

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 1a. Mission Statement

Describe the core philosophy or underlying purpose of the proposed school.

The Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter will be an educational alternative for students seeking an interdisciplinary science and technology based curriculum, smaller class sizes, experiential learning opportunities and a personalized school environment. Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology's comprehensive, multidisciplinary curriculum will incorporate diverse technological and field science studies in addition to thematic language arts, social studies, and mathematics instruction.

Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology's multi intelligence and higher order teaching methods, combined with ongoing student portfolio assessment, will aid each child in realizing his/her full potential and create life long learners.

The Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology's field activity programs will promote team cooperation, positive social interaction, self discipline, and increased confidence and self esteem. Educational field programs will compliment the instructional objectives, while providing supervised physical activities.

Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology's encompassing academic educational program will fully address and implement the multidisciplinary Florida Sunshine State Standards and Florida statute requirements for the middle grades, 6 through 8. The students will then be given the opportunity to apply their learning to real life problem solving situations.

Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology will offer students daily access to the technology necessary to produce their portfolio elements such as data analysis spreadsheets, multimedia presentations, web pages, computer programs, short stories, narrations, video presentations, charts, graphs, tables, and research papers.

Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology's student centered administration and staff will demonstrate and communicate accessibly and openly to its students, parents, and its sponsor. Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology will accomplish this by implementing and supporting extensive parental involvement and community outreach. Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology's family programs will invigorate each parent and child while promoting enthusiasm for learning.

Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology will succeed in this mission by creating and organizing an efficient school delivery system including, but not limited to: uniform classroom management procedures, individual learning plans; experiential field experiences; dynamic classroom presentation; innovative research based teaching methods; extensive modern technology training; accurate responsible budgeting and reporting of financial resources; ongoing student and staff assessment and appropriate problem solving; supportive community and family extensions; a trained, professional motivated staff.

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### I. Academic Design

1b. Describe the target student population to be served, including student ages and grade levels at the school.

The target student population for the Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology is 100 students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade for the first two years. The size of each respective grade level will be determined by initial enrollment. The age range of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students varies between 11 and 14 years depending on their birthday and their school enrollment date.

GCA will target students with an interest and desire to learn middle school academic skills through an emphasis on science and technology. In addition, due to the scope and intensity of the anticipated work required of each student, GCA will admit those students with a successful academic record in the immediate previous academic year's work and an interest in science and technology. Student interest will be determined through a student/parent interview conducted after the completed "application for enrollment" has been received.

As noted in the charter and the Florida statute (listed below), enrollment preference will be given to siblings of a student previously enrolled, and to children of the board and staff members of the charter school.

Our goal is every student and family will benefit from our strong individualized curriculum and every student will be able to move capably and with distinction into high school; whether it be business/technology training, college preparatory classes, honors classes, vocational training, dual enrollment, or advanced placement classes.

### **Florida Statute 228.056 Paragraph 7, Eligible Students, Section C:**

Indicates a charter school may limit the enrollment process only to target various populations. Subsection 5 allows a charter school to target students who meet reasonable academic, artistic, or other eligibility standards established by the charter school and included in the charter school application. The Florida statutes also note: "A charter school may give enrollment preference to a sibling of a student enrolled in the charter school, to the child of a member of the governing board of the charter school, or to the child of an employee of the charter school."

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 2a. Educational Program

Describe the educational program of the school, providing an overview of curriculum objectives and content of the main subject areas.

**(Continued on next page.)**

GCA will offer a continual progression of academic programs that allows for the incorporation of science and technology studies in all three grades through all academic areas. All Sunshine State Standards and Florida Benchmarks will be observed for all grade-level learning.

**Language Arts/Reading:** The ability to communicate effectively using written, oral, and electronic methods impacts every academic discipline. Language Arts in all grades will begin with the assessment of reading ability and vocabulary via the use of Computer Assisted Instruction and Assessment Software. (eg. Incredible Tutor for FCAT) An integrated language arts program will then be customized to the student's achievement level to focus on reading, grammar, spelling, writing, vocabulary, comprehension, literature, and oral presentation skills. Language arts will be the hub of interdisciplinary learning by creation of portfolio elements. Through parent volunteer and reading enhancement programs, in addition to peer tutoring and computer assisted instruction, children determined to be reading below grade level will receive intensive and prolonged support to achieve and maintain the requisite skills for success in the GCA language arts program.

**Mathematics and Algebra:** Mathematics is a cumulative activity that requires a mastery of building blocks before a student can move forward into more complex abstract thinking. GCA's goal is to unlock mathematics on an understandable and practical level. Practical application of mathematical skills will be at the forefront of GCA's academic programs. Students will learn number theory, statistics, probability, analysis, and mathematical reasoning by analyzing and reporting on the experimental data collected and classroom theory. Through a progression to more intricate application, the student will build an stand on these foundations to apply their mathematical ability to the world around them. With teacher evaluations, software assessment, FCAT scores, and student input, those students struggling will be identified and assisted through a variety of methods including small group practice, individualized academic tutoring, and computer assisted instruction. An intensive 8th grade Algebra program will also be offered to students who wish to earn a high school credit and advance their knowledge of Algebraic concepts and their application.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 2a. Educational Program Continued

Describe the educational program of the school, providing an overview of curriculum objectives and content of the main subject areas.

**(Continued from previous page and continued on next page.)**

**Science:** The understanding of science is a mixture of mastering the standards of observation, planning and organizing accumulation of data, and conducting controlled experimentation. These skills combined with the creativity to analyze data and see connections allow the student to identify trends associated with cause and effect relationships. The scientific thought process is emphasized in coordination with a variety of disciplines and their application to the learning environment at GCA. Through research and experimentation, cooperative group interaction, home science-applications and hands-on research based learning, the foundations of the scientific process and understanding of basic scientific principles will be achieved. Critical thinking within the scientific framework in the earth/space, environmental, life, chemical, and physical sciences is a primary focus of the GCA science learning program.

The field science program will be an extension of and enhancement of the interdisciplinary classroom curriculum. A comprehensive list of field experience locations may be found in response II 1b.

**Social Studies:** The social studies program at GCA will center upon the geographical, political, religious, and cultural worlds of individual people and social groups. Historical movements, environmental factors, and ideas that change the shape and course of our lives will be explored thoroughly. GCA's social studies curriculum will foster an understanding of the parallels between the present day events and the historical events that precipitated them. Centering on biographies of notable and influential people of history and incorporating eras, movements, political and social structures against a backdrop of science and technology will allow students to see how forces at work in the world today operate and influence who and what we are. Social studies invites easy integration with language arts and application to the studies of science, mathematics, and technology. While meeting all state Benchmarks and Sunshine State Standards, social studies will further allow the students an opportunity to see the past, present, and even hypothesize future trends.

Social Studies Field experiences will tie directly and indirectly to the social studies curriculum as illustrated in response II 1b.

**Technology:** The practical application of modern technology is one of the chief characteristics of GCA, and will be utilized in a myriad of ways. Students will be trained in the use of a variety of software tools which they will later apply to produce interdisciplinary multimedia presentations including Microsoft Word Documents, Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and graphs, Microsoft PowerPoint animated slide presentations, Microsoft Access database programs, digital graphics and animation, digital video, research through Microsoft Internet Explorer, programmable robots, and computer programs using HTML, Basic, and C++. Through their daily computer experiences, students will acquire an understanding and knowledge of the Microsoft Windows XP operating system along with keyboarding skills and an appreciation for the ethical and appropriate use of technology.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 2a. Educational Program Continued

Describe the educational program of the school, providing an overview of curriculum objectives and content of the main subject areas.

**(Continued from previous page.)**

The instructional materials used to achieve this multidisciplinary approach to learning and emphasize the relationship to modern technology and science are included in the appendix. This representative sample of successful higher-order, multi-intelligent curriculum products are used to address and enhance the Sunshine State Standards and Florida benchmarks.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 2b. Educational Program

Briefly outline the instructional methods to be used, including any distinctive instructional techniques to be employed. How will this pedagogy enhance student learning?

GCA will emphasize basic skills instruction in all disciplines while fostering and encouraging exploration into the specialized areas of science and technology. The key to GCA's excellence in education will be the quality and commitment of its teachers and their curriculum, combined with the individualized atmosphere afforded a charter school. Teacher training will play a vital role in establishing and maintaining high standards of achievement. Collaborative program oriented lesson planning will be supplemented by creative presentations and a multi-intelligent delivery methods which encourage students to excel in their areas of skill and interest.

Struggling students will be quickly identified, given assistance, remediation, and be provided with the individual tools needed to succeed. Peer and parental volunteer tutoring teams will be developed to provide individual assistance to struggling students. In addition, a mentoring program will be deployed to develop positive interpersonal experiences for success.

The instructional program method unique to the GCA will be a weekly scheduled field experience which complements the in-depth interdisciplinary instructional program. It is the mission of GCA to teach through experiential and research based learning, associated with on/off campus learning and laboratory information gathering activities. The geographical location of the school and its proximity to the many rivers, springs, estuaries, bays, forests, caves, and coastal ecosystems provides the living-laboratory for field experiences to accomplish this mission.

The experiential program locations may include, but not be limited to: MOSI, Chinsegut National Wildlife Refuge, Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge, Division of Forestry, Nature Coast Environmental Center, Crystal River, Homosassa River, Florida Caverns and other State Parks, Weeki Wachee, Withlacoochee River, Hernando Beach Park, Vertical Ventures, Public Libraries, Public and Private Universities, Hernando Agricultural Extension Office, Danes Caves, Florida Power Mari-culture Center, Rainbow River, Pasco Energy and Marine Center, Florida Aquarium, Ginny Springs, Williston Springs, Anclote Key, Saint Augustine, Cape Canaveral, Pigeon Key, John Pennekamp State Park, Suwannee River, EPCOT, NASA, Crystal River State Archaeological Site and the Gulf of Mexico.

Each of these programs offers a myriad of high order learning opportunities applicable to all the disciplines and most importantly, learning practical, real-world problem solving skills.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 2c. Educational Program

Describe how your school will meet the needs of Exceptional Education (ESE) Students, including limited English proficient (ESOL) students.

**(Continued on next page.)**

Keeping with the Florida statutes outlined below, GCA will follow all federal, state, and district guidelines for non-discriminatory practices in its enrollment and student population. The rigorous nature of a course of study emphasizing science, math, and technology requires that some academic limitations apply, so that GCA does not accept students into a program where they are unlikely to be successful. The task of determining if it is in the students capability and best interest to attend GCA will be that of the Administrative IEP Team in conjunction with the Hernando County School District Staffing Specialist.

The Administrative IEP Team in conjunction with the HCSB staffing specialist, will determine the services, accommodations, and/or modifications necessary to meet the goals and objectives of the student's IEP prior to the students attending GCA. These goals and objectives are designed to lead to successful academic outcomes. Once these services and modifications are determined, the Administrative IEP Team in conjunction with the Hernando County School District Staffing Specialist will designate appropriate placement. If the Administrative IEP Team in conjunction with the HCSB staffing specialist determines that an ESE student can benefit from the educational services provided by the GCA charter school, then that student is eligible to be enrolled. If the Administrative IEP Team in conjunction with the HCSB staffing specialist determines that an ESE student would be better served at a different school, operated by the sponsor, the Charter School shall not be obligated to serve that student.

When a student identified as an Exceptional Education Student is selected for enrollment in GCA, the Administrative IEP Team in conjunction with the HCSB Staffing Specialist will determine how the IEP will be best implemented in order for the student to receive an appropriate education at GCA as provided by state and federal law. If, during the course of the quarterly evaluations, all reasonable accommodations have been implemented and the student is not making adequate progress according to their IEP, the team can reconvene to determine if other accommodations need to be made and/or an alternative placement is warranted.

Limited English proficient students will be served by ESOL certified personnel or those in the process of becoming ESOL endorsed. ESOL strategies will be employed to provide assistance which meets or exceeds the curriculum guidelines and accommodations as outlined by the Florida statutes.

**Florida Statute 228.056, Paragraph 7, Eligible Students, Section C states:**

“A charter school may limit the enrollment process only to target the following student populations: (5) Students who meet reasonable academic standards established by the charter school application and charter, or, in the case of existing charter schools, standards that are consistent with the school's mission and purpose. Such standards must be in accordance with state law and practice in public schools and may not discriminate against otherwise qualified individuals.”

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 2c. Educational Program (Continued)

Describe how your school will meet the needs of Exceptional Education (ESE) Students, including limited English proficient (ESOL) students.

**(Continued from previous page.)**

GCA will abide by the ESE, 504, and LEP district plans currently in effect for Hernando County students enrolled. GCA will make every effort to implement a student's Individual Education Plan, 504 plan, or Limited English Proficiency Plan with the most successful appropriate services. These services will be provided by certified teachers employed by GCA or through shared services or contract with the Hernando County School District where possible. If none of the above is possible, GCA will seek certified private providers.

The progress of students eligible for ESE services will be monitored and evaluated quarterly; communication will be maintained with the student, parent/guardian, and the Hernando County School Board to ensure that all federal and state regulations pertaining to special education are implemented, including IEP reviews, staffings, and three-year evaluations. The Teacher/ESE coordinator will monitor ESE student records and performance. They will coordinate needed services with the local education agent assigned to GCA by the Hernando County School Board.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 2d. Educational Program

Explain how your school will deal with student discipline issues, and how that policy will be consistent with Hernando County's student code of conduct including "zero tolerance."

The founding members of the Board of Incorporators has adopted the philosophy of the book entitled "Discipline with Dignity" - with regard to discipline issues arising at GCA. Under this philosophy discipline situations are thought of as teaching opportunities with the goal being the instillation of self-discipline on the part of the student. Disciplinary matters will be evaluated on an individual basis, and remedies will be determined to commensurate with the seriousness of the offense. Restitution will be used as a disciplinary remedy where appropriate. In addition, traditional disciplinary measures will be employed. These include:

1. written correspondence to students and parents describing the problem and suggesting ways to explore a remedy.
2. conferences between student and staff, parent and staff, and student, parent and staff.
3. academic and/or behavioral contracts.
4. individual tutoring.
5. family home visits.
6. probationary status.
7. time-out.
8. parent shadowing.
9. community service.
10. program suspension.
11. alternative instructional placement (ISS).
12. out-of-school suspension.
13. other strategies as deemed appropriate

GCA agrees to maintain a safe learning environment at all times. The development of the school's disciplinary policy as outlined in the GCA Code of Conduct shall be in accordance with the Florida State Law, Federal Regulations, and will abide by the Sponsor's policies. The school's disciplinary policies shall apply to all Charter School students while on the GCA campus or while participating in GCA programs off-campus. While alternative instructional placement (ISS) and out-of-school suspensions may be implemented within the school's daily operation; only the Board of Incorporators and the HCSB may expel an otherwise qualified student from attendance except as provided in the Hernando County code of student conduct.

GCA agrees to comply with the Hernando County "Zero Tolerance" policies, Federal Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, and any other applicable local, state, and/or federal law pertaining to the health, safety, and welfare of students.

The implementation of GCA's disciplinary policies shall be determined by the GCA Board of Incorporators or its designee. Any hearings or other matters pertaining to the implementation of the disciplinary policy shall be conducted by the GCA Board of Incorporators or its designee. The rules and procedures by which students may be disciplined, including, but not limited to dismissal or suspension from the school, shall be consistent with the requirements of a due-process procedure and in accordance with the federal laws and regulations governing the placement of students with disabilities. Expulsion from the Hernando County School System shall remain the decision of the Hernando County School Board.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### I. Academic Design

#### 3a. Student Assessment

Describe your plan to assess performance in core academic areas. Please include the current baseline standard of achievement, the outcomes, to be achieved, and the method(s) of measurement to be used.

Prior to the start of school, at the time of enrollment/registration, parents will be asked to sign a request for records from their child's previous school and/or provide their child's school records for the last two years. The FCAT scores, FCAT Writing scores, quarterly grade reports, discipline records, ESE staffing records, LEP staffing records, 504 plans, and other applicable methods of assessment will be utilized to establish a base-line of abilities and previous achievements.

In addition, teacher determined skills assessment mechanisms will be administered during the first months of school. These assessments may include oral evaluations, teacher assessment, software assessment, and standardized test scores currently available. This will further establish areas of need and recognize areas where the student excels in order to begin any remedial help or enhanced learning opportunities to aid the student in realizing his/her full academic potential. The aforementioned assessments will be utilized with the goal of establishing a baseline from which to define individual learning goals.

Once a baseline has been established, meetings will be conducted with parents and students to establish the desired learning outcomes and specific portfolio elements needed. These "Individual Learning Plans" (ILP) will be used as a guide for student achievement and for assessment purposes. The student's achievement toward his/her individual learning plan is based on their success in achieving the stated goals in reading/language, mathematics, science, social studies, and technology. The student's grade will be determined through their numerical score in all academic areas, their ability to work cooperatively in small groups, their contribution toward accomplishing the specific program objectives, the quality of their portfolio elements, their application of specific technological objectives, and computerized tutorial reports.

In addition to a letter grade, each student will receive a written statement of progress toward their individual learning plan and a detailed list of learning activities that their child experienced during the previous quarter. Parental involvement in the evaluation process will include a survey of the parent's and the student's satisfaction and perceived progress toward their personal learning goals. The Individual Learning Plan will be evaluated and revised quarterly and rewritten at the end of each academic year, as needed.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 3b. Student Assessment

Describe the methods used to identify the educational strengths and needs of students and the extent to which educational goals and performance standards are being met.

As stated in the response to question I 3a., baseline assessments will be used to identify strengths and weaknesses of individual students. These assessments will then be used to generate Individual Learning Plan with specific learning objectives for each student in consultation with their parent. The development of the ILP will include, through surveys, school communications, and parent meetings: the strengths; weaknesses; concerns; interests; and particular achievements and abilities of their child. At this time, parents will be advised and provided with the concrete methods and tools for assisting their child in the learning process and supported by the educational/technological means available to them at school.

As stated in the response to question I 3a., the extent to which the ILP learning objectives are being met will be evaluated during quarterly meetings where progress can be seen through teacher assessment records, computerized tutorial reports, cooperative group work, program objective contribution, and portfolio elements encompassing all core academic areas.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### I. Academic Design

#### 3c. Student Assessment

Describe how students will, at a minimum, participate in the state wide assessment program.

All students at GCA will participate in the statewide assessment program (FCAT). Students will be tested in accordance with district, state, and federal guidelines. These scores will be used to evaluate and track individual student progress. These scores are a vital aspect toward the development of each student's ILP.

As a whole these scores will provide one tool to allow GCA to evaluate the school's curriculum and progress toward the GCA educational mission. These scores will also allow the GCA directors and Board of Incorporators to evaluate their students' performance in comparison to the scores of other Hernando County School District students.

These standardized tests will help GCA better serve and meet the educational needs of its students.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### I. Academic Design

#### 3d. Student Assessment

For secondary charter schools, describe the method for determining that a student has satisfied the requirements for graduation in section 232.246, Florida Statutes.

Since GCA will serve students in the middle grades, 6 through 8, GCA will not need to satisfy requirements for graduation as stated in section 232.246 of the Florida Statutes.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### I. Academic Design

#### 3e. Student Assessment

Describe how you will report annual progress to include state required information pursuant to Chapter 228.056 (9) (a) and (16) (b).

The baseline student academic achievement levels and prior rates of academic progress will be established by a review of the student's previous educational records in addition to all of the criteria specified in I 3a., and I 3b.

The baseline rates will be compared to rates of academic progress through the quarterly evaluation methods specified in I 3a., and I 3b.

These rates of progress will also be evaluated and compared with the rates of progress of other GCA students in the same grade level and all other Hernando County School District students in that grade level. The criteria for comparison will be teacher grade records, student rankings, computerized tutorial reports, and progress toward ILP objectives.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 Paragraph 10, Charter Section A, 3(d):**

The district school board is required to provide academic student performance data to charter schools for each of their students coming from the district school system, as well as rates of academic progress of comparable student populations in the district school system.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 1. Profile of the founding board.

II 1a. Describe the organizing group of initial incorporators that are working together to apply for a charter, including the names of the organizers, their backgrounds and experiences, and references for each.

The information requested for question II 1a. (names, backgrounds, and references of the initial incorporators working together to apply for this charter) may be found in the appendix.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 1. Profile of the founding board.

II 1b. Discuss any business arrangement or partnerships with existing schools, educational programs, businesses, or non-profit organizations.

Business partnerships and sponsorships through existing business/community foundations, science centers, various county's parks and recreation departments, universities, environmental resource centers, community science centers, and expert individuals will be pursued. In addition local, national, and international company partnerships will be sought to enhance and supplement the science, technology, and multidisciplinary research aspects of our curriculum.

Specifically we will work to develop working business relationships with the following:

- \* Saint Leo University
- \* University of South Florida
- \* Pasco-Hernando Community College
- \* State Department of Parks and Recreation
- \* State Department of Agriculture
- \* State Division of Forestry
- \* State Fish, Game, and Wildlife Commission
- \* Chinsegut Nature Center
- \* Hernando County Cooperative Extension Office
- \* Hernando County Fair Association
- \* Museum of Science and Industry
- \* Florida Aquarium
- \* Homosassa Springs / Chassahowitzka Wildlife Refuge
- \* Crystal River Coal/Nuclear Power Facility
- \* Crystal River Marine Fish Hatchery
- \* Vertical Ventures
- \* Williston, Devils Den Park
- \* Ginny Springs
- \* American Pro Diving Center
- \* Crystal River Charter Captains and Guides
- \* Local Rivers and Streams
- \* HCSB Nature Coast Environmental Science Center
- \* Pigeon Key Foundation
- \* Mote Marine Science Laboratory
- \* Public Library System
- \* National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
- \* Public Library System
- \* Time Warner Communications
- \* Sprint Communications
- \* Verizon Communications
- \* Gateway Computer Corporation
- \* Dell Computer Corporation
- \* Microsoft Inc.
- \* International Business Machines Inc.
- \* Interconnect Cable Technologies Inc.
- \* Staples
- \* Office Depot
- \* Office Max
- \* Wal Mart
- \* Sleek Software
- \* Jackson Software
- \* Scan Tron Inc.
- \* Software House International
- \* Glencoe, McGraw Hill
- \* Flinn Scientific Company
- \* PJ's Army Navy
- \* Carolina Biological Supply
- \* Ohaus Inc.
- \* Audio Visual Innovations
- \* Mars Inc.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 2. School Governance:

II 2a. Describe the governance structure of the school, including the status of the charter school as a public or private employer as required in subsection (8) of the statute.

GCA will be incorporated under the name and status of a non-profit 501(c)3, private employer. The governance of the school will consist of the following:

- \* a Seven member Board of Incorporators
- \* a Director of Instructional Services/ Curriculum and Program Development
- \* a Director of School Administration / Financial Operations
- \* a Student/Parent Advisory Council

The board of directors is ultimately responsible for all school oversight, consistent with Hernando County School District, State of Florida, and United States Government rules and regulations. The directors will answer to and carry out the directives of the board. The directors are responsible for the daily operation and instructional delivery system of the school.

The Student/Parent Advisory Council (SPAC) will be comprised of interested students and parents. The Council will advise the board and the directors and assist them in creating and accomplishing the mission of GCA. The Student/Parent Advisory Council will have no legal standing or decision-making responsibility, they will act in an advisory capacity.

#### **Florida Statutes: Chapter 228.056, Subsection 8, Legal Entity**

A charter school shall organize as, or be operated by, a non-profit organization.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 2. School Governance:

##### II 2b. Describe the administrative management structure of the school.

The board of directors will have the final authority of any matters directly involving the management of the school. The directors, teachers, and program leader will carry out the daily operation of the school consistently seeking to achieve the educational goals of GCA.

The SPAC will assist the board and the directors in planning and carrying out the school's educational mission.

An abbreviated list of the general responsibilities of the Administrative Director is as follows:

- \* Personnel Management.
- \* Administration and fiscal management.
- \* Facilities management.
- \* School and community relations.
- \* Professional practices.
- \* Professional growth and development.
- \* Supervisory Responsibilities.

An abbreviated list of the general responsibilities of the Director of Instruction and Learning is as follows:

- \* Instructional Management
- \* School Climate.
- \* School Improvement
- \* Student Management
- \* Curriculum Development
- \* Student Assessment
- \* Student Recruitment
- \* Development of School Procedures
- \* School Course Offerings
- \* Staff Development
- \* Supervisory Responsibilities

Please refer to the detailed job descriptions located in the appendix for the specific job functions as referenced above.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 2. School Governance:

II 2c. Describe how the board of directors will be chosen, and what steps will be taken to maintain continuity between the founding organizers vision and that of the permanently established board of directors.

The seven members of the board of directors for GCA include the following:

1. The Administrative Director, a founder of GCA and its educational mission, shall be a voting member of the board.
2. The Director of Instruction and Learning, a founder of GCA and its educational mission, shall be a voting member of the board.
3. An educator employed by GCA and elected by the other instructional employees of GCA, shall be a voting member of the board.
4. Four members of the community who have expressed willingness to serve on the initial board of incorporators and support the educational mission of the school through their own expertise, shall be voting members of the board.

In the event an existing member of the board of incorporators is unable to fulfill his/her duties and responsibilities, the remaining board members will work to create a selection committee for the purpose of securing a new board member committed to the founders' educational mission of the school. Upon reaching a decision, the selection committee will bring the recommended individual before the sitting board of incorporators to vote upon their confirmation or denial. The board must reach consensus on any individual who will fill a vacant position.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 2. School Governance:

II 2d. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, including the relationship of the governing board to teachers and administrators.

In addition to matters directly involving the management of the school, the GCA board has developed job descriptions for each employee position in the school (see appendix). The Board of Incorporators will further develop an employee handbook outlining responsibilities, benefits, opportunities, and personnel policies that will be provided to each staff member. The governing Board of Incorporators will have the ultimate decision to retain or release administrative, instructional, non-instructional, and support staff according to the established bylaws.

The Board of Incorporators in conjunction with the directors will oversee each teacher and auxiliary employee ensuring their understanding of the mission of GCA, their role in GCA, their ability to contribute to the development of GCA, the proper grievance procedures to promote positive changes in GCA, and benefits afforded to them by GCA.

All instructional and non-instructional staff and members of the governing board who are not currently employed with the HCSB will be fingerprinted and have background checks done by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In addition, the Board of Incorporators will ensure the safety of its students by requiring all volunteers to be fingerprinted and have their backgrounds checked by local law enforcement. Finally, the Board of Incorporators will mandate that all staff be involved in ongoing education and training related to their particular duties and the school's mission.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 2. School Governance:

II 2e. Discuss the proposed method for resolving conflicts between the governing board of the charter school and the sponsor.

Should a conflict arise between the Board of Incorporators of GCA and the School Board of Hernando County that cannot be resolved through standard channels of communication, both parties shall move to the following procedures:

1. The aggrieved party will submit in writing their grievance to the other party. A written response is required by within two weeks of the written submission.
2. If no resolution can be obtained, two representatives from each side shall be commissioned and authorized by each side to meet and resolve the conflict.
3. If these commissions cannot create a resolution, both sides shall submit to mediation by an agreed-upon mediation service. The cost of mediation shall be born equally by both sides.
4. If no resolution is agreed upon, both parties shall turn the matter over to their legal council for resolution as applicable by law.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 2. School Governance:

##### II 2f. Discuss the nature of parental involvement in decision matters.

The staff and administration of GCA will work closely with parents of enrolled students to ascertain their child's academic strengths and weaknesses and provide them with concrete tools, methods of support, and the confidence to assist their child in learning. The extensive personal help available to the student and the parent will give them both the confidence to succeed in challenging new academic areas, gain mastery of essential skills, and work cooperatively in growing academically and socially.

GCA will offer open parental communications quarterly to review and assess their child's portfolio, discuss the teacher's written statement of progress, to further ascertain the progress of their child and determine the specific learning goals. Parent input on decision making matters will be solicited through these periodic meetings, the use of parent surveys, parent-teacher conferences, telephonic communication, and the school website.

GCA will also incorporate, support, and implement an extensive parent volunteer group that encourages each parent to become involved in the daily decisions affecting their child's education and impacting the school community. Parents will also have advisory input directly to the Board of Incorporators through their representative from the SPAC.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 2. School Governance:

II 2g. Discuss how the charter school will comply with Florida Statutes relating to public records and public meetings.

All meeting and records will conform to Florida Sunshine State Laws. Those things that are not deemed personal and confidential matters will be made available upon request and subsequent approval by the Board of Incorporators. All necessary documents will be filed in accordance with local, state, and federal laws with the appropriate authorities.

Signed copies of the minutes of board meetings and any public documentation relating to the school will be made available upon written request and subsequent approval of the Board of Incorporators. These records will be made available during normal GCA business office hours.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 3. Length of Contract and Implementation Timetable

II 3a. State the length of the initial charter term, from 3 to 15 years. Technically, the charter may be terminated before that period, as described in subsection (10) of the charter statute. In any case, the charter school is subject to an annual review of academic progress.

The length of the school district of Hernando County—Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology Charter School Contract is five (5) years with the applicable limits and termination procedures as specified by state law.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 3. Length of Contract and Implementation Timetable

II 3b. Present a timetable for implementing the charter, which addresses the implementation of each element thereof and the date by which the charter shall be awarded in order to meet this timetable.

**(Timetable continued on next page...)**

September	2002	GCA Charter Application Submitted to HCSB
October	2002	Application Considered and Approved
October	2002	Application for "Charter School Startup Grant" Submitted
November	2002	Charter School Startup Grant Received
November	2002	Establish Legal Service Contract
November	2002	Incorporation 501(c)3 Status Established
November	2002	Establish Banking Services
November	2002	Contract with Sponsor (HCSB) Signed
November	2002	Negotiate Property Lease
November	2002	Application for Sales Tax Exemption
November	2002	Application for Employer ID Number
November	2002	Establish Food Service Agreement for 2003-2004 School Year
November	2002	Establish Transportation Agreement for 2003-2004 School Year
November	2002	Establish Funds Distribution Schedule
November	2002	Establish Financial Services Consultant
November	2002	Establish Payroll Calendar and Benefits Schedule
November	2002	Establish Monthly Cash Flow Analysis
November	2002	Develop Purchasing Procedures
November	2002	Finger Printing / Background Check for Board Members
November	2002	Establish Bookkeeping System
December	2002	Building Code, Safety, and Fire Inspection
December	2002	Establish Contract with Insurance Provider
December	2002	Receive Certificate of Occupancy for Offices/Classrooms
December	2002	Emergency Protocols and Evacuation Plans Established
December	2002	Purchase Office Equipment / Furniture
December	2002	Prepare and Furnish Administrative Offices
December	2002	Establish Telephone Service Agreement
December	2002	Establish Water/Sewer Service Agreement
December	2002	Establish Electrical Utility Service Agreement
December	2002	Establish Internet Service Provider Agreement

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 3. Length of Contract and Implementation Timetable

II 3b. Present a timetable for implementing the charter, which addresses the implementation of each element thereof and the date by which the charter shall be awarded in order to meet this timetable.

**(Timetable continued from previous page and continued on next page...)**

January	2003	Begin Preparation of Classroom Building
January	2003	Begin Preparation of Computer Lab
January	2003	Furnish Computer Lab
January	2003	Purchase Instructional Computer Equipment
January	2003	Network Wiring for Computer Lab
January	2003	Prepare Instructional Site for Social Studies
January	2003	Prepare Instructional Site for Language Arts
January	2003	Prepare Instructional Site for Mathematics
January	2003	Prepare Instructional Site for Science
January	2003	Prepare Lunch/Break Area
January	2003	Develop School Calendar
January	2003	Develop Employee Handbook
January	2003	Develop Employee Application
January	2003	Develop Student Handbook
January	2003	Develop Student Enrollment Application
February	2003	Develop FTE Audit Procedures
February	2003	Implement Recruitment Strategies for Staff
February	2003	Implement Recruitment Strategies for Students
February	2003	Implement Outreach Program to Ensure Student Diversity
February	2003	Schedule Open Enrollment Period
February	2003	Establish Lottery Procedures
February	2003	Establish GCA Website
March	2003	Begin Acceptance of Student Applications
March	2003	Begin Student/Parent Interview Process
March	2003	Schedule Staffings for ESE applicants.
March	2003	Monitor Applications for Student Diversity
March	2003	Negotiate Teacher/Staff Contracts
March	2003	Notify Accepted Teachers/Staff
March	2003	Conduct Employee Fingerprinting & Background Checks
March	2003	Bloodborne Pathogens, First Aid, CPR, Medication Training for Staff

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 3. Length of Contract and Implementation Timetable

II 3b. Present a timetable for implementing the charter, which addresses the implementation of each element thereof and the date by which the charter shall be awarded in order to meet this timetable.

**(Timetable continued from previous page.)**

April	2003	Notify Accepted Students
April	2003	Hold Enrollment Lottery if Necessary
April	2003	Schedule Student Orientation and Registrations
April	2003	Obtain Student Records
April	2003	Prepare Student Database
April	2003	Notify District of Enrolled Students
April	2003	Invite Teacher Input on Curriculum and Instructional Materials
April	2003	Order Curriculum and Instructional Materials
April	2003	Identify Exceptional Students and Begin IEP/504 Staffing
May	2003	Establish/Schedule Remote Programs
May	2003	Establish Agreement with Program Guides/Vendors
May	2003	Develop Core Curriculum
May	2003	Develop Program Based Experiential Curriculum
May	2003	Identify and Contact Community Resources to Assist the School
June	2003	Begin Grant Writing Program for Instructional Funds and Programs
June	2003	Staff Orientation and Development
July	2003	Orientation and Registration Open House for 2003-2004 School Year
August	2003	School Begins in Accordance with District Calendar

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### II. Governance and Management

#### II 4. Evidence of Support

II 4a. Try to convey as clearly and concretely as possible the scope of community backing for the proposed charter school and its founding board. Document this community support among teachers, parents, students, community members and institutional leaders and others, through the use of support, surveys, or other tangible means.

Community support for this project and the mission of the founding board is evidenced and documented by the correspondences and public commentary which may be found in our appendix. In addition, with the proposed centrally zoned location of GCA and the demonstrated growth in the number of students vying for space in our county's public middle schools, there is a demonstrated need within the educational community to provide academic experiences with the lowest student to teacher ratio possible. Also, community support for a school which emphasizes science and technology is evidenced by the public's willingness to support and endorse the new Nature Coast High School. Furthermore, evidence that the parents of school-age children embrace experiential learning endeavors is apparent by the success of the experiential, program based magnet school philosophy as exemplified by Chocachatti Elementary School. Finally, the adoption of thematic learning designations at the district middle school level demonstrates a willingness by the county to embrace innovation.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 1. Facilities

III 1a. Describe the facilities to be used and their location, or alternatively, describe your present options for a building.

Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology's proposed facility is located on Lamson Avenue and Tillery Road across from the Sherwood Forest Nursery in Spring Hill. The brand new, steel constructed, building has 4500 square feet of working space which will be arranged as shown on the floor plan located in the appendix.

The facility has 55 parking spaces, four entrances and four exits, four unisex handicap accessible bathrooms, emergency lighting and exit signs, outside landscaping and lighting, and meets all 2002 building and fire codes. The interior walls of this building are non-load bearing steel studs which allow for flexibility and openness of the interior arrangement.

The building is located in a quiet commercially zoned area. The facility has both paved and grassy areas available for recreational use.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 1. Facilities

III 1b. Describe how this site would be a suitable facility for the proposed school. Including any plans to renovate and bring the facility in compliance with all applicable local building codes.

This 2002 steel constructed building is in compliance with all state and local building codes. No future renovations are necessary or expected. The site provides significant classroom/laboratory space and ample facilities for auxiliary activities.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 1. Facilities

III 1c. If applicable, discuss any progress, partnership developments, or other future steps towards acquisition of a school building.

At the present time there is no need to acquire any building other than the aforementioned GCA leased facility.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 1. Facilities

III 1d. Describe financing plans for facilities, if available.

The facility lease will be funded through capital outlay funds. Startup grant funds will be used to secure the lease agreement. Please refer to the GCA three-year budget projection found in the appendix and response III 2b.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 2. Finances

III 2a. Describe the financial management and internal accounting procedures of the school.

Financial management including accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, auditing, etc. will be supervised and audited by an accredited accounting firm. The Board of Incorporators will seek a company with expertise in school financial management. All checks will require two authorized signatures, and all checks in excess of \$2000.00 will require the approval of the Board of Incorporators. Issues or questions that may arise regarding the financial management of the school will be reported immediately to the Board of Incorporators. A monthly summary of accounts will be presented and received for audit at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Incorporators. An independent outside auditor will conduct an annual audit whose findings will be presented to the Board of Incorporators. Necessary steps will be taken to implement any recommendations stated by the independent auditor. All records will be kept in accordance with the publication entitled "Financial and Program Cost Accounting and Reporting for Florida's Schools" (The "Red Book") and/or Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) for non-profit corporations, and be made available upon request to the Hernando County School Board.



## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 2. Finances

III 2c. Present a three year budget covering all projected sources of revenue, both public and private and planned expenditures.

The three year budget analysis/projection may be found in the appendix.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 2. Finances

III 2d. Do you plan to conduct any fundraising efforts to generate capital or to supplement the per pupil allocation. If so, briefly explain.

There are no plans at the present time for supplemental fundraisers. However the SPAC or the Board of Incorporators may seek to conduct fundraising activities to support the educational programs at the school. We do plan to seek grant monies from national, state, and local sources.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 2. Finances

III 2e. Explain the manner in which the school will be insured, including liability insurance.

GCA will comply with all requirements of insurance for charter schools as required by state law. Upon approval of the charter, we will demonstrate proof of insurance including, but not limited to the following coverage:

- Errors and Omissions Insurance
- Officers and Directors Liability Insurance
- Commercial and General Liability Insurance
- Automobile Liability Insurance
- Employee Liability Insurance
- Property Insurance
- Employee Health Insurance
- Workman's Compensation Insurance
- Unemployment Compensation Insurance

A detailed insurance quotation is provided in the appendix.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 3. Recruiting and Marketing Plan

III 3a. Demonstrate how you will publicize the school to attract a sufficient pool of applicants.

GCA will seek a diverse population of students. Advertising will include: newspaper advertisements; flyers; cable television community events calendars; an informational web site; and presentations to local organizations. In addition, with school board approval, information will be disseminated to fifth through seventh grade students currently enrolled in the Hernando County School System. In conjunction with our advertising efforts, the local press coverage explaining the unique educational opportunity available at GCA will serve to attract a sufficient pool of diverse applicants. A dedicated telephone line will also be established to field questions from the community and provide information to parents or guardians of potential students.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### III. Finance and Facilities

#### III 3. Recruiting and Marketing Plan

III 3b. What steps will, be taken to reach students representative of racial and socioeconomic diversity in the community, including typically “harder to reach” families?

One of the strengths of GCA will be its diversified student population. Through the presentations referenced in the previous response, GCA will work actively to recruit students who would not necessarily be aware of the advantages of our unique experiential science and technology program. GCA will respond with kindness and understanding to the needs and concerns associated with individual situations of the harder-to-reach families.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 1. Admissions and Registration Plan

IV 1a. Describe the admissions procedures and dismissal procedures you will use.

**(Continued on next page.)**

#### **Admission Procedures:**

GCA will accept enrollment applications from all students residing in Hernando County who would otherwise qualify to attend a Hernando County School District middle school and meeting the criteria as described in response I 1b.

Students will be admitted without regard to ethnicity, national origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Applications will be accepted during a two-week enrollment period. Students will initially be competing for twenty eighth grade, forty seventh grade, and forty sixth grade positions for the first year. If the number of applications for a particular grade level exceeds the number of available positions, then a lottery will be used to determine which students are accepted into that grade level.

Enrollment preference will be given to siblings of enrolled students, children of board members, and children of GCA staff members. Students who express a desire to re-enroll, will have enrollment priority for the following school year.

#### **Dismissal Procedures:**

The Board of Incorporators and school directors will establish the Student Code of Conduct and GCA behavior agreement. Parents and students will be asked to read and sign this behavior agreement as part of their enrollment contract.

Parents are expected to participate in their child's education by:

- keeping informed of their child's progress in school.
- assisting with their child's studies.
- participating in parent-teacher conferences.
- participating in school events.
- dealing promptly and constructively with any disciplinary or academic issues their child may have in order to achieve a positive conclusion.
- ensuring that their child is present for classroom instruction and programs.
- following through on any academic or behavior agreements as agreed upon through joint conferences.
- providing transportation for their child.
- assisting by whatever means necessary to insure the safety, well being, and possibility for the academic success of their child.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 1. Admissions and Registration Plan

IV 1a. Describe the admissions procedures and dismissal procedures you will use.

**(Continued from previous page.)**

In cases where there are serious breaches in academic or behavioral expectations, the principles of due process shall be employed. At a minimum these will include, but not be limited to:

1. written correspondence to students and parents describing the problem and suggesting ways to explore a remedy.
2. conferences between student and staff, parent and staff, and student, parent and staff.
3. academic and/or behavioral contracts.
4. individual tutoring.
5. family home visits.
6. probationary status.
7. time-out.
8. parent shadowing.
9. community service.
10. program suspension.
11. alternative instructional placement (ISS).
12. out-of-school suspension.
13. other strategies as deemed appropriate.

The Board of Incorporators believes that expulsion from GCA will not be necessary except under the most egregious, blatant, and contemptuous violations of legal, safety or behavioral standards. If a rare student finds himself/herself facing expulsion, after exhausting our resources and processes, they will have the opportunity to appeal to the GCA Board of Incorporators and subsequently the Hernando County School Board.

# Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

## IV. Operations

### IV 1. Admissions and Registration Plan

IV 1b. Describe the timetable to be used for registering and admitting students, including a plan for the admissions lottery if the number of applicants exceeds the program's capacity.

#### **Application Procedure:**

Applications will be made available on March 3rd 2003 at the school site and on the school website. Each application received will be time-stamped and dated. Applications will be considered during a two-week application window. Applications must be fully completed and signed to be considered submitted. Applications post-marked, or received in-hand by 5:00 PM on the second Friday of the two week application period will be considered for that two week period. Parents will be contacted by telephone to schedule an enrollment interview, at this time instructions for providing scholastic records and meeting all school district and state health requirements will be given. After enrollment interviews have taken place with the student and parent present and if the number of qualified interviewees exceeds the number of available spaces in a particular grade level, the lottery procedure will be put into effect.

#### **Application Review:**

1. Application was submitted during the proper enrollment window.
2. Application is complete and signed by a parent or guardian.
3. Both parent and prospective student agree, during their enrollment interview, that the educational program offered at GCA would best suit their educational needs, interests, and abilities.

#### **Lottery Procedure:**

If the number of qualified interviewees exceeds the capacity of any grade level, a lottery will be conducted within that grade level. After making allowances for the children of board members and teachers, and siblings of enrolled students, the lottery will commence. Students will be selected by a random drawing of names from the pool of eligible students until all available spaces for that grade level are filled. At this point all additional names will be drawn and numbered to form a hierarchal order on the GCA waiting list. Future available spaces and openings during the course of the school year will be filled from the waiting list as necessary. If the waiting list is exhausted and spaces remain to be filled, another open enrollment period will be advertised and conducted following the procedures outlined above.

#### **The following timeline will be followed with regard to admissions:**

Monday	March 3	2003	Begin Acceptance of Student Applications
Friday	March 14	2003	Enrollment Window Ends
Monday	March 17	2003	Schedule and Conduct Interviews
Monday	April 21	2003	Interviews End
Friday	April 25	2003	Lottery Conducted
Monday	April 28	2003	Letters of Acceptance Sent

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 1. Admissions and Registration Plan

IV 1c. Describe the ways in which the school will endeavor to achieve a racial/ethnic balance reflective of the community it serves.

Every effort will be made to ensure a student population reflective of the racial/ethnic balance of the surrounding area. The wide distribution of informational materials and the fairness of the lottery process will ensure the invitation to participate is extended to all HCSB middle grades students regardless of race or ethnicity. The inviting presentations and welcoming personal interactions will allow both the parents and students to feel comfortable in applying. The fair and random lottery selection held when applicants exceed the number of available spaces will not influence racial/ethnic composition of the student population in any way. We will follow all the anti-discrimination provisions of the Florida statutes and local, state and federal law.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 1. Admissions and Registration Plan

IV 1d. In the case of an existing school being converted to charter status, suggest alternative arrangements for current students who chose not to attend the charter school.

This question does not apply to GCA's charter application.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 2. Human Resource Information:

IV 2a. Describe the standards to be used in the hiring process of teachers, administrators, and other school staff.

#### **Teachers:**

All full-time teachers at GCA will be certified and/or qualified as described in Florida Statute 228.056 and as required by chapter 231 as it relates to teacher certification. Teachers will be required to participate in continuing education programs of instruction and learning specific to their areas of certification.

#### **Administrators:**

The administrators / directors will hold a valid Florida teaching certificate, have a minimum of five years teaching experience, and demonstrate experience in management, grant-writing, and program leadership. In addition, success in motivating individuals to high performance and excellent parent/student communication skills are required.

All new hires, not currently employed by the School Board of Hernando County, will be subject to academic and personal background checks and fingerprinting in addition to state, local, and FBI clearances. Furthermore, part of the employee application process will include documentation of professional skills, goals, plans, and personal/professional references.

All staff will be enthusiastically willing to share in the support of, and provide the means to implement, the mission of GCA.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (13) f**

Teachers employed by or under contract to a charter school shall be certified as required by chapter 231. A charter school governing board may employ or contract with skilled selected noncertified personnel to provide instructional services or to assist instructional staff members as education paraprofessionals in the same manner as defined in chapter 231.

The qualifications of teachers shall be disclosed to parents.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 2. Human Resource Information:

IV 2b. Describe your human resource policies governing: salaries, contracts, hiring and dismissal, and benefits packages.

Teachers will be hired at salaries and benefits competitive with those of the Hernando County School Board and commensurate with degrees earned, experience, and the requisite skills needed for GCA. All employees will sign a written contract. All employees will receive and acknowledge an employee handbook explaining goals and aims as well as benefits, grievance procedures, causes for dismissal, and dismissal procedures from the Board of Incorporators.

A graduated, step-wise, due process procedure for employee grievances and/or teacher performance issues will be utilized. Each position has a job description which will be provided to GCA employees. GCA is an equal opportunity employer, hiring without regard to race, religion, gender, age, nationality, creed, or disability.

Staff situations that may arise will be remedied under a clear policy and procedure for addressing personnel issues which will be established by the Board of Incorporators and included in the GCA employee handbook. All final personnel decisions are the responsibility of the Board of Incorporators.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### IV. Operations

#### IV 2. Human Resource Information:

IV 2c. Describe how the qualifications of teachers will be described to parents considering the charter school for their children, as required in the charter statute.

Information and pertinent data for all teachers, leaders, directors and staff will be made available to all parents prior to the start of school via the GCA website. Public files with staff applications, qualifications, letters of recommendation, etc. will be available for review in the school office during regular business hours.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 2. Human Resource Information:

IV 2d. What are the targeted staff size, staffing plan, and projected student-teacher ratio?

The targeted staff size for the first year of GCA's operation includes a full time administrative director, a full time instruction and learning director, five full time certified teachers, one full-time teaching-certified program leader and one part-time instructional assistant. During the first two years of operation the teacher to student ratio is 20:1. During the third year of operation the teacher to student ratio will be no more than 25:1.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 2. Human Resource Information:

#### IV 2e. Explain your plan for professional development.

Staff will have regularly scheduled in-service training and workshops. In addition, continuing education will be encouraged and staff will be sent to out-of-area and in-area workshops and conferences. Those who are not certified teachers in the state of Florida, or certified out-of-field will be required to obtain proper certification. The Board of Incorporators feels learning is a lifelong process and those who lead must be personally immersed in this process to sharpen their skills, maintain their enthusiasm and grow as individuals and as teachers.

Examples of conferences and workshops which GCA staff will be encouraged to attend are as follows:

- Florida League of Middle Schools Conference
- Florida Educational Technology Conference
- Astronauts Memorial Foundation Technology Training
- Florida Association of Science Teachers Conference
- Florida SEAS (Florida Aquarium) Workshops
- SWFWMD Workshops
- GCA In-House Workshops
- Florida Consortium of Charter Schools Conference

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 3. Transportation

IV 3a. Discuss the plans for transporting students to and from the school. What arrangements, if any, will be made with the local school district, private providers, or with parents?

Those students living within a two-mile radius of the school are eligible to walk to the GCA campus as noted in Florida Statute 234. Transportation beyond this radius will be provided for students residing in the reasonable distance as defined in response IV 3b.

GCA abides by the provisions of Florida Statute 228.056 and will ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students residing within a reasonable distance of the charter school as determined in its charter.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (14) c**

The governing body of the charter school may provide transportation through an agreement or contract with the district school board, a private provider, or parents. The charter school and the sponsor shall cooperate in making arrangements that ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students residing within a reasonable distance of the charter school as determined in its charter.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 3. Transportation

IV 3b. Charter schools are responsible for providing transportation for students residing within a “reasonable distance” of the charter school. How has that reasonable distance been defined in your charter transportation plan? What factors helped form the basis for this distance determination.

As noted by Florida Statute 234, children residing within a two (2) mile radius of GCA will walk to school.

A reasonable distance for GCA is defined as those students living beyond a two mile radius but no greater than a four mile radius from the school located on Lamson Avenue and Tillery Road. This incorporates parts of the geographic area from which three HCSB middle schools currently draw students. Those three schools are: Fox Chapel Middle School, West Hernando Middle School, and Powell Middle School.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (14) c**

The governing body of the charter school may provide transportation through an agreement or contract with the district school board, a private provider, or parents. The charter school and the sponsor shall cooperate in making arrangements that ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students residing within a reasonable distance of the charter school as determined in its charter.

## Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application

### IV. Operations

#### IV 3. Transportation

IV 3c. Describe the policies, which will help ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students.

As stated in Florida Statute 228.056 (14) c, GCA and the sponsor (HCSB) shall cooperate in making arrangements that ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students residing within a reasonable distance of the charter school as determined in its charter and referenced in the preceding response IV 3b.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (14) c**

The governing body of the charter school may provide transportation through an agreement or contract with the district school board, a private provider, or parents. The charter school and the sponsor shall cooperate in making arrangements that ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students residing within a reasonable distance of the charter school as determined in its charter.

## **Gulf Coast Academy of Science and Technology (GCA) Charter Application**

### V. Sponsor Support of the Charter School

#### V. 1. Sponsor Support

V. 1a. Describe the support the charter school will seek from the sponsor and provide a means by which the sponsor may reply to the charter school's specific requests.

GCA will enlist the support of the sponsor (HCSB) to work positively and collaboratively to achieve the mission of the GCA Board of Incorporators. Specific requests for assistance and the means to respond may be found in the appendix.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (13) (e)**

Employees of a school district may take leave to accept employment in a charter school upon the approval of the district school board. While employed by the charter school and on leave that is approved by the school board, the employee may retain seniority accrued in that school district and may continue to be covered by the benefit programs of that school district, if the charter school and the district school board agree to this arrangement and its financing. School districts shall not resignations of teachers desiring to teach in a charter school. This paragraph shall not prohibit a school board from approving alternative leave arrangements consistent with chapter 231.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (14) (c)**

The governing body of the charter school may provide transportation through an agreement or contract with the district school board, a private provider, or parents. The charter school and the sponsor shall cooperate in making arrangements that ensure that transportation is not a barrier to equal access for all students residing within a reasonable distance of the charter school as determined in its charter.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (14) (g)**

If a district school board facility or property is available because it is surplus, marked for disposal, or otherwise unused, it shall be provided for a charter school's use on the same basis as it is made available to other public schools in the district.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (14) (h)**

If other goods and services are made available to the charter school through the contract with the school district, they shall be provided to the charter school at a rate no greater than the district's actual cost. To maximize the use of state funds, school districts shall allow charter schools to participate in the sponsor's bulk purchasing program if applicable.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (14) (e)**

The sponsor shall provide certain administrative and educational services to charter schools at no additional fee. These services shall include Contract Management Services, FTE and data reporting, Exceptional Student Education Administration, Test Administration, Processing of Teacher Certificate Data, and Information Services.

#### **Florida Statute 228.056 (14) (f)**

School boards shall make every effort to ensure that charter schools receive timely and efficient reimbursement, including processing paperwork required to access special state and federal funding for which they may be eligible.