



Introduction:

Dear New Hampshire Board of Education/Charter Renewal Committee,

I am proud and pleased to come before you with our 10th year charter renewal. The Birches Academy was founded in 2012 and opened its doors on September 4th, 2012 with 88 students in 4 classes and a staff of 14. Today we have 225 students with 10 classrooms and a staff of 41. There is clearly still a need in southern New Hampshire that The Birches Academy of Academics and Art is serving well! Aside from adding staff since the approval of our five-year charter renewal, I would like to highlight the other changes that have been made.

When our five-year charter renewal was approved, we were focused heavily on improving our Arts Integration. While this remains an important part of what we do, and our teachers work closely to ensure that this remains a priority, we have also been focused on expanding our programs to focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics as we move toward a STEAM inclusive curriculum.

Our technology goals were accelerated by necessity during the pandemic, and we worked hard to ensure that our use of technology was meaningful and gave the students greater access to their education. We began meeting in professional learning communities (PLCs) and utilizing the methodology found in the SAMR model (Terada, 2020) to maximize the impact of technology. We have increased our one to one computing to include grades three, four and five. In middle school we continue to employ a bring your own device (BYOD) strategy, but we have Apple laptops and Chromebooks available for students who do not have a device of their own.

Teachers work in their PLCs to share their expertise with each other. This has led to the inclusion of a Universal Design for Learning (UDL, 2021) philosophy, and it is helping flipped classroom techniques spread throughout our school. In addition, we have created a Makerspace where students and teachers can explore different technologies such as Raspberry Pi microcomputers, 3D printing, Legos, and littleBits STEM kits. We were able to send a teacher to be trained as a coding instructor, and we also started a robotics club, although this is currently on hold due to constraints put on the school and in-person gatherings by the pandemic.

Another way we work to leverage staff expertise is by employing a train-the-trainer methodology. With UDL, for example, we sent a team of teachers to be trained and then they returned to lead staff development groups. In the last five years we also developed trainers for Crisis Prevention Institute's (CPI) de-escalation and physical intervention, CPR and First-Aid, FEMA incident command system, and have four staff members signed up to attend the Regulated Classroom training offered by the state of New

Hampshire (Read-Daniels). Two of the attendees will also be working on our social emotional curriculum revamp over the summer to ensure that all of our programs work together for the maximum benefit to the students.

We also had several teachers at the elementary level research different explicit reading programs to supplement their instruction and try examples before the team finally settled on Bookworms which is based on the Science of Reading. This was in response to test data and observations by the elementary teachers and the Response to Intervention (RTI) teacher. As a team they decided that this area of focus was the most apt to have class-wide impact and enable the students to acquire the tools they needed to move forward successfully. This example also illustrates the openness of our teachers, in that their reaction to large numbers of students needing intervention was not to blame the students but rather to alter their instruction.

We have rented space at 419 S. Broadway in Salem for the last ten years, but there are specific references in our charter to an actual, physical space. Our building committee is working actively to find our forever home, but the pandemic, along with other market factors, has contributed to making buying at this time difficult. Because of this, we have had to sign an extension on our lease for an additional three years.

We continue to follow a curriculum which is centered around the Common Core Academic Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards to inform our Science curriculum. We also utilize other programs to address areas of concern within the school and several formative and summative assessment programs to generate the data necessary to determine our school-wide needs.

We have highlighted many important factors of attending The Birches Academy in a Home/School Compact that is given to interested parents upon visiting a Spotlight Tour and when enrolling in our school. Parental involvement and commitment is important to building a strong learning community so we want to communicate all aspects of The Birches Academy to incoming families before they make a decision to commit . This is included in Appendix H of our charter.

Our evolving needs have determined the creation of administrative positions and structure. We currently have a Dean of School, a Dean of Operations, a Student Services Coordinator, a Human Resources and Operations Assistant, a Donor Relations and Event Coordinator, and an Administrative Assistant. Additionally, we have added a full-time nurse to our staff.

Our Birches Board of Trustees is a strong factor in helping lead The Birches Academy with policies and oversight. At the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year, the Board of Trustees contracted a consultant to lead Board training and help the Board to prepare for a Capital Campaign for our new building. The consultant led several retreats and planning sessions which enabled the Board to improve its recruiting and onboarding policies. The consultant also helped the Board to generate a schedule with the Dean of School to review and add policies; this process is ongoing.

These are some of the changes between our first charter renewal and this charter renewal. These changes were made in order to continue our pursuit of the strong initial vision for The Birches Academy of Academics and Arts: A Chartered Public Charter. Although we seek to make use of new tools, it is our initial vision that continues to guide us today.

Sincerely,

Christopher Smith
Dean of School
The Birches Academy of Academics and Art

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The Birches Academy of Academics and Art

A Public Charter School

10 YEAR RENEWAL CHARTER

**The Birches Academy
Board of Trustees**

**419 South Broadway
Salem, NH 03079**

May 2022

Table of Contents

Introduction:	1
Educational mission	7
Governance and organizational structure and plan	8
Methods by which trustees and their terms are determined	9
General description and proposed or potential location of facilities to be used	10
Maximum number, grade or age levels	10
Curriculum and instructional goals	10
Achievement tests	14
Staffing overview	15
Personnel compensation plans	17
Pupil transportation plan	17
Statement of assurances related to nondiscrimination	18
Method of coordinating with a pupil's local education agency (LEA)	18
Admission procedures	20
Philosophy of pupil governance and discipline	21
Method of administering fiscal accounts and reporting	21
Annual budget, including all sources of funding	22
School calendar arrangement... pursuant to RSA 194-b:8, III	23
Provision for providing continuing evidence of adequate insurance coverage	23
Philosophy of parent involvement and related plans and procedures	24
Disseminate information to assist parents and pupils with decision-making about their choice of school	24
A global hold harmless clause	24
Severability provisions and statement of assurance	25
Provision of dissolution	25
In addition to an application, each charter school applicant, in consultation with the local school board, shall prepare a proposed contract	26
An outline of the proposed accountability plan	26
Appendix A: Founding members	27

Appendix B: Budget	28
Appendix C: Government and Organizational Structure	34
Appendix D: Bylaws	35
Appendix E: Curriculum Framework	44
Appendix F: Curriculum Sample, The Birches Writing Cans	51
Appendix G: Job Descriptions	52
Appendix H: Home School Compact	57
Appendix I: Organizational Chart	59
Appendix J: Letters of Support	60

1. Educational mission

The mission of The Birches Academy is to provide a top quality elementary and middle school education through the lens of arts integration and using science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics (STEAM) while cultivating the individual qualities and strengths of each child. Through our staff and curriculum, we offer an environment that embraces the natural diversity of learning styles and supports the social, emotional and physical needs of our students. There are eight fundamental aspects of our mission.

A. Provide a rigorous core academic program through integrated curriculum projects.

The Birches Academy will provide rich curricula in reading, spelling, writing, social studies, mathematics, and science with a focus on skill development and application. There will be an emphasis on the use of projects that make connections between academic subject areas and the arts. The core curriculum program will receive no less than 60% of time available.

B. Cultivate the individual qualities and strengths of each student.

The Birches Academy will strive to meet the individual needs of each child. A Personal Learning Goal (PLG) will be created for each child taking into consideration the individual child. The PLG will be created by the teacher with input from parents/guardians and student which increases as students grow older. An individual portfolio compiled by each student under teacher direction will show progress in learning. This portfolio will include at least one metacognitive analysis per year which addresses questions such as, "How did my prior knowledge affect my work on this assignment?"

C. Train students to use artistic processes for academic learning.

The Birches Academy will develop critical thinking skills in students regarding all their work through increased ownership and an emphasis on process and arts in the classroom. Through various forms of artistic expression, students will be encouraged to express themselves creatively.

D. Utilize the scientific method and technology best practices to guide student inquiry, dialogue and critical thinking.

Students will be taught to use technology to take control of their learning, including offering them greater access to their education and supporting their executive functioning. Students will be provided with opportunities to understand and implement the scientific method both in the classical sense and also in contemporary applications such as rapid prototyping. The goal will be to give them opportunities, and exposure to first hand experience with applications used in higher education and real-world scenarios.

E. Offer comprehensive multidisciplinary enrichment programs allowing new ways of thinking, behaving and learning.

The Birches Academy will provide after school enrichment programs that may include visual arts, movement, dance, theater, music, and foreign language allowing students to explore new ways of thinking, behaving, and learning.

F. Support student achievement by creating an inclusive community that actively engages parents, teachers and students in the learning process.

The Birches Academy will create a learning community that actively engages parents in significant and substantial ways both inside and outside the classroom so that they become learning partners with students and teachers.

G. Promote character development and good citizenship.

The Birches Academy will promote sound character development by helping students relate and communicate with others, develop leadership skills and understand their individual rights and those of others in a respectful environment. Students will participate in forming the policies and procedures that affect them. All students will be given the opportunity to become involved in whole school meetings, and each student and staff member will be assigned membership in one of the Houses. All-school meetings will occur weekly and House meetings will occur once a month. House meetings will be structured so that each meeting has a theme which can be altered to address school-wide issues as they arise and offer older students an opportunity to mentor their younger counterparts. The House system can also function as a peer leader program when appropriate. House points can also be awarded by adults in the school community to support pro-social behaviors and create social capital for students who may struggle socially.

H. Incorporate the use of technology.

The Birches Academy will use technology and technology platforms as a teaching tool wherever possible. The Birches Academy will ensure, through staff development, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and supervision, that teachers have access to new educational technologies and opportunities to train with them. Teachers will receive support as they transition in their technology integration through the substitution, augmentation, modification and redefinition (SAMR) model.

2. Governance and organizational structure and plan

The Board of Trustees will govern The Birches Academy with statutory responsibilities under RSA 194-B:5 for “general supervisory control and authority over operations of the charter school.”

The Board of Trustees will consist of the Dean of School, who will be a non-voting member, teachers, parents, and community members.

The Board of Trustees will consist of a chair, vice chair, secretary, and treasurer and will establish governing policies. The Board of Trustees will exercise its authority to set policy and make decisions that serve the mission of the school and will have oversight and authority to render final decisions on matters pertaining to:

- Hiring of the Dean of School
- Approval and oversight of annual budget and fund-raising programs
- Setting policy
- Appointment of one or more advisory members or committees
- Delineating educational priorities
- Setting professional salaries and compensation program
- Reviewing and approving significant contracts, e.g., for facilities and benefit programs
- Matters for which the board serves as a hearing body for action or appeals
- Any other matters that are not administrative in nature and/or that are prescribed in statute or rule

Please see Appendix C for additional detail on the governance and organizational structure.

3. Methods by which trustees and their terms are determined

The Bylaws will outline the Board selection process and terms. In general, openings on the Board will be filled by recommendation, nomination, and vote of a majority of the Board present and participating and per the Board policy.

Please see Appendix D for the Bylaws.

4. General description and proposed or potential location of facilities to be used

The Birches Academy is located in Salem, NH. We occupy 22,000 sq ft. of first and second floor retail space. This includes 9 classrooms, space for tutoring, art, music, and the school's administrative staff, as well as two large all-purpose rooms. There is a limited outdoor space for physical activity. We are in year 1 of 6 of a lease extension and are actively reviewing options for our forever space.

5. Maximum number, grade or age levels, and, as applicable, other information about pupils to be served

The Birches Academy opened its doors in 2012 with 88 students. In fall 2013 The Birches added 3 classrooms bringing our enrollment to 168. We added an additional classroom in each of the next 2 subsequent years and a full day Kindergarten in 2015, bringing our total to 225 students, which was approved by the Board of Education in 2014. We seek to increase our total enrollment to 300, as approved by the Birches Board in 2022, and plan to initially spread the additional students between existing classrooms. This also allows us the ability to initially benefit from increased revenue opportunities. It later affords the opportunity to add an additional Kindergarten classroom when we acquire a permanent building and gives us the ability to continue to grow our student population.

We have an average of 25 students per grade / per class with a full time qualified Teaching Assistant in each class in Gr K-5 and a shared Teaching Assistant in Gr 6-8. Due to the structure of our middle school, we could absorb more students without substantially increasing class size.

6. Curriculum and instructional goals

The following gives an overview of curriculum objectives in core content areas. The curriculum is based on known standards, including Common Core Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards and the NH Social Studies Frameworks, and have course objectives that are rigorous and challenge all students. The Birches Academy will meet or exceed state standards.

The Birches Academy highly values principles such as those of *Next Generation Learning*. Students are engaged in cross curricular projects that provide real life, student centered learning experiences and the opportunity for authentic performance based assessment. At times, learning incorporates community members and professionals to create learning studio experiences. Multi-aged classrooms promote both self-directed learning and cooperative learning. Teachers serve as facilitators who scaffold learning experiences and provide support while the students engage and take ownership of their learning. Ultimately, The Birches Academy students are building a strong foundation for life, work and citizenship in the 21st Century.

Arts are integrated and this inclusive approach naturally embeds the processes of critical thinking, creative solutions and goal attainment. Research has shown that when school

curricula are integrated through the arts, students gain not only academically, but also improve their self-concepts and self-confidence. Creativity and the artistic process is modeled and emphasized. Arts include:

- Visual Arts: drawing, painting, sculpture modeling, and exposure to varied and quality supplies.
- Performance Art: drama is woven into curricular areas. Students have opportunities to learn, practice, and perform theatrical presentations including original works.
- Music: learning rhythm, keeping time, reading music, and exposure to and instruction in musical instruments and chorus, and opportunities for performance.

Our curriculum is designed to develop knowledge and skills in reading, spelling, writing,, history, geography, social studies, and STEAM. Foreign language and technology are interwoven with the curriculum at all levels. The middle school also has electives including: technology as a hobby, health content, theater, etc. that help enhance the core academic program. The arts are emphasized through a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary arts program beyond core academic instructional time, as well as through integrated curriculum projects. Experiential learning will be emphasized as will the importance of student agency in their education. Additionally, there is a focus on real world learning and problem resolution. The instruction takes a cross-curricular approach wherever possible.

The Birches Academy reaches out to our surrounding area and creates community learning partnerships in all subject areas wherever possible, including membership in the Chamber of Commerce and singing at the Lion's club and a nursing home.

Please see Appendix E and Appendix F for our curriculum framework and outcomes.

A. Language Arts: Reading, Writing, Literature and Oral Language

The Language Arts curriculum includes a combination of direct instruction, individual work, and cooperative group work and is demonstrated across all subject areas.

Reading

- Grades K-5: Students are exposed to a balanced reading curriculum that includes exposure to whole literature as well as direct instruction in phonics. Students will read for fluency and understanding and learn through balanced instruction. Based on need and appropriateness, students will experience a variety of grouping to best meet their skill level. Students will be taught through vocabulary rich instruction. Students are engaged in small guided reading groups and literature circle groups.
- Grades 6-8: All students will continue to work on fluency and comprehension as well as study skills and building vocabulary. Students read for fluency and understanding through balanced instruction. They gather and process information through reading a wide variety of sources and materials. Students engage deeply and collaboratively to discuss and critique a variety of literature via literature circle groups and multi- disciplinary projects.

Writing

- Grades K-5: Students learn the mechanics of forming letters in Grades K-2 and learn cursive in Grade 3. *The Six Traits of Writing* is across the grade levels.
- Grades 6-8: Students will continue to work on writing skills, including proofreading, note taking, using graphic organizers, publishing and journaling, among other skills. Writing is incorporated across the curriculum to include vocabulary, grammar and the mechanics of language.

The Birches has developed a list of Writing Cans, some non-negotiable standards across the grade levels. These are not meant to be an exhaustive set of standards but some important grade level milestones. See Appendix F.

Oral Language

- Students in all grades develop skills to present across all curriculum areas. Students work in groups and individually to share and discuss topics. Students have the opportunity to express themselves artistically through drama and performance. Presentation opportunities are a common part of classroom experience. In addition, there are opportunities and expectations that students share and present within their classroom and at the all school meeting.

B. Mathematics

The Birches utilizes enVision Math 2.0 for K-6 from Pearson Education that aligns with CCSS as well as NCTM Standards and recommendations. This program was chosen because of its research base and alignment with the Common Core. Neighboring towns who piloted this program and others were consulted and the data proved this program to be more successful. In Grades 7/8, the Birches utilizes Big Ideas Math from Harcourt Publishers which also aligns with the Common Core. Skills and concepts include: numeration, operations & computation, patterns, use of data, measurement, functions, algebra, and geometry. Ongoing assessments allow students to proceed as they demonstrate competency.

- Grades K-6: The students are exposed to innovative resources that provide variety. The program includes manipulative and real world problem solving to make mathematics meaningful to the students. Art is integrated into math when it can enable more meaningful connections.
- Grades 7-8: The students build on the concrete skills and foundation established. Students will engage as mathematical thinkers able to apply math concepts and utilize problem solving strategies across the curriculum.

C. Science

The Birches science curriculum is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). In Grades K-3, teachers utilize creative resources and hands on activities and experiments to teach these standards. In Grades 4-8, teachers utilize Pearson Education Interactive Science for the resources to create a truly interactive program. The Science

curriculum emphasizes experimental learning and the scientific process. Students are expected to think as scientists as they work. The scientific method and process skills are the basis of hands on experiences in lab and field activities. Topics are examined authentically, using real life practical applications, to encourage connection and understanding of our world, with increasing sophistication each year, or each grade level. Topics alternate in multi grade classrooms.

D. Social Studies

The New Hampshire State Social Studies Frameworks guides our social studies content. In Grades K-3 Teachers utilize creative resources and arts integrated, hands on activities to teach these standards. Grades 4-8, as a partner to the NH State Social Studies Frameworks, also utilize the Harcourt United States History. Grades 6-8 uses History Alive: Ancient Civilizations and Geography and Economics in alternate years. When possible, real world experiences, guest speakers and primary sources are used. There is an emphasis on depth of learning and cross curricular projects. Topic presentation are cyclical in multi grade classrooms.

E. Art

Art takes many forms including, but not limited to visual art, performance art, and music. Students attend art and music classes multiple times per week. In addition, art is integrated into all subject areas. The exposure to the arts encourages the growth of imagination, expression and individuality. The artistic process involves critical thinking, evaluation, discussion, assessment, creativity, and continued improvement to meet a goal. The Birches has adopted the Kennedy Center for Arts definition for arts integration.

Arts integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.

F. Technology

Technology is incorporated throughout the curriculum. We provide opportunities to develop skills and awareness in a wide range of traditional and contemporary technologies. We promote an appreciation for the interdependency of technology and other disciplines. We increase the understanding of the relationships between technology, individuals, and society. We work to align with the goals outlined in the NH Technology/Engineering Education Curriculum Guide. In grades 4- 8 portfolios are created, stored, accessed, updated, and reviewed electronically.

G. Character development, good citizenship, community and critical skill building

The Birches Academy is committed to developing individuals who are prepared to succeed 21st Century citizens. Authentic opportunities for character education are targeted, utilized and recognized. The school sets clear expectations of respect and productivity along with logical consequences. Classroom meetings are used to build classroom communities and as a way to teach oral and listening skills, support, cooperation, and reflection. Partnerships such as cross class buddies aid in character development and community building.

Regularly scheduled whole school meetings provide opportunities for critical skill building in the areas of character development, collaboration and leadership. Students have opportunities for team building, student government, service projects,

community outreach, and partnerships. The Birches Academy instills the importance of teamwork, negotiation, critical thinking, and effective communication among other critical life skills. Consideration is given to training teachers in the area of critical skills in order to naturally and fluently incorporate these necessary skills into everyday learning experiences.

H. Health and Fitness

All Birches students have a physical activity period each day. In addition, all Birches students have a physical education period once a week. Health topics are integrated into the classroom curriculum in Grades K-5 and during an Advisory Period in Grades 6-8. Outside speakers and resources supplement the health curriculum.

I. Foreign Language

The Birches offers an exploratory Spanish foreign language program in Grades K-8. The youngest students are exposed to Spanish once a week. This exposure increases to twice a week in the intermediate grades while middle school students explore the language three times a week. The goal of the program is not fluency, but exposure to and exploration of a foreign language.

7. Achievement tests 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

Achievement will be determined in several ways and are not limited to the following:

- Basic skills of literacy and numeracy are assessed using a combination of informal reading assessments, Smarter Balanced, New Hampshire state required standardized tests and a nationally norm-referenced achievement test the NWEA's MAP (Northwest Evaluation Association's Measurement of Academic Progress).
- Report cards document students' progress in subject and critical skills areas, and can be reviewed for year to year comparisons.
- Students maintain portfolios of work. Portfolios include work selected by students and teachers, and will document progress over time. The portfolio will provide an opportunity for the student to reflect on his or her learning and progress.
- A Personal Learning Goal is created and updated. The Personal Learning Goal will acknowledge strengths and weaknesses, and will document a target for the school, family, and student to work together to achieve.
- Parent/Teacher/Student conferences provide an opportunity to review the student's progress and personal learning goal.

Assessment Calendar

September - October

Portfolio/Personal Learning Goal initiated

Throughout year	Ongoing teacher assessments and collecting, selecting, and reviewing work for portfolio
November	Parent/Teacher/Student Conference Portfolio/Personal Learning Goal updated Student Report Card
March	Portfolio/Personal Learning Goal updated Student Report Card
April -May	Statewide Assessment
May	Portfolio/Personal Learning Goal updated Statewide Assessment Gr 4 & 8
June	Student Report Card

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

Not applicable at this time.

9. Staffing overview, including qualifications sought for professionals and paraprofessionals

The Board of Trustees will comply with RSA 194-B: 14. Section IV which requires the teaching staff of a charter school to consist of a minimum of fifty percent of teachers with New Hampshire certification, or having at least three years teaching experience.

We have a Dean of School, one full-time teacher, and one full-time teacher aide for each classroom Gr K-5 which is a student-teacher ratio 13:1. For Gr 6-8 we have one full time teacher for each classroom and two teaching assistants for the three grades, and a student- teacher ratio of 18:1.

The Board of Trustees, along with the Dean of School, have identified requirements such as Administrative Support, Business Manager, Special Education Liaison, Director of Student Services, and Curriculum Coordinator as needed. Multiple duties may be fulfilled by one position or person.

- The Dean of School should have the following qualifications and traits
 - o Bachelor's Degree or higher (Master's Degree preferred)
 - o Strong visionary and innovative leader
 - o Leadership experience working in a K-8 school
 - o Experience and/or interest in integrating the arts with academics
 - o Excellent communication skills
 - o Experience motivating and organizing a new team, able to work with a group
 - o Proactive and collaborative approach with parents and families
 - o Strong decision making and problem solving skills
 - o Respect for the power of the arts in all areas of education
 - o Experience and interest with student based assessment and student portfolios
 - o Ability to organize volunteers to maximum effect
 - o Dedication to literacy
 - o Innovation in planning and scheduling
 - o Ability and willingness to research grant programs and write funding applications.

Please see Appendix G for the Dean of School's more comprehensive job description.

- Teachers should have the following qualifications and traits:
 - o Bachelor's Degree or higher (Master's Degree preferred)
 - o Be highly qualified or certified in the state of NH
 - o Willing to work as part of team with other school members, the students and the parent community
 - o Self-motivated and willing to wear multiple hats
 - o Experience and/or interest with portfolio assessments
 - o Adaptable and flexible with working with students' individual qualities and strengths
 - o Apply critical thinking concepts into a project based learning environment
- Teacher Aides should have the following qualifications and traits:
 - o Bachelor's degree preferred
 - o Supportive of children
 - o Ethical role mode
- Special Education Liaison should have the following qualifications and traits:
 - o Bachelor's Degree or higher (Master's Degree preferred)
 - o Certified in Special Education
 - o Willing to work as part of a team with school members, the students and other school districts
 - o Adaptable and flexible with working with students' individual qualities and strengths

In addition, we have a full time Dean of Operations and a Director of Student

Service.

For job descriptions for these positions please see Appendix G.

10. Personnel compensation plans, including provisions for leaves and other benefits, if any

The charter school complies with all federal, state and local laws and rules related to pre-employment screening, hiring, employment compensation and leave.

Our Dean of School, Business Manager, Director of Student Affairs and full time teachers are paid a salary and are offered health and other benefits. The teaching assistants and other personnel, whether full-time or part-time, are paid on an hourly rate as employees or as independent professionals based on negotiated rates.

The Birches Academy publishes an annual calendar of holiday and vacations during which the school will officially be closed. It is expected that salaried employees will receive a maximum of three (3) days of paid personal leave per year. Personal leave days must be used during the school year in which they are accrued.

Full time salaried employees receive ten (10) sick days per school year, to be used in the year in which they are accrued. Hourly employees receive two (2) sick days per year, to be used in the year in which they are accrued. For purposes of sick leave for hourly employees, one day will equal the number of hours in that employees' regularly scheduled work day.

11. 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

Charter school students have access to transportation only if they reside in the district where the charter school is located. The charter school complies with charter law provisions that govern student transportation under RSA 194-B:2, which states: Attendance at a chartered public school for the purposes of transportation shall not constitute assignment under the provisions of RSA 189:6 and RSA 189:8. Pupils who reside in the school district in which the chartered public school is located shall be provided transportation to that school by the district on the same terms and conditions as provided for in RSA 189:6 and RSA 189:8 and that transportation is provided to pupils attending other public schools within that district. However, any added costs for such transportation services shall be borne by the chartered public school.

The Birches Academy works closely with the Salem School District to coordinate bus transportation for its Salem students. Students from other school districts must coordinate their own transportation. The Birches Academy makes every effort to support families as they explore transportation options and facilitate ride sharing between families of students from outside the district through an online database or other means.

12. Statement of assurances related to nondiscrimination according to relevant state and federal laws

The Birches Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability or marital status in the selection of students or staff or in the administration of its educational programs or in any other way as is prohibited by law.

13. 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 Birches Academy will discuss the school with any parent and will accept applications from any parent or student. RSA 194-B:11, III, the local school district continues to be responsible for special education funding and decision-making for any child whose parents seek the child's attendance at a charter school. Placement at the school will require an LEA endorsement, from the IEP (individualized education plan) team. RSA 194-B:11, III, states that all options available to the parent and the local school district are retained.

A. Coordinating with a pupil's school district

The Birches Academy will respect the LEA's responsibility under statute for handling special education decision-making, and has a charter school liaison that collaborates with the local education agency on individual student matters.

B. Current school district special education responsibility

ED 1104.01, effective 2008, sets forth the following sequence of the special education process:

1. Referral;
2. Evaluation;
3. Determination of eligibility;
4. Development of an IEP;
5. Placement;
6. Ongoing monitoring of the IEP; and
7. Annual review of the IEP.

C. Charter school responsibility and method of coordinating

The Dean of School works with sending districts and The Birches Special Education teacher hired by those districts to oversee the proper handling of special education matters.

The Birches' responsibilities include:

1. Notifying districts about requests for admission for any student with an IEP.

2. Providing information about the school to the sending district, and attending meetings for the purpose of district review of choice requests.
3. Obtaining copies of parent rights provided to parents by districts and to assist parents who want choice to understand their own districts procedures.
4. Obtaining copies of any IEP that is in place, and ensure that each teacher and service provider listed as having responsibility for implementing the IEP has a complete copy of this document and explanation as to what is required of the charter school.
5. Keeping name, address, phone, and email for the person(s) in each district who are responsible for special education students attending the charter school, and make contact, when needed.
6. Alerting the sending district of issues that rise to a level of concern of needing district attention.
7. Meeting with special education administrators or their designees to understand how districts would like certain procedures to take place, e.g., should the charter school schedule and call a required meeting or should the LEA.
8. Notifying the sending school district of concerns about a current IEP and requesting a review of the IEP when necessary.
9. Being available to the sending district to review the student's progress under the current IEP and to make recommendations.
10. Working with the sending district and articulating services or accommodations for the students' needs from the charter school's perspective, and to continue the dialogue about concerns until they are reviewed.

14. Admission procedures

The Birches Academy actively recruits a representative population of students from the region who understand and value the school's mission and are committed to the school's instructional and operational philosophy. Enrollment is open to any resident of the State of New Hampshire. Methods of enrollment are not designed, intended or used to discriminate or violate individual rights in any manner prohibited by law. The Board of Trustees has established application procedures and policies pertaining to enrollment and the school lottery.

A. Procedures

- Informational meetings and school tours for prospective applicants are regularly offered.
- Application packets to parents or guardians are made available on-line to those interested. Included is information on the school's mission and instructional philosophy and any relevant forms. Parents are asked to sign an agreement indicating their understanding of the school's mission and expectations. This includes Home School Compact (see Philosophy of parent involvement, page 20).
- Prospective students (grades 3 and up) are invited to spend a day within the school community to obtain an experience of the school.
- Application forms will be submitted online via Form Site.
- The Dean of School / Administrative Assistant will notify prospective students with a status of the application and information about openings and the lottery if applicable.
- Enrollment in kindergarten will be determined by a lottery held on a pre-determined day and time. Remaining students will be placed on a waiting list by grade in order determined by the lottery. The Dean of School / Administrative Assistant will inform all applicants of the admission results.
- Admitted students and their parents or guardians may have an individual entrance meeting to confirm interest and compatibility with the mission, goals and objectives of the school.

B. Enrollment Provisions

- There is an automatic re-enrollment for students. A letter of intent to return is required each year.
- Siblings of children already enrolled at the school receive preference.
- Siblings of alumni who have graduated from 8th grade at The Birches are given preference.
- The Board of Trustees has given preference in enrollment to children of school faculty as part of the employee benefits package.

- If a student withdraws from the school during the school year, the first person on the waiting list for the applicable grade will be contacted for immediate enrollment. If that student is no longer interested in enrolling, the school will continue to contact students in waiting list order until a student is found to fill the opening.
- If a family declines the position before March 1st, they are removed from the wait list but may re-enroll at any time. However, if a family declines a position after March 1st, they may remain on the wait list but families below them may be called until the position is filled.
- Children of the Founding Members of The Birches Academy are given priority for placement as a means of recognition of their sweat equity in establishing the school. Founding members are outlined in Appendix A and are further defined as those who have volunteered 150 hours or more toward the upstart of the school between May 2011 and May 2012.

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

The Birches Academy is committed to providing a respectful and safe environment for students and all members of the school community. The school establishes clear and fair expectations for behavior through written guidelines. These guidelines were established by the Board of Trustees and published with an ending contract page in our Student/Parent Handbook signed by the parent and child. These guidelines are distributed to students and parents yearly. As teachers and parents working together, the expectation that each child refrains from behaviors that can waste valuable instruction time and cause distraction or concern to other students is paramount.

Our joint efforts will promote academic and social success within the team-oriented, community atmosphere at school and beyond. Disrespectful or continual disruptive behaviors will not be accepted. Interventions can include: verbal warning; student conferences; teaching successful behavior strategies; loss of privileges; restitution; “Think” forms; makeup time; in school or home suspension; and under extreme circumstances, expulsion.

The Birches Academy will provide fair and age appropriate due process in administering student discipline and will comply with current suspension and expulsion provisions in RSA 193:13 (Suspension and Expulsion of Pupils) and RSA 194-B: 9, III.

16. Method of administering fiscal accounts and reporting, including a provision requiring fiscal audits and reports to be performed by an independent certified public accountant

The Birches Academy follows New Hampshire public school accounting guidelines and has put in place internal accounting controls necessary to safeguard its assets. The Board of Trustees appoints a Treasurer to provide oversight necessary for monitoring financial status of the school. The Board of Trustees also adopts policies for the financial management of the school, including policies on conflict of interest for Board members and faculty.

A general account is set up for the administration of funds, and the Board Chair, Treasurer and Dean of School will be the only people with check writing authority. The Board has established a maximum cap for check writing that requires a Board vote to approve. The Board of Trustees has a check writing maximum cap for discretionary expenditures. Except for emergency purchases cleared with the Finance Committee, all expenditures follow the Board-approved financial control policy, referenced on our website.

Each individual with check writing authority is covered by a fidelity bond in accordance with guidelines of New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration. Accounting activities consist primarily of the bi-weekly payroll paid to school personnel and the maintenance of an accounts payable system to track amounts due to vendors of the school. The Birches Academy complies with all requirements specified in the law pertaining to reporting requirements (RSA 194-B:5 & RSA 194-B:10). This list includes: annual report, annual financial audit and report, program audit, and participation during the annual school budget process.

The Birches Academy produces an annual report, which complies with the format established by the Department of Education. The Finance Committee oversees selection of an independent auditor and the completion of an annual audit of the school's financial affairs. The audit addresses accounting practices and reviews the school's internal controls. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school. The audit is conducted yearly and the Board of Trustees reviews any suggestions.

17. Annual budget, including all sources of funding

The included budget in Appendix B is a one year budget based on new enrollment numbers.

It is necessary to secure funding from beyond the resources of our per pupil allotment. The Birches Academy has a nonprofit foundation whose sole purpose is to fundraise and focus on long-term sustainability. We establish aggressive fundraising initiatives annually that extend beyond the school. This includes researching grant opportunities, school fundraising events and engaging business and community leaders.

Other revenue sources are also utilized, such as community events that support our arts integrated mission; creative usage of space during non-school hours such as summer/after school programs; and philanthropic gifts.

There are contributions from the school community in forms other than monetary such as volunteer time in the classroom or within the school and expertise assistance, such as computer support or construction.

The Board of Trustees, under their umbrella of responsibilities, understands the priority and significance of additional revenue in order to maintain school sustainability.

18. School calendar arrangement and the number and duration of days pupils are to be served pursuant to RSA 194-b:8, III

The Birches Academy follows a 180-day school year in accordance with the RSA 194-B: 8, III, and generally follows the calendar of our host district, Salem, in order to best coordinate transportation services. Any school-specific changes to the schedule are monitored carefully to ensure that our students meet the required number of attendance hours.

19. Provision for providing continuing evidence of adequate insurance coverage

Pursuant to RSA 194-B:1, The Birches Academy is a public school afforded the same protections as all other public schools under RSA 507(b), which provides for limited general liability for the charter school and its agents. The Board of Trustees procures, and provides evidence of, adequate insurance coverage as required by the State of New Hampshire, including but not limited to general liability for the school.

20. Philosophy of parent involvement and related plans and procedures

A community is created where we have “Parents as Learning Partners” which involves parents and/or guardians, students and teachers. The goal is 100% parental involvement in meaningful ways that support the school development, student learning and community education. Our diverse experiences and strengths bring energy to our strong school community. The Birches Academy is a community that leads by example. Each year we strive to achieve the following:

- Communicate the school’s philosophy and establish clear expectations of parent/guardian involvement; request 20 hours per family of school volunteering by adult family members per year
- Request information on any specialty skill that a family member might have that would benefit the school community
- Provide a variety of options for parents/guardians for meeting this involvement expectation
- Board of Trustees Parent Participation
- Develop school learning and educational opportunities for those in our school community and in our surrounding school district
- Support a position of Donor Relations and Events Coordinator to help achieve our goals.

21. Disseminate information to assist parents and pupils with decision-making about their choice of school

An Outreach Committee exists as well as the Dean of School and Events Coordinator and Donor Relation to recruit and inform potential students, and the community at large, of the opportunities that The Birches Academy provides. This includes newspaper articles and advertisements, brochures, informational meetings, informative website updates, and business community outreach.

22. A global hold harmless clause

The Birches Academy, its successors and assigns, covenants and agrees at all times to indemnify and hold harmless any school district which sends its students to the charter school, and their school board, 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 charter school, its board, officers, employees, agents, representatives, contractors, guests and invitees, or pupils. The school shall have no obligation to hold harmless the Indemnified Parties for any claims, damages, losses, or expenses resulting from the Indemnified Parties’ own acts or omissions.

23. Severability provisions and statement of assurance

If any provision of The Birches Academy Charter 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.

24. Provision of dissolution

In the event The Birches Academy should cease operations for whatever reason, including the non-renewal or the revocation of its Charter, the Board of Trustees shall consult with its attorney and 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 then other remaining property will be offered to other charter schools, public schools or other charitable organizations.

25. In the case of the conversion of a public school to a charter conversion 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.

26. A plan for the education of the school's pupils after the charter school may cease operation

In the event that The Birches Academy shall have cause to cease operation, the Dean of School will work with the Board to develop a student transfer process and advise all parents/guardians, staff and faculty of the process to be followed. To complete each student's personal file, parents/guardians shall be asked to provide a statement of intent regarding their children's education, moving forward. The Birches Academy will obtain parent/guardian permission for release of information in order to notify the new schools of the impending transfers. The Birches Academy staff, faculty, and Board will make every effort to be available for consultation, sharing students' portfolios, individualized learning plans and other relevant materials with the receiving school. Each family will also receive notice by mail, in a timely fashion, advising them of the dissolution of the School and the plan for student transition. The Birches Academy will ensure that the receiving schools have appropriate information to facilitate the students' transitions.

27. In addition to an application, each charter school applicant, in consultation with the local school board, shall prepare a proposed contract

Not applicable.

28. An outline of the proposed accountability plan which clarifies expectations for evaluating the school's program and which contains an acknowledgement that a full accountability plan shall be developed and ready to implement prior to the date of opening

The Birches Academy will provide the New Hampshire State Department of Education with reports on our programs and progress annually. Utilizing a variety of assessment tools and data collected from our students, faculty/staff and parents/guardians, we will share information about our educational impact, parental involvement, outreach methodology and an overall analysis of our goals. In addition, our annual reports will inform the Department about our student enrollment, financial operations and governance.

This reporting will address the following questions:

- 1: Is the school making progress toward achieving our Mission?
- 2: Is the school responsibly using public funds?
- 3: Is the school promoting student attainment of expected knowledge and skills?
- 4: Is the school sustainable?

Appendix A: Founding members

Jennifer Chisholm
Bonnie Doyle
Bonnie LaBossiere
Christine Miele
Paula Patten
Holly Ruocco
Christie Storniolo
Ruth Templeton
Jessica Wachsman
Jennifer Wilson
Dianne Wright

Appendix B: Budget

New Hampshire State Department of Education
Office of School Finance
101 Pleasant Street, Concord NH, 03301-3860

2022-2023 Charter School Budget

Charter School Name	ademy of Academics and Art: A Public	District #	Budgeted Expenditures			
	Acct No	Total	Elementary	Middle	High	
Instruction	1000-1999	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Regular Programs	1100-1199	1,066,769.07	1,066,769.07	0.00	0.00	
Special Programs	1200-1299	49,000.00	49,000.00	0.00	0.00	
Vocational Programs	1300-1399	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Other Programs	1400-1499	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Non-Public Programs	1500-1599	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Adult & Community Programs	1600-1699	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Community/Jr Coll Ed. Programs	1700-1799	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Community Service Programs	1800-1899	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Support Services	2000-2999	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Student Support Services	2000-2199	500.00	500.00		0.00	
Instructional Staff Services	2200-2299	0.00	0.00		0.00	
General Administration		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Collective Bargaining	0000-0000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
School Board Contingency	2310 / 840	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Other School Board	2310-2319	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Execuive Administration		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Management Services	2320 / 310	0.00	0.00		0.00	
All Other Administration	2320-2399	520,519.00	520,519.00		0.00	
School Admin Services	2400-2499	0.00			0.00	
Business	2500-2599	0.00			0.00	
Operation & Maint. Of Plant	2600-2699	378,000.00	378,000.00		0.00	
Student Transport	2700-2799	0.00			0.00	
Support Services Central/ Other	2800-2999	0.00			0.00	
Non-Instructional Services		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	
Food Service Operations	3100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Enterprise Operations	3200	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

New Hampshire State Department of Education
Office of School Finance
101 Pleasant Street, Concord NH 03301-3860

2022-2023 Charter School Budget

Charter School Name		Academy of Academics and Art: A Public		District #	
Budgeted Expenditures					
	Acct No	Total	Elementary	Middle	High
Facilities, Acquisitions, Construction		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Site Acquisition	4100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Site Improvement	4200	0.00			0.00
Architectural/Engineering	4300	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Educational Specification Develop	4400	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Building Acquisition/Constr.	4500	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Building Improvement Services	4600	0.00			0.00
Other Facilities Acq. And Serv.	4900	0.00			0.00
Other Outlays	5000-5999	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Debt Service - Principal	5110	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Debt Service - Interest	5120	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
To Food Service	5220-5221	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
To Other Special Revenue	5222-5229	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
To Capital Projects	5230-5239	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
To Capital Reserve	5251	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
To Expendable Trust	5252	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
To Non-expendable Trust	5253	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
To Fiduciary Funds	5254	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
To Charter Schools	5310	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
To Other Agencies	5390	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Supplemental Appropriation	----	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Deficit Appropriation	----	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Total Budgeted Expenses		2,014,788.07	2,014,788.07	0.00	0.00
Budgeted Revenue					
	Acct No	Total			
Revenue	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Local Revenue	1111-1990	96,621.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Tuition from NH LEA (Regular Program)	1321		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX

New Hampshire State Department of Education
Office of School Finance
101 Pleasant Street, Concord NH 03301-3860

2022-2023 Charter School Budget

Charter School Name	Acct No	Total	Elementary	Middle	High
Budgeted Expenditures					
Tuition From NH LEA (Special Program)	1322				
Tuition From NH LEA (Vocational Program)	1323				
Other Tuition (Individuals/Outside LEAs/Other)	1310/1330/1340	8,000.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Transportation Fees	1400	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Other Local Revenue (e.g. contributions)	1500-1990	88,621.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
State Revenue	3111-3900	1,832,791.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Adequacy State Revenue	3111	1,792,791.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Lease Aid State Revenue	3190	40,000.00			
Other State Revenue	3112-3900		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Federal Revenue	4100 - 4595	84,000.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Title 1	4520	10,000.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
All Other Title Grants Excluding Title 1	4530	14,000.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Federal CSP Start-up Grant	4590	0.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
ESSER	4595	60,000.00	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Other Federal Revenue					
Other Revenue	5110 - 5600		XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX
Total Budgeted Revenue		2,013,412.00			
Surplus Statement					
Starting Balance				10,000.00	
Estimated Revenue			2,013,412.00		
Estimated Expenditures			-2,014,788.07		
Operational Balance Surplus/ (Deficit)					-1,376.07
Ending Balance				8,623.93	

Appendix C: Government and Organizational Structure

Committees

Curriculum Assessment and Accountability Committee

The Curriculum Assessment and Accountability Committee will review curriculum in all core subject areas including music, arts and other enrichment programs. This research is presented to the Board of Trustees. The group also examines assessment testing and results.

The committee works with the Dean of School to assess how well the school is accomplishing its mission and fulfilling the charter. The Dean of School and the committee will create and manage the state accountability plan and review and oversee its implementation. The committee reviews student work, and reviews the longitudinal growth of the student body over time. This work will not include evaluation of either individual students or teachers.

Membership: Board members, faculty, and parents

Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee is charged with promoting, encouraging and supporting awareness of the school and its programs with the community of Southern New Hampshire.

Membership: Board members, parents

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee works closely with all other groups addressing issues related to the school's finances. The committee establishes the budget and ensures the school has a balanced budget.

The committee provides oversight of all financial aspects of the school. These include, but are not limited to: Overseeing the development of the budget in conjunction with the Dean of School and Dean of Operations; ensuring accurate tracking/monitoring/accountability for funds; ensuring adequate financial controls; oversight of the financial audit; signing payroll, manifests and other financial documents as necessary.

Membership: Board members only

Personnel Committee

The Personnel Committee oversees personnel management of the school. *A sub-committee of the Board of Trustees conducts annual reviews of the Dean of School.*

Membership: Board members only.

Appendix D: Bylaws are under review by counsel and new version will reflect the change of Head of School being referred to as Dean of School

BYLAWS OF

THE BIRCHES ACADEMY OF ACADEMICS AND ART: A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
Salem, New Hampshire

ARTICLE I

NAME AND SEAL

The corporation shall be known as THE BIRCHES ACADEMY OF ACADEMICS AND ART: A PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL (hereinafter referred to as the "School") and shall have a corporate seal bearing the name of the corporation and the year of incorporation. The Board of Trustees may change the form of the seal and the inscription thereon at any time.

ARTICLE II

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Corporation is to be a public charter school pursuant to NH RSA 194-B. The school's purpose is to provide a learning community that supports excellence in core academics and the arts while cultivating the individual qualities and strengths of each child. The School serves New Hampshire students in grades K-8.

ARTICLE III

MEMBERSHIP

There shall be no voting members of the corporation.

ARTICLE IV

GOVERNANCE

Section 1 -Board of Trustees

Pursuant to State law, governance of the school shall be vested in a Board of Trustees, constituted as provided herein, which Board shall exercise without limitation all the powers and responsibilities of the Corporation provided for herein and by law. Because all power and legal authority of the Board of Trustees lies in its actions as a group, individual Trustees (also referred to herein as "Board members") may exercise authority over school affairs only by voting or when the Board has voted to delegate limited authority at an official meeting. In no other circumstances does an individual member have authority to act. Members of the Board shall not receive compensation for their services as Board members, but may receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses as approved by the Board.

Section 2 - Board Responsibility

The Board is responsible for general supervisory control and authority over the operations and policies of the chartered public school and may take all actions related thereto. Pursuant to N.H. RSA 194-B:5, III, the Board's authority shall include, at a minimum, the authority to do the following:

To adopt a name and corporate seal,

To sue and be sued, but only to the same extent and upon the same conditions that a town can be sued,

To acquire real property from public or private sources by lease, by lease with an option to purchase, or by gift for use as a school facility, provided that such acquisition is consistent with established school purposes,

To receive and disburse funds for school purposes,

To make contracts and leases for the procurement of services, equipment, and supplies, provided that: (a) If the board of trustees intends to procure substantially all educational services under contract with another person or entity, the terms of such a contract shall be provided in an addendum in the school's contract, (b) The state board and the district school board shall not approve any such contract terms, the purpose or effect of which is to avoid the prohibition in this chapter against chartered public school status for nonpublic schools,

To incur temporary debt in anticipation of receipt of funds,

To solicit, accept, manage, and use any grants or gifts, provided that such activities are consistent with established school purposes,

To have such other powers and take such other actions that are available to a business corporation formed under RSA 293-A and that are not inconsistent with NH RSA Chapter 194-B.

Section 3 – Composition

The Board shall have a maximum of thirteen Trustees; voting and non-voting, but shall have no fewer than 6 voting Trustees. The Board shall include at least one parent of a pupil attending the School as well as at least one community member. The Dean of School shall be a non-voting member of the Board. One member of the Board shall be a teacher at the School who shall be a non-voting member of the Board. No greater than 25 percent of the membership of the Board, or one Trustee, whichever is greater, may simultaneously serve as members of any other school board. No School employee shall be an officer of the Board. Every appointment to the Board is conditioned upon a satisfactory criminal background check and according to the Board Nomination Policy.

Section 4 - Terms

Each voting Board member shall have a one-year term, renewable three times. The terms of all voting members shall expire at the end of the one-year anniversary of the appointment except as provided otherwise herein. Except as otherwise provided herein; each voting Board member shall be eligible for re-election for a maximum of three consecutive one-year terms. Additional terms are at the discretion of the Board with a two-thirds vote required.

The Dean of School shall be a non-voting member of the Board so long as he or she is employed in that position and actively performing the duties thereof. The teacher member shall serve for a one-year term, so long as he or she remains employed at the School, with no more than two

consecutive terms unless approved by the Board.

Section 5 - Meetings and Actions

The Board shall meet at least monthly during the regular school calendar year. For each official meeting, each Board member will be given at least seven calendar days' notice of the time and place of the meeting. Official meetings shall comply with the requirements of NH RSA 91-A. Refer to section 12 for special or emergency meetings.

No Board action shall be taken except at an official meeting and with an affirmative vote of the majority of Board members present, eligible to vote, and voting on the matter in question. Board members shall not be eligible to participate in a vote when they have been recused due to a conflict of interest.

Section 6 - Quorum

Except as specifically required in other provisions of these bylaws or in statute, a simple majority of Trustees qualified to vote shall constitute a quorum to convene a meeting and conduct business.

Section 7 - Conflict of Interest

The Board of Trustees is committed to maintaining the integrity of the institution and securing the public's trust. As a result, the Board shall adopt and adhere to a conflict of interest policy, which shall include, at a minimum, the following:

Any material conflict of interest on the part of any member of the Board, officer, committee member, or employee, shall be disclosed in writing to the Board and made a matter of record through an annual procedure, and also when the interest involves a specific issue before the Board. Where a transaction between the School and a Board member, officer, committee member, or employee exceeds five-hundred dollars but is not greater than five-thousand dollars in a fiscal year, a two-thirds vote of the disinterested Board members present, eligible to vote, and voting is required. Where the transaction involved exceeds five-thousand dollars in a fiscal year, a two-thirds vote of the disinterested Board members and publication in the local newspaper is required. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect that a disclosure was made, the abstention from voting, and the actual vote itself. A Board member shall recuse himself or herself and be excused from any portion of a meeting where the discussion of or vote regarding any topic involving a family member is taking place, including but not limited to contracts, employment, and admission. No voting member of the Board may have any direct pecuniary interest in a contract with the school or in the purchase or sale of any school real or personal property or equipment. No member of the Board shall solicit any favor, gift, or other items of monetary value for personal benefit, improperly use school property, use his or her position as a member of the Board for personal gain, or make unauthorized promises or commitments on behalf of the Board. Every new member of the Board shall be informed of the conflict of interest policy upon entering the duties of his or her office, and shall sign a statement acknowledging understanding of and agreement to this policy. The Board will comply with all applicable State and Federal conflict of interest requirements, including NH RSA 7:19, II and RSA 7:19-A, which are incorporated herein by reference.

Section 8 - Board Elections

The Board shall renew or elect Trustees, per *Section 4 – Terms* as referenced above, to replace those whose term(s) will be expiring. The renewal(s) and/or election(s) shall take place during an official meeting of the Board. New Trustees shall be elected by a majority of Trustees present at such a meeting. Trustees so elected shall serve a term of one year upon Board approval.

Section 9 - Officers and Duties

The officers of the Board will consist of a chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer who shall be elected annually during the first official meeting of the fiscal year from among those Board members currently serving. No member may serve as chairperson for more than two years consecutively unless an extension is voted by two-thirds of the Board.

The officers' duties are as follows:

Chair: The Chair shall convene regularly scheduled Board meetings, and shall preside at each official meeting. Meetings shall provide for fair and open deliberation that is also efficient, timely, and orderly. The Chair is required to keep the Board informed of all activities of the corporation. The Chair is specifically authorized to sign, in the name of the Corporation, all contracts and documents authorized by the Board. The Chair shall determine the meeting agenda with the advice and input of the Dean of School and other Board Members. The Chair shall appoint an acting secretary at any meeting where the Secretary is absent. The Chair, after consultation with the Board, shall appoint Board members to represent the Board with government agencies and any other organizations. The Chair shall have the authority to cancel and/or reschedule meetings after consultation with the Board members and the Dean of School. The Chair is further authorized to call special or emergency meetings in accordance with the related provisions contained herein. The Chair of the Board shall have such other powers and duties as the Board may from time to time determine.

Vice-chair: In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-chair shall assume the duties of the Chair and shall also have such powers and duties as the Board may determine.

Secretary: The Secretary shall be responsible for keeping the records of Board actions, including overseeing the taking of minutes at all Board meetings, including non-public sessions, sending out and posting meeting notices and announcements, distributing copies of the minutes and agenda to each Board member, and assuring that Corporate records are properly maintained. Procedures for recording minutes shall include the following, at a minimum:

Record all actions or votes at Board meetings by last name, except unanimous votes, which may be recorded as such;

Record in the minutes of all public meetings and other proceedings the full names of the Members and other persons appearing before the Board (the names of people in the audience who do not speak do not need to be recorded.);

Record a brief description of the subject matter discussed;

Record final decisions of any Board action;

Provide draft minutes of public meetings, so labeled, for public inspection within five days, as required by RSA 91-A:2, II. Minutes of nonpublic sessions must be publicly disclosed within seventy-two hours as required by RSA 91-A:3, III.

Present the draft minutes to the Board for review and approval;

Make corrections to the draft minutes after review by the Board;

Post the official minutes after they are reviewed and approved by the Board; and

Submit the original official minutes to the School's administrative office for filing in the School's permanent record.

The Secretary shall have such other powers and duties as the Board may require and shall perform all duties customarily incident to the office of a corporate secretary. In the absence of the Chair and Vice- chair, the Secretary shall assume the responsibilities of the Chair.

Treasurer: The Treasurer shall oversee the financial affairs of the School, monitor the creation and preservation of all financial records and accounts, initiate financial statements to be prepared, be the custodian of the funds and securities of the School, and shall oversee and assist in the preparation of the budget for presentation to the Board. The Treasurer shall make a report of the finances of the Corporation at each meeting and shall make financial information available to individual Board members upon request. The Treasurer shall have such other powers and duties as the Board may determine and shall perform such duties as are customary and incident to the office of Treasurer of a Corporation. In the absence of the Chair, Vice-chair, and Secretary, the Treasurer shall assume the responsibilities of the Chair.

If any of the offices shall become vacant for any reason, the remaining Board members shall elect a successor to hold such office for the remainder of the unexpired term, provided that all Board members have been notified at least seven calendar days prior to any meeting at which a Board officer vacancy will be filled.

Section 10 - Vacancies

When a vacancy on the Board is created during a Trustee's term, the Secretary must receive nominations per the Board Nomination Policy. These nominations will be sent out to all Board members at least two weeks in advance of the next official meeting and shall be voted on at the next official Board meeting. The vacancy will be filled only until the end of the vacant seat's term.

Section 11- Resignation, Termination, and Absences

Resignation from the Board must be in writing and received by the Secretary to be effective. A Board member may be terminated from the Board due to excessive absences, defined as being absent without excuse from the Chair from more than one-fourth of official meetings. A Board member may be terminated from the Board for other reasons upon a vote in favor of termination by three-fourths of all the remaining Trustees provided that notice of intention to remove such Trustee is set forth in the meeting notice seven calendar days prior to that meeting. Any such Trustee shall be entitled to appear before the full Board and be heard at such meeting.

Section 12 - Special or Emergency Meetings

Special meetings of the Board shall be called by the Chair or by the Secretary upon receipt of written requests from one-third of the Board members. Notices of special meetings shall be sent out by the Secretary to each Trustee at least one week in advance, unless exigent circumstances exist, in which case 48 hours' notice shall be sufficient.

Section 13 - Telephonic or Electronic Attendance

Pursuant to statute, a Trustee may only attend a meeting electronically or otherwise when attending in person is not "reasonably practical." In that circumstance, a member may participate and vote by telephone, provided that all participants, whether present in person or telephonically, are able to hear and speak to all other participants throughout the meeting by conference telephone or similar equipment and further provided that those participating remotely can be reasonably identified, have identified any other persons at the same location with them, and have stated for the record the reason they cannot appear in person. Attendance other than in person is discouraged.

ARTICLE V COMMITTEES

The Board may create committees of the Board members as needed, including but not limited to finance, curriculum, personnel, etc. The Treasurer shall be a member of the finance committee. The Board may create committees, including advisory committees. Committee members other than Board members may be appointed by the Board and shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. Appointment to the Finance Committee shall be subject to a satisfactory criminal background check and any other requirement the Board deems necessary.

ARTICLE VI Dean of School

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 7 herein, the Dean of School is hired by the Board adhering to the Dean of School Hiring Policy. The Dean of School is the Board's delegate for day-to-day responsibilities for the School operations, including carrying out the goals and policies of the School as established by the Board and the School's Charter, which delegation of authority can be rescinded by a vote of the Board. The Dean of School shall be a non-voting member of the Board and shall attend all official Board Meetings, report on the status and progress of the School, answer questions of the Board members, and carry out all duties of the job description. The Board may designate other duties to the Dean of School as it determines appropriate.

ARTICLE VII GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 1 - Authority to Sign

The Board may authorize any Trustee or Trustees to sign contracts and other documents on behalf of the School, in addition to the Chair as provided herein above. Such authorization shall be delegated at an official meeting and shall be in writing. The Treasurer and the Chair are authorized to sign all checks, drafts, and other orders for payment on behalf of the School. The Board may authorize additional members to sign checks, drafts, and other orders for payment as it deems necessary pertaining to the Financial Control Policy.

Section 2 - Authority to Accept Gifts, Contributions, Bequests, and Devises

Pursuant to statute, the Board may solicit and accept on behalf of the School any gift, contribution, bequest, or devise for any purpose consistent with the School's mission.

Section 3 - Organization Records

There shall be kept in the administrative office of the School correct books of the accounts and transactions of the School and Board, including an official record of meeting minutes, Articles of Agreement, and up-to-date Bylaws.

Section 4 - Fiscal Year

The Corporation's fiscal year shall end on June 30, and the ensuing fiscal year shall commence on the following day, or the fiscal year may commence and end on such other days as the Board shall determine.

ARTICLE VIII

THE BIRCHES ACADEMY OF ACADEMICS AND ART FOUNDATION

The Birches Academy of Academics and Art Foundation is a New Hampshire non-profit corporation whose purpose is the advancement of the School. The Foundation may conduct advancement activities that are consistent with the School's mission and that are approved by the School's Board in collaboration with the School's Board and Dean of School. At least one member of the School's Board of Trustees shall be appointed to sit on the Foundation Board and they shall report back to the School Board regarding the activities of the Foundation.

ARTICLE IX

LIABILITY AND DEFENSE AND INDEMNIFICATION OF TRUSTEES AND OFFICERS

No Trustee or Officer shall be personally liable for any debt, liability, or obligation of the School. Further limits on liability contained in the Articles of Agreement are incorporated herein by reference. Except to the extent prohibited by RSA 292:2, V-a or other applicable law, the School shall defend and indemnify any Trustee made, or threatened to be made, a party to, or called as a witness in, or asked to provide information in connection with any threatened or pending action, proceeding, hearing, or investigation or any appeal therein, where such Trustee or officer is or has been made or threatened to be a party or summoned to give evidence, by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a Trustee or officer acting within the scope of his or her duties, against all judgments, fines, amounts paid in settlement, and reasonable expenses including attorney's fees actually and necessarily occurred in the defense against or as a result of such action, proceeding, hearing, investigation, or appeal therein.

No defense and indemnification shall be provided under this Article in any action or proceeding brought by or on behalf of the School to procure a judgment or a remedy, whether civil or criminal. Further, no defense and indemnification shall be provided under this Article where the Trustee acted in bad faith or contrary to his or her fiduciary duty, or where the Trustee has been a knowing participant to any transaction from which any Trustee derives an improper personal benefit, or has committed a knowing violation of the law, or has committed an act or gross, wanton, or willful negligence.

ARTICLE X
AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended when necessary by a two-thirds majority of the Board of Trustees. Proposed amendments must be submitted to the Secretary and sent out to the Board two weeks prior to a meeting at which a vote on the amendments is to be held.

ARTICLE XI

CERTIFICATION

These bylaws were approved at a meeting by a two-thirds majority vote of the signers of the Articles of Agreement on _____.

Secretary

Date

Appendix E: Curriculum Framework

Our complete curriculum framework and outcomes can be found at <https://www.birchesacademy.org/curriculum>. Listed below is one sample from Grade 4/5. In addition to this framework the school has an active curriculum map which expands on topics, connections, activities and assessments.

Sample Curriculum Document

Grade 4 and 5 at a Glance

English Language Arts

The Language Arts curriculum is aligned to the ELA Common Core <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>, which outlines grade level expectations in the form of standards. The grade-specific standards are categorized as Reading, Writing, Language and Speaking and Listening. Students are introduced to a range of texts and comprehension tasks gaining skill through an arts integration approach to learning. The teachers at Birches Academy utilize a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of all learners and multiple resources including Bookworms (based on the science of reading curriculum), Foundations, Six Traits of Writing, Benchmark's Writers Workshop, and the Fountas and Pinnell Reading Program. Consistency in practice across the grade levels along with an emphasis on a common language resonates and provides continuity of instructional practice.

These strategies include mini-lessons, small group instruction, independent reading, a guided reading program and writing with an emphasis on process. Students enrolled in Birches Academy of Academics and Arts can expect to progress through the grades developing proficiency in all four areas of the Common Core.

Overview of Expectations: Year A and Year B

- Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound and syllabication patterns to read accurately.
- Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding including prose and poetry with accuracy and expression.
- Demonstrate command of English grammar and usage, capitalization, punctuation and spelling.
- Use words and phrases to convey ideas, explain the similes, metaphors, common idioms and proverbs.
- Understand words that are opposites (antonyms) and similar but not identical (synonyms).
- Summarize text with key details, explain events, ideas and concepts and draw inferences.
- Interpret information, use reason and evidence to support a particular point, and integrate information from two texts.
- Describe in depth a character, setting, and event in a story or drama.
- Compare and contrast points of view and themes, topics and patterns of events in stories, myths and cultural literature.
- Engage in collaborative discussions, build on ideas and articulate own ideas, and speak clearly at an understandable pace.
- Produce clear and coherent writing that is well developed with organization appropriate to the task, purpose and audience.

Mathematics

The Mathematics curriculum is aligned to the Mathematics Common Core <http://www.corestandards.org/Math/> with a focus on concept development, big ideas and essentials of understanding. The Mathematics Common Core is comprised of strands and specific grade level standards that define what students should know and be able to do. The Grade 4 and 5 Mathematics strands include Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Numbers and Operations in Base Ten and Fractions, Measurement and Data and Geometry. The instructional resource in grades 1 through grade 6 is Pearson *EnVision Math 2.0*. Teachers combine instruction with hands-on activities where students begin to develop a conceptual understanding of foundational mathematics, learn basic computational skills, engage in practice and apply knowledge to solve problems. The instructional approach allows for the daily reinforcement of basic skills as students begin to gain a greater understanding of each strand and demonstrate proficiency in grade level expectations. Based on assessment and aligned with the essence of the Birches Academy mission statement, if a student has met grade level expectations then the student may engage in advanced mathematical studies consistent with the learning progression.

Overview of Expectations

Year A

- Use the four operations and whole numbers to solve problems.
- Gain a familiarity with factors and multiples.
- Generate and analyze patterns.
- Demonstrate an understanding for place value with multi-digit whole numbers.
- Understand fraction equivalents and order and build fractions.
- Gain an understanding for decimal notations and compare decimal fractions.
- Solve measurement problems and convert from larger to smaller units.
- Represent and interpret data.
- Understand concepts of angle and measure angles.
- Draw and identify lines and angles, and classify shapes using lines and angles.

Year B

- Write and interpret numerical expressions.
- Analyze patterns and relationships.
- Understand place value to perform operations with multi-digit whole numbers and decimals to hundredths.
- Add and subtract fractions and extend knowledge to multiply and divide fractions.
- Convert like measurements using like units.
- Understand concepts of volume and relate volume to multiplication and addition.
- Graph points on a coordinate plane and solve problems.
- Classify two-dimensional figures into categories based on properties.

Science

The Science curriculum is aligned to the Next Generation of Science Standards <http://www.nextgenscience.org/next-generation-science-standards>, a framework for K-12 Science education developed through a collaborative process. The framework is comprised of three disciplinary areas including Physical Science, Life Science, and Earth and Space Science where instruction is guided by grade level performance expectations. The performance expectation defines what a student should know and be able to do by grade level. The fourth area of Engineering, Technology and Applications of Science identifies performance expectation by grade span. Science instruction combines classroom discussions, hands-on activities, experiments, and research. Additionally, in Grades 5-8, students use Pearson Interactive Science. Students are introduced to scientific concepts through an arts integration approach to learning. Exploration into the Earth, its structure and landforms, biomes and ecosystems allows students to gain a perception of the world around them. Knowledge and understanding become the underpinnings for socially responsible and caring young adults.

Overview of Expectations Year A

Physical Science

- Use evidence to construct an explanation relating the speed of an object to the energy of that object.
- Make observations to provide evidence that energy can be transferred from place to place by sound, light, heat, and electric currents.
- Ask questions and predict outcomes about the changes in energy that occur when objects collide.
- Develop a model of waves to describe patterns - amplitude and wavelength and that waves can cause objects to move.
- Develop a model to describe that light reflecting from objects and entering the eye allows objects to be seen.

Life Science

- Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures to support survival.
- Use a model to describe that animals receive different types of information through their senses, process the information in their brain, and respond to the information in different ways.

Earth and Space Science

- Make observations and/or measurements to provide evidence of the effects of weathering or the rate of erosion by water, ice, wind, or vegetation.
- Analyze and interpret data from maps to describe patterns of Earth's features.
- Obtain and combine information to describe that energy and fuels are derived from natural resources and their uses affect the environment.

Year B

Physical Science

- Develop a model to describe that matter is made of particles too small to be seen.
- Measure and graph quantities to provide evidence that regardless of the type of change that occurs when heating, cooling, or mixing substances, the total weight of matter is conserved.
- Make observations and measurements to identify materials based on their properties.
- Conduct an investigation to determine whether the mixing of two or more substances results in new substances.
- Support an argument that the gravitational force exerted by Earth on objects is directed down.
- Use models to describe that energy in animals' food was once energy from the sun.

Life Science

- Support an argument that plants get the materials they need for growth chiefly from air and water.
- Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among plants, animals, decomposers, and the environment.

Earth and Space Science

- Support an argument that differences in the apparent brightness of the sun compared to other stars is due to their relative distances from the Earth.
- Represent data in graphical displays to reveal patterns of daily changes in length and direction of shadows, day and night, and the seasonal appearance of some stars in the night sky.
- Develop a model using an example to describe ways the geosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, or the atmosphere interacts.
- Describe and graph the amounts and percentages of water and fresh water in various reservoirs to provide evidence about the distribution of water on the Earth.

Engineering Design 3-5

- Define a simple design problem reflecting a need or a want including criteria for success and constraints.
- Generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on meeting criteria and constraints of the problem.
- Plan and carry out tests in which variables are controlled and failure points are considered to improve a model or prototype.

Social Studies

The Social Studies curriculum is aligned to the New Hampshire State Curriculum Framework for Social Studies

http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/curriculum/social_studies/documents/frameworks.pdf.

The Framework is divided into five content strands including Civics, Economics, Geography, New Hampshire and United States History, World History and Contemporary issues. Instruction combines classroom discussion, current topics in history, and research in history.

The Grade 4 curriculum focuses on Economics while in Grade 5 the emphasis is on American History.

Overview of Expectations Year A

Economics

- Reflect on needs, wants, the free market, resources and the economy.
- Illustrate cycles of economic growth and decline and the impact of each on people's lives.
- Describe different methods people use to exchange goods and services including barter and money.
- Explore the relationship between productivity and wages, and wages and standards of living.
- Identify the factors of production including entrepreneurship, human resources, and natural resources.
- Recognize that shortage and surplus affect the price and availability of goods and services.
- Describe gross domestic product and the difference between imports and exports.
- Explain the effects of inflation on people under different circumstances.

Geography

- Describe the purposes of geographic tools including maps, globes, graphs, diagrams, photographs, and satellite images.
- Using spatial information on maps, identify the origin of consumer goods and transportation routes.
- Locate physical features in the United States and on Earth i.e. mountain ranges, parallels, meridians, and landforms.
- Using population density maps compare the distribution of populations in rural, suburban and urban areas.
- Explain how the patterns within the physical environment produce changes in the ecosystems.
- Explain how people modify the physical environment for human use such as development or agriculture.
- Describe the role of natural resources, and examine renewable and nonrenewable resources.

World History

- Explain the unique contribution of different ethnic and religious groups to New Hampshire history and culture.
- Explore attitudes toward diversity including segregation or inclusion.
- Describe reasons why various groups have come to the United States including enslavement or economic opportunity.

Year B

Civics and Government

- Understand that the world is divided into different countries each with its own government that are not the same.
- Identify the core ideals and principles of the American government by citing documents
- Evaluate the effectiveness and fairness of rules and laws at the local, state, or federal levels.
- Illustrate ways in which the government in the United States is founded on the conviction that Americans are united by the principles they share including of life, liberty, and property.
- Identify the heritage that the early settlers brought to the development and establishment democracy.
- Evaluate those characteristics that promote good citizenship.

US and NH History

- Understand that the foundations of American democracy are rooted in European, Native American and colonial traditions, experiences and institutions.
- Examine how various groups of people have influenced and enhanced the art, music and literature of our nation.
- Understand and demonstrate how the westward movement led to opportunities and a more diverse economy.
- Explain the impact of ethnic and religious groups on the development of the United States.
- Describe the impact of major national events on everyday life.
- Examine the change in roles and lives of women and their impact on society.
- Explore the evolution of the US economy including the effects of changes in economic productivity, and technology.
- Identify the various improvements in agriculture and the effects on human survival and in feeding the world's hungry

Art

The Art program provides students with an introduction to the Arts and art forms. Students build on vocabulary, the color wheel, mixing colors and making inferences between color and emotions or moods. Mediums, textures and artist tools continue to be of importance to the further study of art. Students learn the steps in reflection that is an important component of artwork. The instructional focus is on the integration of the arts into projects and assignments across the core disciplines. The mission of The Birches Academy is to cultivate a learning community that promotes excellence in core academics and the arts while valuing the individual qualities and strengths of each child. Grade level teachers work collaboratively with the art teacher to give students every opportunity to express thoughts and ideas through the arts.

Overview of Expectations

Colors and the Color Wheel

- Explore the primary colors – red, blue, green and yellow.
- Mix colors to make orange, purples, green and other colors.
- Correlate color to moods and

emotions. Drawing

- Learn to observe and record the body through gestural drawings.
- Explore contour, blind contour and upside down drawings.

Painting

- Replicate the symbols and animals in the caves of Lascaux, France.

Collage

- Learn techniques of collage with a focus on tactile and visual texture.

Printmaking

- Explore Egyptian Hieroglyphic and create a print.

Construction Studio

- Create a Roller coaster using various materials and form, integration with science.

Music

The Music program is designed to instill a love of music and an introduction to the art of Music. Students continue the study of music through listening, moving to rhythms, and singing a variety of songs as well as music theory. All students attend a weekly chorus class with a focus on developing skills for good vocal production and ensemble singing of choral literature age appropriately arranged. Students enjoy participating in vocal music and work cooperatively with other students as well as serve the school by participating in selected performances.

Overview of Expectations

- Develop an independent singing voice and engage in unison, rounds and partner songs.
- Learn to read and write melodic and rhythmic notation.
- Understand basic music concepts and build on the vocabulary of music.
- Continue the study of the ukulele or another instrument.

Foreign language

The Grade 4 and 5 Foreign Language program provides an introduction to the Spanish language. There is a focus on vocabulary and early conversation to build a foundation for the study of languages, and an appreciation of new cultures.

- Learn vocabulary - colors, numbers, days of the week, months of the year, foods, the body, animals, weather and clothing.
- Understand the rules of basic grammar, pronunciation, and sentence structure.
- Explore the Spanish culture.

Physical Education

Students participate in age appropriate, safe and effective physical activities based on the New Hampshire K-12 Physical Education Curriculum Guidelines. Essential to performing a variety of physical activities is building motor skills as well as the qualities of movement. A pre and post assessment is conducted using Pacer Assessment to determine cardiovascular endurance to demonstrate student growth, and as a guide to improve and/or maintain physical

Appendix F: Curriculum Sample, The Birches Writing Cans

Seeds Can...	Seedlings Can...	Sprouts Can...	Saplings Can...	Leaves Can...	Trees Can...
Write one sentence with a capital letter and period	Write a 5 sentence paragraph on one topic	Indent and write 2 paragraphs with 5 sentences	Write a 3/5 paragraph essay with support	Write a 5 paragraph essay with an introduction and conclusion	Use conjunctions and commas to combine sentences correctly
Have an illustration and sentence on the same topic	Add adjectives and voice to work	Underline book titles and capitalize all proper nouns	Use commas and apostrophes	Use past, present, and future tenses correctly	Use all forms of punctuation, including semi-colons and colons
Use transitional words (first, then, next, finally) for procedural writing	Write pieces with a lead	Add silver dollar verbs	Use silver dollar adverbs and figurative language	Show subject/verb agreement	Use prepositional and infinitive phrases correctly
	Write a personal narrative on topic with a beginning, middle, and end	Use resources to correct spelling	Edit and revise writing pieces	Show pronoun/antecedent agreement	Write compound and complex sentences with no run-ons or fragments
		Write a biography report	Write a variety of sentence types with varied beginnings	Use transitional words and phrases to create fluid paragraphs	Use subordinating clauses correctly
			Write an argumentative piece	Use content vocabulary correctly	Write a lab report
				Write an expository essay	Write a compare/contrast essay
					Write a research paper

Appendix G: Job Descriptions

The Birches Academy of Academics & Art Dean of School - Job Description

The Dean of School at The Birches Academy, under the guidelines set forth in our charter, will report to the Board of Trustees and is responsible for the areas of:

- Management
- Staff Development
- Curriculum
- Communication

Expectations:

- Develop and facilitate experiences and traditions that will create a positive, unique school culture and that will help to define The Birches as a school that is highly desirable and extraordinary.
- Develop specific operations, goals, and objectives to implement the strategic goals that have been mutually established with the Board of Trustees.
- Promote a culture of global citizenship and awareness at the school.
- Create and instill a school environment that is respectful, responsible, compassionate, and aware.
- Support teaching staff in the arts integrated philosophy, current best practices, utilizing up to date technology, and overall implementation of the school's mission.

Management:

- Ensure that all state reporting requirements are met.
- Oversee the admission of students, including lottery procedures.
- Attend all Board meetings as a nonvoting member and prepare and present reports as requested by the Board of Trustees.
- Ensure school safety, security, and the ability to handle a crisis and use supervision appropriately and constructively.
- Evaluate school operations.
- Aiding and assisting with all IEP/504 meetings.

Staff Development:

- Provide ongoing staff development to strengthen teaching skills and to support a highly academic and arts integrated education.
- Evaluate the need for and provide staff training in the areas of team building, core curriculum, Responsive Classroom, critical skills, art integration, project-based learning, competency-based assessment, student portfolios, technology implementation, and other practices or programs that will enhance student learning and the Birches Academy educational philosophy.
- Hire, supervise, mentor, and evaluate teaching and support staff.
- Develop and implement a new student enrollment plan and assure proper student-teacher ratios.

- Lead and facilitate staff meetings to guide and support staff.
- Collaborate with the Dean of Operations to present the annual operating budget to the Board of Trustees.

Curriculum:

- Oversee ongoing program evaluation, including curriculum standards and curriculum development.
- Knowledge of New Hampshire State Frameworks, Common Core State Standards, and Core Knowledge Sequence.
- Oversee student evaluation and implement student assessment.
- Implement action plans for student achievement and school success.

Communication:

- Foster and maintain regular, ongoing, and open dialogue with the staff, parents, and the Board of Trustees.
- Foster a positive relationship with the community, local School District and all other sending districts, as well as the New Hampshire Department of Education.
- Articulate and advocate for the mission of The Birches Academy of Academics and Art.
- Collaborate with colleagues and professionals at partnering charter schools and within the field of education.
- Be inspirational, visible, and accessible to members of the school community and beyond.

This job description is not intended, and should not be construed, to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, skills, efforts or working conditions associated with this job. It is intended to be an accurate reflection of the principal job elements essential for performing the job.

THE BIRCHES ACADEMY OF ACADEMICS & ART DEAN OF OPERATIONS – JOB DESCRIPTION

The Dean of Operations at The Birches Academy, under the guidelines set forth in our charter, will report to the Dean of School and is responsible for the areas of:

- Finance
- Personnel and Administrative
- Grants Administrator

Definition:

To plan, organize and direct the development and implementation of The Birches accounting system; to work with the Dean of School and Board of Trustees to develop the budget and effective use of funds; to supervise the accounting, payroll, financing and budget control activities; to perform accounting functions in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and the New Hampshire Department of Education's (DOE) Charter School Office; and to perform a variety of other duties relative to assigned area of responsibility.

Finance:

Perform Birches Academy accounting functions in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and the New Hampshire Department of Education's (DOE) Charter School Office:

- Advise on the management of the financial affairs of the school.
- Supervises the collection, safekeeping and distribution of all funds.
- Works with the Head of School and Board of Trustees in preparing and implementing the budget.
- Maintenance of all bank accounts, bank deposits and bank transactions.
- Responsible for payroll record keeping and preparation.
- Oversee cash disbursements, cash receipts, accounts payable, accounts receivable and journal entries for adjustments to the general ledger.
- Prepares and issues reports for the Head of School and Board of Trustees concerning the status of budgetary accounts.
- Prepares accurate cash flow reports and projections as needed.
- Provide all necessary documentation for and oversee successful on-time completion of the annual audit and the DOE 25.
- Monitor all procurement activities; buying, purchasing, leasing or otherwise acquiring supplies and services and all of the functions that pertain to such acquisitions.
- Advise on all binding agreements, including lease, equipment rental agreements, and personnel contracts.
- Responsible for inventory of fixed assets.
- Advises on the day-to-day fiscal and business operations of the school.
- Ensure the security of computer systems at the school.
- Ensure the accuracy of grant receipts and expenditures and financial reporting requirements. Makes monthly requests of grant funds and keeps proper historical records.
- Perform related duties and responsibilities as required.

Personnel and Administrative:

Personnel:

Guides and assists with compensation administration functions including calculation of proposed salaries, processing of payroll documents, preparation of various personnel forms in compliance with The Birches policies and procedures, preparing annual salary budgets and processing of fiscal year salary updates.

- Oversees the development and maintenance of confidential personnel and associated files, documents, and/or databases.
- Serves as contact for school insurance, employee medical and dental, life and disability, New Hampshire Teachers' Retirement Board and ensures all accounts are kept current.
- Oversees the processing and keeping of records for benefits programs.
- Evaluates, recommends, contracts for, and monitors employee benefits and human resource programs (insurance, retirement, etc) and the facilities insurance needs.

Administrative:

- Assists the Dean of School in overseeing the school facilities including custodial services, safety issues, maintenance, and relationships with third party contractors to maintain and improve the facility.
- Advise Dean of School in the creation of efficient management systems.

This job description is not intended, and should not be construed, to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, skills, efforts or working conditions associated with this job. It is intended to be an accurate reflection of the principal job elements essential for performing the job.

Student Services Coordinator

Qualifications:

This Student Services Coordinator must be certified in Special Education in New Hampshire and will be committed to project based learning, standards based curriculum, and innovative approaches in education. The candidate must be a team player, dedicated to the success of the students, and to the successful growth of the school.

Special Education:

- Serve as a liaison with each district, collaborate with contractors from each district. Schedule and attend all special education/504 meetings.
- Work with teachers and parents to collect data and navigate the special education process/504 process.
- Overseeing and scheduling of contractors.
- In collaboration with the special education contractors, work with teachers to ensure accommodations are in place for students.

Student Wellness:

- Using the existing Student wellness curriculum, support teachers to implement in the classrooms. (mindfulness, social emotional intelligence, and developing a growth mindset,)
- Support students social emotional growth by meeting with students one on one or in small groups.
- Work with middle school students on study skills, executive functioning skills and advisory topics.
- Work with the whole school population to explain student behavioral expectations, digital citizenship and ensure that discipline issues result in positive behavioral outcomes.
- Act as the schools Homeless Liaison
- Participate in the School-wide House initiative

Reading and Math Intervention:

- Coordinate with RTI providers, teachers and Dean of School to participate in SST meetings and provide support to teachers to improve the quality of the general education program and reduce the underachievement of students.

Other:

- Any other duties that may be assigned by the Dean of School

Some other aspects of program enrichment matched with the coordinator's interests and expertise. Some examples might be:

- UDL
- High School transition
- School-wide Literature initiative
- Podcasting
- Coordinating Health and Wellness Class for 5th and 8th graders in collaboration with School Nurse and Classroom Teachers

Appendix H: Home School Compact

The Birches Academy of Academics & Art

Home/School Compact

We are very happy that you are considering becoming part of The Birches Academy. While a charter school is a public school, there are ways in which it differs which we would like to highlight. Your child's education is of utmost importance to both you and us and so we want to make sure that we have a common understanding of The Birches Academy: A Public Charter School. We pledge our Mission and Core Values. We ask your understanding of the following in reaching our goals in order for the school to be successful.

- I understand that the connection between home and school is vital to my child's success. I will help my child with homework, communicate with the school and staff, attend conferences and as many school functions as possible and support my child's education in any way that I can.
- I understand that the fundraising goal of the school is between \$60-\$80,000 per year. The Birches Academy is a public school; there is no tuition required to attend The Birches. However, as a charter school, The Birches receives approximately only 40% of the state funding that other public schools receive. For this reason, there is a substantial fundraising effort required just to pay our operating costs including a yearly art fee and annual fund drive. While I need not participate in all of these fundraisers, it is important to know that helping the school monetarily in whatever way I can is part of participating in a charter school.
- I understand that The Birches Academy asks a commitment of twenty volunteer hours per family per year. Because of the funding formula for New Hampshire charter schools, The Birches Academy does not have the personnel or support that a more traditional public school has. In addition, it is part of our mission that we are a learning *community*. Part of your child's success will come from your involvement. This involvement can take many forms and we will work together to find ways in which you can participate.
- I understand that The Birches Academy follows the Common Core standards with the arts used to support learning in the major subject areas. The Birches Academy participates in mandated state testing and performs its own assessments as well as a means to document growth. When making instructional decision regarding students, such as a placement in an advanced math class, we take into account the whole student which includes but is not limited to the social and emotional needs of the student.
- I understand that I should make at least a one year commitment to the school The Birches is a choice and this choice works well for some students and may not be a match for others. Older, and even younger students, may miss other friends. Sometimes, when learning gets difficult, students may want to change schools. This is always an option, but making at least a year's commitment and sticking with it and decreasing the number of school transitions and the resulting curricular loss is important to the education and development of the child.
- I understand that all students at The Birches will play a musical instrument with a variety of choices available to the students as they get older. It is the parent's responsibility to rent or purchase the instrument and music lessons take place at some point during the school day, sometime necessitating missing thirty minutes of one subject each week. For some students under some circumstances, voice can be an instrument of choice. Performances and concerts that often take place out of school hours are a

required part of the music program. I understand that utilization of technology as a learning tool is very important for our twenty-first century students. While the school provides much of this technology in the form of smartboards, laptops, desk top computers and iPads, we ask that all students entering Grade 6 purchase their own iPad to be utilized through Grade 8 at The Birches Academy.

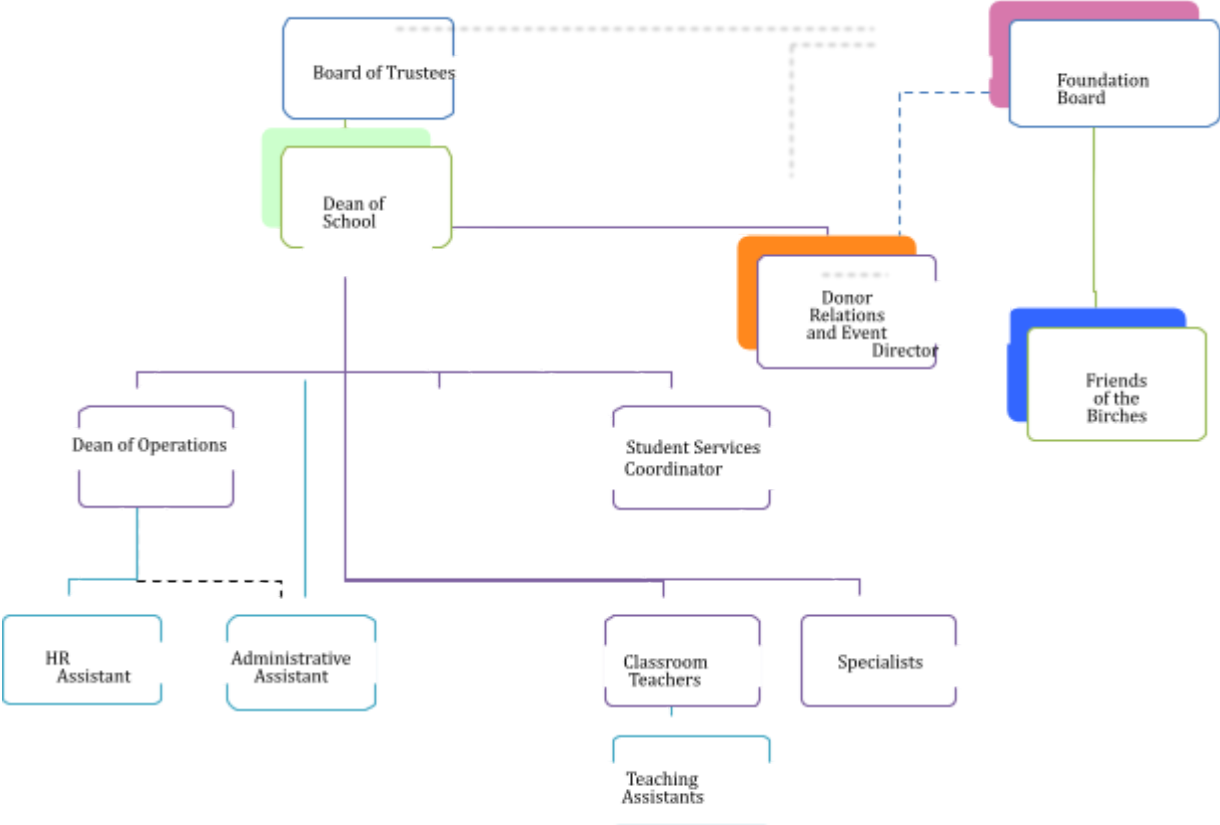
I understand that The Birches Academy is a public school and our enrollment is open and determined by lottery. Students on Individual Education Plans are accepted when it is determined by the special education team that The Birches is a fit for their needs. We strive to meet the individual needs of all students. However, as a public school, we are bound by the same discipline policies that are mandated by law for all public schools.

Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix I: Organizational Chart

The Birches Academy of Academics and Art Organizational Chart 2022



Appendix J: Letters of Support

Jennifer Madden
398 Notre Dame Ave
Manchester, NH 03102

April 30, 2017

New Hampshire Department of Education
Concord, NH. 03301

To Whom It May Concern:

Upon reflecting on my son's academic experience, I can't help but think of the road that lead us to Birches Academy. My son, Cameron, is very bright. An avid independent reader since he was four years old. When he began kindergarten in a local public school, the teacher recognized this and in fact said that she had never before had a student reading at his level. She then informed me that each student's reading level corresponds with a letter. She didn't know Cameron's actual reading level because the school wouldn't allow her to test him beyond a certain letter. This was unsettling to me. How was he supposed to be appropriately challenged?

Throughout the school year, very little work came home, not even artwork and on numerous occasions Cameron expressed that he felt bored at school because he was not learning new things. Ultimately, my husband and I decided to enroll Cam in the lottery at Birches Academy and we joined the community as he entered first grade. What a different experience!

Within two weeks of starting school, the teachers understood his strengths and weaknesses. He was placed in second grade math and an appropriate reading group. I am amazed everyday by the schools ability to differentiate learning to meet individual needs in a hands on way. Each student truly has the opportunity to shine. When you walk into a classroom, you see active, engaged learners and phenomenal teachers who go above and beyond to create a curriculum that ensures learning is achieved and supported through the arts. Students do not just learn, they experience. For example, when the first/second grade class learns about community, they take it to the next level by building an actual community with sculptures made from recyclable materials.

The hallways are always lined with amazing artwork that reflect progress and growth. The music program allows students to experience culture and encourages individuality. I truly cannot say enough about how amazing The Birches is. It is a strong community with amazing leaders, educators, parents and families that continue to impress me every day. Ultimately, my son thrives in this school environment and seeing the spark in him each day as he talks about everything that happened and things he learned about is the ultimate reward.

Thank you for taking the time to read about our experience!

Jennifer Madden

April 14, 2017

NH Department of Education Charter

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the Birches Academy of Arts in their bid for charter renewal. My family has been part of the Birches community for two years now, and I could not be happier with the supportive school environment and the education my child is receiving.

As I researched education for my daughter, I was not satisfied with our local public school or the private school I toured. These schools taught to the lowest level in the classroom instead of the individual child's needs, some of the curriculum was antiquated, and the teacher-student ratios were sometimes alarming. The Birches has exceeded my expectations on many levels. The Birches affords my child smaller classrooms, project-based learning, and excellent teacher-student ratios, which I find are not only important in individualized learning but actually help drive the desire to learn. My child's enthusiasm for reading has been encouraged and she has gained skills which have allowed positive personal growth. With the Birches encouragement and individualized program she is now reading above her grade level.

By setting personal learning goals for each child the Birches fosters not only growth for the strength areas but assistance in areas where children are not as strong. My daughter struggled a bit in math this year and I have been given multiple tips, out-of-the-box ideas, and advice from the teachers to help give her the tools she needs to succeed. The teachers know my child and provide the guidance that will work based on her personal learning style. This instruction, focus, and dedication from the Birches teachers have helped her increase her math skills quickly in a way that works for her.

My daughter loves art! At the Birches she allowed to create in art class with multiple mixed-media supplies fostering her creativity. The music department has also transformed my shy child who would never stand up in front of anyone, to someone who is confident enough to sing on her own during the school assembly. She has also joined a theatre program and has been singing, dancing, and performing for an audience in our town. She has really come out of her shell. I credit the Birches with giving her the means to know herself, be herself, and to be confident enough in her abilities to try something new. There is a strong sense of community at the Birches. Parents, teachers and children are all committed to both the internal community at our school and to helping our local communities. My daughter won the Leaf of the Month award for "Community" this school year for helping the Kindergartners assimilate into first grade. Being supportive and coaching/mentoring others is a skill necessary no matter what you do in life. I appreciate my daughter having a school that encourages children to be empathic and to help each other. The awards are an added bonus when children are "caught" doing the right thing.

The Birches is an asset to our student population, our local communities and the State of New Hampshire. We are truly thankful to have a choice in educating our child in a school that engages the whole child and encourages personal learning growth on so many levels.

Sincerely,



Leanna Dinsmore
7 Heath Street
Pelham, NH 03076

Troy and Donna Wells

46 Partridge Road
Windham, NH 03087
(603)437-8447
bostoncart@gmail.com

8th April 2017

NH Department of Education Charter

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to support Birches Academy of Academics and Art in their bid for charter renewal. We have been a part of the Birches community since 2014. Our children have flourished academically and socially in the learning environment that Birches provides.

Project-based learning really connects to both of my children, especially my daughter, Carly. While studying economics in social studies, Carly and her friends were inspired to start a business with the purpose of raising money for their school. They had the full support of our wonderful Head of School and their teacher. This support includes letting them set up an area to display their goods (bookmarks, origami and drawings) in the school store, allowing them to speak at our weekly school-wide assembly to promote their business, and helping them work through disagreements related to running a business. This is an experience I am sure she would not get at a traditional public school and she has learned many life lessons along the way.

Our first-grader, Trevor, is learning second grade math as this is the level he is capable of. The teachers at Birches are skilled at determining each child's ability and guide students in determining personal learning goals so that everyone is working to their fullest potential. I am so grateful that Carly, Trevor and other children in New Hampshire have these unique educational opportunities. The Birches Academy of Academics and Arts is truly an asset to our state.

Sincerely,



Troy and Donna Wells