

ROCKBRIDGE MONTESSORI SCHOOL

PART A GENERAL INFORMATION

Sponsoring Entity: **Rockbridge Montessori School**
IRS Status: **Applied for 501(c)(3) non-profit status**
Grade Levels: **K-8th**
Student Enrollment Cap: **325**
Address of Proposed Charter: **108 W. Roosevelt, Little Rock AR, 72206**

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 Letter of Intent filed with Arkansas Department of Education on time and including all the necessary information

Fully Responsive

PART B EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

Evaluation Criteria:

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

Fully Responsive

PART C NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED CHARTER

C1: 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 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
- 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

Partially Responsive- FULLY RESPONSIVE (BASED ON RESPONSE)

Concerns and Additional Questions

The dates of the newspaper publications have been cut off. Provide newspaper clippings that show the dates that the announcements were published in the paper.

Submitted here are pictures of the entire newspaper pages that show the dates the announcements were published in the newspaper. We decided to simply take pictures of the newspapers since our scanners were not accommodating.

Daily record

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Daily record
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Daily record

Marriage Licenses

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Marriage Licenses
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Marriage Licenses

Divorces

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Divorces
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Divorces

Political Animals

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Political Animals
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Political Animals

Etowah boy killed

Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Etowah boy killed
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
Etowah boy killed

Need no lawyer, double-murder suspect tells court

BRAD LUTZ
A Little Rock suspect
Need no lawyer, double-murder suspect tells court

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Need no lawyer, double-murder suspect tells court

4th of July Special
WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY ONLY!
CANS 70¢/EA
FREE Hot Dogs
TRG
945-0881
TENNIS-BAGBY RACING GROUP LLC

4th of July Special
WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY ONLY!
40% off
Entire Purchase of Red Dot Clearance
20% off
Any One Sale Item

Stein Mart
THURSDAY & FRIDAY
STORES OPEN JULY 4, 9AM-7PM
Make One More Stop Before You Leave for the 4th!
This is a BETTER SALE because the savings are on TOP OF OUR DISCOUNT PRICES!

4th of July 50% OFF SALE
2 DAYS ONLY
50% OFF
1000s & 1000s of Items!
50% OFF Assorted Ladies underwear
50% OFF Petite & Women's sportswear
50% OFF IAC & White West Collections
50% OFF East Avenue Crop tops
50% OFF Ladies shorts, tank & capris
50% OFF Ladies spring sweaters
50% OFF Boutique separates
50% OFF Dresses
50% OFF Ladies casual hats
50% OFF Ladies casual tops
50% OFF Ladies capris & casual sportswear
50% OFF Ladies career & casual business
50% OFF Men's short sleeve knit shirts
50% OFF Men's long sleeve women shirts
50% OFF Double-breasted blazers
50% OFF Quilt
50% OFF SOFTC vintage tops & casual dress
FREE Clearance decorative pillows

Stein Mart
THURSDAY & FRIDAY
\$50.00
\$24.95
\$31.95
\$7.17
Take These Coupons for MORE SAVINGS ON TOP OF SAVINGS!

Stein Mart
THURSDAY & FRIDAY
20% off
Any One Sale Item

C2: 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:

- 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

Fully Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions

Confirm that the charter board will follow the freedom of information act in regard to public meetings and that all voting will be done in public.

The school board of Rockbridge Montessori will follow the freedom of information act in regard to public meetings. The school board will all hold all voting in public.

C3: 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 mission statement that is clear and succinct

Fully Responsive

C4: 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:

- Valid, reliable, and verifiable data substantiate an educational need for the charter,
- Innovations that would distinguish the charter from other schools

Fully Responsive

C5: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT GOALS

The Academic Achievement Goals section should define the performance expectations for students and the school as whole and support the charter’s mission.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Specific goals in reading and mathematics that are clear, measurable, and attainable;
- Valid and reliable assessment tools to be used to measure the goals; and
- Attainment of the goals demonstrate that the charter is meeting the identified educational need for the school and fulfilling its mission

Partially Responsive - FULLY RESPONSIVE (BASED ON RESPONSE)

Concerns and Additional Questions

Charter goals are stated as “5% higher than combined” mathematics/literacy scores of surrounding district. Explain what is meant by “combined scores” and how they are calculated.

The goal of “40% of entering children will meet 100% of their *literary* growth goals” appears to be listed twice.

The goal of “Children will perform 5% higher than the combined *literacy* scores” appears to be listed twice.

Combined Score and Calculation

Rockbridge previously stated that, “Children will perform five percent higher than the combined literacy scores of the surrounding districts of Little Rock, North Little Rock, and Pulaski County, and children will perform five percent higher than combined mathematics scores of the same surrounding districts. Scores will be determined annually by PARCC or by the next generation of assessment,

determined by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE).” Rockbridge also spoke of the uncertainty of the direction of Arkansas performance assessment, as the PARCC test has not yet been fully administered nor fully reported for the districts in central Arkansas. Our uncertainty in future testing practices as well as in the future reporting of test results has created difficulty as we seek to precisely report our annual performance assessment goals. Thus we are revising our performance goals in literacy and mathematics to say that children at Rockbridge will meet or exceed at least two out of three composite district scores from the LRSD, NLRSD, and PCSSD.

If we are able to assume that the test reporting methods and dissemination will remain the same, then we can say that we will calculate the composite district scores in literacy and mathematics in this manner:

For each district (LRSD, NLRSD, and PCSSD), Rockbridge will take the overall district-reported scores of “proficient and advanced” for each grade level and will combine and average these scores to create a composite district score, one for literacy and one for mathematics. The grade levels that will be used for the composite district score will only be the grade levels that Rockbridge offered that tested academic year.

Table of Performance Goals

The table measuring performance goals contains typing errors. It should read:

- 40% of entering children will meet 100% of their literacy growth goals
- 40% of entering children will meet 100% of their mathematics growth goals

Based on the revisions mentioned above, two of the table’s rows should now read:

Children will meet or exceed at least two of the three composite district scores from LRSD, NLRSD, & PCSSD in literacy.

Children will meet or exceed at least two of the three composite district scores from LRSD, NLRSD, & PCSSD in mathematics.

C6: 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 clear description of the proposed educational program, including but not limited to the foundational educational philosophy and curricular and instructional strategies to be employed;
- An educational program with ample resources to ensure that students achieve academic goals and excel;
- A description of the grade levels and maximum enrollment, by year, if the charter plans to grow over time; and
- A description of the length of school day and school year that meets minimum state requirements.

Partially Responsive - FULLY RESPONSIVE (BASED ON RESPONSE)

Concerns and Additional Questions

Provide a description of the grade levels and maximum enrollment, by year, if the charter plans to grow over time.

Explain how the assessment, class assignment, advancements, grade level and data recording will be monitored and implemented in mixed age grouping.

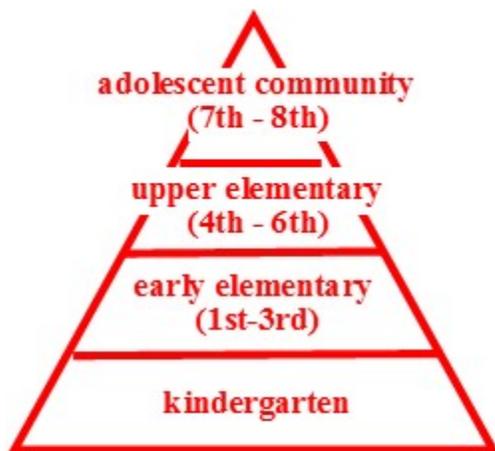
Description of Grade Levels and Maximum Enrollment

Rockbridge will begin as a kindergarten through fifth grade school with a maximum enrollment of one hundred and fifty children. In the course of five years, Rockbridge will grow to provide kindergarten through eighth grade with a maximum enrollment of three hundred and twenty-five. How we grow each year is described as follows:

For the first two years, Rockbridge will offer kindergarten through fifth grade. This will allow our upper elementary teacher to complete AMI training, replete with the sixth grade curriculum, before welcoming sixth graders into the classroom. Fifth graders who join our school the first year will be informed that they will transition to a different school to begin middle school when their year at Rockbridge is complete.

For the third through fifth years, Rockbridge will grow approximately forty to fifty children a year. We will be adding additional multi-age classrooms to accommodate these new children. Similarly, we will also add a grade level annually so as to fully welcome middle school children through the eighth grade into our school's adolescent community.

Multi-age classrooms, classrooms which allow teachers to serve children in three different grades, creates a fluidity of enrollment in the classroom because every year children are transitioning in and out of the classroom. For example, in an early elementary classroom that serves first, second, and third grade children, the multi-age classroom will welcome new first graders every year as they transition from kindergarten to early elementary, thereby gaining enrollment. At the same time, the same multi-age classroom will also promote third graders into the upper elementary classroom, thereby losing enrollment. Thus the fluidity of multi-age classrooms requires that our School Director and School Curriculum Director understand our current enrollment, anticipate our growth goals, and open new classrooms where needed.



Triangular Model of Enrollment in a Montessori School

Although the fluidity of multi-age classrooms creates complexity in enrollment, the benefits of multi-age classrooms outweighs any additional work created for our Directors. In multi-age classrooms, children have the advantage of continuous learning, peer assistance, the opportunity for leadership, and the same teacher who loses no instructional time in getting to know each of them every year.

Despite this fluidity, we do have some factors that will assist in stabilizing our enrollment numbers. The advice we have received from multiple Montessori Directors is that Montessori schools work best when they have a triangular model, with the largest enrollment numbers for its base and lesser enrollment

throughout the higher grades. (See image.)

Based on this model, most of our recruitment and therefore our enrollment will focus on kindergarten, as we want children to experience Montessori for their entire elementary education. We will also add to our numbers when we add adolescent community classrooms to our school. Every time we open a new classroom of thirty children, we will add a new teacher and aide. For the adolescent community, we might hire two teachers and therefore no aide, to better accommodate the specialized disciplinary knowledge that is needed to teach all subjects required in middle school.

Multi-Age Classrooms, Monitoring and Implementing

To monitor and implement the many facets of a multi-age classroom, we will utilize Montessori Compass. In our application, we mentioned and described this online recording keeping system. We said:

For this class-based assessment, teachers will utilize Montessori Compass in their record keeping. Montessori Compass is an online record keeping system providing Montessori teachers a simple way to personalize each child's academic progress. The teacher can record for each child each lesson presented, each material practiced, each skill mastered. Every Montessori lesson is already aligned to the Common Core Standards so that parents can be assured that their children are receiving an academically rigorous curriculum.

This response gives us more opportunity to report how Montessori Compass will play a central role in allowing our teachers to generate detailed **data recording** for each child. Through Montessori Compass, our teachers can monitor and track each individual child's academic progress in regards to individualized **assignments** (in our application, we call these "lessons") and assessments of these lessons. The Montessori curriculum is sequential, building from one academic concept to the next, yet it is also personalized, with a range of class assignments that cater to the interest of every individual child. Montessori Compass lists all of the lessons in the Montessori curriculum in a way that teachers can see the sequential patterns of lessons yet also use their expertise to select lessons individualized to each child, based on the child's skill and interest. In a Montessori classroom, the true **assessment** of an academic skill is whether the child has mastered the skill or content, whether the child can use the skill to demonstrate how the skill solves real life problems, can apply them to a new situation or event, or can create something new with the new skill acquired. Thus Montessori teachers use the products that children create as evidence of academic progress; the more advanced, complex, and self-created works indicate the greater mastery. Montessori Compass keeps track of all of this.

Grade Level and Advancement

In our application, we discussed how children with exceptionalities helps us see what all children really need. We said, "All children have strengths and areas in which to grow, so all children can benefit from the release of the pressure of yearly grade promotion. All children can be confident in knowing they will stay with their teacher, their classroom, their work cycle for three years, and longer if needed." This statement shows how a Montessori classrooms has the flexibility that children need when it comes to their grade levels and their advancement (we call advancement or promotion a "transition").

In a Montessori multi-age classroom, teachers generally do not distinguish their children by grade level. For example, they will not call all of the "first graders" to a lesson; rather they will determine which children need the lesson and call them by name to the lesson. If a second-year child needs a lesson that other first-year children need to receive, the second-year child will receive the lesson as

well. Because lessons are not grade-specific, there is no negative stigma attached to a child who needs lessons offered at a slower pace. All children know they will be in the same classroom with the same teacher and roughly the same friends for three years; they all know they will continue to receive lessons at their own pace and ability, and therefore they can rest in the fact that they will transition when they are ready. Thus grade levels will not be a distinguishing mark of Rockbridge children, rather they will identify with the small class community they form and the larger Montessori community of Rockbridge.

After three years in each multi-age classroom, children are offered the choice of transitioning to the next multi-age classroom or staying an additional year in their current classroom. The decision to transition is as individualized as the Montessori curriculum, because the teacher, the school directors, parents, and even the child him/herself look at the child's whole development (socially, emotionally, as well as academically) to determine if the child is ready to transition to the next classroom.

We have observed that in Montessori classrooms most children are ready to transition after three years in their classrooms. However if a child appears unready, several factors will be considered, such as: Has the child mastered most if not all the works and materials in the current classroom? Does the child's tests scores on NWEA and PARCC indicate a mastery of skills and content? Has the child developed the social skills needed to function as a full member of the next classroom? Do the decision makers feel confident that the child is ready for transition? Are there extenuating factors that need to be considered before transitioning? Would the child benefit from an additional year in the current classroom? Etc. Finally we must also take into account the child's previous education, specifically if the child has transferred from another school during a "grade level" that has not allowed the child to complete the full three years in the current multi-age Montessori classroom. Although generally we will honor the "grade level" recommended by the child's previous school, we will need to determine if the child's whole academic and social development will allow him or her to successfully transition.

Thus the decision to transition will take into consideration the many facets of each child's progress. It will be informed by data generated by Montessori Compass as well as testing data from NWEA and PARCC. It will be discussed by the many adults that care about the welfare of the child, and it will be made so that each child may thrive in whatever classroom they are in.

C7: CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

The Curriculum Alignment section should define the process by which the charter will ensure that the curriculum aligns with Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and Common Core State Standards.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence that the applicant has a process to ensure all curriculum materials , used in the educational program, align with the Arkansas Department of Education's curriculum frameworks and the Common Core State Standards

Fully Responsive

C8: STUDENT SERVICES

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

Evaluation Criteria:

A description of 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 a gifted and talented program for eligible students

Fully Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions

Special Education:

Confirm that the charter will provide a full continuum of services in the least restrictive environment.

Confirm that the charter will comply with all state and federal requirements for students with disabilities

Rockbridge agrees to provide a full continuum of services in the least restrictive environment.

Rockbridge agrees to comply with all state and federal requirements for students with disabilities.

C9: 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:

- 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.

Fully Responsive

C10: 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 timeline for data compilation and completion of an annual report to parents, the community and the authorizer that outlines the school's progress; and
- A plan for dissemination of the annual report to appropriate stakeholders

Fully Responsive

C11: 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 describe the random, anonymous lottery selection process.

Evaluation Criteria:

- 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.

Fully Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions

Confirm that the after school program mentioned is a completely separate program and not a part of the charter.

Rockbridge's after-school program is a completely separate program and not a part of the charter.

C12: PRIOR CHARTER INVOLVEMENT

The Prior Charter Involvement section should identify all prior charter involvement, if any, for each individual connected with the proposed charter.

Evaluation Criteria:

- A complete Prior Charter Involvement Template for each individual connected with the proposed charter;
- Accurate data in each Prior Charter Involvement Template, including active links to assessment data

Fully Responsive

C13: 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 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.

Fully Responsive

C14: 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:

- 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;
- A budget that includes costs for all personnel, programs, and expenses described in other sections of the application;
- An understanding of the minimum number of students required for financial viability and a contingency plan to provide the education program outlined in the program if fewer students than necessary for viability enroll and/or attend; and
- Plans to pay for unexpected but necessary expenses

Fully Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions

Lines 3 and 8 on the budget template reflect the number of students for NSL. The calculated funding does not support the rate of funding (70% of students would be funded at \$1,033 per the rate).

NSL funds are listed in lines 3 and 8 on the budget template. The application response in this sections states that NSL funds were excluded from the original budget as part of the plan for preparation of urgent expenses. Please explain.

Lines 3 and 8 on the budget template are concerning the revenues that are expected to be generated through NSL funding. Although we expect more of our children to receive NSL funding, we submitted budgeted for only 10 children's NSL funding to cover the budgetary costs that we perceive will happen toward the end of the year. We did this because it was our understanding that the NSL funding would not be readily available until after December, so our budget covers all expenses through most of the academic year. Toward the end of April or May, we are anticipating some end-of-the-year costs with material maintenance. These will be covered by the NSL funding generated by 10 children because by the end of year we should have our full amount of the NSL funding. We anticipate the full amount of NSL funding to reflect the following revised budgetary lines 3 and 8:

Line 3: No. of students 84 x \$1,033.00 eligible rate NSL funding

Line 8: No. of students 105 x \$1,033.00 eligible rate NSL funding

We know the remaining NSL funding that is not used for material maintenance will be saved for urgent expenses, and we do know that this amount will be much more than the 10 children funding we will spend on material maintenance. Thus the urgent expenses for the first and the second year will come from the NSL funding remaining from the first year.

The second year's NSL funding will be used to pay for other budgetary items and will not become a part of the funding for urgent expenses.

C15: 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 Arkansas Department of Education and the community.

Evaluation Criteria:

- 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 Arkansas Department of Education or the Division of Legislative Audit.

Fully Responsive

Partially Responsive

Not Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions

C16: 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:

- 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

Fully Responsive

Not Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions

C17: 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:

- 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:
 - Members of the local board of the public school district where the charter school will be located;
 - The employees of the public school district where the charter school will be located;
 - The sponsor of the charter school; and
 - Employees, directors and/or administrators of the charter school.

Fully Responsive

Concerns and Additional Questions

Confirm that the statement, "When children with physical disabilities enroll at our school, we will assess needs and immediately make the needed modifications," is referring to *additional* modifications that could be needed and that the school will be in compliance with all ADA requirements when the facility opens.

Rockbridge confirms that the statement "When children with physical disabilities enroll at our school, we will assess needs and immediately make the needed modifications" is indeed referring to additional modifications that could be needed. Further Rockbridge confirms that the school will be in compliance with all ADA requirements when the facility opens.

C18: 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:

Full disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest and an explanation of the ways in which conflicts, if any, will be addressed

Fully Responsive

C19: FOOD SERVICES

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

Evaluation Criteria:

- 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.

Fully Responsive

C20: 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 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.

Fully Responsive

C21: WAIVERS

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

Evaluation Criteria:

- 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 fulfilling the charter's mission

Concerns and Additional Questions

SEE LEGAL COMMENTS

C22: 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:

- 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

Concerns and Additional Questions

SEE LEGAL COMMENTS

C23: SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAM

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

Evaluation Criteria:

- The plan to ensure the sustainability of the charter in the future.

Fully Responsive

Red=Waivers not previously requested, need additional discussion, or have remaining issues
Green=Waivers previously granted, no remaining issues
Information provided by Applicant is in italics.

Rockbridge Montessori School Waivers Requested in Original Application 2014

1. School Boards

Ark. Code Ann. §6-13-601 et seq. District Board of Directors

Ark. Code Ann. §6-14-101 et seq. School Board Elections

Rockbridge seeks exemption from these portions of the Education Code to the extent that it governs school board operations. Rockbridge is requesting this waiver from these statutes, which are on their face applicable only to school districts, to ensure that there is no confusion as to the applicability of the statutes to the governance structure of Rockbridge's charter. The waivers requested under the Ark. Code Ann. §§6-13-601 et seq. series do not include the monthly meeting requirements under Ark. Code Ann. §6-13-619 and the board training requirements under Ark. Code Ann. §6-13-629.

Legal Comments: The Applicant should clarify which sections of Ark. Code Ann. § 6-13-601 et seq. it seeks waiver from. Applicant should note that Ark. Code Ann. § 6-13-622 contains a constitutional requirement that cannot be waived.

Response: *The applicant wishes to clarify its waiver request by specifically asking for waivers of Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-13-608; 6-13-611; 6-13-615; 6-13-616; 6-13-618; 6-13-619(c)(Note: This will be the only part of 6-13-619 requiring a waiver unless you do not plan on holding monthly Board meetings); 6-13-620; 6-13-621; 6-13-628; 6-13-630; 6-13-631; 6-13-633; 6-13-634 and 6-13-635. The same rationale for the waiver request that was stated in the charter application is also applicable here.*

Remaining Issues: None

2. Grades

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

ADE Rules Governing Uniform Grading Scales

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code because, under the Rockbridge model, students do not receive grades rather the teacher-based monitoring of academic progress is accomplished through Montessori Compass, an online record-keeping system which records all lessons received, practiced, and mastered by each individual child. Academic progress is further assessed three times a year through Northwest Education Association (NWEA) adaptive testing and is assessed annually through PARCC or the next generation of assessment. The use of the Uniform Grading Scale is permissive at the elementary school level, however, careful records will be kept of student progress in lieu of traditional grades and Rockbridge will be able to make

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specific, detailed accountings of student progress.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

3. Licensure

Ark. Code Ann. §6-15-1004-qualified Teacher in Every Classroom

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-301 concerning Employment of Certified Personnel

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-302 concerning Principals' Responsibilities

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-309-concerning Certification to Teach Particular Grade or Subject Matter

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-401-concerning Teacher Licensure Requirement

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-902-concerning Definition of Teacher

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-919-concerning Warrants Void without Valid Teaching License and Contract

15.02 and 15.03 of the ADE Rules Governing the Standards for Accreditation of Public Schools and School Districts

ADE Rules Governing Educator Licensure

Rockbridge seeks exemption from these portions of the Education Code. Instead, Rockbridge seeks the flexibility to hire teachers and administrators who are best suited to implement Rockbridge's unique curriculum and policies to best attain the maximum amount of student achievement and growth. Rockbridge will seek to hire licensed teachers and administrators whenever possible; all teachers hired will be highly qualified. Rockbridge provides extensive training, support, and supervision for its teachers and administrators. Rockbridge ensures that proper administrative staffing will be maintained to allow for the proper administration and supervision of its students and staff.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

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4. Business Manager

Ark. Code Ann. §6-15-2302 General Business Manager

Rockbridge 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. Rockbridge seeks the flexibility to hire a qualified general business manager that is able to address the unique needs of the school's business model.

Legal Comments: In order to effectuate this waiver, the Applicant should also request a waiver of the ADE Rules Governing Minimum Qualifications for General Business Managers of Public School Districts.

Response: *The applicant wishes to clarify and fully effectuate the previously requested waiver by additionally requesting a waiver of the ADE Rules Governing Minimum Qualifications for General Business Managers of Public School Districts.*

Remaining Issues: None

5. U.S. Flag

Ark. Code Ann. §6-16-105 U.S. Flag

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it requires the erection of a flagstaff on school grounds. Rockbridge may be leasing its facilities. As such, it may not be permitted to erect a flagstaff on the leased property. Otherwise, Rockbridge will seek alternative methods for prominently displaying the United States flag.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

6. Arkansas Flag

Ark. Code Ann. §6-16-106 Arkansas Flag

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it requires the erection of a flagstaff on school grounds. Rockbridge may be leasing its facilities. As such, it may not be permitted to erect a flagstaff on the leased property. Otherwise, Rockbridge will seek alternative methods for prominently displaying the Arkansas flag.

Legal Comments: None

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Remaining Issues: None

7. Arkansas History (withdrawn)

Ark. Code Ann. §6-16-124 Arkansas History

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-418-concerning the Arkansas History Requirement for Teacher Licensure

Standard 9.03.3.11 of the ADE Standards Rules Arkansas History grade 5-8

Rockbridge seeks exemption from these portions of the Education Code and the ADE Rules to allow flexibility to follow the established Montessori Method curriculum. The Montessori curriculum is global in nature and does not address specific states' histories. Students who develop interest in Arkansas history would be encouraged to conduct independent study in this area. Arkansas history will be taught as a part of the 7th or 8th grade curriculum.

Legal Comments: Waiver of Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-418 is not necessary. This statute outlines the requirement that teachers complete a college course in Arkansas history before they are licensed.

Response: *In light of the ADE review comments on this request, the applicant wishes to withdraw its request for a waiver of Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-418.*

Remaining Issues: None

8. Daily Planning Period

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-114 Daily Planning Period

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code because Rockbridge's model requires the flexibility to adapt teacher schedules to its unique curriculum and practices regarding curriculum planning and support. Rockbridge places great emphasis on planning and monitoring teacher and student development and ensures that teachers have the support they need to plan effectively.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

9. Duty Free Lunch/Non-instructional duties

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-111 Duty Free Lunch

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Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-117 Non-Instructional Duties

Rockbridge seeks exemption from these portions of the Education Code as, with a small staff, seeks the flexibility to assign duties in such a way as to maximize use of teacher and administrator time.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

10. Personnel Policies

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-201 et. seq. concerning Certified Personnel Policies

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code because the Rockbridge Board will adopt personnel policies and procedures in accordance with applicable laws and best practices in order to address the unique needs of the school's business model. This request is complimentary to other waivers requested concerning the Teacher Fair Dismissal Act and the Public Employee Fair Hearing Act.

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-203 Committees on Personnel Policies –Members

Rockbridge seeks the flexibility to develop its own personnel policies to address the unique needs of the school's business model.

Legal Comments: Waiver of Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-203 is included in a waiver of Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-201 et seq. In order to effectuate this waiver, waiver of Section 4 of the ADE Rules Governing Personnel Policies, Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents Posted to the District Website is also necessary.

Response: *In order to clarify and fully effectuate the above requested waivers, the applicant hereby withdraws its separate waiver request for Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-203 (as it is included in the waiver request for Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-201 et seq.) and additionally requests a waiver of Section 4. of the ADE Rules Governing Personnel Policies, Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries and Documents Posted to the District Website.*

Remaining Issues: None

11. Teacher Fair Dismissal Act

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-1501 et.seq. Teacher Fair Dismissal Act

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code because the Rockbridge model

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requires the flexibility to hire and retain the most highly qualified teachers available. Rockbridge teachers and administrators are expected to be highly responsive to the needs of students and families.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

12. Public School Employees Fair Hearing Act

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-1701 et. seq. Public School Employee Fair Hearing Act

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code because the Rockbridge model requires the flexibility to hire and retain the most qualified employees available. Rockbridge employees are expected to be highly responsive to the needs of students and families.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

13. Classified Personnel Policy

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-2301 et. seq. Classified School Employee Personnel Policy Law

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code. Instead, the Rockbridge Board will adopt personnel policies, including, but 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.

Legal Comments: In order to effectuate this waiver, waiver of Section 5 of the ADE Rules Governing Personnel Policies, Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents Posted to the District Website is also necessary.

Response: *In order to fully effectuate this waiver request, the applicant wishes to additionally request a waiver of Section 5. of the ADE Rules Governing Personnel Policies, Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents Posted to the District Website.*

Remaining Issues: None

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14. Guidance and Counseling

Section 16.01 of the ADE Standards Rules

ADE Rules Governing Public School Student Services

Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-1001 et seq. Public School Services Act

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code because the Rockbridge model provides a full array of support services which have proven effective in supporting students and families. In the Montessori Method, the teacher also provides services usually provided by the guidance counselor. The services provided by the counselor are therefore provided instead by the entire staff of Rockbridge. In Rockbridge's unique model, teacher stays with the same student for three consecutive years, providing the continuity, support, and stability necessary to provide guidance and counseling services effectively.

Legal Comments: Waiver of the entire ADE Rules Governing Public School Student Services is not necessary. Only Section 3.01.1 is necessary.

Response: *In light of the ADE review comments on this request, the applicant wishes to clarify its request for a waiver of the ADE Rules Governing Public School Student Services (Rules) to only include Section 3.01.1 of the said Rules.*

Remaining Issues: None

15. School Nurses

Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-706

Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-1001 et seq.

Section 16.03 of the ADE Standards Rules

ADE Rules Governing Public School Services

Rockbridge seeks exemption from these portions of the Education Code and the ADE Rules because the duties of the school nurse will be fulfilled by the entire staff. Rockbridge will also employ a staff member with a degree in medical sciences and experience in identifying, treating, and rehabilitating injuries. This staff member is also a certified first-responder, and she has EMT training. The School Director will work with the School Board's Member at Large in charge of volunteers to also reach out to the central Arkansas medical community to aid in providing free health screenings. Medical volunteers can give visual and auditory screenings, can check vitals (pulse and blood pressure), and monitor for weight and BMI (body mass index).

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Legal Comments: Instead of Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-1001 et seq., it appears that only a waiver of Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-1005(a)(6) is necessary. Waiver of the entire ADE Rules Governing Public School Student Services is not necessary. Only Section 3.01.6 is necessary.

Response: *In light of the ADE review comments on this request, the applicant wishes to clarify its request to waivers of Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-1005(a)(6) and Section 3.01.6 of the ADE Rules Governing Public School Student Services.*

16. Superintendent

Ark. Code Ann. §6-13-109 School Superintendent
Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-302 Principal-Responsibilities
Ark. Code Ann. § 6-17-427
Section 15.01, 15.02, and 15.03 of the ADE Standards Rules (concerning superintendents and principals)

Rockbridge seeks exemption from these portions of the Education Code and the ADE Rules to allow Rockbridge the flexibility to utilize a single person as School Director, fulfilling both superintendent and principal roles in concert with its companion waiver requests concerning teacher and administrator licensure. This would allow Rockbridge to promote the most efficient use of human and financial resources in the school.

Rockbridge seeks exemption from these Education Code provisions and ADE Rules in order to have the flexibility to attract and retain an individual who is highly skilled and suitable to oversee a Montessori-based school. The individual selected will receive extensive training and professional development in order to successfully carry out the requirements of the position.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

17. Transportation (withdrawn)

Ark. Code Ann. §6-19-101 et seq. Transportation

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it conflicts with the transportation services described herein. Any transportation services provided directly by Rockbridge will be in full compliance with this section.

Legal Comments: The applicant should explain why this waiver is necessary if transportation provided will be in compliance with this section.

Response: *The applicant wishes to withdraw its request for a waiver of Ark. Code Ann. §6-19-101 et seq.*

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Remaining Issues: None

18. Leased Academic Facilities

Ark. Code Ann. §6-21-117 Leased Academic Facilities

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code to the extent that it requires that facilities leased by Rockbridge 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 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.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

19. Personnel Policies/Salary Schedules

Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-201(c)(2) concerning Classified Employee Compensation
Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-2203 Classified Employees Minimum Salary Act
Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-2403 Teacher Compensation Program of 2003
Sections 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the ADE Rules Governing School District Requirements for Personnel Policies,
Salary Schedules, Minimum Salaries, and Documents Posted to District Websites

Rockbridge seeks exemption from these sections of the Education Code and the ADE Rules so that it may have the flexibility to develop its own compensation schedules for its employees.

Legal Comments: In order to effectuate this waiver, waiver of Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-17-807 is also necessary.

Response: *In order to fully effectuate this waiver request, the applicant additionally requests a waiver of Ark. Code Ann. §6-17-807.*

Remaining Issues: None

20. Purchases of Commodities

Ark. Code Ann. §6-21-304 Manner of Making Purchases

Rockbridge 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

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exceed \$10,000.00. For purchases between \$1,000.00 and \$50,000.00, Rockbridge will use either a state approved vendor or obtain a minimum of three quotes. Rockbridge will obtain bids in each instance in which the estimated purchase price shall equal or exceed \$50,000.00.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

21. Gifted and Talented/ALE

Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1005 (b)(5)

Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-503(a)(1)(C)(i)

Ark. Code Ann. §6-20-2208(c)(6)

Ark. Code Ann. §6-42-101 et. seq.

Ark. Code Ann. § 6-48-101 et seq.

Section 18.01-18.03 Rules Governing Gifted and Talented Program

Section 19.03 ADE Standards Rules

ADE Rules Governing Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards

Section 4.00 of ADE Rules Governing the Distribution of Students with Special Needs Funds

Rockbridge seeks exemption from these portions of the Education Code and the Department of Education Rules because, under the Rockbridge model, each child is taught at his or her own level and is capable of being fully educated within his/her classroom even though the child displays characteristics usually identified as either requiring “gifted and talented” services or placement in an alternative learning environment. Accordingly, each child is given the opportunity to develop his or her own gifts and talents. Rockbridge's model does not designate some children as “gifted and talented” or “ALE” to the exclusion of other children from enriched programs.

Legal Comments: Based on the information provided, it appears the Applicant needs a waiver of Ark. Code Ann. § 6-42-109 instead of Ark. Code Ann. § 6-42-101 et seq. It also appears the Applicant needs a waiver of the entire ADE Rules Governing Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards, and Section 18 of the ADE Standards for Accreditation.

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Response: *In light of the ADE review comments, the applicant wishes to revise its request for a waiver of Ark. Code Ann. §6-42-101 et seq. to only Ark. Code Ann. §6-42-109 and to additionally request a waiver of the entire ADE Rules Governing Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards and Section 18 of the ADE Rules Governing the Standards for Accreditation.*

Remaining Issues: None

22. Library Media Specialist

Ark. Code Ann. §§6-25-103 and 104 concerning School Library Media and Technology

Section 16.02.3 of the ADE Standards Rules

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Education Code and ADE Rules to the extent that the hiring of a licensed library media specialist is required. Under the Rockbridge model, libraries are located in each classroom. Montessori classrooms essentially have their own nonfiction libraries filled with quality children's nonfiction literature that children can read by themselves, such as nonfiction books on a single subject matter or a collection of subjects, children's trade magazines, dictionaries, thesauruses, and access to print or online encyclopedias. Classrooms are also well stocked in texts that require the reading and understanding of visually-organized information such as charts, graphs, maps, timelines, works of art, and works of nomenclature; the children become accustomed to accessing information using these visually-organized resources and therefore fulfill a standard of Common Core and Arkansas Frameworks. Although Rockbridge's Montessori classrooms will be filled with books, Rockbridge also seeks to acquire additional resources for our children. Rockbridge has contacted a local public library who offers a weekly children's program. They could come to our school and supply us with at least two hundred books a week and also provide a weekly story time and other literary activities. In this way children can also read fiction literature, poetry, and other volumes as well as learn to take care of books and borrowed materials.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

23. Class Size

Section 10.02 of the ADE Standards Rules (Class Size)

Rockbridge seeks exemption from this portion of the Department of Education Rules because, under the Rockbridge model, larger class sizes are desirable for student learning and interaction. The variety of students is integral to the Montessori Method. Additionally, each classroom will have not only a teacher, but also an aide present at all

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times. Classes will be no larger than 30 students at a maximum.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

24. Discipline Policies

Ark. Code Ann. §6-18-501 et seq. concerning Student Discipline Policies and the ADE Guidelines for the Development, Review, and Revision of School District Discipline and School Safety Policies Rockbridge seeks exemption from these portions of the Education Code to allow the school the flexibility to adopt its own student discipline policies. The policies adopted and implemented will meet all due process requirements. A waiver from these provisions is commonly held by open-enrollment public charter schools.

Legal Comments: None

Remaining Issues: None

25. Fine Arts/Music

Section 9.03.2.6 Fine Arts of the ADE Rules Governing the Standards of Accreditation
Section 9.03.3.6 Fine Arts of the ADE Rules Governing the Standards of Accreditation

Rockbridge is required to teach a minimum of 40 minutes per week in both Art and Music in grades K-6. Rockbridge is required to schedule time to teach Music and Art in grades 7 and 8. Rockbridge is asking for a waiver of the requirement in order that curriculum meeting the requirements of the ADE Standards Rules, Arkansas Frameworks and all applicable rubrics may be embedded within other coursework to be provided by the open-enrollment charter school. Rockbridge ensures that students will receive instruction concerning the required material in the Music and Art class meeting or exceeding all state curriculum requirements through embedding the curriculum within the students' ELA, Science and Social Studies required coursework.

Legal Comments: Applicant should confirm that it will comply with Ark. Code Ann. § 6-16-130 or seek waiver of necessary provisions.

Response: *The applicant wishes to clarify this waiver request by requesting a waiver of Ark. Code Ann. §6-16-130(b)(1), (b)(3), and (b)(4)(A). As stated in the original waiver request, the applicant will provide instruction in Music and Art meeting all state curriculum requirements through the embedding of the required curriculum within the students' English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies required coursework. In summary, Rockbridge is not asking that it be waived of the requirements to teach the Fine Arts and Music curriculum, but just to have flexibility in the amount of time devoted to these subjects per class and the ability to embed the curriculum within other required courses.*

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Remaining Issues: None

26. PE/Health

Section 9.03.3.5 Health and Safety Portion Only of the ADE Rules Governing the Standards of Accreditation

Section 9.03.3.7 Health and Safety of the ADE Rules Governing the Standards of Accreditation

Rockbridge is required to schedule time to teach Health and Safety. Rockbridge is asking for a waiver of the requirement in order that curriculum meeting the requirements of the ADE Standards Rules, Arkansas Frameworks and all applicable rubrics may be embedded within other coursework to be provided by the open enrollment charter school. Rockbridge ensures that students will receive instruction concerning the required material in the Health and Safety class meeting or exceeding all state curriculum requirements through embedding the curriculum within the students' required Science and Physical Education coursework.

Legal Comments: Applicant should confirm that it will comply with Ark. Code Ann. § 6-16-132 or seek waiver of necessary provisions.

Response: *The applicant wishes to clarify this waiver request by requesting a waiver of Ark. Code Ann. §6-16-132(b)(1)(A).*

The intent of this request is not to attempt to reduce or waive Physical Education requirements, but to obtain flexibility in meeting the Health and Safety requirements of the ADE Rules Governing the Standards for Accreditation by embedding the curriculum into the students' required Science and Physical Education coursework.

Remaining Issues: None

Desegregation Analysis: Fully responsive