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Dear New Hampshire Board of Education/Charter Renewal Committee,

I am proud and pleased to come before you with our 5<sup>th</sup> year renewal charter. The Birches Academy was founded in 2012 and opened its doors on September 4<sup>th</sup>, 2012 with 88 students in 4 classes and a staff of 14. Today we have 223 students with 9 classrooms and a staff of 27. There is clearly a need in southern New Hampshire that The Birches Academy of Academics and Art is serving well! Aside from adding students and staff since the approval of our original charter, I would like to highlight any other changes that have been made.

When our original charter was approved, we did yet have a physical space. Since our opening, we have rented space at 419 S. Broadway in Salem. There are now specific references in our charter to an actual, physical space. We have a lease for this space through 2022, the end of this upcoming charter.

While we referenced the Common Core Curriculum standards in our original charter, we were also going to base our curriculum around the Core Knowledge Sequence. This sequence turned out to be too broad for our needs and since the inception, the Common Core standards have been more broadly accepted so they are the basis of our curriculum. In addition, the Next Generation Science Standards have grown in acceptance and use since our founding and our science curriculum outcomes are based on these.

We have highlighted many important factors of attending The Birches in a Home/School Compact that is given to interested parents upon visiting a Spotlight Tour or 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 to incoming families before they make a decision to commit to The Birches. This is included in Appendix H of our charter.

Our needs have determined the creation of administrative positions and structure. We currently have a Head of School, a Business, Operations and Technology Manager and assistant, a Director of Student Affairs, a Donor Relations and Event Coordinator and an administrative assistant.

Our Birches Board of Trustees is strong factor in helping lead The Birches with policies and oversight. They have had two trainings over the five years of our first charter and went through a comprehensive revision of their by-laws, also attached in Appendix B.

These are some of the changes between our original charter and our renewal charter. The fact that there are not more and that these changes can fit on one page point to a strong initial vision for The Birches Academy of Academics and Arts: A Public Charter School. It is a vision that guides us today.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dael Angelico-Hart



# **The Birches Academy of Academics and Art**

A Public Charter School

**5 YEAR RENEWAL CHARTER**

**The Birches Academy  
Board of Trustees  
419 South Broadway  
Salem, NH 03079**

**MAY 2017**



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# **1. Educational mission**

The mission of The Birches Academy 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. There are seven 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.

## **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. 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.

## **E. 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.

## **F. 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 student

government and in whole school meetings. Student government will meet at a minimum of once a month and whole school meetings will occur weekly.

**G. Incorporate the use of technology.**

The Birches Academy will use technology and technology platforms as a teaching tool wherever possible. The goal will be to give them opportunities, and exposure to firsthand experience with applications used in higher education and real world scenarios.

## **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 Head 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 Head 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 20,000 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 a large all-purpose room. There is a limited outdoor space for physical activity. We are in year 5 of a 10-year lease and will begin to review space options in year 7.

#### **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 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.

#### **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 21<sup>st</sup> 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, mathematics, history, geography, social studies, and science. Foreign language, technology, health content, and other enrichment programs are woven into the core academic program. The arts will be emphasized through a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary arts program beyond core academic instructional time, as well as through integrated curriculum projects. Learning through experience will be emphasized as well as being student centered. Additionally, there is a focus on real world learning and problem resolution. The curriculum will weave together language arts, math, and science where possible.

The Birches Academy reaches out to our surrounding area and create 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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.*

### **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 6- 8 portfolios are created, stored, accessed, updated, and reviewed electronically.

### **Character development, good citizenship, community and critical skill building**

The Birches Academy is committed to developing individuals who are prepared to succeed 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

### **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.

### **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

NWEA test administered

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	Smarter Balanced Statewide Assessment
May	Portfolio/Personal Learning Goal updated New Hampshire State tests (NECAP) Science - 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 Head 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 one teaching assistant for the three grades, and a student-teacher ratio of 18:1.

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

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

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

In addition, we have a full time Business Manager / Technology Coordinator, a Director of Student Affairs and a Curriculum Coordinator.

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 Head 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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Charter school responsibility and method of coordinating**

The Head 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.

### **Procedures**

1. Informational meetings and school tours for prospective applicants are regularly offered.
2. 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).
3. Prospective students are invited to spend a day within the school community to obtain an experience of the school.
4. Application forms will be submitted online via Form Site.
5. The Head of School / Administrative Assistant will notify prospective students with a status of the application and information about openings and the lottery if applicable.
6. 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 Head of School / Administrative Assistant will inform all applicants of the admission results.
7. 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.

### **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 1<sup>st</sup>, they are removed from the wait list but may re-enroll at any time. However, if a family declines a position after March 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 Head 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 reflects expenses and revenue for the next five (5) years. Our projected budget is based on maximum potential costs and will be adjusted with real time revenue and expenses to eliminate a budget deficit.

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 Head 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 Head 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

DRAFT Budget		2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
		year 6	year 7	year 8	year 9	year 10
	General Inflation	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	Enrollment Goal	225	225	225	225	225
	Total Students for Budget	222	222	222	222	222
	Total Non K Students	198	198	198	198	198
	Funding per Student	\$ 6,847	\$ 6,972	\$ 7,272	\$ 7,272	\$ 7,472
	Total K Students	\$ 24	\$ 24	\$ 24	\$ 24	\$ 24
	Funding per K Student	\$ 4,817	\$ 4,817	\$ 5,817	\$ 6,017	\$ 6,017
	Total Funding	\$ 1,471,359	\$ 1,496,109	\$ 1,496,109	\$ 1,584,264	\$ 1,623,864
	Foundation Fundraising	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 80,000
		2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
<b>Income</b>						
4000 · Contributed support						
	carried over from previous year cash	\$ 140,068	\$ 183,675	\$ 160,322	\$ 97,497	\$ 72,101
	4010 · Indiv/Business Contributions					
	4071 - Student Annual Art Supply Fee	\$ 11,322	\$ 11,322	\$ 11,322	\$ 11,322	\$ 11,322
	4200 Before/After Care Income	\$ 68,600	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000	\$ 14,000
	4210 Enrichment Income	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
	4220 Summer Camp	\$ 1,500	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
	Total 4510 · Contributed Support	\$ 223,990	\$ 212,997	\$ 189,644	\$ 126,819	\$ 101,423
	4530 · State grants					
	4531 · Equitable Aid	\$ 1,471,359	\$ 1,496,109	\$ 1,496,109	\$ 1,584,264	\$ 1,623,864
	4532 · Other Grant	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000	\$ 18,000
	Total 4530 · Non Foundation Grants	\$ 1,489,359	\$ 1,514,109	\$ 1,514,109	\$ 1,602,264	\$ 1,641,864
	4600 Previous Year Foundation Fundraising	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	\$ 80,000
	Total Income	\$ 1,723,349	\$ 1,737,106	\$ 1,713,753	\$ 1,739,083	\$ 1,823,287
<b>Expense</b>						
1100000 · Instructional Program - Expenses						
	1100112 · Salaries, Teachers	\$ 400,112	\$ 414,116	\$ 428,610	\$ 443,611	\$ 459,138
	1100113 · Instructor, Salaries	\$ 127,666	\$ 131,942	\$ 136,273	\$ 140,753	\$ 145,387
	1100115 · Salaries, Support Staff	\$ 154,697	\$ 159,972	\$ 165,431	\$ 171,081	\$ 176,928
	1100119 Substitute Teacher Expense *	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,500
	1100260 · Workers Compensation	\$ 4,326	\$ 4,456	\$ 4,589	\$ 4,727	\$ 4,869
	Mentoring Program	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
	1100270 · Benefits Programs***	\$ 56,800	\$ 56,800	\$ 56,800	\$ 56,800	\$ 56,800
	1100585 · Professional Development	\$ 3,500	\$ 3,605	\$ 3,713	\$ 3,825	\$ 3,939
	1100611 · Art Supplies***	\$ 11,000	\$ 11,330	\$ 11,670	\$ 12,020	\$ 12,381
	1100612 Music Supplies	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,060	\$ 2,122	\$ 2,185	\$ 2,251

5/25/17

total budget

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
1100640 · Textbooks & Workbooks (Cu	\$ 12,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 17,000	\$ 12,000	\$ 15,000
1100650 · Computer Software,Licenses	\$ 20,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
1100733 · Furniture & Equipment	\$ 4,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 4,000	\$ 4,000
Total 1100000 · Instructional Program- Ex	\$ 809,102	\$ 830,281	\$ 857,208	\$ 879,002	\$ 908,693
2100000 · Student Support Services					
2122370 · Testing/Appraisal Services	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100
Total 2100000 · Student Support Services	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100	\$ 2,100
2130000 · Health Services					
2134610 · Health Services-Supplies	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250
Total 2130000 · Health Services	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250
2222000 · Library/Research Program					
2222641 · Library-Books	\$ 750	\$ 750	\$ 750	\$ 750	\$ 750
Total 2222000 · Library/Research Program	\$ 750	\$ 750	\$ 750	\$ 750	\$ 750
Total Instructional and Support	\$ 812,202	\$ 833,381	\$ 860,308	\$ 882,102	\$ 911,793
2300000 · General Administration Support					
2300009 · Payroll Fee	\$ 8,200	\$ 8,300	\$ 8,500	\$ 8,700	\$ 8,800
2300110 · School Administration, Salari	\$ 265,219	\$ 274,502	\$ 280,613	\$ 289,621	\$ 298,929
2300220 Employer Taxes Expense	\$ 81,028	\$ 83,835	\$ 86,434	\$ 89,353	\$ 92,373
2300390 · Contracted Services	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
2300391 · Curriculum Development	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
2300534 · Postage	\$ 700	\$ 700	\$ 700	\$ 700	\$ 700
2300540 · Advertising	\$ 5,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
2300540 · Field Trips	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500
2300541 In School Enrichment	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500	\$ 1,500
2300550 · Printing	\$ 19,000	\$ 19,570	\$ 20,157	\$ 20,762	\$ 21,385
2300615 · Supplies-General	\$ 12,500	\$ 12,875	\$ 13,261	\$ 13,659	\$ 14,069
2300810 · Dues & Fees	\$ 6,200	\$ 6,386	\$ 6,578	\$ 6,775	\$ 6,978
2300890 · Other expenses	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
2317390 · Audit Fee	\$ 6,700	\$ 6,901	\$ 7,108	\$ 7,321	\$ 7,541
2318395 · Legal Fees	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,500
Total 2300000 · General Administration Su	\$ 414,047	\$ 425,569	\$ 435,851	\$ 451,892	\$ 465,774
2600000 · Oper.& Maint. of Facility					
2600390 · Cleaning	\$ 32,000	\$ 32,960	\$ 33,949	\$ 34,967	\$ 36,016
2600395 · Waste Management	\$ 2,700	\$ 2,781	\$ 2,864	\$ 2,950	\$ 3,039
2600420 · Facility and grounds mainte	\$ 5,000	\$ 5,150	\$ 5,305	\$ 5,464	\$ 5,628
2600430 · Building Repairs	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,575	\$ 2,652	\$ 2,732	\$ 2,814
2600520 · Property Insurance	\$ 7,500	\$ 7,725	\$ 7,957	\$ 8,195	\$ 8,441
2600530 · Telephone	\$ 3,800	\$ 3,914	\$ 4,031	\$ 4,152	\$ 4,277
2600610 · Building&Grounds-Supplies	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,030	\$ 1,061	\$ 1,093	\$ 1,126
2600612 Room Rental Fee	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000
2600622 · Electricity	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,450	\$ 15,914	\$ 16,391	\$ 16,883

5/25/17

ewal.xistotal budget

		2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
	2600624 · Heating Gas	\$ 3,700	\$ 3,811	\$ 3,925	\$ 4,043	\$ 4,164
	2620441 · Rent-Building	\$ 239,224	\$ 241,436	\$ 241,436	\$ 251,996	\$ 254,108
	move fees	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 90,000
	<b>2600000 · Oper. &amp; Maint. of Facility - Other</b>					
	<b>Total 2600000 · Oper. &amp; Maint. of Facility</b>	<b>\$ 313,424</b>	<b>\$ 317,832</b>	<b>\$ 320,094</b>	<b>\$ 332,984</b>	<b>\$ 427,495</b>
	<b>Total Administration &amp; Facilities</b>	<b>\$ 727,472</b>	<b>\$ 743,403</b>	<b>\$ 755,948</b>	<b>\$ 784,879</b>	<b>\$ 893,274</b>
	<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$ 1,539,674</b>	<b>\$ 1,576,784</b>	<b>\$ 1,616,256</b>	<b>\$ 1,666,982</b>	<b>\$ 1,805,067</b>
	<b>Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ 183,675</b>	<b>\$ 160,322</b>	<b>\$ 97,497</b>	<b>\$ 72,101</b>	<b>\$ 18,220</b>
	Budget Assumptions:					
	Small increase in state funding after 2018-2019			Full Day K Starting in year 7 - no after care		
	-3.5% increase in salaries annually					
	-3% general inflation on costs					

## **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 Head of School to assess how well the school is accomplishing its mission and fulfilling the charter. The Head 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 Head of School and Business Manager; 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 Head of School.*

*Membership:* Board members only.

## **Appendix D: Bylaws**

### **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 Head 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 Head 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 Head 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 Head 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  
HEAD OF SCHOOL**

Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 7 herein, the Head of School is hired by the Board adhering to the Head of School Hiring Policy. The Head 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 Head 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 Head 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 Head 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 [www.birchesacademy.org/about-birches/curriculum/](http://www.birchesacademy.org/about-birches/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 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](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**

### **Head of School**

The Head of School works collaboratively with the Board, staff, designated committees, and parents. The Head of School is ultimately responsible to the Board for designated outcomes, and the Board delegates to the Head of School the power to make decisions concerning the internal operations of the school. The Head of School delegates authority to other staff as appropriate. The Head of School communicates the mission of the school, oversees operations, and creates a climate in which learning is valued.

In conjunction with the Board, The Head of School hires teachers and other staff; researches and writes policy and other handbook materials; conducts community outreach where appropriate; meets with the school district where the school resides to establish rapport and discuss transportation and special education needs; meets with parents of enrolled students on an IEP and the sending school districts to ensure special education needs are met; establishes curriculum; provides input into the enrollment process, provides input into the budget; attends Board meetings as a non-voting member; and other items as deemed appropriate by the Board.

#### **Expectations:**

- Articulates and advocates for the mission of The Birches Academy of Academics and Art.
- Collaborates with colleagues and professionals at partnering charter schools and within the field of education.
- Provides ongoing staff development to strengthen teaching skills and to support a highly academic and arts integrated education.
- Serves as philanthropic ambassador within the organization and community.
- Inspirational, visible, and accessible to members of the school community and beyond.
- Develops working knowledge of New Hampshire State Frameworks, Common Core State Standards, and Next Generation Science Standards.
- Establishes the curriculum for all subject areas and grades within the school.
- Attends all Board meetings as a nonvoting board member and prepares and presents reports as requested by the Board of Trustees.
- Manages positive and professional relationships with students, faculty, parents, trustees, and community members.
- Establishes a plan to oversee and redirect student behaviors.
- Ensures school safety, security, and the ability to handle a crisis and use supervision appropriately and constructively.
- Promotes a culture of global citizenship and awareness at the school.
- Creates and instills a school environment that is respectful, responsible, compassionate, and aware.
- Develops and facilitates 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.
- Implements action plans for student achievement and school success.

#### **Management**

- Develops specific operations, goals, and objectives to implement the strategic goals that have been mutually established with the Board.
- Hires, supervises, mentors, and evaluates teaching and support staff.
- Oversees admission of students, including lottery procedures.
- In consultation with the Board of Trustees, and informed by the Birches Academy Policy Manual, make final decisions regarding disciplinary action or dismissal of staff.
- Ensures that all state reporting requirements are met.
- Responsible for the delivery of Special Education services in collaboration with sending school districts.
- Leads and facilitates staff meetings to guide and support staff.
- Oversees all aspects of facility management.

### **Communication**

- Fosters and maintains regular, ongoing, and open dialogue with the staff, parents, and the Board of Trustees.
- Spokesperson for Birches Academy Charter School.
- Fosters a positive relationship with the community, local School District and all other sending districts, as well as the New Hampshire Department of Education.
- Mandated reporter to the NH Division for Children, Youth, and Families.

### **Finance and Fund Development**

- Prepares and presents annual operating budget to the Board of Trustees in conjunction with the Treasurer and Business Manager.
- Administers the operating budget and is accountable to the Board of Trustees for effective business management.
- Prepares annual budget recommendations including personnel, committees, facilities and programs.
- Applies for grants that support the economic viability of the school.
- Serves as a non-voting member of Birches Academy Charter School Foundation Board.
- Familiar with and understands best practices in fund development.
- Assists in identifying and cultivating prospective donors.
- Serves as philanthropic ambassador within the organization and community.

### **Professional Staff Development**

- Creates opportunities and coordinates trainings for incoming teachers and staff.
- Evaluates the need for and provide staff training in the areas of team building, core curriculum, 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.
- Supports teaching staff in the arts integrated philosophy, current best practices, utilizing up to date technology, and overall implementation of the school's mission.
- Develops and implements an enrollment plan and assures proper student-teacher ratios.

### **Compliance and Accountability for School Operations**

- Conducts written evaluations of staff.
- Oversees student evaluation and implement of student assessment.



- Oversees ongoing program evaluation, including curriculum standards and curriculum development.
- Ensures that the school is in compliance with all applicable government laws and regulations, including transportation and Special Education.
- Evaluates school operations.

## **Business and Operations Manager / Technology Coordinator Job Description**

The Business Manager / Technology Coordinator at The Birches Academy, under the guidelines set forth in our charter, will report to the Head of School and is responsible for the areas of:

- Finance
- Personnel and Administrative
- Technology

The Business Manager / Technology Coordinator plans, organizes and directs the development and implementation of The Birches accounting system; to work with the Head 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:**

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

- Advises 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.
- Maintains all bank accounts, bank deposits and bank transactions.
- Responsible for payroll record keeping and preparation.
- Oversees cash disbursements, cash receipts, accounts payable, accounts receivable and journal entries for adjustments to the general ledger.
- Prepares accurate cash flow reports and projections as needed.
- Provides all necessary documentation for and oversee successful on-time completion of the annual audit and the DOE 25.
- Monitors all procurement activities; buying, purchasing, leasing or otherwise acquiring supplies and services and all of the functions that pertain to such acquisitions.
- Advises 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.
- Ensures the accuracy of grant receipts and expenditures and financial reporting requirements. Makes monthly requests of grant funds and keeps proper historical records.

## **Personnel and Administrative:**

### **Personnel:**

Guides and assists the Head of School 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.

- Develops and maintains 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.
- Processes and keep records for flexible benefits program.
- Evaluates, recommends, contracts for, and monitors employee benefits and human resource programs (insurance, retirement, etc.) and the facilities insurance needs.
- Processes all new-hire employee paperwork. Enrolling all new-hire employees in payroll and all the appropriate benefit programs.
- Coordinates criminal background checks for all new personnel and school volunteers.
- Pursues knowledge of human resources concepts, practices, policies, and procedures along with knowledge of federal and state employment laws and regulations and public sector employment policies and procedures.

### **Administrative:**

- Assists the Head 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.
- Advises Head of School in the creation of efficient management systems.

### **Technology:**

- Ensures the security of the computer systems at the school.
- Maintains hardware, planning future purchases when necessary.
- Monitors software download and purchasing if required.
- Troubleshoots problems and connects with technology support for solutions.

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 Director of Curriculum and Instruction**

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

- Executes such duties as assigned by the Head of School.
- Assists the Head of School in articulating and advocating for the curricular, instructional and student centered mission of The Birches Academy of Academics and Art and maintaining an effective and positive learning climate in the school.
- Assists in the development of the school handbook designed to define rules and regulations of the school with respect to student behavior.
- Researches and help align innovative, arts integrated curriculum with the New Hampshire State Frameworks, Common Core State Standards, and Core Knowledge Sequence.
- Assists the Head of School in the development, revision, and monitoring of the instructional program.
- Facilitates publicizing school programs and events.
- Consults with teachers on instructional problems, as appropriate, and to assist teachers in improving their classroom performance.
- Assists the Head of School in providing appropriate staff development opportunities for teachers and other staff.
- Cultivates positive and professional relationships with students, faculty, parents, trustees, and community members.
- Supports a school environment that is respectful, responsible, compassionate, and aware.
- Fosters and assists regular, ongoing, and open dialogue with the staff, parents, and the Board of Trustees.
- Assists work on grants that support the economic viability of the school.
- Assists with assessments, progress reports, testing and data analysis that supports student learning.

## Director of Student Affairs

The Director of Student Affairs works collaboratively with the Head of School, teachers, staff, Governing Board of Trustees and The Birches Community to help students, through a variety of means, achieve their potential and ultimately the mission of The Birches Academy. This is accomplished in the following ways:

- Assists the Head of School in articulating and advocating for the student-centered mission of The Birches Academy of Academics and Art and maintaining an effective and positive learning climate in the school.
- Cultivates positive and professional relationships with students, faculty, parents, trustees, and community members.
- Assists in redirecting student behaviors and providing conflict resolution.
- Investigates peer leaders opportunities where peers mediate problems or older and younger students interact posit.
- Supports regular education students in focus grades 3 and 6.
  - Helps achieve the mission of the school to help make all students readers by the time they leave Grade 3.
  - Helps students in Grade 6 with organizational and executive functioning skills to be successful in a “middle school” model.
- Assists in the development of the school handbook designed to define rules and regulations of the school with respect to student behavior
- Consults with teachers on student problems and issues, as appropriate, and assists teachers in improving their classroom performance.
- Assists with discipline issues when the Head of School is not available or in conjunction with the Head of School in order to form relationships with at-risk students.
- Aids regular education or 504 students with social or emotional problems. Uses talk therapy, “lunch bunches” with typically developing students as some of the means of supporting students.
- Attends 504 team meetings or special education meetings when possible in order to be aware of accommodations and help teachers implement them.
- Works with parents of students with excessive absences or tardies.
- Works with DCYF or other social services, files “failure to send” or CHINS in extreme cases.
- Helps coordinate and promote After School Enrichment programs, summer programs in order to help fulfill the point in our mission that “the learning never stops.”
- Executes other duties assigned by the Head of School

## 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.

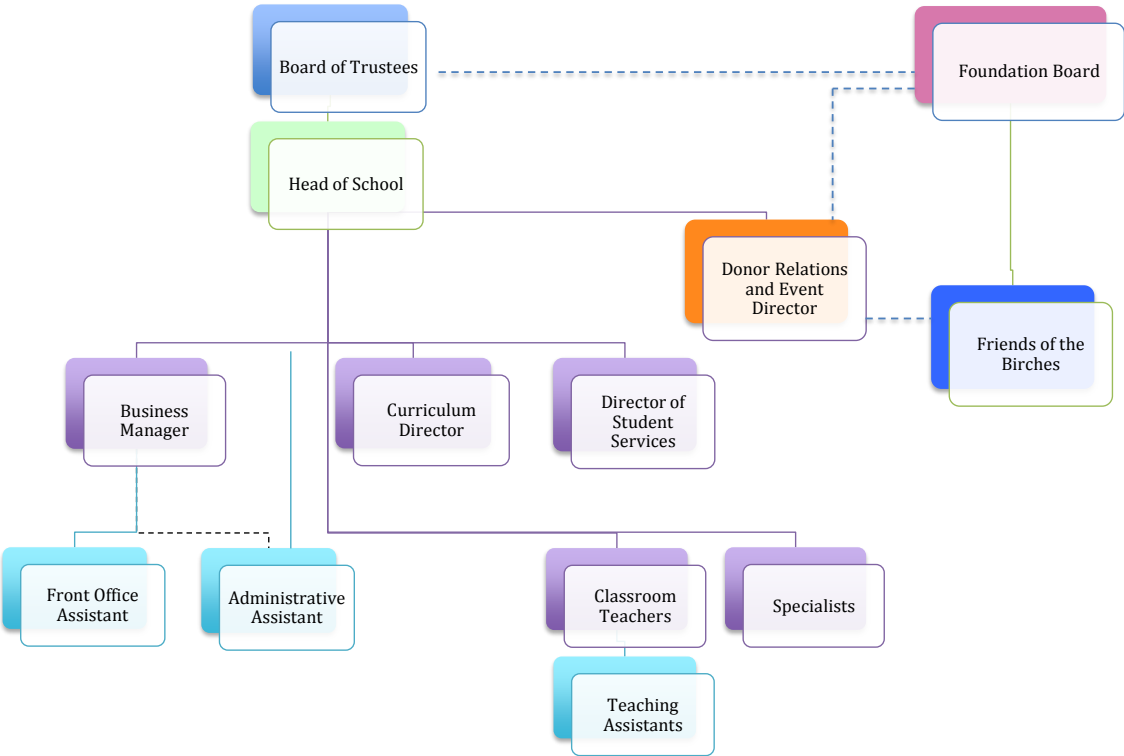
I understand that The Birches Academy is a public school and our enrollment is open and determined by lottery. Students on Individual Education Plans are accepted when it is determined by the special education team that The Birches is a fit for their needs. We strive to meet the individual needs of all 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 2016





## 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

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**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**