



Charlie Van Zant, Jr.  
Superintendent of Schools

## SCHOOL BOARD OF CLAY COUNTY

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### BOARD MEMBERS:

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June 30, 2015

Mr. William Korach  
Cornerstone Classical Education Foundation  
1093 A1A Beach Blvd. #321  
St. Augustine, FL 32080-6733

Dear Mr. Korach,

Thank you for your recent submittal of a draft charter school application for Clay Classical Academy.

According to F. S. 1002.33 the statutes providing the legislative support for the charter school process, charter school applicants are expected to submit an application using the state's model application. The model application provides a collection of highly structured questions and rubric to guide the review process. Clay County has assembled a team of reviewers to examine the application submitted by Clay Classical Academy: Cornerstone Classical Educational Foundation. The application is required to provide information in three broad strands: Educational Plan, Organization Plan and Business Plan. This preliminary review is not intended to respond to every issue presented in the application, but it is our intent to provide the applicant with some indication of areas of the application that require more attention and review prior to the submission of a final draft.

The Education Plan must describe a quality educational program that meets the statutorily defined purpose of a charter school; provide a detailed curriculum plan that will result in improved student learning and academic achievement, with special emphasis on low-performing students; and a clearly defined reading plan. In addition, the Education Plan must contain measurable goals and objectives for how student success will be determined and how the academic program will be evaluated. The Clay Classical Academy has not presented a clear and cohesive educational program that responds to all of the questions as presented in the model application. There is a great deal of discussion about the strength and history of the classical instructional model. However, beyond the discussion, the applicant simply presents a list of instructional programs that will be used. At no time is there any discussion of the specific curriculum proposed. The applicant presents an extensive alignment of the instructional programs with the Florida Standards. The Education Plan, as presented, is replete with inconsistencies, including charts and tables that are not in agreement with the narrative. The enrollment counts vary from table to table. There is a master schedule that is presented in a couple of unrelated formats. The assessment section contains dated information and is therefore inaccurate. It has to be noted in this preliminary process that the educational program is such a critical component of this process and it would be difficult to determine if the program will result in improved student performance because the program has not been clearly defined.

The Organization Plan must ensure that the governing board has the capacity to provide adequate oversight at the proposed charter. The Organizational Plan must also indicate the people who will be charged to run the school are able to perform key roles and responsibilities that are essential to the success of the education program. The application submitted by Clay Classical Academy: Cornerstone Classical Educational Foundation provides an organizational chart that is inconsistent with any of the staffing plans presented in the application. The idea of a 'network' governing board suggests that there is a network of some type that exists, but this is not established in this application.

The Business Plan must demonstrate that the proposed charter will be fiscally sound. The plan must contain anticipated fund balances based on revenue projections, a spending plan based on projected revenues and expenses, and a description of controls that will safeguard finances and projected enrollment trends. The Business Plan does not appear to support the educational program as presented. The enrollment numbers vary from table to table throughout the application; so does the number of teachers. STEM was indicated as a program, but no technology teacher is included. The technology noted in the budget does not appear to support the idea of a STEM program.

The applicant needs to ensure that each of the questions are thoroughly answered and meets the requirements of the rubric. Please consider this feedback carefully. You may revise and resubmit your proposal by August 3, 2015.

Respectfully,



Charles D. Sikes  
School Board Attorney



**William M. Korach  
Executive Director  
Cornerstone Classical Education Foundation  
1093 A1A Beach Blvd. # 321  
St. Augustine, FL 32080-6733**

August 3, 2015

Mr. Charles D. Sikes, Esq.  
Clay County School Board Attorney  
23 S. Green St.  
Green Cove Springs, FL 32043

Dear Mr. Sikes,

Subject: Clay Classical Academy Charter Application

Thank you for your letter of June 30, 2015 providing an early review of our charter application to guide us in the attached final submission of August 3, 2015 for school year 2016. We have carefully studied the commentary of your team of reviewers and addressed each item in the attached application.

We appreciate the time and effort of the Clay District personnel who reviewed the preliminary application on our behalf. Please find attached (5) copies of the application and thumb drives.

**Comments Pertaining to the Educational Plan**

Review Team Comment: "At no time is there any discussion of the specific curriculum proposed."

Our response:

A detailed and specific curriculum map for the core academic areas is now found within the main body of the Education Plan in Section 4, pages 59-68. The rationale and research supporting the curriculum is to be found on pages 68-82. A specific discussion of the reading curriculum is found on pages 83-87 and includes a list of reading materials by grade level on page 85.

In addition, Appendix 6 contains a detailed demonstration of how the curriculum aligns with the Florida State Standards on pages 321-438.

Review Team Comment:

“The assessment section contains dated information and is therefore inaccurate.”

Our response:

Assessment methodologies have been updated to reflect the latest FL DOE testing requirements such as the FSA test in Mathematics and the FCAT 2.0 test in Reading and are discussed in Section 5, pages 99-105. Assessment of learning outcomes are discussed in Section 1, pages 14-15 on a high level.

Review Team Comment:

“Charts and tables are not in agreement with the narrative. Enrollment counts vary from table to table. There is a master schedule that is presented in a couple of unrelated formats.”

Our response:

All tables and schedules have been brought into conformity.

### **Comments Pertaining to the Organizational Plan**

Review Team Comment:

“The Organization Plan must ensure that the governing board has the capacity to provide adequate oversight at the proposed charter. The Organizational Plan must also indicate the people who will be charged to run the school are able to perform key roles and responsibilities that are essential to the success of the education program. The application submitted by Clay Classical Academy: Cornerstone Classical Educational Foundation provides an organizational chart that is inconsistent with any of the staffing plans presented in the application. The idea of a 'network' governing board suggests that there is a network of some type that exists, but this is not established in this application.”

Our response:

A discussion of the Cornerstone charter network organization has been added to the application in Section 9, page 141. The governing board, its roles and responsibilities, and school staffing plans are discussed on pages 141-175.

### Comments Pertaining to the Business Plan

Review Team Comment:

The Business Plan must demonstrate that the proposed charter will be fiscally sound. The plan must contain anticipated fund balances based on revenue projections, a spending plan based on projected revenues and expenses, and a description of controls that will safeguard finances and projected enrollment trends. The Business Plan does not appear to support the educational program as presented. The enrollment numbers vary from table to table throughout the application; so does the number of teachers. STEM was indicated as a program, but no technology teacher is included. The technology noted in the budget does not appear to support the idea of a STEM program.

Our response:

The enrollment numbers which first appear on page 2 of the application, are used throughout the business planning process.

School Year	Grade Levels	Total Projected Student Enrollment	Student Enrollment Capacity (if known)
First Year	K-8	293	302
Second Year	K-8	435	448
Third Year	K-8	574	590
Fourth Year	K-8	710	728
Fifth Year	K-8	710	728

Revenue projection, and a detailed spending plan based upon projected revenue and expenses is found in Section 17, pages 197-202. Addition



financial information included cash flow is found in Appendix 5, pages 295-300.

The budget does not support a technology teacher because we are not a STEM school in the academic sense of the word. We are a Classical Academy that provides a rigorous instruction in math and science. In many Classical Charters in America, 60% of the graduates go on to STEM majors in college. A detailed discussion is found on page 207.

A description of controls that will safeguard finances and projected enrollment trends is found in Section 18, pages 209-214.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our application.

Sincerely,

William M. Korach



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**Charlie Van Zant, Jr.**  
Superintendent of Schools

October 30, 2015

Mr. William Korach, Executive Director  
Cornerstone Classical Education Foundation  
1093 A1A Beach Blvd., #321  
St. Augustine, Florida 32080-6733

Dear Mr. Korach,

This letter is intended to inform you that I am receipt of your letter confirming your decision to withdraw the Clay County Classical Academy Application for the 2016-2017 school year.

As you have stated in your letter, I do believe that the classical model would provide a different learning opportunity that may be of interest for some parents. I do not agree with your statement that it would be a good fit in Clay County as that seems to be an overstatement of my beliefs on the methodology. I encourage the modeling of programs designed to enhance high moral character, a well-informed patriotism and love of country. However, your application does not articulate nor instill confidence that your organization can bring that about in a more prolific manner than what is already in place in Clay County. I have never wavered from my opinion that the School District of Clay County offers rigorous, engaging and differentiated learning opportunities to meet the needs of every child. I do however support each parent's right to choose the manner in which they would like their child to be educated. I did commit to providing your team a key point of contact who could provide you further clarity on the areas of the application that are deficient and answer your questions on how these areas might be improved.

To clarify the timeline, a revised application for the 17-18 school year may be submitted on or before May 1, 2016. While every effort will be made to expedite the review process, by state statute, the District Charter School Review Committee has 60 days from receipt of the application to provide you feedback. Should deficiencies still exist, you would have until August 1 to resubmit a revised and final application. Should the application meet all standards, we would recommend approval accordingly.

I do believe the additional time will allow you the opportunity to resubmit an application that contains a curriculum and instructional design that would prove to be more successful for our children while also giving you time to identify a school site. I'd also recommend that you use this time to attempt to get confirmation and a solid commitment of funding from the individual you have identified as a financial backer of the Clay Classical Academy.

You can expect someone from the school district to arrange a time and date to meet with you in the near future to provide you the additional information you will need to begin your revision of the application.

Thank you for making the decision that will allow us to better support you now and in the future.

Sincerely,

Charlie Van Zant  
Superintendent of Schools  
CVZ/klb