

# **THE LEAF CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION**

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## **(a) Educational mission.**

**Our vision** is a community of learners inspired to create, collaborate, and contribute, both in and out of school settings, for their entire lives. We hope to “cultivate the experimental mind,” as Piaget says, and “lead the child to construct for himself the tools that will transform him from the inside.” (*To Understand is To Invent*)

**The mission of the LEAF Charter School** is to provide expanded educational opportunities for all students, through an intellectually rigorous STEAM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Arts-Math) curriculum and strong partnerships with creative professionals. LEAF Charter School students will graduate prepared for 21st century careers and communities. Our name embodies the major tenets of the charter:

Learning from Local Leaders  
Experiential Education  
Arts Integration & Academic Achievement  
Freedom & Flexibility

**Learning from Local Leaders** will include a variety of opportunities for students and community members to learn from one another, such as:

- School visits – Creative professionals talk with students about their life’s work
- Tours of local businesses – May include studios, workshops, offices, job sites, etc.
- Job shadowing – Each student teams up with a professional for a workday
- Mentorships – Community members offering guidance & insight to like-minded students

**Experiential Education** will build on these community relationships, while also offering students the choice of pursuing interests independently:

- Internships – Students commit to a semester-long work-study relationship
- Apprenticeships – Long-term, mutually beneficial, training initiative
- Taking or leading a “Skills Intensive” workshop
- Individual or team participation in a variety of state or national design competitions
- Overlap and mutual support of existing programs such as the Scouts, 4-H, Interact, Habitat for Humanity, NH-VEX Robotics, Project Lead The Way, etc.

Engineering and Technology can be seen as real-world applications of Math and Science, while real-world application of the Arts often translates to essential, transformational design. (STEAM)

### **Arts Integration and Academic Achievement**

“In my own philanthropy and business endeavors, I have seen the critical role that the arts play in stimulating creativity and in developing vital communities...the arts have a crucial impact on our economy and are an important catalyst for learning, discovery, and achievement in our country.”

-- Paul G. Allen, Co-Founder, Microsoft

Participation in the arts engenders confidence, curiosity, persistence, resourcefulness, and self-discovery – all necessary for true academic achievement. The artist’s passion to develop his or her work leads to research and skill-building: for example, the playwright or filmmaker who seeks content and meaning in history or philosophy, the architect who relies on sound knowledge

of physics and trigonometry, or the dancer who is fascinated by anatomy and physiology. Conversely, a deep understanding of academic subjects requires a means by which to express that understanding. The LEAF Charter School celebrates and encourages divergent thinking.

### **“Freedom & Flexibility”**

“...Children come into the world exquisitely designed, and strongly motivated, to educate themselves. They don’t need to be forced to learn; in fact, coercion undermines their natural desire to learn. What they do need is *opportunity*.”

-- Peter Gray, author of *Freedom to Learn*

- Threads of inquiry, rather than conventional subject-specific classes, empower students to explore topics of personal interest and make important intellectual connections
- Online courses, including AP & foreign language classes and other distance learning options, allow a small school to offer a wide range of courses and credits
- Powerful educational resources, such as MIT’s Media Lab, give students access to state-of-the-art technology and a global community of forward-thinking learners
- Fridays are “Flex Days,” for guided independent work, open studio or lab access, online coursework, or external programming like museum, job-site, or library visits
- A school culture of respect, intellectual rigor, & high expectations means that flexible time is used productively by all staff and students

## **(b) Governance and organizational structure and plan.**

**The LEAF Charter School Partnership**, the founding organization of the School, is a group of community members, parents, and certified, experienced NH educators. The Partnership, in conjunction with the Alstead Area Citizens Trust, a non-profit 501c(3) organization of local business owners and professionals, has worked to establish a financial and legal foundation for the School. See Appendix A for biographical descriptions of Partnership members.

**A Board of Trustees** (referred to hereafter as “the Board”) will govern the School. The Board will meet once per month. The Board will establish governing policies, and will hire initial administrative staff, who will oversee the School’s growth plan. The Board will report progress and achievement of the School’s stated goals to the State Department of Education. This report will be made available to sending school districts, parents of children attending the charter school, partner organizations, and other interested parties throughout the community.

The founding Board will be appointed by the LEAF Charter School Partnership. A formal transition and induction will take place before the school begins to operate. The Board will consist of a minimum of nine members and a maximum of fifteen that will include the following:

- 2-3 representatives from sending school districts
- 2-3 parents of former, current or anticipated students of the school
- 1-3 representatives of the professional arts community
- 1-3 representatives of the local business community
- 1-2 representatives of the higher education community
- 1 member who is Director of the School

The Board of Trustees will be responsible for:

- Approving an annual operating budget for the school
- Planning for financial growth, development and sustainability
- Developing an annual financial timeline for the school
- Approving fiscal reports, facilities plans, fundraising plans & reports, personnel contracts
- Ensuring proper accounting and reporting practices
- Supporting the LEAF Charter School curriculum and educational plan
- Developing a long-range, strategic growth plan

**Officers of the Board of Trustees** will include a Chair, a Vice-Chair, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Officers shall be determined by majority vote at the Board's annual meeting.

**Committees of the Board** shall include, but not be limited to: Budget, Facilities, Curriculum, Development, and Community Outreach committees. Committees will research relevant topics, seek out advisors, develop an action plan, and report back to the Board of Trustees.

**An Advisory Board** of academics, business leaders, creative professionals, and others will be formed to augment the Board's perspective on matters of school development and sustainability.

**The School Leader (Director)** will facilitate interactions between all constituents (teachers, students, board members, parents, and the wider community). He or she will have some teaching responsibility, and will take a leading role in the areas of human resources, curriculum, budget, and disciplinary issues, with consideration to recommendations made by faculty and students. A full description of the Director's responsibilities is included in Section (j) Staffing Overview.

**Governance of the School** will follow a largely democratic process. A panel of students, parents, faculty, and board members will form at least six months in advance of the School opening to determine specific governance protocol. Continued student involvement in School governance is encouraged to create ownership and investment in the School's mission, and to increase awareness of the democratic process.

### **(c) Methods by which trustees and their terms are determined.**

After the initial appointment of trustees by the LEAF Charter School Partnership, governance will transfer to the Board of Trustees. An essential formal transition and induction will take place within two months of school authorization and before the school begins to operate. Prospective board members will participate in training in general governance and financial management.

Terms of Trustees will be staggered, five-year terms. Approximately one half of the initial Trustees will be appointed for two, three, or four-year terms to initiate staggered terms to foster governance stability. Terms can be renewed by nomination and majority vote of the Board. The Board may appoint a Trustee to fill a vacancy to complete a term according to established term timelines.

The Board, once operating, will select and appoint future Trustees and establish policies for board governance and filling vacancies. In seeking potential Trustees, the Board will emphasize diversity of professional experience and dedication to the mission and vision of the School.

Board members are expected to attend meetings regularly, and will be subject to replacement if absences reach 50% or more of meetings in a six month period. For purposes of conducting business, the Board will follow New Hampshire Right to Know Law, RSA 91-A. For purposes of lawful meetings, a quorum is defined as a majority of Trustees physically present or participating through video or voice communication systems. Records and minutes of meetings will be kept in accordance with statutory guidelines.

**(d) General description and proposed or potential location of facilities to be used, if such information is available.**

We hope to locate the LEAF Charter School at “Mole Hill” a renovated and re-purposed machine shop currently serving as a multi-purpose performance venue. Mole Hill is located in East Alstead, within the SAU 60 (Fall Mountain) school district, and in close proximity to other towns under-served by charter school options. The building currently houses office, kitchen, studio, storage, and performance spaces. Approximately 4200 sq. ft. are available for flexible classroom or study space. The grounds include parking, outbuildings for storage and workshop space, fields for recreation and horticulture, and access to forested trails.

The LEAF Charter School philosophy acknowledges that flexibility and hands-on experiences are key ingredients in successful learning. It also acknowledges, and embraces, a variety of learning styles and learner needs. The traditional classroom is not always conducive to innovative classroom management and instruction. We have divided learning areas into four distinct modes, in order to foster diversity in teaching and learning.

**RESEARCH/COLLABORATION, including:**

- A Media Lab, with access to computers, printers, & other technology
- A well-stocked Library, with a wide variety of fiction, non-fiction, and reference works

**DISCUSSION/PRESENTATION/CRITIQUE, including:**

- A comfortable, welcoming space with flexible seating and multiple presentation tools, such as SmartBoards, chalkboards, easels, tablets, etc.

**DESIGN/CREATION/CONSTRUCTION, including:**

- A Makerspace, or workshop, with hand tools and power tools for project creation
- A flexible Studio or creative workspace with worktables, art supplies, robotics kits, etc.

**MOVEMENT/PERFORMANCE, including:**

- A flexible performance space with provisions for lighting & sound
- An outdoor Courtyard or other areas for eating, wellness/exercise, data collection, etc.

Space for all of these areas exists in the proposed facility (see attached site plan, Appendix G). Some areas, such as the performance space, are already outfitted with the necessary equipment to function adequately for LEAF Charter School classes. Some furniture and/or equipment will need to be purchased for other areas, such as the studio and makerspace, although we have had several offers of in-kind donations to supplement purchases (items like tools, pottery wheels, etc.). The area designated as a research/study center will need wiring for wi-fi connection. Start-up funds will be used to purchase an acoustic curtain for flexible separation of two of the larger

classroom areas. This curtain will be LEAF Charter School property, and can be removed and reinstalled elsewhere if the School should change locations in the future.

**(e) Maximum number, grade or age levels, and, as applicable, other information about pupils to be served.**

The LEAF Charter School will serve grades 9-12 with a maximum number of 28 pupils per grade. Initial matriculation will be Grade 9 only. Each successive year an additional grade will matriculate, until the School is operating at capacity (112 students).

Students in this region have few opportunities for school choice. Families with sufficient resources often choose privately funded high schools, such as Kimball Union Academy, The Putney School, or Vermont Academy. This area (southwestern New Hampshire, including Sullivan and Cheshire counties and surrounding towns) has one of lowest socio-economic demographics in the state of NH (34% of students receive free or reduced lunch, compared to 26% statewide<sup>1</sup>); some of the poorest academic performance (drop-out rates twice the state average<sup>2</sup>, fewer than half of students score proficient or above in math & writing<sup>3</sup>); and some of the highest occurrence of risky behaviors (including the highest rate of teen pregnancy outside Manchester<sup>4</sup>).

Within this larger demographic are smaller subgroups of students who may find the LEAF Charter School to be a perfect educational match. Students who are struggling with the structure of a traditional school day, students who are bored or unchallenged by the conventional curriculum, students who feel uncomfortable or even threatened in a larger school setting, all might benefit from a transition to the LEAF Charter School. Bright students who are academically unmotivated, or whose intellectual strengths are difficult to measure with tests, will find opportunities to shine at the LEAF Charter School.

**(f) Curriculum.**

Each school year will be comprised of four 9-week quarters, or terms. Throughout the year, students at each level will explore topics around a central theme, or “Thread of Inquiry.” All core academic subjects, as well as technology and the arts, will be integrated into this thematic exploration. Foreign languages and AP courses will be offered as online electives.

Each term begins with a weeklong “Skills Intensive,” with a different focus for each term, as listed below. Each term ends with a series of school-wide “Forums,” student-led exhibitions (presentations, displays, performances, etc.) incorporating critiques and discussions.

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<sup>1</sup> New Hampshire Department of Education Division of Program Support, Bureau of Data Management, Free & Reduced Lunch 2011-12 (SAU 60 statistics)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 4-Year Cumulative Drop-out Rates 2010-11 (SAU 60 statistics)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Student Achievement Trends 2011-14 (SAU 60 statistics)

<sup>4</sup> New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Teen Pregnancy Rates, 2008-2013 (Sullivan County statistics)

CURRICULUM MAP OF 4-YEAR PROGRESSION

Year	Summer Term	Fall Term	Winter Term	Spring Term
<b>One</b>	<b>Thread of Inquiry: PREHISTORY &amp; THE NATURAL WORLD</b> Integrated Subjects: Earth & Life Sciences, Algebra & Logic, Geography Suggested Readings: <i>The Telling of the World</i> (Penn); <i>America Before Columbus</i> (Oyasin); <i>Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i> (film, Herzog); <i>The Cradle of Humanity</i> (Bataille) Sample STEAM Challenge: Design a website that explores an era or concept from this thread			
	Survival Skills: CPR & First Aid, Wilderness & Hiking Safety	Study Skills: Learning styles, Note-taking, Active reading	Job Skills: Public Speaking, Mediation & Teamwork	Life Skills: Health & Nutrition, Stress & Time management
<b>Two</b>	<b>Thread of Inquiry: WORLD CIVILIZATION &amp; PHILOSOPHY</b> Integrated Subjects: Physical Science, Geometry, Government & Economics Suggested Readings: <i>Guns, Germs, &amp; Steel</i> (Diamond); <i>Odyssey</i> (Homer); <i>Night</i> (Weisel); <i>Maus</i> (Spiegelman); <i>Cry The Beloved Country</i> (Paton); <i>Siddhartha</i> (Hesse) Sample STEAM Challenge: Use technology to design & model an educational environment (museum, landscape, amusement park, etc.) that reflects an era or concept from this thread			
	Survival Skills: Basic gardening, Food preservation, Sewing & mending	Study Skills: Use of technology, MLA Citation, Scholarly Ethics	Job Skills: Networking & Social Media, Design Literacy	Life Skills: Healthy Relationships, Animal Care
<b>Three</b>	<b>Thread of Inquiry: U.S. HISTORY &amp; AMERICAN IDENTITY</b> Integrated Subjects: Chemistry, Environmental Science, Civics, Algebra II Suggested Readings: <i>A Different Mirror</i> (Takaki); <i>Lies My Teacher Told Me</i> (Loewen); <i>A People's History of the United States</i> (Zinn); <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> (Steinbeck) Sample STEAM Challenge: Write, design, and produce a play, film, animation, or videogame that explores an event, an individual, or a concept from this thread			
	Survival Skills: Basic foraging, Fishing & tracking, Fire safety	Study Skills: SAT Test prep, College & Career Research	Job Skills: Interview basics, Writing resumes & cover letters	Life Skills: Automotive Basics, Sign Language, Travel Essentials
<b>Four</b>	<b>Thread of Inquiry: GLOBAL CULTURE &amp; CURRENT EVENTS</b> Integrated Subjects: Physics or Computer Science, Statistics, Calculus Suggested Readings: <i>Persepolis</i> (Satrapi); <i>In the Shadow of No Towers</i> (Spiegelman); <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i> (Pollan); <i>Collapse</i> (Diamond); <i>Brave New World</i> (Huxley) Sample STEAM Challenge: Design & engineer a product that addresses a specific problem in our community; then assess its effectiveness & draw conclusions from the results			
	Survival Skills: Basic shelter construction, Forestry essentials	Study Skills: College application & Effective essay writing	Job Skills: Business management, Grant writing	Life Skills: Financial & debt management, Voting/Citizenship

ALWAYS INTEGRATED: Literacy & Numeracy Skills; Visual & Performing Arts; Technology  
 ALWAYS OFFERED AS ONLINE ELECTIVE OPTIONS: Foreign Languages, AP Courses

The “thread of Inquiry” for each level will be continuously examined over the course of the four terms. Students will have two long blocks of inquiry-based learning each day, a Humanities block and a STEM block, each led by a certified teacher with the assistance of an aid or intern. These blocks will integrate language arts, mathematics, sciences, and social studies into coherent modules for thematic student-centered learning. Visual and performing arts will also be

integrated, in both the humanities and science blocks, as processes for exploring and expressing deep knowledge. Basic drawing, vocal, movement, and performance skills will be an essential component of the first year curriculum. Later, students will have more choice in developing specific arts-related skills and knowledge through mentors, tutors, and independent study.

Other shorter blocks throughout the day will provide opportunities for tutoring, small group collaborative sessions, wellness, and student participation in school governance. Every Monday, the day begins with a school-wide “Morning Meeting,” to discuss and vote on school issues. Each morning Tuesday – Thursday begins with a “Problem of the Day,” a STEAM challenge that increases in complexity over the course of the week (derived from the University Child Development School model, “Math Vitamins,” and their Build-Draw-Record method). “Flex Days” on Fridays allow time for more freedom to pursue individual interests. Fridays begin with a “School Service” block, time to work together and help out around the school with activities like campus clean-up, garden harvesting & food preparation, hanging student artwork, etc.

The school day will be framed by optional sessions of wellness and open studio time. Wellness options might include walks, yoga, dance, hikes, sledding or skating in the winter, field games, or indoor games like table tennis for inclement weather. Open studio time enables students to continue exploration of a particular thread of inquiry, work on unresolved STEAM challenges, get extra help from teachers, work together in groups, or pursue an independent interest.

#### WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF INTEGRATED ACADEMIC BLOCKS

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
7:30am-8am	Optional Wellness	Optional Wellness	Optional Wellness	Optional Wellness	Optional Wellness
8am-9am	Morning Meeting	Problem of the Day	Problem of the Day	Problem of the Day	School Service
9am-10am	Morning Block:	Morning Block:	Morning Block:	Morning Block:	Mentorships, Seminars, & Portfolio Development
10am-11am	Humanities w/Teacher A	STEM w/Teacher B	Humanities w/Teacher A	STEM w/Teacher B	
11am-12pm	Lunch & Free Time	Lunch & Free Time	Lunch & Free Time	Lunch & Free Time	Independent Study, Internships, Site Visits, Online Courses, Community Service, etc.
12pm-1pm	Afternoon Block:	Afternoon Block:	Afternoon Block:	Afternoon Block:	
1pm-2pm	STEM w/Teacher B	Humanities w/Teacher A	STEM w/Teacher B	Humanities w/Teacher A	
2pm-3pm	Arts Workshop	Writing Labs	Visiting Artists /Professionals	Portfolio Reviews	
3pm-4pm	Open Studio or Wellness	Open Studio or Wellness	Open Studio or Wellness	Open Studio or Wellness	

Required school attendance time is 8am-3pm, Monday – Thursday, and 8am-11am on Fridays. This flexible 4½-day weekly schedule empowers students and staff to tailor the available time to suit their learning needs. Friday afternoons will be dedicated to flexible programming, such as online coursework, independent study, or student-selected study groups (e.g., AP or foreign language courses). Older students who are able to provide or coordinate transportation may use this time for off-site programming, such as internships or community service. Families may take

advantage of this time for travel or other extended learning opportunities like museum visits. Students who leave campus will be required to document their learning process for school credit.

The School will use as guidelines for curriculum development the Common Core State Standards and the recently approved NH Common Core-aligned Math, ELA, Science, and Arts Competencies. In particular, the LEAF Charter School will emphasize the Work-Study Practices (WSPs) developed by the NHDOE in June of 2014 (See Section (g) below). School faculty will utilize the California Center for College and Career's ConnectEd resources - "Designing Multidisciplinary Integrated Curriculum Units" and "Performance-Based Curriculum Mapping" - to aid in meaningful integration across disciplines.

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Resources: NH K-12 Curriculum Frameworks for Reading and Written & Oral Communication  
English Language Arts (ELA) will be integrated into all areas of study. Specific foundational skills in reading and writing will be assessed upon admission to the School, to determine areas of intervention and acceleration for all students. Weekly Writing Labs will offer personalized guidance and structured opportunities for individual growth. All faculty will engage students in pre- and post-reading activities for content learning, and will develop meaningful challenges that require students to use writing to express understanding (e.g., writing a graphic novel or screenplay about the American Revolution). Relevant literature will be explored in all Threads of Inquiry. The Senior ELA Seminar will focus primarily on college application essays and professional writing.

Year 1: ELA Basics, Reading & Writing for Content Learning

Year 2: World Literature

Year 3: American Literature

Year 4: Modern Literature & Senior Seminar

### MATHEMATICS

Resources: NH K-12 Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks

Faculty will use the Core-Plus Mathematics Program to integrate essential math concepts into the wider curriculum. Specific foundational skills in computation, logic, structures, and functions will be assessed upon admission to the School, to determine areas of intervention and acceleration for all students. The "Problem of the Day" will offer personalized guidance and structured opportunities for individual growth. All faculty will use content-specific word problems and puzzles to increase numeracy, and will develop meaningful challenges that require students to use math to solve real-world problems (e.g., creating computer programs or designing and building structures). The Senior Math Seminar will be largely individualized and allow students to pursue theoretical or practical mathematical interests.

Year 1: Integrated Algebra, Geometry, & Statistics

Year 2: Integrated Algebra, Geometry, & Statistics

Year 3: Integrated Algebra, Geometry, & Statistics

Year 4: Integrated Algebra, Geometry, & Statistics or Calculus

### SOCIAL STUDIES

Resources: NH K-12 Curriculum Frameworks for Social Studies

The Social Sciences offer a broad array of intellectual content for exploration in the Humanities. Threads of Inquiry for each year of study will be largely drawn from history, with in-depth investigation into the geo-political contexts of cultures worldwide. Curriculum development will

rely heavily on the University of San Diego's model "World History For All," an integrated and comprehensive high school social studies curriculum.

Year 1: Geography, Anthropology

Year 2: World History, Government & Economics

Year 3: US History, Civics

Year 4: Global Studies

## SCIENCES

Resources: NH K-12 Curriculum Frameworks for Science

Sciences are at the core of STEM-centered learning and integral to student success in the 21st century. Scientific inquiry - forming hypotheses, making predictions, collecting data, experimenting and analyzing - is analogous to the creative process of learning at the LEAF Charter School. Each Thread of Inquiry will incorporate concrete scientific knowledge and real-world applications of scientific principles. Specific integrated curriculum materials will be drawn from ConnectEd's Multidisciplinary Integrated Curriculum Units and other sources, particularly in the areas of engineering, biomedicine, and forensics.

Year 1: Earth & Life Sciences (Science of the Natural World)

Year 2: Physical Science (Science of the Built World)

Year 3: Environment Science, Chemistry (Science of the Manufactured World)

Year 4: Physics or Anatomy/Physiology (Science of the Modern World)

## ARTS

Resources: NH K-12 Curriculum Frameworks for the Arts

The Arts (Dance, Music, Visual Arts, & Theater) will be integrated into all areas of study. Specific foundational skills in movement, public speaking, and visual expression will be developed in the first year of attendance. Subsequent years will allow for more individual exploration. Weekly Arts Workshops will offer personalized guidance and structured opportunities for individual growth. All faculty will develop meaningful challenges that require students to use the arts to express understanding (e.g., design and model an environment that reflects an era). Additional opportunities for students to engage in the arts will be provided through open studio time, independent study, mentorships, and participation in the offerings of larger arts organizations, such as the Scholastic Arts & Writing program, the NH Educational Theater Guild, the Monadnock Valley Music Festival, and the NH Dance Institute.

## TECHNOLOGY

Resources: NH K-12 Technology Education Curriculum Guide

Technology will be integrated into all aspects of School culture. Many students have smartphones or other devices that can be leveraged for educational purposes; for example, smartphone sensors (camera, GPS, accelerometer, etc.) can be used for a wide variety of data collection. Specific foundational skills in ICT (Information and Communication Technology) basics and computer programming will be developed in the first year of attendance. Subsequent years will allow for more individual exploration. All faculty will explain and model appropriate uses of technology, and will encourage the innovative use of technology to express understanding (e.g., designing a website, interactive presentation, app, etc. to document a relevant social issue). Additional opportunities for students to engage in ICT learning will be provided through open studio time, independent study, mentorships, and participation in the offerings of larger organizations, such as NH-VEX Robotics, Project Lead The Way, etc.

## HEALTH/WELLNESS

Resources: NH K-12 Physical Education & Health Education Curriculum Guidelines  
Issues of health, wellness, and physical education will be explicitly addressed during quarterly "Skills Intensives," and will include such topics as CPR/First Aid, Nutrition, and Healthy Relationships. Guest speakers and healthcare professionals will be invited to participate and lead workshops during the Intensive week. Wellness skills will be implicitly taught through modeling and optional activities throughout the semester. Before- and after-school offerings such as hiking, yoga, and field games will be available every school day. Additionally, the School lunch and garden programs (aided by the Farm-to-School Network and local food producers) will give students the opportunity to make healthy nutritional choices and participate in growing and preparing their own food.

## ELECTIVES

Elective options are vast and limited only by the student's interest and imagination. Time is available each week for guided and independent pursuit of topics of interest. This may take the form of a traditional independent study, in which a student outlines in advance, with the assistance of a mentor, the curriculum that he/she wishes to study. Electives may also be online offerings, through VLACS (NH's Virtual Learning Academy Charter School), Advanced Placement, MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), or others. Older students may choose to earn elective credit through apprenticeships, internships, or work-study programs. Students will work with their mentors and/or employers to construct detailed curricula and expectations for all external programming. All LEAF students will be encouraged to study at least one Foreign Language. Additional credits may be earned over the summer through documented and assessed community service, travel, pre-college programs, or other activities. LEAF students will be strongly encouraged and incentivized to continue learning over summer vacation, to increase overall progress and mitigate "backsliding."

### **(g) Academic and other learning goals and objectives.**

“Our education systems should focus on the development of *entrepreneurs*: individuals who leverage their specialized knowledge to dream, create, make, explore, learn and promote entrepreneurial, cultural, or social endeavors, taking risks and enjoying the process as much as the final outcome, without fearing the potential failures or mistakes that the journey includes.”

-- John Moravec, *Manifesto 15*

The LEAF Charter School's primary academic goal is to offer students a wide range of pathways towards literacy, numeracy, cultural fluency, and competency in essential 21st century skills. LEAF students will graduate prepared for college, careers, and diverse communities.

1. All students will gain an understanding of traditional academic subjects, through meaningful interdisciplinary study and STEAM (Science-Technology-Engineering-Arts-Math) projects.
2. All students will demonstrate their readiness for college, career, and life-long learning through portfolio development and presentation of work.
3. All students will read and compute at or above grade level, based on NH State Standards and school-specific GSEs (Grade-Span Expectations).

## EXPECTATIONS FOR WORK-STUDY PRACTICES

### **Communication**

I can use various media to interpret, question, and express knowledge, information, ideas, feelings, and reasoning to create mutual understanding.

Graduating seniors will be able to demonstrate that they can:

- Communicate effectively using multiple modalities
- Interpret information using multiple senses
- Demonstrate ownership of the work

### **Creativity**

I can use original and flexible thinking to communicate my ideas or construct a unique product or solution.

Graduating seniors should be able to demonstrate that they can:

- Think originally and independently
- Take risks
- Consider alternate perspectives
- Incorporate diverse resources

### **Collaboration**

I can work in diverse groups to achieve a common goal.

Graduating seniors will be able to demonstrate that they can:

- Contribute respectfully
- Listen and share resources and ideas
- Accept and fulfill roles
- Exercise flexibility and willingness to compromise

### **Self-Direction**

I can initiate and manage my learning, and demonstrate a "growth mindset," through self-awareness, self-motivation, self-control, self-advocacy, and adaptability as a reflective learner.

Graduating seniors will be able to demonstrate that they can:

- Persevere in completing complex, challenging tasks
- Use self-reflection to influence work and goals
- Engage stakeholders to gain support

Additionally, the School will collaborate with area school districts and other organizations (NH State Council on the Arts, Antioch University, etc.) to offer expanded professional development opportunities for all local educators. In this way, School faculty may share best practices and curriculum materials with their colleagues in the traditional school system (especially surrounding competency-based assessment).

**(h) Achievement tests to be used to measure pupil academic and other goal achievement including, but not limited to, objective and age-appropriate**

**measures of literacy and numeracy skills, including spelling, reading, expository writing, history, geography, science, and mathematics.**

Assessment of student learning at the LEAF Charter School will be primarily competency-based, and include both formative and summative models. Students will demonstrate competency in the Common Core State Standards and the new state-approved New Hampshire Competency-based Graduation Requirements, as listed in (f) Curriculum, above. Specific assessments include:

1. Teacher-developed formative assessments, such as project rubrics
2. State and national assessment tools, such as MAPS testing, PSATs, AP exams, etc. Every LEAF student will be required to take the SAT in his/her 11th grade year (and encouraged to re-take in 12th grade) in an effort to increase college attendance and track both student and school performance over time.
3. Each student will develop, and continually add to, a portfolio of personal work that demonstrates his/her competency in the required areas. These portfolios will be reviewed systematically in four tiers:
  - Every week, time is allotted for individual portfolio reviews. This is a chance for each student to meet with a teacher or other mentor and talk about his/her progress & goals
  - At the end of each quarter, during “Forums,” each student will share new work (created during that quarter) with his/her cohort (1<sup>st</sup> year students, 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, etc.) for constructive criticism, discussion, and written peer evaluations. Additionally, student work from all cohorts will be displayed throughout Forums. This may include galleries or exhibits of student work, presentations, streaming video, live performances, etc.
  - At the final Forum of the year (Spring Term), all students will present the cumulative work they have created throughout the year to a review panel consisting of one family or community member, one teacher, and one student, for a formal critique and written evaluation.
  - Finally, the 4<sup>th</sup> year cohort will select representative works from their entire time at the LEAF Charter School, to present to a Graduation Committee of one family member, one local artist or community member, two teachers, at least one student, and the Director of the school. This work should demonstrate proficiency in all core areas, as well as significant creativity and personal growth in one or more areas of individual interest.

Reporting of assessment will include quarterly narrative reports (with relevant test scores) to parents, and compilation of assessment data for the Board’s progress reports.

**(i) For schools offering high school grade levels, graduation requirements sufficient to ensure that the school has provided an adequate education for its pupils.**

In accordance with SAU 60 graduation requirements, students must earn at least 28 credits in order to graduate. These credits will be embedded in the LEAF Charter School’s required Science & Humanities blocks. Health & Physical Education credits are embedded in the quarterly Skills Intensives. Additional credits may be earned through independent study, online foreign language offerings, AP courses, internships, and other extended learning opportunities. A student earns credit by demonstrating competency as outlined in (h) Assessment, above.

First Year Curriculum: 7 CREDITS REQUIRED (8 Credits Possible with Elective Options)

- Earth Science – ½ Credit
- Life Science/Biology – ½ Credit
- Integrated Algebra, Geometry, & Statistics – 1 Credit
- English Language Arts – 1 Credit
- Geography – ½ Credit
- Anthropology – ½ Credit
- Integrated Arts – 1 Credit
- Integrated Technology – 1 Credit
- Physical Education (through Skills Intensive) – ½ Credit
- Health (through Skills Intensive) – ½ Credit
- Online Electives (Foreign Languages & Other): ½ to 1 Credit Possible

Second Year Curriculum: 7 CREDITS REQUIRED (8 Credits Possible with Elective Options)

- Physical Science – 1 Credit
- Integrated Algebra, Geometry, & Statistics – 1 Credit
- World History – ½ Credit
- World Literature – 1 Credit
- Government & Economics – ½ Credit
- Integrated Arts – 1 Credit
- Integrated Technology – 1 Credit
- Physical Education (through Skills Intensive) – ½ Credit
- Health (through Skills Intensive) – ½ Credit
- Online Electives, AP Courses, Independent Study: ½ to 1 Credit Possible

Third Year Curriculum: 7 CREDITS REQUIRED (8 Credits Possible with Elective Options)

- Environmental Science – ½ Credit
- Chemistry – ½ Credit
- Integrated Algebra, Geometry, & Statistics – 1 Credit
- American Literature – 1 Credit
- U.S. History – ½ Credit
- Civics – ½ Credit
- Integrated Arts – 1 Credit
- Integrated Technology – 1 Credit
- Physical Education (through Skills Intensive) – ½ Credit
- Health (through Skills Intensive) – ½ Credit
- Online Electives, AP Courses, Independent Study, Internships: ½ to 1 Credit Possible

Fourth Year Curriculum: 7 CREDITS REQUIRED (8 Credits Possible with Elective Options)

- Physics or Anatomy/Physiology – 1 Credit
- Integrated Algebra, Geometry, & Statistics OR Calculus – 1 Credit
- Global Studies – 1 Credit
- Modern Literature – 1 Credit
- Integrated Arts – 1 Credit
- Integrated Technology – 1 Credit

- Physical Education (through Skills Intensive) – ½ Credit
- Health (through Skills Intensive) – ½ Credit
- Online Electives, AP Courses, Independent Study, Internships: ½ to 1 Credit Possible

TOTAL REQUIRED CREDITS: 28 (32 Credits Possible)

These requirements exceed New Hampshire's state graduation requirements, per Ed 306.27(m) High School Curriculum, Credits, Graduation Requirements, and Cocurricular Program.  
(m) The 20 credits required for graduation shall be distributed as specified in Table 306-2:

New Hampshire Required Subjects and Credits for High School Graduation

Arts education 1/2 credit

Information and communications technologies 1/2 credit or demonstrate proficiency

English 4 credits

Mathematics 3 credits, including algebra credit that can be earned through a sequential, integrated, or applied program

Physical sciences 1 credit

Biological sciences 1 credit

US and NH history 1 credit

US and NH government/civics 6 credit

Economics 1/2 credit

World history, global studies, or geography 1/2 credit

Health education 1/2 credit

Physical education 1 credit

Open electives 6 credits

Totals 20 credits

**(j) Staffing overview, including qualifications sought for professionals and paraprofessionals.**

The LEAF Charter School will employ two full-time teachers for each lower cohort (Years 1 & 2), a Humanities lead teacher and a STEM lead teacher. The upper cohorts (Years 3 & 4) will share a team of two teachers (one Humanities, one STEM). Once the School has fully matriculated all four cohorts, we will have a team of six lead teachers. All teachers will be supported by the School Leader (Director), who will share teaching responsibilities. In addition, each lead teacher will be assisted by a classroom volunteer aid or student intern. At least 50% of teachers employed by the school will have New Hampshire teaching certificates, per New Hampshire Charter School statute. Preference will be given to teachers with advanced degrees and experience teaching adolescents. The LEAF Charter School will work closely with nearby institutions of higher education – such as Antioch University, Keene State College, Franklin Pierce University, Dartmouth College, the School for International Training, and others – to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers, interns, and other personnel.

**The School Leader (Director)** will facilitate interactions between all constituents (teachers, students, board members, parents, and the wider community). He or she will have some teaching

responsibility, and will take a leading role in the areas of human resources, curriculum, budget, and disciplinary issues, with consideration to recommendations made by faculty and students.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

- The Director will act as a mediator and advisor in matters of student scheduling, discipline, curriculum development, instructional practices, and professional development.
- The Director will take on teaching responsibilities as necessary, will assist in Portfolio Reviews and portfolio development sessions, and will serve on the Graduation Committee for every LEAF graduate.
- The Director will work closely with faculty, including and especially the Special Education liaison, to ensure a rigorous and appropriate education for all LEAF students.
- The Director will solicit input from faculty and other stakeholders in developing a realistic annual budget, to be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- The Director will actively engage, in collaboration with the Board and others, in sourcing and developing sustainable funding for the LEAF Charter School.
- The Director will publicly represent the School at both internal and external School events, including performances, community events, and recruitment engagements.
- The Director will model respectful, responsible, positive behavior and instructional best practices during all School activities

**Qualifications Sought:**

- A dedicated, dynamic leader who is passionate about the School's mission
- Extensive high school classroom experience
- An advanced degree in education
- Prior administrative experience and/or principal licensure is preferred
- Diversity of work, travel, community service, and other life experience is appreciated
- A record of success in community building
- Experience in raising and managing funds
- Highly effective communication, coaching, organizational, and interpersonal skills

**The Administrative Assistant** will be an integral member of the school community, actively involved in the daily functioning of the School, attending morning meetings, and participating in school activities.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

- Assist the Director in all administrative matters as necessary, including (but not limited to), budget, development, scheduling, and preparation of reports
- Direct and significant interaction with students, parents, faculty, staff, and visitors
- Assist with planning, implementing, and coordinating events
- Participate in outreach efforts, including visits to middle schools and hosting school administrators and teachers
- Modeling respectful, responsible, positive behavior during all School activities

**Qualifications Sought:**

- Exceptional organizational and multitasking skills
- Highly effective communication and interpersonal skills
- Proficiency in MS Office & other computer skills required; Experience managing websites, handling social media presence, and/or working with budgetary or educational management

software is highly desirable.

**Lead Teachers**, in both STEM and Humanities, will teach a full course load of interdisciplinary classes that address the specific Thread of Inquiry for each cohort.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Teaching assigned interdisciplinary courses, working closely with cohort partner teacher to integrate subject matter, through the lens of the Thread of Inquiry
- Planning lessons and keeping records on student progress, including participation in Portfolio Reviews and portfolio development sessions
- Coaching/assisting in quarterly Skills Intensives, extracurricular activities, and off-campus trips
- Modeling respectful, responsible, positive behavior during all School activities
- Attending meetings and serving on committees as necessary
- Participating in the school's professional development program

Qualifications Sought:

- Dedicated and enthusiastic educators who are passionate about the School's mission
- Extensive high school classroom experience in a relevant discipline
- Highly collaborative and team-oriented style
- Experience implementing technology and multimedia in the classroom
- Diversity of work, travel, community service, and other life experience is appreciated
- An advanced degree in education and/or NH teaching certification is preferred
- Highly effective communication, coaching, organizational, and interpersonal skills

**Teaching Assistants** will be largely drawn from area teacher training programs, or recent college graduates investigating careers in education through Americorps and similar organizations.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Working closely with lead teacher to provide challenging and meaningful learning experiences
- Participation in Portfolio Reviews and portfolio development sessions
- Coaching/assisting in quarterly Skills Intensives and off-campus trips
- Modeling respectful, responsible, positive behavior during all School activities

Qualifications Sought:

- Energetic, creative college student or recent college graduate
- Interested in progressive and experiential school settings
- Highly collaborative and team-oriented style
- Diversity of work, travel, community service, and other life experience is appreciated

The **Special Education Liaison**, initially a part-time position, will coordinate all interventions and serve as the primary contact for all areas of exceptional education.

Specific Responsibilities:

- Assess the academic and socio-emotional strengths of all students at regular intervals
- Assist students in the development of strategies for intervention and acceleration
- Working closely with lead teachers, parents, home LEA support teams, external specialists and others to ensure full compliance with IEPs and student success
- Regularly attend IEP meetings and other in-school and external obligations as necessary

- Support classroom teachers with developing strategies to implement into their teaching practice

**Qualifications Sought:**

- Master’s Degree in special education preferred
- Experience in providing learning support to students in a school setting
- Knowledge and understanding of neuropsychological evaluations
- Excellent oral and written communication skills
- Knowledge of recent research in brain development and language learning, current research on best-instructional practices for working with students with learning differences
- Approaches student support from a team or collaborative approach

The **Tech Integration Specialist** will be contracted to work 4 hours per week during the school year. He/she may also serve as a mentor for students who are interested in IT integration.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

- Implementation of all technology related applications, including installation, configuration, and maintenance of desktops, tablets, laptops, peripheral equipment, and software
- Actively collaborate with faculty to define equipment and training needs
- Recommend hardware and software purchases and replacement
- Oversee Help Desk operations in an effort to ensure effective resolutions of end user issues
- Provide on-call tech support as needed

**Qualifications Sought:**

- Experience in technology-related work is preferred
- Energy and enthusiasm necessary to achieve the responsibilities of this position
- Excellent problem-solving, trouble-shooting, communication, and interpersonal skills

The **School Nurse** will be available on a per diem and as-needed basis. All faculty members will maintain current CPR and First Aid certifications, to assist in the event of emergency when the Nurse is not present.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

- Health assessment, care and management of students as necessary
- Lead quarterly Skills Intensives workshops in health-related areas

**Qualifications Sought:**

- NH Registered Nurse licensure and current CPR certification
- Experience working with adolescents or in a school setting preferred
- Strong communication, organizational and time management skills
- Computer skills and experience with electronic medical records is preferred

**PROJECTED 5-YEAR STAFFING PLAN**

POSITION	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Director	.25 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE

Admin Assist	0	1 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE
Business	contracted	contracted	contracted	contracted	contracted
Humanities	0	1 FTE	2 FTE	2 FTE	3 FTE
STEM	0	1 FTE	2 FTE	3 FTE	3 FTE
IT Support	0	4 hrs/week	4 hrs/week	4 hrs/week	4 hrs/week
Maintenance	0	8 hrs/week	8 hrs/week	8 hrs/week	8 hrs/week
Nurse	0	per diem	per diem	per diem	per diem
Aids/Interns	0	2 (unpaid)	4 (unpaid)	6 (unpaid)	8 (unpaid)
Sp.Ed.	0	.5 FTE	.5 FTE	1 FTE	1 FTE
Total Staff	.25 FTE	4.5 FTE	6.5 FTE	8 FTE	9 FTE
Student Body	0	28	56	84	112
Staff/Student	N/A	1/7	1/10	1/10	1/11
Adult/Student	N/A	1/5	1/6	1/5	1/6.5

**(k) Personnel compensation plan, including provisions for leaves and other benefits, if any.**

Teaching Staff will work 188 days. Teachers will be expected to participate in paid, school-sponsored professional development every year of employment: up to two weeks for their inaugural year, and up to one week for every subsequent year. There will be an allowance for ten sick days, and five personal days, all paid. There will be a common bank of unused sick days, which allows teachers to donate days to others in the event of long-term illness or other emergency. Administration will work year round, with paid vacation time.

The LEAF Charter School Staff and Board of Trustees will establish a plan for employee contracts. Salaries, health and dental coverage, and other employee benefits will be determined by the Board based on statewide norms and availability of funds. The Board will make every attempt to offer competitive compensation packages to attract highly qualified personnel.

**(l) Pupil transportation plan, including reasonable provision from the charter school's own resources for transportation of pupils residing outside the district in which the charter school is physically located.**

The LEAF Charter School will be located in East Alstead. SAU 60 bus routes transport students to and from Alstead, Acworth, Langdon, Charlestown, Walpole, Goshen, Lempster, and Unity. The School will make every attempt to help students outside these towns coordinate transportation, through networking with surrounding school districts, forming carpool or ride-share groups, encouraging biking and walking, and other avenues. The School will continue to seek funding for additional transportation, including the purchase of two 15-passenger vans, for daily use as well as field trips and other external programming.

**(m) Statement of assurances related to nondiscrimination according to relevant state and federal laws.**

The LEAF Charter School will not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities or with respect to employment terms and conditions on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. This policy is consistent with state and federal laws.

**(n) Method of coordinating with a pupil's local education agency (LEA) responsible for matters pertaining to any required special education programs or services including method of compliance with all federal and state laws pertaining to educationally disabled pupils.**

The Special Education Liaison will coordinate all interventions and serve as the primary contact for all areas of exceptional education, including assessment of the academic and socio-emotional strengths of all students; development of strategies for intervention and acceleration; working closely with lead teachers, parents, home LEA support teams, external specialists and others to ensure full compliance with IEPs and student success; attendance at IEP meetings; and supporting classroom teachers with developing strategies to implement into their teaching practice.

The LEAF Charter School will comply with all federal and state special education laws and rules applicable to a New Hampshire charter school setting. Under New Hampshire's charter school statute, RSA 194-B: 11, III, the local school district continues to be responsible for special education decision-making for any identified student who seeks attendance at a charter school. Decision making for special education services needed and student placement stays with the local school district. In an individualized program with tutorial support, students otherwise requiring special education may be more independent of special education services. Placement at the school will require an LEA endorsement from the IEP team or Superintendent of Schools.

According to RSA 194-B: 11, §111, all options available to the parent and the local education agency are retained. Regarding special education, options now available to parents and the local district include:

1. The district concurring on the parent's or student's desire for choice and attendance at this school, and assuring whatever services the student needs continue to be received
2. The parent accepting or rejecting the district-proposed education plan in full or in part
3. The district concurring with the choice placement as a general placement and providing the special services needed after hours
4. An education plan of short duration or one that allows for a trial period in the charter school to assess suitability for a student and the services needed, if any, in the charter school environment
5. The parent refusing special services and matriculating the student without services, should the charter school find this acceptable in a particular instance
6. Should the placement be disputed, either the parent or the school district initiating the resolution of disagreements through provisions of the Department of Education

**(o) Admission procedures.**

As with all charter schools, admission to the LEAF Charter School will be open to any resident in the state of New Hampshire. Students will be recruited and admitted as follows:

1. A panel of LEAF Charter School representatives will actively engage in recruitment throughout our region, by speaking and distributing information at middle schools and other appropriate venues.
2. The School will provide application packets with information on its educational philosophy, curriculum, and student expectations.
3. The School will hold on-site information sessions for prospective students and their families.
4. Students must complete the application and submit it by the designated deadline. Application will include a conventional application form (to be completed on paper or online) and a statement of interest in the LEAF Charter School, to be completed in any manner or media chosen by the student. Examples might include essays, videos, personal interviews, drawings, or other means of expression. This statement of interest is a requirement for admission, but *not a basis for selection*.
5. An Admissions Panel, appointed by the Board, will review applications for completion in the order in which they are submitted. All complete applications submitted by the deadline will be considered viable for admission to the School.
6. The Admissions Panel will notify students of application receipt and status.
7. If the School receives more applications than spaces available, a lottery will be conducted. Remaining students shall be placed on a waiting list, according to the order in which their application was received.
8. Admitted students and their guardians will attend an orientation event at the School prior to matriculation.
9. LEAF Charter School students will be automatically re-enrolled for the following year, provided they are in good standing at the School and submit a letter of intent to return. Students on the waiting list will be invited to enroll if any openings present themselves.
10. Diversity is an important factor in successful school culture. The School's Admissions Panel will track application submissions from year to year. If certain groups are found to be under-represented (for example, mainly students of one gender, or all from the same attendance area, etc.), the Panel will make every attempt to reach out to those groups in future recruitment efforts.

**(p) Philosophy of pupil governance and discipline, and age-appropriate due process procedures to be used for disciplinary matters including suspension and expulsion.**

Pupil Governance at the LEAF Charter School will be founded on respect for the community and the individual. All decisions on staff and pupil conduct, disciplinary procedures, and student expectations will take this high level of respect into consideration. The LEAF Charter School also operates on the principles of democratic participation and meaningful consequences.

Expectations for Student Conduct: The faculty and students will work collaboratively to develop a comprehensive “Constitution” of student expectations at the beginning of each school year. Discussion and development will occur during the school-wide Morning Meeting, and follow the Democratic School format. Once ratified by all constituents, students will receive a copy of this Constitution, to be shared with, and signed by, their guardians. The Constitution will be posted in the School and referred to in cases of disciplinary action. Opportunity to amend the existing Constitution will be available throughout the school year via Morning Meetings.

Disciplinary procedures: Minor infractions will be dealt with as necessary by the LEAF Charter School lead teachers or interns. Repeat infractions, or actions of a more serious nature, will result in a conference to determine consequences. This conference will include the student, a parent or guardian, the School Director, and a lead teacher or intern. Ongoing difficulties between students will result in individual meetings as well as peer mediation. A student who is frequently and repeatedly unable to meet school conduct expectations may be asked to seek educational alternatives. Under such circumstances, the School will work closely with the student, family, and home SAU to determine the best options and make the student's transition as seamless as possible.

Suspension and expulsion guidelines: Certain behavior, such as bullying, harassment, and other violent behavior toward students or faculty; possession of illegal substances; and other criminally disruptive activity will be considered major offenses. On matriculation, students will be given a contract, which will include descriptions of specific actions that lead to suspension or expulsion. All students will pledge to do no harm to themselves or others and to make choices that will lead to their own betterment. Students will sign the contract, which will be kept on file for future reference. A pupil may be suspended or expelled from a chartered public school based on criteria determined by the board of trustees consistent with the advice of the principal and teachers and in conformance with RSA 193:13.

**(q) Method of administering fiscal accounts and reporting, including a provision requiring fiscal audits and reports performed by an independent certified public accountant.**

The LEAF Charter School will follow New Hampshire public school accounting guidelines and will put in place internal accounting controls necessary to safeguard its assets. An annual financial report will be provided with an audit by an independent, certified public accountant.

The Board will appoint a Treasurer and an Assistant Treasurer to provide necessary monitoring of financial management, including conflict of interest for Board members and faculty. There shall be two signatures required for each check written to ensure integrity within the management of funds. A discretionary fund shall be established, and the School's assigned program coordinator and the Treasurer will have check writing authority for this account. The Board will establish the maximum cap for discretionary expenditures.

Each individual with check-writing authority will be covered by a fidelity bond in accordance with guidelines of New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.

The LEAF Charter School will comply with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B: 101-V). This list includes: annual report, annual financial audit and report, program audit, and participation during the annual school budget process.

The Board will form an audit committee each fiscal year to oversee selection of the independent auditor and the completion of the annual audit of the School's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the School.

## **(r) Annual budget, including all sources of funding.**

The LEAF Charter School Partnership will apply for a federal charter school start-up grant, as well as other national, private, and corporate funds, in order to supplement state per pupil funding. Founding members recognize that the financial sustainability of a charter school requires a long-term fiscal plan, especially after the expiration of the federal grant. We are currently investigating multiple revenue sources such as entrepreneurial programs, grants, and an annual giving campaign that will solicit both private and corporate donors. The LEAF Charter School Partnership will use funds raised to establish an endowment to support long-term fiscal sustainability.

Some examples of entrepreneurial revenue and other potential sources of funding include:

### Summer Arts & Technology Programs for Younger Students

- Open to elementary and middle school students (tuition and other costs to be determined)
- An opportunity for LEAF faculty and area artists to share their skills and earn a stipend
- Internship and extended learning opportunities for current LEAF students
- Community- and awareness-building for the School among area families

### Evening Adult Education Programs

- Offering wellness, arts, technology, and other courses for adults (fees to be determined)
- Potential to partner with the NH Bureau of Adult Education, offering GED & other options

### Professional Development for Area Educators

- Sharing best practices and instructional innovation with nearby schools via in-service hours
- Using exemplary student portfolios to demonstrate Competency Based Assessment
- Offering creative integrated workshops for educators and parents on site at the School

### In-Kind Donations

- Several partner organizations have already committed to donations of time & materials
- Mentorships, leading workshops, and other volunteer opportunities enrich the LEAF student experience, strengthen community partnerships, and save in direct instructional cost

### Grant Funding

- Grants specifically for STEM-based programs, such as Toshiba's America Foundation grants
- Grants & competitions for underserved communities, such as Google's RISE challenge
- Funding for small school initiatives

Please see Appendix F for projected budget estimates. All data for state funding is based on the NH per-pupil charter rate for 2014-15 (\$5498.30). All data for compensation is based on SAU 60 contracted teacher salaries for 2014-15. Occupancy costs are based on similar commercial lease rates for the area: \$6/sq.ft. yearly (or, \$24,000 annually, \$2000 per month) and assume occupancy in January of 2016 (1/2 of Year 1).

Approximately \$40,000 has been set aside during Year One for "Building Readiness." This will include a number of purchases to facilitate the unique and flexible use of space called for by the LEAF teaching philosophy. All purchases will become LEAF Charter School property, and can be removed and reinstalled elsewhere if the School should change locations in the future. These

include: flexible data ports (\$3000), ergonomic desks (\$6000) and chairs (\$5000), portable storage units (\$4000), moveable partitions (\$5000), and an acoustic curtain (\$17,000) for the performance area. Some physical changes and upgrades to the building will be made during Year One, but all of these (with the exception of additional wiring for wi-fi connection) will be made with in-kind labor and donation of materials.

**(s) School calendar arrangement and the number and duration of days pupils are to be served pursuant to RSA 194-B:8, III.**

The LEAF Charter School will comply with the 180-day school calendar mandated by RSA 194-B:8. The School will strive to coordinate its calendar with the calendars of nearby school districts, to allow for shared transportation and to assist families with children in multiple school systems. Actual dates and times will be largely dependent on availability of buses.

**(t) Provision for providing continuing evidence of adequate insurance coverage.**

The LEAF Charter School, in accordance with RSA 194-B:1, III, will be a "Chartered Public School," that is subject to the same protections as any public school under RSA 507 (b) which provides for Limited General Liability for the charter school and its agents.

The LEAF Charter School will obtain, and keep current, policies of each form of insurance required for the operation of a Chartered Public School. All formal documents related to the maintenance of insurance (including the insurance policies and evidence of continuing insurance) will be kept on file within the business offices of the School.

**(u) Identity of consultants to be used for various services, if known.**

**Diana Watson** was a classroom teacher for more than a decade, teaching in both public and private schools. Diana's immersion in neurodevelopmental content led her to be part of the team who established the Center for School Success in West Lebanon, NH. There, she was the Director of Professional Development for five years, responsible for creating and providing professional development combining collaboration with a neurodevelopmental approach to teaching and learning. During her time at The Center for School Success, Diana worked also worked directly with teachers and students K-12 in school-based contracts. Currently, Diana is an independent consultant, working with schools and school districts to provide professional development in neurodevelopmental content and collaborative practices. Diana has been involved with *critical friends groups (cfg's)* and collaborative practices since 2000. She has been a lead facilitator for the School Reform Initiative, offering *cfg* training locally and nationally since 2001, and served on the Board of Directors from 2009-2011.

**Katy O'Meara** began her teaching career as a "Teach for America" teacher in a Las Vegas, NV district where 85 percent of students were learning English as a second language and 100% of the school population qualified for free or reduced lunch. While in Las Vegas she taught

multiple grade levels and served as the after school administrator for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program. While her joy for teaching began in high school on the ski slopes of New Hampshire, her passion for helping at-risk children came to light while volunteering at a South African orphanage for HIV-infected children and as a mentor for children of incarcerated parents in Washington, DC. Katy has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science and Psychology, Cum Laude, from The George Washington University and Masters Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, Summa Cum Laude, from the University of Nevada. She also is a certified English as a Second Language teacher. Currently, Katy is The National Director of District Development for the Learning Together Company and has worked with school districts in 28 states to set up intervention programs for at risk youth. However, she plans to return to the classroom full time this fall as the ESOL teacher in Rochester, NH.

**Dennis Molesky** is an inheritor of and caretaker at "Mole Hill" in Alstead. Mole Hill is 120 acres of forest, field, buildings, and people. He manages a multi-use commercial building, within which he established and operates a community performance space. Dennis attended Fall Mtn Regional HS and UNH. He has degrees and experience in chemical engineering and business management. As a sideline he does artistic and functional stonework.

**Dan Patterson** has directed at Keene State College for the last 34 years. Professor Patterson is the chair of the National Critics Institute for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival and his work as a respondent/adjudicator for that organization takes him all over the United States. He is also the executive producer of the David Mark Cohen national playwriting award, which is a joint venture between the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE) and the KCACTF. He is currently on the Board of the Actor's Theatre of West Chesterfield. He was awarded the Kennedy Center Medallion in 2003 for his work as co-chair and co-host of the New England Regional of the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival. He received his BFA and MFA degrees from the University of Texas at Austin.

**Jessica Benedetto** has provided marketing, public relations, fund development, and writing/editing expertise to international as well as community-based non-profit organizations for the past ten years. She currently serves as Director of Marketing and Planning for a community action agency in Massachusetts that operates a range of programs for economically disadvantaged individuals and families, including an alternative high school and an adult education and career training center. As Director, Jessica is responsible for strategic planning, public and private grant-writing and reporting, individual fundraising, public relations, community outreach and events, website and social media management, marketing and branding, and creation of all print and digital marketing/outreach materials. She was selected to present on marketing and development best practices at the national conference of the Community Action Partnership in San Francisco in 2011. Jessica has also consulted with other community organizations around strategic planning and needs assessments, and works on a freelance basis with other non- as well as for-profit groups as a copywriter and graphic designer.

**Ben Robertson** is an actor, author, and business consultant. In 2014, Ben published *The Last Generation*, an Amazon best-selling young adult historical novel about the Greenland Norse. As an actor, Ben is a member of the Screen Actors Guild and recipient of the New Hampshire Film Festival award for Best NH Performance. Ben worked in banking and finance for over fifteen years, starting his career at The Chase Manhattan Bank and later working in private equity, venture capital, buy-side stock research on Wall Street. Ben received an MBA from University of Chicago Booth School of Business, where he was selected for the Kauffman Internship

Program, funded by the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, and led the first place winning team in the Edward L. Kaplan New Venture Challenge. Ben studied Chinese at Northfield Mount Hermon School, Fudan University, Beijing Normal University, and Wesleyan University, where he received a BA in East Asian Studies. Ben serves as treasurer on the board of the Monadnock International Film Festival and is a screenplay competition judge and social media coordinator for the New Hampshire Film Festival. Ben lives and works in Keene, NH.

**Katrina Spenceman** is a mother of two elementary school-aged children who are currently attending the Monadnock Waldorf School, where Katrina also works as a volunteer in outreach and enrollment. She is the marketing chair of Keene ICE, a group of community minded local residents who are building an state-of-the-art, energy efficient ice arena for Keene and the surrounding areas, which is due to open in late 2015. Katrina moved to New Hampshire from Los Angeles five years ago, where she studied acting with renowned acting teacher Sanford Meisner. Thereafter she worked as both a model and actress in theatre and television, after which she had a successful career in licensing with Disney Consumer Products. She is an advocate for educating the whole child, is an enthusiastic supporter of the LEAF Charter school initiative, and her experience in the arts and community outreach will be a valuable asset to the organization.

**Kathy Torrey**, Educational Consultant  
Former Chair, Surrey Village School Board of Trustees  
Co-founder, The Orchard School, Alstead NH

**Jake Cutone**, Professional Development Consultant  
PD Administration, The University Child Development School, Seattle, WA  
Visit: [ucds.org](http://ucds.org)

**John Herman**, Marketing & Publicity Consultant  
Artist, writer, teacher, media maker, Exeter, NH  
Visit: [johnherman.org](http://johnherman.org)

**Nina Simoneaux** is an FMRHS & Pratt Institute graduate with a degree in Graphic Design. While at Pratt, Nina held internships with Nickelodeon, Viacom, Anthropologie, and Armchair Studios. She hails from Langdon, New Hampshire and now resides in Brooklyn, New York. Nina is a design assistant at Random House Children's Books, and continues to make her own art in her tiny apartment.

**Rebecca Holtz** is an FMRHS and Smith College graduate with a degree in Playwriting and a 5-College Certificate in Ethnomusicology. Raised in Alstead, NH she currently performs with her original indie group, The Once Hollow, and with a number of swing orchestras in the New England area. Rebecca has been on the Board of Trustees for the Vermont Jazz Center since 2013. She also works at the New England Center for Circus Arts where she learns how to stand on her head and fly through the air.

**Mollie Tobin** is an FMRHS and Massachusetts College of Art and Design graduate with a degree in fiber arts. Mollie has held internships with the Boston Ballet and Central Square Theater in Cambridge, MA. She also studied traditional fiber arts at the Penland School of Craft.

**(v) Philosophy of parent involvement and related plans and procedures.**

The LEAF Charter School welcomes and encourages parent involvement at all levels. It is our belief that active parental participation promotes a positive school culture, increases student learning and investment, and helps to ensure long-term school sustainability. The School will make every effort to engage parents in meaningful school-related activities, especially families from historically disenfranchised backgrounds.

Some possible opportunities for parents and other family members to contribute include:

- As members of the Board of Trustees, Parent Advisory Board, Admissions Review Panel
- Assessing student work through Forums and the Graduation Committee
- During the regular school schedule as an academic tutor, classroom aid, or mentor
- Various volunteer opportunities, i.e., preparing mailings, maintaining website, sourcing local food options, chaperoning/transporting for field trips & external programming, etc.
- Continued support in assisting with school readiness, ongoing grant applications, etc.
- Leading a “Skills Intensive” workshop (offered at the beginning of each academic quarter, in the areas of Life Skills, Survival Skills, Study Skills, & Job Skills)
- Sharing educational beliefs & LEAF Charter School experiences with the community
- Recruitment of other parents & students

**(w) A plan to develop and disseminate information to assist parents and pupils with decision-making about their choice of school.**

A panel of LEAF Charter School representatives – including faculty, parents, students, and others – will actively engage in recruitment throughout our region, by speaking and distributing information at middle schools and other appropriate venues. The School will create posters, brochures, application packets, a Facebook page, and a website with information on its educational philosophy, curriculum, and student expectations. The School will also hold on-site information sessions for prospective students and their families.

**(x) Global Hold-Harmless Clause**

The LEAF Charter School, its successors and assigns, covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless SAU 60, any other school district which sends its students to the School, and their school boards, officers, directors, agents, employees, all funding districts and sources, and their successors and assigns, (the "indemnified parties") from any and all claims, demands, actions and causes of action, whether in law or in equity, and all damages, costs, losses, and expenses, including but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees and legal costs, for any action or inaction of the School, its board, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils.

**(y) Severability provisions and statement of assurance that any provision of the charter school contract found by competent authority to be contrary to applicable law, rule, or regulation shall not be enforceable.**

If the provision of the charter agreement is determined to be unenforceable or invalid for any

reason, the remainder of the charter agreement shall remain in effect unless otherwise terminated by one or both of the parties in accordance with the terms contained herein. Said provision shall not be enforced by the School or its affiliates, and will be promptly amended by the Board to meet statutory obligations.

**(z) Provision for dissolution of the charter school including disposition of assets or amendment of its program plan.**

In the event the LEAF Charter School should cease operations for whatever reason, including the non-renewal or revocation of its Charter, the Board of Trustees shall consult with its attorney and also the Department of Education to assure that contractual and financial obligations are met and that technical assistance is sought. The planned sale and distribution of any assets shall assure first that any financial obligations of the school are met and that the public schools are offered any remaining property in proportion to their financial support of the School over the history of the School. When possible, items of in-kind donation will be returned to their donor. Other assets will be redistributed as determined by the Board, with regard to statutory obligation.

**(aa) In the case of the conversion of a public school to a charter conversions school, provision for alternative arrangements for pupils who choose not to attend and teachers who choose not to teach at the charter school.**

Not applicable.

**(bb) A plan for the education of the school's pupils after the charter school may cease operation.**

In the event that the School shall cease operation for any reason, The LEAF Charter School Director will act immediately to place students in appropriate educational settings. The School's faculty will assist in student transition.

1. Families will be informed of the dissolution of the School at least 90 days in advance.
2. A parent committee will assist in exploring options for students.
3. Parent/guardian will provide a written release of information.
4. The receiving school for each student will be notified and files forwarded.
5. New schools will be advised that School personnel are available for consultation.
6. Information, including all appropriate student records, will be mailed to each home.

**(cc) Proposed Contract with Local Schools**

Not applicable.

**(dd) Proposed Accountability Plan**

The LEAF Charter School will provide annual reports to the New Hampshire State Department

of Education, addressing progress and fidelity to the School's mission. Data will be gathered from students, parents, faculty and staff, and alumni to track the School's educational impact. The School will also update the Department about its student enrollment, graduation and college matriculation rates, financial operations, and governance on an annual basis. The School will provide one copy of its annual report to the state board and to its local school board. This report will also be available to any person who expressly requests it.

The School will conduct an annual financial audit and report to the state board and the school board complying with any current format and content requirements imposed upon a public school. The report shall include the number of pupils served by the school and their respective tuition rates and a discussion of progress made towards the achievement of the school's academic and other goals set forth in its charter

The School will be subject to a first year program audit by the department of education or its agent, and will be subject to a program audit by the department of education at least once every 3 years thereafter.

A summary of the annual report will be provided to the parent or guardian of each pupil enrolled at the School, and will be made available to the legislative body.

A representative of the School will attend and be prepared to report at and answer questions during relevant portions of the annual school district budget process.

A full accountability plan will be developed by LEAF Charter School faculty and administration, and approved by the Board of Trustees, prior to the date of opening.

## **Appendix A: Founder Biographies & Certifications**

**Dakota Benedetto** grew up in New Hampshire and graduated from the K-12 Alton Central

School. She has been teaching visual and performing arts in rural public schools for over 15 years. After traveling through Europe and studying architecture at Rhode Island School of Design, Dakota received her BS in Arts Education (with a K-12 certification) from Plymouth State College. She later went on to earn her Ed.M in Teaching & Learning through the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University. In seeking to create and fund innovative arts programs in public schools, Dakota has written and received numerous grants, from organizations such as the NH Council on the Arts, the Fall Mountain Educational Endowment Association, and the Farm-to-School Network. She has studied and performed with a broad range of companies, including the American Repertory Theater (Cambridge, MA), the Edge Ensemble Theatre Company (Keene, NH), and Apron Theatre (Putney, VT). Dakota lives on a sustainable homestead she designed and built (with the help of many friends, family, and students) in Marlow, NH.

**Sally Eaton** is a veteran mathematics teacher. After teaching 7<sup>th</sup> grade for two years in Beloit, Wisconsin she traveled to southern Africa where she spent 14 years teaching mathematics in Swaziland and Zululand. This was during the apartheid system of government. When the environment became unsettled in 1990 she and her family returned to the United States for safety. She spent three years at Penn State University earning a Masters degree in Mathematics Education. In 1994 she began teaching mathematics at Fall Mountain Regional High School, from which she retired last June, after 20 years. She is committed to improving education for young people in this region and is very enthusiastic about the LEAF concept for education. She has taught mathematics for students from 7<sup>th</sup> grade through post-secondary at Granite State College. Her experience as an educator and a mathematics department head will be invaluable to moving forward with the LEAF Charter school.

**Katy Haas**, raised in South Acworth, New Hampshire, is a documentary photographer and filmmaker working independently and with Florentine Films where she is currently an assistant producer and apprentice editor. She worked on the award winning film *The Dust Bowl* and her independent projects have taken her to the streets of Brooklyn, farms in Ireland, whaling stations in Iceland and across the North Atlantic on a cargo ship. She has worked as a teaching assistant at the International Center of Photography, and taught photo courses at 3rd Ward, The InSight Photography Project and with the Community Education program in Keene, NH. Katy has a Bachelors degree in American Studies from Smith College and has studied at The Salt Institute for Documentary Studies and the Burren College of Art. The Bakery Photo Collective and the Monica Flaherty Frassetto Fund awarded her a residency and grant funding, respectively, for her photographs of family farming on Ireland's west coast.

**David Benedetto** holds a BS in Computer Science from the University of NH in Durham, NH, and a NH teaching certification with endorsements in secondary mathematics and computer science & information technology. He is in his fifth year of teaching, and his second year teaching Computer Science at Pinkerton Academy in Derry, NH. At Pinkerton, David has established a state-approved CTE (career & technical education) program consisting of three courses. David expects to earn his MS in Computer Science in Spring 2016. He is especially interested in effective integration of higher-order computing skills across the secondary curriculum.

**Barbara Davis** has been a pottery instructor since 1978. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Ceramics at the State University of New York at Fredonia in 1981. After graduating she took a position as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the country of Guatemala, working with women and

children as a 4-H extension volunteer. After her time in Guatemala she moved to New Hampshire and established a farm in Acworth with her former husband. Barbara speaks Spanish fluently and has taught Spanish classes in the Unity elementary School, the Alstead Primary School and to home school groups and individuals. She also speaks the language of Guarani - the indigenous language of Paraguay. She learned this during her second time with the Peace Corps. She continues to teach pottery from her studio and run her farm. She has been a mentor to many aspiring farmers and has hosted an apprenticeship for over 15 years. Ms Davis has been the library administrator of both the Acworth and Alstead Libraries with a combined 12 year history in this profession. She has been a member of the League of NH Craftsmen and served as a member of the Acworth Conservation Commission and as a board member at the South Acworth Village store.

## **Appendix B: Community Partners**

### COMMITTED MENTORS & PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

AACT: The Alstead Area Citizens Trust  
Non-profit 501(c)3 Organization  
Alstead, NH

Joel McCarty  
Former President, Timberframers Guild of America  
Former School Board Member, SAU 60  
Town Selectman, Alstead, NH

Noah Elbers  
Owner, Orchard Hill Breadworks  
(Affiliated with the Orchard School & Community Center)  
Alstead, NH

Misha Golfman & Lynn Boudreau  
Founders, Kroka Adventure Camps  
Marlow, NH

Mary Ann Kristiansen  
Executive Director, The Hannah Grimes Center  
Keene, NH

Jen Risley  
Monadnock Food Co-op  
Keene, NH

Don Primrose  
Arts Alive Foundation  
Keene, NH

Kim Dupuis  
Artistic Director, The Edge Ensemble Theatre Company  
Keene, NH

Johnny Bolster  
Director, MakeItSo Makerspace  
Keene, NH

Theresa Niles  
Director, River Theater Company  
Charlestown, NH

Alice Fogel  
Textile Artist & NH Poet Laureate  
Acworth, NH

Linda Simoneaux, RN  
Musician & Health Care Provider  
Langdon, NH

Bronwyn Sims & Patrick Donnelly  
Founders, Strong Coffee Stage  
Brattleboro, VT

Jason Snell  
Owner, OldTimers Timberframes  
Saxton's River, VT

Chloe Somers Walier  
New England Center for the Circus Arts  
Brattleboro, VT

Bensonwood Homes & Woodworking  
Walpole, NH

Badger Balm Company  
Gilsum, NH

## **Appendix C: Letters of Support**

Kroka Expeditions  
767 Forest Road  
Marlow, NH 03456  
(603) 835-9087  
www.kroka.org

To Whom it may Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of the charter application for the LEAF Charter School in East Alstead New Hampshire. For the past 18 years I have been working as a teacher, administrator, and youth development worker here in southern New Hampshire. Most recently I have been teaching at a private high school in Keene as well as working as an administrator at Kroka Expeditions, a wilderness education school in Marlow, New Hampshire.

Kroka serves more than 300 young people each year who come to our summer camp programs in order to revitalize their connection to nature and the spirit within, and awaken their capacity for conscious living and compassionate service. Our unique programs are based on our 21-acre farm, where we can combine wilderness adventure, community living, farming, and the practice of traditional and indigenous skills. We are so lucky to be located on the edge of the Ashuelot river watershed, amidst the rich and historic landscape of northern Cheshire County.

Our many years of experience here have shown us that the young people in our rural villages are seeking to be reconnected to their neighbors and landscape through meaningful work, authentic creative expression, and education that is relevant to their daily lives. Despite the hype about social networking, they want know one another more deeply than through a Facebook page or Instagram post. They want to be part of a small educational community where they can be fully known as rich and complex human beings. They want to be challenged by their teachers and peers to take new risks and make new accomplishments.

A small charter school with the vision of the LEAF Charter School is the perfect place for this kind of learning and community building to take place. We at Kroka stand with many other friends, neighbors, and co-workers in complete support of this brilliant initiative. We hope very much that the New Hampshire Department of Education will recognize the great potential here and support our process.

Sincerely,  
Nathan Lyczak  
Managing Director,  
Kroka Expeditions

To whom it may concern:

My name is Jacqueline Kensen. I am a longtime resident of Drewsville, New Hampshire. I am the mother of two grown children who spent their elementary, middle, and high school in the Fall Mountain School district. My work is in agriculture and because of that I have a strong connection to the community I live in.

Part of my community service is being a board member of AACT (Alstead Area Citizens Trust), a nonprofit interested in supporting education, local history, theater and art. The support can be through fundraising or functioning as a fiscal agent. I am also a committee member of the Hooper Institute. The Hooper Institute is an educational program, serving the children of Walpole from Kindergarten through High School.

I am supportive of the Leaf Charter School proposal. I have been a foster parent for 7 years and have worked with at-risk teens. Through those experiences I am very aware that a traditional school system does not serve all students as well as it should.

Jacqueline Kensen

Drewsville, NH

### **LEAF Charter School Letter of Support**

My name is Stefan Hofer. I am a local woodworker and craftsman. I have previously worked as a teacher at the Monadnock Waldorf School.

As a craftsman and teacher I am excited about the idea of the LEAF Charter School. I think it would help fill a void that is growing in our society currently. There is a growing need for students to have a hands-on approach to learning and I believe that a school providing an integrated hands-on curriculum with internships, apprenticeships, and life-mentoring, would be a huge benefit to our community and society. Not all students are destined for college, and may even struggle to complete high school. I believe that the LEAF Charter School could help some of these students find joy in learning and ultimately success in life. I would be like to support the school by offering mentorship, and apprenticeship opportunities to students, and potentially teaching classes at the school. I hope you consider the positive benefit this school could have on the local economy and culture.

Stefan Hofer

To whom it may concern:

My name is William K. Stahl. I am a retired high school teacher with more than twenty years experience in teaching English, Mythology and Public Speaking. In English I taught all levels, from “general” classes through Advanced Placement literature.

I am excited about the possibility of there being a new charter school in southwestern New Hampshire. While my own young sons have been receiving a fine education in our local schools, kindergarten through middle school, I have grave concerns with the quality of education offered by our local high school. There seems to be a “mile wide, inch deep” philosophy currently endemic to public high schools in general, and I have personally seen it at work in our local school. I want more for my children.

A charter school, especially one with an emphasis on the arts, would offer not only my children, but those with similar interests as well, an opportunity to be immersed in an educationally rich learning environment. In such an environment, students would be afforded true cross-curricular learning applications. Smaller class sizes would foster closer teacher-to-student interactions, not to mention the ability for students to explore topics in greater depth.

Throughout the years, I have been honored by invitations to attend many high school reunions of former students. Among the comments by these former students I was most gratified to hear were their responses to my own attempts at innovative teaching with statements like, “I still remember that class,” and, “I never thought I was going to like that [said of various units], but I wound up loving it!”

What I mostly took away from these statements was that what these former students really valued was my level of engagement with both the topics and with them. They also recognized and valued my willingness to try new approaches, to rethink and to come at topics from a “different angle” when needed. This is not to say that I was some kind of super teacher. These are things that all students value in their teachers. These are also the kinds of interactions with learners that all good teachers crave. A richer curriculum, combined with smaller class sizes and a more focused learning emphasis is something I truly wish my sons to experience. I would be willing to volunteer my time, effort, and experience in any way needed in order to help the Leaf Charter School Partnership succeed in making this charter school a reality.

William Stahl

Walpole, NH

To: NH Department of Education

I have read studied the application of The Leaf Charter School as a charter high school and am excited about the prospects of this type of secondary school. I know a number of the people behind the effort to create this school; they are of high character and have demonstrated a commitment to education in the Fall Mountain Area for a good many years.

The purpose of this letter is to support the application of The Leaf Charter School as a NH Charter School, and to indicate my willingness to partner with this school in perhaps a number of different ways, including leasing space to the school. What follows is meant to convey a sense of why I would consider such a commitment and why I think the application of TLS should be approved.

The property known as "Mole Hill" has been in my family since 1924, when the prospect of work as a miner brought Mikas Maleckas, here with his bride, Petrone Kiskonis. They had immigrated from Lithuania several years earlier and had lived in New York City, Worcester, and Keene. They paid \$250 for 8 acres and a cellar hole. My father was the 9th of their 12 children. He and my mother raised a family here and built a successful business from scratch. I moved back to Alstead in 1999 when my father died. I continued to run the family business (metal stamping) but also created a community performance space, Mole Hill Theatre. The theatre offers live music, plays, and other entertainment/cultural events.

There is a need for such a school as The Leaf Charter School is proposing. The public school system does not fill the needs for a significant percentage of the student population. Self-direction, creativity and innovation are important attributes for success in today's fast-changing world. The facility at Mole Hill is inspiring and flexible, it offers a great environment to help students develop these qualities.

Additionally, I would offer consulting and mentorship where appropriate; my education and experience is in chemical engineering and business management.

Dennis Molesky  
Alstead, NH

To whom it may concern,

Life in rural New Hampshire can be hard for an art-focused kid. Despite a teacher's best efforts, the arts are not always supported in local high schools. After graduating from Fall Mountain Regional High School in 2010, I was lucky enough to be accepted at Pratt Institute, which I graduated from in 2014. I am now a graphic designer at Penguin Random House and live in New York City. I was lucky enough to have the support of my teacher Dakota Benedetto to reach beyond what was easily available to me.

I think the LEAF Charter School is a great opportunity to expand learning for teenagers in South Western New Hampshire. There is nothing like it in the area. As a former student of Dakota Benedetto, a graduate of art school, and a working creative professional, I would be thrilled to be involved long distance. When I am in the area, I would love to do portfolio reviews or guest lessons. I would be happy to mentor kids interested in graphic arts. I can also provide insight on applying for colleges and jobs in the creative world. Even though I am currently living in Brooklyn, NY, I want to support the school and its potential students in any way.

Sincerely,

Nina Simoneaux  
Formerly of Langdon, NH, Currently residing in Brooklyn, NY

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Sally Eaton. I have been a mathematics teacher in the Fall Mountain Regional School District for 20 years. I retired in June of 2014. I've also taught courses at Granite State College in Claremont, NH.

I'm very enthusiastic about the establishment of a charter school in our district. The LEAF concept, Learning from Local Leaders, Experiential Education, Arts Integration & Academic Achievement, and Freedom & Flexibility, will provide students in our school district with a very positive alternative to a more traditional education. It will give the arts oriented students an opportunity to blossom and I have confidence that all students will thrive in this environment. I also recognize that there are currently several families in our district who are dissatisfied with the status quo and are choosing to send their children to private schools or to home school. They would welcome this choice. I totally support your initiative and want to help in any way that I can.

Sincerely,

Sally Eaton  
Acworth, NH

Dear Dakota,

I am writing on behalf of the Monadnock Food Co-op to express our interest in partnering with the LEAF Charter School in the future.

All the best with your endeavor,  
Jen Risley  
Marketing & Membership Manager  
Monadnock Food Co-op  
34 Cypress Street Keene, NH 03431  
603.355.8008  
www.MonadnockFood.coop

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Barbara Davis and I am a potter from Acworth New Hampshire. I have a Bachelor of Arts degree in ceramics from the State University of New York at Fredonia. I have been teaching pottery in the Monadnock Region for over 30 years.

I have always been inspired by how much interest and support for the arts there is in this rural area in which I live. The L.E.A.F. Charter School is a brilliant effort to continue this excellent tradition. I began making pots on a small wooden kick wheel built 1983 by a man that lived up the road from me. One day a neighbor came to my small cabin with her two boys. They were fascinated by my work and I agreed to give them classes. In this way I began my pottery business. I ended up teaching all the children in my neighborhood and still continue to do so. This is how I envision the L.E.A.F. Charter School beginning and growing. There is a need for more creative opportunities and outlets for students, and there are many talented adults/teachers willing to give of their time and expertise. There is not always the opportunity for students in public high schools to fit as many creative arts classes as they would like into their schedules. High School is a time when young minds should be given all the creative license they want. I believe in this new opportunity for students in the Monadnock Region.

I look forward to helping create a new and innovative school for the students in this area. I wish I had had this kind of opportunity as a high school student. I look forward to personally supporting any student who is seeking this kind of educational opportunity.

Thank you for your time in considering the L.E.A.F Charter School Proposal.

Sincerely,

Barbara Davis

## **Appendix D: Local Survey Results**

Results from an online survey, conducted by the LEAF Charter School Partnership, via social media.

Respondents were comprised of parents (43.9%), community members (34.2%), students (7.3%), and others, such as teachers and alumni.

The majority of parents and students who responded were affiliated with traditional public schools (66.7%) as opposed to private, charter, or home schools (20%).

Most respondents (65.9%) reside in the SAU 60 district, which includes the towns of Acworth, Alstead, Charlestown, Langdon, and Walpole. A smaller portion (14.6%) reside in SAU 29. The remainder live in surrounding towns or are alumni who have moved out of the area.

Many respondents (51.3%) felt the southwestern New Hampshire needs more schools with a specific focus, such as the arts or technology.

Some responses to a question asking respondents to describe the ideal high school:

- Academically rigorous with plenty of creative outlets
- Where students learn at their own pace and are encouraged and pushed by caring, dedicated teachers who know that educating is so much more than just the academic classroom. A good education includes learning to think and problem solve independently and to learn your individual role in society.
- Excellent teachers; students that are engaged and motivated
- A school where students are guided and assisted but who ultimately get to make decisions that prepare them for their futures
- A school that covers core education, but allows for educational opportunities that extend beyond the traditional classroom.
- Demanding but sensitive to individuality. Structured enough to provide clear goals and expectations but flexible enough to allow independent investigation and personal expression.
- It should be well rounded with a variety of interesting classes. Student should be able to find themselves by experimenting and taking classes that might interest them.
- The ideal high school would be one in which gifted teachers are allowed to teach in ways which inspire students to learn & which prepare students to hit college already running.
- Inclusive and focused on exposing students to the world outside our small area, teaching tolerance and acceptance of other people.
- Small classes, rigorous but interesting
- Inspired kids excelling at their interests and learning all subjects without them knowing it
- Project based. Pass or fail based on very high expectations and skill based competencies
- NOT test driven!!!!
- Teaching students for life outside of a school.

## **Appendix F: Five-Year Budget (See attached)**

**Appendix G: Site Plans & Proposed Changes to Facility (See attached)**