to take time off for parental care.

- **Duration of Pregnancy Disability Leave**

Pregnancy disability leave may be taken in one or more periods, but not to exceed four months total. "Four months" means the number of days the employee would normally work within four months. For a full-time employee, four months means 88 working and/or entitlement based on an average of 22 working days for four months.

Pregnancy disability leave does not count against the leave which may be available as Family Care and Medical Leave.

- **Pay During Pregnancy Disability Leave**

1. An employee on pregnancy disability leave must use all accrued paid sick leave at the beginning of any otherwise unpaid leave period.
2. The receipt of sick leave pay, or state disability insurance benefits will not extend the length of pregnancy disability leave.
3. Sick pay accrues during any period of unpaid pregnancy disability leave only until the end of the month in which the unpaid leave began.

- **Health Benefits**

The provisions of VCA various employee benefit plans govern continued eligibility during pregnancy disability leave and these provisions may change from time to time. When a request for pregnancy disability

leave is granted, SPCHS will give the employee written confirmation of the arrangements made for the payment of insurance premiums during the leave period.

- Seniority

An employee on pregnancy disability leave remains an employee of SPCHS and a leave will not constitute a break in service. When an employee returns from pregnancy disability leave, he or she will return with the same seniority he or she had when the leave commenced.

- Medical Certifications

1. An employee requesting a pregnancy disability leave must provide medical certification from her healthcare provider on a form supplied by VCA. Failure to provide the required certification in a timely manner (within fifteen (15) days of the leave request) may result in a denial of the leave request until such certification is provided.
2. Recertifications are required if leave is sought after expiration of the time estimated by the healthcare provider. Failure to submit required recertifications can result in termination of the leave.

- Requesting and Scheduling Pregnancy Disability Leave

1. An employee should request pregnancy disability leave by completing a Request for Leave form and submitting it to the Chief Executive Officer. An employee asking for a Request for Leave form will be referred to VCA's then current pregnancy disability leave policy.
2. Employee should provide not less than thirty (30) days or as long of notice as is practicable, if the need for the leave is foreseeable. Failure to provide such notice is grounds for denial of the leave request, except if the need for pregnancy disability leave was an emergency and was otherwise unforeseeable.
3. Where possible, employees must make a reasonable effort to schedule foreseeable planned medical treatments so as not to unduly disrupt VCA's operations.
4. Pregnancy disability leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule when medically advisable, as determined by the employee's healthcare provider.
5. If an employee needs intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule that is foreseeable based on planned medical treatment, the employee may be transferred temporarily to an available alternative position for which he or she is qualified that has equivalent pay and benefits that better accommodates recurring periods of leave than the employee's regular position.
6. In most cases, VCA will respond to a pregnancy disability leave request within two (2) days of acquiring knowledge that the leave qualifies as pregnancy disability and, in any event, within ten (10) days of receiving the request. If a pregnancy disability leave request is granted, VCA will notify the employee in writing and leave will be counted against the employee's pregnancy disability leave entitlement. This notice will explain the employee's obligations and the consequences of failing to satisfy them.

- Return To Work

1. Upon timely return at the expiration of the pregnancy disability leave period, an employee is entitled to the same position unless the employee would not otherwise have been employed in the same position (at the time reinstatement is requested). If the employee is not reinstated to the same position, she must be reinstated to a comparable position unless there is no comparable position available, but filling that position with the returning employee would substantially undermine VCA's ability to operate the business safely and efficiently. A "comparable" position is a position that involves the same or similar duties and responsibilities and is virtually identical to the employee's original position in terms of pay, benefits, and working conditions.
2. When a request for pregnancy disability leave is granted to an employee, VCA will give the employee a written guarantee of reinstatement at the end of the leave (with the limitations explained above).
3. Before an employee will be permitted to return from a pregnancy disability leave of three days or more, the employee must obtain a certification from her healthcare provider that she is able to resume work.

4. If the employee can return to work with limitations, VCA will evaluate those limitations and, if possible, will accommodate the employee as required by law. If accommodation cannot be made, the employee will be medically separated from VCA.

- **Employment During Leave**

An employee on pregnancy disability leave may not accept employment with any other employer without VCA's written permission. An employee who accepts such employment will be deemed to have resigned from employment with VCA.

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**Payment during Maternity or Paternity Leave:**

VCA will pay up to 2 week's salary for leave taken due to the birth (or adoption) of an employee's child.

**Industrial Injury Leave (Workers' Compensation)**

VCA provides insurance coverage for employees in case of work-related injuries. Workers' compensation benefits provided to injured employees may include:

- Medical care;
- Cash benefits, tax-free to replace lost wages; and
- Vocational rehabilitation to help qualified injured employees return to suitable employment.

To ensure you receive any worker's compensation benefits to which you may be entitled, you will need to:

- Immediately report any work-related injury to your manager or department head;
- Seek medical treatment and follow-up care if required;
- Complete a written Employee's Claim Form (DWC Form 1) and return it to your supervisor; and
- Provide VCA with a certification from your health care provider regarding the need for worker's compensation disability leave as well as your eventual ability to return to work from the leave.

It is VCA's policy that when there is a job-related injury, the first priority is to insure that the injured employee receives appropriate medical attention. VCA, with the help of its insurance carrier has selected medical centers to meet this need. Each medical center was selected for its ability to meet anticipated needs with high quality medical service and a location that is convenient to the VCA operation.

- If an employee is injured on the job, he/she is to go or be taken to the approved medical center for treatment. If injuries are such that they require the use of emergency medical systems (EMS) such as an ambulance, the choice by the EMS personnel for the most appropriate medical center or hospital for treatment will be recognized as an approved center.
  - All accidents and injuries must be reported to the employee's manager or department head and to the individual responsible for reporting to VCA's insurance carrier. Failure by an employee to report a work-related injury by the end of his/her shift could result in loss of insurance coverage for the employee. An employee may choose to be treated by his/her personal physician at his/her own expense, but he/she is still required to go to VCA approved medical center for evaluation. All job-related injuries must be reported to the appropriate State Worker's Compensation Bureau and the insurance carrier.
  - When there is a job-related injury that results in lost time, the employee must have a medical release from a medical facility before returning to work.
- Any time there is a job-related injury, VCA's requires drug/alcohol testing along with any medical treatment provided to the employee.

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**Bereavement Leave**

Salaried employees are entitled to a leave of up to five (5) work days without loss of pay due to a death in the immediate family (parent, spouse, domestic partner, son/daughter, sister/brother, parents-in-law, son/daughter-in-law, grandparents, grandchild).. Any scheduled days off (including, holidays and vacations) falling during the absence will be counted as both bereavement leave and scheduled days off.



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### **Jury Duty or Witness Leave**

For all exempt employees, VCA will pay for time off if you are called to serve on a jury. For all non-exempt employees, VCA will pay for up to three (3) days if you are called to serve on a jury.

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### **Voting Time Off**

If an employee does not have sufficient time outside of working hours to vote in an official state-sanctioned election, the employee may take off enough working time to vote. Such time off shall be taken at the beginning or the end of the regular working shift, whichever allows for more free time and the time taken off shall be combined with the voting time available outside of working hours to a maximum of two (2) hours combined. Under these circumstances, an employee will be allowed a maximum of two (2) hours of time off during an election day without loss of pay. When possible, an employee requesting time off to vote shall give his or her manager or department head at least two (2) day's notice.

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## **DISCIPLINE AND TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

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### **Rules of Conduct**

The following conduct is prohibited and will not be tolerated by VCA. This list of prohibited conduct is illustrative only and applies to all employees of VCA; other types of conduct that threaten security, personal safety, employee welfare and VCA operations also may be prohibited. Further, the specification of this list of conduct in no way alters the at-will employment relationship as to at-will employees of the School. If an employee is working under a contract with the School which grants procedural rights prior to termination, the procedural terms in the contract shall apply.

1. Insubordination - refusing to perform a task or duty assigned or act in accordance with instructions provided by an employee's manager or proper authority.
2. Inefficiency - including deliberate restriction of output, carelessness or unnecessary wastes of time or material, neglect of job, duties or responsibilities.
3. Unauthorized soliciting, collecting of contributions, distribution of literature, written or printed matter is strictly prohibited on SPCHS property by non-employees and by employees. This rule does not cover periods of time when employees are off their jobs, such as lunch periods and break times. However, employees properly off their jobs are prohibited from such activity with other employees who are performing their work tasks.
4. Damaging, defacing, unauthorized removal, destruction or theft of another employee's property or of VCA property.
5. Fighting or instigating a fight on VCA premises.
6. Violations of the drug and alcohol policy.
7. Using or possessing firearms, weapons or explosives of any kind on VCA premises.
8. Gambling on VCA premises.
9. Tampering with or falsifying any report or record including, but not limited to, personnel, absentee, sickness or production reports or records, specifically including applications for employment and time cards.
11. Use of profane, abusive or threatening language in conversations with other employees. Intimidating or interfering with other employees.
12. Conducting personal business during business hours
13. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness excused or unexcused.
14. Posting any notices on VCA premises without prior written approval of management, unless posting is on a VCA bulletin board designated for employee postings.
15. Conviction of a criminal act.
16. Any other conduct detrimental to other employees or SPCHS's interests or its efficient operations.

For employees who possess an employment contract which provides for other than at-will employment, the procedures and process for termination during the contract shall be specified in the contract.

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### **Off-Duty Conduct**

While the School does not seek to interfere with the off-duty and personal conduct of its employees, certain types of off-duty conduct may interfere with the School legitimate business interests. For this reason, employees are expected to conduct their personal affairs in a manner that does not adversely affect the School or its own integrity, reputation, or credibility. Illegal or immoral off-duty conduct by an employee that adversely affects the School's legitimate business interests or the employee's ability to perform his or her work will not be tolerated.

While employed by the School, employees are expected to devote their energies to their jobs with the School. For this reason, second jobs are strongly discouraged. The following types of additional employment elsewhere are strictly prohibited:

- Additional employment that conflicts with an employee's work schedule, duties, and responsibilities at our

- School.
- Additional employment that creates a conflict of interest or is incompatible with the employee's position with our School.
- Additional employment that impairs or has a detrimental effect on the employee's work performance with our School.
- Additional employment that requires the employee to conduct work or related activities on the School's property during the employer's working hours or using our School's facilities and/or equipment; and
- Additional employment that directly or indirectly competes with the business or the interests of our School.

Employees who wish to engage in additional employment that may create a real or apparent conflict of interest must submit a written request to the School explaining the details of the additional employment. If the additional employment is authorized, the School assumes no responsibility for it. The School shall not provide workers' compensation coverage or any other benefit for injuries occurring from or arising out of additional employment. Authorization to engage in additional employment can be revoked at any time.

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### **Termination of Employment**

Should it become necessary for you to terminate your employment with VCA, please notify your supervisor regarding your intention as far in advance as possible. At least two week's notice is expected whenever possible.

If you are participating in the medical and/or dental plan, you will be sent information on your rights under COBRA.

### **INTERNAL COMPLAINT REVIEW**

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The purpose of the "Internal Complaint Review Process" is to afford all employees of the School the opportunity to seek internal resolution of their work-related concerns. All employees have free access to the Chief Executive Officer or Board of Directors to express their work-related concerns.

#### Filing of Complaint

If complaints cannot be resolved informally, employees may file a written complaint with the Director or Board President as soon as possible after the events that give rise to the employee's work-related concerns. The written complaint should set forth in detail the basis for the employee's complaint.

#### Investigation

An objective and timely investigation of all complaints which cannot be resolved informally will be undertaken. This includes meeting separately with the employee and with others who either are named in the complaint or who may have knowledge of the facts set forth in the complaint.

The School will attempt to treat all internal complaints and their investigation as confidential, recognizing, however, that in the course of investigating and resolving internal complaints some dissemination of information to others may be necessary or appropriate.

Upon completion of the investigation, the Personnel Manager shall report the finding(s) to the employee in writing.

#### Non-Retaliation

If an employee has filed a complaint in good faith, the employee will not be disciplined or otherwise penalized for lodging the complaint. If an employee believes that he or she is being retaliated against for lodging a complaint, the employee should immediately notify the Director or Board President.

### **AMENDMENT TO EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

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This Employee Handbook contains the employment policies and practices of VCA in effect at the time of publication. All previously issued handbooks or any inconsistent policy statements or memoranda are superseded.

VCA reserves the right to amend, delete or otherwise modify this Handbook at any time provided that such modifications are in writing.

Any written changes to the Handbook will be distributed to all employees. No oral statements can in any way change or alter the provisions of this Handbook.

## APPENDIX A

### HARASSMENT COMPLAINT FORM

*It is the policy of VCA that all of its employees be free from harassment. This form is provided for you to report what you believe to be harassment, so that VCA may investigate and take appropriate disciplinary or other action when the facts show that there has been sexual harassment.*

*If you are an employee of VCA, you may file this form with the Chief Executive Officer or Board Chair.*

Please review VCA's policies concerning harassment for a definition of harassment and a description of the types of conduct that are considered to be harassment.

*VCA will undertake every effort to handle the investigation of your complaint in a confidential manner. In that regard, VCA will disclose the contents of your complaint only to those persons having a need to know. For example, to conduct its investigation, VCA will need to disclose portions of your factual allegations to potential witnesses, including anyone you have identified as having knowledge of the facts on which you are basing your complaint, as well as the alleged harasser.*

*In signing this form below, you authorize VCA to disclose to others the information you have provided herein, and information you may provide in the future. Please note that the more detailed information you provide, the more likely it is that VCA will be able to address your complaint to your satisfaction.*

*Charges of harassment are taken very seriously by VCA both because of the harm caused to the person harassed, and because of the potential sanctions that may be taken against the harasser. It is therefore very important that you report the facts as accurately and completely as possible and that you cooperate fully with the person or persons designated to investigate your complaint.*

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Alleged Incident(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person(s) you believe harassed you or someone else: \_\_\_\_\_

List any witnesses that were present: \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident(s) occur? \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the events or conduct that are the basis of your complaint by providing as much factual detail as possible (i.e. specific statements; what, if any, physical contact was involved; any verbal statements; what did you do to avoid the situation, etc.) (Attach additional pages, if needed):

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I acknowledge that I have read and that I understand the above statements. I hereby authorize VCA to disclose the information I have provided as it finds necessary in pursuing its investigation.

I hereby certify that the information I have provided in this complaint is true and correct and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Complainant**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

Received by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF RECEIPT OF PERSONNEL HANDBOOK

PLEASE READ THE EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK AND SUBMIT A SIGNED COPY OF THIS STATEMENT TO THE PERSONNEL MANAGER.

EMPLOYEE NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

I ACKNOWLEDGE that I have received a copy of the Employee Handbook. I have read and understood the contents of the Handbook, and I agree to abide by its directions and procedures. I have been given the opportunity to ask any questions I might have about the policies in the Handbook. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and familiarize myself with the policies and procedures contained in the Handbook.

I understand that the statements contained in the Handbook are guidelines for employees concerning some of VCA policies and benefits, and are not intended to create any contractual or other legal obligations or to alter the at-will nature of my employment with VCA. In the event I do have an employment contract which expressly alters the at-will relationship, I agree to the foregoing except with reference to an at-will employment status.

I understand that except for employment at-will status, any and all policies or practices can be changed at any time by VCA.

I understand that other than the Chief Executive Officer or Board of Directors of VCA, no person has authority to enter into any agreement, express or implied, for employment for any specific period of time, or to make any agreement for employment other than at-will; only the Board has the authority to make any such agreement and then only in writing signed by the Board Chair.

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Attachment 4A: School Calendar

## Valor Collegiate Academies

### 2014 - 2015 Academic Calendar

Calendar Legend																											
Regular Day							Testing Day							Expedition							PD : Staff in, Stu. Out						
July 2014							August 2014							September 2014													
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S							
		1	2	3	4	5						1	2	31	1	2	3	4	5	6							
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13							
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20							
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27							
27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30											
October 2014							November 2014							December 2014													
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S							
			1	2	3	4							1	30	1	2	3	4	5	6							
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13							
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20							
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27							
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31										
January 2015							February 2015							March 2015													
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S							
				1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	8	9	10	11	12	13	14							
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	15	16	17	18	19	20	21							
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	22	23	24	25	26	27	28							
25	26	27	28	29	30	31								29	30	31											
April 2015							May 2015							June 2015													
S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S							
			1	2	3	4						1	2	31	1	2	3	4	5	6							
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13							
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20							
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27							
26	27	28	29	30			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30											

## Attachment 4B: School Calendar and Schedule

### Annual Calendar

**Describe the annual academic calendar for the school. Explain how this calendar reflects the needs of the academic program. Provide the school's proposed calendar for the first year of operation, including the total number of days/hours of instruction.**

The annual academic Calendar is shown in Attachment 4a. There will be 189 school days in the traditional year. There will be 159 days of “academic” instruction and 30 days of Expeditions instruction when students will take their in-depth elective courses. The schedule is shown for the 2014 – 2015 school year so that we could compare it to the known MNPS schedule, but it will be updated for 2015 - 2016 this year once the MNPS schedule is released. Students will start school July 30<sup>th</sup> and will stay in school until June 5. The number of minutes for each course for the year is shown below in Table 1 (stage 1) and Table 2 (stage 3):

**Table 1: Average Minutes for VCA Courses in Stage 1**

Course	Avg. Min/Day	Avg. Min/Week	Days/Yr	Min/Yr	Min/Yr with Max Remediation
Math	60	300	159	9540	10890
English	145	685	159	23055	24405
Science	40	160	159	6360	
History	40	160	159	6360	
Daily Expeditions	60	270	159	9540	
Daily RtI Expeditions	30	120	159	4770	
Morning Meeting/Mentor Group/ Social and Emotional Learning	30	150	159	4770	
RtI Expeditions - Extended	180	900	15	2700	
Expeditions - Extended	180	900	15	2700	

**Table 2: Average Minutes for VCA Courses in Stage 3**

Course	Avg. Min/Day	Avg. Min/Week	Days/Yr.	Min/Yr.	Min/Yr. with Max Remediation
Math	95	433	159	15105	17805
English	105	473	159	16695	19395
Science	95	433	159	15105	
History	52	260	159	8268	
Learning Lab	52	260	159	8268	
Fitness	20	80	159	3180	
Mentor Group	15	145	159	2385	
Expeditions	180	900	30	5400	
Extended Semester	60	300	6	360	
Remediation Expeditions	180	900	30	5400	



<b>Summer Bridge Remediation</b>	120	600	15	1800	
<b>Office Hours</b>	45	225	32	1440	
<b>Saturday School Remediation</b>	120	120	25	3000	

The column titled “Minutes/Year with Maximum Remediation” shows how many minutes a scholar at VCA can have in a course if they receive the maximum number of minutes available in the schedule, which would include the following:

1. **Regular class-time**
2. **Office hours for that class 1x week**
3. **Extended semester class**
4. **Remediation Expeditions class in mornings**
5. **Summer Bridge program**

What is innovative about this schedule is that it allows for students who are progressing adequately to have a reasonable course-load and time in academic classes. For students who need extra time to master the standards, however, they may receive up to 2x the normal class time in smaller settings to get the support they need. We believe this schedule will allow for a diverse group of students, who come with various preparation levels, the ability to all be successful and supported in the model.

### **School Day and Week**

**Provide a description of the school day and week. Include the number of instructional hours/minutes in a day for core subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Note the length of the school day including start and dismissal times. Explain why this schedule will be optimal for student learning. Provide the minimum number of hours/minutes per day and week the school will devote to academic instruction in each grade.**

### **Weekly Schedule**

The average minutes per class each week is shown above in **Table 1 and Table 2**. **Table 3** shows the weekly schedule for Kindergarten and **Table 4** shows the weekly schedule for 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **Weekly/Daily activities for students**

**Core Academic courses:** Students take four main academic courses (Math, English, History, and Science) each day during the Academic Semester. In stages 1, English is broken up into Read Aloud, Shared Reading, Literacy Stations, and Writing. In Stages 3 – 4, English is broken up into Reading and Writing. In Stages 1 and 2, scholars have Electives “Expeditions” twice/daily for 30 minutes each period. In Stages 3 and 4, electives are taken during Expeditions weeks. In addition, scholars spend time in the following activities:

**Breakfast:** Breakfast will be served for all students each morning, with students on Free and Reduced plans having those meals provided for free or at a reduced rate.

**Mentor Group (stages 3 and 4):** The official school day starts at 8am in mentor groups. Each faculty member and administrator has a mentor group of about 18 students. All students meet in their assigned mentor room and the mentor teacher takes role, checks homework, and delivers announcements. Mentors will also do the first Focus Fitness session of the day for 2-6 minutes with their mentor group.

**Morning Meeting:** In Stages 1 and 2, scholars have morning meeting in the morning meeting space in their classroom on Monday – Thursday. On Friday, scholars have a whole school morning meeting in the common space. In Stages 3 and 4, all students will walk quietly to the common area with the mentor group and sit in their assigned areas on the floor for the All School Meeting. The Principal of the school will run the ASM meeting each morning with a focus on inspiring students to be at their best for the day.

**Daily RtI Expeditions:** In Stages 1 and 2, scholars will have a whole school RtI Expeditions Block which will be used to provide daily additional support in math and reading to scholars who need additional support. This is a critical piece of VCA’s approach to RtI in Stages 1 and 2

**Table 3: VCA Kindergarten Weekly Schedule**

	Monday	Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday	Friday
<b>7:30-8:00</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>7:30-8:00</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>7:30-8:00</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>breakfast</b>
<b>8:00 - 8:30</b>	Morning Meeting & SEL	Morning Meeting & SEL	<b>8:00 - 8:30</b>	Morning Meeting & SEL	<b>8:00 - 8:30</b>	Morning Meeting & SEL	All School Morning Meeting & SEL
<b>8:30 – 9:00</b>	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	<b>8:30 – 9:00</b>	Read Aloud	<b>8:30 – 9:00</b>	Read Aloud	Read Aloud
<b>9:00 – 9:15</b>	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	<b>9:00 – 9:15</b>	Shared Reading	<b>9:00 – 9:15</b>	Shared Reading	Shared Reading
<b>9:15 – 10:15</b>	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	<b>9:15 – 10:15</b>	Literacy Stations	<b>9:15 – 10:15</b>	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations
<b>10:05 – 10:20</b>	Transition	Transition	<b>10:05 - 10:20</b>	Transition	<b>10:05 - 10:20</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>10:20 - 10:50</b>	Expeditions 1	Expeditions 1	<b>10:20 - 10:50</b>	Expeditions 1	<b>10:20 - 10:50</b>	Expeditions 1	Expeditions 1
<b>10:50 - 10:55</b>	Transition	Transition	<b>10:50 - 10:55</b>	Transition	<b>10:50 - 10:55</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>10:55 - 11:55</b>	Math	Math	<b>10:55 - 11:55</b>	Math	<b>10:55 - 11:55</b>	Math	Math
<b>11:55 - 12:00</b>	Transition	Transition	<b>11:55 - 12:00</b>	Transition	<b>11:55 - 12:00</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>12:00 - 12:20</b>	Lunch	Lunch	<b>12:00 - 12:20</b>	Lunch	<b>12:00 - 12:20</b>	Lunch	Lunch
<b>12:20 - 12:35</b>	Recess	Recess	<b>12:20 - 1:00</b>	Social Studies	<b>12:20 - 12:35</b>	Recess	Recess
<b>12:35 - 12:40</b>	Transition	Transition	<b>1:00 - 1:40</b>	Science	<b>12:35 - 12:40</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>12:40 - 1:20</b>	Writing	Writing	<b>1:40 - 1:55</b>	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	<b>12:40 - 1:20</b>	Writing	Writing
<b>1:20 - 2:00</b>	Social Studies	Social Studies	<b>1:55 - 2:10</b>	Dismissal	<b>1:20 - 2:00</b>	Social Studies	Social Studies
<b>2:00 - 2:05</b>	Transition	Transition			<b>2:00 - 2:05</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>2:05 - 2:35</b>	Expeditions 2	Expeditions 2			<b>2:05 - 2:35</b>	Expeditions 2	Expeditions 2
<b>2:35 - 2:40</b>	Transition	Transition			<b>2:35 - 2:40</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>2:40 - 3:20</b>	Science	Science			<b>2:40 - 3:20</b>	Science	Science
<b>3:20 - 3:50</b>	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions			<b>3:20 - 3:50</b>	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions
<b>3:50 - 4:00</b>	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up			<b>3:50 - 4:00</b>	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up
<b>4:00 - 4:10</b>	Dismissal	Dismissal			<b>4:00 - 4:10</b>	Dismissal	Dismissal

**Table 4: VCA 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Weekly Schedule**

	Monday	Tuesday		Wednesday	Thursday		Friday
<b>7:30 – 8:00</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>7:30-8:00</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>7:30-8:00</b>	<b>breakfast</b>
<b>8:00 – 8:15</b>	advisory	advisory	<b>8:00 – 8:15</b>	advisory	advisory	<b>8:00 – 9:33</b>	Reading
<b>8:15 – 8:17</b>	transition	transition	<b>8:15 – 8:17</b>	transition	transition		Writing
<b>8:17 – 8:32</b>	Morning meeting	Morning meeting	<b>8:17 – 8:32</b>	Morning meeting	Morning meeting	<b>9:33-9:35</b>	transition
<b>8:32 – 8:34</b>	transition	transition	<b>8:32 – 8:34</b>	transition	transition	<b>9:35-11:08</b>	Math / Fitness
<b>8:34-10:19</b>	Reading	Reading	<b>8:34-9:27</b>	Reading / Writing	Reading		
	Writing	Writing	<b>9:27-9:29</b>	transition	Writing	<b>11:08-11:10</b>	transition
<b>10:19-10:21</b>	transition	transition	<b>9:29-10:22</b>	Learning Lab	transition	<b>11:10-12:03</b>	History
<b>10:21-12:01</b>	Learning Lab	Learning Lab	<b>10:22-10:32</b>	Recess	Learning Lab	<b>12:03-12:33</b>	Lunch
	History	History	<b>10:32-11:25</b>	History	History	<b>12:33-12:35</b>	transition
<b>12:01-12:31</b>	Lunch	Lunch	<b>11:25-11:55</b>	Lunch	Lunch	<b>12:35-1:28</b>	Learning Lab
<b>12:31-12:33</b>	transition	transition	<b>11:55-11:57</b>	transition	transition	<b>1:28-1:30</b>	transition
<b>12:33-2:18</b>	Math / Fitness	Math / Fitness	<b>11:57-12:50</b>	Math	Math / Fitness	<b>1:30-2:23</b>	Science / Fitness
			<b>12:50-12:53</b>	transition			
<b>2:18-2:20</b>	transition	transition	<b>12:53-1:46</b>	Science	transition	<b>2:23-3:53</b>	
<b>2:20-4:05</b>	Science / Fitness	Science / Fitness	<b>1:46-2:00</b>	Dismissal 1	Science / Fitness		Connections
			<b>2:00-4:00</b>	Professional Development			
<b>4:05-4:10</b>	Dismissal 1	Dismissal 1			Dismissal 1	<b>3:53-4:00</b>	Dismissal 1
<b>4:10-4:55</b>	Office Hours	Office Hours			Office Hours	<b>4:00-5:00</b>	Office Hours
<b>4:55-5:00</b>	Dismissal 2	Dismissal 2			Dismissal 2	<b>5:00</b>	Dismissal 2

**Focus Fitness:** Students will do two additional short Focus Fitness sessions with their teachers and classmates at the end of two classes.

**Learning Lab (stages 3 and 4 only):** Students will spend one period (53 minutes) in Learning Lab. Learning Lab will be used to either work silently on homework, online content for their academic courses, or an additional online elective course (as decided by each student's Personalized Learning Plan). For ELL and IEP students Learning Lab is often the time they access the Resource Room.

**Lunch:** Students will have lunch for 30 minutes each day.

**Office Hours (stages 3 and 4 only):** Office Hours are 4 days a week from 4:10-4:55 pm. Office Hours are generally optional for students. Each VCA teacher has Office Hours two days a week and students may come get help on class material, re-take assessments, work in study groups, or help their classmates. Some students will be assigned Office Hours if they are missing homework or due to being placed into Level 3 of the VCA RtI model.

**Early Dismissal Wednesday:** Students will be dismissed early on Wednesdays (Stage 1: 1:55 pm, Stage 2 1:46 pm), and new homework will not be assigned on Wednesday evenings as a means of giving students a mental break in the middle of the school week.

**Connections (Stages 3 and 4 only):** Students will be with their mentor groups on Friday afternoons for Connections. Connections time will be spent on community building, academic literacy, health, and academic intervention. Students must have all homework complete for the week before leaving on Fridays, so part of Connections is spent completing homework. Students who do not have all homework complete for the week are assigned to Friday Office Hours to complete their missing work.

**Friday All School Meeting (Stages 3 and 4 only):** On Friday afternoons all students go with the mentor group to the ASM meeting. The meeting will usually focus on an evaluation of the week (academic achievement, culture, etc.). The end of the meeting will have a fun competition/song/etc. to end the week on a positive note as a community.

**Table 5: Average Minutes/Day for Courses/Activities in Stage 1**

Course	Avg. Min/Day
Math	60
English	145
Science	40
History	40
Expeditions	60
RtI Expeditions	30
Morning Meeting/Mentor Group	30
RtI Expeditions - Extended	180
Expeditions - Extended	180

**Table 6: Average Minutes/Day for Courses/Activities in Stage 3**

Course	Avg. Min/Day
Math	95
English	105

<b>Science</b>	95
<b>History</b>	52
<b>Learning Lab</b>	52
<b>Fitness</b>	20
<b>Mentor Group</b>	15
<b>Office Hours</b>	45

**Describe a typical school day for a teacher and a student.**

**Typical Student Day**

Eduardo takes the bus to VCA each day. The bus picks him up at 6:55am each morning and he travels from his house to VCA, arriving at 7:25am. He goes into the common area where he finds a warm breakfast and 2 VCA teachers waiting for him. Students sit at tables in the common area and eat quietly, talking with their friends and VCA faculty. Eduardo also gets some help from his Science teacher on the last few problems of the previous night's homework.

At 7:57am Eduardo cleans his breakfast up and heads to his mentor group location. His Mentor takes role at 8am sharp in their room. Eduardo has his homework from the previous night on his laptop, and he knows that he needs to scan his math homework and upload it to his personal workspace. He uses the scanner in the room to do so. His mentor teacher Ms. Rodriguez comes around and checks for homework completion. Eduardo did not do his History assignment to a very high quality, so Ms. Rodriguez makes a note in Live School on her laptop so that Ms. McShea (his History teacher) knows to check it in class. Ms. Rodriguez then reads a few brief announcements for the day and then does a "circle check-in" with the students for 4 minutes. Each student says one person whom they are grateful for. At 8:11, Ms. Rodriguez has all students stand, and she leads them through a 3-minute exercise routine. The routine is differentiated so that all students can perform the movements. Eduardo is a little winded at the end, but is smiling and his energy level is higher. At 8:15 Ms. Rodriguez has all students form a single file line and they walk quietly to the common area and sit in their assigned location for All School Meeting.

Ms. Giblin is waiting for all students to sit quietly and begins promptly at 8:17am. The students do one of the VCA chants, and are impressively silent at the end as Ms. Giblin raises her hand to signal silence. Ms. Giblin delivers a short talk about the Core Value of Joy and shows a YouTube video of a "laugh circle" where people meet in groups to simply laugh. She then explains the science behind the benefits of laughter and then asks for student volunteers for nice clean jokes. Eduardo and many others raise their hands and Ms. Giblin picks two students to tell their jokes. Ms. Giblin then tells a really corny joke but everyone laughs anyways. Ms. Giblin ends the ASM with everyone stating the VCA Daily Creed "We are VCA Patriots. Today we will be kind. Today we will learn. Today we will look out for each other. Today we will grow."

Ms. Giblin excuses each Section in order (6 sections named after colleges) and they walk quietly to their first class of the day with their first period teacher. Eduardo has an IEP and is in Section 6 (which in 5<sup>th</sup> grade has both a regular education teacher and a SPED teacher with a group of 20 students) and he goes to English first period. Ms. Ruzic starts class exactly at 8:34 am with all students in their seats. They start with a silent Do Now projected on the screen. Each student responds to the Do Now prompt in their Reader's Notebook. A projected timer let's students know how much time they have left. Ms. Allen, the SPED teacher for 5<sup>th</sup> grade, checks in on Eduardo as he types and asks a few questions to help Eduardo think through the prompt.

Ms. Ruzic stops everyone exactly as the timer goes off and signals for scholars to move to their class meeting space for the day's book talk and mini-lesson to begin. Yemen, another scholar, has signed up on the Book Talk board to give the day's talk. He gives a 30-second "commercial" on the book he recently finished – *The Westing Game* – to class, and ends by prompting his classmates "You should read this book if you want to read an incredible mystery, and try, just try to figure it out before the end." Yemen places a copy of *The Westing Game* on the "Auburn Scholars Recommend..." bookshelf. His classmates send him love and Yemen takes a seat in his meeting space. Ms. Ruzic then signifies to scholars to track her, and begins the day's mini-lesson. Ms. Ruzic is teaching a mini-lesson within the "Following Characters into Meaning" unit. The lesson objective is for scholars to notice moments when the main character acts *out* of character. She begins the mini-lesson with a "Connection" and tells an engaging (and silly) anecdote about how her father always

acts when preparing for weekly family dinner. She then presents a twist – one time, family dinner was about to begin, and her father was nowhere to be found. She says “Scholars, my whole family noticed this immediately, because right before family dinner started, Dad always sets the table for mom and goes around the house gathering all of us to eat. When he didn’t do this, we knew something was up. Dad was acting WAY out of his character.” After her quick anecdote, Ms. Ruzic begins the “Teach” portion of the mini-lesson. She picks up the class text *Tiger Rising*, and begins to read where they left off yesterday. She stops three times throughout her lesson to verbally demonstrate her thinking for scholars. Ms. Ruzic often uses self-talk, to model for scholars how they should be actively thinking while they are reading. This sounds like “I’m noticing here that Rob is doing something different from how he normally acts. Today, he sits on the bus next to Sistene. This is so rare for Rob because he always sits by himself. I’m going to mark this spot with a post-it as a place that Rob is acting out of character.” She continues reading and pauses two more times during the text. Then, she begins the “Active Engagement” component of the mini-lesson. She posts an excerpt of *Tiger Rising* on chart paper and also has a printout of the text for a couple scholars, Eduardo included. She urges scholars to read the excerpt with their “Talk Partners” and notice when Rob begins acting out of character. She provides a sentence starter for scholars to use if they need it: “Rob is acting out of character when he \_\_\_\_\_. This is unusual because \_\_\_\_\_.” Then, she sets her visual timer for 3 minutes, and claps three times. Immediately, there is low talking as scholars begin reading the text to their “Talk Partners.” When scholars finish reading, excited chatter follows about when and why Rob is acting out of character. Ms. Ruzic quickly circulates to three different talk partners to listen to their conversation and provide feedback to deepen scholars thinking. “You’re right, this is out of character for Rob, but why? How is Rob acting that is so different?” and “Notice that Rob is feeling a different emotion here. Why might that be?” The timer buzzes and Ms. Ruzic claps three times. Scholars immediately stop talking and turn back to face her. She says “I’m curious, why was this so out of character for Rob.” She pulls equity sticks and hears from three different talk partners who share the part they noticed. She ends her mini-lesson by providing her link: “Today and every day, readers, you should be mining for hidden details from an author when their beloved characters do something strange – when they act OUT of character.” Ms. Ruzic then gives three lightning fast reminders to scholars: “Amy, Mike, Roberto, Malcolm, I’ve responded to your book letters. Oliver, Kaya, Dulce, Eduardo, your book letters are due today and I can’t wait to read them! Broncos – I’ll meet you at the Guided Reading table in 30 seconds, make sure you bring your text and Reader’s Notebook. I’ll pull seat choice sticks as soon as I get to the Guided Reading table.” Ms. Ruzic snaps twice, and scholars quickly begin moving. Scholars gather their book bins from their book bin holders and go back to their seats. Scholars in the Broncos group get their book bins and walk over to the Guided Reading table, and Oliver, Kaya, Dulce, and Eduardo sit and open their Reader’s Notebook. When Ms. Ruzic sits at the Guided Reading table, she sets the visual timer for 38 minutes, pulls 5 seat choice sticks, and begins her guided reading lesson with the Broncos. Ms. Allen, the Special Education teacher for the grade level goes over to Eduardo to check in on him as he begins his book letter. Ms. Allen has made a special book letter template to help scholars like Eduardo who may need support conveying their thinking in their book letters. She reminds Eduardo about the book letter checklist Ms. Ruzic made, and they discuss a couple thoughts Eduardo wants to share in his book letter today. She tells him she’ll check back in twenty minutes.

After 19 minutes, exactly half way through the independent reading time, Ms. Ruzic dings her bell three times. Scholars pause wherever they are across the room and turn to Ms. Ruzic. She begins “Scholars, today I asked you to mine for evidence when the author makes her beloved characters act OUT of character. It’s now time to buzz about what you’ve found.” Ms. Ruzic claps three times and scholars turn to their “Buzz” partners and begin chattering. After 30 seconds, Ms. Ruzic calls on one scholar who has noticed a really strong example, and the scholar shares with the class. Then, the Broncos get up from the Guided Reading table and go back to their seats to begin their Independent Reading time.

Ms. Allen checks in with Eduardo and asks Eduardo to show his book letter. Using the checklist, Eduardo shares “I have the date, my greeting, and I’ve begun my second body paragraph. I know when I’m finished to add my signature. I’ve shared two thoughts so far with Ms. Ruzic – I shared with her about when I noticed the BFG was acting strange and not like he usually does when he came across another Giant.” Ms. Allen responds “Great Eduardo, you’ve noticed that the BFG was acting strange and not like normal. But why is that? Why is that out of character for him?” Eduardo responds by saying “Well, he normally doesn’t like to talk to the other giants because they want him to act differently and he doesn’t want to...but this time he starts trying to talk to the other giant and is trying to get the giant to eat that gross stuff. He’s acting different because he’s trying to trick the other giant.” Ms. Allen says “Good. That’s why the BFG is acting out of character. Share that in your letter.” Eduardo begins working again.



When the timer dings, scholars gather their book bins and go back to their meeting spot. Ms. Ruzic says “Oliver, how should we buzz today?” and Oliver says “in our birthday partners.” Ms. Ruzic claps three times and scholars begin talking to their birthday partner. Ms. Ruzic listens to two different partner groups who she didn’t have a chance to talk to during the lesson. Ms. Ruzic claps three times and scholars turn back to face her. She celebrates a job well done, reminds scholars about completing their Reading Log, and dismisses the class.

Eduardo and his classmates walk quietly to their Math class. Math is taught by Mr. Gutter and has a similar feel to English. Eduardo is greeted warmly at the door by his teacher and then knows the exact routine for the class very well. He is in his seat with his laptop open, his Math folder is open and the Do Now is ready and waiting for him. Mr. Gutter is really high energy and leads the students through a similar lesson structure: short direct instruction on a topic, time to work individually on the topic, and then a group exploration of how to apply that topic. The period is again wrapped up with a summary of the learning and an Exit Ticket.

For the last 10 minutes of Math, Eduardo and his classmates do a Focus Fitness routine with Mr. Gutter. It is a fun game between groups centered on balance and flexibility. Eduardo really likes the physical breaks during the day.

Mr. Gutter dismisses everyone exactly at 12:01 for lunch. Students walk quietly to the common area where hot lunch is waiting for them. The lunches are organic, which Eduardo was not a big fan of early in the year, but he has learned to like them a lot more now, especially after Focus Fitness – he is hungry! He and his friends sit at a table outside and enjoy the sunshine while they eat. A teacher sits with them as well – chatting about sports and Justin Bieber.

At 12:26 pm the teachers monitoring lunch give everyone a 5 minute clean-up reminder. Eduardo’s mentor group is assigned to make sure the common area is spotless on Mondays, so they walk the area as a group and clean up any last bits of trash.

Eduardo and his classmates walk quietly to History class and follow a similar routine to English and Math – crisp, well-designed standards based lessons in a warm and demanding environment. Eduardo then transitions to the Resource Room. Eduardo goes to the Resource Room instead of Learning Lab because he has an IEP with an SLD (auditory processing). Eduardo also is an English Language learner. Ms. Allen greets him at the door with a handshake and Eduardo finds his seat. There are 8 students in the class, and Ms. Allen works with them one-on-one during the period. Eduardo is working on his History homework with a classmate that he was just assigned. When Ms. Allen sits down with Eduardo he asks if the vocabulary that they worked on yesterday was helpful in English and History today. Eduardo says yes. Ms. Allen then shows Eduardo the lesson plans for English and History tomorrow and shows him the key words and terms that will be included so that Eduardo can look them up on his laptop. Ms. Allen also congratulates Eduardo on how well he performed in his group in English, and makes a suggestion for how interact with Jake when he is talking too quickly. They role play the interaction. They then look briefly at Eduardo’s status on his Rosetta Stone English course. In his Personalized Learning Plan Eduardo’s family, mentor, and Ms. Allen decided to create a schedule where Eduardo works on Rosetta Stone 3 days during Office Hours (in the Resource Room), and 2 days during his Resource period. He is making good progress and is finding it helpful, although a little boring.

Eduardo and his classmates do a 7 minute Focus Fitness at the end Resource class – a fast paced circuit of squats, lunges, and push-ups. Eduardo loves the challenge of Focus Fitness, and he is thinking about trying to get a Fitness Badge by running with Mr. Dickson in the Nashville 5k in the spring. He is attending the informational meeting at lunch tomorrow.

Eduardo walks quickly to Science class, which starts at exactly 2:20pm. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Allen greet the students at the door and Eduardo quickly sits down and begins the Do Now on his laptop. The lesson follows the familiar VCA rhythm, and Mr. Johnson is clearly well prepared and excellent at maintaining a focused, clear, and fast-paced lesson. Eduardo notices that Mr. Dickson, the CEO, is in the back of the class taking notes and waves to say hi.



At 4:00pm Mr. Johnson reminds students who are assigned Office Hours where they must report, and then has students complete an Exit Ticket. Eduardo finds a few friends and hangs out with them until 4:09 pm and then walks to the Resource Room, where we quietly works on homework and gets occasional help from Ms. Allen and his peers.

At 4:55pm Eduardo walks to the bus. Ms. Giblin shakes his hand as he is leaving and tells him he is proud of how hard he is working this year. He is tired, but he is proud of himself too. It feels good to see the hard work paying off, and he is happy that he decided to go to Valor.

### Typical Teacher Day: Kindergarten

	"DU" Kinder Teacher	"USC" Kinder Teacher	"Auburn" Kinder Teacher	"Loyola" Kinder Teacher	Kinder SPED Teacher
7:30-8:00	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast
8:00 - 8:20	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	PUSH IN - Morning Meeting
8:20 - 8:50	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Resource - Literacy
8:50 - 9:05	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	
9:05 - 10:05	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	
10:05 - 10:20	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break
10:20 - 10:50	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING
10:50 - 10:55	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
10:55 - 11:55	Math	Math	Math	Math	Resource - Math
11:55 - 12:00	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
12:00 - 12:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:20 - 12:35	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
12:35 - 12:40	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
12:40 - 1:20	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing	PUSH IN - Writing
1:20 - 2:00	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	PUSH IN - Social Studies
2:00 - 2:05	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
2:05 - 2:35	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING
2:35 - 2:40	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
2:40 - 3:20	Science	Science	Science	Science	PUSH IN - Science
3:20 - 3:50	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RESOURCE
3:50 - 4:00	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up
4:00 - 4:10	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

**Typical Teacher Day: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

	<b>"Vanderbilt" 1st Teacher</b>	<b>"Harvard" 1st Teacher</b>	<b>"Morehouse" 1st Teacher</b>	<b>"Lipscomb" 1st Teacher</b>	<b>1st SPED Teacher</b>
<b>7:30-8:00</b>	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	
<b>8:00 - 8:20</b>	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	PUSH IN - Morning Meeting
<b>8:20 - 9:20</b>	Math	Math	Math	Math	RESOURCE - Math
<b>9:20 - 9:35</b>	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break
<b>9:35 - 10:05</b>	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING
<b>10:05 - 10:10</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>10:10 - 10:40</b>	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Resource - Literacy
<b>10:40 - 10:55</b>	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	
<b>10:55 - 11:55</b>	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	
<b>11:55 - 12:00</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>12:00 - 12:20</b>	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
<b>12:20 - 12:35</b>	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
<b>12:35 - 12:40</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>12:40 - 1:20</b>	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing	PUSH-IN Writing
<b>1:20 - 1:25</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>1:25 - 1:55</b>	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING
<b>1:55 - 2:00</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>2:00 - 2:40</b>	Science	Science	Science	Science	PUSH-IN Science
<b>2:40 - 3:20</b>	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	PUSH-IN Social Studies
<b>3:20 - 3:50</b>	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RESOURCE
<b>3:50 - 4:00</b>	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up
<b>4:00 - 4:10</b>	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

**Typical Teacher Day: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

	English 1	English 2	Math 1	Math 2	Science 1	Science 2	History	SPED	Coach
8:00 – 8:15	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
8:15 – 8:17	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
8:17 – 8:32	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM
8:32 – 8:34	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
8:34-10:19	Reading	Reading	Math / Focus	Planning	Science / Fitness	Planning	History	Resource	Learning Lab
	Writing	Writing					History		Learning Lab
10:19-10:21	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
10:21-12:01	Reading	Reading	Planning	Math / Focus	Planning	Science / Fitness	History	Learning Lab	Resource
	Writing	Writing					History	Learning Lab	
12:01-12:31	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:31-12:33	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
12:33-2:18	Reading	Planning	Math / Focus	Math / Focus	Science / Fitness	Science / Fitness	History	Planning	Planning
	Writing						Planning	Learning lab	
2:18-2:20	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
2:20-4:05	Planning	Reading	Math / Focus	Math / Focus	Science / Fitness	Science / Fitness	History	Planning	Planning
		Writing					Planning		Learning lab
4:05-4:10	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:10-4:55	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours
4:55-5:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
		Roamer			Roamer				

### **Typical Teacher Day**

Mr. Johnson arrives at school at 7:15am for school. He is rested and knows that he has an exciting day ahead of his teaching Science to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at VCA. He reviews his lesson plans for the day, and then makes sure that he understands the Focus Fitness routines and All School Meeting responsibilities that he has for the day. He has Breakfast Duty this morning (2x week) so he is waiting at the door to the common area of the school and shaking students' hands as they walk in the door at 7:30am. He oversees the groups of about 75 students with one other teacher who is on breakfast duty with him. He helps Eduardo and a few other students with a few math problems once most kids have arrived and are eating breakfast. He helps ensure that all scholars clean up their tables and then leaves at 7:57 to go to his mentor group location.

At 8:00am sharp Mr. Johnson takes role in his mentor group. 16 of 17 students are present, and Mr. Johnson uploads his attendance via his laptop into Illuminate (the Knowledge Management System). He also checks homework and uploads any missing assignments/poor quality assignments into Live School on his laptop. At 8:15am he takes his mentor group to the All School Meeting and makes sure they are all in place and quiet by 8:17am. Mr. Johnson looks across the room and is reminded how he loves the rich diversity of the student body. The mentor groups are all heterogeneous by design, so the ASM is an even mixture of kids from all different backgrounds sitting together. His last mentee comes in late to the ASM and looks sheepishly over at Mr. Johnson. He sits down with his mentor group, and at the end of ASM he stands and publicly apologizes to the community for being late this morning. One of Mr. Johnson's colleagues, Ms. Barger, also publicly apologizes for being late.

At the end of the ASM Mr. Johnson walks to the Teacher Planning Room for teachers. He has 105 minutes of planning time prior to his first class and spends it grading assessments and thinking through his lesson plans later in the week, specifically how to differentiate some of the processes and products in his plans now that he has seen the latest student achievement data from his short assessment last Friday. He checks LiveSchool to see how many students did not complete last night's homework. He is happy to see the 93% of students completed the homework, but he does adjust two groupings when he sees that those groups will not be productive with multiple students not doing the homework. He also spends about 15 minutes preparing for his reflection meeting with the Assistant Principal, Ms. Barger, who observed his yesterday. They have a coaching meeting during his afternoon prep period that is focused on whole group questioning strategies. With 10 minutes to go prior to his first class, Mr. Johnson reviews his lesson for the day. He and his teaching partner, Mr. Jackson, practice possible answers to the questions they will pose in class today and give each other feedback on their answers. Mr. Jackson is in his 7<sup>th</sup> year of teaching and has his Master's in Education from Vanderbilt and Mr. Johnson is thrilled to be partnered with him this year. He is a Teach For America alumni in his third year of teaching and has learned great amounts from Mr. Jackson. Mr. Jackson is going to observe his introduction and first transition today and give his feedback as well. (Mr. Jackson is equally inspired by Mr. Johnson's work ethic and his huge appetite for growth – he is always pushing him to be on his toes with his keen questions and observations.)

Mr. Johnson teaches his first block for 90 minutes, followed by a 15-minute Focus Fitness routine. Mr. Jackson observes the first 10 minutes and sends him an email with suggestions on where to tighten up the first transition, as well as a thought around making sure his ELL learners can all see the Word Wall he has created from their seats. Mr. Johnson ends the lesson with an online Exit Ticket. He dismisses students on time and high fives them as they leave his room.

Mr. Johnson teaches his second 90 min block using the adjustments he made during his planning period. He feels it goes more smoothly and he is interested to see the Exit Tickets.

Ms. Barger is the Director of C&I and coaches Mr. Johnson on a weekly basis. They meet to discuss yesterday's observation. Ms. Barger pulls up the notes he posted in Bloomboard that Mr. Johnson reviewed this morning. They also view the video clip of Mr. Johnson questioning students on the scientific method that Ms. Barger took on his iPad and uploaded to Bloomboard. They discuss increasing the rigor of the questioning by not letting students off the hook too easily, and then role play practice. Ms. Barger also pushes Mr. Johnson to ask extension questions that will increase the thinking ratio for students. Again, they practice by role playing. Mr. Jackson is sitting in the room and asks if he can do a few role plays as well. They practice for about 10 minutes as a group, even getting a little goofy with their example kids and scenarios. Mr. Johnson thanks Ms. Barger for the insights. He feels very supported at VCA with his large amounts of planning time, Master co-teacher, and great instructional coach that he is able to see weekly.

He teaches his third class and finishes by dismissing students for the day. He had to assign one student to Principal Office Hours in his last period for poor behavior choices and he walks him to Ms. Giblin's office and has him fill out a Reflection Sheet. He walks quickly to his Office Hour room and spend the last 45 minutes of the day (he does this 2 times per week) working with about 15 students on assessment revisions and discussing a few of the more difficult concepts from the last Unit.

He dismisses students at 5pm. He is tired but feels very proud of his kids and the growth they are able to make at VCA. He is really looking forward to having Expeditions in another week! He loves the opportunity they have to take a break from the rigors of teaching and to really look at the data from the previous 8 weeks. He is excited to see the growth his kids have made, and to learn from his colleagues about how to adjust his instruction in order to ensure that all of his students are well supported and challenged. He is working on Differentiation in his Personalized Educator Plan and is looking forward to learning with Mr. Arambula who is an expert in this area of the VCA Professional Continuum. They are going to design differentiated Units together for their Expeditions product.

Overall, Mr. Johnson is really happy that he decided to join the VCA faculty this year – what an amazing place to grow as an educator!

**Summarize the number of hours/minutes and days allocated for tiered interventions, enrichment, tutoring and other non-academic activities.**

**Tiered Interventions:** VCA will employ a wide range of interventions in our Tiered Service Model. A brief summary is shown below in Table 1

**Table 1: Tiered Interventions at VCA**

Scholar Experience	Average Minutes/Week	Resource
<b>Level 1: 50% of scholars are prepared through basic mainstream program</b>		
Daily classroom experience	Regular program	
Illuminate data School Outcomes posts and tracking	Mentor groups / regular program	
Homework completion	Regular program	
Regular Connections participation	150 min /week	
PLP development and annual meeting	120 min 2x per year	Conducted in August with family and mentor
Personalized Learning Lab time	53 minutes/day	
<b>Level 2: 20% of scholars require level one program plus additional mainstream supports to be prepared</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Office Hours	45 min/day	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory After School Study Hall	45 min/day	Higher priority than Office Hours
<input type="checkbox"/> Mandatory Peer Tutoring		Conducted during Office Hours
<b>Level 3: 15% of scholars required level one, level two supports, and level three mainstream supports to be prepared</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Remediation Expeditions	180 min/day x 30 days	Usually most struggling 20-25% of students in Math and ELA
<input type="checkbox"/> Extended Semester	120 min/day x 6 days	Usually about 20-25% of students in a course that need more time to master content
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal Tutor	45 min/day	Conducted during Learning Lab or Office Hours - can be peer, parent, or

		volunteer
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday School	120 min/day x 25 Saturdays	Usually 20-25% of students who need behavioral and academic support
<input type="checkbox"/> Additional mentor support	90 min/week	During Connections time on Fridays
<b>Level 4: 8% of scholars required level one, two, and three, plus level four mainstream supports to be prepared</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> 504/IEP plan with accommodations	Varies	Varies by IEP/504, but can include Resource Room
<input type="checkbox"/> Extensive personal mentor support	Varies/often lunch and mornings	Each mentor should have 1-3 IEP students whom they give extra attention
<input type="checkbox"/> Grade level interventions / plans	Varies	
<b>Level 5: 7% of scholars require all mainstream supports, plus special education to be prepared</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> IEP with services	Varies	Varies by IEP/504, but can include Resource Room
<input type="checkbox"/> Resource support	53-181 min/day	
<input type="checkbox"/> Speech and language therapy	Varies	
<input type="checkbox"/> Occupational therapy	Varies	
<input type="checkbox"/> Hearing	Varies	
<input type="checkbox"/> County mental health	Varies	
<input type="checkbox"/> Modifications to program / curriculum	Varies	

Tiered interventions can be a small part of a scholars program (Level 1) or can be the major part of a scholar's experience (Level 5 – up to 50% of a scholar's day if needed) depending on their needs.

### **Enrichment**

VCA provides enrichment opportunities in multiple ways.

1. **In- class** – VCA teachers will be experts in differentiated instruction, and will use technology to provide enrichment within each VCA course.
2. **Learning Lab** – VCA scholars will have the opportunity to take an additional course during Learning Lab if they desire. We envision well-prepared scholars opting to take courses such as computer programming, foreign language, and additional academic courses.
3. **Valor Badge system** – VCA scholars will have opportunities to achieve Valor Badges for enrichment activities that they choose to do outside of Valor. We envision these Badges being an inspiring part of the VCA experience and something valued and celebrated in the VCA community.
4. **Expeditions** – VCA scholars will have great opportunities for a wide range of enrichment opportunities depending on how students design their Expeditions courses in their PLP.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

#### **Clubs**

VCA will provide extra-curricular clubs during the Office Hours times of 4:15-5:00pm. Volunteer teachers will advise clubs that are organically created by students. The organic process is structured through the Connections curriculum and the PLP process (where mentors and families help students think about clubs they might want to start or join). Summit Prep Charter had this model for clubs and it was highly successful – students regularly had 10+ active clubs, including a Running Club, Chess Club, Debate Club, Jazz Club, Anime Club, Service Club, and Leadership Club.

#### **Sports**

It will be a long-term goal that VCA has a competitive sports program. In the growth stages of the school we will have intramural sports, and in Year 3 we will apply to become part of a local sports league (most likely a small private school league with schools of similar size). Mr. Dickson started and built the successful sports

program at Summit Prep and will draw on his experiences there to create a vibrant program at VCA. The proposed sports will be:

VCA Sports		
Fall	Winter	Spring
Boys Soccer	Boys Basketball	Boys Lacrosse
Girls Soccer	Girls Basketball	Girls Lacrosse

### **Saturday School**

VCA will hold Saturday school from 10-12pm most Saturdays during the year (that do not fall over 3 day weekends or at the start of vacations. This should be approximately 25 Saturdays during the academic year. The administration will oversee Saturday School on a rotation, and teachers may volunteer to assist. Saturday School has two main purposes – **1) as part of the Graduated Discipline Plan**, and **2) as an academic support**.

We anticipate about 10 students per week at Saturday School for disciplinary reasons, and about 20-30 students there for academic reasons. We envision building a vibrant tutoring community that helps students on Saturdays, ideally getting to place where students have a consistent one-on-one tutor on Saturdays whom helps them plan for their week. For the discipline program, we envision also working to build partnerships with community organizations so that Saturday discipline sessions can have community partners that come and speak with our scholars who are struggling to consistently reach the VCA behavior expectations. For example, at Summit Prep we were able to have Stanford Football coach Jim Harbaugh and a few Stanford football players come speak to our small group of struggling students about how they made mistakes growing up and how they grew from those experiences. From this experience two of the football players volunteered to be mentors to two students and they kept in contact with them for two years until they both successfully graduated with college acceptances.



## Attachment 5a: Stage 1 and Stage 2 Student Discipline Policy

### *Positive Behavior Support*

At Valor Collegiate Academy, we utilize a positive behavior support approach to discipline. We believe that all Scholars can learn the skills necessary to be successful in school, to demonstrate **VCA's core values and core character strengths**, and to use these skills and values to become successful college students. A positive behavior support system approaches behavior from an educational, proactive perspective that requires positive relationships and a preventative approach, rather than a reactive approach. Therefore, you will see that the following Code of Discipline defines expected behaviors first; then school rule infractions; followed by possible strategies for correcting the behavior.

As with academics, we believe that Scholars should be praised and rewarded for meeting behavior expectations. For this reason, we have a number of creative opportunities for Scholars to receive rewards. Some of these opportunities include, but are not limited to:

**Valor Tickets:** scholars are given Valor tickets to signify that they are meeting expectations, particularly in shared spaces like hallways, the cafeteria, and restrooms. These tickets are used in a daily raffle drawing in the classroom. At the end of each week, the tickets are again used for a school-wide raffle at our Morning Meeting.

**Valor Fuel:** When an entire class is meeting expectations, they are rewarded with bright blue Valor Fuel to acknowledge a whole group effort. Valor Fuel can also be earned in Expeditions classes to let classroom teachers know when scholars are continuing to show core values and character strengths outside of the classroom. During Friday's school wide Morning Meeting, Valor Fuel awards for the week are tallied and the winning class will have its college flag proudly displayed at the school entrance.

**Awards Assemblies:** Twice each year, families and scholars gather for an awards assembly, during which teachers select one scholar for each of the focus character strengths in the classroom. The principal and deans also award Deans' Awards to recognize exemplary scholars in the areas of leadership, social and emotional competency, academic achievement, and model behavior.

### *Logical Consequences*

In addition to acknowledging behavior expectations, we respond to repeated misbehavior using a system of Logical Consequences. Using logical consequences combines our high level of behavior expectations with a climate that is responsive to the social and emotional development of scholars. The goal is to help scholars notice and reflect on the connections between their actions and the consequences of those actions. Logical consequences are always respectful, relevant to the scholar's actions, and realistic.

**Relax and Return:** Relax and Return is a consistent, calm, and non-punitive strategy for helping scholars develop self-control while preserving the smooth flow of the classroom. When scholars are lacking focus – maybe talking to a friend during instruction, or unable to track the teacher who is speaking – we allow the scholar to go to Relax and Return. This is a designated spot in the classroom with a timer and sometimes an object to help relax, where the scholar takes time away from the group to refocus. This Relax and Return spot is always separate from the group but close enough that the scholar is still engaged in instruction rather than being isolated and missing out on any learning opportunity.

**Reparation:** A second Logical Consequence is what we call Reparation, or “You broke it, you fix it.” Reparation gives scholars the opportunity to take responsibility by fixing the damage they have caused. If a scholar loses control and knocks something over, makes a mess, or damages someone else's property, they are expected to fix what they broke. This can mean “fixing” it when a scholar has damaged someone's feelings, or paying to replace a book that a scholar has torn. Repairing what has been broken ensures that the scholar understands the consequences of his or her actions and internalizes the importance of the rules and expectations we have in school.

**Loss of Privileges:** Finally, when scholars are behaving irresponsibly, they Lose a Privilege. Privileges are opportunities to learn to be reliable, to take responsibility for following the expectations when acting autonomously. For example, if a scholar is splashing water at the drinking fountain, they lose the privilege of

getting a drink with their peers. They will need to get a drink at another time with adult supervision. Or, if a scholar is running outside the safety boundaries at recess, the scholar loses the privilege of playing that game at recess and needs to sit next to an adult until recess is over.

## LEVEL I

### EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIORS

Level I Behavior ensures a smoothly operating classroom and school environment. The expected behaviors minimize disruptions, contribute to a calm learning atmosphere, and allow all Scholars to be on task and engaged in academics. Scholars who exemplify these behaviors will:

- Understand and follow school rules;
- Attend school every day and on time;
- Use books, materials, and other items appropriately;
- Adhere to the school dress code;
- Resolve problems peacefully;
- Use respectful and appropriate language at all times; and
- Demonstrate Valor's core values, character strengths, and character disciplines.

### BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS

Scholars who do not adhere to expected Level I Behavior may disrupt the learning process for themselves or others. To avoid this disruption, Scholars should avoid the following infractions:

- failing to comply with classroom and school rules;
- Failing to participate in learning or classroom activities;
- Possessing items that are inappropriate for the educational setting (such as cellular phones or other electronic devices), or misusing educational materials;
- Initiating or participating in verbal confrontations with other scholars or adults; · using profane or crude language; or displaying or participating in behavior that is disruptive or that Valor's core values, character strengths, and character disciplines.

### LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

When a Scholar fails to follow the expected Level I Behaviors, or when a Scholar engages in the above behaviors that are disruptive, one of the following logical consequences may be used:

- Classroom Behavior Infraction notice or parent/family contact;
- Verbal correction;
- Re-teaching and rehearsing an expected Level I Behavior;
- Conference with the Scholar (which may involve the Scholar, parent or family member, teacher, Grade Level Coach, and/or other Leadership Team member);
- peer mediation;
- Loss of privilege to participate in related activity;
- Confiscation of inappropriate items;
- Temporary removal from classroom setting where the infraction occurred;
- Behavior contract;
- Informal counseling session with Grade Level Coach.

VCA team members may also use another corrective strategy that maximizes the Scholar's opportunity to remain engaged in the instructional setting.

## LEVEL II

### EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIORS

Level II Behavior is more significant than Level I Behavior, primarily because these behaviors are more serious and allow for continued learning and they more deeply reflect an understanding of Valor Collegiate Academy's core values, character strengths, and character disciplines:

- speak and act honestly and respectfully;

- show respect to others in words, actions, and intentions;
- develop good study habits;
- set goals and work toward achieving them;
- complete all classroom and homework assignments;
- participate actively in class;
- cooperate with and obey all directions given by adults in the school community;
- demonstrate pride in the school community by showing respect for the property of the school and of others; and
- care for the feelings of others and treat others with respect.

#### BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS

Scholars who do not adhere to expected Level II Behavior are not demonstrating Valor Collegiate Academy's core values, character strengths, and character discipline. Scholars should avoid the following infractions:

- cheating or lying;
- exhibiting any behavior that instigates or provokes a negative reaction from others or encourages others to engage in a negative physical or verbal dispute;
- verbal confrontation with a staff member;
- refusing to comply with school rules or directions given by adults in the school community;
- using profane or provocative language directed at others;
- taking or concealing someone else's property without permission;
- destroying or defacing school property;
- name-calling, gossiping, or using gestures to intimidate others; or
- repeated Level I Behavior infractions.

#### LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Scholars that fail to comply with Level II Behavior expectations are seriously disrupting the rights of other Scholars to learn. As a consequence, one or more of the following logical consequences may be enforced:

- referral to Grade Level Coach;
- parent/family conference;
- removal from instructional setting and loss of privilege to participate in social or extracurricular activities;
- school-based program or small group that focuses on modifying the student's inappropriate behavior and teaches appropriate replacement behaviors; or
- suspension from school (partial day up to 3 days).

### LEVEL III

#### EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIORS

Level III Behavior is more serious than Level II Behavior because these behaviors are essential to the safety of the school. Behavior infractions that fall into this category could harm others or cause a serious disruption to the learning environment. Scholars who exemplify Level III Behavior will:

- show kindness and respect towards others;
- accept others for their individuality and embrace differences in race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, language, ability, and family background;
- immediately report all acts of violence, harassment, or threats to school staff;
- speak to others using positive and respectful language;
- use conflict management skills to resolve disagreements; and
- seek help from school staff when a conflict may evolve into a violent or combative circumstance.

#### BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS

Failing to comply with expected Level III Behaviors could result in harmful situations that seriously undermine the safety and well-being of others. Scholars should avoid the following infractions:

- physically hurting or threatening another person;
- bullying others by using intimidation or teasing;

- harassing others by using language or gestures that are demeaning to a person's race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, language, ability, or family background;
- using sexually suggestive comments or gestures to intimidate others;
- removing or destroying school property;
- displaying or possessing a fake weapon; and
- endangering the health and safety of others.

#### LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Scholars that fail to comply with Level II Behavior expectations are seriously disrupting the rights of other Scholars to learn. As a consequence, one or more of the following logical consequences may be enforced:

- referral to Grade Level Coach;
- parent/family conference;
- removal from instructional setting and loss of privilege to participate in social or extracurricular activities;
- school-based program or small group that focuses on modifying the student's inappropriate behavior and teaches appropriate replacement behaviors;
- reparation of damage or harm done to property;
- suspension from school (one to 10 days);
- recommendation for expulsion and alternative placement hearing, such as an alternative Safe School.

#### LEVEL IV

##### EXPECTED STUDENT BEHAVIORS

Level IV Behavior represents the most significant degree of behavior. Infractions at this level endanger the safety and well-being of the members of our school community. Scholars who exemplify appropriate Level IV Behavior will:

- accept responsibility for their actions;
- respect the safety and well-being of others;
- maintain self-control at all times;
- seek help from a trusted adult to solve problems or report any incidents of concern;
- report any acts of aggression or violence between Scholars or between Scholars and staff;
- cooperate with everyone to create a safe, positive learning environment;
- and demonstrate pride in their school and community.

##### BEHAVIOR INFRACTIONS

Scholars who do not follow the expected behaviors for Level IV are those that are engaged in serious misconduct, aggression, or destruction of property. Therefore, Scholars must avoid the following infractions:

- using violent physical actions or threats towards other Scholars or staff;
- possessing, using, distributing, or selling any object, controlled substance, or weapon that could inflict serious harm on others or put a person in fear of serious harm;
- engaging in or forcing others to participate in sexual acts at school or a school related function;
- threatening to take another person's life;
- withholding information needed to solve a crime;
- setting a fire; or
- committing any act that would result in the destruction of property.

##### LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Level IV infractions are the most serious acts of misconduct. As a result, one or more of the following logical consequences may be enforced:

- parent/family conference;
- suspension from school for one to ten days;
- recommendation for alternative educational setting;
- recommendation for expulsion or alternative placement hearing, such as an alternative Safe School.

#### **Suspension and Expulsion Policy**

This Pupil Suspension and Expulsion Policy is established in order to promote learning and protect the safety and well-being of all students. When the Policy is violated, it may be necessary to suspend or expel a student from regular classroom instruction. This policy shall serve as the School's policy and procedures for student suspension and expulsion and it may be amended from time to time without the need to amend the charter so long as the amendments comport with applicable law.

Staff shall enforce disciplinary rules and procedures fairly and consistently amongst all students. This Policy and its Procedures will be printed and distributed as part of the Student Handbook and will clearly describe discipline expectations.

Discipline includes but is not limited to advising and counseling students, conferring with parents/guardians, detention during and after school hours, use of alternative educational environments, suspension and expulsion.

Corporal punishment shall not be used as a disciplinary measure against any student. Corporal punishment includes the willful infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, or willfully causing the infliction of, physical pain on a student. For purposes of the policy, corporal punishment does not include an employee's use of force that is reasonable and necessary to protect the employee, students, staff or other persons or to prevent damage to school property.

Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school-related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

The School administration shall ensure that students and their parents/guardians are notified in writing upon enrollment of all discipline policies and procedures. The notice shall state that these Policy and Administrative Procedures are available on request at the Chief Executive Officer's office. Suspended or expelled students shall be excluded from all school and school related activities unless otherwise agreed during the period of suspension or expulsion.

A student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act ("IDEIA") or who is qualified for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") is subject to the same grounds for suspension and expulsion and is awarded the same due process procedures applicable to regular education students except when federal and state law mandates additional or different procedures. The School will follow Section 504, of the IDEIA, and all federal and state laws, when imposing any form of discipline on a student identified as an individual with disabilities or for whom the School has a basis of knowledge of a suspected disability or who is otherwise qualified for such services or protections in according due process to such students.

#### Administrative Procedures For Pupil Suspension And Expulsion

##### A. Definitions (as used in this policy)

1. "Board" means The Valor Collegiate Academies Board of Directors.
2. "Expulsion" means disenrollment from the School.
3. "Schoolday" means a day upon which the School is in session or weekdays during the summer recess.
4. "Suspension" means removal of a pupil from ongoing instruction for adjustment purposes. However, "suspension" does not mean the following:
  - a. Reassignment to another education program or class at the School where the pupil will receive continuing instruction for the length of day prescribed by the School's Board for pupils of the same grade level.
  - b. Referral to a certificated employee designated by the Principal to advise pupils.
  - c. Removal from the class but without reassignment to another class for the remainder of the class period without sending the pupil to the Principal or designee.

5. "Pupil" includes a pupil's parent or guardian or legal counsel or other representative.

6. "School" means Valor Collegiate Academies.

**B. Grounds for Suspension and Expulsion of Students**

A student may be suspended or expelled for prohibited misconduct if the act is related to school activity or school attendance occurring at any time including but not limited to: a) while on school grounds; b) while going to or coming from school; c) during the lunch period, whether on or off the school campus; d) during, going to, or coming from a school-sponsored activity.

**C. Enumerated Offenses**

Students may be suspended or expelled for any of the following acts when it is determined the pupil:

1. Caused, attempted to cause, or threatened to cause physical injury to another person or willfully used force or violence upon the person of another, except in self-defense.
2. Possessed, sold, or otherwise furnished any firearm, knife, explosive, or other dangerous object unless, in the case of possession of any object of this type, the student had obtained written permission to possess the item from a certificated school employee, with the Director/Administrator or designee's concurrence.
3. Unlawfully possessed, used, sold or otherwise furnished, or was under the influence of, any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage, or intoxicant of any kind.
4. Unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant of any kind, and then sold, delivered or otherwise furnished to any person another liquid substance or material and represented same as controlled substance, alcoholic beverage or intoxicant.
5. Committed or attempted to commit robbery or extortion.
6. Caused or attempted to cause damage to school property or private property.
7. Stole or attempted to steal school property or private property.
8. Possessed or used tobacco or any products containing tobacco or nicotine products, including but not limited to cigars, cigarettes, miniature cigars, clove cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chew packets and betel.
9. Committed an obscene act or engaged in habitual profanity or vulgarity.
10. Unlawfully possessed or unlawfully offered, arranged, or negotiated to sell any drug paraphernalia.
11. Disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, other school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.
12. Knowingly received stolen school property or private property.
13. Possessed an imitation firearm, i.e., a replica of a firearm that is so substantially similar in physical properties to an existing firearm as to lead a reasonable person to conclude that the replica is a firearm.
14. Committed or attempted to commit a sexual assault or sexual battery.

15. Harassed, threatened, or intimidated a student who is a complaining witness or witness in a school disciplinary proceeding for the purpose of preventing that student from being a witness and/or retaliating against that student for being a witness.
16. Unlawfully offered, arranged to sell, negotiated to sell, or sold the prescription drug Soma.
17. Engaged in or attempted to engage in hazing of another.
18. Aiding or abetting the infliction or attempted infliction of physical injury to another person.
19. Made terrorist threats against school officials and/or school property.
20. Committed sexual harassment.
21. Caused, attempted to cause, threatened to cause, or participated in an act of hate violence.
22. Intentionally harassed, threatened or intimidated a student or group of students to the extent of having the actual and reasonably expected effect of materially disrupting class work, creating substantial disorder, and invading student rights by creating an intimidating or hostile educational environment.
23. Consistently fails to meet VCA behavior Expectations, defined as 3 or more Reflection Sheets in an 8 week period for consideration for suspension, and 5 or more Reflection Sheets in two successive 8 week periods for consideration for expulsion.

#### D. Suspension Procedure

Suspensions shall be initiated according to the following procedures.

- 1) Conference - Suspension shall be preceded, if possible, by a conference conducted by the Principal or the Principal's designee with the student and his or her parent and, whenever practicable, the teacher, supervisor or school employee who referred the student to the Director. The conference may be omitted if the Principal or designee determines that an emergency situation exists. An "emergency situation" involves a clear and present danger to the lives, safety or health of students or school personnel. If a student is suspended without this conference, both the parent/guardian and student shall be notified of the student's right to return to school for the purpose of a conference. At the conference, the pupil shall be informed of the reason for the disciplinary action and the evidence against him or her and shall be given the opportunity to present his or her version and evidence in his or her defense. This conference shall be held within two school days, unless the pupil waives this right or is physically unable to attend for any reason, including, but not limited to incarceration or hospitalization. No penalties may be imposed on a pupil for failure of the pupil's parent or guardian to attend a conference with school officials. Reinstatement of the suspended pupil shall not be contingent upon attendance by the pupil's parent or guardian at the conference.
- 2) Notice to Parents/Guardians - At the time of the suspension, a School employee shall make a reasonable effort to contact the parent/guardian by telephone or in person. Whenever a student is suspended, the parent/guardian shall be notified in writing of the suspension. This notice shall state the specific offense committed by the student. In addition, the notice may also state the date and time when the student may return to school. If school officials wish to ask the parent/guardian to confer regarding matters pertinent to the suspension, the notice may request that the parent/guardian respond to such requests without delay.
- 3) Suspension Time Limits/Recommendation for Expulsion - Suspensions, when not including a recommendation for expulsion shall not exceed five (5) consecutive school days per suspension. Upon a recommendation of expulsion by the Principal, the pupil and the pupil's guardian or representative will be invited to a conference to determine if the suspension for the pupil should be extended pending an expulsion hearing. This determination will be made by the Principal upon either of the following determinations: a) the pupil's presence will be disruptive to the education



process; or b) the pupil poses a threat or danger to others. Upon either determination, the pupil's suspension will be extended pending the results of an expulsion hearing.

E. Authority to Expel

A student may be expelled either by the Board following a hearing before it or by the Board upon the recommendation of an Administrative Panel to be assigned by the Board as needed. The Administrative Panel may recommend expulsion of any student found to have committed an expellable offense.

F. Expulsion Procedures

Students recommended for expulsion are entitled to a hearing to determine whether the student should be expelled. Unless postponed for good cause, the hearing shall be held within thirty (30) school days after the Principal or designee determines that the Pupil has committed an expellable offense. The expulsion hearing will be presided over by the Board Chair or the Chair of the Administrative Panel. In the event a Panel hears the case, it will make a recommendation to the Board for a final decision whether to expel. The hearing shall be held in closed session unless the pupil makes a written request for a public hearing three (3) days prior to the hearing. Written notice of the hearing shall be forwarded to the student and the student's parent/guardian at least ten (10) calendar days before the date of the hearing. Upon mailing the notice, it shall be deemed served upon the pupil. The notice shall include:

- 1) The date and place of the expulsion hearing;
- 2) A statement of the specific facts, charges and offenses upon which the proposed expulsion is based;
- 3) A copy of the School's disciplinary rules which relate to the alleged violation;
- 4) Notification of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to provide information about the student's status at the school to any other school district or school to which the student seeks enrollment;
- 5) The opportunity for the student or the student's parent/guardian to appear in person or to employ and be represented by counsel or a non-attorney advisor;
- 6) The right to inspect and obtain copies of all documents to be used at the hearing;
- 7) The opportunity to confront and question all witnesses who testify at the hearing;
- 8) The opportunity to question all evidence presented and to present oral and documentary evidence on the student's behalf including witnesses.

G. Special Procedures for Expulsion Hearings Involving Sexual Assault or Battery Offenses

The School may, upon a finding of good cause, determine that the disclosure of either the identity of the witness or the testimony of that witness at the hearing, or both, would subject the witness to an unreasonable risk of psychological or physical harm. Upon this determination, the testimony of the witness may be presented at the hearing in the form of sworn declarations which shall be examined only by the School or the hearing officer. Copies of these sworn declarations, edited to delete the name and identity of the witness, shall be made available to the pupil.

- 1) The complaining witness in any sexual assault or battery case must be provided with a copy of the applicable disciplinary rules and advised of his/her right to:
  - (a) receive a five day notice of his/her scheduled testimony;

(b) have up to two (2) adult support persons of his/her choosing present in the hearing at the time he/she testifies, which may include a parent, guardian, or legal counsel; and;

(c) elect to have the hearing closed while testifying.

- 2) The School must also provide the victim a room separate from the hearing room for the complaining witness' use prior to and during breaks in testimony.
- 3) At the discretion of the person or panel conducting the hearing, the complaining witness shall be allowed periods of relief from examination and cross-examination during which he or she may leave the hearing room.
- 4) The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also arrange the seating within the hearing room to facilitate a less intimidating environment for the complaining witness.
- 5) The person conducting the expulsion hearing may also limit time for taking the testimony of the complaining witness to the hours he/she is normally in school, if there is no good cause to take the testimony during other hours.
- 6) Prior to a complaining witness testifying, the support persons must be admonished that the hearing is confidential. Nothing in the law precludes the person presiding over the hearing from removing a support person whom the presiding person finds is disrupting the hearing. The person conducting the hearing may permit any one of the support persons for the complaining witness to accompany him or her to the witness stand.
- 7) If one or both of the support persons is also a witness, the School must present evidence that the witness' presence is both desired by the witness and will be helpful to the School. The person presiding over the hearing shall permit the witness to stay unless it is established that there is a substantial risk that the testimony of the complaining witness would be influenced by the support person, in which case the presiding official shall admonish the support person or persons not to prompt, sway, or influence the witness in any way. Nothing shall preclude the presiding officer from exercising his or her discretion to remove a person from the hearing whom he or she believes is prompting, swaying, or influencing the witness.
- 8) The testimony of the support person shall be presented before the testimony of the complaining witness and the complaining witness shall be excluded from the courtroom during that testimony.
- 9) Especially for charges involving sexual assault or battery, if the hearing is to be conducted in the public at the request of the pupil being expelled, the complaining witness shall have the right to have his/her testimony heard in a closed session when testifying at a public meeting would threaten serious psychological harm to the complaining witness and there are no alternative procedures to avoid the threatened harm. The alternative procedures may include videotaped depositions or contemporaneous examination in another place communicated to the hearing room by means of closed-circuit television.
- 10) Evidence of specific instances of a complaining witness' prior sexual conduct is presumed inadmissible and shall not be heard absent a determination by the person conducting the hearing that extraordinary circumstances exist requiring the evidence be heard. Before such a determination regarding extraordinary circumstance can be made, the witness shall be provided notice and an opportunity to present opposition to the introduction of the evidence. In the hearing on the admissibility of the evidence, the complaining witness shall be entitled to be represented by a parent, legal counsel, or other support person. Reputation or opinion evidence regarding the sexual behavior of the complaining witness is not admissible for any purpose.

#### H. Record of Hearing

A record of the hearing shall be made and may be maintained by any means, including electronic recording, as long as a reasonably accurate and complete written transcription of the proceedings can be made.

I. Presentation of Evidence

While technical rules of evidence do not apply to expulsion hearings, evidence may be admitted and used as proof only if it is the kind of evidence on which reasonable persons can rely in the conduct of serious affairs. A recommendation by the Administrative Panel to expel must be supported by substantial evidence that the student committed an expellable offense. Findings of fact shall be based solely on the evidence at the hearing. While hearsay evidence is admissible, no decision to expel shall be based solely on hearsay, and sworn declarations may be admitted as testimony from witnesses of whom the Board, Panel or designee determines that disclosure of their identity or testimony at the hearing may subject them to an unreasonable risk of physical or psychological harm. If, due to a written request by the expelled pupil, the hearing is held at a public meeting, and the charge is committing or attempting to commit a sexual assault or committing a sexual battery, a complaining witness shall have the right to have his or her testimony heard in a session closed to the public. The decision of the Administrative Panel shall be in the form of a written recommendation to the Board who will make a final determination regarding the expulsion. The final decision by the Board shall be made within ten (10) school days following the conclusion of the hearing. The Decision of the Board is final. If the expulsion hearing panel decides not to recommend expulsion, the student shall immediately be returned to his/her educational program.

J. Written Notice to Expel

The Director or designee following a decision of the Board to expel shall send written notice of the decision to expel, including the Board's findings of fact, to the student or parent/guardian. This notice shall include the following:

- 1) Notice of the specific offense committed by the student.
- 2) Notice of the student's or parent/guardian's obligation to inform any new district in which the student seeks to enroll of the student's status with the School.

K. Disciplinary Records

The School shall maintain records of all student suspensions and expulsions at the School. Such records shall be made available for the Charter Authorizer review upon request.

L. No Right to Appeal

The pupil shall have no right of appeal beyond the appeal at Valor Collegiate Academies Board of Directors level from expulsion from the School as the Board's decision to expel shall be final.

M. Expelled Pupils/Alternative Education

Pupils who are expelled shall be responsible for seeking alternative education programs.

N. Rehabilitation Plans

Students who are expelled from the School shall be given a rehabilitation plan upon expulsion as developed by the Board at the time of the expulsion order, which may include, but is not limited to, periodic review as well as assessment at the time of review for readmission. The rehabilitation plan should include a date not later than one year from the date of expulsion when the pupil may reapply to the School for readmission.

O. Readmission

The decision to readmit a pupil or to admit a previously expelled pupil from another school district or charter school shall be in the sole discretion of the Board following a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer and the pupil and guardian or representative, to determine whether the pupil has successfully completed the rehabilitation plan and to determine whether the pupil poses a threat to others or will be disruptive to the school environment. The Chief Executive Officer shall make a recommendation to the Board following the meeting regarding his or her determination. The pupil's readmission is also contingent upon the School's capacity at the time the student seeks readmission or admission.

P. Special Procedures for the Consideration of Suspension and Expulsion of Students with Disabilities

1) Notification of District

The School shall immediately notify the District and coordinate the procedures in this policy with the District the discipline of any student with a disability or student who the School or District would be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability

2) Services During Suspension

Students suspended for more than ten (10) school days in a school year shall continue to receive services so as to enable the student to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment or functional analysis, and behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur. These services may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

3) Procedural Safeguards/Manifestation Determination

Within ten (10) school days of a recommendation for expulsion or any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- a) If the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- b) If the conduct in question was the direct result of the local educational agency's failure to implement the IEP.

If the School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team determine that either of the above is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. If the School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP Team shall:

- a) Conduct a functional behavioral assessment or a functional analysis assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that the School had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement;
- b) If a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and
- c) c) Return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP team determine that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability and that the conduct in question was not a result of the failure to implement the IEP, then the School may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities.

4) Due Process Appeals

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or the School believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request an expedited administrative hearing through the Special Education Unit of the Office of Administrative Hearings.

When an appeal relating to the placement of the student or the manifestation determination has been requested by either the parent or the School, the student shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the forty-five (45) day time period provided for in an interim alternative educational setting, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the School agree otherwise.

5) Special Circumstances

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct. The Chief Executive Officer or designee may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than forty-five (45) days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability in cases where a student:

- a) Carries or possesses a weapon, as defined in 18 USC 930, to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function;
- b) Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function; or
- c) Has inflicted serious bodily injury, as defined by 20 USC 1415(k)(7)(D), upon a person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function.

6) Interim Alternative Educational Setting

The student's interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the student's IEP team.

7) Procedures for Students Not Yet Eligible for Special Education Services

A student who has not been identified as an individual with disabilities pursuant to IDEIA and who has violated the district's disciplinary procedures may assert the procedural safeguards granted under this administrative regulation only if the School had knowledge that the student was disabled before the behavior occurred.

The School shall be deemed to have knowledge that the student had a disability if one of the following conditions exists:

- a) The parent/guardian has expressed concern in writing, or orally if the parent/guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement, to School supervisory or administrative personnel, or to one of the child's teachers, that the student is in need of special education or related services.

- b) The parent has requested an evaluation of the child.
  - c) The child's teacher, or other School personnel, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education or to other School supervisory personnel.
- 8) If the School knew or should have known the student had a disability under any of the three (3) circumstances described above, the student may assert any of the protections available to IDEIA-eligible children with disabilities, including the right to stay-put.

If the School had no basis for knowledge of the student's disability, it shall proceed with the proposed discipline.

The School shall conduct an expedited evaluation if requested by the parents; however the student shall remain in the education placement determined by the School pending the results of the evaluation.

The School shall not be deemed to have knowledge of that the student had a disability if the parent has not allowed an evaluation, refused services, or if the student has been evaluated and determined to not be eligible.

## Attachment 5b: Stage 3 and Stage 4 Student Discipline Policy

This Discipline Policy will be the same as VCA. For space purposes we only included the Discipline Policy for the new grade levels in Attachment 5a.

## Attachment 6: Facilities Plan

The Valor Collegiate Academies (VCA) founding team understands that finding a suitable facility is often one of the greatest challenges facing charter school operators. Finding buildings that are in ideal locations, that have the characteristics of a school, and that can be utilized on the needed timeline can be very challenging. While VCA has not yet secured its facility, it will employ the following primary strategies in order to minimize the risk associated with finding a great facility:

**Financing:** VCA will work with the Tennessee Charter School Incubator, Pacific Charter School Development, the Charter School Development Corporation, the Charter School Growth Fund, and/or Canyon-Agassi to secure facilities financing. All of the aforementioned parties are very experienced in facilities financing and we are confident that they will provide excellent support in securing financing that fits within the budget constraints detailed in Attachment 9 – Public Charter School Budget Template.

### Location and partnership with District:

Based on our facility analysis, VCA approximates a need for 70 square feet per student each year as we grow to capacity. In the first year, we will therefore need a minimum of 20,250 square feet.

In terms of facility and space usage, the school will be comprised of 9 classrooms in Year 1, one Special Education Resource Room, 1 Teacher Planning Room, one Lunch Room, a Main Office and a Large Common Area. Our facility usage strategy is consistent with our core values and school design, including vital opportunities for rich staff collaboration and the development of an ideal school culture by utilizing space conducive to developing a community of learners.

VCA has carefully considered facility options within its overall growth strategy and has developed two facility scenarios, either lease or purchase options. Overall, we have identified 3 viable facilities. If VCA is unable to secure external philanthropic funding, we will move forward with the lease option. We have presented three options below that we are investigating as possible locations:

### Lease Option 1: Food Lion at 4529 Nolensville Pike

This location is ideal for VCA. It has an affordable Total Annual/SF and the landlord is amenable to negotiating a “build out” lease with VCA that would allow for the school to pay for only the square footage it uses in the first year (around 11,000 square feet), and then build out and pay for the remaining square footage in year 2. The total square footage of the building would require portables to be used to accommodate students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, but the site has enough space for this to happen, and the cost would make it a very affordable option for VCA.

Leasing of Space from Traditional Third-Party Landlord			
Development Cost		Total Expense	
Location:	Food Lion Lease	Rent	\$285,858.00
Space Size (SF):	31,762	Build-out	\$1,064,324.50
Parcel size (ac):	N/A	Total	\$1,350,182.50
Rent	\$285,858.00	Total/SF	\$42.51
Lease/Rate/SF	\$9.00		
		Opex/SF	\$4.50
Improvements	\$952,860.00	Opex/Total	\$142,929.00
Improvements/SF	\$30.00		
Site Improvements (total)	\$0.00	Assumed Enrollment	485
Total Hard:	\$952,860.00	<b>Total Annual</b>	<b>\$428,787.00</b>
		<b>Total Annual/SF</b>	<b>\$13.50</b>



Arch/Eng (% of hard cost):	4.00%
Arch/Eng total:	\$38,114.40
Civil:	\$15,000.00
Legal:	\$25,000.00
C/M (% of hard cost):	3.50%
C/M:	\$33,350.10
Total Soft:	\$111,464.50
Total Construction	\$1,064,324.50
Total Construction/SF	\$33.51
<b>Total Development</b>	<b>\$1,350,182.50</b>
<b>Total Development/SF</b>	<b>\$42.51</b>

<b>Total Annual/Student</b>	<b>\$884.10</b>
<b>Build Out Lease</b>	
<b>Total Annual Year 1</b>	<b>\$128,636.10</b>
<b>Total Annual Year 2</b>	<b>\$285,572.14</b>
<b>Total Annual Year 3</b>	<b>\$428,787.00</b>

<b>Budget Amount Year 1</b>	<b>\$218,000.00</b>
<b>Budget Amount Year 2</b>	<b>\$398,899.00</b>
<b>Budget Amount Year 3</b>	<b>\$575,291.00</b>

#### **Lease Option 2: 619/621 Norris Avenue**

The Norris Avenue site is a good option for VCA as well. The landlord is agreeable to a “build-out” lease, essentially allowing for the school to pay as we grow, and the site could accommodate the middle school with the addition of portables in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The location is not as ideal for our target area, but the cost is well within our budget numbers.

<b>Leasing of Space from Traditional Third-Party Landlord</b>			
<b>Development Cost</b>		<b>Total Expense</b>	
Location:	Norris Avenue Conversion	Rent	\$110,814.50
Space Size (SF):	26,074	Build-out	\$1,581,625.25
Parcel size (ac):	N/A	Total	\$1,692,439.75
Rent	\$110,814.50	Total/SF	\$64.91
Lease/Rate/SF	\$4.25		
		Opex/SF	\$4.50
Improvements	\$1,434,070.00	Opex/Total	\$117,333.00
Improvements/SF	\$55.00		
Site Improvements (total)	\$0.00	Assumed Enrollment	485
Total Hard:	\$1,434,070.00	<b>Total Annual</b>	<b>\$228,147.50</b>
		<b>Total Annual/SF</b>	<b>\$8.75</b>
Arch/Eng (% of hard cost):	4.00%	<b>Total Annual/Student</b>	<b>\$470.41</b>
Arch/Eng total:	\$57,362.80	<b>Build Out Lease</b>	
Civil:	\$15,000.00	<b>Total Annual Year 1</b>	<b>\$68,444.25</b>
Legal:	\$25,000.00	<b>Total Annual Year 2</b>	<b>\$151,946.24</b>
C/M (% of hard cost):	3.50%	<b>Total Annual Year 3</b>	<b>\$228,147.50</b>
C/M:	\$50,192.45		
Total Soft:	\$147,555.25	<b>Budget Amount Year 1</b>	<b>\$218,000.00</b>
		<b>Budget Amount Year 2</b>	<b>\$398,899.00</b>
Total Construction	\$1,581,625.25	<b>Budget Amount Year 3</b>	<b>\$575,291.00</b>
Total Construction/SF	\$60.66		
<b>Total Development</b>	<b>\$1,692,439.75</b>		
<b>Total Development/SF</b>	<b>\$64.91</b>		

### **Purchase Options**

In the event that the school can secure additional funding, a more aggressive facilities strategy will be used to purchase and build out a facility, two of which have been identified.

#### **Purchase Option 1: New Construction at Boys and Girls Club on Thompson Lane**

*This is VCA's first choice for a facility.* It is in a great location and the partnership with the Boys and Girls Club would be a great service to families of Valor and the Glencliff area in general. The strong financial position of the school in later years would allow for this type of opportunity to be explored as well.

<b>Purchase/Redevelopment of Boys and Girls Club Property (Thompson Lane)</b>			
<b>Development Cost</b>		<b>Financing: 100%</b>	
Location:	Boy and Girls Club	Rate	5.25%
Bldg Size (SF):	35,000*	Term	20
Parcel size (ac):	2.5	Payments	12
Purchase Price	\$500,316.00	LTC	100.00%
Purchase Price/SF:	\$97.00	Loan	\$3,094,620.50
		Cap Required	\$0.00
Improvements	\$7,500,260.00		
Improvements/SF	\$45.00		
Site Improvements (total)	\$7,500,260.00	<b>Annual Debt Payment</b>	<b>\$250,235.04</b>
Total Hard:	\$8,000,260.00	Annual/SF	\$13.29
		<b>Enrollment (Year 2)</b>	<b>265</b>
Arch/Eng (% of hard cost):	4.00%	Annual/Student	\$944.28
Arch/Eng total:	\$320,010.40		
Civil:	\$10,000.00	Opex/SF	\$4.50
Legal:	\$25,000.00	Opex/Total	\$84,726.00
C/M (% of hard cost):	3.50%	Property Taxes (if required)	\$57,683.73
C/M:	\$280,009.10	Property Taxes/SF	\$3.06
Total Soft:	\$121,0		
		<b>Total Opex/Taxes</b>	<b>\$142,409.73</b>
Total Construction	\$1,268,304.50	<b>Total Opex/Taxes/SF</b>	<b>\$7.56</b>
Total Construction/SF	\$67.36		
		<b>Total Annual</b>	<b>\$392,644.76</b>
<b>Total Development</b>	<b>\$3,094,620.50</b>	<b>Total Annual/SF ("Rent")</b>	<b>\$20.85</b>
<b>Total Development/SF</b>	<b>\$164.36</b>	<b>Total Annual/Student</b>	<b>\$1,481.68</b>
		<b>Build Out Rate (Year 1)</b>	<b>196,322.38</b>
		<b>Build Out Rate (Year 2)</b>	<b>392,644.76</b>
		<b>Budget Amount Year 1</b>	<b>\$218,000.00</b>
		<b>Budget Amount Year 2</b>	<b>\$398,899.00</b>
		<b>Philanthropy Need</b>	<b>\$168,390.53</b>

In summary, VCA is confident that we will find a quality facility in our target area. If we are unable to secure additional funding we will pursue a build-out lease option similar to many current charter operators. If we are able to secure philanthropy we will pursue a purchase option.

Finally, VCA will ensure that any facility it occupies will fully comply with T.C.A. § 49-13-105, the Americans with Disabilities Act and any applicable city planning review procedures.

## Attachment 7: Transportation Plan

Valor Collegiate Academies (VCA) believes that transportation can be a barrier for some students to succeed at high levels. As a result, we have decided to provide an effective and efficient transportation service for our scholars.

VCA will contract with a private transportation service. The contract and relationship with the contracted service provider will be overseen and managed by the Director of Operations, ensuring that the focus of the Principal will remain on increasing academic achievement and student learning.

Based on our market analysis<sup>47</sup>, we anticipate providing transportation services to approximately 50% of our scholars each year (130 scholars in Year 1, 295 scholars in Year 2, etc. At approximately 50 scholars per bus, 2 buses will be required in Year 1, increasing to 13 buses in Year 5). Assuming a cost of \$175 per bus each day, the anticipated VCA investment with respect to its transportation costs will be \$100,000 in year 1 and \$745,000 in Year 5. VCA will ensure that it selects a transportation contractor that has the capability to provide services to students with disabilities as required by applicable law and have assumed the cost of these services within the overall assumptions presented above. As stated in our contingency planning in Attachment 10– Budget Narrative, if we find that more students will need transportation services than our market analysis predicted we will ensure that all scholars that need transportation to school are serviced.

VCA also understands that it must abide by state and federal regulations regarding its transportation service, particularly including the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. As a result, we will work with our transportation contractor, both during the initial negotiations and contract development and after implementation, and use additional resources (such as public transportation options) to ensure that any scholar that meets the qualification for being homeless or temporarily displaced will be able to remain in the school even if temporarily living outside of the general boundaries that transportation services are provided. In this way, VCA endeavors to minimize the impact of homelessness, as it is defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as a barrier to a sustained high-quality education.

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<sup>47</sup> VCA researched five charter schools operating in MNPS currently (Nashville Prep, Liberty Collegiate, STEM Prep, LEAD, and KIPP Nashville) and found that a 50% estimate for students utilizing school transportation was a safe assumption. In addition, at the VCA Family Room Events that were conducted over the past 9 months, a survey was given to parents regarding transportation – while the results were difficult to draw strong conclusions because parents really needed to know where the school would be located, we did find that about 25-50% of parents said they would utilize VCA transportation. An additional strong cultural aspect of Summit Prep Charter School was organizing car pools. VCA will coordinate this in the summer each year for parents, and we found it to significantly drop the number of students who wanted or needed VCA transportation.

## Attachment 8: Food Service Plan

Valor Collegiate Academies will provide a food service program in accordance and compliance with the nutrition regulations outlined in T.C.A. §§ 49-6-2301--2307. The school will offer all students the opportunity to participate in the school breakfast and lunch program. The school will provide its food service program on a contracted basis with the Chief Operating Officer overseeing and managing the appropriate vendor. VCA will seek bids from local food service providers, all of which will include a price per meal, including the following: a reimbursable meal including milk, condiments applicable to the menu, serving utensils if applicable, packaging and containers needed to transport food in a sanitary manner, and transportation to and from the school. Any vendor must submit milk in a variety of fat contents as defined by current regulations of the National School Lunch Program.

Sample contract provisions and expectations include:

- Maintaining Tennessee Health Department Bi-Annual Inspection with a Passing Score
- Having a HACCP program in place and be able to provide proof of such
- Maintaining Daily Individual Meal Food Production Records
- Maintaining Daily Individual Meal Component Documentation
- Maintaining a “Buy American” Provision
- Maintaining 21-day Monthly Cycle Menus
- Making accommodations for Food Allergies
- Insuring hot meals maintained at 140 degrees or above and cold meals at 40 degrees or below prior to and during transport and delivery
- Providing meals that are individually packaged and sealed.
- All meals will be priced as a unit, which meet USDA requirements
- Any provider shall implement the “Traditional Menu Planning Approach”
- All meals and menus will be appropriate to the age of Purpose Prep scholars
- The provider substitute food components for a student with disabilities (7 C.F.R. Section 15b) if their disability restricts their diet.

In addition, the Chief Operating Officer will be responsible for working in concert with the Office Manager and Student Support Coordinator to ensure that all parents and guardians complete the federal Free-and-Reduced Price Lunch Program to determine eligibility. The school will employ various strategies to ensure completion of appropriate forms by including them in initial student documentation, orientation, and other school events and through individual communication with parents.

## Attachment 11: Insurance

# MARTIN & ZERFOSS

INSURANCE & BONDS SINCE 1978

March 21, 2013

Director of Charter Schools  
2601 Bransford Ave.  
Nashville, TN 37204

RE: Valor Collegiate Academy Intent of Insurance Coverage

Dear Mr. Coverstone:

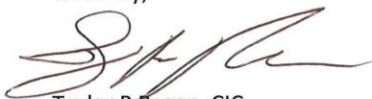
Valor Collegiate Academy has begun the process of fulfilling the insurance requirements that Metro Nashville Public Schools requires be maintained for their Charter Agreement. As stated by MNPS guidelines General Liability/Automobile Liability Policy: must be equal to or greater than \$5,000,000. This insurance will be primary insurance and the first \$1,000,000 dollars will be with a company licensed in Tennessee with an AM Best rating of at least A. The following \$4,000,000 layer will be covered under an excess liability policy or an umbrella policy. This policy will name MNPS as an additional insured and will include contractual liability. The automobile coverage will cover all owned, hired and non-owned vehicles in the amount of \$1,000,000 with the additional \$4,000,000 excess layer.

The Professional Liability policy for the Directors and Officers for Valor Collegiate Academy will be equal to or greater than \$5,000,000 and the Teacher Professional Liability cover will be equal or greater than \$1,000,000. Workers Compensation and Employers Liability policy will be equal to or greater than \$500,000 each accident, \$500,000 each employee and \$500,000 policy limit. Property and Boiler insurance policy will be provided if the Charter school purchase or leases the property being occupied. Insurance shall be for the full replacement cost of the property and contents with no coinsurance penalty provision.

Certificates of Insurance in a form satisfactory to the Chartering Authority shall be provided to the Chartering Authority prior to the commencement of performance of this Charter Agreement. Throughout the term of this Charter Agreement the sponsor will provide updated Certificates of Insurance forms upon expiration of the current certificates.

Should you have any questions regarding coverage requirements, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Taylor R Ragan, CIC  
Martin & Zerfoss, Inc.

1909 21ST AVENUE SOUTH  
PO BOX 121587  
NASHVILLE, TN 37212

TEL 615 297-8500  
FAX 615 269-7390  
TF 888 297-8557



WWW.MARTINZERFOSS.COM

## Attachment 12: Waivers

Valor Collegiate Academy (“VCA”) shall operate in accordance with all Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools policies and regulations and all applicable and local laws, rules and regulations, unless specifically waived. In order for VCA to ensure its students meet or exceed local state and national academic standards, it must have flexibility to give its students a greater amount of time on task. VCA’s governance and leadership needs flexibility in its initial structure to overcome potential barriers in fulfilling its mission and goals. We formally request a waiver from the laws, rules and regulations listed below. This request includes all laws, rules, and regulations covering the same subject matter as those listed below and a waiver of all rules and regulations that come into force following the date of submission of this charter proposal.

### PERSONNEL WAIVERS

#### 1. COMPENSATION – LICENSED PERSONNEL SALARIES

TN Education Statute: §49-3-306(a)

State Board Rule: 0520-1-2-02

Rationale for Waiver: While we ensure that public monies will be used properly and all personnel will be paid adequately and timely, it is critical to our program that the VCA payroll system reflects our individual school’s purpose and philosophy. At VCA we believe academic results should be a factor in determining total compensation.

#### 2. COMPENSATION – LONGEVITY PAY

TN Education Statute: §8-23-206(a)

State Board Rule:

Rationale for Waiver: While we ensure that public monies will be used properly and all personnel will be paid adequately, it is critical to our program that VCA’s payroll system reflects our individual school’s purpose and philosophy. Upon approval by the Board of Directors, VCA will offer incentive pay that compensates them for years of consistent student performance and professional development growth, not just years of service.

#### 3. HOURS AND BENEFITS – TEACHER ASSIGNMENT

TN Education Statute: §49-5-401

State Board Rule:

Rationale for Waiver: VCA utilizes an extended schedule, including increased instructional and professional development hours. Teachers receive compensation commensurate with the increased work hours.

#### 4. HOURS AND BENEFITS – SCHOOL TERM VACATIONS AND OTHER NON- INSTRUCTIONAL DAYS

TN Education Statute: §49-6-304A (2)-D

State Board Rule: 0502-1-3-.03(4)

Rationale for Waiver: VCA operates with an extended school year of 187 days and an extended school day from 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

#### 5. PROMOTION AND EVALUATION – CAREER LADDER

TN Education Statute: 49-5-5002-5010, 49-5-5206-5209, 49-5-5301, 49-5-5304, 49-5-5401, 49-5-5405, 49-5-5406, 49-5-5501, 49-5-5504-5506

State Board Rule: 0520-2-2

Rationale for Waiver: No need or funding is currently available for career ladder initiatives

## 6. PROMOTION AND EVALUATION – GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATION

6. TN Education Statute: 49-5-5205

7. State Board Rule: 0520-1-1-.01

8. Rationale for Waiver: The key to our success is being able to attract and retain a staff that is committed to our vision and to provide them with the motivation necessary to get the job done. It is essential that we are able to design hiring, pay, benefits, promotion and evaluation systems that are aligned with our mission and goals. The guidelines and performance expectations are outlined specifically in yearly contracts that are developed for VCA personnel.

## 7. PROMOTION AND EVALUATION – THIRD-YEAR APPRENTICE EDUCATORS

TN Education Statute: 49-5-5205

State Board Rule: 0520-2-1-.03

Rationale for Waiver: The key to our success is being able to attract and retain a staff that is committed to our vision and to provide them with the motivation necessary to get the job done. It is essential that we are able to design hiring, pay, benefits, promotion and evaluation systems that are aligned with our mission and goals. The guidelines and performance expectations are outlined specifically in yearly contracts that are developed for VCA personnel.

## 8. TENURE – EVALUATION CONTRACTS AND EMPLOYMENT TERMINATION

a. TN Education Statute: 49-5-408-409

b. State Board Rule: 0520-2-2(2)

c. Rationale for Waiver: The key to our success is being able to attract and retain a staff that is committed to our vision and to provide them with the motivation necessary to get the job done. It is essential that we are able to design hiring, pay, benefits, promotion and evaluation systems that are aligned with our mission and goals. Every teacher will be assessed based on their performance. Teachers, who attain the required levels of performance, as outlined in their contracts, will be offered another contract.

## 9. TENURE - TENURE

a. TN Education Statute: 49-5-501-513

b. State Board Rule:

c. Rationale for Waiver: As a charter school, VCA will be results-driven. Accordingly, VCA employees will be “at-will.”

## 10. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS – LICENSED PRINCIPALS

TN Education Statute: 49-5-101(a)

State Board Rule: 0520-1-2-.03(6)

Rationale for Waiver: VCA would like to be able to recruit the most qualified candidates around the country to fulfill its mission.

## 11. STAFFING REQUIREMENTS – LIBRARY INFORMATION CENTER PERSONNEL

a. State Board Rule: 0520-1-3-.07(2)

b. Rationale for Waiver: A substantial library is available to students at the nearest public library, Nashville Public



Library Southeast Branch, which is currently located at 2325 Hickory Highlands Drive. VCA students will have continuous access to a substantial classroom library.

## B. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT/OPERATIONAL WAIVERS

### 1. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT/OPERATIONAL WAIVERS – SCHOOL YEAR COMMENCEMENT

- a. TN Education Statute: 49-6-3004
- b. State Board Rule:
- c. Rationale for Waiver: VCA utilizes an expanded school year calendar. For this reason, the school will start before Labor Day.

### 2. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT/OPERATIONAL WAIVERS – LOCAL FISCAL AHSRUNTING

- a. TN Education Statute: 49-3-316
- b. State Board Rule:
- c. Rationale for Waiver: While we ensure that public monies will be used properly, that all regulations will be met and that all of our operations will stand up to a financial audit, it is critical to our program that our management systems reflect our individual school's purpose and philosophy.

### 3. SCHOOL MANAGEMENT/OPERATIONAL WAIVERS – FORMULATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE CODES

- a. TN Education Statute: 49-6-4012(b)
- b. State Board Rule:
- c. Rationale for Waiver: While parents and students will undergo due process, it is important that the discipline practices of VCA provide a safe and effective learning for students.

## C. EDUCATION WAIVERS 1. CURRICULUM – HEALTH, PHYSICAL AND WELLNESS EDUCATION

- a. TN Education Statute:
- b. State Board Rule: 0520-1-3-.05
- c. Rationale for Waiver: Students will be involved in physical education activities each week as part of Focused Fitness each day. The Principal will oversee these classes and work to ensure that the PE curriculum meets state content standards, despite the use of non-certified instructional personnel.

### 2. CURRICULUM - FINE ARTS

- a. TN Education Statute:
- b. State Board Rule: 0520-1-3-.05
- c. Rationale for Waiver: Students will be involved in fine arts activities during Expeditions. Fine arts classes may be taught by volunteers. The Principal will oversee these classes and work to ensure that the fine arts curriculum meets state content standards, despite the use of non-certified instructional personnel.

### 3. CURRICULUM – USE OF UNAPPROVED TEXTBOOKS

- a. TN Education Statute: 49-6-2206
- b. State Board Rule:
- c. Rationale for Waiver: To meet the potential of our school, it is essential that we tie our curriculum and instructional approaches to our individual school's mission and goals. VCA will use both state-approved textbooks and other unapproved instructional materials.

#### D. CAPITAL OUTLAY WAIVERS

##### 1. CAPITAL OUTLAY

- a. TN Education Statute: 49-3-311
- b. State Board Rule:
- c. Rationale for Waiver: Preparing a charter school facility will be one of our greater challenges. Because we finance our own buildings and do not have the power to raise taxes to fund capital outlay, it is critical that we gain freedom from non-health and safety standards for the school site and have control of the facility vested in our board, rather than the city board of education. Having this freedom will allow us to use our school site resources most effectively and efficiently and align our building choices with our mission and goals.

In addition to the specific waiver requests listed above, we request waivers of any additional rules and regulations that are waived for existing or future charter schools authorized by Metro Nashville Public Schools. We reserve the right to supplement this request or make additional waiver requests in the future. To request waivers of MNPS District Standard Operating Procedures (DSOP), Valor Collegiate Academy understands the process outlined in the Standard Operating Procedure Outline (Policy Reference No. SBO 1.106) required when requesting a waiver of a policy within MNPS and will do the following:

- ☐ Submit all waiver requests in writing to the Chartering Authority no later than sixty (60) days prior to the school's intention to implement the waiver, if granted.
- ☐ Provide a waiver request that explicitly lists the specific DSOP requested to be waived.
- ☐ Provide a waiver request that includes detailed documentation of the grounds for requesting the waiver and specific evidence showing how the DSOP currently inhibits or hinders the proposed charter school's ability to reach its goal or comply with its mission statement.
- ☐ Ensure that all waiver requests filed with the Chartering Authority contain information on other waiver requests filed with the TN Commission of Education and including the status of those waiver requests.

## Attachment 13: Summit Prep Expeditions Course Offerings



### EXPEDITIONS INFORMATION AND COURSE CATALOG 2012 - 13

Expeditions is one of the most exciting and innovative aspects of Summit Public School's program. For those who have not yet experienced it, Expeditions is comprised of two four-week sessions during the school year when students engage in a full-time course or experience. Students from both Summit Prep and Everest will be in class together, so students will have the opportunity to meet their peers from our larger Summit Public Schools (SPS) Redwood City community.

With over 800 students, the process for scheduling and coordinating the Expeditions can be complicated. Please help us to ensure that everything runs smoothly by thoroughly reading the following documents and adhering to all of the requests and deadlines.

Many thanks for your cooperation. We look forward to another successful and exciting Expeditions  
**Course Catalog, 2013-14**

#### **Courses Offered This Year:**

A complete description and important information for each course are included in this catalog (courses are featured in alphabetical order).

<u>Full Day Courses</u> Architecture & Design College Readiness/Volunteer Service Computer Science & Information Technology Culinary Arts Fashion Design Forest to Farm to Food Independent Study Internship Invention and Digital Fabrication for Sustainability Leadership, Life Skills & Beyond Wilderness / Nature Studies  <b>Courses meeting VPA requirement:</b> Dance I Drama I Digital Media Design & Production (Ezine) Ensemble Music Production Musical Theater I & II Photography I Spoken Word Musical Theater (Hip Hop) Video Production @ Riekes Video Production @ Fresh Takes Visual Art I & II	<u>Half Day Courses</u> Aikido Art Studio: Collage Becoming a Change Maker Boxing & Fitness English Connections Guitar Instruction Indoor Soccer / Basketball Math Connections I Math Connections II Mindfulness Yoga Online Courses Photo / Video Studio Project Give Psychology The Holocaust: An in-depth study
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## Attachment 14 – Letters of Support

Letters of Support are not included in the digital copy in order to stay within the 250 page limit. They will be mailed to the Board and are included in the printed copies.

## Attachment 15 – Draft Connections Curriculum

### **Grades 6: Connections Curriculum Standards**

#### **ACADEMIC LITERACY**

##### **Grade 6**

###### ***6.1 Time Management***

- 9.1A All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are able to identify the various segments of their lives that they must dedicate time to (eg. school, family, sports)
- 9.1B All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are able to complete a daily schedule template for themselves
- 9.1C All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are introduced to various time-management strategies
- 9.1D All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are able to identify how their time was used for short periods of time (eg. a weekend)
- 9.1E All 9<sup>th</sup> graders are able to identify factors that contribute to a conducive working environment

###### ***6.2 Organization***

- 9.2A All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students have a binder with dividers for each class or multiple binders
- 9.2B All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students have an academic planner of some type
- 9.2C All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students write down all assignments in their academic planner
- 9.2D All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are introduced to various options for organizational systems

###### ***6.3 Self-Advocacy***

- 9.3A All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students understand that all people have strengths and weaknesses
- 9.3B All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students begin to identify their areas of strength and areas of weakness
- 9.3C All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are introduced to the importance of self-advocacy in relation to academic situations

###### ***6.4 In-class Strategies***

- 9.4A All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are introduced to the Summit Participation Rubric
- 9.4B All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are exposed to at least two different note-taking strategies
- 9.4C All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are introduced to common types of questioning strategies

###### ***6.5 Test Taking and Study Strategies***

- 9.5A All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are introduced to the Summit Test Taking Preparation Guide
- 9.5B All 9<sup>th</sup> graders are introduced to specific multiple choice test strategies
- 9.5C All 9<sup>th</sup> graders are introduced to various study strategies

###### ***6.6 Producing Quality Work***

- 9.6A All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students can identify the difference between quality work and non-quality work

###### ***6.7 Communication***

- 9.7A All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are able to identify various forms of written and verbal communication
- 9.7B All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are able to recognize their own functional, social/emotional, and academic needs

###### ***6.8 Understanding Consequences of Daily Actions/Choices***

- 9.8A All 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are introduced to short-term consequences of their daily actions and choices, specifically MASH and MARS)

## Attachment 16 – Expeditions Community Partners

### DRAFT Valor Collegiate Academies Middle School Expeditions Planning Document

Focus	Institution/Company	Course Description
Athletics	Predators	Internship with Front Office
Athletics	TN Titans	Fitness demonstration
Business	Entrepreneur Center	New Product presentation
Business	Owen School @ VU	Owens on entrepreneurship
Health Care	Vanderbilt University	Children's Hospital demonstration
Journalism	Tennessean	Reporter explains the job
Law & Government	Law School (VU, Belmont)	Charter and Public education law
Legal Profession	Bass Berry	Law Case Studies (famous TN law)
Manufacturing	Nissan or Saturn	Design Thinking and prototyping
Music Business	Belmont School of Business	Produce your first CD!
Non-Profit	Habitat for Humanity	Explain process from fundraising to house raising
Printing Business	Hatch Show Print	Demonstration
Public & Media Relations	McNeilly, Pigott & Fox	Present issue relevant to age group
Restaurant Business	Coffee Shop (Starbucks)	Day in the Life of a Barista
Teaching & Education	Lipscomb School of Education	presentation & discussion
Technology	Dell	Build a Laptop - design theory
Math	Vanderbilt University	Study game theory in math
Law & Government	DA's Office	Case studies on famous TN law decisions
Law & Government	Governor's Office	Case studies on famous TN law decisions
Law & Government	Mayor's Office	Public Transit in Nashville or health
Life Skills	YMCA	Swimming safety
Literacy	Nashville Public Library	Research tool demonstration
Science & Medicine	Adventure Science Center	Design & build machines & animals w/motors and sensors
Science & Medicine	Nashville Zoo	Animal visit
Support	Oasis Center	services expose
Sustainability	Warner Parks	Land preservation & renewal
Arts	Cheekwood	sculpting class/gardening
Arts	Frist Center for Visual Arts	art presentation
Arts	Nashville Ballet	dance demonstration
Arts	Nashville Symphony	music seminar & demonstration
Design	O'More School	design seminar
Music	Blair School of Music	music seminar
Music	Country Music Hall of Fame	Music City's Music History
Music	WO Smith Center	music seminar
Theatre	TN Repertory Theatre	acting seminar
Theatre	TPAC	Stage management
Culinary Skills	Hermitage Hotel	garden @ Glen Eden
Life Skills	Martial Arts	skills and mindsets of great martial artists
Life Skills	Planned Parenthood/Sex Education	Health Education
Life Skills	Red Cross	Babysitting Course
Life Skills	Safe Sex/Personal Hygiene	Local OB/GYN explains
Life Skills	Yoga/Meditation	Conduct class
Science & Medicine	Red Cross	Blood Donation process & need
Sustainability	Hermitage Hotel	Sustainable Gard'g & Cook'g
Sustainability	The Land Trust	Land preservation & renewal

**Attachment 17a: Personalized Learning Plan (Stage 1 & Stage 2)**  
**Sample Personalized Learning Plan**  
**Valor Collegiate Academy**

\_\_\_\_\_ 's Personalized Learning Plan for 2016 – 2017 Grade 3

<b>Immediate influences</b>
-----------------------------

What is one thing from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade that you want to change? Why?

What is one thing from 2<sup>nd</sup> grade that you want to keep the same? Why?

What do I enjoy doing?

What am I good at in school? What is one thing I'm good at outside of school?

<b>Long-term Goals</b>
------------------------

Colleges I may be interested in:

Careers I want to learn more about:

Careers I may enjoy:

<b>Short-term Goals</b>
-------------------------

1. Earn the following grades:
  - a. Earn a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ in English. Last year I earned a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Earn a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ in math. Last year I earned a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Earn a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ in science. Last year I earned a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. Earn a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ in Social Studies. Last year I earned a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Engagement Goal: What are you going to do to give back to your community this year?
3. Extracurricular activities: what extracurricular activities do you want to try?

## Attachment 17b: Personalized Learning Plan (Sample, Stage 3 & 4)

### Sample Personalized Learning Plan

Valor Collegiate Academy

\_\_\_\_\_ 's Personalized Learning Plan for 2014-15  
Grade 5

#### Immediate influences

What is one thing from last year that you are committed to changing or to keeping the same? Why?

#### Long-term Goals

College

Career

Personal Development

Community Contribution

Finance

#### Short-term Goals

4. Earn a \_\_\_\_\_ grade point average in my five academic courses, thereby improving (may be appropriate to maintain) my grade point average by \_\_\_\_\_ points.
  - a. Earn a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ in English. Last year I earned a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. Earn a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ in math. Last year I earned a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Earn a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ in science. Last year I earned a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. Earn a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ in Social Studies. Last year I earned a(n) \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Deep Practice Ideas: What are you going to try this year to find something that you are passionate about?
6. Expeditions courses: What are you interested in taking for Expeditions this year?
  - a. Choice 1:
  - b. Choice 2:
  - c. Choice 3:
7. Complete at least 100 hours of physical activity by participating in the following activities:
  - a. Fall
  - b. Winter
  - c. Spring



### Items to be completed this year

\_\_\_\_\_ Community Service Goal: What are you going to do to give back to your community this year?

\_\_\_\_\_ Visit the following colleges

2. .
3. .
4. .

\_\_\_\_\_ Spend the summer semester

- Workshop
- Course
- Camp
- Internship

\_\_\_\_\_ Extracurricular activities

- Club
- School / community service
- Leadership

### Weekly Strategies / Timeframes

1. Raising GPA
2. Finding a “good fit” college

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Before 8:00am							
8-noon	Class	Class	Class	Class	Class		
Lunch							
12:45-2:45	Class	Class	Class	Class	Class		
3-4							
4-5							
5-6							
6-7							
7-8							
8-9							
9-10							

## Attachment 18: Example Curriculum Alignment Template (Draft)

VCA Standard	Learning Activity	Assessment	Spiraled	Power	I1	I2	I3	I4
Operations and Algebraic Thinking								
5.1 Write and interpret numerical expressions. Use parentheses, brackets, or braces in numerical expressions, and evaluate expressions with these symbols.		IA1: Example Internal Test Question Here	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	X	X	x	x	x
		MAP1: Sample MAP test question here						
		Common Core Summative: Example CC Test Question Here						

## Attachment 19: Intervention Template

<b>Last Name:</b>	<b>First Name:</b>	<b>Grade:</b>
<b>Parent(s) Name:</b>	<b>Phone:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>1) Reason for Intervention:</b>
------------------------------------

<b>2) Student input:</b>
--------------------------

<b>3) Teacher input:</b>
--------------------------

<b>4) Parent input:</b>
-------------------------

<b>Student will do</b>	<b>School will provide</b>

<b>Date of Review</b>	<b>Teacher Initiating Review:</b>
-----------------------	-----------------------------------

### Signatures:

Parent _____	Date _____	Parent
_____	Date _____	
Student _____	Date _____	Teacher
_____	Date _____	
Teacher _____	Date _____	Teacher
_____	Date _____	
Teacher _____	Date _____	Other
_____	Date _____	

<b>Last Name:</b>	<b>First Name:</b>	<b>Initial Date:</b>	<b>Evaluation Date:</b>
-------------------	--------------------	----------------------	-------------------------

<b>1) Success of the plan:</b>	<input type="radio"/> <b>Successful</b>	<input type="radio"/> <b>Partially Successful</b>	<input type="radio"/> <b>Unsuccessful</b>
--------------------------------	---	---	---

<b>2) Rationale for decision (describe the evidence used to make decision):</b>
---

<b>3) Determination of next step:</b>
---------------------------------------

<b>Person contacting Parent:</b>	<b>Conversation Log:</b>
----------------------------------	--------------------------

### Signatures:

Teacher _____	Date _____	Teacher
_____	Date _____	
Teacher _____	Date _____	Teacher
_____	Date _____	
Teacher _____	Date _____	Other
_____	Date _____	

## Attachment 20: PEP Template

### Valor Collegiate Personalized Educator Plan

**Fall Plan: 2014-15**

#### Part I: Performance Based School Goals

- 3-5 School Goals agreed upon by Faculty (25% of Performance Bonus determined from these goals)

SMART Goal	Tiered Metric	% of Bonus

#### Part II: Performance Based GLT Goals

- 3-5 GLT Goals agreed upon by Faculty (25% of Performance Bonus determined from these goals)

SMART Goal	Tiered Metric	% of Bonus

#### Part III: Performance Based Individual Goals

- 3-5 GLT Goals agreed upon by Faculty (50% of Performance Bonus determined from these goals)

SMART Goal	Tiered Metric	% of Bonus

#### Part IV: Individual Continuum Goals

- 2-3 position moves on attached Continuum Rubric

Continuum Reference	SMART Goal	Metric	% of Bonus

#### Part V: Support Needed to Reach Goals

Support / Development Needed	Action Steps
	Education/Experience/Exposure:
	Education/Experience/Exposure:

#### Part VI: Resiliency Goals

- Please set 1-2 goals for how you will keep yourself resilient throughout the year (NOT tied to Performance Bonus)

Goal

#### Part VII: Core Characteristic Goals

- Please set goals around development of 1-2 Core Characteristics for the year (NOT tied to Performance Bonus)

Goal

## Attachment 21: Enrollment Policy

As required by state law, participation in the lottery for Valor Collegiate Academy Southeast (VCASE) will be based on parental choice and will be open to all MNPS students who qualify for charter school admission under Tennessee Code Annotated (T.C.A.) §49-13-106(a)(1), which states

**( 1) Public charter schools authorized by an LEA may be formed to provide quality educational options for all students residing within the jurisdiction of the chartering authority; provided, however, an LEA may authorize charters to enroll students residing outside the LEA in which the public charter school is located pursuant to the LEA out-of-district enrollment policy and in compliance with § 49-6-3003 and § 49-6-403(f).**

VCASE's recruitment plan and admissions policies support our mission and goals of ensuring that all of our students enter and excel in college and in life. We will work actively recruit the students who are most at need and ensure that all students that are eligible (either at a failing school or failing themselves) can apply and be enrolled in VCASE in a fair and equitable manner.

**Application Period** – VCA will begin to accept applications starting October 1, 2013 and will end at 5pm on March 15, 2015.

**Enrollment Deadlines** – All applications must be received in hand by 5:00pm on March 15, 2015. Any applications received after this time and date will be placed at the end of the waitlist.

**Receipt and processing of applications** – All applications must be delivered in person to guarantee a placement into the lottery. Parents are welcome to mail their application to (address to be determined). An acknowledgement will be emailed upon receipt of the email application, but if a family does not receive or keep this receipt VCA is not responsible for claims that an application was sent by mail by not received by the deadline (we will track all receipts as well and it is highly unlikely we will lose the record, but we cannot take responsibility if the family does not keep their record in the rare case that an application cannot be located). All applications received in person will receive a receipt.

**Lottery** - If there are more applications than seats available in a grade level, then the school will have a public lottery. The lottery will have the following preferences:

- 1) Scholars of employees or Board members of VCA (not to exceed 25 students or 10% of enrolled students, whichever is less)
- 2) Siblings of scholars currently enrolled or graduated from VCA
- 3) If a student is chosen in the lottery and there is a sibling or siblings on the waitlist for that grade or another grade, they will immediately move into the sibling lottery and will be given preference so the family may all attend the same school.

Parents will be mailed the official results on the Monday following the Saturday lottery (late March). Parents will have fourteen days beyond the lottery notification date to submit a letter of intent. After this date, VCA will attempt to verify personally with each parent by phone or at home that they are indeed forfeiting their seat at VCA. If we are unsuccessful in contacting the family for verification we will then give up their seat and place them on the waitlist. After all seats have been assigned, a waiting list will be established for the remaining students who have registered in the event that a seat should open up. If there are still seats available after the lottery, we will accept applications on an ongoing basis, and students will be admitted to the school on a first come-first served basis until all seats are filled. In all cases, VCASE will adhere to any and all schedules and requirements of Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools concerning the recruitment and enrollment of students.

**Waitlist, withdrawals, re-enrollment, transfer policies** – Below are the policies on these important issues.

- **Waitlist** will start one week after Acceptance Day (day noted in letters from Lottery that families must officially accept their seat) and last until end of second week of school.
- **Waitlist** then expires and anyone who wishes to transfer must re-apply. Applications after the expiration date are taken in order and a new waitlist is built.
- **Transfer lotteries** held at discretion of CEO during semester, and at end of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> semester if spaces available. Transfer lotteries will be advertised on the website and at school.
- **Dis-enroll** - If a scholar dis-enrolls during a semester but then decides to return they must re-apply like anyone else. Exceptions to this can be clarified in an expulsion agreement (i.e., an expelled student may be enrolled at the end of a school year if they meet the requirements of the expulsion rehabilitation plan).

## Attachment 22: Draft Scholar Handbook



# VALOR COLLEGIATE *Academies*

### Student and Family Handbook

*DRAFT*

VCA prepares a diverse student population for success in college and to live inspired and purposeful lives. Our scholar's will graduate with academic skills, social-emotional skills, and positive character strengths that rival the outcomes of the best schools in the world.

[MM, DD, YYYY]

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Valor Collegiate Academy community! We are excited that you and your student have chosen Valor.

Valor Collegiate is founded upon the belief that families are our partners in the work of meeting our mission and we look forward to the successes of the inaugural class of Valor Collegiate students, the Class of 2027 – so called because that is the year when our first class of Valor Collegiate alumni graduates from college. Within a seamless elementary to high school, our students receive a high quality high school preparatory education that equips them to excel in selective colleges, earn professional opportunities, and demonstrate positive leadership. In the Valor Collegiate elementary school (k – 4), scholars learn the foundational skills for their educational career. In the Valor Collegiate Middle School, scholars learn the foundational skills needed to master rigorous high school curriculum. Our BIG GOAL is that Valor Collegiate alumni graduate from college, armed with the academic knowledge, 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, and social, mental, and emotional skills needed to make smart choices in the future and have positive impact in their community.

We have assembled this handbook to provide you with as much information as we can about the coming school year. The following pages contain information about our program, academic supports, and the discipline and uniform policies. They also include important information about other policies and procedures, so please read them carefully. Although we have tried to be as complete as we can be, we know that we may have not addressed all of the questions that you have. We encourage you to contact any one of us if you have concerns or need further information.

We want to highlight the section of this handbook that discusses your role in your student's experience at Valor Collegiate. Our mission states: "Valor Collegiate VCA prepares a diverse student population for success in college and to live inspired and purposeful lives. Our scholar's will graduate with academic skills, social-emotional skills, and positive character strengths that rival the outcomes of the best schools in the world." In order for us to realize our mission, we need your help. We believe that parents and guardians are critical partners to ensure their student's success. Whether through formal or informal discussions, school events or volunteer activities, we hope that we see and hear from you throughout the year. We look forward to working closely with you.

Sincerely,

The Staff of Valor Collegiate Academy



## FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

### FAMILY PARTNERS IN EDUCATION

We welcome every opportunity to work with parents. Valor Collegiate will host a **Family Partners in Education (FPE) Committee** that will be comprised of volunteers who are adult family members of our students. The FPE will **meet monthly** with school leaders to discuss issues that arise as they relate to families. Through these meetings, the FPE will be able to assume an important role in helping to relay information from the school to students' families and vice-versa. The FPE will also be intimately involved in the development of **family workshops, family fundraisers**, and will help to coordinate **family volunteer opportunities** at the school.

Within the first six months of the school year, Valor Collegiate will invite one parent of a Valor Collegiate scholar to the Board of Directors. Specific information about the selection process will be distributed to families in students' homework folders in September, 2014.

### COMMUNICATION

We believe that it is incredibly important that families become part of our school's effort to promote their children's academic success, and the possible academic success of all students. As a Valor Collegiate family, you can expect the following from Valor Collegiate staff:

FAMILY COMMUNICATION CYCLE	
<b>Homework:</b> HW is assigned to students five times per week (every day except Wednesday evenings) Parents sign off on homework assignments <b>DAILY</b> , checking for completion only.	<b>Family Literacy Night: TRIMESTERLY</b> , ELA team hosts Family Literacy Nights at the grade level three times per year - families learn best strategies for holding their children accountable for and supporting them in their independent reading.
<b>Phone Calls:</b> We communicate with families <b>DAILY</b> about mandatory Homework Center assignments, morning Tutoring sessions, Detention, and other time-sensitive scheduling matters. All families have the professional phone and email contacts for all staff to communicate efficiently and well.	<b>Morning Coffee with Principal: MONTHLY</b> , we host morning coffee hour - a forum for families to communicate concerns, ask questions, get to know one another, and receive pertinent information from the school.
<b>Syllabi:</b> Every Monday, students receive <b>WEEKLY</b> syllabi, outlining all assignments for the week. All parents sign weekly syllabi and return to school as part of HW requirement.	<b>Parent University:</b> New families are introduced <b>ANNUALLY</b> to the school through three 90-minute summer sessions, where parents learn about the systems, culture, and expectations. All families receive copy of the <b>Student and Family Handbook</b> .
<b>Character Currency Statements:</b> Every Monday, students receive <b>WEEKLY</b> CC Statements - progress report to share with family, a snapshot of academics/behavioral and HW completion.	<b>Home Visits:</b> Family Orientation process concludes with 30-minute home visit before school year begins. Conducted <b>ANNUALLY</b> , staff begins relationship with every family.
<b>Newsletter:</b> Families are part of our community and most important partners. All families receive <b>MONTHLY</b> newsletter detailing academic highlights with a focus on academic growth, student achievement, and school successes.	<b>Personalized Learning Plan Conferences: EACH FALL</b> , you will meet with your student's faculty mentor and plan for the year by setting goals with your student.

## ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES

### Attendance Requirements

Attendance is crucial to student's success at Valor Collegiate. Students demonstrate their professionalism and preparedness to learn by showing up to school every day and on time. Students cannot master the content and skills of our rigorous academic program without being here every day. To that end, we have very clear attendance requirements.

**Students MUST bring in a note after each day they are absent.** The note must include:

- the date of the absence
- the reason for the absence
- a phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached

- the parent/guardian signature

### **Excused and Unexcused Absences**

We realize that there are times when students will not be in school, but Valor Collegiate strongly believes that your student's education should be his or her priority. Valor Collegiate will only count as excused the following reasons for absence from school:

- A **note from a doctor** explaining an illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school
- A **death** in the immediate family or other significant family crisis
- **Religious** holidays
- **Suspension** from school

All other absences will be unexcused.

**Students who have fifteen or more unexcused absences** will be automatically referred for retention in the current grade at the end of the academic year. Advisors will contact families of students with attendance issues.

**After three unexcused** absences the advisor will remind the student and the family of Valor Collegiate's attendance policy in a phone call.

After **six unexcused** absences, the advisor, along with the school leader, will arrange a meeting with the family and the student to address the situation and help develop a plan of action to ensure the student's attendance at school.

### **Lateness**

All students are expected to arrive at school no later than 8:00 am. If a student reports to school after 8:00, they will be considered late. Late students receive a Demerit, which is deducted from their Character Currency account, and are placed in Lunch Detention that school day. They must also publicly apologize to the community in that morning's All School Meeting.

## **CALENDAR AND SCHEDULE**

### **Calendar**

The Tennessee Public Charter Schools Act of 2002 requires that charter schools meet, at a minimum, the state's requirement for instructional time in other public schools (TCA 49-13-105). The Valor Collegiate school year has 190 instructional days, divided into three trimesters and a week-long student orientation at the beginning of the school year. Prior to the start of the school year, the Principal meets with families three times once students are enrolled at a series of events called Parent University, which prepare families for the Valor Collegiate experience. In addition to our extended day and year, we also provide approximately 25 days of Saturday Academy for students that need additional time to achieve mastery of curriculum in preparation for TCAP exams and end-of-year comprehensive assessment and also for behavior support.

**Typical Kindergarten Scholar Schedule**

	Monday	Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday	Friday
<b>7:30-8:00</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>7:30-8:00</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>7:30-8:00</b>	<b>breakfast</b>	<b>breakfast</b>
<b>8:00 - 8:20</b>	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	<b>8:00 - 8:20</b>	Morning Meeting	<b>8:00 - 8:20</b>	Morning Meeting	All School Meeting
<b>8:20 - 8:50</b>	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	<b>8:20 - 8:50</b>	Read Aloud	<b>8:20 - 8:50</b>	Read Aloud	Read Aloud
<b>8:50 - 9:05</b>	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	<b>8:50 - 9:05</b>	Shared Reading	<b>8:50 - 9:05</b>	Shared Reading	Shared Reading
<b>9:05 - 10:05</b>	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	<b>9:05 - 10:05</b>	Literacy Stations	<b>9:05 - 10:05</b>	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations
<b>10:05 - 10:20</b>	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	<b>10:05 - 10:20</b>	Bathroom Break	<b>10:05 - 10:20</b>	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break
<b>10:20 - 10:50</b>	Expeditions 1	Expeditions 1	<b>10:20 - 10:50</b>	Expeditions 1	<b>10:20 - 10:50</b>	Expeditions 1	Expeditions 1
<b>10:50 - 10:55</b>	Transition	Transition	<b>10:50 - 10:55</b>	Transition	<b>10:50 - 10:55</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>10:55 - 11:55</b>	Math	Math	<b>10:55 - 11:55</b>	Math	<b>10:55 - 11:55</b>	Math	Math
<b>11:55 - 12:00</b>	Transition	Transition	<b>11:55 - 12:00</b>	Transition	<b>11:55 - 12:00</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>12:00 - 12:20</b>	Lunch	Lunch	<b>12:00 - 12:20</b>	Lunch	<b>12:00 - 12:20</b>	Lunch	Lunch
<b>12:20 - 12:35</b>	Recess	Recess	<b>12:20 - 1:00</b>	Social Studies	<b>12:20 - 12:35</b>	Recess	Recess
<b>12:35 - 12:40</b>	Transition	Transition	<b>1:00 - 1:40</b>	Science	<b>12:35 - 12:40</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>12:40 - 1:20</b>	Writing	Writing	<b>1:40 - 1:55</b>	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	<b>12:40 - 1:20</b>	Writing	Writing
<b>1:20 - 2:00</b>	Social Studies	Social Studies	<b>1:55 - 2:10</b>	Dismissal	<b>1:20 - 2:00</b>	Social Studies	Social Studies
<b>2:00 - 2:05</b>	Transition	Transition			<b>2:00 - 2:05</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>2:05 - 2:35</b>	Expeditions 2	Expeditions 2			<b>2:05 - 2:35</b>	Expeditions 2	Expeditions 2
<b>2:35 - 2:40</b>	Transition	Transition			<b>2:35 - 2:40</b>	Transition	Transition
<b>2:40 - 3:20</b>	Science	Science			<b>2:40 - 3:20</b>	Science	Science
<b>3:20 - 3:50</b>	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions			<b>3:20 - 3:50</b>	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions
<b>3:50 - 4:00</b>	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up			<b>3:50 - 4:00</b>	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up
<b>4:00 - 4:10</b>	Dismissal	Dismissal			<b>4:00 - 4:10</b>	Dismissal	Dismissal

### Typical 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Scholar Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday		Wednesday	Thursday		Friday
7:30 – 8:00	Breakfast	breakfast	7:30-8:00	breakfast	breakfast	7:30-8:00	breakfast
8:00 – 8:15	Advisory	advisory	8:00 – 8:15	advisory	advisory	8:00 – 9:33	Reading
8:15 – 8:17	transition	transition	8:15 – 8:17	transition	transition		Writing
8:17 – 8:32	Morning meeting	Morning meeting	8:17 – 8:32	Morning meeting	Morning meeting	9:33-9:35	transition
8:32 – 8:34	transition	transition	8:32 – 8:34	transition	transition	9:35-11:08	Math / Fitness
8:34-10:19	Reading	Reading	8:34-9:27	Reading / Writing	Reading		
	Writing	Writing	9:27-9:29	transition	Writing	11:08-11:10	transition
10:19-10:21	transition	transition	9:29-10:22	Learning Lab	transition	11:10-12:03	History
10:21-12:01	Learning Lab	Learning Lab	10:22-10:32	Recess	Learning Lab	12:03-12:33	Lunch
	History	History	10:32-11:25	History	History	12:33-12:35	transition
12:01-12:31	Lunch	Lunch	11:25-11:55	Lunch	Lunch	12:35-1:28	Learning Lab
12:31-12:33	transition	transition	11:55-11:57	transition	transition	1:28-1:30	transition
12:33-2:18	Math / Fitness	Math / Fitness	11:57-12:50	Math	Math / Fitness	1:30-2:23	Science / Fitness
			12:50-12:53	transition			
2:18:2:20	transition	transition	12:53-1:46	Science	transition	2:23-3:53	
2:20-4:05	Science / Fitness	Science / Fitness	1:46-2:00	Dismissal 1	Science / Fitness		Connections
			2:00-4:00	Professional Development			
4:05-4:10	Dismissal 1	Dismissal 1			Dismissal 1	3:53-4:00	Dismissal 1
4:10-4:55	Office Hours	Office Hours			Office Hours	4:00-5:00	Office Hours
4:55-5:00	Dismissal 2	Dismissal 2			Dismissal 2	5:00	Dismissal 2

## STUDENT SUPPLIES

Being a Valor Collegiate scholar means being prepared for class with the necessary supplies; this is an important component of being ready to learn. If students does not have pens, pencils, or paper, they may ask to borrow supplies from other students before class begins. Students without the required materials may receive a Demerit (in middle school). Repeated occurrences of unpreparedness will result in a phone call home and Lunch Detention (in middle school). All materials listed below can be purchased from Valor Collegiate during Parent University and throughout the year as needed.

### Elementary School

- Pencils
- Eraser
- Small pair of scissors
- Crayons
- Markers
- Personal pencil sharpener
- 1 box of tissues for scholar's classroom

### Middle School

- A 1 ½ inch three ring binder for each class
- Valor Collegiate Academic Planner
- Supply of pencils and black ink pens (two of each should be in hand each day)
- Supply of 8 ½-by-11 inch loose leaf white notebook paper (about 200 sheets, placed in binder)
- Plastic pocket for pens and pencils (placed in binder)
- Colored pencils, crayons, or markers
- Glue stick
- Small pair of scissors
- Erasers
- Personal pencil sharpener with cover
- Workbooks and textbooks
- Calculators (for use at school only)

## HOMEWORK POLICY AND EXPECTATIONS

Homework completion is mandatory for academic success. The following expectations apply for all Valor Collegiate Students:

- It is the student's responsibility to maintain record of his or her homework. In elementary school, scholars will receive weekly homework packets. In middle school, scholars should record his or her homework each day in their Valor Collegiate Academic Planner.
- Completed homework must be reviewed and the homework planner must be signed nightly by the child's parent or guardian, or the child will face a CHARACTER CURRENCY stock deduction.
- In order for a homework assignment to be considered complete, it must:
  1. Complete all parts of homework.
  2. Be written in complete sentences
  3. Have the correct heading, including the student's first and last name
  4. Have no skipped questions – all questions must be attempted. If a child really is confused, he or she may restate the question and attempt to answer it.
  5. If a child completes every question on a homework assignment, it will be considered complete; however, teachers will still grade assignments. As such, children may still receive a low grade even on a complete assignment.
- If a child needs assistance with his or her homework, he or she must do the following, in the order listed:
  1. Ask his or her parent or family member for assistance.
  2. Review homework tutorial materials (elementary school)
  3. Contact his or her teacher and leave a specific message. Children may only call their teacher one time. Multiple calls and calls with no message are unacceptable.<sup>48</sup>
  4. Even if a child does not successfully reach any of the above resources, he or she must still complete every question on his or her assignment in order for it to be considered complete.

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<sup>48</sup> In elementary school, scholars' parent or guardian is responsible for reaching out to scholar's teacher.

A child who does not turn in his or her homework assignments or receives a grade below 70% on any assignment will be required to attend Homework Center (middle school). Once a child is identified as needing Homework Center, his or her attendance is mandatory. Homework collection and grading is completed by no later than 12:00 noon each day, and the Office Coordinator contacts the parents of those students required to attend Homework Center by 1:00 pm. Note that Homework Center attendance does not change the daily pm pickup time unless the student must attend Homework Center on a day he or she would otherwise attend off-site enrichment.

## ASSESSMENT

We remediate academic gaps and challenge students with high levels of rigor using our cycle of assessments, which calls for frequent assessment and immediate intervention based on their results. Prior to the start of the school year and during the first week of orientation, students take baseline diagnostic assessments so that teachers can structure curriculum and instruction to meet students where they are and ramp them up quickly. Throughout the year students are assessed on four-week cycles of assessments and are quizzed weekly on course content to provide multiple data points for teachers, students, and families. Data allows us to know what to reteach and how as all students move toward mastery of course content. Near the end of the year, students take the PARCC exam and the end of course exams in Science and Social Studies to measure mastery of grade standards.

## GRADING POLICY

Students at Valor Collegiate will earn grades based on their demonstration of mastery of Valor Collegiate curriculum standards, which have been informed by Tennessee State Standards, the Common Core, and as needed supplemented by Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Grades will include student performance on in-class work, homework, assessments, and other components as applicable to each content area.

We outline below the ways in which letter, percentage, and rubric grades will be used at Valor Collegiate and what these grades mean in terms of a student's level of mastery of the State Content Standards.

### Grading Guidelines

#### Elementary School Grading Scale

##### Reading

- **K – 2**
  - 1 grade per category aligned to the F & P benchmark for the quarter:
    - Fluency – 20%
    - Accuracy – 20%
    - Comprehension – 20%
    - Reading Readiness Benchmarks – 20%
  - Formative Literacy Grade – 20%
    - includes effort
  - includes any other assignments (unit tests, sight word quizzes, word work quizzes) that teachers want to grade scholars on
- **3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>**
  - 1 grade per category aligned to the F & P benchmark for the quarter:
    - Fluency – 15%
    - Accuracy – 15%
    - Comprehension – 15%
    - Word Work – 15%
      - based off of work formative work and spelling assessments during Words Their Way
    - Formative Literacy Grade – 40%
      - includes effort
      - includes any other assignments (unit tests, sight word quizzes, word work quizzes) that teachers want to grade scholars on
- **Grading Scale:**
  - K – 2: all grades are based on a 5 point scale; above target receives a 5, at target receives a 4, below target receives a 3.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup>:
    - Independent above the quarter's benchmark – A – 10 points
    - Independent at the quarter's benchmark – A – 9 points
    - Independent 1 level below the benchmark – B – 8.5 points
    - Independent 2 levels below the benchmark – C – 7.5 points

- Independent 3 or more levels below the benchmark – D – 6 points

#### Math

- Grade Requirement: 1 grade per week
- Categories:
  - Unit Tests – 65%
  - Formative Math Grade (formerly assignments) – 25%
  - Participation – 10%
- Grading scale: all Formative Math Grades should be scored on a consistent scale within a grade level; either a 5 point scale or a 0 – 100% point scale. Teachers should utilize a consistent scale to ensure formative grades are weighted equally.

#### Science and Social Studies

- 1 grade per week
- Categories:
  - Unit Tests – 65%
  - Formative Science/Social Studies Grade (formerly assignments) – 25%
  - Participation – 10%
- Grading scale: all Formative Science and Social Studies Grades should be scored on a consistent scale within a grade level; either a 5 point scale or a 0 – 100% point scale. Teachers should utilize a consistent scale within the formative category to ensure formative grades are weighted equally.

#### Writing

- Categories:
  - End-of-Unit On Demand: 60%
    - 1 End-of-Unit On Demand piece per unit
  - Formative Grade: 40%
    - 1 formative grade per week
- Goals: writing grades are based off a 4-point scale. Each Unit of Study has a corresponding rubric.

Kindergarten Rubric		
Number of Points	Scaled Score	Grade
2 – 22	1 – 2	D
22.5 – 27.5	2.5	C
28 – 33	3	B
33.5 – 44	3.5 – 4	A

1 <sup>st</sup> – 4 <sup>th</sup> Grade Rubric		
Number of Points	Scaled Score	Grade
1 – 16.5	1 – 1.5	D
17 – 27.5	2 – 2.5	C
28 – 33	3	B
33.5 – 44	a. – 4	A

#### Expeditions Courses

- 1 grade per week

#### Miscellaneous

- Homework completion
  - If a scholar does not complete their homework five times in a trimester, the scholar will earn an unsatisfactory grade

#### Middle School Grading Scale

Letter	Percentage	Rubric	Meaning
A+	98-100%	4	Student earning an A in a course is consistently demonstrating advanced levels of mastery with the content standards.
A	93-97%		
A-	90-92%		
B+	88-89%	3	Student earning a B in a course is consistently demonstrating proficiency with the content standards.
B	83-87%		
B-	80-82%		
C+	78-79%		



C	73-77%	2	Student earning a C in a course is consistently demonstrating basic competency with the content standards.
C-	70-72%		
F	Below 70%	0 or 1	Student earning less than 70% in a course is not yet demonstrating a basic Level of mastery with the content standards and needs to demonstrate mastery of the standards before credit will be earned.

Note: Valor Collegiate does not give Ds. We are aware that the lowest grade most colleges and universities will accept for entry is a C-. Because our mission is to prepare every Valor Collegiate student for success at four-year colleges and universities, we align our grading practices with these standards.

Each Friday, students will receive a progress report. This progress report will contain all student grades for the entire semester for each class. At school, each student's advisor will review the progress report with the students. Students will bring home the progress report each Friday afternoon and we strongly encourage parents to use the information contained in the progress reports to reinforce at home what we have identified students need to work on here at Valor Collegiate. We also suggest that you keep a binder at home with your student's progress reports and journals. In addition to receiving the progress report, parents will also receive a progress report reply form which must be signed and returned to the school the Monday after a progress report is sent home. Students who do not bring back a signed reply form will be assigned Homework Center.

In addition, teachers meet frequently to assess student progress. The areas discussed in these meetings include academic performance, participation, engagement, effort, ability to follow directions, and organization. Not only do the teachers discuss these categories, but they also develop ways to support a student's progress. These comments and strategies are shared with a student's advisor and other teachers.

Valor Collegiate students receive semester report cards that include:

- A grade for the semester's coursework and comprehensive assessments
- An overall grade for the academic performance during the semester in each class

Valor Collegiate students receive final report cards that include

- An overall grade for each year's coursework and comprehensive assessment

## **PROMOTION AND RETENTION POLICY**

We believe that students should only be promoted when they have demonstrated mastery of our academic standards. Valor Collegiate Academy is founded upon the understanding that promoting students to the next grade because of their age, not their readiness to do the work, is not beneficial to students. Thus, one of the most critical and distinctive aspects of Valor Collegiate's academic program is its promotion policy. To build a culture of learning and achievement, and to hold students accountable for their own efforts in their education, Valor Collegiate uses a strict and simple promotion policy: in order to be promoted to the next grade, middle school students must pass each core academic course in each semester with a minimum C- average and meet benchmark goals for the grade level. We believe that students must take responsibility for their educational futures, and give us the opportunity to support them as they pursue academic success. In keeping with this thinking, students should maintain a 95% attendance rate in order to be considered for promotion to the next grade. Any student who has fifteen or more unexcused absences from school will be automatically referred for retention in the current grade at the end of the academic year.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Valor Collegiate scholars have affirmative responsibilities in the classroom regarding participation. 100% of our students are expected to be engaged in classroom instruction. In order to educate every student to become excellent readers and speakers of English language, our classrooms are designed to be literacy-rich environments with high-levels of student interaction and discussion. Students receive Valor tickets (elementary school) and Merits and Demerits for classroom participation (middle school)

## **BEING A POSITIVE MEMBER OF THE COMMUNITY**

Valor Collegiate scholars have affirmative responsibilities to be contributors to an achievement-oriented school community. Students will have numerous opportunities to hone leadership skills and volunteer in and around the school to enhance school culture. Students have affirmative responsibilities to help each other and to be respectful to others.

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY TOWARDS DISCIPLINE**

We believe that a structured and disciplined school environment is a key driver of academic progress and student success. Learning cannot occur in the midst of chaos and distraction. To that end, we place a high value on discipline

and order, and believe that it is the responsibility of every adult in the building to work collectively as one voice in order to ensure that students understand, without any doubt or confusion, exactly what the expectations for behavior are and how the school will respond to infractions.

### **REWARDS – CHARACTER CURRENCY SHARES (3<sup>RD</sup> – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE ONLY)**

We will implement a token economy revolving around a paycheck system. This system will allow teachers to reward students for positive behavior and penalize students for exhibiting behavior that does not uphold the school's Core Values and Character Strengths. Each week, students will receive 5 shares of CHARACTER CURRENCY stock valued at \$10 each. Individual classroom teachers are then responsible for awarding or deducting CHARACTER CURRENCY stocks from students throughout the week. The worth of our CHARACTER CURRENCY stocks has been determined by our character strengths. Students can earn new CHARACTER CURRENCY shares only by exhibiting all of character strengths. At the end of each week, the grade level coach will tally the week's awards and deductions using the school's culture management system and print CHARACTER CURRENCY account statements. These statements will be distributed to students on Fridays during Connections time. Students must bring these paychecks home, have a parent or guardian review the paycheck and sign it, and bring it back to school the following day. Students must maintain a certain weekly paycheck average in order to qualify to go on Study Trips.

Eligible students may redeem their paychecks once a week on Fridays during Connections pursuant to Valor Collegiate's Currency Redemption Plan, which allows for the redemption of shares in exchange for the receipt of mission-appropriate materials (college notebooks, pens, and t-shirts) and school supplies. Eligible students must have an average daily balance in their CHARACTER CURRENCY share account of \$2,500 and have earned no fewer than 5 CHARACTER CURRENCY shares during the preceding week (Friday – Thursday).

Students can earn Badges through a rigorous process and acknowledged for their achievement during ASM. Eligible students must have an average daily balance in their CHARACTER CURRENCY Shares brokerage account of \$5,000 and earn five or more CHARACTER CURRENCY shares per week over a five-week period. Students must provide two one-page essays, a teacher recommendation, and excel in a brief interview. Valor members are trained to lead and model our Core Values, learn to lead Circle Up, and receive certain privileges like wear college paraphernalia on Valor Fridays, transition independently, and redeem shares in the CHARACTER CURRENCY Shop for achievement-oriented supplies.

### **SCHEDULE OF OFFENSES**

Our discipline system is defined by clarity, consistency, and consequences. Students will be receive consequences for doing any of the following:

Minor Offenses	Moderate Offenses	Serious Offenses
Arriving Late to School/Class	Chewing Gum, Eating Candy, Chips	Cheating
Being out of Uniform	Chronic Tardiness	Cutting Class or School
Being Unprepared for Class	Deliberately Disrupting Class	Damaging, destroying or stealing Personal or school property or attempting to do so (including
Disengaged	Disrespecting a Fellow Student	Disrupting Saturday detention through
Improper Use of Student Planner	Disrespecting Faculty, Staff	Gambling
Lack of Organization	Disrespecting School Property	Gross Disrespect of Faculty, Staff or
Inappropriate Noise	Drinking Soda	Gross Disrespect of Fellow Student
Making Excuses	Engaging in Horseplay	Leaving school grounds without permission
Misuse of Resources	Failure to Return a Signed Progress Report	Making verbal or physical threats, empty or otherwise
No Pass in Hall	Ignoring/Refusing	Plagiarizing or Forging
Not Following Faculty Directions	Littering	Skiping all or a portion of Homework
Not Tracking Speaker	Pharmaceuticals w/o Prescription	Setting off false alarms
Poor Attitude	Profanity	Sexual, racial or any form of harassment or intimidation
Poor Posture	Receiving 3 Demerits in One Week	Using abusive, vulgar or profane Language

## LEVELS OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Any time a student does not meet Valor Collegiate's behavioral expectations and an infraction to the school's Code of Conduct has been incurred, swift, decisive and consistent disciplinary action will ensue. These disciplinary actions follow a model of escalating consequences, and may include, but are not limited to:

Once students graduate from Valor Institute, they are expected to conduct themselves like Valor Collegiate Patriots and they are held accountable for performing in accordance with the school's Code of Conduct. The staff works together during summer professional development to norm responses to student behavior. In all circumstances, intervention for misbehavior or doing the wrong thing begins with a nonverbal correction but escalates to the consequences below as necessary to protect instructional minutes and deliver on our promise of uninterrupted learning.

Students who commit minor offenses receive a logical consequence (K – 2<sup>nd</sup>) or demerit (3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>) as a first level of correction. This is the second level of correction for all students.

Any student who receives a Reflection sheet in class assigned to Principal Office Hours from 4:15-5:00pm. This is the third level of correction for all students. An in-school suspension is defined as the suspension of a student from Valor Collegiate Academy for a period not exceeding three (3) school days that occurs on school grounds. An in-school-suspension occurs when students repeatedly commit moderate offenses. Once the student returns to school, the student must issue a Public Apology in order to be welcomed back into the Valor Collegiate community.

Except in the case of an emergency situation, in which the Principal has determined there is a clear and present danger to the lives, health and safety of students or school personnel, any suspension will be preceded by a conference conducted by the Principal. This pre-suspension conference will include the student and, if possible, the teacher(s) or other school personnel involved in the matter. At this conference, the student will be informed of the reason for the contemplated disciplinary action, the evidence against him or her and evidence in support of his or her defense. After the pre-suspension conference, the Principal will be empowered to suspend the student for a period of one (1) to ten (10) school days in the event that the Principal determines that the student has committed one of the serious offenses named above.

Before the student returns to class, the student, his or her parent or guardian, the Grade Level Coach and/or the Principal will meet in order to address the student's behavior and plan for improvement. Suspensions may not be appealed. Once the student returns to school, the student must issue a Public Apology in order to be welcomed back into the Valor Collegiate community.

A student who is expelled will be subject to due process under Tennessee state law. At Valor Collegiate the due process will be as follows (subject to legal review and Board approval):

- Principal will follow standard disciplinary policies and procedures for investigating the facts, obtaining witness statements, and ensuring adherence to due process procedures.
- If the Principal believes it is warranted, the student will be expelled.
- The Principal shall report to the Nashville Police Department any documentable or suspected incident involving illegal drugs, firearms, explosives, or other weapons outlined in TCA 39-17-1309.
- Following the Principal's decision to expel, there is an appeal process:
  - The Principal will give written or actual notice of the expulsion to the parent/guardian within 24 hours, including giving notice that the parent/guardian or student has five (5) days to file an appeal.
  - All appeals must be filed, orally or in writing, within five (5) days after receipt of the notice of expulsion.
  - The parent/guardian, the student or a teacher requested by the student can appeal the decision.
  - Absent a timely request for appeal, the decision of the Principal will be final. The appeal will be filed with the Governing Board of Directors. The hearing will be held no later than 10 days after the beginning of the expulsion. Notice of the time and place of the hearing will be provided to the parent/guardian, the student, the Principal and a teacher who chooses to file an appeal.

- The Governing Board of Directors may affirm the decision of the Principal, order removal of the expulsion unconditionally or upon such terms and conditions as it deems reasonable. The action of the Governing Board of Directors is final.

Valor Collegiate shall include in each application to the Tennessee Department of Education for assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Act the following report of expulsions imposed in accordance with this policy as it applies to the Gun Free Schools Act:

- the name of the school concerned,
- the number of students expelled from the school, and
- The types of weapons concerned.

The Valor Collegiate policies and administrative rules and regulations pertaining to student conduct shall be filed with the Commissioner of Education.

### **Discipline and Special Education**

In the case of a special education student, or a student who receives 504 accommodations, Valor Collegiate will ensure that it makes the necessary adjustments to comply with the mandates of State and federal laws, including the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Plan of 1973, regarding the discipline of students with disabilities. Prior to recommending expulsion for a Section 504 student or special education student, the Principal will convene a review committee to determine whether the student's misconduct was a manifestation of his or her disability; whether the student was appropriately placed and receiving the appropriate services at the time of the misconduct; and/or whether behavior intervention strategies were in effect and consistent with the student's IEP or 504 Plan. If it is determined that the student's misconduct was not a manifestation of his or her disability, that the student was appropriately placed and was receiving appropriate services at the time of the misconduct, and that the behavior intervention strategies were in effect and consistent with the students IEP, the student may be expelled.

The school contracts with a charter bus company to provide transportation to students.

### **TRANSPORTATION ~~HHH~~**

Transportation eligibility is determined on the basis of the student's grade level and the distance between the student's residence and school. The table below shows how transportation eligibility is determined. For example:

- A fifth-grader who lives one mile from school is eligible for full fare transportation.
- An eighth-grader who lives one mile from school is not eligible for full fare transportation.

\*We will work with every family to ensure that you have a safe and timely ride to school each day and will work with parents to coordinate car pools and other transportation solutions for neighborhood families.

### **BUS SERVICE AND STOPS**

Yellow bus service will be available for scholars in K – 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The following provides details and eligibility requirements for that service.

Yellow bus service is provided from designated stops at designated times to and from schools receiving this service.

Discipline on the school bus is identical to the systems and procedures that the school provides on campus. We partner with our transportation providers to ensure that transportation is safe, timely, and consistent with our school culture.

- Students can receive merits and demerits for bus behavior.
- Students must be silent on the bus at all times unless instructed otherwise.
- Students cannot work on school assignments on the bus that require a pencil, pen, or other writing instrument to complete them for safety reasons. Any student caught completing homework on the way to school will receive Lunch Detention (middle school)
- Students may not de-board the bus upon arrival to school until a member of the Valor Collegiate staff boards the bus to begin morning procedures.
- Students who frequently misbehave on the bus, committing moderate offenses (more than 3 times) will be

ineligible for transportation services for the remaining school year. Students who misbehave on the bus, committing any serious offense, will be ineligible for transportation services.

## **UNIFORMS**

### **GENERAL POLICY**

Clothing worn by students at Valor Collegiate should emphasize the fact that the school is both a community and a place of work. Students should dress in a way that expresses their membership in the community and that suits the standards of a workplace. Their attire should be neat and tidy and should conform to the Valor Collegiate uniform at all times.

Valor Collegiate's uniform consists of a blue Valor jacket or shirt, blue or grey Valor pants (boys) or skirt (girls), and dark blue, orange, or grey running shoes. Each student is required to wear their attire as follows.

- An official Valor Collegiate shirt. Undershirts must be solid (color to be determined).
- The official Valor Collegiate jacket.
- Official Valor Collegiate pants and/or skirt.
- Blue, orange, or grey running shoes (official Valor shoes optional and may be earned).

The student uniform at Valor Collegiate specifically forbids the wearing of:

- Any clothing with legible writing or images (other than the Valor Collegiate logo). This refers even to clothing worn under another shirt, for example a t-shirt under an oxford shirt.
- Jeans. This includes khaki-colored jeans.
- Carpenter-style pants or pants with large pockets on the sides.
- Hats, caps, bandanas, hoods or night wraps. (Students may wear headbands for the purpose of holding back hair, but they may not cover the majority of the head and they must be Valor Collegiate colors.)
- Jackets or overcoats that are not official Valor jackets (except while outdoors)
- Beepers, iPods, cell-phones, or other electronic items. These items will be confiscated and returned only to a parent or guardian.
- Any clothing tied around the waist or neck.
- Any clothing which is inappropriate for the workplace (i.e. miniskirts, excessively baggy pants, elaborate jewelry, etc.).

No student will be admitted to class until his or her attire meets the requirements listed above. Families with questions or concerns about the uniform policy should consult the Principal. Further, the Principal and other faculty reserve the right to restrict individual items of clothing as necessary, given notification of a parent or guardian, if such clothing interferes with normal school activities.

Uniforms should be clean and neat at all times; students whose gym clothes are dirty or offensive smelling will be considered to be out-of-uniform and will be unable to participate.

## Attachment 23: School Visits

Mr. Dickson visited the following schools in his research for the design on Valor Collegiate Academy:

School	Location	Focus of Visit
Summit Public Schools: San Jose HS	San Jose, CA	Math Program
Rocketship: Si Se Puede ES	San Jose, CA	English Language Learner program
KIPP: Heartwood MS, HS	San Jose, CA	Leadership, Math
KIPP: King HS	Hayward, CA	Critical Thinking, History
Aspire: Phoenix Academy MS, HS	East Palo Alto, CA	Blended Math, Art
Leadership Public School: Richmond HS	Richmond, CA	Response to Intervention Untracked 9th grade, teacher leadership
Hillsdale High School	San Mateo, CA	
Synapse School ES, MS	Redwood City, CA	Social-Emotional Learning
High Tech High MS, HS	San Diego, CA	Project Based Learning
Democracy Prep MS	Harlem, NY	Middle School
North Star Academy ES	Newark, NJ	School systems
University Heights	Newark, NJ	Middle School
New Visions HS	Harlem, NY	Turnaround HS
KIPP TEAM High School	Newark, NJ	High School
KIPP Memphis	Memphis, TN	Mentoring, RtI, Reading Levels
Power Center	Memphis, TN	Blended Learning
Citizens of the World	Los Angeles, CA	Constructivist Learning
Denver School of Science and Tech	Denver, CO	Middle School
Strive Prep	Denver, CO	Middle School
GALS (Girls Athletic Leadership School)	Denver, CO	Fitness program

The following group of people helped give feedback, were thought partners, or gave helpful edits to the actual charter application. In addition, VCA conducted 25+ events in parent's living rooms in order to get insight and feedback on what they were interested in for their children.

### Nashville Family Input:

In addition, Mr. Dickson also conducted 26 family room events over the past 18 months in Nashville with parents of students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade or younger. From these meetings he was able to share his ideas about his model and listen to input from families on what type of educational they wanted for their children. A summary of the general findings of these meetings is given below:

In our meetings with parents, we have found a desire for the following school characteristics:

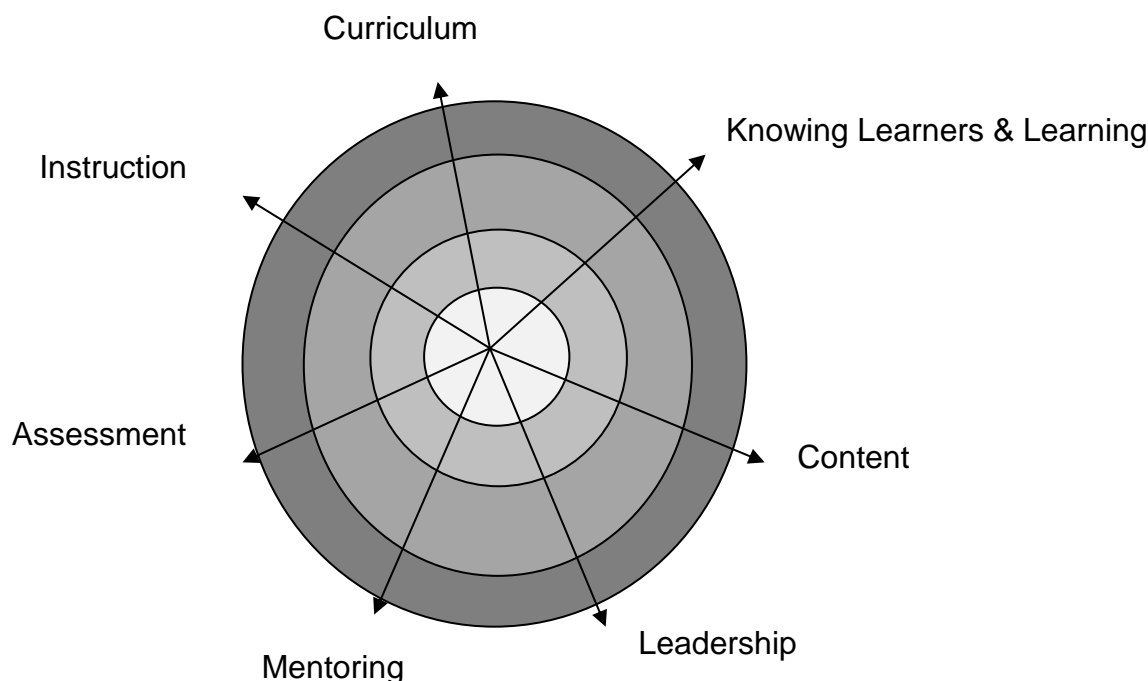
- Physically and emotionally safe culture
  - Small and personalized experience
  - Excellent at building strong character strengths as well as academics
  - A wide range of interesting elective courses and extra-curricular activities
  - Rigorous and college preparatory for all students
- Serves a truly diverse student population in a high performing environment

## Attachment 24 – Valor Continuum

### Valor Collegiate Professional Development Continuum

#### Valor’s Professional Development Program

Valor aims to attract, develop, and retain the highest-performing educators in the profession. The Professional Development Program aims to support this goal by 1) supporting individual Valor educators to grow as classroom teachers, mentors, and school leaders, and 2) creating a learning community that collaboratively examines our practices and their effects on student learning and the school community.



#### The Continuum

Valor educators will work to improve in seven “strands”, organized visually into a bull’s eye (above). These strands align with the Role of the Educator document, which defines the basic expectations of all Valor educators. The circles represent increasing proficiency in a particular area. The following describes what each level represents. Included are some ideas about what a teacher performing at a given level might also be doing – these are guidelines only.

#### Educator Levels on the Continuum

The Continuum is tied to the Valor Compensation structure as follows:

- There are six levels of performance that correlate to base salary compensation. Under this model, teachers performing at a specific level would receive base salary compensation within a defined band that would be competitive in the industry with a commensurate level of performance.
- The proposed levels are related to placement on the seven strands of the continuum.
  - (1) 1 or more Basic
  - (2) 7 of 7 Proficient
  - (3) 4 of 7 Highly Proficient (must include Instruction) and the other three must be proficient
  - (4) 7 of 7 Highly Proficient and National Board Certification
  - (5) 4 of 7 Expert and other three must be highly proficient
  - (6) 7 of 7 Expert



## Summary Sheet of Continuum Strands

<u>Continuum Strand</u>	<u>Substrands</u>
<b>I. Content</b>	<b>IA. Content Knowledge</b> <i>Understand the subject matter, as well as the history, structure, and real-world applications of the subject.</i>
	<b>IB. Pedagogical Content Knowledge</b> <i>Understand how the subject matter can be taught.</i>
<b>II. Curriculum</b>	<b>IIA. Differentiation</b> <i>Differentiate instruction when necessary in order to give students access and support in reaching for the same deep understandings.</i>
	<b>IIB. Facilitating Cooperative Learning</b> <i>Facilitates cooperative learning opportunities through complex instruction and collaborative instruction strategies</i>
	<b>IIC. Backwards Planning</b> <i>Utilizes the principles of <u>Understanding by Design</u> to create backwards planned units.</i>
	<b>IID. Interdisciplinary Teaching</b> <i>Enables students to make connections across subject areas by designing and implementing interdisciplinary curricula.</i>
<b>III. Instruction</b>	<b>IIIA. Classroom Management</b> <i>Manages any group of VCA students effectively (class, mentor group, Learning Lab, MARS, substituting, Study Trips, etc) – holding high expectations while letting students know we care.</i>
	<b>IIIB. Execution of Lessons/Curriculum</b> <i>Effectively executes curriculum/plans in class, mentor group, IL, MARS, substituting, etc</i>
<b>IV. Assessment</b>	<b>IVA. Formative Assessment</b> <i>Uses ongoing formative assessment to adjust planning and instruction.</i>
	<b>IVB. Authentic Assessment</b> <i>Provide meaningful authentic assessment opportunities to improve student learning.</i>
<b>V. Knowing Learners and Learning</b>	<b>VA. Adolescent Development</b> <i>Uses an understanding of how learning is affected by adolescent development, cultural/school context, and social and individual learning theory.</i>
	<b>VB. Special Needs &amp; Learning Differences</b> <i>Uses an understanding of how learning is affected by learning disabilities in order to meet the needs of students with learning differences.</i>
	<b>VC. English Language Learners</b> <i>Uses an understanding of how student learning is affected by language development in order to meet the needs of English Language Learners.</i>
<b>VI. Mentoring</b>	<b>VIA. Mentoring</b> <i>Serves as a role model, advocate, &amp; partner in education. Be informed about the college process, be able to teach about the process, and be able to counsel students about the process.</i>
<b>VII. Leadership</b>	<b>VIIA. Self Awareness</b> <b>VIIIB. Self Management</b> <b>VIIIC. Social Awareness</b> <b>VIIID. Relationship Management</b>

## One Example Rubric – additional rubrics not included due to space limits.

**I. Content.** Accomplished teachers have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history, structure, and real-world applications of the subject. (from NBPTS Core Principle #2) (CSTP 4)

Standards	Basic	Proficient	Highly Proficient	Expert
<b>IA. Content Knowledge</b>  <i>Understand the subject matter, as well as the history, structure, and real-world applications of the subject.</i>	I know and understand the information and skills encapsulated in the standards of my course.	I am knowledgeable in my content and familiar with the content of other courses in my discipline, and am able to build on skills and content taught previously, and teach skills and content that needed for future courses.	I am knowledgeable enough in my content to spiral within my content and knowledgeable enough in the other courses in my discipline to design intradisciplinary lessons and units designed to create a metaconceptual bonus for students.	I am knowledgeable enough in my content to spiral within my content, and knowledgeable enough in the other courses in my discipline to design and teach intradisciplinary lessons or units that intentionally lead to a metaconceptual bonus.
	I am committed to eventually teaching all levels of my discipline.	I am confident teaching half of the levels of my discipline.	I am confident teaching most levels of my discipline.	I am confident teaching all levels of my discipline.
	I recognize the value of content professional development.	I keep my content knowledge current by engaging in formal professional development.	I keep my content knowledge current by engaging in informal and formal professional development.	I keep my content knowledge current by engaging in regular formal and informal professional development and dialogue with the professional community of my discipline.
	I recognize the need for outside resources.	I can find resources to continue students' learning outside school.	I have resources to continue students' learning outside school.	I have resources to continue students' learning and to motivate student interest outside school.
<b>IB. Pedagogical Content Knowledge</b>  <i>Understand how the subject matter can be taught.</i>	I recognize the importance of teaching concepts at the heart of the discipline that are not part of my standards.	I am familiar with the concepts at the heart of the discipline that are not part of my standards.	I teach concepts at the heart of the discipline that are not part of my standards as separate lessons.	I incorporate concepts at the heart of the discipline that are not part of the standards into my core content.
	I recognize common difficulties and problem areas in my content.	I know common difficulties and problem areas in my content, and address them after they have been uncovered in students.	I proactively address common difficulties and problem areas.	I proactively address common difficulties and problem areas.
	I recognize misconceptions when students present them in class.	I know common misconceptions and alternate conceptions of my content, and deliberately uncover them.	I know and recognize common misconceptions and alternate conceptions of my content, and deliberately address them when they are uncovered.	I proactively provide experiences to uncover and address misconceptions and alternate conceptions.

## Attachment 25: Teacher Schedules

### Typical Teacher Day: Kindergarten

	"DU" Kinder Teacher	"USC" Kinder Teacher	"Auburn" Kinder Teacher	"Loyola" Kinder Teacher	Kinder SPED Teacher
7:30-8:00	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast
8:00 - 8:20	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	PUSH IN - Morning Meeting
8:20 - 8:50	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Resource - Literacy
8:50 - 9:05	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	
9:05 - 10:05	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	
10:05 - 10:20	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break
10:20 - 10:50	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING
10:50 - 10:55	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
10:55 - 11:55	Math	Math	Math	Math	Resource - Math
11:55 - 12:00	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
12:00 - 12:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:20 - 12:35	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
12:35 - 12:40	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
12:40 - 1:20	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing	PUSH IN - Writing
1:20 - 2:00	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	PUSH IN - Social Studies
2:00 - 2:05	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
2:05 - 2:35	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING
2:35 - 2:40	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
2:40 - 3:20	Science	Science	Science	Science	PUSH IN - Science
3:20 - 3:50	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RESOURCE
3:50 - 4:00	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up
4:00 - 4:10	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

**Typical Teacher Day: 1<sup>st</sup> Grade**

	<b>"Vanderbilt" 1st Teacher</b>	<b>"Harvard" 1st Teacher</b>	<b>"Morehouse" 1st Teacher</b>	<b>"Lipscomb" 1st Teacher</b>	<b>1st SPED Teacher</b>
<b>7:30-8:00</b>	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	
<b>8:00 - 8:20</b>	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	PUSH IN - Morning Meeting
<b>8:20 - 9:20</b>	Math	Math	Math	Math	RESOURCE - Math
<b>9:20 - 9:35</b>	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break	Bathroom Break
<b>9:35 - 10:05</b>	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING
<b>10:05 - 10:10</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>10:10 - 10:40</b>	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Read Aloud	Resource - Literacy
<b>10:40 - 10:55</b>	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	Shared Reading	
<b>10:55 - 11:55</b>	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	Literacy Stations	
<b>11:55 - 12:00</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>12:00 - 12:20</b>	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
<b>12:20 - 12:35</b>	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
<b>12:35 - 12:40</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>12:40 - 1:20</b>	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing	PUSH-IN Writing
<b>1:20 - 1:25</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>1:25 - 1:55</b>	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING	GRADE LEVEL PLANNING
<b>1:55 - 2:00</b>	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
<b>2:00 - 2:40</b>	Science	Science	Science	Science	PUSH-IN Science
<b>2:40 - 3:20</b>	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies	PUSH-IN Social Studies
<b>3:20 - 3:50</b>	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RtI Expeditions	RESOURCE
<b>3:50 - 4:00</b>	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up	Closing Circle and Pack-Up
<b>4:00 - 4:10</b>	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal

### Typical Teacher Day: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

	English	Math	Science	History	SPED	Coach
8:00 – 8:15	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
8:15 – 8:17	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
8:17 – 8:32	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM	MM
8:32 – 8:34	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
8:34-10:19	Reading	Math / Focus	Science / Fitness	History	Resource	Learning Lab
	Writing			History		Learning Lab
10:19-10:21	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
10:21-12:01	Reading	Planning	Planning	History	Learning Lab	Resource
	Writing			History	Learning Lab	
12:01-12:31	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:31-12:33	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
12:33-2:18	Reading	Math / Focus	Science / Fitness	History	Planning	Planning
	Writing			Planning	Learning lab	
2:18-2:20	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition	Transition
2:20-4:05	Planning	Math / Focus	Science / Fitness	History	Planning	Planning
				Planning		Learning lab
4:05-4:10	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
4:10-4:55	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours	Office Hours
4:55-5:00	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal	Dismissal
			Roamer			

## Attachment 26: Draft Valor Collegiate Salary Bands

VCA will have a Skill Based Step and Ladder as part of the compensation plan for faculty and leadership. As teachers improve on the Valor Professional Development Continuum they will receive raises to their Base Salary. The estimated Salary Bands are shown below:

Valor Collegiate Salary Bands		
Level	Range	Approx. Years Experience
Emerging	35k-44k	0-3 years
Accomplished	45k-54k	3-5 years
Master	55k-74k	5+ years
Expert	75k-100k	10+ years

VCA intends to hire a mixture of new and experienced teachers and pair those teachers on teaching teams. We will pay Emerging teachers a little less than the typical MNPS public teacher (with the value proposition that we will give them incredible professional development and coaching which will allow them to make more at VCA in 3-5 years.) We will pay Master teachers more than the typical MNPS veteran teacher. We anticipate

having very few Expert teachers, but do hope to encourage great teachers to stay in the classroom by having a “career” option in the classroom that rivals leadership positions within a school.

### **Salary**

Every employee’s base salary should meet the following criteria:

- Be competitive for the education industry.
- Reflect the current level of demonstrated skills, knowledge and performance of the employee.

### **Classroom-Based Employees**

For classroom-based employees, the VCA Continuum of Performance defines levels of skill, knowledge and performance, and allows for the transparent and objective assessment and evaluation of them. Thus, the Continuum should be the tool used to determine starting salaries and increases to the salary.

- There will be six levels of performance that correlate to base salary compensation. Under this model, teachers performing at a specific level would receive base salary compensation within a defined band that would be competitive in the industry with a commensurate level of performance.
- The levels are related to placement on the seven following strands of the continuum.

<b>(7) Emerging</b>	<b>1 or more Basic</b>
<b>(8) Accomplished</b>	<b>4 of 7 Highly Proficient</b>
<b>(9) Master</b>	<b>7 of 7 Highly Proficient and National Board Certification</b>
<b>(10) Expert</b>	<b>7 of 7 Expert</b>

- Any teacher who demonstrates a higher level of proficiency by January 30<sup>th</sup> of a school year will receive a salary increase consistent with the range for his/her new level of performance. The increase will be reflected in the salary beginning in September of the following school year.

### **Administrative Employees**

For administrative employees, the Educational Leadership Continuum defines levels of skill, knowledge and performance, and allows for the transparent and an objective assessment and evaluation of them. Thus, the Leadership Rubric should be the tool used to determine the starting salaries and increases to the salary of administrative employees.

- There will be six levels of performance that correlate to base salary compensation. Under this model, administrators performing at a specific level would receive base salary compensation within a defined band that would be competitive in the industry with a commiserate level of performance.
- The levels are related to placement on the seven strands of the continuum.

<b>(5) Emerging</b>	<b>1 or more Basic</b>
<b>(6) Accomplished</b>	<b>4 of 7 Highly Proficient</b>
<b>(7) Master</b>	<b>7 of 7 Highly Proficient and National Board Certification</b>
<b>(8) Expert</b>	<b>7 of 7 Expert</b>

- Any administrator who demonstrates a higher level of proficiency by January 30<sup>th</sup> of a school year will receive a salary increase consistent with the range for his/her new level of performance. The increase will be reflected in the salary beginning in September of the following school year.

VCA acknowledges that a continuum or its equivalent will need to be developed for other non-classroom based employees, for whom the Leadership Rubric is inappropriate.

## Attachment 27 – Professional Development: Summer Session Overview

### Calendar for 2015 Summer

July 2015						
S	M	T	W	Th	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	1
July 6 – July 24	<b>Faculty PD</b>					
27-Jul – 29-Jul	<b>Faculty PD AND Valor Institute</b>					
July 30 – July 31	<b>Valor Institute</b>					

#### Summer Sessions:

Professional Development in the Summer Sessions will generally be differentiated according to teacher need. However, in the first year all teachers will go through the same prescribed program in order that we all start at Valor on similar footing.

Each session will be 2 hours in length. We will do 3 sessions per day. The Calendar for the sessions is shown below:

Week 1	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
6-Jul	VCA Culture	Execution – Culture	VCA Culture
7-Jul	VCA Culture	Execution – Culture	VCA Culture
8-Jul	Academic Program	Assessments – English	Curriculum – English
9-Jul	Assessments – Literacy Training		Curriculum – English
10-Jul	Assessments – Math	Curriculum – Math	Curriculum – Math

Week 2	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
13-Jul	Execution – English	Assessments – Science	Curriculum – Science
14-Jul	Execution – Math	Curriculum – Science	VCA Culture
15-Jul	SPED	Mentoring	Execution – Science
16-Jul	SPED	Assessments – Social Studies	Curriculum – Social Studies
17-Jul	Curriculum – Social Studies	SEI 1	SEI 2



Week 3	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
20-Jul	Execution – Social Studies	VCA Culture	Perfect Day
21-Jul	ELL	Execution – Culture	Perfect Day
22-Jul	ELL	Execution – Academics	Tech/Blended
23- Jul	VCA Culture	Execution – Academics	Execution - Culture
24 - Jul	VCA Culture	Differentiated Execution	Execution - Culture

Week 4	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3
27-Jul	Valor Institute	Differentiated Execution	Perfect Day
28-Jul	Valor Institute		Perfect Day
29-Jul			Perfect Day
30- Jul	Valor Institute		
31 Jul			

#### **Descriptions of Sessions (92 hours)**

**VCA Culture:** Faculty will be given a clear and vivid introduction to what they VCA culture for faculty and students looks and feels like. VCA leadership will use video, role playing, students, and parents to describe the VCA culture. In the first year VCASE will use scholars and families from VCA’s first middle school to help describe and model the cultures at these schools). Faculty will also role play certain situations and be given feedback by VCA leadership. **(14 hours)**

**Special Education Development:** VCA leadership will conduct SPED training along with VCA’s Coach and expert Daren Dickson and SPED teacher Brooke Allen on best practices with IEP students, including reviewing and practicing the VCA RtI system, referral system, Grade Level team agendas, and typical high-yield strategies that are effective in the classroom. **(4 hours)**

**ELL Development:** Teachers will be trained for 2 days on the SIOP ELL model. This training will be integrated into the next two sessions (i.e., as faculty develop their assessments and curriculum for the school year, they will practice embedding high quality SIOP strategies into their lesson plans and curriculum – VCA leadership will give feedback on their implementations of the SIOP strategies. **(4 hours)**

**Assessment:** Faculty will be walked through the 5<sup>th</sup> grade assessments for each content area (English, Math, Science, Social Studies). Faculty will also be trained on administering any literacy level assessments. Faculty will then spend time in course teams breaking down assessment items, discussing objectives, and designing/revising internal assessments. **(12 hours)**

**Curriculum:** Faculty will be walked through the 5<sup>th</sup> grade scope and sequences and model unit plans by the Principal. Faculty will internalize their first units and make adjustments to these based on scholar data. Faculty will begin planning their 3<sup>rd</sup> unit and will write their lesson plans for the first month of the school year. **(16 hours)**

**Execution - Academics:** Faculty will practice and receive feedback on their execution of lessons. Faculty will work as a group and role-play classroom settings where each teacher will practice a select group of common classroom management techniques that will be used across the grade level. VCA leadership will introduce common techniques and then give feedback and coaching on their implementation. **(12 hours)**

**Execution – Culture:** Faculty will practice and receive feedback on their classroom management plan and development of classroom structures. Faculty will work as a group and role-play classroom settings where each

teacher will practice a select group of common classroom management techniques that will be used across the stage. VCA leadership and teachers will give feedback on implementation. (10 hours)

**Execution – Differentiated:** Faculty will practice and receive feedback on either execution of lessons or transitions and structures of choice. (4 hours)

**The Perfect Day:** Having crisp, safe, and organized transitions during non-classroom time is very important. VCA will practice every non-classroom time transition with the faculty and ensure that everyone is clear on their responsibilities at all times during the school day. (10 hours)

**Mentor 101:** The VCA SPED team will lead the faculty through 2 sessions on how to be an excellent mentor, mostly training faculty on the Social-Emotional models that they will use to coach students in their non-cognitive growth. (2 hours)

**Technology/Blended:** Faculty will be trained on their laptops and all technology software that will be used at VCA. (2 hours)

**Social Emotional Learning and Coaching:** Faculty will receive training from the CEO on the Six Seconds and Valor SEI model, and how it has been integrated into the Valor Curriculum, Mentoring program, and Badge system. (4 hours)