

# New Mexico Public Education Commission



## 2023 FTC Application Kit

### Part C

## Written Responses

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## Applicant Information

**Name of Proposed Charter School:** First Things Classical Charter School

School Address (if known): N/A – School location unknown at this time.

School Location (City/Town): Rio Rancho, New Mexico

School District within which the proposed school will be located: Rio Rancho School District

Grades to be served: K-6 in first year and growing one grade per year until K-12 are served.

Requested Enrollment Cap: 520 Students (13 grades X 40 Students/Grade)

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# I. Academic Framework

## A. Mission and Vision

### **A. (1) MISSION**

State the mission of the proposed school. (NMSA 22-8B-8A)

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: First Things Classical Charter School (FTCCS) seeks to train the minds and improve the hearts of young people through a rigorous, American, classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue. FTCCS believes that an emphasis on a classical education will be well received and supported in the community as evidenced by the number of individuals that express support whenever this is brought up in conversation. Mission success will be having an educated population that can think critically and voice opposition or support of societal changes from a vantage point of knowing history.

### **A. (2) VISION STATEMENT**

State the vision, or the driving force, that guides this school proposal.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: First Things Classical Charter School envisions developing Citizens with critical thinking skills by emphasizing a curriculum based upon core disciplines of math, science, history and language arts, followed by attention to music, art and foreign languages, especially Latin. Each of these disciplines will be taught with an emphasis on our own history and traditions as American citizens and inheritors of Western Civilization, with an acknowledgement of the many cultural traditions included in our diverse country.

The founders took on this challenge of starting a charter school because we were concerned about the educational slippage in student scores and the apparent breakdown in public discourse.

The founders and Governing Council will reach out to the community by attending and speaking about FTCCS to as many groups as we can, including neighborhood associations, private/public clubs, churches, recreational functions, governmental functions and etcetera.

FTCCS's classical curriculum will be unique to the community and it will serve the community in unique and innovative ways as described below.

### **A. (3) UNIQUENESS AND INNOVATION**

Provide **clear evidence** demonstrating the **uniqueness, innovation**, and significant contribution that the educational program will bring to public education. (NMSA 22-8B-3)

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: First Things Classical Charter School seeks to instruct students in the basic, classical curriculum including Reading, Mathematics, History, Science, and Language (specifically Latin), in an atmosphere of mutually supportive, rigorous, academically challenging classrooms, with educators who are trained in content, as well as character, virtue, and arts

education. Part of the educational imperative includes instruction in Art, Music, and Physical Education. The curriculum includes extensive focus on the Classics in Literature and primary documents in History. The goal is to develop the critical thinking and analysis skills in each student so that they can address any challenge, job, or problem they may encounter in life. In other words, this is a classical, liberal education meant to help students with general knowledge of the world around them, their history and that of their community and country, and the thoughts, decisions, and policies which bring us to the point we are now.

In the firm belief that knowledgeable and virtuous lives are the basis of individual happiness and a free and just society, First Things Classical Charter School seeks to develop within its students the intellectual and personal habits and skills upon which responsible, independent, and flourishing lives are built.

**Outcomes - FTCCS students will:**

- Desire and pursue knowledge for its own sake.
- Approach or achieve mastery of the fundamentals in basic academic skills.
- Approach or achieve mastery of fundamental knowledge in core academic subjects.
- Come to understand the foundational tenets of our Western and American heritage, include the principles of American self-government and Constitutionalism.
- Understand and exhibit the principles of moral character.
- Understand and highly value the principles of civic virtue.
- Understand why a free, just, civil society must stand on principles of moral character and civic virtue as well as knowledge and intellect.

**How First Things Classical Charter School will accomplish these outcomes:**

- FTCCS will develop a school culture that values knowledge for its own sake and acknowledges the objective standards of correctness, logic, beauty, weightiness, and truth intrinsic to the liberal arts.

Because human beings are thinking creatures, it is in our nature to seek information; we want to know things. Specifically, we want to know the truth about what the things around us are and how they operate. We want to know who we are, where we come from, and what is expected of us. Animated by this understanding of human nature, FTCCS values knowledge for its own sake and heralds a school culture and curriculum that cultivates the desire in students to pursue knowledge for its own sake.

Education in the liberal arts assumes the existence of objective standards of correctness, logic, beauty, weightiness, and truth to which youth ought to be introduced. The Western and American traditions recognize these standards. At the outset of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says, "Every art and every inquiry, and likewise every action and choice, seems to aim at some good."<sup>1</sup> Aristotle spends the remainder of the book establishing a hierarchy of goods. At the pinnacle of the hierarchy is human happiness, which is inseparable from true friendship and all the virtues of character. George Washington acknowledges the same principle in his Farewell Address: "There is no truth more

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<sup>1</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, ed., Joe Sachs. Newburyport: Focus Publishing, 2002. Pg.1  
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thoroughly established, that that there exists...in nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness.”<sup>2</sup>

The ancients and America’s founders agreed that objective standards exist in nature and that living in accord with these standards is essential to human happiness. In continuation of this legacy, First Things Classical Charter School recognizes this maxim and aims to lead students to these objective standards through direct and Socratic instruction in a classical, great books, primary source curriculum. The FTCCS academic program puts young minds to work. It feeds, directs, and strengthens children’s mental capacities, supporting the acquisition of concrete skills and a core body of knowledge essential to their happiness and to their full participation in the American social and political order. Intelligent teachers who are masters of their subject matter demonstrate their own love of knowledge when they study their own personal and well-worn copies of the great books and documents and share their enthusiasm for understanding the world through their subject matter with their students.

- Intensive language instruction including explicit phonics and grammar instruction, composition, classic literature, and the teaching of Latin.

Since antiquity, intelligent men have agreed that language instruction—in the form of reading, listening, speaking, writing, and grammar—must play a central role in the earliest years of schooling. Francesco Pesellino’s famous painting, *The Seven Liberal Arts*, depicts grammar as the foundation for the rest of liberal learning. The premier educators in our Nation’s founding periods also wrote plans for schools that devote the early years of education mainly to the study of language.<sup>3</sup> FTCCS’s curriculum is language-rich and heralds robust, explicit phonics and handwriting instruction, explicit, systematic English grammar, composition, and instruction in Latin. Daily, students in grades K-3 receive direct and systematic instruction in letter/sound correspondences, culminating in the mastery of the 71 phonograms and 47 spelling patterns that explain the English language code. Our Riggs method is a multi-sensory, brain-based, and proven approach to instruction that includes precise modeling and practice of speaking and writing.<sup>4</sup> Students in grade 3-6 receive daily instruction in an explicit, systematic English grammar program that includes a full sequence of grammar principles and an effective method of diagramming sentences. Through our Core Knowledge Literature program, all K-8 students will read a rich array of reading materials that provide regular opportunities for the kinds of in-depth discussions that enhance the reading process and reading comprehension. Finally, elementary students will receive instruction in the Latin roots of their spelling words and students in grades 6-9 and beyond will receive formal Latin instruction which aids in the development of concentration, analysis, and puzzle-solving skills, nurtures precision in words and thoughts and cultivates an appreciation for the sheer beauty of language, thus creating accomplished and exact writers.

- A curriculum that is content-rich, balanced, and strong across the four core disciplines of math, science, literature, and history.

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<sup>2</sup> George Washington. “First Inaugural Address, 1789” in *Writings*, ed. John Rhodehamel. New York: Library of America. 1997. Pg. 732-33.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin Franklin. “Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania” in *Benjamin Franklin: Writings*. ed. Joseph A. Leo, J.A. Leo Lemay. New York: Literary Classics of the United States. 1987. Pg 323-44; Noah Webster. *Grammatical Institute of the English Language*. Hartford: Hudson and Goodwin. 1798; Benjamin Rush. “A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools, 1786”

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/N15652.0001.001/1:2?rgn=div1;view=fulltext>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.riggsinst.org/>; For an explanation of why “explicit” phonics is essential to literacy see:

<http://riggsinst.org/BNR.aspx>

First Things Classical Charter School strives to offer enrichment and to develop character through its curricular offerings with the aim of nurturing the child’s humanity and a constant view to the potential adult. Our time-honored liberal arts curriculum and pedagogy direct student achievement toward mastery of the fundamentals in the basic academic skills, exploration of the arts and sciences, and understanding of the foundational tenets of our Western heritage. FTCCS’s curriculum is content-rich, balanced, and strong across the four core disciplines of math science, literature, and history. In the elementary and middle school, First Things Classical Charter School will emphasize an education in the humanities, the sciences, and the arts in several current and research-based curricula/programs, which include: The Core Knowledge Sequence (a specific grade-by-grade core curriculum of common learning); Riggs Institute’s The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking as supplemented by content from Access Literacy, LLC (for teaching “explicit” phonics, reading, and language arts); Singapore Math (a conceptual approach to mathematical skill building and problem solving).

In the high school FTCCS will provide students with a content-rich classical liberal arts education, which includes the focused and rigorous study of literature, math, history, civics, the sciences, music, and art. This curriculum heralds classical content and teachers equipped to train upper-level students in Socratic Seminars to encourage intelligent, logical, and independent thinking. The classical content of our curriculum refers to those traditional works of literature, history, and philosophy that embody perennial truths of the human soul and which remain compelling because they present these truths in memorable, or beautiful, ways. These classics are admired not because they are old; rather they are admired because they have continued to ring true with people of many eras, cultures, and tongues. The classics provide the most thoughtful reflections on the meaning and potential of human life. They introduce students into a conversation which spans millennia and seeks to address the ageless questions of the human heart and mind. While this curriculum upholds standards of excellence, it is not elitist. It has proven to be successful for all students, including students with special needs as well as students who are learning English as their second language.<sup>5</sup>

- The centrality of the Western tradition in the study of history, literature, philosophy, and fine arts in conjunction with a rich and recurring examination of the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions.

FTCCS’s mission serves a long-term vision to have a citizenry worthy of the legacy of our country’s founders and the continuation of our American experiment. Thus, the school will train students who will be stewards of the “Western Tradition” and the pillars of a free society. The school will do this by providing a classical, great-books curriculum not geared toward a specific trade or profession but designed to engage the student in the highest matters and the deepest questions of Truth, Justice, Virtue, and Beauty. The FTCCS curriculum by purpose and design is a survey of the best intellectual and cultural traditions of the West as they have been developed and refined over many generations.

Where possible, we engage those ideas and those principles in the original texts which have both intrinsic worth and beauty and are worth of study and contemplation in and of themselves. We also find a clear expression of this legacy both in the founding documents of our country as an experiment in self-government under law and in the itinerary and scientific education of the founders themselves. FTCCS’s curriculum is also designed to teach the student the ideas and principles of our founding, including the principles of civic virtue our founders knew are essential to securing American liberty and prosperity. As the founders sought to avoid the problems of pure democracy as seen in Athens

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<sup>5</sup> New Mexico Public Education Commission, approved 2/9/2018.  
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and of a republic that gave way to an empire in Rome and despotism in Europe, we too will engage in those ideas with students and help them understand the perils of each.

- Instruction in the principles of moral character throughout the curriculum and a school culture demanding moral virtue, decorum, respect, discipline, and studiousness among the students and faculty.

FTCCS will leave questions of religious belief up to the students and parents. However, we agree with Plato that the purpose of education is to help young people fall in love with virtue. We also agree with Aristotle's dictum that one becomes virtuous by practicing the virtues. Every young person has a conscience. Like the capacities of the mind, the conscience must be educated, or it will lapse into lethargy. Thus, FTCCS will teach the classical virtues using traditional methods. FTCCS faculty will model and expect virtuous behavior insisting that students be attentive and polite. Moreover, the teaching of the classical virtues will be interwoven with the Socratic method throughout the curriculum and at every grade level. When students become capable of discussing virtue, FTCCS faculty will confront them with the great stories of self-command and self-sacrifice found in literature and history. For example, industry equips Aesop's ant for the winter. Obedience, humility, and kindness are the source of Cinderella's reward, and selflessness, courage, and integrity render Washington an international hero and beloved founder of a free nation. These kinds of narratives show that actions have consequences and that there is a clear difference between right and wrong. Just as we encourage students to emulate the intellectual virtues of writers and scientists, so we lead them to emulate the moral virtues of heroes and heroines. Furthermore, such virtuous standards as represented in Eight Pillars of Character (responsibility, respect, courtesy, courage, industry, integrity, gratitude, and self-government) and four classical virtues (temperance, fortitude, justice, and prudence) will be displayed and emphasized. Finally, high school students take a semester-long Moral Philosophy class introducing them to the formal, academic study of morality and right conduct. The class uses a variety of original sources that shed light on the desirability of right living.

- A faculty where well-educated, articulate, and respectable teachers explicitly convey real knowledge to students using traditional teaching methods.

Teachers should be intelligent and very knowledgeable about that which they undertake to teach. Young people are inclined to imitate what they observe. They are also more apt to embrace instruction from someone they love and respect. For these reasons, FTCCS will hire school leaders and teachers who are intelligent, well educated, articulate, and exemplary in manners and character.<sup>6</sup> FTCCS standards for teacher excellence and instructional approach is similar to the approaches used in successful liberal arts schools around the country. It is also consistent with the educational ideas of America's Founders and FTCCS's curriculum. FTCCS recognizes each subject area as one aspect of understanding the ordered world and man's place in the world. This means two things regarding instruction: First, teachers are knowledgeable in their subject matter and strong communicators who love, steward, and engage students in their content. As subject matter experts, teachers will be responsible for the leadership and direction of the classroom. Teachers will actively engage students

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<sup>6</sup> Benjamin Franklin established a high standard for the leaders of public schools in Pennsylvania: "*I propose that the Rector be a Man of good Understanding, good Morals, diligent and patient, learn'd in the Languages and Sciences, and a correct pure Speaker and Writer of the English Tongue.*" Franklin. *Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania.* Pg 327. Noah Webster described good teachers as "men of unblemished reputation and possessed of abilities competent to their situation." According to Webster, in addition to being masters of the subjects they teach, "instructors of youth ought...to be the most prudent, accomplished, agreeable, and respectable." Webster. "On the Education of Youth in America," from *Essays on Education in the Early Republic.* Ed Frederick Rudolph. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1965. Pg. 57



with important questions, both written and oral, to develop students' ability to process and communicate information through language. Second, teachers at every level help students make useful and appropriate connections between the content they learn in various subjects yet avoid the forced or artificial integration of content that occurs in some classical settings.

### **What is innovative and unique about First Things Classical Charter School?**

Several salient characteristics of FTCCS are not available in other public schools in the Rio Rancho/Albuquerque/Bernalillo area. The means of achieving FTCCS's outcomes described in the section immediately above are some of those characteristics. Examples of the unique and innovative aspects of the curriculum are shown below:

1. FTCCS promotes a two-thousand-year-old liberal arts and sciences tradition. Our school is "classical", but it is also, in a manner of speaking, cutting edge. We promote a somewhat countercultural notion in the twenty-first Century—the belief that students are made for, and should be educated for, much more than college, jobs, and careers. We view students for who and what they are, dignified human beings endowed with natural rights and gifts. With this in mind, we take on the tremendous responsibility to help parents cultivate students and their gifts so they can live good and happy lives in a state of liberty. This is the essence of a "liberal" education. Except for the Cottonwood Classical Academy, which only serves grades 6-12, the FTCCS founders find no evidence of any public district or charter schools that adhere to a classical model or teach the liberal arts and sciences in Bernalillo, or Rio Rancho.
2. All students in grades four and five will be informally introduced to Latin roots which have been demonstrated to improve reading comprehension and vocabulary and bolster performance in all subjects.<sup>7</sup> Formal study of Latin will begin in grade six. Because Latin is a highly structured language, students will develop a deeper understanding of grammar of the English language as well as insights into all languages. Further, since around half of all English words derive from Latin roots, the formal study of Latin and of "word histories" will engender in students a command over words and an appreciation for the force and dignity of language. On a practical level, FTCCS students will clearly understand the frequent occurrences of Latin in the English language (*per diem*, *quid pro quo*, *ante bellum*, e.g., i.e., *status quo*, *et cetera*). Finally, students in the high school who choose to take more advanced Latin electives will be able to read ancient works written in Latin that are the foundation of our literary, historical, and political tradition. This aspect of our curriculum is not only proven, it is entirely unique in Rio Rancho and Albuquerque public schools. In the 2016-2017 school year there was no evidence of any Albuquerque public school—even Cottonwood Classical—that included Latin in their curriculum.<sup>8</sup> This appears to continue to be true.
3. Upper-Level students will study history mainly through primary source documents to foster analytical skills and essential insight into their culture and heritage. This approach which is essential to our classical model, both brings history to life for students and fosters the habit of studying history, as all subjects, with probity, going to the sources of subsequent historical narratives in pursuit of knowledge, understanding, and truth.<sup>9</sup> Most textbooks adopted for

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<sup>7</sup> *Efficacy of Latin Studies in the Information Age*, Alice K. Devan, Reference: 1997. Paper submitted for PSY 702; Educational Psychology. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University.

<sup>8</sup> New Mexico Public Education Commission, Approved 2/9/2018

<sup>9</sup> This practice strongly aligns with New Mexico Common Core Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies 6012, which call for the careful reading and analysis of primary source informational texts. Pg 60-61. NMPEC, 2/9/2018

K-12 New Mexico Public Schools are comprised of mostly historical narrative composed by the textbooks' authors and include only smatterings and excerpts of primary sources.

4. In literature, students in all grades will have to read to them or read select works of classic literature essential to western and American civilization. The common practice among public schools today is to have students read excerpts within English language arts textbooks or anthologies. FTCCS uniquely takes seriously the responsibility to make sure students read and understand complete works of great literature, which both builds their cultural literacy and helps them understand important themes about human nature and the world. Review of popular K-12 ELA textbooks, as well as the content in popular elementary book fairs indicate that modern authors have to a large extent replaced the classics in public education classrooms. With regards to New Mexico, the public-school literature curriculum is primarily presented through textbooks with a combination of excerpts and shorter complete works. Many of the titles and authors included in these textbook compilations were non-recognizable. Finally, there is little evidence of classical literature being taught in Albuquerque Public Schools in the manner proposed by FTCCS or at all.
5. All students will be trained in study skills such as time management, organization, and note-taking that are essential for building stamina for further academic pursuits with success. Students will be exposed to these concepts from the elementary grades.
6. The program will introduce and seek to instill virtues of character in the lower grades through these pillars of character: responsibility, respect, courtesy, courage, industry, integrity, gratitude, and self-government. Instruction in the classical virtues (temperance, fortitude, justice, and prudence) will be introduced in the upper grades as a continuance of the elementary character program and a necessary support of the classical curriculum. Ten hours of training in classroom management strategies is required for substitute teachers. The training promotes mainly a carrot-and-stick approach to classroom management and student discipline. At FTCCS, it is not our design to make students behave begrudgingly and only when a teacher is in the room. Our concern goes beyond students from harming one another or cheating on tests. Our greater aim is to cultivate within our students the understanding that acting rightly is conducive to human happiness, to help them fall in love with the moral virtues, and to become good, happy human beings.
7. FTCCS takes its responsibility as an institution of learning and stewardship of young people's time and energy seriously. One of the ways we exhibit this structure and dedication to students' learning is by maximizing instruction time. The time we have with our students is valuable and will be employed in such a manner. FTCCS's rigorous and content-rich academic program demands that certain skills and content, including moral and civic virtues, be taught in each academic year. To teach these skills and this content well, our teachers must make the most of every moment of class time. FTCCS's daily schedule indicates what subject will be taught and for what amount of time in every K-6 classroom. Transition times between subjects will be well employed. Students will practice the moral and civic virtues while preparing for the next academic lesson and will often recite poetry or sing songs in unison. Students in the upper school are under the direct instruction of their subject-specific teachers, with the exception of five-minute passing periods. FTCCS upper school teachers will teach from bell to bell, assuming the passing period is sufficient for students to pack up, visit the restroom, and make it to the next class. Moreover, the FTCCS will provide a campus of order and decorum. Teacher monitored hall time for K-6 students and passing periods for upper school students at FTCCS present a prime opportunity for students to practice the virtues our staff models, teaches, and expects. Finally, the Head Administrator will monitor to

ensure that teachers fulfill their expectation to teach through the last minutes of the school day, providing a sufficient, but not excessive amount of time for younger students to pack up and prepare for pick-up.

## B. Mission-Specific Goals

The Amended Charter School Act Requires that new charter applications include: the goals, objectives and student performance outcomes to be achieved by the charter school as well as a description of the charter school's plan for evaluating student performance, the types of assessments that will be used to measure student progress toward achievement of the state's standards and the school's student performance outcomes, the timeline for achievement of the outcomes and the procedures for taking corrective action in the event that student performance falls below the standards (NMSA 22-8B-8(E))

This application requirement prepares the applicant team for the Performance Framework contents, which will be negotiated with the PEC if the proposed charter application is approved. Specifically, the performance framework shall allow for the inclusion of additional rigorous, valid and reliable indicators proposed by a charter school to augment external evaluations of its performance, provided that the chartering authority shall approve the quality and rigor of such proposed indicators and the indicators are consistent with the purposes of the Charter Schools Act (NMSA 22-8B-9.1(C))

### B. Mission-Specific goals

Identify and provide two mission-specific goals or Indicators in the following section.

Applicant Response: Goal 1 related to School's Mission/ Student Performance:

The mission of First Things Classical Charter School is to train the minds and improve the hearts of young people through a rigorous, American classical education in the liberal arts and science, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue. One of the primary ways that FTCCS will accomplish this mission is through our content-rich Core Knowledge curriculum that is designed to build in our K-8th grade students a core body of knowledge vital to the American literary, moral, philosophical, political, and historical traditions.

#### **Mission-Specific Indicator:**

Ninety percent (90%) of FTCCS students in grades 2-8 who attend the school for 2 or more academic years will meet or exceed proficiency in Core Knowledge content in history/geography/civics, science and literature by the end of year three. Proficiency is defined as a score of 80% or better on the Core Knowledge Foundation's online assessments in each of the three content areas: social studies (history/geography), science and literature.

Did FTCCS meet its mission-specific indicators?

**Specific:** The FTCCS mission-specific indicator is specific, clear, and concise. The goal pertains specifically to students in grades 2-8 that have participated in FTCCS's academic program for two or more years and specifically to their demonstration of proficiency in

specific Core Knowledge content. The basis of FTCCS's K-8 curriculum in history/geography, science, and literature is E.D. Hirsch's Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence. The Core Knowledge Sequence is distinguished by a planned progression of specific knowledge in these subjects that builds knowledge upon prior knowledge by establishing a foundation of key content for students in lower grades and spiraling around to treat the same content more broadly and deeply. The assessment described in FTCCS's mission-specific indicator is made available through the Core Knowledge Foundation and is specifically tied to the Core Knowledge Scope and Sequence in the specified subjects. Finally, proficiency is defined as earning a score of 80% or better on the assessments in each content area.

**Measurable:** The FTCCS mission-specific indicator is measurable. The Core Knowledge online assessment uses online tools available from ProProfs. The assessments are embedded into a customized website for each participating school. The assessment was designed with certain goals in mind that align with FTCCS's mission—specifically, the assessment should:

- Be a formative assessment, not summative.
- Be **brief** so as not to take too much time away from instruction, and user-friendly for both teachers and students.
- Not be a “gotcha” for teachers but instead a tool to help them focus, refine, and improve their teaching.
- Provide results/data to teachers in fairly short order.
- Go beyond.
- a traditional “fill-in-the-bubble” test and instead include a mix of question types, including multiple choice, true/false, matching, fill in the blank, short answer and brief essays.

All FTCCS students in grades 2-8 will take the CK online assessment in history/geography, science, and literature at the end of each domain. The tests range from 10-20 questions and only take 10-15 minutes of class time. The tests are primarily multiple-choice questions and usually include a short answer or essay response, which is graded by Core Knowledge professionals to ensure intergrader reliability. The tests are graded on a standard 0-100% scale. All assessment items except the short answers and essays are automatically scored by the software. Thus, the result of these test scores will be available to teachers quickly, allowing teachers to analyze the results in time to adjust and improve instruction. At the end of each school year, the percentage scores of each end-of-domain test for each subject (history/geography, science, and literature) will be averaged for each student. This will render an average percentage score for each student in each subject. These scores will be compared against the metric for the mission-specific indicator shown above.

**Attainable.** The goal of 90% of FTCCS students in grades 2 through 8 who attend the school for 2 or more academic years achieving or exceeding proficiency in Core Knowledge content in history/geography/civics, science, and literature by the end of year three is attainable. Estancia Valley Classical Academy (EVCA), in Edgewood, NM, uses the same Core Knowledge academic program we intend to implement at FTCCS.

Students in the Moriarty-Estancia School District (MESD), like the Rio Rancho, Albuquerque, and Bernalillo students we intend to serve, have very low reading proficiency scores and science scores. EVCA's students, drawn from the Moriarty-Edgewood area, perform much higher on the state reading and science tests than MESD students. Moreover, EVCA's score on their end-of-year Core Knowledge assessments show that this academic program is effective in equipping students with the Core Knowledge content in history/geography, science, and literature. It is expected that in the first years of the school, FTCCS will likely serve students who come in at lower academic achievement levels than the students at EVCA served in the first years of their program. That said, based on the effectiveness of EVCA's program in serving the students in Moriarty-Edgewood, we can anticipate significant growth even within the first year or two of the school. By year three, FTCCS, students will be equipped with the reading skills they need to readily access Core Knowledge content. Moreover, our direct instruction and Socratic Seminar approach to instruction has proven effective in cultivating knowledge in students from all socio-economic and academic backgrounds.<sup>10</sup>

**Rigorous:** The score of 80% may not seem like a rigorous goal to some and on some assessments, 80% is not a rigorous goal. Yet, rigor pertains to the task students are expected to accomplish. The Core Knowledge Assessments are content rich and rigorous. For FTCCS students to score well on these assessments, they will have to retain the content they learn in class for a series of weeks at a time. They will be required to remember key figures and understand key terms and events in history, and be able to write intelligently about those figures, terms, and events. They will have to remember characters and narratives of the classical literature they read and be able to analyze and evaluate that literature in written response. They will have to understand the facts and concepts they learn in science and be able to express their understanding.

**Time-Bound with Target Dates:** FTCCS's mission indicator specifies that students will demonstrate proficiency in Core Knowledge content by the end of FTCCS's third school year.

Applicant Response: Goal 2 related to School's Mission/Student Performance: Reading

Reading at grade level is critical to student performance and will be an emphasis in K – 3. Periodic testing and administrative oversight will ensure that students understand the importance that FTCCS places on reading. If a student is lagging in their reading skills additional mentoring and parent-teacher interface will be initiated to bring the students reading skills up to the required levels.

### C. Curriculum, Educational Program, Student Performance Standards

C. Provide a description of the proposed school's curriculum. The proposed curriculum must be research-based, reasonable, and clearly align with New Mexico Common Core State Standards and the proposed school's mission. (NMSA 22-8B-A(C))

**ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE:** Several classical education models are currently under review, including the Hillsdale curriculum, and Great Hearts Academy. The Hillsdale curriculum

<sup>10</sup> NMPEC, 2/9/2018  
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has the most review and is attached. We are currently in the process of licensing the Hillsdale curriculum as it aligns most closely with the mission and goals as identified in the previous answer.

FTCCS will offer an American classical education in the liberal arts and sciences reflecting the excellent purposes, curriculum, and approach set forth by America's Founding Fathers. The Founders anticipated a system of public education that aims to diffuse knowledge and cultivate virtue broadly among Americans. Consonant with the liberal arts tradition, the Founders emphasized the early mastery of literacy as the key to knowledge in all areas.<sup>11</sup> They also understood each academic subject as constituting one part of the pursuit of knowledge of the world and man's place in it. Thus, they were equally concerned about teaching content and skills. Their curriculum provided robust content in each major subject area and, when appropriate, integrated content across subjects. In terms of content, the Founders understood that the study of Greek, Roman, English, and American literature and history is necessary to the preservation of American liberty and thus indispensable to the curriculum. Heavily influenced by Newton and supportive of scientific innovation and commercial prosperity, the Founders also gave the sciences, mathematics, and the study of commerce a prominent place. Moreover, for them, one could not be considered educated without studying Latin, modern language, and music. Finally, the cultivation of moral and civic virtue was a foremost priority, interwoven throughout the course of study in their proposed schools' curricula.<sup>12</sup>

FTCCS's academic program is based on this American classical model. The aim of the school is to equip students to become moral and intelligent human beings who are capable of pursuing their individual happiness and to become self-governing citizens who understand our Nation's founding principles and are capable of taking their place and flourishing in a free society. Thus, First Things Classical Charter School will provide students a full and complete education that will challenge them to excel both in learning and in character. The curriculum has been carefully selected to facilitate these goals.

Our systematic and rigorous curricular approach is already used in some of the top schools in Colorado as well as at least seventeen Barney Charter School Initiatives (BCSI) schools around the nation.<sup>13</sup> Unique to our approach is the combining of the American liberal arts tradition with cutting-edge, research-based programs, each of which involves a content-rich, organized, and sequential continuum of learning. Our curriculum begins with the rudiments of basic literacy and math skills and continues in a coherent and orderly fashion to the higher orders of knowledge, logic, thought, and expression. Our curriculum, most of which has been implemented at the Estancia Valley Classical Academy with strong results, meets or exceeds the New Mexico state standards in all subjects.

FTCCS will collaborate with Hillsdale College's charter school curriculum in design and execution of the educational program. Hillsdale's curriculum has shown success, based on collaboration with more than a dozen other classical schools, with students across a wide variety of backgrounds. The Hillsdale curriculum is characterized by a strong emphasis on language, content-richness in all subjects, a strong core curriculum, instruction in the principles of moral and civic virtue, and a focus

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<sup>11</sup> Benjamin Rush. A Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools, 1786.

<sup>12</sup> Benjamin Rush, "Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic, 1798" *The Selected Writings of Benjamin Rush*. Ed. Dagobert D. Runes. New York: Philosophical Library. 1947. Found in *The Founders' Constitution*. Vol. 1, Chapt. 18, Doc. 30. The University of Chicago Press. <http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch18s30.html>

<sup>13</sup> Five of the top 10 high schools in Colorado are liberal arts schools. Ridgeview Classical, Vanguard Classical, and Liberty Common Schools are in the top 5 schools. FTCCS's curriculum is similar to these programs.

upon the historical, literary, and scientific traditions of the United States and of Western civilization at large.

In the earliest grades, the curriculum focuses primarily on language, with the bulk of the school day given to teaching literacy and numeracy. Both subjects are foundation to a students' education, so the resources and methods deployed in each case must be consistent and excellent. FTCCS will use the Riggs Institute's *The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking* and two supplement programs to teach literacy and related skills, and the Singapore Math Program to teach numeracy.

The Riggs Institute's *The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking* is a multi-sensory, brain-based approach for teaching explicit phonics, spelling, reading, handwriting, and grammar. The Riggs program is closely related to the Orton-Gillingham and Spalding Methods, and practitioners of these will quickly recognize the basics of the Riggs program.<sup>14</sup> The Riggs program teaches the 71 letter-sound (phonogram) combination used in the English language, beginning with the easiest sig-to-sound correspondences, and working towards those that are most complex. Syllabication is critical to a proper understanding of letter-sound relationships, so the Riggs program teaches syllabication from the beginning of kindergarten. Alongside learning phonograms and implementing these into a potent spelling and vocabulary regimen, students using the riggs program will learn handwriting, including cursive handwriting. As students grasp the basics of English literacy, the program lays a foundation in basic grammar and composition. This proven program is the product of 120 years of research and experience.<sup>15</sup> At FTCCS, our Riggs program is supplemented by Access Literacy and Well-Ordered Language. Access Literacy provides a scope and sequence for literacy instruction in Kindergarten, and adaptation for teaching older students the principles of phonics, and enhanced cursive writing instruction sequence.<sup>16</sup> This program was designed by two veteran teachers who have personally had 40 years of successful teaching using this method. Moreover, for at least the last 15 years, this program has been used to transform literacy programs in dozens of schools.<sup>17</sup> Well-Ordered Language will be used in grades 3-6. It is an explicit, systematic English grammar program including a full sequence of grammar principles and an effective method of diagramming sentences.

The Singapore Math Program is a conceptual approach to the teaching of mathematics focusing on the student's complete understanding of essential math procedures and concepts. From the earliest grades, this program emphasizes concepts, mental math, and number sense while employing physical and graphical illustrations of underlying mathematical rules and phenomena. In this regard, the hallmark of the Singapore curriculum is its model method which progresses from the concrete through the pictorial to the abstract.<sup>18</sup> The program presents mathematical skill-building and problem solving such that students have a better understanding of not simply when to use a particular equation—but why. Singapore Math also provides an extended exploration (2-4 weeks) of a topic before moving to the next, allowing students to have the opportunity to achieve a much deeper understanding and proficiency. Finally, moving students on to higher levels of skills before they are ready is not an option, so the program will be employed at each student's ability level. Ability-level

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<sup>14</sup> For an explanation of why "explicit" phonics is essential to literacy see: <http://www.riggsinst.org/BNR.aspx>.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.riggsinst.org/>

<sup>16</sup> *The Effects of Handwriting Experience on Functional Brain Development in Pre-literate Children*. Karin H. James and Lauran Engelhardt. Psychological and Brain Sciences. Bloomington: Indiana University. Columbia University.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.accessliteracy.com/>

<sup>18</sup> What the United States Can Learn from Singapore's World-Class Mathematics System (and what Singapore can learn from the United States): An Exploratory Study, January 28, 2005. [Files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED491632.pdf](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED491632.pdf)

groups will be determined at the beginning of each school year, and adjustments will be made on an as-needed basis in order to best equip each student with the language of numeracy.

The central position of language in the curriculum continues throughout the elementary and middle school grades. In grades 4 and 5, students will learn Latin and Greek roots of English words, with the support of *English from the Roots Up! Vols 1-2*. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, students begin learning formal Latin, and will continue with Latin through 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Latin is introduced and taught alongside English so that students learn the structural underpinnings of their own language, expand their vocabulary, and improve their reading comprehension. As subsidiary effects, research shows that Latin instruction also aids the development of concentration, analysis, and puzzle-solving skills. It also nurtures precision in words and thoughts and cultivates an appreciation for the sheer beauty of language.<sup>19</sup>

As students mature in their facility with language, the curriculum directs their time and intellectual energy into more content-based (as opposed to skills-based) aspects of the curriculum. The basis of these subjects from Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade is the Core Knowledge Sequence, made available through the Core Knowledge Foundation. This sequence was developed to provide comprehensive order to K-8 education, with the intention of training students in the art, literature, science, history, math, and language that form their cultural and intellectual inheritance. The Core Knowledge Sequence was first published in 1988 and has been successfully employed and tested in hundreds of schools throughout the United States.<sup>20</sup> Research shows that foundational knowledge helps students build more knowledge and be better readers and thinkers.<sup>21</sup> In its ninth and current editions, the sequence aligns with New Mexico state standards in English language arts, history, the fine arts, and science, including the Next Generation Science Standards.<sup>22</sup>

The Core Knowledge Sequence is based on E.D. Hirsch's idea of cultural literacy, which makes it the ideal curriculum for a classical school. The Core Knowledge Sequence provides a grade-by-grade sequence of specific topics to be taught in grades K-8. It will provide the basic curricular framework for history, geography, literature, visual arts, music, and science at First Things Classical Charter School. With cultural literacy as the guiding principle, the Core Knowledge sequence leads students through a comprehensive and grade-appropriate view of science, literature, art music, and history. Topics which are especially important for cultural literacy are repeated in a spiraling fashion—so that younger students build a firm but broad foundation in these topics while older students are able to achieve depth. The sequence provides a necessary order across grades and between schools and families, such that teachers can base their lessons upon what students have learned in prior grades and will learn in subsequent grades, and parents can anticipate what their students will learn in each grade. The effect of the CK Sequence is to build a strong foundation of core knowledge in all students that facilitates the acquisition of future knowledge, while making students better readers and thinkers.<sup>23</sup> The Core Knowledge Foundation provides resources to support some, but not the entirety of the sequence, so teachers are supported but encouraged to reach beyond the immediate resources

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<sup>19</sup> Devan, Efficacy of Latin Studies

<sup>20</sup> <https://atlantaclassical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CK-How-Do-We-Know-This-Works.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Donna R. Recht and Lauren Leslie. "Effect of Prior Knowledge on Good and Poor Readers' Memory of Text." *Journal of Educational Psychology* Vol 80. No. 1(1988): 16-20;

<http://www.literacyhow.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Effect-of-Prior-Knowledge-on-Good-and-Poor-Readers-Memory-of-Text.pdf>; See also:

<https://atlantaclassical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Reading-Comprehension-E.D.-Hirsch-article.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> See: [https://www.coreknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CK\\_Domains\\_compared2\\_NGSS\\_Topics.pdf](https://www.coreknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CK_Domains_compared2_NGSS_Topics.pdf); <https://www.nextgenscience.org/sites/default/files/AllDCI.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.literacyhow.com>



and take ownership of their own lessons. The purveyors of this curriculum have found this arrangement valuable in striking a balance between teacher support and teacher freedom. Based on general information from those who have used the program, this arrangement is conducive to overall teacher preparedness and strong instruction.

Although the rhetoric surrounding a classical school often emphasizes the humanities, the sciences are no less important than the humanistic disciplines and will not play a secondary role at First Things Classical. The Core Knowledge science program focuses on thematically linked science topics and biographies of great scientists. The order of the Core Knowledge program allows for regular repetition of the most important topics, such that students are well-versed in the fundamentals by the time they reach high school. The science program is supported by Pearson’s Science Expl9orer series, complete with integrated lab manuals and demonstrations and Delta Science Content Readers. A complete overview of the curriculum along with reference texts is available and can be supplied upon request. High school students will be offered at least four full years of science classes and will be expected to complete four years of science to meet graduation requirements.

In high school, FTCCS will follow this course sequence. This includes four and a half years of history; four years of literature, math, and science; three years of foreign language; and a semester each of government, economics, and moral philosophy. In history, students begin with Western Civilization I & II in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades, learn American History from 1600-1900 in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and finish with a year of Modern European History 1789-2000+) and a semester of 20<sup>th</sup> Century American History in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In literature, students read great works, usually in their entirety, with an emphasis on ancient literature in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, British literature in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, American literature in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and modern literature in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The required track for science is Biology and Chemistry, then options such as Physics, Earth Science, Astronomy, or a more advanced course in Biology or Chemistry in the other two years. In math, students will complete courses at least through Geometry and Algebra II, and be able to take additional courses such as Trigonometry and Pre-Calculus to complete the four-year math requirement. In foreign language, students will be expected to take at least one year of Latin and two additional years of a foreign language—either Latin or a modern foreign language.

Appendix (\*) provides a table overview of the high school curriculum.

The Hillsdale program is robust and proven. We have selected this program because experience shows that it will equip students in our community to thrive. While this curriculum is already well-designed for our students, we recognize that certain adaptations and additions must be made to fully meet the needs of our local community and the State of New Mexico.

One addition and adjustment FTCCS’s academic program will make to the Hillsdale program is a robust health and physical education curriculum, fully aligned and exceeding the NM standards as described in NMAC [6.29.6 and 6.29.9]. We will also require more physical education than the Hillsdale model or the state of NM requires. In the *Republic*, Plato claims that the best education for youth is a combination of music and gymnastics, by which he means a combination of exposure to true and beautiful sounds, images, stories, and ideas and the physical training necessary to render Athenian youth capable of defending their city-state. In his plan for educating the youth of Pennsylvania, Benjamin Franklin proposed that in addition to their studies, the scholars “be frequently exercised in Running, Leaping, Wrestling, and Swimming, etc.” This was both “to keep [the scholars] in Health, and to strengthen and render active their bodies” as well as to serve an “essential part in the formation of a liberal character.”<sup>24</sup> Both Plato and Franklin explain that rigorous mental training alone

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<sup>24</sup> Benjamin Franklin. Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pennsylvania.  
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is insufficient. Rigorous physical training is also necessary in the formation of moral, intelligent, and able human beings.

As the founders of FTCCS, we agree with Plato and Franklin. We are also concerned with current state childhood and adolescent overweight and obesity statistics and their correlation with chronic conditions such as diabetes and heart disease, as well as depression, in youth. New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) reported in 2022, 31% kindergarten students and 42.7% third grade students in NM were overweight or obese. The report showed an alarming and continuing trend of obesity prevalence in NM students increasing substantially (up to 73%) in the three years between kindergarten and third grade. High obesity rates are not exclusive to our younger students.<sup>25</sup>

FTCCS's physical education program is designed to meet the ends described by Plato and Franklin as well as to meet the immediate health needs of students in NM and Sandoval and Bernalillo Counties. FTCCS's physical education program will emphasize character development and the cultivation of a lifestyle conducive to life-long physical health, with an emphasis on building cardiovascular strength. Specifically, through our P.E. and Health courses, we aim to instill in our students the foundational virtues of moderation, courage, and perseverance, and to help students get into healthy physical condition. Class time is limited. Our P.E. classes will be designed to get kids moving quickly and to keep them moving throughout the class period, with little standing around time. We will achieve this through good planning with careful attention to the goals of the P.E. class. Here are examples of ways FTCCS's P.E. classes will get and keep students moving, and on the way to improved physical, and mental, health.

- Traditional team sports will be played with smaller numbers of students. For example, 3-on-3 basketball, volleyball, and soccer as opposed to full teams.
- Avoiding games with cumbersome set-up and equipment requirements unless these can be addressed very quickly and efficiently.
- Selection of non-traditional sport or non-sport activities, for example, ultimate frisbee, speedball, HIT circuits, cardio drills, dance pilates, strength training.
- Use of heart monitors to measure effort levels and improvement in cardio vascular health throughout the course of the year.
- Accountability: Establish a baseline fitness level for each student at the beginning of the year for cardiovascular strength, flexibility, physical strength, and balance. Establish goals for improvement and monitor progress toward progress toward improvement. Heart monitor data will be a useful component of measuring this progress.

In the FTCCS recommended schedule, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have a study hall period at the end of the day. At FTCCS, the last period of the day will serve as a P.E. class for all 7<sup>th</sup> grade students.

Other additions and/or adjustments FTCCS's academic program will make to the Hillsdale academic program include the addition of New Mexico History, and in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade, a required etiquette and social dance course. New Mexico History is required.

#### FTCCS's Curriculum is Research-Based

As mentioned, the curriculum of First Things Classical Charter School will be based on the curriculum devised by the Hillsdale curriculum. That curriculum is based in part on the curriculum and the success of Ridgeview Classical School in Fort Collins, Colorado, a nationally recognized leader in charter schools. Dr. Terrence Moore helped to develop the curriculum at Ridgeview Classical School (as school principal) prior to bringing his experience and curricular insight to the Hillsdale curriculum.

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<sup>25</sup> [https://hsc.unm.edu/ctsc/services/cerc/\\_docs/nm-health-data-summary-2023.pdf](https://hsc.unm.edu/ctsc/services/cerc/_docs/nm-health-data-summary-2023.pdf)  
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Since that time, more than 16 charter schools have incorporated this curriculum in their programs; including in Florida, Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arkansas, Michigan, Indiana, Georgia, and Nevada.<sup>26</sup> Their experience with these schools continues to inform the curriculum and any curricular changes. Hillsdale provides initial teacher training in their curriculum, continuing professional development each summer, and annual updates to their curricular and resource recommendations. Their collaboration offers schools the kind of information and experience that is ordinarily available only to large charter management organizations, but without the bureaucratic costs and institutional inertia that accompany CMOs and similar organizations. The collaboration between First Things Classical Charter School and Hillsdale will focus on curriculum and consultation. Hillsdale is primarily interested in helping charter schools to develop and use good curriculum and instruction and has no direct financial interest in FTCCS or any other affiliated schools. The curriculum devised by Hillsdale is not intended as a standards-based curriculum, but Hillsdale-affiliated schools have generally performed well on state assessments.

### *Research Base for RIGGS*

The National Reading Panel (NRP) issued a report in the year 2000, where it states the benefits of phonics instruction and why it should be explicit and systematic (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Explicit phonics instruction happens when students receive a direct and explicit teaching of the relationship between graphemes and phonemes. Systematic means that the instruction should follow a clear and defined sequence; and such sequence should move from simple to more complex. The following are the scientific research conclusions related to phonics instruction found by the NRP, which were summarized in the guide *Put Reading First*.<sup>27</sup> Note that these findings regard native English-speaking students:

- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is more effective than non-systematic or no phonics instruction.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves children's reading comprehension.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves children's reading comprehension.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction significantly improves kindergarten and first-grade children's word recognition and spelling.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is effective for children from various social and economic levels.
- Systematic and explicit phonics instruction is most effective when introduced early.<sup>28</sup>

While more research needs to be done in the area, studies show that the NRP findings regarding the significant benefits phonics instruction has for native speaking children, can also be translated to

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<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.hillsdale.edu/educational-outreach/barney-charter-school-initiative/classical-charter-schools/> for BCSI schools.

<sup>27</sup> Armbruster, B.B., F. Lehr, J. Obsorn. National Inst. For Literacy, W.C., National Inst. Of Child Health and Human Development (NIH), Bethesda, MD., Office of Educational research and Improvement (ED), W.C. (ED), Washington, DC., & Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement. A.I. (2001). *Put Reading First: the Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*, K-3.

<sup>28</sup> National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel. *Teaching children to read: an evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implication for reading instruction: Reports of the sub-groups* (NIH Publication No. 00-4754). Washington, DC: US Gov't Printing Office pg. 19, 20, 21

children who are learning English as a second or foreign language. The much-heralded Report of the National Literacy panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth, published in a book entitled *Developing Literacy in Second Language Learners*, describes five studies that explored the effect explicit phonics had on EL students.<sup>29</sup> In general, the findings are consistent with the NRP finding for non-English learners. An excerpt from the report and further evidence is provided in Section F (2) of this application. Here is an excerpt from the report:

“Clearly, five small studies of phonological awareness and phonics are far from sufficient to allow a determination of the most useful instructional methods for meeting the early literacy needs of English language learners. However, the findings of all five studies are consistent with the solid findings of first-language research. The National Reading Panel examined 52 studies of phonological awareness instruction and another 38 studies of phonics instruction. Both conferred clear benefits on children’s reading development as determined by a wide range of measures, including beginning reading comprehension. The five studies of phonological awareness and phonics with English-language learners had similar results, although only one of these studies measured reading comprehension outcomes.”<sup>30</sup>

A study performed with 85 primary school students by a bilingual education specialist in a school in Columbia reaffirms the findings of these studies, and further showed that explicit and differentiated phonics instruction have a positive effect for students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in reading comprehension and that the differentiation of it has a considerable impact on EFL students’ literacy skills in general. According to the result, explicit phonics instruction helped EFL students to improve their pronunciation when reading in English, which directly impacted the understanding of what was being read, thus enhancing their reading comprehension. The most significant benefit that explicit phonics instruction had for EFL students was the improvement of their written statements by revising and adapting EFL phonics vocabulary and focusing mainly on verbs. This differentiation allowed EFL students to write much more complex sentences and to communicate in a more effective way. Finally, the study revealed that the effects explicit phonics instruction had on the reading comprehension in the lowest performing 20% of the students were considerable. These students began with an average grade of 34% at midterm and rose to a 59% and continued rising over the course of seven subsequent exams, until they reached an incredible 82% in the seventh exam, even surpassing their high performing fellow students. In the same study, the survey results of other bilingual teachers’ observations confirmed the test score results. The teachers all confirmed that the students receiving explicit phonics instruction read aloud much better than at the beginning of the year and this contributed to a better understanding of what was being read, and they saw a disproportionately positive impact in their lowest performing students.<sup>31</sup>

*Liberal Arts Education Prepares Students to Succeed in Postsecondary Ed and the Workforce*

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<sup>29</sup> The contents of the book reflect four years of work (2002-2006) conducted by a panel of 13 experts in second language development, cognitive development, curriculum and instruction, assessment, and methodology selected by the Institute of Education Sciences staff and initially funded by several major agencies in the US Dept. of Education, and by the National Institute of child Health and Human Development (NICHE) through funds transferred to the US Dept of Education, OELA—Office of English Language Acquisition, and the IES—Institute for Educational Sciences.

<sup>30</sup> Shanahan, T. and I. Beck (2006). Effective literacy teaching for English language learners. In D. August & T. Shanahan (eds), *Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: report of the national Literacy Panel on language-minority children and youth*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. P. 427.

<sup>31</sup> Angélica María Martínez, Explicit and Differentiated Phonics Instruction as a Tool to Improve Literacy Skills for children Learning English as a Foreign Language. *Gist Education and Learning Research Journal* ISSN 1692-5777. No. 5, November 2011. Pp. 25-49 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1062615.pdf>.

Like America's Founders, we believe that equipping students well with the knowledge, skills, and character they need to succeed in further education, or the workforce is essential to education's more comprehensive aim, which is to equip students to contribute to their communities and to pursue their own happiness. We also believe a complete academic program, rather than a targeted process or course, is the best approach to college and career readiness. The best measures of college and career readiness are 1) mastery of subject knowledge and skills, including clear thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity/entrepreneurial, personal, civic/interpersonal, and professional and 2) successful entry to and performance in competitive colleges/universities and/or employment. FTCCS's content-rich, liberal arts program with its emphasis on literacy and high standards for character and academic performance, including more core requirements for graduation, is structured, and proven to develop this knowledge and skill base and to achieve these outcomes. Here are just a few ways our liberal arts program serves college and career readiness. Our program: 1) gives students global and cultural awareness and a broad foundation to draw from when exercising careful thinking and creativity by exposing students to a wide range of knowledge in history, literature, math, science, and the arts, 2) cultivates students' ability and confidence to communicate in speech and writing and to collaborate with others to solve problems in a common pursuit through regular poetry recitation, composition, and Socratic discussion, and 3) cultivates personal responsibility, self-government, work ethic, integrity, and time management skills through a culture of virtue and academic rigor.

Test scores, college admissions, and business professionals affirm that this knowledge and skill base, provided by a robust liberal education, well equips students for college and career success. Students in schools following the Hillsdale curriculum earn SAT and ACT scores averaging in the 76<sup>th</sup> percentile, with the more established schools achieving scores in the 97<sup>th</sup> percentile. On the PSAT, 40% of the ninth-grade students at Atlanta Classical Academy scored in the top 10% and more than half scored in the top quarter of college-bound students. In this study, four students in these classical academies were named National Merit commended Scholars and one is a National Merit Semifinalist. After hearing about the Hillsdale-led strong academic program and culture in these liberal arts classical schools, many renowned colleges and universities started courting seniors from these schools and offering them millions in scholarships. As of 2016, only two Hillsdale curriculum schools had graduated 67 students. Baylor University Honors College, Fordham University, Grove City College, Hillsdale College, New York University, Southern Methodist University Honors College, University of Dallas, Wheaton College and other renowned colleges/universities offered these students admission and over \$4.4 million in scholarships. Moreover, research recognized by the National Association of Colleges and Employers shows that graduates from liberal arts programs "are more likely to be leaders, contributors, and civically engaged than those college graduates who...didn't have liberal arts graduates' breadth and range of education."<sup>32</sup> Forbes claims, "Businesses value [liberal arts] graduates' critical thinking skills, communication abilities, and creativity. The breadth of focus gives the students knowledge that can help them thrive in a wide variety of fields."<sup>33</sup>

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<http://www.nacweb.org/career-development/special-populations/liberal-arts-graduates-what-employers-need-to-know/>

<sup>33</sup> Rob Sentz. "What Can You Do With That (Useless) Liberal Arts Degree? A Lot More Than You Think." *Forbes Magazine* 2016,

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/emsi/2016/10/19/what-can-you-do-with-that-useless-liberal-arts-degree/#598204ce41b8>. See also: Delps, Cleves, "Careers and Liberal Learning."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ddp41yaQitk&feature=youtu.be>

## D. Bilingual Multicultural Education, Indian Education, Hispanic Education and Black Education

### D.(1) Bilingual Multicultural, Indian Education, Hispanic Education and Black Education

Provide a description of how the proposed school's curriculum will ensure equal education opportunities for students in New Mexico by addressing the goals of the Bilingual Multicultural Education Act (NMSA §22-23-1), the goals of the Indian Education Act (NMSA §22-23A-a1), the goals of the Hispanic Education Act (NMSA §22-23B-2), and the goals of the Black Education Act (HB 43)

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: FTCCS acknowledges the impact of the multicultural setting in which we live and we want to include those cultures in the education of our students. Specifically, the rich Native American/Indigenous, and Hispanic cultures, as well as the history of Black Americans. In keeping with the Yazzie/Martinez ruling of 2018, FTCCS will implement appropriate cultural curricula to meet the requirements of the State of New Mexico under Yazzie/Martinez.

The FTCCS program will include an appreciation for the geography in which the school will be located, and will use the cultural, geographical, and physical environment to support the Core history, literature, math, and science curriculum whenever possible. We are committed to partnering with parents in every possible way, including, but not limited to, communication, curriculum, physical plant, field trips and any other aspect where parents can be involved, in addition to the expectation that parents will fill positions on the Board. In this way, FTCCS will have the information available to allow us to address the needs and specific culture education required by Yazzie/Martinez.

Yazzie/Martinez requires the inclusion of teachers, preferably those culturally identified with the Native American student population, and FTCCS intends to meet those requirements by hiring a diverse faculty to teach the students. Any faculty will, of course, be required to be trained in the Hillsdale Curriculum; we are confident and excited that a teacher versed in Native American History and culture, will be uniquely able to marry the rigorous Liberal Arts curriculum with the cultural sensitivity of the populations we will serve. To this end, we will recruit teachers from the surrounding Native American populations and encourage Native speakers to apply for teaching positions at the school.

Given the rich cultural heritage of New Mexico, Native American teachers are not the only focus of a culturally and ethnically diverse faculty. We will encourage and attempt to hire teachers of many ethnic backgrounds, and again, will be reflective of the surrounding community and population.

### D.(2) Equity Plan

Provide a description of how the proposed school will create an effective and equitable system of support for all students focused on root-cause analysis, equity-focused leadership and continuous improvement, and culturally and linguistically responsive curriculum and pedagogy.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Based upon the community that attends FTCCS, we will work to emplace an equally reflective Administration and faculty in the school. Likewise, students, faculty, staff, and administration will be trained in the implementation of New Mexico's equity requirements and the incorporation of those requirements in the classical liberal framework.

Through continuous assessment and communication with the populations involved with the school, we will endeavor to adjust on an as-needed basis to make sure we are meeting the state equity expectations.

FTCCS's Head Administrator will set up a Leadership Team to help guide the school to address cultural and linguistic challenges as well as to continue to attract and retain quality and diverse teachers. Likewise, FTCCS will seek and recruit Governing Board members from the diverse populations which are included in the school.

Since FTCCS's students will be chosen by lottery, all students will be welcomed, and taught where they are, with the included special needs process outlined in this application, in addition to open communication and hiring practices which include a reflection of the demographic of the student population. Support staff will be sought and hired based on the needs of the student population.

## E. Graduation Requirements

E. Identify the proposed school's requirements for graduation, if applicable, and explain any changes or additional requirements that vary from state mandated minimum requirements.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE:

**First Things Classical Charter School Graduation Requirements:** (which will begin with the first graduating class at FTCCS, estimated to be 2031)

Graduation requirements for a particular student are set when that student first enters the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at FTCCS, or when they transfer into high school at FTCCS, whichever is later. A student that leaves FTCCS and re-enrolls is subject to the Graduation Requirements at their most recent re-enrollment.

The high school graduation requirements for FTCCS include both certain core courses and a particular number of credits. The chart attached lists both. In cases where the credits required for graduation exceed the core courses required, the student must take an approved elective in that topic area to fulfill the credit requirement. All students are required to complete the core courses with a passing grade. Any high school level-course taken in any grade will count for high school credit toward graduation. Students will need a minimum of 27 credits to graduate.

All students are required to complete the core courses. Once enrolled at FTCCS, if a student fails to pass any of the required core classes, he or she must retake the class at FTCCS at the next opportunity. If a student fails a core course, the course must be re-taken in lieu of an elective provided the total number of credits earned during the student's high school tenure does not fall below the state's minimum credit requirement for graduation. At the discretion of the principal, a student may be required to complete remedial courses in order to graduate. The principal has the authority to waive any graduation requirement except those meeting New Mexico state requirements.

Students enrolled at FTCCS are not permitted to take a core course from any other institution, including online or dual credit institutions, unless FTCCS is unable to offer the class in a timely fashion. Students may complete at least one approved honors, Advanced Placement, dual credit, or online

course. Online and dual credit courses must be approved in advance by the principal. One credit at FTCCS will be awarded for a standard 3-credit-hour dual credit or online course.

While some courses may be completed during middle school (such as Health, Algebra I or Latin I), graduation credits are only earned in high school. See attachment in Part C folder.

#### **Departures from New Mexico State Requirements:**

FTCCS's graduation requirements meet all of New Mexico's core course graduation requirements yet departs from New Mexico's graduation requirements in the number of core courses and electives required. FTCCS requires 3 more credits than New Mexico requires overall and requires that 25.5 credits be earned in core courses, whereas New Mexico requires 17 credits be earned in core courses. Each of FTCCS's additional core course requirements reflects and is essential to the school's mission and educational philosophy as an American classical school.

First Things Classical Charter School seeks to train the minds and improve the hearts of young people through a rigorous, American Classical education in the liberal arts and sciences, with instruction in the principles of moral character and civic virtue.

FTCCS students will:

- Desire and pursue knowledge for its own sake.
- Approach or achieve mastery of the fundamentals in basic academic skills.
- Approach or achieve mastery of fundamental knowledge in core academic subjects.
- Come to understand the foundational tenets of our Western and American heritage, including the principles of American self-government and Constitutionalism.
- Understand and exhibit the principles of moral character.
- Understand and highly value the principles of civic virtue.

FTCCS's high school curriculum and graduation requirements are similar to the curriculum and approach used in successful liberal arts schools around the country. They are also consistent with the educational ideas of America's Founders and FTCCS's academic philosophy. As an American, classical liberal arts and sciences school, FTCCS recognizes each subject area as one aspect of understanding the ordered world and man's place in the world. Thus, to leave out of limit exposure to core subjects in our curriculum is to limit a student's understanding of the world and his or her place in it as a human being. Additionally, FTCCS's required courses include specific classic works of literature, history, and philosophy that present perennial truths of the human soul in memorable or beautiful ways and provide the most thoughtful reflections on the meaning and potential of human life. Moreover, part of FTCCS's mission is to train students who will be stewards of the "Western Tradition" and the pillars of a free society. Thus, the school's classical, great-books curriculum is by design a survey of the best intellectual and cultural traditions of the West as they have been developed and refined over many generations, including the clear expression of this legacy both in the founding documents of our country as an experiment in self-government under law and in the principles of moral and civic virtue the Founders championed as essential to securing American liberty and happiness. To leave out some of the core classes in FTCCS's high school curriculum is to deprive students of the opportunity to read and study and discuss these important works and these essential ideas with the support of a subject matter expert and other engaged peers.



## F. Instruction

F. (1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** overview of the teaching and instructional philosophy

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE:

### Teaching Core Knowledge:

Ideally, students will experience the topics in the Core Knowledge Sequence in a sequential, grade by grade manner since knowledge builds cumulatively (i.e., what students learn at each new grade level builds upon the knowledge learned in earlier grade levels). However, FTCCS as a new school will begin a school-wide implementation of Core Knowledge across all grade levels simultaneously. Schools have been successful implementing in this way by explicitly recognizing that students in the upper grade levels have not benefited from sequential, grade by grade introduction to the topics of the Sequence; background knowledge that would normally be taken for granted at a given grade level must be explicitly taught. In the early years of the school, FTCCS teachers will carefully craft their curriculum plans to incorporate time for “back-teaching” earlier topics, building background knowledge that students would normally have already received. FTCCS teachers will be able to create a list of prior topics by reviewing those listed for the earlier grades in the Core Knowledge Sequence. FTCCS will also assign summer reading (with parents) to help supply some of the key prior knowledge. Also, when FTCCS has new students transfer into our Core Knowledge program, they will jump right in and teachers will fill missing background knowledge as a teacher would with any curriculum and a new student.

FTCCS will hire and train highly qualified and motivated teachers who will be knowledgeable in the basic tenets of the Core Knowledge Sequence, as well as the subject areas in which they teach. Likewise, FTCCS will seek to build a faculty/staff/administrative team that both supports the students in their efforts and models the virtues, respect, and academic curiosity that is expected of students. Basic to the success of the program is training; faculty will be expected to attend professional development in the curriculum, philosophy, and requirements of both the Classical Liberal education curriculum, and the New Mexico state requirements in education.

F. (2) Provide a yearly calendar and daily schedule (length of school day, instructional blocks, and breaks) that **completely comply** with **all** state requirements and ensure **effective, successful** implementation of the academic program/curriculum for the proposed age group the school intends to serve. \*\*\*If anticipating serving K-5 Students and or an extended day program, please describe and include in a Year 2 calendar.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE:

For grades K-6, the school day will begin at 8:15 am and end at 3:15 pm, which includes the required 30 minutes for lunch. The number of instructional hours will be 6.5 per day. The number of school days will be five per week, not including mandatory, federal, state, and professional development days. For grades 7-12, the school day will begin at 8:00 am and end at 3:30 pm. A 30-minute lunch break is included in this schedule. The number of instructional hours will be 7 hours per day. The

number of school days will be five per week, as noted above. The length of the school year will be 175 days with a total number of 1137.5 instructional hours for grades K-6, and 1226 instructional hours for grades 7-12.

FTCCS's Year 1 schedule reflects two sections of grades K-8. Students in grades K-6 will receive the bulk of their instruction in their grade specific general education classrooms. Students in these grades may change rooms during the math block and will change rooms to attend music, art, and P.E. in spaces designated for those purposes. Students in grades 7-8 in their Year 1, and 7-12 ultimately, will rotate classes. These students will have seven daily class periods with five-minute passing periods, and a 35-minute lunch period.

*FTCCS will follow the following guiding principles for the school schedule:*

1. For the lower grades, literacy and math are best scheduled in the morning when the students are most alert.
2. When reading groups are in place in the early grades (mainly K, 1, 2, and possibly 3), it is best to have them at the end of the day so that parent volunteers may participate right before they pick up their own children from school.
3. In the elementary grades, "Literacy" incorporates vocabulary, spelling, handwriting, phonics, grammar, and reading practice in their ability-grouped circles. "Literature" means the teacher is teaching a work of literature to the students.
4. For grades K-6, 80 minutes of math is recommended. Fifty minutes of Primary Mathematics curriculum, 10 minutes of math fact practice, and 20 minutes of a Number Talk or Bar Model.
5. For grades K-2, 150 minutes of literacy/literature is required. Sixty minutes in the morning devoted to learning new words and punctuated practice throughout the day.
6. A common math block across all elementary grades permits ability grouping of the students. Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grades do not ability-group and therefore do not need a math block.
7. The elementary math block should not overlap with any of the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade math classes so that the upper school math teacher assist with the elementary school math instruction if needed.
8. The "specials" (Music, Art, PE, Modern Foreign Language) meet every other day.
9. The placement of the "specials" allows for a common planning period for adjacent grades (e.g. 2<sup>nd</sup> grade has a common special period with both 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) that allows for vertical planning periods for the teachers.
10. The different grades that are split between Music Teacher 1 and Music Teacher 2 (and Art Teacher 1 and Art Teacher 2) is flexible and will be tailored to the specific strengths of the teachers that are hired.
11. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade special period should not overlap with any of the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade Latin classes so the upper school Latin teacher can come down and assist with 6<sup>th</sup> grade Latin.
12. With a school of several hundred students (eventually), daily opening activities (attendance recording, pledge of allegiance, recitations, announcements) are best done in the classroom.

13. In the elementary school, lunch is staggered, when necessary, to prevent overcrowding of the lunchroom and playground.
14. Recesses are scattered throughout the schedule to accommodate the younger students.
15. Restroom breaks ought to be taken in the lower grades at intermittent times. They are not included in the schedule but can be taken over the top of phonogram reviews math fact practice, etc.
16. For grades 9-12, there are six daily class periods plus a lunch period and a study hall/elective period. (In Year 1, 7<sup>th</sup> grade students will take P.E. and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will have an elective.)
17. For grades 9-12, so that students can consult with teachers, begin homework, and receive remedial reading instruction, there should be a common study hall at the end of the day.
18. For grades 7-12, the standard teaching load is five classes with no more than three preps.
19. 19 For grades 7-12, the schedule assumes a 5-minute passing period is adequate.

The yearly calendar will approximate the schedule for Rio Rancho Public Schools, with additional days for specified teacher professional development geared toward the classical liberal curriculum. In the 2024-25 school year, the first days of school will be Monday and Tuesday August 5 and 6, 2024—professional development/beginning of school meetings. Wednesday, August 7, orientation. Thursday August 8, First day of school. FTCCS will recognize all the mandated holidays, and parent conference days.

See daily schedule attachment in Part C folder.

F. (3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** explanation of how the educational philosophy, instructional methods, and yearly calendar and daily schedule will be effective with the anticipated student population.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE:

**Anticipated Student Population:**

The anticipated location of the school is in the Central or Northern/Northwestern part of Rio Rancho where there are fewer schools located. This constitutes an area that is easily accessible to students from Rio Rancho, Corrales, the Town of Bernalillo. We also expect to draw students from northern Albuquerque, and Placitas.

FTCCS will ultimately serve all K-12 students, regardless of personal circumstance. FTCCS envisions service students from the entire Rio Rancho metropolitan area, especially in the underserved region of Northern Rio Rancho, drawing students who would likely attend Cielo Azul, Sandia Vista or Vista Grande elementary schools, Rio Rancho, Eagle Ridge, or Lincoln middle schools, and Rio Rancho, Cleveland, and Bernalillo high schools, but drawing from a fairly wide-ranging area. If the location is advantageous, FTCCS could possibly serve students from any of the Five Sandoval Pueblos: Cochiti, Jemez, Santa Ana, Sandia, and Zia.

Families are likely to choose FTCCS for its 1) effective elementary English language and math programs; 2) cohesive, rigorous, and content-rich K-12 curriculum; 3) high standards of behavior and learning, and its 4) warm, supportive, orderly, and studious campus. Parents of students in other classical schools using the Hillsdale model around the country boast that their young children understand mathematical concepts and know more about the English language than they do. They also boast that dinner table conversation has changed because of the rich content (stories, biographies, history, science, etc.) their students are learning. They especially appreciate the Core Knowledge Sequence, which informs of the content their children will learn in each grade, and ensures their students will avoid gaps in their learning. Finally, parents love the close-knit/warm/supportive school community and orderly campus that supports and holds their students accountable to high standards of behavior and academic performance.

The impact of the recent COVID-19 shutdown is being felt and will be felt for years to come. Students from low-income families and students at-risk are likely to need even more additional support and interventions in literacy. Our Riggs program is highly successful at preempting problems and in providing remediation, as seen with Ridgeview Classical and Vanguard Classical schools. These students also excel in more structured, content-rich learning environments. Our Core Knowledge Sequence provides a cumulative, ordered, and defined academic program that is heavy on content knowledge and integrates learning across disciplines. It is proven to help close achievement gaps by disproportionately benefiting students from homes where they are not exposed to this body of rich knowledge.<sup>34</sup> For GAT education, our program allows individual student to study a subject in greater depth, i.e. while most students read the abridged version of Robinson Crusoe in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in keeping with the CK literature sequence, GAT students will be able to read the original, unabridged version. FTCCS will also ability-group in math in the elementary school through the implementation of a math block. This will allow students to advance to higher levels of math as they demonstrate content mastery. In the high school, Honors or AP courses can be offered.

First Things Classical Charter School's curriculum has proven to be successful for all students, including special needs students, as well as English Language Learners (ELLs). Classical Education upholds a standard of excellence and has proven itself over the course of time. We believe FTCCS's high standards and research-based curriculum will provide students with a traditional education that will challenge them to excel not only in learning but in character development, regardless of their ability upon entrance. At FTCCS, high academic achievement, personal discipline, ethics, and responsibility will be consistently reinforced through the study of subject in the classical tradition. Students will graduate from FTCCS highly literate and ethical citizens who are well-prepared to advance into any life endeavor and to inspire others. The Hillsdale model curriculum was selected specifically to meet the needs of all the students within the enrollment zone, and we expect a population of students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse learning abilities. Our curriculum is time-tested and research-based, and has been successfully implemented for students from academically, socially, and economically varied backgrounds. Core Knowledge, Riggs, and Singapore Math were selected because these programs are designed to build foundations of knowledge in the elementary years. Because children learn by building on what they already know, this curriculum will benefit students with varying learning abilities. Emphasizing foundation skills and rich content, highly trained teachers can not only effectively bring students with academic problems up to grade level, but also strengthen the knowledge base and challenge the academic potential of every student at or above grade level.

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<sup>34</sup> E.D. Hirsch. "Reading Comprehension Requires Knowledge—Of Words and the World" *American Educator*, 2003. Pg 29. <https://atlantaclassical.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Reading-Comprehension-E.D.-Hirsch-article.pdf>. See also: E.D. Hirsch, *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know*. New York: Random House, 1987. Pp. 33-69

Students presenting academic difficulty need programs that address remediation directly and target specific deficiencies. The time-tested, multi-sensory, brain-based approach that addresses multiple student learning styles is the Riggs method, The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking. Riggs is appropriate for teaching all students the explicit phonics, reading, and language arts they must learn in order to succeed. ELL students will also benefit because Riggs provides limited concepts at a given time and is practiced until students achieve mastery.

Low performing students will also be identified using our assessment and diagnostic tools. Students who score below grade level will be given extra support to reach grade level within the classroom, such as small group setting and differentiated instruction, as well as pull-out instruction. Homework and classwork help will be offered during specific study hall hours throughout the week to assist students in need of extra practice. Teachers will make themselves available during a time that is outside of the instructional block. This additional contact with the student can help provide structured practice and further feedback. When learning gains are not progressing at an appropriate rate, we will provide for tutoring. These sessions are programmed within our operating budget and will be applied to those students requiring an extra intervention to bring them up to grade level expectations.

By choosing sound, research-based programs like Riggs and Singapore Math, coupled with a classical curriculum that, by definition, is a literacy-focused curriculum, we propose to provide students with these skills early on to ensure a successful academic future.

## **G. Special Populations**

This includes those with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) English Language Learners (ELLs), Native American Students, Hispanic Students, and Bilingual and Multicultural educational needs to improve student outcomes. Please ensure that you adhere to state obligations as outlined in the consolidated Yazzie and Martinez Lawsuits.

### **G. (1) Special Education**

G. (1a) Provide a **clear, cohesive, and comprehensive** description of how the proposed school will provide required instructional services/supports to students with IEPs.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: FTCCS's founders believe an academic program and culture like that at FTCCS are the best solution for all students, including exceptional students such as those with education disabilities, and students who are classified as gifted. Likewise, students from differing backgrounds, beliefs, family structures, and socio-economic situations will find acceptance, guidance, and support in navigating the liberal arts curriculum.

FTCCS will gladly welcome and is committed to serving any student who wants to attend. This commitment extends to all students in the school including those who have physical, emotional, behavioral, learning, and other disabilities.

We expect to hire qualified and well-trained educators in Special Education to address those needs as they are identified in our demographic. The culture of the school will support the success of all students, and the administration is committed to providing the necessary faculty and staff to achieve that success for each student, no matter what level or need. All special education faculty will be trained in the Hillsdale model, and FTCCS will expect that all educators will follow the liberal arts curriculum. One of the most appealing aspects of the Hillsdale model is the ability to frame it for any

student at any level. This will prove especially advantageous in addressing a variety of abilities and levels.

FTCCS believes that all students deserve the very best education possible. For that to occur, the school is committed to provide best first instruction in the classroom for every student. At the same time, given the school's high expectations for academic success and the behavior required to achieve it, FTCCS will provide a comprehensive support system for all students built around the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Response to Intervention (RtI). Schools commonly use these two terms to describe the process by which they identify, categorize, and support struggling students. While similar, they are not synonymous. RtI describes a system of support to specifically improve academic outcomes (primarily reading). MTSS describes a systematic way to support not only students who have academic deficits through RtI, but also to organize a more complete response to supporting struggling students. The MTSS process drives this through shared leadership, data-based problem solving and decision-making, layered continuum of supports, evidenced-based instruction, intervention, and assessment practices, screen and progress monitoring, and family, school, and community partnering.

With support from the Hillsdale curriculum and program, FTCCS will have the expertise to develop, execute, and improve its MTSS program. Academically, the initial focus of the MTSS system will be to provide additional instruction and practice in reading (phonics, fluency, and comprehension), math (primarily arithmetic through pre-algebra), and writing (handwriting, spelling, use of common conventions, sequence, and editing). In addition, FTCCS will provide instruction and practice in functional skills (e.g., dress, deportment, management of emotions, social interactions, test anxiety, public speaking) as well as not- and test-taking skills, materials management, and executive functioning.

See MTSS attachment in this Part C folder.

G. (1b) Provide a **clear, cohesive, and comprehensive** description of how the proposed school will regularly evaluate and monitor the progress and success of special education students

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Please see answer addressed in F.3 and C above.

## G. (2) English Learners (ELs)

G. (2a) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of how the proposed school will provide required curriculum, and instructional services/supports to students identified as ELLs.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: As indicated earlier, English Language Learners are better able to increase their comprehension and writing under the Literature and Grammar curriculum of the Hillsdale program. Please see the answer under F.3 and C above.

G. (2b) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** to regularly evaluate and monitor the progress of English learners.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: This information will apply to all students, regardless of academic, social/emotional, or socioeconomic needs.

FTCCS will fully participate in all aspect of the state testing and other assessments as required by state statute. The school will also conduct its own data analysis of student learning by any other proven assessment tools deemed necessary and appropriate, including, but not limited to, Riggs and Singapore math student inventories, DIBELS and DRA as diagnostic reading assessments in our tiered interventions, teacher-created assessments, portfolios, and observation. This data will be used to identify students not making adequate progress toward the State Standards, regardless of ability and achievement level, to implement an individualized program to improve measurable learning outcomes. The school will seek to analyze reports from different perspectives to maximize the usefulness of information gained from the accountability process. Such analysis may include viewing student learning results by age groups, grade levels, previous academic experiences, gender attendance and any other aspects of the student population that will enhance the school’s knowledge about student learning needs. A key goal of the school’s learning measurement process will be to provide results of finding and outcomes by way of communication and feedback to students and overall stakeholders. Students, parents, staff, and board members will receive published reports of student achievement on an individual and collective basis with the intention of encouraging community ownership of learning outcomes and increased accountability for the teaching and learning practices the school espouses. These practices will be re-evaluated on an annual basis to allow for adjustment of techniques, strategies, other relevant programs with the intention of more significantly affecting learning outcomes.

The governing question of any assessment plan should be, “Are our students learning?”

What data do we collect to show that students are actually learning?

FTCCS’s governing board will focus on outcomes that measure student academics. FTCCS will have a continuous improvement plan to leverage areas of strength and address areas of growth. Where special student populations are concerned, they will be tested as needed with both specialized tests, depending on their needs (Tier), and standardized tests used with the rest of the student population, and as often as necessary to ensure that progress is being made.

G. (3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** to ensure adherence to ESSA and State statutes in addressing the needs of Native American Students, Hispanic Students, Black Students and Bilingual and Multicultural educational plan to improve educational outcomes. The narrative should include an explanation of the supplemental program or services offered to ensure implementation and ensure policies will be culturally and linguistically responsive.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: This has been addressed in sections F.3, F.1, D.1, and C above.

## **H. Assessment and Accountability**

A charter school application should include a clear plan for evaluating student performance across the curriculum. (NMSA 22-8B-8(E). This plan should align with state performance standards, as well as with the proposed school’s student performance goals, and should be presented, along with a clear timeline for achieving these standards/indicators/goals. A clear explanation of the types of assessments and frequency of administration should be included, reflecting thoughtfulness given to tracking student progress. A plan for the use and dissemination of data gathered through assessments should include procedures for how the board will initiate corrective action (both individually and collectively) if pupil performance falls below expected standards.

When developing the assessment plan, consider the following: 1) the appropriateness of assessments to the curriculum; 2) what will serve as baseline for student progress comparisons; 3) the inclusion of school, state, and other assessments to demonstrate appropriate student growth; 4) the ability of the assessment plan to provide for the early detection of students struggling with curriculum content; and 5) the ability of assessments to reflect the use of basic skills at grade-appropriate levels (e.g., reading, writing, problem-solving). Finally, all New Mexico public schools, including charter schools, are subject to a variety of testing requirements, which are aligned with state and federal content standards.

For more information on NM assessment requirements, please see:

<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/assessment/>

#### **H. Assessment and Accountability**

H.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive assessment plan**

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Please see answer to G.2(b) above.

H.(2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** description of the how assessment data will be analyzed

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE:

The rigorous state, and additional assessments will provide meaningful data which will be examined to identify strengths, weaknesses, and actionable root causes within the school’s locus of control, both on an individual level, and school wide. Teachers will be versed in assessments in their own subject-areas; standardized tests, both those mandated by the State for assessing the effectiveness of the education provided, and those geared specifically to private and charter schools will be used. The data collected will be analyzed in comparison with similar schools around the country, as well as schools in the immediate area and the state, both public and public-charter.

The updated state-recognized assessments now include the ACT, SAT, and PSAT, which are valuable tools in determining student achievement. Likewise, the CLT, NAEP, and others used in assessing student achievement will be used.



H.(3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** student progress/ achievement communication plan

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE:

Students at FTCCS will receive individual grade reports which will be shared with parents. We look to meet regularly with parents at least once a semester individually, have ongoing communication with parents (Internet/email newsletters and meetings) teacher/parent/student communication, and community-wide, general reporting regarding the outcome of standardized testing on a school-wide (not individual) basis.

Individual parent/teacher/student conferences may result in increased academic assistance, or referral to additional support services.

## II. Organizational Framework

### A. Governing Body Creation/Capacity

A charter application shall include a description of the governing body and operation of the charter school, including: (1) how the governing body will be selected; (2) qualification and terms of members, how vacancies on the governing body will be filled and procedures for changing governing body membership; and (3) the nature and extent of parental, professional educator and community involvement in the governance and operation of the school (NMSA 22-8B-8(l)).

#### A.(1) Summarize and incorporate **all** key components of your governance structure

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The Governing Council of First Things Classical Charter School (the “Governing Council” or “Council”) retains and reserves all powers and duties conferred upon and vested in it by the New Mexico State Statutes (Section 22-5-4). The primary powers and duties of the Governing Council are to set school policy, review and approve the budget, hire and evaluate Head Administrator(s), and provide general governance and oversight of First Things Classical Charter School. (Section 2.1 of the attached Governing Council Bylaws)

The role and purpose of the Governing Council is to be responsible for the fair and uniform application of all federal, state and local laws, as well as the rules, regulations, contracts, and policies of First Things Classical Charter School in the operation of the school and in conformance of its charter. Additionally, the Governing Council is responsible for overseeing all the fiscal operations of the school; the exercise of governance through the formulation and adoption of school policies; and is responsible for hiring establishing the duties of, evaluating and determining the salary of First Things Classical Charter School’s Head Administrator. (Section 2.2 of the attached Governing Council Bylaws)

The Governing Council shall have the discretion to appoint First Things Classical Charter School’s Head Administrator, who shall be responsible for carrying out the work of First Things Classical Charter School in accordance with the policies established by the Governing Council. (Section 5.1 of the attached Governing Council Bylaws)

#### A. (2) Enumerate the qualifications desired for governing body members.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Qualifications to be a member of the Governing Council include, but are not limited to:

- a. An individual who is twenty-five years of age or older.
- b. Enthusiasm for the School and conviction into purpose as described in the Articles of Incorporation.
- c. Support for the principles of classical education.

- d. Commitment to professional development and the completion of any requirements for training or development.
- e. Willingness to submit to an extended criminal record background check.
- f. Agreement to abide by an established Board Code of Conduct and to comport themselves prudently and ethically, holding themselves accountable to good governance and public fiduciary and stewardship practices.
- g. Special skills to address specific oversight and needs of the School.
- h. Willingness to accept and support decisions democratically made.
- i. Ability to represent the School to the community when needed.

(Information contained in Section 2.2 of the Governing Council Bylaws)

A.(3) Provide a **clear and appropriate process or plan** for selecting new Governing Body members.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: New Members shall be elected, and vacancies shall be filled, by a majority vote of the existing Council from the nominations made by a standing Governance Committee in accordance with Sections 2.6 and 3.1 of the proposed Bylaws. (Appendix A)

## B. Governing Body Training and Evaluation

B.(1) Provide an **ongoing, clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for annual Governing Body training.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Recognizing the requirements of Section 6.80.5 of the New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC), the Governance Committee of the Council will establish and maintain a record of training received by each Member from the Charter School Division or other qualified providers. Each Member shall be encouraged to register for and complete the variety of training subjects required for new Members as soon as possible within the FY and subsequently fulfill the requirements for continuing Members.

B. (2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for an annual self-evaluation of the Governing Body.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Annually, the Governing Council will ask the Head Administrator to request written input on the Governing Council from the families of students being served by this

School and from the teachers working at this School. The comments received will be anonymously provided to the Council and discussed in an open meeting.

### C. Leadership and Management

C.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for how the governing body will monitor organizational, financial, and academic outcomes.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The Governing Council will monitor organizational, financial and academic outcomes at each meeting of the Governing Council. The Head Administrator will present a report on the organizational and academic outcomes, and The Vigil Group will provide an update on the financial status of the School.

C. (2) Identify and provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for hiring a head administrator.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The Head Administrator will be identified through an open and transparent search process, which may include advertising in local/regional/national newspapers and/or by digital means. The position description for the Head Administrator is contained in Appendix B. The Head Administrator (HA) must have the education and certifications needed for the position and have previous experience in school administration. The ideal HA will have a heart for kids and a desire to lead. References will be checked as well as a background check will be used to evaluate candidates. Student, teacher, and parent input will be requested as part of the selection process.

C. (3) Describe how the governing body will convey and distinguish their roles and responsibilities with those of the proposed school's head administrator.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The roles of the Council and Head Administrator are outlined in the Governing Council Bylaws and briefly presented in item A(1) above.

C. (4) Identify and provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan** for annually evaluating the head administrator.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The Governing Council will annually meet and evaluate the Head Administrator to include the following:

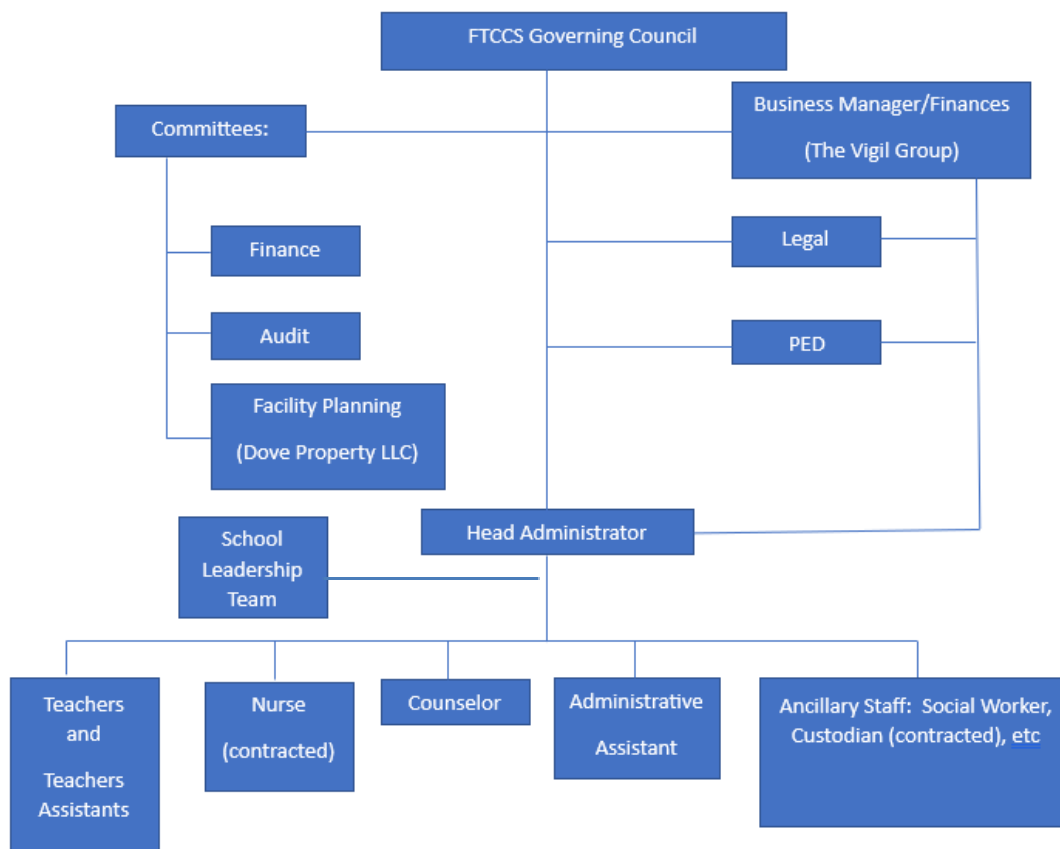
1. Request Student and teacher input and review this information as part of the overall review process.

2. Review Student performance, including core knowledge and reading proficiencies.
3. Review financial, legal, and regulatory compliance.
4. Review the position description and agreed upon performance matrix.
5. Meet with the Head Administrator and provide an open format for reviewing and discussing their performance.
6. Other review items will be determined by the Governing Council as part of the annual review process.

## D. Organizational Structure of the Proposed School

D.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable** organizational chart and narrative.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE:



The Governing Council will hire the Head Administrator and contract for financial services (The Vigil Group), facility planning (Dove Property Advisors, LLC). and legal. The Governing Council members will also serve on the Finance and Audit Committees. The Governing Council recognizes that the Head Administrator runs the school and is solely responsible for its performance.

The Head Administrator will hire the Teachers, Teachers Assistants, Counselor, Administrative Assistant and Ancillary Staff as well as contract for Nursing Care and Custodial services and any other service that the school needs to function. The Head Administrator will also have direct interface with legal and financial services. The Head Administrator will set up a School Leadership Team to help assess and guide the school functions. The Head Administrator will attend Governing Council meetings and report on the Schools operations and stand for questions and comments.

D. (2) Provide **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** job descriptions for all certified and licensed staff and any other key staff (if your charter requires non-traditional roles or positions, identify and describe here).

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The job descriptions for FTCCS certified, licensed and key staff are contained in Appendix C.

D.(3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** staffing plan that demonstrates an understanding of the proposed school's staffing needs.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The staffing plan is contained in the budget information shown in Appendices E and F, but simply put strive to include 1 Teacher and 1 Teaching Assistant in each classroom. Special needs, Counseling, nursing, legal, financial, custodial and other services will be assessed when the student population is determined. The process to make this happen will be:

1. Hire the Head Administrator as soon as FTCCS's application is approved and interim funding is provided. The hope is that this can be done by September or October 2023.
2. The Head Administrator will review FTCCS official documents and meet with the Governing Council to present a plan to hire teachers and staff and to contract the remaining, desired services.
3. The Head Administrator will fill all positions. The hope is that this can be done by April or May 2024.

D.(4) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and compelling** plan for Professional Development.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: FTCCS highly values professional development and will support and promote professional development in the budget and in the administration of the school. Additionally, portions of any additional fundraising efforts will be earmarked for professional

development. The principal and the assistant principal of academics will be responsible for the oversight of professional development activities.

In addition to specified training in the Hillsdale model of classical liberal curriculum, FTCCS will support and encourage continued professional development in content areas, specific grade-level, and classroom management. Prior to Year 1, FTCCS will provide intensive professional development, and ongoing support, in the classical model. Highly trained teachers will provide effective implementation of the educational program. Professional development will take place both internally during the year, and externally to the school prior to school opening, each year, and will cover all aspects of the core elements of curriculum implementation, classroom management, and content expertise. Professional development opportunities will be provided/supported for all faculty, staff, administration, and Governing Board members.

FTCCS seeks to provide a robust teacher-mentorship program for new/young teachers, and will utilize all possible opportunities to not only provide mentoring teachers, but also to develop, and therefore model, a close, supportive, encouraging, warm faculty group, through which to model the virtues of a strong community system.

Our primary goal is to ensure that the professional development offered to faculty and staff is effective and has a positive impact on student achievement. Some of the trainings provided will be systemic, while other professional development offerings will be individualized throughout the school and will target individual teacher needs as determined by analysis of student performance data, instructional observation, and the school's—and teachers'—improvements goals.

FTCCS's student services team, general education teachers, and administrator(s) will also receive training in special education best practices to ensure that regular education teacher have the necessary skills, knowledge, and support to provide instruction to students with disabilities in the regular education classroom. FTCCS's personnel preparation programs will include training in the use of new technologies, the area of early intervention, educational, and transition services effectively involving parent, and positive behavioral supports. Our principal will receive ongoing leadership training, including training in serving special populations, through Hillsdale. In accord with State law, FTCCS will ensure practicing professionals have the technical assistance they need to best serve the needs of FTCCS students. Finally, FTCCS personnel will collaborate with other classical liberal arts schools in New Mexico, including Estancia Valley Classical Academy and the Hozhó Academy, when possible, to share useful information about innovative, effective, and efficient curricula designs, instructional approaches, and strategies to improve the services available to students with special needs. The administration will help assess and provide professional development opportunities to teachers specific to the needs of the school through individualized professional development plans (IPDPs). New and experienced teachers will be taught to expand upon their initial knowledge base in order to refine their instructional delivery and increase their effectiveness. Teachers will meet with administrators after assessment and testing periods to analyze student progress and develop an action plan. The effectiveness of the professional development will be evaluated by the change in teacher instructional practices, which demonstrates mastery of the skills and concepts taught through the professional development offerings. Implementation of the curriculum with fidelity will be monitored and professional development will be tailored to ensure teachers are effectively utilizing the curriculum and classical pedagogy. Ultimately, the professional development offered should impact student achievement and the training provided to teachers will be measured by its ability to develop teacher knowledge and practices that improve student performance. Professional development options will emphasize training on how to employ the classical education model in the classroom, especially in the first few years of the school's operation. Mandatory professional

development will be required in the core components of our education/curriculum program prior to the school's opening. Additionally, FTCCS will provide training in the mandates of the state of New Mexico's equity requirements and mandates under Yazzie/Martinez.

### *Core Knowledge Sequence*

Training in the Core Knowledge Sequence will provide overview of topics for each grade level in the areas of Language Arts, History and Geography, Visual Arts, Music, Mathematics, and Science. Teachers will be provided with examples lesson plans and instructions on how to incorporate the Sequence into their instructional practice. The Sequence guides teachers in which instructional resources are necessary to utilize to fully deliver the curriculum. A minimum of five days of Core Knowledge professional development is recommended in the first year of implementation. All staff members will participate in the "Getting Started with the Sequence" training for Grades K-8. Likewise, the school administrators and select faculty may participate in the Core Knowledge Coordinator and Leadership Institute and provide continued professional development opportunities for teachers through professional learning communities (PLCs) or on-campus workshops during certain scheduled professional development days, or parts of days.

### *Singapore Math*

Singapore Math contains different elements that comprise daily lessons (mental math, teacher-directed learning, guided practice, activity, and independent practice) that align with students' conceptual and skill-building frameworks to teach math. What needs to be included in a lesson, how the lesson is introduced and presented, how it progresses from the concrete to the abstract, and how to differentiate for students is clearly presented in a logical sequence that needs to be followed. Mastery of the material is expected before students move from one level to the next. Singapore Math must be followed with fidelity in order for students to be successful. Teachers will be trained in assessing students, placing students in the appropriate skill groups, and in implementing the lessons using the Singapore strategies and methods in Foundations of Number Sense and Foundations of Model Drawing. Teachers are also trained in the implementation of effective Singapore Math strategies in their classrooms. In addition to building Singapore Math expertise among staff, FTCCS will provide training to increase Singapore Math capacity within the school by providing models that will utilize resources effectively.

### *Socratic Seminars*

The Socratic Seminar is a method of teaching designed to engage students in intellectual discussion by responding to questions using questions instead of answers. Prior to conducting a seminar, students are given a text to read. After the text has been read, open-ended questions are asked. Training of FTCCS teachers will occur in the following areas:

- Primary resources and texts teachers will assign
- Strategies to formulate questions that will encourage critical thinking, analyzing, meaning, and expression of ideas with clarity and confidence
- How to lead students in Socratic Seminar discussions
- Instructional discussion techniques to guide students into unexplored areas or to promote further research

### *Character Education and Classroom Management*

FTCCS will provide training to staff including the following topics:

- The Pillars of Character
- Behavior Management
- Anger Management/Mediation/Conflict Resolution programs/bullying
- Effective communication



- How to integrate opportunities to discuss and model virtuous behavior within the curriculum
- Media Literacy
- Students with Disabilities

Additionally, all faculty and staff will be offered, at minimum, the following schoolsite and/or district-based training:

- Curriculum/Standard implementation by subject area
- Differentiated instruction
- Data-driven decision-making
- Safety and Security
- Suicide prevention
- Cultural Diversity (especially state-mandated equity and requirements under Yazzie/Martinez)

Administration will set the example as life-long learners and participate in all professional development trainings alongside faculty with additional opportunities for development available. Leaders will develop their abilities through professional learning such as national conferences and participating in leadership focused seminars, including school leadership conferences, and content area seminars. Additionally, school administrators and other leadership staff may participate in Core Knowledge Coordinator and Leadership training and specific methods of classroom observation, feedback, and coaching for improvement, and will employ professional learning studies and other additional protocols to focus and support teacher work on improving instructional assessment practice.

FTCCS will continually encourage ongoing professional development, which is reflected in additional contractual days of professional development before the school year begins, during the school year, and after the school year ends. This includes participation in early release days and teacher-planning days as outlined in Rio Rancho Public Schools calendar to provide collaborative planning time for teachers to implement our curriculum or the opportunity to attend district, state, or other trainings, as applicable. Teachers may have up to five early release days, at least three in-service days within the calendar school year, and one week of in-service days before the start of the school year for professional development and collaboration opportunities. Some professional development and/or department meetings may be held after school hours. The daily schedule will attempt to place students in the same grade level in special areas and electives courses at the same times to allow for additional collaborative planning time for faculty.

Funds will be allocated for staff to attend relevant conferences and training in addition to hiring consultants to provide on-campus training. Training materials, books, and other resources will be purchased for additional professional development and learning community opportunities. Each summer, teachers may travel for additional training in the Hillsdale model.

## E. Employees

E. **Clearly describe** the employer/employee relationship and provide **clear terms** and conditions of employment for all classes of employees (administration, professional staff, and administrative staff).

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: All classes of employees may be used at FTCCS, including full time, part time, term, contract, administrative and professional. Some employee policies and procedures are noted in this application and will be incorporated into an employee handbook that the

Head Administrator will produce when they are hired. On-boarding and retraining will be included in the handbook. The Governing Council and the Head Administrator will work cooperatively with unions and any other school specific employee representatives with the understanding that the State sets budgetary limits on all public schools including FTCCS.

## F. Community/Parent/Employee Involvement in Governance

F(1). Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan that describes school structures that will provide meaningful parental, professional educator, and community involvement in the governance and operation of the proposed school.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Two School organizations will be set up to provide meaningful involvement for teachers and the student families (Parent/Teacher Association and a Family Association). A representative from each association will be invited to each Governing Council meeting and be provided an opportunity to present their opinions and issues.

F. (2) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan to receive and process concerns and complaints from the community and parents.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: All formal complaints should be addressed in writing to the offending staff member, and if not resolved, to that staff member's immediate supervisor. Optional forms will be available online and in the Administrative Offices. Complaints involving the Head Administrator or any member of the Governing Council must be formally filed in writing with the President of the Council. Details regarding processing are included in the School's Policies and Procedures. (Appendix H)

## G. Student Recruitment and Enrollment

G.(1) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** outreach and recruitment plan

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: In addition to interaction opportunity on the School web site, information will be promulgated through Facebook, local advertising, and specific addressing to families requesting enrollment information. Such information will also be shared with neighboring classical charter schools for dissemination to families on their waiting lists. Annually, student recruitment will be assessed as part of the Head Administrators annual evaluation.

G. (2) Provide a **complete, comprehensive, and cohesive** plan to implement a lottery admission process.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Information will be posted on the School web site to enable application for enrollment as a student. Information will identify the school year, eligibility for enrollment, deadline for application, and procedures for applying. Upon enrollment for a succeeding year, accepted incumbent students will have first priority access to a seat in their grade for the new year. Upon application, any unenrolled siblings of a reenrolling incumbent will have second priority access regardless of the grade. All other applicants will have third priority access to available seats. If more than 40 applications are received for any grade level, all applicants holding a priority access level that would exceed the class capacity will be notified that acceptance will be via a lottery in which the names will be drawn from their priority level group until 40 students have been accepted for that grade. After all first and second priority applicants have been accommodated, all other applicants will be considered subject to the same rules regarding the remaining available seats. Unsuccessful lottery participants will be placed on a waiting list in their priority level from which they will be eligible to be drawn by lottery to fill any vacancy that occurs among the first 40 acceptances. Students on waiting lists will be eligible throughout the school year to replace any permanently withdrawn student. Enrollment for the highest grade shall be considered first with second priority status conferred immediately upon unenrolled siblings of successful applicants. Enrollment for the next lower grade will be considered next and similarly down through the grade levels with K being considered last. During the opening year enrollment, all applicants will initially be considered third priority.

## H. Legal Compliance

H. Provide a **current, clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** Conflict of Interest Policy.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Appendix H includes a "Policies and Procedures" document that includes detailed information regarding Conflicts of Interest. Subject to any requirement from PEC to amend this document, approval of and willingness to comply with this document will be among the first orders of business when the Governing Council is first convened.

## I. Evidence of Partnership/Contractor relationship (if applicable)

I.(1) If there is /are third party relationship(s) (partner organization, a contractor, foundation ) that are essential to the existence of your charter school, governance, key instructional staff, or management functions, identify them (entity, person, contact information etc.).

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Pending the granting of this charter, FTCCS Foundation has two current, Board approved, third party relationships readily transferable to the Governing Council:

1. The Vigil Group for financial services. Contact: Mike Vigil Work Phone (505) 977-7702. The Vigil Group will provide budget and financial support to FTCCS including tracking revenues

and expenditures, payroll and paying for services and equipment, interfacing with PED, Head Administrator and the Governing Council.

2. Dove Property Advisors, LLC for property lease/acquisition and development. Contact: Constance Dove Work Phone (505) 891-0757. Dove Property will assist FTCCS in locating and leasing the initial school site. If successful and when the time is appropriate, Dove Property Advisors locating, acquiring and constructing the permanent school site.

Necessary curriculum licensure is being pursued with Hillsdale College. Additional relationships are anticipated with providers of health care and other essential services.

I.(2) If applicable, provide and attach as **Appendix D**, a proposed, **signed, clear, formal** agreement between the applicant and each third party relationship **OR** memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the applicant and each prospective third-party.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: FTCCS Foundation has entered into two agreements to assist in the development and operation of the school with the understanding that the relationship will be transferred to the Governing Council upon activation.

1. The Vigil Group for budget development and continued oversight during school operation.
2. Dove Property Advisors, LLC to assist in locating a site to lease for the initial five years of operation.

## J. Transportation and Food

J. (1) If applicable, state how the proposed school plans to offer transportation to its students. For further information, please see the following link:  
<https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/transportation/>.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: No transportation will be provided for students coming to school and returning home from school. Transportation may be contracted for special events for school purposes (e.g., going to a museum).

J. (2) If applicable, provide a plan to offer food services to students (e.g., contracting with approved/appropriate food service vendors, providing free and reduced lunch).

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: N/A – No food will be provided during the initial facilities lease period. Once a permanent site is selected and constructed, any mandated food service will be provided by a licensed food service vendor.

## K. Facilities/ School Environment

Applicants must complete the required Facilities Master Plan Ed. Spec. Checklist form, referenced below as III M. (1), and submit it to the Public Schools Facilities Authority no later than **the published deadline in the month of April**. The Facilities Master Plan/Ed. Spec. Checklist form can be accessed on the PSFA website at:

[nmopsfa.org/legacy/pdf/planning/Charter\\_School\\_FMPEd\\_Specs\\_Renewal\\_Program\\_August\\_2019.pdf](https://nmopsfa.org/legacy/pdf/planning/Charter_School_FMPEd_Specs_Renewal_Program_August_2019.pdf)

K.(1) **Complete, submit, and attach as Appendix E**, the Public Schools Facilities Authority (PSFA) approval of the proposed school’s Facilities Master Plan Ed / Spec Checklist.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The First Things Classical Charter School Facility Master Plan was submitted on March 30, 2023, and approved on April 3, 2023, by letter from Mr. John Valdez, Facilities Master Planner for the NM Public School Facilities Authority. That letter and our approved plan are included in Appendix E of this application.

K. (2) Provide evidence that you have researched facilities/properties and **identified at least one appropriate, viable facility/property in the targeted geographic location**.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Dove Property Advisors, LLC has suggested three viable buildings as follows:

1. 601 Quantum Road NE, Rio Rancho
2. 561 Quantum Road NE, Rio Rancho
3. 2351 HP Parkway Rio Rancho, NM

Additional information for each of these buildings is included as Exhibits in the First Things Classical Charter School Facility Master Plan in Appendix E.

## III. Financial Framework

### A. School Size

State the requested enrollment, grade levels to be served, and student/teacher ratio. Please note that this is a projected enrollment. If approved, actual funding will be determined by NMPED School Budget Bureau based on data regarding enrollment membership including, but not limited to, lottery applications submitted and registrations completed in spring of the implementation year.

Academic Year	Number of Students	Grade Levels	Student/Teacher Ratio
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Year 1	280	K-6	20/1
Year 2	320	K-7	20/1
Year 3	360	K-8	20/1
Year 4	400	K-9	20/1
Year 5	440	K-10	20/1
At Capacity (Enrollment Cap)	520	K-12	20/1

**B. Budgets**

Please note that the PEC will ask the applicants to respond to questions on the budget during the Community Input Hearing. The applicants may have the personnel with the technical expertise with them at the table (and *should* have these people with them if these people were primarily responsible for drafting a section). However, the applicants themselves should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of all areas of the budget.

B. (1) Provide, and attach as **Appendix F**, a completed 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheet, using appropriate values and computations for each year of the five-year budget plan (use projected unit value and for special education, please budget the local district’s percentage of special education unless the school has a sufficient justification for why it will have a larger population). State and federal funds, including but not limited to student funding, shall not be used to pay, compensate or reimburse contract management organization or education management organization, regardless of their organizational or tax-exempt status. Ensure that your worksheet **clearly demonstrates your understanding of, and your capacity to implement, New Mexico public school funding.**

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Five years of built out 910B-5 documents are included in Attachment F on a single worksheet amongst separate tabs. There is a tab on the same worksheet for the 5-year budget. The final tab includes some basic assumptions that indicate justification of preparing the 910B-5 in a conservative manner. Please note that we have included a budget for the projected, full student population of 520 students. We have also prepared another budget for a projected student population at 50% (i.e., 260 students) to ensure that the school can open even at reduced initial attendance. We did not include this 50% budget in this application.

B.(2) Provide, and attach as **Appendix G**, a proposed five-year budget plan, fully aligned with the 910B5 SEG Revenue Worksheet that clearly supports the proposed school’s mission and aligns with the proposed school’s five-year growth plan, including staffing, facilities, educational program, and services. State and federal funds, including but not limited to student funding, shall not be used to pay, compensate or reimburse contract management organization or education management organization, regardless of their organizational or tax-exempt status. Ensure that your draft budget clearly demonstrates the financial capacity and long-term sustainability of the proposed school (consider your growth plan, including staffing, facilities, educational program, mission etc.).

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: A 5-year budget in the proposed school's format has been provided in Attachment G, as mentioned above.

B.(3) Provide a clear, comprehensive, cohesive, and reasonable budget narrative.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: First Things Classical has developed a 5-year budget utilizing information gleaned from similar sized charter schools with similar educational programming and demographics to provide budget estimates as accurate as possible. This was done knowing that the budget building process is a practice at this point and the school, if approved, will need to adjust to the needs of students that actually enroll. The budget is also intended to address the mission of the school. It is the intent of those involved in budget development to ensure that charter specific goals and the charter's vision are the leading influence of all budgetary decisions along with full regulatory compliance. The 910B-5 worksheets align with the school's proposed student enrollment plan as described within this application. This takes into account the appropriate growth measures projected for each year's increase in enrollment due to adding another grade level as well as the prior-year funding in the Basic Program calculation based on the previous year's enrollment projections. Each of the resulting 5-year budgets has been populated according to the amount calculated in the operational budget according to the 910B-5s. For each year, the school has a budget with a positive operating income and a cash balance that increases from year-to-year to account for any financial unpredictability.

#### **Revenue Assumptions**

First Things Classical's 5-year budget utilizes a conservative approach. The school will start with an estimated enrollment of 280 students. In each following year, an additional grade will be added with an enrollment of 480 students in year five of operation. The final total enrollment will be 520 in a K through 12 at FTCCS year 7.

#### **Student Equalization Guarantee (SEG)**

The estimated revenue projections are based on the 910B-5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) funding calculation as provided for by New Mexico legislation. Assumptions include:

1. The 2024-2025 Unit Value would be estimated at \$5,858.82 and indexed with a 3% increase for future years.
2. A Teacher Cost Index (TCI) of 1.000 as a conservative measure which increases at 1% each following year.
3. The At-Risk Index of 0.108 was used as provided for Rio Rancho in FY23-24 and it is held flat across all years. Additionally, the special education population is anticipated to be 17% per year, with Level A and B Level students making up 5%, Level C students at 10%, and Level D students at 2% of total enrollment. This assumption is based on similar sized charter schools Special Education averages in recent years.

B. (4) Provide a **clear and meaningful** description of what budget adjustments will be made to meet financial budget and cash-flow challenges, or to address the failure to receive any anticipated funding sources.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The school has developed a separate set of 910B-5s at half of the projected full enrollment amount (e.g., 140 students in year 1) and that separate 5-year budget is included in the attachments. The purpose of this practice is to insure that FTCCS is financially viable even if enrollment is not as high as anticipated. In each year, the school would build a budget based on a realistic and conservative outlook on potential student enrollment. As the school approached its first instructional day, enrollment would be watched regularly to determine if any budget or cash flow issues could arise. The Head Administrator will report to the Finance Committee and Governing Council regularly as to the enrollment and lottery process. If any urgent situations would arise, the Finance Committee would be informed immediately and a special meeting of the Governing Council in full would be considered as allowable by the Open Meetings Act.

## C. Financial Policies, Oversight, Compliance, and Sustainability

C.(1) Provide a description of the internal control procedures.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Within the context of the extensive Policies and Procedures (Appendix H) to be adopted by the Governing Council, the Council will establish according to its Bylaws (Appendix A) such committees as required by PEC and as additionally deemed necessary to provide unreproachable management of finances, oversight, and compliance to provide a basis for School sustainability.

FTCCS has been blessed beyond belief by the very patient mentoring of **Mike Vigil of The Vigil Group**. Under his guidance (Appendix D) the founders are learning the magnitude of their fiduciary responsibilities and the value of Mr. Vigil's ability to keep them on track. He has proposed, and FTCCS has adopted, the following financial policies and detailed procedures (see C.(3) below) to ensure the most effective use of the public and private funds needed to support its mission and to ensure that the funds are budgeted, accounted for, expended, and maintained appropriately.

FTCCS is committed to developing and maintaining financial policies and procedures that ensure sound internal controls, fiscal responsibility, and accountability in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) in instances where GAAP standards are appropriate. FTCCS will follow all the applicable laws and regulations that govern Charter Schools within the State of New Mexico. As a Council of Finance, FTCCS Governing Council ("Council") is entrusted with funds granted by government agencies, private foundations, and individual contributors, and it will adhere to the highest of standards of accounting. Clear financial policies and procedures will enable the school to meet its financial needs and obligations, will ensure long-term financial stability and viability, and will protect its tangible assets and reputation.

### Financial Policies

1. FTCCS shall comply with the laws, rules, and regulations applicable to it in regard to financial matters and with the terms of the charter contract by which it is bound.
2. Control procedures shall be in place to ensure the security of the school's assets.
3. Timely and accurate financial information shall be produced to fulfill all reporting requirements and management needs.



C. (2) Identify the appropriate staff to perform financial tasks.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The Head Administrator shall hire and supervise such people as will be necessary to collect information required by the Business Manager (The Vigil Group). Such information shall routinely be available to the Council's Finance Committee.

The financial leadership and management team of FTCCS will consist of:

- The Governing Council
- The Finance Committee
- The Audit Committee
- The Treasurer of the Governing Council (by default, also the Chairperson of the Finance Committee)
- Head Administrator
- The Office Staff (as needed)
- Licensed School Business Official (SBO) – Business Manager (The Vigil Group)

The day-to-day fiscal responsibilities of FTCCS are assigned to its financial staff (office staff both clerical and advanced in later years in the budget, as well as the Business Manager). However, ultimate fiduciary responsibility for the overall management of the organization lies with the Governing Council.

C.(3) Provide a **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive plan for** how the Governing Body will provide proper legal and fiscal oversight.

[ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The founders have relied heavily on the professional recommendations of The Vigil Group and are profoundly grateful for the hours of computations to develop Appendices F and G and the detailed Policies and Procedures throughout Section III of these Written Responses.

The Governing Council will meet, at a minimum, ten (10) times during the course of each fiscal year to ensure that its fiduciary duties are met. First Things Classical Charter School (FTCCS) will have an established Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will be commissioned by and responsible to the Governing Council. It will have the responsibility for working with the Head Administrator to make recommendations to the Council in the following areas:

- (a) financial planning, including reviews of the school's revenue and expenditure projections.
- (b) review of financial statements and periodic monitoring of revenues and expenses.
- (c) annual budget preparation and oversight; and
- (d) procurement.

The Finance Committee shall also serve as an external monitoring committee on budget and other financial matters. The Finance Committee shall be assisted by the Head Administrator. Members of the Finance Committee shall be the Treasurer of the Council, who shall serve as chair of this committee, and at least one other member of the Council, as appointed by the President of the Council, with the advice and consent of the Council in accordance with the Council's bylaws and NMSA 1978 §22-8-12.3.

The Finance Committee of the Governing Council shall be responsible for the primary Council-level oversight of school financial matters, as defined by the Council and New Mexico law. The Head Administrator of FTCCS will have primary responsibility for executing all financial matters and financial decisions of the Council. All members of the fiscal management team will work together to make certain that all financial matters of the organization are addressed with care, integrity, and in the best interest of FTCCS.

The Head Administrator is responsible for administering the school's adopted policies and ensuring compliance with procedures that have been approved by the Governing Council. Recommendations for changes or amendments to policies relating to school finances shall be conducted by the Finance Committee and considered by the Governing Council every year.

Any violation of FTCCS's financial policies and procedures may be considered to be cause for termination or removal and, depending upon the nature of the infraction, civil and/or criminal prosecution.

FTCCS, pursuant to 6.20.2.8 NMAC, will account for every financial transaction. FTCCS will build and sustain a budget that aligns to and conforms with the Public School Code and New Mexico Public Education Department (NMPED) procedures for public school accounting and budgeting. FTCCS's Head Administrator will be responsible for maintaining the school's budget as well as preparing and presenting all financial documentation. FTCCS's Head Administrator will meet the competency requirements in 6.63.12.9 NMAC.

### **Budget Preparation**

FTCCS, pursuant to 6.20.2.9 NMAC, will follow budget requirements stated in all sections of NMSA 1978, as well as meet all NMPED requirements and procedures when preparing, submitting, maintaining, and reporting budgetary information.

### **Projecting Revenue**

FTCCS's Head Administrator and its Governing Council will work collaboratively with the NMPED to project an accurate annual budget that will sustain the school and its mission. The following points will hold constant:

1. The State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) will be FTCCS's primary source of revenue.
2. The school will use historical data to project an average number of students in each category outlined in the 910B-5 (SEG) budget preparation spreadsheet provided by the NMPED.
3. FTCCS will use both historical data and estimated student enrollment to project the number and type of certified and non-certified FTEs. Location and historical data allow First Things

Classical to include the At-Risk Unit in the 910B-5. The State Equalization Guarantee will be computed using all current data and formulas provided by the NMPED.

4. Any non-categorical revenue that is generated, such as donations, will be projected based upon legitimate and authenticated funding sources. A collaborative effort between the Donor, the Governing Council, Head Administrator, and The Chief Operating Officer will provide protection to ensure that an accurate projection of this revenue is made, recorded, and reported to all parties.
5. If First Things Classical maintains any cash balance from the prior fiscal year in its Operational Fund, the balance may be budgeted for operational expenditures, with the exception of payroll, with the proper approval from the NMPED and the Office Manager of Education.

### **Projecting Expenditures**

FTCCS will use prior year statistical data as well as projections of future enrollment to estimate student body population each year. Projections of future enrollment that is based on the school's growth and phase-in plan will be used to identify FTCCS's certified and non-certified staffing needs as well as the associated costs, that may include, but may not be limited to instructional supplies, equipment, and facility. In order to understand and better anticipate the impact on students due to budgetary changes, projections of new personnel needed, and their associated costs will be made with ample time to address any impacts.

FTCCS will use historical costs to project the school's contributions to the New Mexico Educational Retirement and ERA Retiree Plans. In addition, the school's contributions to the New Mexico Public Schools Insurance Authority (NMPSIA) for health insurance premium estimates will be gauged using historical data and our growth and phase-in plan, so that future staffing may be projected.

FTCCS will attempt to maintain a reserve fund (cash carryover) that may range from one (1) percent to five (15) percent, not to exceed five (10) percent once the school has phased in all grades, of its operational expenditures using operational cash balances carried forward from the previous fiscal year. FTCCS will use the account to pay for any unforeseen expenditures that may arise after the initial budget has been approved. Money in the emergency account shall not be expended on salaries or benefits without prior written approval from the Office Manager of Education.

### **Budget Approval**

Pursuant to 6.20.2.9 NMAC, FTCCS will follow all budget requirements stated in Sections 22-8-5 through 22-8-12.3, NMSA 1978, and procedures of the department in preparing, submitting, maintaining, and reporting budgetary information. Budgetary control shall be at the function/Head Administrator level. Over-expenditure of a function shall not be allowed. FTCCS will follow the following procedures to ensure that the school's budget is approved by the NMPED:

1. FTCCS will use the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) to calculate the operational revenue by means of the 910B-5 provided by the NMPED. The school will rely upon historical data, prior year enrollment, and projected membership, as well as the prior year TCI index and At-Risk index.
2. FTCCS will submit its budget as scheduled each year by the NMPED and the budget will be reviewed by the NMPED. Prior to submission of the budget to the NMPED, the Governing

Council must review and approve the budget as presented. FTCCS and the NMPED shall review the school's projected revenues and confer before determining where additions or reductions to the budget will be incorporated.

3. Prior to June 20th, and in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, Section 10-15-1 et seq. 1978, Public School Code, and local Council policy, FTCCS will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget and shall give notice of the public hearing. Certification of the proposed budget by the NMPED shall be on or before July 1st. The approved and certified budget will then constitute the operating budget of FTCCS and will be integrated into the school's accounting system. Encumbrances will be used as an element of control and integrated into the budget system.

### **Budget Maintenance Standards**

Pursuant to 6.20.2.10 NMAC, Budget Adjustment Requests (BARs) shall be submitted on the most current form prescribed by the NMPED. First Things Classical will submit budget adjustment requests for the operating budget to the NMPED for budget increases, budget decreases, transfers between functional categories, and transfers from the emergency reserve account. If the NMPED does not take action on a budget adjustment request within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of receipt by the NMPED, the request will be considered approved. Periodic financial reports will be submitted by First Things Classical to the NMPED using the NMPED-approved format, and reporting will be done on a monthly or quarterly basis based upon the discretion of the NMPED. Reports will be submitted to the NMPED by the last working day of the end of the month following the end of the required reporting period, unless extended to a later date by the Secretary of Education as per the requirements of the NMPED.

### **Budget Adjustments**

FTCCS acknowledges its responsibility to develop and maintain policies and procedures that ensure the financial stability of the school and create oversight within the school. FTCCS intends to ensure that its budget and financial accounting are maintained in accordance with the Public School Code, Chapter 22, NMSA, 1978 Compilation, with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) when appropriate, with federal and state laws and regulations, and that are in accordance with all rules and regulations of the NMAC and the NMSA 1978.

Pursuant to Section 22-8-41(C) NMSA 1978, operational cash balance carried forward from the previous fiscal year will not be used for salaries and payroll benefits. If there is a need to adjust the approved budget due to an increase in revenue, decrease in revenue, or budget transfers, FTCCS will perform a Budget Adjustment Request (BAR).

If FTCCS experiences a budget increase or decrease, the school will ensure that the request for approval of the budget adjustment be done at a public meeting in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, NMSA 1978 Section 10-15-1 et seq., the New Mexico Public School Code, and local Council policy. If the Governing Council approves the budget adjustment, it will be entered into the state's Operating Budget Management System (OBMS) and approved electronically by the Head Administrator. Once approved by the NMPED, it will be entered into the school's accounting system. Budget adjustments will not be incorporated into the school's accounting system until approval is received by the NMPED.

Any budget transfers that involve a transfer of funds between expenditure codes within the same function (intra-budget transfers) will only require FTCCS's Governing Council approval. Budget transfers between functions (inter-budget transfers) will need the approval of the Governing Council and the NMPED prior to expending. First Things Classical will maintain a log of all BARs to account for status, numerical sequence, and timely approval at each level. The log will be retained for audit purposes.

### **Financial Reporting**

FTCCS will prepare monthly financial reports comparing actual revenue and expenditures to budgeted amounts. Monthly financial reports reflecting the financial and budget position of FTCCS shall be provided to the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee is responsible for reviewing and reporting to the Governing Council during their monthly meeting. The Finance Committee will review the following each month:

- Budget to Actuals.
- Check Register Activity.
- Outstanding Purchase Orders.
- Bank Reconciliations
- Balance Sheet or similar unaudited financial statement indicating financial position.
- BARs.
- other financial matters directed to the Finance Committee; and
- Audit Committee reports if applicable.

Financial reports required by NMPED shall be submitted no later than the last day of the month following the end of the reporting period, unless extended to a later date by the Office Manager of Education. The Governing Council shall be notified of any report which has not been submitted on a timely basis and the reason(s) for the late filing. If any financial reports required by the NMPED have not been submitted on a timely basis, the Governing Council will be notified and provided the reason(s) for the late filing. All reports will be generated by the school's accounting system in the most current required NMPED format. The data reported on state reports will tie to revenue/expenditure and cash ledgers.

### **Audit Committee**

NMSA 1978 Section 22-8-12.3 requires each governing authority of the charter school to establish committees, including an Audit Committee. The Audit Committee is commissioned by and responsible to the Governing Council. The Audit Committee shall:

- review the annual request for proposal for financial audit services.
- make recommendations regarding the selection of the external auditor.
- attend the entrance and exit conferences for annual and special audits.

- be accessible to the external financial auditors as requested to facilitate communication with the Council and Head Administrator.
- track and report progress on the status of the most recent audit findings and advise the Governing Council on policy changes needed to address audit findings.
- provide other advice and assistance as requested by the Governing Council.
- and be subject to the same requirements regarding the confidentiality of audit information as those imposed upon the local school Council by the Audit Act [12-6-1 NMSA 1978] and rules of the state auditor.

The Audit Committee shall be assisted by the Head Administrator. Members of the Audit Committee shall be two members of the Council, one volunteer member who is a parent of a student attending the school, and one volunteer member who has experience in accounting or financial matters. Head Administrator and the Chief Operating Officer shall serve as ex-officio members of the committee.

### **INTERNAL CONTROLS**

Pursuant to 6.20.2.11 NMAC, FTCCS will establish and maintain an internal control structure to provide management with reasonable assurance that assets are safeguarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition, that transactions are executed in accordance with management's authorization and recorded properly to permit the preparation of general purpose financial statements in accordance with GAAP, and that state and federal programs are managed in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. FTCCS has developed and established the following structure of internal accounting controls and written procedures to provide for segregation of duties, a system of authorization and recording procedures, and sound accounting practices in performance of duties and functions. The duties to be segregated are the authorization to execute a transaction, recording the transaction, and custody of assets involved in the transaction.

#### **Procedures for Internal Control**

1. The Head Administrator is responsible for all tangible and intangible personal property of the school.
2. Access to assets will be limited by assigning primary custodial staff in each departmental location within the school. The control agent for each department is responsible for monitoring access to the building, classrooms, property, cash, and equipment.
3. Backups of the school's finance documents will be done daily. Documents such as employee earning records, expenditure ledger, revenue ledger, cash control ledger, check register, bank statements, cancelled checks, purchase documents, blank checks, files, diskettes, and USB drives will be stored in a locked, fireproof file cabinet.
4. Regularly scheduled virus checks on the school's server and hard drives will be performed.

#### **Property Management**

All property owned by FTCCS is subject to the requirements of 2.20.1 et seq. NMAC. Guidelines for the property management at First Things Classical include, but are not limited to the following:

1. FTCCS will adhere to the financial reporting requirements for capital and infrastructure assets.
2. FTCCS will keep a list of all equipment or property it has leased.

3. All property will be safeguarded and protected to avoid or minimize loss potential.
4. All property will be used economically and for the purpose intended.
5. All property will be inspected upon arrival and again periodically to ensure it is in good working order.
6. All FTCCS staff will be required to report any property that is not in good working order in a timely manner.
7. All property will be properly and accurately recorded in a fixed asset ledger which shall be maintained by office staff. A labeling system will be established by the school so that all property can be tagged as appropriate.
8. All property will be inventoried on a periodic basis to verify the accuracy of records.
9. Any re-location of property shall be noted and kept with the property records.
10. FTCCS, as a public school, is subject to the same state and federal laws regarding the disposal of equipment purchased with either state or federal funds.

### **Segregation of Duties**

FTCCS shall ensure that the assignment of staff or contractors who have access to the school's financial management system be done so to limit their ability to cause or conceal errors and/or irregularities. FTCCS will take care to not assign all functions to one person. FTCCS will periodically review the oversight procedures to increase security.

FTCCS's control procedures are those policies and procedures, in addition to the control environment and accounting system that management has established to provide reasonable assurance that specific objectives will be achieved. We have devised and established a structure of internal accounting controls that we will continuously maintain, and that ensures the following are in place:

- Segregation of responsibilities to ensure that the following duties are segregated: authorization to execute a transaction, recording the transaction, and custody of assets involved in the transaction.
- A system of authorization and recording procedures to ensure that all transactions are properly approved and recorded.
- Sound accounting practices are in place in the performance of duties and functions. This includes varied error-checking routines that are performed in connection with record keeping and comparing recorded amounts with existing assets and liabilities. Appropriate action shall be taken with respect to any differences.
- Employees handling significant amounts of cash must be adequately bonded. Access to assets is permitted only in accordance with proper authorization.
- Receipts, checks or warrants, purchase requisitions, purchase orders, and vouchers shall be sequentially pre-numbered either via pre-printing or done systematically by a financial accounting system.
- Proper safeguards are in place to protect unused checks, pre-numbered forms, cash that has not been deposited, and other receipts.
- All transactions are recorded as necessary to permit preparation of the financial statements in conformity with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

- Independent checks on performance and proper valuation of recorded amounts are being performed including clerical checks, reconciliations, comparison of assets with recorded accountability, computer-programmed controls, management review of reports that summarize the detail of account balances, and user review of computer-generated reports.

Check signing authority will be vested in one primary person, Head Administrator, with the following exception: Purchases of \$5,000 or above, which will require two signatures, that of Head Administrator and authorized officers of the Governing Council. Two or more signatures in these cases will be required to guard against misuse or fraud. The segregation of duties and the authorization and recording procedures as described below states which person will perform particular functions as it relates to the school's finances.

### **CASH CONTROL STANDARDS**

FTCCS has established the cash management program below to safeguard cash, and shall provide prompt and accurate reporting that adheres to cash management requirements of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-102, and applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

#### **Cash Controls Policies and Procedures:**

1. FTCCS shall issue a factory pre-numbered receipt for all money received. Pre-numbered receipts are to be controlled and secured. If a receipt is voided, all copies shall be marked "VOID" and retained in the receipt book.
2. The bank deposit slip shall have the numbers from applicable receipts entered on it or attached as a reference.
3. A cash receipts journal is prepared during each fiscal year beginning July 1st and ending June 30th and is presented to the NMPED auditor during the annual audit.
4. The school shall verify that there is sufficient cash and budget, prior to the disbursement of cash. A revenue ledger is required for each revenue code as approved in the finalized budget, and additional revenue ledgers may be added as necessary.
5. First Things Classical has established a cash control ledger for each fund/sub-fund. Interfund transfers of cash among separate and distinct funds are not receipts or expenditures. Transfers of previously received cash require Governing Council and NMPED approval, prior to the transfer.
  - a. Temporary transfers of cash are posted as "due from" and "due to" to indicate inter-fund receivables and payables.
  - b. Posting errors are not erased, crossed out, or modified in any other manner in the ledger. A separate journal entry is required to incorporate necessary corrections. Cross-referencing of a correcting entry to the original error should be inserted under the "description" column of the ledger.
6. Clearing accounts or pooled accounts may be used to combine more than one fund in one bank account. Clearing accounts shall reconcile to a zero balance at the end of each month. Bank reconciliations for clearing accounts shall be completed on a monthly basis. All differences between bank and book will be posted in the month reconciled.



7. Vouchers shall be numbered in such a manner as to provide a cross-reference between the voucher, the check, and the check register. All blank checks shall be properly safeguarded, and an inventory of unused checks shall be taken periodically.

8. Completed vouchers and supporting documentation are to be placed in alphabetized paid vendor files and filed for future reference and annual audit.

a. Each warrant or check issued shall have printed on its face the words, "void after one year from date." Whenever any warrant or check remains unpaid for one year, The Chief Operating Officer shall cancel it in accordance with Section 6-10-57(A), NMSA 1978.

b. The Chief Operating Officer shall keep a register of all canceled warrants/checks. The register shall show the number, date, amount, name of payee, fund out of which it was payable, and date of cancellation. The face amount shall revert and be credited to the fund against which the warrant/check was drawn.

9. The school will maintain a cash control ledger for each fund/sub-fund where all transactions affecting cash are recorded. Cash balances reported to the NMPED shall be the same as reflected in the school's cash control ledger and annual audit.

10. All bank accounts shall be reconciled on a monthly basis. Reconciled bank statements are to be prepared by the Chief Operating Officer and reviewed by the Finance Committee. The bank statement, deposit slips, and canceled checks shall be made available to the NMPED auditor during the annual audit.

### **Receipt of Funds**

1. All receipt books are located with the Office staff for security purposes and will only be issued to staff member(s) designated by the Head Administrator.

2. Receipts will be preprinted, pre-numbered, and kept in sequential order. The Office staff, or another designated employee, shall receive cash and prepare a receipt in triplicate for money received from all sources. The original receipt is to be retained in the receipt book, the second copy is to be given to the person(s) making the payment, and the third copy will be given to the Chief Operating Officer, along with the respective cash/checks for proper recording in the school's accounting system. If a receipt is voided, all copies of the receipt shall be stamped "VOID" and retained in the receipt book.

3. The Business Manager will record all cash receipts into the school's financial accounting software.

4. FTCCS shall safeguard and account for all cash and checks received, and shall deposit funds in the appropriate account at a federally insured bank within twenty-four (24) hours of receipt, or one (1) banking day as required by state law NMAC 6.2.2.14.3.

5. The Office staff shall prepare the bank deposit by providing receipts for all cash and checks that need to be deposited and providing this to the Head Administrator or his/her designee.

6. Head Administrator or his/her designee will then prepare the deposit slip and make all deposits, with the Head Administrator as the back-up in the absence of the Chief Operating Officer.

7. The Head Administrator or his/her designee will provide a copy of the deposit slip to the Office staff who will cross check that the receipts match the deposit.
8. The Head Administrator or his/her designee will verify all deposits are made within twenty-four (24) hours, or one (1) banking day as required by state law NMAC 6.2.2.14.3.
9. The Head Administrator or his/her designee will post the revenue to the appropriate fund and revenue code.
10. For purposes of segregation of duties, the actual bank deposit shall not be made by the individual who is responsible for preparing the receipt for the deposit. Deposits will be made by a designee of the Head Administrator and as a backup by the Head Administrator. After the deposit is made, the deposit receipt shall be given to the Office staff who shall staple it to the copy of the deposit ticket and retain the record of deposit provided by the bank.

### **Special Revenue Funds**

All proposals prepared by the school staff for special funding require administrative approval from the Head Administrator. Upon receipt of an award notice, a BAR is submitted to the Head Administrator for review and processing. New award budgets are presented to the Governing Council and then forwarded to the NMPED for approval. Final approved budgets are returned to the Head Administrator and are entered into the financial management system. The Head Administrator monitors special revenue budgets.

### **Receipt of Goods**

All goods purchased by the school are delivered directly to the school. It is the responsibility of the office staff to sign for delivery and the office staff will remain responsible for opening the packages. The office staff is not only responsible for opening the box(es), but also for obtaining the packing slip(s) and reviewing them for accuracy. The packing slip will be reviewed for accuracy, stamped, and dated as received, signed by the Office staff, and given to the Head Administrator. The Head Administrator will check the packing slip against the original PO. If everything is correct and the contents of the entire purchase were received and documented on the packing slip, the packing slip will be stapled to the back of the original PO if a packing slip is available. This packet is then filed in the Operations Binder under the "Waiting for Invoice" tab in alphabetical order by vendor name. If only part of the purchase was received, the packing slip for the received items is stapled to the back of the original PO and the packet is filed under the "Incomplete Orders" tab until the remaining items are received.

If anything is incorrect with the order, the Head Administrator will immediately contact the vendor for a return/credit to the account. When discrepancies occur, they must be investigated and resolved by the Head Administrator within fourteen (14) days from receipt of the goods.

### **Accounts Receivable**

The Head Administrator is responsible for billing and monitoring the collection of all amounts due from outside agencies. The Head Administrator is responsible for tracking and verifying cash balances for all federal, state, and other grants and contracts awarded to FTCCS. The Head Administrator prepares the required cash requests, reimbursement reports, and invoices necessary for collection of amounts due to various programs.

## Procedures for Cash Disbursement

Pursuant to NMAC 6.20.2.14, FTCCS will establish a cash management program to safeguard all cash in its custody and control, as outlined below. Payment for the purchase of supplies, equipment, services, utilities, fixed charges, contract reimbursements, and other expenditures of the school shall be made by check. Before a check can be issued, the following will be required:

1. If a contract is in place, the contract must be signed and approved prior to any disbursement of checks. All contracts must follow state procurement procedures.
2. All tax information, as required by state law, must be on file, including but not limited to, a W-9, prior to disbursement of funds.
3. All mail is received by the Office staff. The Office staff opens, and date stamps all mail with the exception of bank statements. Bank statements are not opened by the Office staff, but instead the envelope is stamped, and the unopened statement is given to the Head Administrator.
4. The Head Administrator will match all invoices to the original purchase order, signed packing slip, and purchase requisition prior to disbursement of funds. The Head Administrator will then present the entire packet to the Head Administrator for payment processing and filing of the original paperwork. The Head Administrator will input the invoices into the financial accounting system's AP module. If changes are required, a change order must be generated.
5. The business management services contractor will ensure that all invoices are paid to take advantage of all applicable discounts and avoid any hardships to vendors.
6. All paid invoices are to be filed by batch and placed into a fireproof file cabinet for future reference and for the annual audit. The invoices are retained and stored in the business office in a fireproof cabinet.
7. The charter school shall administratively control and restrict accessibility to check stock. Only properly designated employees shall handle impressed funds and disbursement of funds.
8. The charter school shall utilize a computerized accounting program to print checks. The charter school's blank check stock shall be pre-numbered and adequately safeguarded by storage in a locked fire-proof safe or file cabinet.
9. All disbursements including payroll, except those from petty cash (see below), will be made by check.
10. All checks, disbursement vouchers, and check requests shall be reviewed and approved for payment by the Head Administrator, prior to disbursement of funds.
11. All checks will be made payable to specified vendors or payees and shall not be made payable to cash.
12. Voided checks shall be stamped VOID and properly defaced by removing the area of the signature line and retained in a file for inspection by management as well as external auditors.

13. Support for payment shall be attached to a check when presented for signature. In addition, all original check requests and invoices attached for support shall be defaced by a stamp indicating "PAID," the check or warrant number, and the date paid.

14. The signing of blank checks is strictly forbidden.

15. For segregation of duty, the Head Administrator, and the Head Administrator or an authorized member of the Council shall be authorized to sign checks under \$5,000. The Head Administrator shall be the primary signature unless the Head Administrator is unavailable. Two signatures will be required on all checks \$5,000 and over. The second signatory can be the Head Administrator or any authorized officer of the Governing Council.

16. Any check issued to the Head Administrator must be signed by a member of the Governing Council.

### **Reimbursement**

FTCCS requires that all purchases, other than recurring costs, be requested through the purchase order process. Any needed supplies for instruction should be ordered via the school's purchase order process. Reimbursement for purchases will only be made on an exceptional basis, if prior approval has been obtained from the Head Administrator, a Request for Reimbursement Form has been completed, and a purchase order has been created. All requested reimbursements must be itemized on a Request for Reimbursement Form; and, only if the request is approved in writing by the Head Administrator, may the reimbursement be made. To receive reimbursement, all original receipts must be attached to the Request for Reimbursement Form and the Request for Reimbursement Form must be signed by the employee and approved by the Head Administrator prior to the purchase being made. A Request for Reimbursement Form may be obtained from the staff lounge. A reimbursement check issued to the Head Administrator must be signed by a member of the Governing Council.

### **Voucher System**

1. The voucher system will be administered by the business office.
2. Documentation will be attached to the voucher, including the PO, invoice, shipping receipt, bids, or quotes.
3. Accounting codes from the Uniform Chart of Accounts are used for posting purposes (fund/sub-fund, function, object codes, program, location, job classification, etc.).
4. Paid vouchers will be certified pursuant to Section 6-5-8 NMSA.
5. Vouchers will be filed numerically by month paid.
6. Check register will be maintained, listing outstanding checks, and it will tie to cash report/total outstanding to date.

### **Bank Reconciliation**

Pursuant to NMAC 6.20.2.14 (K), FTCCS will establish the below cash management program to safeguard all cash in its custody and control, which will include monthly reconciliation of all bank accounts. The bank reconciliation identifies the item(s) that must be recognized in order to arrive at the actual cash balance:

1. The charter school shall have all bank statements received on a monthly basis.
2. The unopened bank statement will be received and opened by the Head Administrator. The Office staff will stamp the outside of the banking envelope but will not open the bank statement.
3. Upon review by the Head Administrator, all bank statements shall be forwarded to the Head Administrator, who will be responsible for the reconciliation of all existing bank accounts. This will be done on a monthly basis.
4. The Head Administrator shall review the activity contained on the bank statement and verify that there are no errors or omissions when compared to amounts shown in the respective general ledger cash account.
5. Adjustments to the school's cash accounts, for items such as bank charges, must be made via a journal entry in the school general ledger and must clearly identify the reason(s) for the adjustment(s) in the description.
6. The bank reconciliation may be prepared on a spreadsheet included as an attachment to the bank statement and copy of the general ledger for review. The reconciliation for any given account shall include checks and deposits outstanding when arriving at an adjusted balance per bank when compared to the general ledger.
7. Deposits in transit and outstanding checks should generally clear the bank within the first few days of the following month. Any check which is more than twelve (12) months old shall be voided and the vendor to whom the check was issued shall be informed.
8. The bank reconciliation must be completed as expeditiously as possible after the receipt of the bank statement to ensure that the cash account balance as shown in the school's general ledger is as accurate as possible.
9. Upon completion of the bank reconciliation for a given month, the Head Administrator shall inform the Finance Committee, who shall be responsible for reviewing the reconciliations with the Head Administrator and the Head Administrator.
10. Copies of all bank reconciliations must be kept by the Head Administrator for the period prescribed by law for the retention of public school records, as well as for review by external auditors or other interested parties.

### **INVESTMENTS**

Pursuant to 6.20.2.15 NMAC, FTCCS will utilize effective cash and investment management to establish and maintain mutually beneficial banking relationships, accurate forecasting of cash requirements, and prudent investments designed to maximize returns within the full extent allowed by statute.

#### **Investment Policies and Procedures**

FTCCS shall account for public money placed in any interest-bearing accounts in accordance with 22-8-40 (C) through (G) NMSA 1978; Section 6.10-17 and 6.10.31 NMSA, and any other federal and state laws which apply to the investment of public school funds.

## **Banking**

1. Pursuant to 22-8-37 and 22-8-40 NMSA 1978, the charter school shall adhere to all regulations concerning the deposit of public school funds for all funds in its custody and control.
2. Pursuant to 6-10-16 through 6-10-17, NMSA 1978, and 6.20.2.15 NMAC, FTCCS will notify the financial institution, which is the custodian of the school funds, that the school receives state money and is subject to a 50% collateralization requirement for amounts above \$100,000.
3. FTCCS shall deposit all cash receipts within twenty-four (24) hours as required by 6.20.2.14 C NMAC.

## **PURCHASING**

Pursuant to 6.20.2.17 NMAC, FTCCS will establish and implement the below written policies and procedures for purchasing that are in compliance with the New Mexico Procurement Code, Section 13-1-28 et seq., NMSA 1978. Purchasing policies and procedures for grant funding will comply with requirements established within the grant and the Procurement Code.

### **Purchasing Policies and Procedures**

All FTCCS employees will follow established policies in purchasing supplies or materials for day-to-day operations of the school, equipment, and furniture. (Note: Purchases made with school activity fund monies shall be governed by a school activity funds policy). FTCCS will make diligent efforts, when purchasing goods or services, to obtain the best prices possible without sacrificing necessary quality or service, in accordance with the requirements of the Procurement Code. Purchases will be made in a fair and impartial manner without the appearance of impropriety. The provisions of the New Mexico Procurement Code, as applicable to charter schools, are adopted as the purchasing policy of FTCCS. All procurement shall be achieved by the competitive sealed bid process or proposal process pursuant to NMSA 1978 Sections 13-1-102 to 12-1-117 of the Procurement Code, except as exempted from the provisions of the Procurement Code, and except for procurement achieved pursuant to the sections of the Procurement Code relating to:

- small purchases;
- sole source procurement;
- emergency procurement;
- existing contracts;
- purchases from Antipoverty Program Businesses;
- cooperative procurements; and
- procurement under existing contracts.

### **Requirements for Purchasing**

1. The procurement officer for the school will be the Head Administrator and the alternative procurement officer for the school will be the Office staff.

2. All purchase requisitions by all staff members are submitted to the Head Administrator for approval.
3. Purchase requisitions made by the Head Administrator require only a requestor signature from the Head Administrator.
4. After approval by the Head Administrator, the purchase requisition is recorded by the Office staff as an encumbrance on the financial management system. 5. The Office staff will issue a pre-numbered purchase order and will also place the order.
6. Upon arrival, the receipt of goods is verified against the packing slip by the Office staff.
7. The packing slip is then given to the Office staff and verified against the purchase order.
8. The Office staff will keep a copy of the purchase order until the order is complete and ready for payment at which time the purchase order and supporting documentation (requisition, packing slip, and invoice) will be submitted to the Head Administrator for payment to the vendor.
9. Under no circumstances will any employee commit FTCCS to any purchase without the prior approval of the Head Administrator.
10. Goods and services up to \$20,000 may be obtained from the best obtainable source, considering cost, service, delivery, and prior use of similar goods. Quotes are not required, but are strongly recommended to ensure the best obtainable price is achieved.
11. For purchases between \$20,001- \$60,000, it is recommended that three written quotes should be obtained for goods and services when there are competitive vendors.
12. Professional service contracts less than or equal to \$12,500 will only require the approval of the Head Administrator. Any contract that exceeds \$12,500 will require governing Council approval.
13. Professional service contracts that exceed \$60,000 will be required to follow the procurement process.
14. Sole source procurement will be based on a written determination that only one source is practically available for a particular good or service. Sole source procurement may be made without formal sealed bidding or competitive negotiation. Any purchase(s) deemed a sole source is/are subject to 13-1-126 and 13-1-128 NMSA 1978.
15. Emergency procurement will occur only when it fulfills the requirements identified in 13-1-127 (B) 1-3, NMSA 1978. Emergency procurement may be made without formal sealed bidding or competitive negotiation with a written justification for the emergency, identification of the goods and/or services being procured, and the name and date of the contractor/entity selected.
16. Purchases made from vendors on a valid state contract through the State of New Mexico Purchasing Agency shall be deemed to have been made in conformance with the requirements for quotes or bids.

17. Cooperative purchasing agreements may be entered into, at the discretion of First Things Classical, pursuant to 13-1-135, NMSA 1978.

18. Subject to #11 and #12, above, all contracts with the school require approval by the Head Administrator. No warrant, check, or other negotiable instrument shall be issued in payment for any purchase of services or construction of items of tangible personal property unless all services and construction of tangible personal property have been received according to the agreed upon terms.

19. All employees will abide by the Procurement Code. The Procurement Code can be found in the school's business office.

20. The Head Administrator and the Office staff of FTCCS shall develop and implement any administrative procedures necessary to administer this policy.

21. All functions of procurement carried out by the Office staff can be carried out by the Head Administrator in the absence of the Office staff.

### **Bidding/RFP Procedures**

1. All bids for supplies, materials, equipment, and contractual services in excess of the amounts listed above shall be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to FTCCS's Head Administrator or his/her designee, and plainly marked with the name of the bid. Advertised bids shall be opened at the time and place specified, and all bidders and other persons shall be invited to attend. The school shall follow the applicable provisions of the Procurement Code in the bidding/RFP process.

2. Bids and proposals must include all pertinent information to be considered valid, i.e. scope of work, price, specifications, etc.

3. The FTCCS Governing Council reserves the right to reject any or all bids and accept the bid which appears to be in the best interest of FTCCS. The Governing Council reserves the right to waive any informality in, or reject any or all bids, or any part of any bid. The Council reserves the right to exercise all options set forth in the invitation documents. Any bid may be withdrawn prior to the scheduled time for the opening of bids. Any bid received after the time and date specified shall not be considered.

4. The bidder to whom the bid is awarded will be required to enter into a written contract with FTCCS.

### **Contracts**

All bids, proposals, contracts, and purchase orders shall be administered through the school by the Chief Operating Officer or the Head Administrator. Contracts and lease-purchase agreements should be submitted to FTCCS's legal counsel for review and approval prior to execution.

### **PAYROLL**

Pursuant to 6.20.2.18 NMAC, FTCCS's proposed payroll policies and procedures are found below and comply with state and federal regulations on payroll. Their purpose is to maintain strict internal controls, close supervision, and financial accounting in accordance with GAAP. FTCCS will maintain and have available for inspection the following employee record documentation: employment



contracts (including increments), personnel/payroll action forms, certification records, employment eligibility verification (federal form I-9 for citizenship certification), federal and state withholding allowance certificates, pay deduction authorizations, pay or position change notices, Educational Retirement Act plan applications, and direct deposit authorizations.

### **Payroll Policies and Procedures**

1. The Head Administrator is responsible for hiring and firing school employees, authorizing salaries including employment contracts, and maintaining the staffing levels approved in the annual budget.
2. The approved employment contracts are entered into the Employment Management System and the office staff prepares the salary worksheets for payroll.
3. The office staff is responsible for tracking and reporting absences. Leave request forms should be submitted at least four (4) days prior to payroll being processed. These reports are submitted to the Head Administrator and are used to update employee leave balances. Leave taken without sufficient leave balances is deducted from the employee's pay during the pay period that the leave was taken.
4. Pursuant to the adopted policy, all employees shall be paid every two (2) weeks, unless specified otherwise in their employment contract. In the event that the pay period ends on a holiday or on a day that the school is closed for business, payment will be made the preceding workday.
5. Any overtime that is worked must be approved in advance by the Head Administrator.
6. Based upon the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employees who are eligible for overtime pay will be compensated in the following manner:
  - a. All hours worked up to forty (40) hours in one workweek are to be paid at the staff member's regular hourly rate. Hours worked in excess of forty (40) hours in any one work week must be paid at time and one-half the regular hourly rate in accordance with law.
  - b. Overtime pay is computed only on hours worked. If an employee uses vacation and/or sick day(s) and works extra hours during the same workweek, payment will be paid at the regular hourly rate until the actual hours worked reaches forty (40) hours before any overtime will be calculated.
  - c. In the case of a non-exempt staff member whose pay rate is quoted on other than an hourly basis, the charter school business office will calculate hourly equivalent pay for overtime purposes.
  - d. Any deviation from the assigned working hours must be approved in advance by the Head Administrator.
7. FTCCS is required by law to deduct FICA (Social Security and Medicare), Federal Income Tax, and State of New Mexico Withholding Tax. Except for FICA which is a fixed percent, the amounts withheld for Federal and State of New Mexico is based on the number of exemptions a staff member claims on the withholding exemption certificate (W-4) at the time of employment, or as changed by the staff member subsequent to employment.

8. FTCCS is required by law to withhold amounts for State of New Mexico Educational Retirement Council (ERB) and ERA Retiree Health Care for those employees who meet the FTE or other requirements established by each entity. Amounts withheld are remitted to the respective entities in the employee's name by the due dates specified.

9. The withholding for an employee's portion of selected insurance coverage(s) shall be deducted in advance from the employee's pay in semi-monthly installments for the following monthly premium. All insurance and other deductions are submitted to the Chief Operating Officer on proper forms and records of these deductions are kept on file by the Chief Operating Officer.

10. FTCCS will maintain a sign-in log through a time clock for part-time employees. This is the official time record for employee compensation. The time clock will be located in the administrative area.

a. Part-time employees must clock in for the start of their work day and clock out at the end of their work day.

b. Non-exempt employees will NOT be paid overtime or compensatory time unless time was approved in advance by the Head Administrator.

c. Any deviation from assigned working hours must be approved by the Head Administrator in advance.

d. Continual and/or repeat deviations from assigned working hours will be grounds for disciplinary action. These deviations include, but are not limited to, time changes without prior approval and tardiness.

e. Any employee that leaves the campus during the workday must check out in the main office and complete a Request for Leave form, except for when leaving for a duty-free lunch. Upon returning to work, the employee must check in.

f. Employees may not clock in for another employee. Falsification of records or documentation is a violation of FTCCS policy and may result in both employees receiving disciplinary action in accordance with FTCCS's Employee Handbook.

11. A copy of the sign-in log will be retained by the Office staff for auditing purposes.

12. A summary sheet reflecting salaried and hourly employee pay must be reviewed and verified by the Head Administrator prior to the issuance of check/vouchers.

13. In addition to required contributions to the Educational Retirement and ERA Retiree Health Care previously mentioned, employees may choose elective deferrals to a qualified 403(b) plan of their choice. The business office shall deduct the amount specified by the employee and remit payment in the employee's name monthly or as required by the plan. The business office shall be aware of IRS contribution limits for elective deferrals and make sure there are no excess contributions to qualified plans.

14. Should a notice of garnishment be received by FTCCS, the employee will be contacted so every effort can be made to have him/her satisfy the creditor and have the garnishment

withdrawn. In the event a release of garnishment cannot be obtained, the school shall acknowledge the wage assignment as required by law, and remit the amount withheld to the appropriate agency.

15. FTCCS shall provide direct deposit for staff members with any valid bank or credit union in the United States.

### **TRAVEL AND TRAINING**

Pursuant to 6.20.2.19 NMAC, FTCCS travel policies and procedures are in compliance with the Per Diem and Mileage Act, Sections 10-8-1 through 10-8-8, NMSA 1978 and NMPED Finance and Administration (DFA) regulations. FTCCS's Governing Council recognizes that the educational program for Council members, staff, and students can be enhanced through the prudent selection of off-campus experiences. Consistent with NMSA 1978 Section 22-8B-5.1, FTCCS's Governing Council will attend annual Council development and training. The objective for the FTCCS Council, staff, and student travel is to be clearly defined and consistent with the intent of any legislative mandates, the charter, curricular goals, or a teacher's goals (e.g., team building). Travel requiring an overnight stay must be based on a verifiable education-related activity or pursuant to Governing Council and/or staff training mentioned above. It is understood that the general purpose of student travel, whenever necessary, is to supplement the school's educational program. The Head Administrator will develop procedures and specific guidelines for all local and out of state travel for the Governing Council, staff, and students.

#### **Travel Policies and Procedures**

1. FTCCS will work diligently to ensure that all travel costs be kept as low as possible without compromising the safety of the Governing Council, staff, students, or activity sponsors (if required).
2. FTCCS's staff and student travel must be approved in advance by the Head Administrator after all safety, supervision, and educational justification (if any) has been verified. Approved field trip request forms and employee travel requests must be completed and maintained on file.
3. Travel for the Head Administrator must be approved in advance by an officer of the Council.
4. Employees and Council members are expected to account for all necessary expenditures while traveling. Reimbursement shall be made in full only for original itemized receipts submitted. No reimbursement shall be made for alcoholic beverages or entertainment.
5. Employees and Council members shall be expected to return as soon as reasonably possible after a conference and/or professional development workshop(s). Expenses for extended stay in a geographic area after attendance at conferences or other professional development shall be the sole responsibility of the employee and/or Council member.
6. All reimbursements are processed in accordance with the Per Diem and Mileage Act, as outlined in DFA regulations. All receipts for out-of-pocket expenditures for transportation, registration, and miscellaneous expenses are required for any reimbursement. DFA regulations can be found in the Chief Operating Officer's office.

7. Student travel will be allowed in school-insured vehicles, such as activity buses. Students may travel with their own parent/guardian with an appropriate consent or release form.
8. No student shall be required to participate in academic school-sponsored travel activities. Non-participation shall not result in a loss of credit, reduction of grade, or any other negative consequence to the student.
9. Written permission for students to travel will be secured from parents/guardians. Consent forms may be signed at the beginning of each school year giving permission for students to participate in all in-state field trips.
10. Academic and behavior standards shall be established prior to the commencement of any trip. Council members, staff, students, and activity sponsors who travel on behalf of First Things Classical shall reflect positively on the school and the community.

### **INSURANCE**

Pursuant to 6.20.2.20 NMAC, FTCCS maintains adequate insurance coverage addressed in the Tort Claims Act, Section 41-4-1 et seq., NMSA 1978, the Workers' Compensation Act, Section 52-1-1 et seq., NMSA 1978; Officers and Surety Bonds, Section 22-5-7, NMSA 1978; and the Public School Insurance Authority Act, Sections 22-2-6.1 through 22-2-6.10, NMSA 1978. Surety bonds paid from the operational sub-fund shall be approved by the NMPED and filed with the Office staff of the NMPED of finance and administration pursuant to Subsection D of Section 22-5-7, NMSA, 1978.

### **FIXED ASSETS**

Establishing guidelines for the control of all capital assets that are owned by the school will assist FTCCS in protecting capital assets, preserving the life of capital assets, avoiding unnecessary duplication of assets on the school campus, providing a guide for future replacement of assets, and establishing a basis for the amount of insurance coverage required.

#### **Asset Capitalization**

The purpose of an asset capitalization policy is to provide guidelines for the control of all capital assets that are owned by the school. The purpose of the controls are to protect capital assets, preserve the life of capital assets, to avoid unnecessary duplication of assets on the school campus, to provide a guide for future replacement of assets, and to establish a basis for the amount of insurance coverage required.

#### **Capital Assets Defined**

Capital assets, for the purpose of internal controls, are defined as tangible or intangible property owned by the school, which meets the definition and minimum dollar amount for capitalization per asset category.

1. Furniture and equipment - Tangible property in excess of \$5,000 purchased or acquired by gift to be used for operational purposes including, but not limited to, desks, filing cabinets, copiers, musical instruments, laboratory equipment, and janitorial equipment.
2. Computer software - Intangible property in excess of \$5,000 either purchased or acquired by gift that is designed to cause a computer to perform a desired function.

3. Computer equipment - Tangible computer equipment in excess of \$5,000, including but not limited to laptops, desktops, routers, hubs, etc., purchased or acquired by gift, to be used for operational or instructional purposes. For capitalization purposes, computers are defined as a CPU, monitor, and keyboard, which go together as a package. Printers, which exceed \$5,000, shall be capitalized separately, while printers which are less than \$5,000 shall be considered supply assets and recorded as such in the school's general ledger.

4. Library holdings - All library holdings purchased or acquired by gifts during the fiscal year are capitalized in aggregate at the end of the fiscal year using the cost-based method. The cost-based method approach entails the following:

- Acquisition costs reflect actual expenses for purchased library materials.
- Donations are capitalized at fair market value.
- A value is placed on items withdrawn from the inventory and that value is reflected in capitalization.

**Donated Items**

Donated items, valued at the threshold contained in this capitalization policy and which are items that the school otherwise would have bought and used in operations, shall be recorded in the school's general ledger account titled "Fixed Assets" (\$5,000 and over) at fair market value at the date of donation. Donated items, which are valued at less than the threshold contained in this capitalization policy, will be recorded in the school's general ledger account titled "Supply Assets" (less than \$5,000) at fair market value at the date of donation. Donated items, which are determined to have no fair market value, will not be recorded.

**Depreciation Guidelines**

Depreciation is a system of accounting which aims to distribute the cost or gift value of a capital asset, less salvage value, over the estimated useful life of the asset in a systematic and rational manner. All depreciable assets will be depreciated using the straight-line method of allocation utilizing the half-year convention. The straight-line method allocates an equal amount of the net cost of an asset to each accounting period in its useful life. Most assets retain some recovery at the end of their useful lives, which is known as salvage value. All depreciable property for the purposes of this policy shall be deemed to have a fair market value at the end of their useful lives.

The useful life of depreciable assets is based on their usefulness to the school. The following table displays the estimated useful lives that will be used to calculate and allocate depreciation:

Property Category	Life in Years
Furniture and Equipment	5
Computer Software	3
Computer Equipment	5
Library Holdings	10

Transportation Equipment	3-5
School Buses	7-10
Land	39
Lease Hold Improvements	20

**Disposal of Capital Assets**

Capital assets which are obsolete, worn out, or no longer meet the requirements of the school, may be disposed of pursuant to NMSA (1978) 13-6-1 to 13-6-4, Sale of Public Property, transferred within the school campus to another department or classroom, or traded-in. A Fixed Asset Disposal Form must be completed in all cases for the disposition of any asset, including those, which were damaged or stolen, and a Fixed Asset Relocation Form must be completed when assets are transferred from one location to another. The Fixed Assets Disposal Form must be signed by the Chief Operating Officer, the Head Administrator, IT and Data Coordinator (for computer related items only), and the Governing Council Chair. Pursuant to NMSA (1978) 13-6-1 and 13-6- 2, all licensed software and any electronic media (computer hard drives) must be completely erased before being disposed of. The Fixed Assets Relocation Form must be signed by the Chief Operating Officer, the Head Administrator, and IT and Data Coordinator (for computer-related items only). The school business office will retain the approved forms to preserve the accuracy of the asset records.

**General Inventory**

Procedures

1. An inventory of all assets, including but not limited to capital assets, will be created and a copy of the list will remain at the school. Other pertinent information such as room, department, manufacturer, and model shall also be recorded on the list.
2. A physical inventory shall be done at least annually on such date(s) and time(s) as specified by the Head Administrator and the Chief Operating Officer.
3. A label or a tag will be attached to the property in a conspicuous location.
4. FTCCS will reconcile any missing or found items.
5. A sign-out log for borrowed equipment will be maintained.
6. A central record of repairs and transfers will be maintained.
7. FTCCS will follow state laws and regulations regarding the disposal of obsolete, surplus, or damaged equipment.

**OTHER SERVICES**

Pursuant to 6.20.2.23 NMAC, FTCCS establishes the following policies for food service, legal fees, state and federal flow through funds, direct funds, student activity funds, and joint powers agreements.

**Food Services**

Food service funds are to be accounted for in the special revenue fund or the enterprise fund. All monies collected from the sale of food for the food service operation are to be accounted for in accordance with GAAP, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requirements, and Section 22- 13-13, NMSA 1978.

### **Legal Fees**

FTCCS's funds shall not be used for payment of personal legal fees, including attorney's fees and costs, of any FTCCS employee or FTCCS Governing Council member. Personal legal fees include but are not limited to:

- legal fees expended in obtaining or retaining any elected position;
- legal fees incurred by any employee or Council member in any civil action filed by or against the employee or Council member in his or her personal capacity, unless, in the case of an action against the employee or Council member, the allegations are based upon acts taken by that individual in the course and scope of his or her employment or service;
- legal fees incurred by any employee or Council member in the defense of any criminal case, unless the charges are based upon acts taken in the course and scope of his or her employment or service; and
- any payment of legal fees by FTCCS will serve a clearly identifiable public interest.

### **Federal/State Grant Flow through Funds**

For grant money that flows through the NMPED to FTCCS, the charter school shall utilize the funding for the purpose in which it was awarded. FTCCS will provide information and submit complete and accurate reports required by the grant and the NMPED within the prescribed time. This funding shall be accounted for in the FTCCS ledger in accordance with GAAP, applicable federal regulations, and procedures set forth in the grant award.

### **Federal/State Grant Direct Funds**

For grant money that is sent directly to FTCCS, the charter school shall utilize the funding for the purpose in which it was awarded. FTCCS shall submit complete and accurate reports required by the grant within the prescribed time. This funding shall be accounted for in accordance with GAAP, applicable federal regulations, and procedures set forth in the grant award.

### **Student Activity Funds**

In general, student activity funds are those funds that are owned, operated, and managed by students under the guidance and direction of a staff member for educational, recreational, and/or cultural purposes. The Head Administrator is authorized to approve the formation of all class organizations, clubs, and associations and before any fundraising can be done. The advisor of the organization must receive prior approval from the Head Administrator in order to establish the class organization, club, or association, and must receive prior approval from the Head Administrator to engage in any fundraising activities.

### **Activity Fund Policies**

1. Projects that raise student activity funds should contribute to the educational experience of students and not be in conflict with, but rather add to, the existing curriculum.
2. Student activity funds, whenever possible, should be spent for the benefit of those students currently enrolled in the school who have contributed to the accumulation of these funds.
3. Student activities should be conducted so that they offer minimum competition to any commercial concerns, while still benefiting the student body as a whole.
4. All activity fund receipts and disbursements must be documented in accordance with established cash receipts and cash disbursements procedures.

### **Activity Fund Procedures**

1. The teacher or advisor in charge of the student activity will be responsible for receipting funds collected with the support of the Office staff.
2. Cash receipts for student activity funds, with pre-numbered receipts, will be issued to the advisor and copies of the receipts along with the funds collected will be submitted to the Office staff for deposit and then the deposit information will be provided to the Chief Operating Officer for entry into the school's accounting system.
3. The teacher or advisor in charge of the student activity will adhere to the twenty-four (24) hour banking rule outlined in NMAC 6.22.14.3 by providing funds to the Office staff in a timely manner so that funds can be accounted for and deposited by the Office staff within twenty-four (24) hours of being collected by the advisor.
4. In the case of an off-site activity such as an intramural sports function, the teacher or advisor in charge of the activity will ensure that all cash is accounted for. It is recommended that two people independently verify cash receipts and, after arriving at the same conclusion, place their initials on a count sheet verifying that all receipts have been tallied. The count sheet shall be given to the Office staff for verification.
5. In a situation where activity fund receipts are taken after school hours, the teacher or advisor in charge of the activity shall make sure that all receipts are properly safeguarded pursuant to NMAC 6.2.2.14.1.
6. The teacher or advisor in charge of the activity shall adhere to the school's adopted policy regarding the procedures for the receipt of funds at all times.
7. The procurement policy for student activity funds requires that state procurement code is adhered to. Under no circumstance will an activity commit FTCCS to any purchase without proper and prior approval by the Head Administrator.

### **Joint Powers Agreements**

Should FTCCS enter into a joint powers of agreement, pursuant to the Joint Powers Agreement Act, Sections 11-1-1 through 11-1-7, NMSA 1978, it shall be done so in accordance with the agreement. Only the Head Administrator, with advice of FTCCS's legal counsel, has the authority to enter a Joint Powers Agreement.



## OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE STANDARDS

Pursuant to 6.20.2.24 NMAC, FTCCS will adhere to the state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to instructional materials, transportation, records retention and disposition, and the Open Meetings Act.

### Instructional Materials

FTCCS shall be funded for textbooks and supplementary instructional materials by the NMPED pursuant to the Instructional Materials Act, Section 22-15-9 NMSA 1978. FTCCS shall submit revenue and expenditure reports as required to the NMPED, detailing expenditures, purchase order number, warrant number, and dates. Audited instructional material records are the official accounting of these funds.

### Transportation

FTCCS may provide limited student transportation with select bus stops. Additionally, transportation will be provided to any student where transportation is designated by the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). If at any time a special education student enrolls at FTCCS with an IEP that requires transportation, the school will negotiate with a transportation contractor to provide transportation services for that student. FTCCS will pay the initial costs for the transportation of special education students as required by their IEP until Federal IDEA money is available.

### Records Retention and Disposition

The management of school records will be in accordance with the Public Records Act, Section 14-3-1 et seq., NMSA 1978 and applicable regulations.

### Open Meetings Act

First Things Classical will comply with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act, Section 10-15-1 et seq.

**Source:** 6.20.2.11 NMAC [ INTERNAL CONTROL STRUCTURE STANDARDS]:

A. Every school district shall establish and maintain an internal control structure to provide management with reasonable assurance that assets are safe-guarded against loss from unauthorized use or disposition, that transactions are executed in accordance with management's authorization and recorded properly to permit the preparation of general purpose financial statements in accordance with GAAP, and that state and federal programs are managed in compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The internal control structure shall include written administrative controls (rules, procedures and practices, and policies that affect the organization) and accounting controls (activity cycles, financial statement captions, accounting applications including computer systems) that are in accordance with GAAP.

B. Each school district shall develop, establish and maintain a structure of internal accounting controls and written procedures to provide for segregation of duties, a system of authorization and recording procedures, and sound accounting practices in performance of duties and functions. The duties to be segregated are the authorization to execute a transaction, recording the transaction, and custody of assets involved in the transaction.

(1) School district management must ensure that protection of the public trust is a major focus when granting the authorization to execute business of the school district.

(2) Employees handling significant amounts of cash must be adequately bonded. Access to assets is permitted only in accordance with school district authorization.

(3) Receipts, checks or warrants, purchase orders, and vouchers shall be sequentially prenumbered.

(4) School districts shall have proper safeguards to protect unused checks and other prenumbered forms, undeposited cash and other receipts, and facsimile signature plates.

(5) Transactions are to be recorded as necessary to permit preparation of financial statements in conformity with GAAP. In addition, school districts shall establish any other criteria applicable to such statements to maintain accountability for assets.

(6) School districts shall conduct independent checks on performance and proper valuation of recorded amounts, such as clerical checks, reconciliations, comparison of assets with recorded accountability, computer-programmed controls, management review of reports that summarize the detail of account balances, and user review of computer generated reports.

C. An internal control structure is required to demonstrate the school district's ability to record, process, summarize and report financial data consistent with the following financial statement assertions:

(1) rights and ownership.

(2) existence and occurrence.

(3) valuation and allocations.

(4) completeness; and,

(5) presentation and disclosure.

D. The internal control structure shall demonstrate that the school district identifies applicable laws and regulations, and that procedures are designed to provide reasonable assurance that the school district complies with those laws and regulations. Internal control procedures shall be established, implemented and documented through school district correspondence, manuals, training, and other additional methods. Appropriate internal control procedures shall be adopted by the local Council within a school district to safeguard its assets, check the accuracy and reliability of its accounting data, promote operational efficiency, and encourage adherence to prescribed managerial policies. The internal control structure shall address all school district transactions. [02-03-93, 11-01-97, 01-15-99; 6.20.2.11 NMAC - Rn, 6 NMAC 2.2.1.11, 05-31-01]

## IV. Evidence of Support

### A. Outreach Activities

A. Provide **clear, comprehensive, and cohesive** evidence that you have developed an effective and thoughtful outreach program.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: The point of First Things Classical Charter School is to provide a quality education for students. While we know that public school enrollment has been on the decline for a few years, we still have the goal to open each school year with a wait list and to become an integral part of the fabric of our community which includes Rio Rancho, possibly Corrales and possibly Bernalillo. To accomplish these goals, we will work to:

- Create awareness among our community and make friends and allies with business leaders, vendors, and community groups. We will build valuable relationships—and share our mission with hundreds of parents.
- We will tap into our founding team, community members, and volunteers who have marketing expertise to keep an evolving strategic plan for growing community support including milestones and benchmarks through our continued meetings.

Established in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, the foundation team of FTCCS has developed a unified goal of reaching community members who have opened their communication with the public which includes Rio Rancho Mayor Gregory Hull and Rio Rancho Public Schools Superintendent Dr. V. Sue Cleveland. Meetings with both helped the team to develop a desire to continue with the mission of establishing an NMPED-authorized charter school which would be built around the classical education and provide enrichment to the Rio Rancho community.

FTCCS Foundation team has met with various groups and has had multiple guests present at our Zoom meetings as well as in-person meetings.

<u>Person (s), Title and Organization</u>	<u>Purpose</u>	<u>Date</u>
Tara Beam, founding member, EVCA	Strategy for incorporating the Hillsdale Barney Initiative	May 7, 2021
Ward Meeting (Bernalillo County ABQ Westside Patriots)	Informational	June 9, 2022
Better Together New Mexico	Informational	September 10, 2022
Michael Vigil and Mike Vigil, Vigil Group	Budget & financial reviews	Multiple dates:
Founding Team meeting with Mayor Gregg Hull	Informational exchange	
Education meeting – Sarah Jane Allen, Moms for Liberty Bernalillo County	Informational exchange	September 13, 2022 November 7, 2022 February 14, 2023 May 11, 2023
Jennifer Rivera, Executive Director, Estancia Valley Classical Academy	EVCA field trip	February 24, 2023
Burly Cain, Americans for Prosperity	Informational	March 7, 2023

Rebecca Murray	Moms for Liberty partnership in growing parents/students in RR	April 4, 2023
NM Alive event	Various patriot organizations	April 13, 2023
Dr. Sue Cleveland	Informational	April 13, 2023
Education panelists: Steve Pearce (Republican Chairman), Joey Romero (Assistant Pastor Legacy Church), Representative Stefani Lord, and Jodi Hendricks (chairwoman NMFAM)	Informational	April 24, 2023
Ward Meeting (Sandoval County)	Informational	May 18, 2023

Without a facility or building to call our own, there has been challenges

1. A Meet and Greet (Open House) was held Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup> at Haynes Park in Rio Rancho. (flyer attached) It was a rainy afternoon which probably made a difference in us receiving less guests than anticipated.

Results: We had multiple guests sign our support sheet.

2. A fundraiser with fundaxi using Pizza 9 was supported by the community and \$\_\_ was raised for the school. (flyer attached)
3. An email marketing list has been purchased for the purpose of reaching specific families who have an interest based on their children's ages. We currently have the ability to reach 10, 694 emails for parents of all children in Bernalillo, Corrales and Rio Rancho.
4. Facebook posts-Our facebook page was launched Spring 2023 and the audience continues to grow with engaging families who desire to partner with us as the news spreads of a classical education being provided.
5. Nextdoor posts – As the time draws near to the opening of the school we are hoping to become more engaged through this method.

6. Neighborhood associations emails – although we have not met with any of the neighborhood associations, there are a few that express an interest in our school presence.

## B. Community Support

B. Provide **sufficient measurable**, quantifiable, and **qualitative** data-based evidence of abundant, broad-based support for the proposed school among residents in the targeted community. **DO NOT provide names or specific letters of interest from families or students.**

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: Public support has been sought and FTCCS has collected many signatures supporting our school.

## C. Community Relationships

C. Clearly demonstrate that you have developed **meaningful and strategic** networking relationships or resource agreements with local community agencies, groups, or individuals. (not including formal partnership agreements that are integral to the proposed school’s operations, as described in Section II. I (1) of this application.)

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE: FTCCS will join the Rio Rancho Chamber of Commerce and other organizations to network with local businesses, groups, and individuals. We will seek and be open to meeting with anyone and any organization to discuss and speak about FTCCS and what we are doing in the community.

## V. Applicant Remarks

**Additional Remarks:** The applicant team is invited to provide additional remarks, not to exceed 500 words. This section will not be rated by the Peer Review Team.

ENTER APPLICANT RESPONSE HERE:

## VI. Appendices and Attachments

	Appendix Description	File Naming Convention	Attached (Check if Yes)
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A	II-A1 Governing Body Bylaws	A School Name Bylaws	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	II-C3 Head Administrator Job Description	B School Name Head Admin	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	II-D2 Job Descriptions for Certified, Licensed, and Other Key Staff	C School Name Job Descriptions	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	II-I2 Proposed Agreements Governing Third Party Relationships and Memoranda of Understandings (MOUs) (*Required if applicable*)	D School Name MOUs	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	II-L1 PSFA-Approved Projected Facility Plan Documentation	E School Name Facility Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
F	III-B1 Five Years of 910B5 State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) Computation Revenue Estimate Worksheets	F School Name 910B5	<input type="checkbox"/>
G	III-B2 Five-year Budget Plan	G School Name Budget Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
H	III-C1 Internal Control Procedures	H School Name Internal Control	<input type="checkbox"/>