

## QUEST MIDDLE SCHOOL OF WEST LITTLE ROCK

<b>Sponsoring Entity:</b>	Responsive Education Solutions (ResponsiveEd)
<b>IRS Status:</b>	Recognized non-profit entity
<b>Grade Levels:</b>	6-12
<b>Student Enrollment Cap:</b>	490
<b>Address of Proposed Charter:</b>	1815 Rahling Road, Little Rock, AR 72223

### PRE-APPLICATION MATERIALS

The Arkansas Department of Education requires that all applicants submit a Letter of Intent, outlining a general description of the proposed charter school.

#### Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will guarantee that:

- A Letter of Intent was filed with Arkansas Department of Education on time and included all the necessary information.

#### Meets the Standard

### PART B EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arkansas Department of Education requires all applicants to include an executive summary.

#### Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A mission statement (with content to be evaluated for Prompt #3 of Part C); and
- The key programmatic features of the proposed charter school.

#### Meets the Standard

### C-1 PUBLIC HEARING RESULTS

All proposed school design teams must conduct a public hearing before applying for an open-enrollment charter school, to assess support for the school's establishment. Applicants are asked both to document the logistics of the hearing and to include a narrative of the hearing results.

#### Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A thorough description of the results of the public hearing;
- Evidence of public support exhibited at the hearing;
- Documentation of required notices published to garner public attention to the hearing; and
  - o Published on a weekly basis for at least three consecutive weeks prior to the date of the hearing in a newspaper having general circulation in the school district in which the school will likely be located
  - o The notice of the public hearing was not published in the classified or legal notice section of the newspaper.
  - o The last publication date of the notice was no less than seven days prior to the public meeting.
- Documentation of required notices of the public hearing to superintendents of districts from which the proposed school is likely to draw students and to superintendents of

districts that are contiguous to the district in which the charter school would be located

- o Within seven calendar days following the first publication.

**Meets the Standard**

**C-2 GOVERNING STRUCTURE**

The Governing Structure section should explain how the school will be governed. It should present a clear picture of the school's governance processes and composition, what responsibilities various groups and people will have and the relationships among the groups.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Documentation of proper legal structure of the governing board and sponsoring entity;
- A comprehensive description of the planned relationship between the governing board of the school and governing board of the sponsoring entity;
- A clear description of the governing board's roles and responsibilities;
- Adequate policies and procedures for board operation, including board composition, member term length, and member selection;
- A clear, sensible delineation of roles and responsibilities in relation to governance and school management; and
- A reasonable plan for involving parents, staff, students and community in the decision- making of the school.

**Partially Meets the Standard - Meets the Standard (Based on Response)**

**Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Provide the job description for the state director, budgeted at 0.25 FTE.

**Response:** The "State Director" referenced on the Personnel Salary Schedule is the "Regional Director" referenced in the 2013 Application: Open-Enrollment Public Charter School ("Charter Application"). The job description and professional qualifications for the Regional Director are found on Pages 8 and 25 of the Charter Application respectively.

**C-3 MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission Statement should be meaningful and indicate what the school intends to do, for whom, and to what degree.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A mission statement that is clear and succinct.

**Meets the Standard**

**C-4 EDUCATIONAL NEED**

The Educational Need section should explain the need for a charter school in the proposed location and the innovative educational option offered by the charter school.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A description of the educational need for the charter school substantiated with valid and reliable data, and
- A description of the innovations that would distinguish the charter from other school

**Meets the Standard**

### C-5 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

The Educational Program section should describe the educational foundation of the school and the teaching and learning strategies that will be employed.

#### Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A clear description of the proposed educational program, including but not limited to the foundational educational philosophy and curricular and instructional strategies to be employed;
- Specific reasons that the school would be viable; and
- A description of the length of school day and school year that meets minimum state requirements.

#### Meets the Standard

#### Concerns and Additional Questions:

- Provide the grade levels to be served by year with the maximum enrollment for each year.

#### Response:

School Year	Grade Levels	Student Enrollment
First Year	6-8	220
Second Year	6-9	280
Third Year	6-10	350
Fourth Year	6-11	420
Fifth Year	6-12	490
Maximum	6-12	490

- Confirm the understanding that every digital course must be offered from a provider approved by the Arkansas Department of Education and must meet or exceed curriculum standards and requirements established by the Arkansas State Board of Education in accordance with all laws, rules, and procedures promulgated to ensure access to quality digital learning content and online blended learning.

**Response:** Quest understands that every digital course must be offered from a provider approved by the Arkansas Department of Education and must meet or exceed curriculum standards and requirements established by the Arkansas State Board of Education in accordance with all laws, rules, and procedures promulgated to ensure access to quality digital learning content and online blended learning.

### C-6: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

The Academic Achievement Goals section should define the performance expectations for students and the school as whole.

#### Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Specific goals in:
  - o Reading;
  - o Reading Comprehension;
  - o Mathematics; and
  - o Mathematics Reasoning;
- Goals that are clear, measurable and data-driven;

- Goals on improving student achievement; and
- Valid and reliable assessment tools for measuring each of the defined goals.

**Partially Meets the Standard - Meets the Standard (Based on Response)**

**Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Define the specific subpopulations whose performance will be analyzed to determine if there is a narrowing of the achievement gap on state assessments.

**Response:** The subpopulations whose performance will be analyzed include: (1) Economically Disadvantaged, (2) English Language Learner, and (3) Special Education.

- Define “narrowing of the performance gaps” and quantify how much the gap will be narrowed to demonstrate measurable growth for students.

**Response:** The performance gaps identified in Quest’s first year of operation will be narrowed by 25% by the end of Quest’s fourth year of operation.

- Explain the manner in which “80% of state assessments over a three year time period” will be calculated.

**Response:** This goal is to be revised to read “In Reading/Mathematics, performance gaps identified in Quest’s first year of operation will be narrowed by 25% by the end of Quest’s fourth year of operation as demonstrated by student performance on mandated state assessments.”

- Define the “three year time period.”

**Response:** The “three year time period” is the time between Quest’s first and fourth years of operation.

- Confirm the understanding, that during the first year of operation, the charter’s annual measurable objectives (AMOs) will be based on the state AMOs, and that in following years, the charter’s AMOs will be based upon the academic performance of the students who attend the charter.

**Response:** Quest understands that, during the first year of operation, the charter’s annual measurable objectives (AMOs) will be based on the state AMOs, and that in following years, the charter’s AMOs will be based upon the academic performance of the students who attend the charter.

**C7: CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND ALIGNMENT**

The Curriculum Development and Alignment section should define the process by which the design team developed (or chose) the curricular program of the school and illustrate alignment with Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard of a curricular development and alignment program will

present:

- Evidence that the curriculum aligns with, or a sound plan and timeline for aligning the curriculum with, the Arkansas Department of Education’s content standards, benchmarks and performance standards.
- Evidence that the applicant is prepared to implement the requirements and timeframe of the Common Core State Standards.

**Does Not Meet the Standard - Meets the Standard (Based on Response)**

**Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Describe the process that will be used to develop and align the curriculum with the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and the curriculum requirements of the Common Core State Standards as adopted by the State Board of Education.

**Response:** Quest’s response to C.7. contains a typo. Having already been approved by the Arkansas State Board of Education to operate three open- enrollment charter schools—including Quest Middle School of Pine Bluff— ResponsiveEd’s team of 30+ writers, editors, proofreaders, and graphic artists have already aligned the curriculum with the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks in content areas **including** English Language Arts and Mathematics and the curriculum requirements of the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics as adopted by the State Board of Education.

- State the content areas in which there is curriculum alignment with the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and/or the Common Core State Standards as it is stated that there is alignment “in content areas **excluding** English Language Arts and Mathematics and the curriculum requirements of the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics as adopted by the State Board of Education.” (Emphasis added.)

**Response:** Quest’s response to C.7. contains a typo. ResponsiveEd’s team of 30+ writers, editors, proofreaders, and graphic artists have already aligned the curriculum with the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks in content areas **including** English Language Arts and Mathematics and the curriculum requirements of the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics as adopted by the State Board of Education.

**C-8: STUDENT SERVICES**

The Student Services section should describe how the school will address specific services for its student body.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will describe the ways in which the following services will be provided to students even in those areas for which a waiver is requested:

- A guidance program that will serve all students;
- A health services program that will serve all students;
- A plan for a media center for use by all students;
- Sound plans for educating special education students that reflect the full range of programs and services required to provide such students with a high quality education;
- A transportation plan that will serve all **eligible** students;

- An alternative education plan for eligible students, including those determined to be at-risk and to offer access to one or more approved Alternative Learning Environments;
- A plan to serve students who are English language learners; and
- Plans for offering access to one or more approved Alternative Learning Environments; and
- Plans for a gifted and talented program for eligible students.

**Partially Meets the Standard**

**Concerns and Additional Questions: Health**

- Explain how the charter will comply with health and safety services outlined in 16.03 of the Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Standards for Accreditation.

Response: Quest is seeking exemption from Rule 16 in order to obtain greater flexibility in the provision of its support services. Even so, health and safety services will be provided to the students attending Quest. Health screening services have been budgeted and will be performed by a qualified independent contractor. In addition, as part of the general administration provided by the sponsoring entity, a Director of Health and Safety will have the following duties and responsibilities:

- Develop policies, procedures, and work standards for school health program.
- Monitor compliance of school health program with federal, state and local laws, regulations and policies.
- Collaborate with other child-support agencies in designing and providing a school health program.
- Negotiate professional and medical services essential to the school health program.
- Provide professional development on health-related topics for school staff.
- Screen and conduct health appraisals for students and staff.
- Provide follow-up evaluations on students as required

- Explain the ways in which daily responsibilities for student health issues will be handled and by whom.

Response: Daily responsibilities for student health issues will be handled by school staff who have been trained by the Director of Health and Safety or (if professional medical expertise is required) qualified independent contractors.

**Special Education Services**

- Confirm the understanding that RTI cannot replace referrals for special education services.

Response: Quest understands that RTI cannot replace referrals for special education services.

- Confirm that all state and federal special education laws and rules will be followed.

**Response:** Quest confirms that all state and federal special education laws and rules will be followed

### **Transportation Services**

- Provide the student transportation plan.

**Response:** Quest has budgeted \$99,000.00 each year to develop and implement a transportation program designed to ensure that all eligible Little Rock students who wish to attend Quest may do so. While the transportation program has not yet been fully developed, it is anticipated that the program will include a combination of both school and public bus transportation.

### **English Language Learner Services**

- Revise the budget as it states that funds for the English Language Learner Program are dependent on federal funds, but the services must be provided even without federal funds.

**Response:** The budget will be revised to reflect the requested revision.

### **Gifted and Talented Services**

- Describe the program assessment that could result in the determination of the need for a gifted and talented program.

**Response:** Not applicable. Quest is seeking exemption from all laws, rules, and standards that would require Quest to provide a gifted and talented program. Instead, Quest will offer interested students an opportunity to take part in dual-enrollment, pre-AP, and AP classes.

- Confirm the understanding that offering dual-enrollment, pre AP, and AP classes does not constitute a gifted and talented program.

**Response:** Quest confirms its understanding that offering dual-enrollment, pre AP, and AP classes does not constitute a gifted and talented program.

- Confirm that AP classes will be offered in accordance with state law.

**Response:** Quest confirms that AP classes will be offered in accordance with state law.

- Explain how gifted and talented students will be identified.

**Response:** Not applicable. Quest is seeking exemption from all laws, rules, and standards that would require Quest to provide a gifted and talented program. Instead, Quest will offer interested students an opportunity to take part in dual-enrollment, pre-AP, and AP classes.

- Explain which teachers will serve gifted and talented students and describe specific training that the teachers will receive in meeting the needs of gifted and talented students.

**Response:** Not applicable. Quest is seeking exemption from all laws, rules, and standards that would require Quest to provide a gifted and talented program. Instead, Quest will offer interested students an opportunity to take part in dual-enrollment, pre-AP, and AP classes.

- Explain how the social and emotional needs of gifted and talented students will be met.

**Response:** Not applicable. Quest is seeking exemption from all laws, rules, and standards that would require Quest to provide a gifted and talented program. Instead, Quest will offer interested students an opportunity to take part in dual-enrollment, pre-AP, and AP classes.

### **C-9: GEOGRAPHICAL SERVICE AREA**

The Geographical Service Area section must outline the impact of a new school opening within the current public education system.

#### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- The specific geographical area that would be served by the charter school; and
- Information on the school districts likely to be affected by charter school, including data on the expected number of students to transfer to the charter school.

#### **Partially Meets the Standard**

##### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Explain how the following sentence relates to the geographical area to be served by the charter, "Quest's use of a classical based curriculum will ensure students a solid foundation of content learning."

**Response:** The referenced sentence does not relate directly to a description of the geographic area to be served by Quest so much as it describes one characteristic of Quest's overall education program.

- Discuss the classical based curriculum that will be used at Quest as this was not mentioned in the educational program.

**Response:** The reference to a "classical based curriculum" describes one characteristic of Quest's overall educational program. Quest's curriculum is "classical" in that it provides students with the tools of learning necessary to be well-rounded human beings who know who they are and understand the world around them. These tools help students acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to live virtuous and happy lives. The classical nature of Quest's curriculum accomplishes this by teaching students at the points of their physiological strengths and by respecting a proper hierarchy of knowledge. It places its historical, literary, and artistic focus on what are referred to as "The Classics" and offers purposeful study of mathematics and the sciences.

### **C-10: ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS**

The Annual Progress Reports section should define how the academic progress of individual students and the school as a whole will be measured, analyzed, and reported.

#### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A timeline for data compilation and completion of an annual report to parents, the community and the Charter Authorizing Panel that outlines the school's progress; and
- A plan for dissemination of the annual report to appropriate stakeholders.

Meets the Standard

### **C-11: ENROLLMENT CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES**

The Enrollment Criteria and Procedures section should describe how the school will attract and enroll its student body, including any criteria for admission and enrollment. Applicants must also provide assurances for a random, anonymous lottery selection process.

#### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A student recruitment plan that will provide equal opportunity for all parents and students to learn about and apply to the school;
- An enrollment and admissions process that is open, fair, and in accordance with applicable law; and
- A process for, and a guarantee of, a random, anonymous lottery process should there be more student applications than can be accommodated under the terms of the charter.

Partially Meets the Standard - Meets the Standard (Based on Response)

#### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Explain the lawful criteria pertaining to admission and enrollment identified in the charter.

**Response:** The reference to “lawful criteria” refers to: (1) Quest’s enrollment cap, (2) “qualifying residency,” and (3) qualifying “disciplinary history.”

- Clarify the terms “qualifying residency” and “disciplinary history” as they relate to admission and enrollment in the charter school.

**Response:** “[Q]ualifying residency” refers to Quest’s approved geographic region. To be “eligible for admission,” a student must reside in Quest’s approved geographic region. Likewise, to be “eligible for admission,” a student may not have any disqualifying “disciplinary history.” As described in the Charter Application, Quest “shall exclude a student from admission who has been expelled from another public school district in accordance with Title 6 of the Arkansas Education Code.”

### **C-12: STAFFING PLAN**

The Staffing Plan section should describe the job duties of the school director and other key personnel. This section should also describe the professional qualifications which will be required of employees.

#### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A job description for the school director and other key personnel, including but not limited to an operations director, board members, teachers, etc.;
- An outline of the professional qualifications required for administrators, teachers, counselors, etc.;
- A staffing plan that clearly outlines both the types and numbers of positions to be filled at the school and salary scales for such positions, and

- The staffing plan presented in this section matches the staff members noted in the budget.

**Partially Meets the Standard - Meets the Standard (Based on Response)**

**Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Provide the educational qualifications for the following positions:
- Superintendent;
- Regional director;
- State director, and
- Campus director.

**Response:** The Superintendent, Regional Director (which is the State Director), and Campus Director must each have a bachelor’s degree from a four-year college or university.

**C-13: BUSINESS AND BUDGETING PLAN**

The Business and Budgeting Plan section should describe how the charter school will organize its business office and manage its fiscal responsibilities.

**Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- An appropriate plan for managing procurement activities;
- A description of the personnel who will perform business duties, including the requisite qualifications of any proposed personnel;
- A realistic timeline and process by which the governance structure will review and adopt an annual budget;
- A balanced two-year budget estimate that accurately reflects the revenue currently available to the school and expenditures for program implementation and does not rely on one-time grants or other funds that are not presently guaranteed, and
- A budget that includes costs for all personnel, programs, and expenses described in other sections of the application.

**Partially Meets the Standard**

**Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Confirm that the charter will comply with state and federal procurement laws and rules unless waivers of state laws and rules are approved by the charter authorizer.

**Response:** Quest confirms that the charter will comply with state and federal procurement laws and rules unless waivers of state laws and rules are approved by the charter authorizer.

- Confirm that the charter will comply with federal procurement laws and rules even if waivers of state laws and rules are approved as federal regulations cannot be waived.

**Response:** Quest confirms that the charter will comply with federal procurement laws and rules even if waivers of state laws and rules are approved as federal regulations cannot be waived.

- Confirm that there will be sound business reasons for purchases of all amounts.

**Response:** Quest confirms that there will be sound business reasons for purchases of all amounts.

- Remove the name of the CFO and refer to the position so that the charter document will not need revision if there is any change to the person who holds the position.

**Response:** The name of the CFO will be removed from the charter document as requested.

- Provide documentation that demonstrates the other sources of funding is guaranteed or revise the budget excluding \$300,000 in 2014-2015 and \$100,000 in 2015-2016 as revenue.

**Response:** ResponsiveEd, as the sponsoring entity applying for the charter, guarantees that it will provide Quest with up to \$300,000.00 in 2014-2015 and up to \$100,000.00 in 2015-2016 should Quest fail to receive this revenue from other sources.

#### **C-14: FINANCIAL AND PROGRAMMATIC AUDIT PLAN**

The Financial and Programmatic Audit Plan section should provide the procedure and timeline by which an annual audit will be conducted. This section should also include an outline for the information that will need to be reported to ADE and the community.

##### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A sound plan for annually auditing school's financial and programmatic operations.  
If the application names an accountant other than the Division of Legislative Audit to perform the first-year audit, the named accountant meets the requirements of Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Publicly Funded Educational Institution Audit Requirements and is not listed on any ineligibility list maintained by ADE or the Division of Legislative Audit.

**Meets the Standard**

**C-15: ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOL COMPUTER NETWORK ASSURANCES** The Arkansas Public School Computer Network (APSCN) Assurances section should provide documentation of the applicant's understanding of and participation in the required state finance and educational data reporting system.

##### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Assurance that the charter school will participate in APSCN and will comply with all state statutory requirements regarding the APSCN finance and educational data reporting system.

**Meets the Standard**

#### **C-16: FACILITIES**

The Facilities section should identify and describe the facilities to be used by the school, any changes to be made to the facilities, and the owners of the facilities.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- An identified facility appropriate to meet the needs of the school over the term of its charter;
- A realistic plan for remodeling or adapting a facility, if necessary, to ensure that it is appropriate and adequate for the school's program, the school's targeted population, and the public;
- Evidence that the school understands the costs of securing and improving a facility and has access to the necessary resources to fund the facility plan; and
- A sound plan for continued operation, maintenance, and repair of the facility.

For schools that will be using district-owned facilities, a response that meets the standard will present:

- Documentation that the school district and charter school officials are in agreement over the use of the facility and its equipment.

For schools that will NOT be using district-owned facilities, a response that meets the standard will present:

- Documentation that the property owner and school are in agreement over the use of the facility and its equipment;
- A statement of the facilities' compliance with applicable codes; and
- A detailed outline of any relationships between the property owner and:
  - o Members of the local board of the public school district where the charter school will be located;
  - o The employees of the public school district where the charter school will be located;
  - o The sponsor of the charter school; and
  - o Employees, directors and/or administrators of the charter school.

### **Meets the Standard**

## **C-17: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Conflicts of Interest section should identify any potential conflicts of interest among the individuals involved with the proposed charter school and explain how conflicts will be addressed.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present full disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest and explain how conflicts, if any, will be addressed.

### **Partially Meets the Standard - Meets the Standard (Based on Response)**

#### **Legal Questions:**

- Explain the procedures that **will be followed** if a conflict of interest is identified. The procedures must ensure that all actions are in the best interest of the school and the students at the school.

**Response:** If a conflict of interest is identified, the individual with the conflict must disclose the conflict to his or her supervisor and abstain from any decision-making process involving the conflict. By requiring such disclosure and removing the person with the conflict from the decision-making process, the procedures ensure that all actions are in the best interest of the school and the students at the school.

## **C18: FOOD SERVICES**

This section should describe how the school will address food services for its student body.

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A food service plan that will serve all eligible students.
- A management plan that reflects a clear understanding of federal law and requirements if the charter school plans to participate in the National School Lunch program.

### **Partially Meets the Standard**

#### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Confirm that federal procurement guidelines will be followed when the charter selects a food service vendor.

**Response:** Quest confirms that federal procurement guidelines will be followed when the charter selects a food service vendor.

- Remove the reference to Quest of Pine Bluff.

**Response:** The reference to “Quest of Pine Bluff” will be revised to read “Quest.”

- Remove the food services funding from the budget as federal funds were not to be included as revenue.

**Response:** The budget will be revised to reflect the requested revision.

## **C19: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

The Parental Involvement section should describe how parents or guardians of enrolled students, the school employees, and other members of the community will make a positive impact on the school and its educational program.

Evaluation Criteria:

A response that meets the standard will present:

- A plan for involving parents and guardians in the school’s education programs; and
- A proposal that involves the parents of students, employees and the broader community in carrying out the terms of the charter.

### **Partially Meets the Standard - Meets the Standard (Based on Response)**

#### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Explain how members of the community, other than parents, guardians, and school employees will be involved to make a positive impact on the school and its educational program.

**Response:** Members of the community will have the opportunity to be involved in and make a positive impact on the school and its educational program through participation in the Community Advisory Council (see Charter Application, Page 8). In addition, Quest will strive to keep members of the community involved in the happenings of Quest through the use of on-site informational campus meetings; annual gatherings allowing questions and community feedback; informational newsletters; and web-based communication of school news. Finally, Quest will pursue partnerships with community leaders who support the

school's mission and goals.

### **C-20: WAIVERS**

The Waivers section should discuss all waivers requested from local or state law.

#### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Each law, rule, and standard by title, number, and description for which a waiver is requested;
- A rationale for each waiver request; and
- An explanation of the way that each waiver would assist in implementing the educational program of the charter and/or fulfilling the charter's mission.

#### **Does Not Meet the Standard**

##### **Legal Questions:**

Generally:

Ark. Code Ann. §6-23-302(c)(4) requires the application to list the specific provisions of Title VI and the specific rules and regulations promulgated by the state board from which the open-enrollment charter seeks to be exempted. Phrases such as "but not limited to," "all other provisions of the Education Code required to give effect to this waiver," "all rules required to give effect to this waiver," and "all standards required to give effect to this waiver" should not be included. Each statute, rule, and standard should be specifically listed. Brief, but specific rationale other than "to meet the goals of the school," for each waiver should be included.

Without specific and inclusive waivers requested and explained, a thorough analysis of the applicant's waivers cannot be completed. However, some issues to consider are addressed below.

##### **Requested Waivers:**

- **Ark. Code Ann. § 6-10-106 School Year Dates**

This waiver is not necessary to accommodate the applicant's planned adherence to the Little Rock School District's schedule. The applicant should explain why this waiver is necessary.

- **Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-902(a) Grading Scale**

Based on the application, it is not apparent why this waiver is necessary. Please explain.

Typically, this waiver has only been granted as to non-core courses when the request is made in a new charter school application. The waiver has been granted as to core courses

only after a charter school has established itself and demonstrated a substantial need for the waiver. In addition, the waiver may be granted only to the extent that the proposed grading scale is more rigorous than the scale provided by statute.

- **Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-211 Mandatory Attendance for Students in Grades 9-12**

Based on the application, it is not apparent why this waiver is necessary. Please explain.

- **Standards for Accreditation 9.03.4 38 units**

Please explain the need for this waiver. Typically, a waiver of this Standard has only been granted for charters as they phase in grades.

- **Standards for Accreditation 10.02 Class Size and Teaching Load**

Based on the application, it is not apparent why this waiver is necessary. Please explain.

Typically, this waiver has only been granted if the applicant proposes specific alternative maximum teacher-student ratios.

- **Standards for Accreditation 14.03 Unit of Credit and Clock Hours Per Unit**

Based on the application, it is not apparent why this waiver is necessary. Please explain.

**Response:** In response to the foregoing general guidance and specific concerns, Quest revises its request for waivers as follows:

### **GENERAL INAPPLICABILITY**

#### **Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated:**

- 6-13-619 (Meetings): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires monthly meetings and prohibits removal of a member of the board by a majority vote of the remaining board members for any reason. Quest seeks to hold meetings as often as necessary to address the needs of the school, whether weekly, monthly, quarterly, etc. Quest seeks to provide the board with the flexibility to determine its membership.
- 6-13-620 (Powers and Duties of School Boards): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires employment contracts, requires the incorporation of employment policies in all employment contracts, and conflicts with the delegation of powers and duties between the ResponsiveEd Board and Quest Board described in the Charter Application.

- 6-13-622 (Budget Publication): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires the publication of the school budget and refers to board elections. Quest requests that it be permitted to provide its budget to the public as needed in response to public information requests.
- 6-13-634 (School District Board of Directors-Size): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it is generally not applicable in the open-enrollment charter school context.
- Chapter 14 (School Elections): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it is generally not applicable in the open- enrollment charter school context.

**State Board of Education Rules:**

- ADE Rules Governing School Board Zones and Rezoning: Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it is generally not applicable in the open-enrollment charter school context.
- ADE Rules Governing School Election Reimbursement: Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it is generally not applicable in the open-enrollment charter school context.

**SUPERINTENDENT, PRINCIPAL, AND TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND LICENSURE**

**Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated:**

Quest seeks exemption from the following provisions to the extent that they require superintendents, principals, and teachers to be certified and/or licensed. Quest seeks the flexibility to identify and hire those individuals best suited to facilitate the school's unique educational program. Quest will hire “highly qualified” teachers (as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001).

- 6-13-109 (School Superintendent)
- 6-15-1004 (Qualified Teachers in Every Public School Classroom)
- 6-17-301 (Employment of Certified Personnel)
- 6-17-302(Public School Principals – Qualifications and Responsibilities)
- 6-17-309 (Certification - Waiver)
- 6-17-401 (Teacher's License Requirement)
- 6-17-427(Superintendent License-Superintendent Mentoring Program Required)
- Chapter 17, Subchapter 4 (Certification Generally)
- 6-17-902 (Definitions)
- 6-17-919 (Warrants Void Without Valid Certificate and Contract)

### **State Board of Education Rules:**

Quest seeks exemption from the following provisions to the extent that they require superintendents, principals, and teachers to be certified and/or licensed. Quest seeks the flexibility to identify and hire those individuals best suited to facilitate the school's unique educational program. Quest will hire “highly qualified” teachers (as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001).

- ADE Rules Governing Educator Licensure
- ADE Rules Governing Superintendent Mentoring Program

### **Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts:**

Quest seeks exemption from the following provisions to the extent that they require superintendents, principals, and teachers to be certified and/or licensed. Quest seeks the flexibility to identify and hire those individuals best suited to facilitate the school's unique educational program. Quest will hire “highly qualified” teachers (as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001).

- 15.01 (School District Superintendent)
- 15.02 (Principals)
- 15.03 (Licensure and Renewal)

## **EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS**

### **Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated:**

Quest seeks exemption from the following provisions to the extent that they require employees to be under contract. Quest seeks the flexibility to hire all employees on an “at-will” basis, maintaining the flexibility to dismiss employees when it becomes apparent that they are not performing up to the high standards required for successful implementation of the school’s unique educational program. Employees will have the ability to appeal their dismissal in accordance with a grievance policy adopted by the ResponsiveEd Board.

- 6-17-117 (Non-instructional Duties)
- 6-17-201 (Certified Personnel Policies and Committees)
- 6-17-301 (Employment of Certified Personnel)
- 6-17-302(Public School Principals- Qualifications and Responsibilities)
- 6-17-919 (Warrants Void Without Valid Certificate and Contract)
- 6-17, Subchapter 15 (Teacher Fair Dismissal Act)
- 6-17, Subchapter 17 (Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act)
- 6-17-2301 et seq. (Classified School Employee Personnel Policy Law)

## **EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION, LEAVE, AND BREAKS**

### **Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated:**

Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires specific employee benefits relating to compensation, leave, and breaks. Quest seeks the flexibility to develop its

own employee compensation and leave package to attract those employees it deems likely to contribute meaningfully to the successful implementation of the schools' unique educational program.

- 6-17-111 (Duty-Free Lunch Period)
- 6-17-201 (Personnel Policies Requirements)
- 6-17-211 (Use of Personal Leave When Administrator of School Employee is Absent from Campus)
- 6-17-908 (Teachers' Salary Fund-Authorized Disbursements)
- 6-17-1001 (Minimum Base Salary)
- 6-17, Subchapter 12 (Teachers' Minimum Sick Leave Law)
- 6-17, Subchapter 13 (School Employees' Minimum Sick Leave Law)
- 6-17, Subchapter 22 (Classified School Employee Minimum Salary Act)
- 6-17, Subchapter 24 (Teacher Compensation Program of 2003)

## **ACADEMICS**

### **Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated:**

- 6-15-902(a) (Grading Scale): Quest seeks exemption from this provision so that it may implement a more rigorous grading scale.
- 6-15-1005(b)(5) (Alternative Learning Environments): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to offer an alternative learning environment. Quest itself, as a school of choice, is an alternative learning environment.
- 6-16-102 (School Day Hours): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it defines the length of a "school day." Quest requests the flexibility to implement its mastery-based educational program, which may necessitate a "school day" of more or fewer than six hours.
- 6-16-1204 (Implementation): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to offer pre-AP courses. Quest requests the flexibility to offer pre-AP courses as student interest and need dictates.
- 6-17-114 (Daily Planning Period): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to provide teachers with time for conferences, instructional planning, and preparation. Instead, such time is to be spent before or after school without and addition to the teacher's base pay. Time for instructional planning and preparation should be greatly reduced given Quest's academic support and curriculum resources.
- 6-18-211 (Mandatory Attendance for Students in Grades Nine through Twelve): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires students in grades nine through twelve (9-12) to enroll in no less than three hundred fifty (350) minutes of planned instructional time each day as a requirement for graduation.

Quest requests the flexibility to implement its mastery-based educational program, which may necessitate more or fewer than 350 minutes of planned instructional time each day.

- 6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(i) (Alternative Learning Environments): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to offer an alternative learning environment. Quest itself, as a school of choice, is an alternative learning environment.
- 6-20-2208(c)(6) (Gifted and Talented): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to provide a gifted and talented program. Instead, Quest will offer interested students an opportunity to take part in dual-enrollment, pre-AP, and AP classes.
- 6-21-303 (Rules): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to reimburse teachers for personal expenditures on classroom supplies. All educational materials necessary for the effective implementation of Quests educational program will be provided to the teacher as established in the school budget.
- 6-42, Subchapter 1 (Gifted and Talented): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to provide a gifted and talented program. Instead, Quest will offer interested students an opportunity to take part in dual-enrollment, pre-AP, and AP classes.
- 6-48, Subchapter 1 (Alternative Learning Environments): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to offer an alternative learning environment. Quest itself, as a school of choice, is an alternative learning environment.

#### **State Board of Education Rules:**

- ADE Rules for Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards: Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to provide a gifted and talented program. Instead, Quest will offer interested students an opportunity to take part in dual-enrollment, pre-AP, and AP classes.
- ADE Rules Governing Waivers for Substitute Teachers: Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to ensure that no class of students receives instructions from a substitute teacher(s) for more than thirty (30) consecutive school days in the same class during the year. Quest requests the flexibility to identify and utilize those substitute teachers who it believes will effectively implement its unique educational program.
- ADE Rules Governing Parental Notification of an Assignment of a Non-Licensed Teacher to Teach a Class for More Than Thirty (30) Consecutive Days and for Granting Waivers: Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it

requires Quest to obtain a waiver from the Arkansas Department of Education for teachers who will be teaching outside of the grade level or subject area they are licensed to teach for more than thirty (30) consecutive school days in the same class during a school year. Quest requests the flexibility to identify and utilize those teachers who it believes will effectively implement its unique educational program.

- Section 4 of the ADE Rules Governing the Distribution of Student Special Needs Funding and the Determination of Allowable Expenditures of those Funds (Alternative Learning Environments): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to offer an alternative learning environment. Quest itself, as a school of choice, is an alternative learning environment.

### **Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts:**

- 9.0 (Curriculum): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it conflicts with the educational program described in the Charter Application.
- 9.03.4 (38 Units of Credit): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires all 38 units to be taught annually. Instead, Quest requests the flexibility to offer those courses necessary to enable a student to obtain the requisite 22 units required for graduation.
- 10.02 (Class Size and Teaching Load): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires a certain teacher/student ratio. Instead, Quest requests the flexibility to establish teacher/student ratios that best implements its individualized educational program.
- 14.03 (Unit of Credit and Clock Hours for a Unit of Credit): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it sets a minimum of 120 clock hours for each unit of credit. Quest is a mastery-based system. As such, a unit of credit may be earned in fewer than 120 clock hours.
- 15.01 (School District Superintendent): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires the employment of a full-time superintendent when enrollment exceeds 300. The superintendent for Quest oversees the operations of several charters.
- 18 (Gifted and Talented Education): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to provide a gifted and talented program. Instead, Quest will offer interested students an opportunity to take part in dual-enrollment, pre-AP, and AP classes.
- 19.03 (Alternate Learning Environments): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to offer an alternative learning environment. Quest itself, as a school of choice, is an alternative learning environment.

- 19.04 (Summer School and Adult Education Programs): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires Quest to provide opportunities for summer school and adult education programs. Instead, Quest requests that it be permitted to focus on the educational program described in the Charter Application.

## **SUPPORT SERVICES**

### **Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated:**

Quest seeks exemption from the following provisions to the extent that it requires specific support services (e.g., guidance and counseling, media services, health and safety services, etc.). Quest seeks flexibility to provide those support services which it determines are integral to its unique educational program. This is especially critical given Quest's limited budgetary resources.

- 6-18, Subchapter 10 (Public School Student Services Act)
- Chapter 25 (Public School Library Media and Technology Act)

### **State Board of Education Rules:**

- ADE Rules Governing Public School Student Services: Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires specific support services (e.g., guidance and counseling, media services, health and safety services, etc.). Quest seeks flexibility to provide those support services which it determines are integral to its unique educational program. This is especially critical given Quest's limited budgetary resources.

### **Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts:**

- 16 (Support Services): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires specific support services (e.g., guidance and counseling, media services, health and safety services, etc.). Quest seeks flexibility to provide those support services which it determines are integral to its unique educational program. This is especially critical given Quest's limited budgetary resources.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Title 6 of the Arkansas Code Annotated:**

- 6-10-106 (Uniform Dates for Beginning and End of School Year): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it is required to permit Quest to follow the school calendar for the Little Rock School District.
- 6-11-129 (Data to be Accessible on Website): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires the listed information to be identified on its website. Instead, Quest seeks to make such information available to the public as

requested in response to public information requests.

- 6-15-2302 (General Business Manager): Quest seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it requires a general business manager for a public school district to meet the minimum qualifications established by rule of the Department of Education. Quest seeks the flexibility to hire a general business manager that is able to address the unique needs of the school's business model.
- 6-16-105 (United States Flag): Quest seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it requires the erection of a flagstaff on the school grounds. Quest may be leasing its facilities. As such, it may not be permitted to erect a flagstaff on the leased property. Otherwise, Quest will seek alternative methods for prominently displaying the United States flag.
- 6-16-106 (Arkansas Flag): Quest seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it requires the erection of a flagstaff on the school grounds. Quest may be leasing its facilities. As such, it may not be permitted to erect a flagstaff on the leased property. Otherwise, Quest will seek alternative methods for prominently displaying the Arkansas flag.
- 6-17-201 et seq. (Committee for Each School District): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that mandates the content, distribution, revision, and effective date of Quest personnel policies. Instead, Quest seeks the flexibility regarding the content, distribution, revision, effective date of its personnel policies.
- 6-17-908(a)(4)(B) (Teachers' Salary Fund): Quest seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it requires insurance or other fringe benefits to be approved by a majority of the teachers in the school district. Instead, the provisions of insurance or other fringe benefits will be considered and provided pursuant to action by the ResponsiveEd Board.
- 6-17, Subchapter 23 (Personnel Policy Law for Classified Employees): Quest seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code. Instead, the ResponsiveEd Board will adopt personnel policies, including, but are not limited to, the following terms and conditions of employment: salary schedule, fringe benefits, and other compensation issues; annual school calendar, including work days and holidays; evaluation procedures; leave; grievance procedures; termination or suspension; reduction in force; and assignments.
- 6-17-2802 (Teacher Excellence and Support System): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires the form of teacher evaluation. Quest seeks the flexibility to evaluate its staff to ensure successful implementation of the school's unique educational program.
- Chapter 19 (Transportation): Quest seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it conflicts with the transportation services described

herein.

- 6-21-117 (Leased Academic Facilities): Quest seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it requires that facilities leased by Quest to conform to the school facility standards defined in the Arkansas School Facility Manual. Considering initial enrollment size, it will be difficult to financially follow through with this requirement. The applicant ensures that any and all facilities that it leases for academic purposes shall meet the requirements of all state and local health and safety codes, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
- 6-21-304 (Manner of Making Purchases): Quest seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it requires bidding in each instance in which the estimated purchase price shall equal or exceed \$10,000. For purchases between \$1,000 and \$50,000, Quest will use either a state approved vendor or obtain a minimum of three quotes. Quest will obtain bids in each instance in which the estimated purchase price shall equal or exceed \$50,000.

#### **State Board of Education Rules:**

- ADE Rules Governing Minimum Qualifications for General Business Managers: Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires a general business manager for a public school district to meet the minimum qualifications. Quest seeks the flexibility to hire a general business manager that is able to address the unique needs of the school's business model.

#### **Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts:**

- 21.0 (Auxiliary Services): Quest seeks exemption from this provision to the extent that it requires that transportation and food services be provided in a manner inconsistent with the Charter Application.

#### **C-21: DESEGREGATION ASSURANCES**

The Desegregation Assurances section should describe the applicant's understanding of applicable statutory and regulatory obligations to create and maintain a unitary system of desegregated public schools.

##### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- Assurance that the charter school will comply with all applicable federal and state statutory and regulatory requirements regarding the creation and maintenance of desegregated public schools; and
- An outline of the potential impact of the proposed charter school on those desegregation efforts already in place in affected public school districts.

**Meets the Standard**

## **C-22: SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAM**

The Sustainability section should describe the applicants' plan to ensure continued success of the charter school over time.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

A response that meets the standard will present:

- The names, experience, and qualifications of the individuals responsible for the application; and
- The plan to ensure the sustainability of the charter in the future.

### **Partially Meets the Standard - Meets the Standard (Based on Response)**

#### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Explain the actions to be taken by the founders "to ensure a seamless transition when it comes time to turn the reigns of leadership over to their successors."

**Response:** Established in 1998, the sponsoring entity is an established organization whose 1,200+ employees currently operate more than 65 charter schools throughout Arkansas and Texas. As such, the infrastructure and policies are in place to ensure the success of the charter school when others are placed in leadership positions.

## **REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS**

#### **Concerns and Additional Questions:**

- Revise the Facilities Utilization Agreement to show that the terms are contingent upon approval of the charter to open by August 2014.

**Response:** The Facilities Utilization Agreement has been revised and attached as requested.

**OPEN-ENROLLMENT PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL  
FACILITIES UTILIZATION AGREEMENT**

Lessor(Owner): Two Rahling Centre, LLC

Lessee(Tenant): Responsive Education Solutions

Any information regarding affiliation, family ties, or other relationships between the Lessor (Owner) and Lessee (Tenant) must be disclosed with the facilities lease agreement.

Describe the present use of the facility:

The building is presently vacant and was constructed about three years ago.

Address of Premises: 1815 Rahling Road, Little Rock, AR 72223

Square Footage: 22,563

Terms of Lease: Ten (10) year lease period

Rental Amount: \$41,365.50/mo.;\$496,386.00/yr

Contingency: The terms of this agreement are contingent upon

Responsive Education Solutions

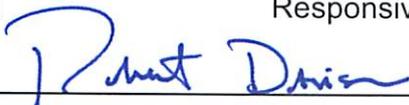
Sponsoring Entity

receiving a charter to operate an open-enrollment public charter school approved by the authorizer by August of 2014

Statutory Language Concerning No Indebtedness:

No indebtedness of any kind incurred or created by the open-enrollment public charter school shall constitute an indebtedness of the State of Arkansas or its political subdivisions, and no indebtedness of the open-enrollment public charter school shall involve or be secured by the faith, credit, or taxing power of the state or its political subdivisions. An open-enrollment public charter school shall not incur any debt, including any lease, without the prior review and approval of the Commissioner of Education.

Lessee: Responsive Education Solutions

By:  Date 10/7/13

Lessor: Two Rahling Centre, LLC

By:  Date 10-7-13