

# 1. Application

## Attachment A

**School Name**  
Aspire Online Charter School

**Applicant Name**  
Robert Ralphs

### Table of Contents

---

<b><u>Section</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
1. Cover Sheet (Attachment A) .....	1
2. Title Page (Attachment B) .....	10
3. Target Population (Attachment C) .....	12
4. Market Analysis .....	17
5. Detailed Business Plan .....	23
6. Fiscal Procedures .....	26
7. Organizational Structure and Governing Body .....	42
8. Background Information Sheet and Resume (Attachments F and G) .....	45
9. Articles of Incorporation .....	57
10. Comprehensive Program Instruction .....	58
a. Curricular Emphasis.....	58
b. Accountability Plan.....	71
c. Programmatic Operations.....	82
d. Program Instruction.....	88
e. Calendar and Master Course List.....	94
f. Library Plan.....	98
g. Special Education.....	99
11. Admission .....	100
12. Procedures to Review Complaints .....	102

13. Opportunities for Parental Involvement .....	103
14. Educator Qualifications .....	104
15. Administrative Services .....	107
16. Terms of Conditions of Employment .....	110
17. Employee Evaluation .....	112
18. Employment of Relatives .....	114
19. Insurance .....	115
20. Assurances (Attachment H) .....	116
21. Waivers (Attachment I) .....	121
22. Additional Information/Letters of Support .....	122
23. Utah State Retirement .....	123
24. Capital Facilities Plan. ....	124
25. Attachments .....	127
Affidavits (5)	
Budget	
Article of Incorporation	
Amended Articles of Incorporation	
Board Minutes	

**Attachment A (cont'd)**

Submitted to Terry Linares who works at Tooele  
School District on 92 Lodestone Way, Tooele, UT 84074 (NOTE: repeat this statement for each district in which the school may draw students)

I certify all information contained in this application is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the charter application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered.

The charter school applicant acknowledges that it has read all Utah statutes regarding charter schools and that, if approved, it is subject to and will ensure compliance with all relevant federal, state and local laws and requirements. The charter school applicant acknowledges that, if approved to operate a charter school, it must execute a charter contract with the Utah State Charter School Board within twelve months of the date of approval of the charter by the Utah State Charter School Board and must begin providing educational services within the timeframe outlined in the charter. Failure to do so may result in revocation of the charter approval and, if applicable, termination of the contract and revocation of the charter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Agent (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**All information presented in this application becomes part of the charter contract and may be used for accountability purposes throughout the term of the charter contract**

Submitted to Curt Hansen, Student Services who works at Granite  
School District on 2500 South State Street, SLC Utah 84115 (NOTE: repeat this statement for  
each district in which the school may draw students)

I certify all information contained in this application is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the charter application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered.

The charter school applicant acknowledges that it has read all Utah statutes regarding charter schools and that, if approved, it is subject to and will ensure compliance with all relevant federal, state and local laws and requirements. The charter school applicant acknowledges that, if approved to operate a charter school, it must execute a charter contract with the Utah State Charter School Board within twelve months of the date of approval of the charter by the Utah State Charter School Board and must begin providing educational services within the timeframe outlined in the charter. Failure to do so may result in revocation of the charter approval and, if applicable, termination of the contract and revocation of the charter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Agent (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**All information presented in this application becomes part of the charter contract and may be used for accountability purposes throughout the term of the charter contrac**

**Attachment A (cont'd)**

Submitted to Noel Zabriski, Superintendent who works at Ogden School District on 1950 Monroe, Ogden Utah 84401. (NOTE: repeat this statement for each district in which the school may draw students)

I certify all information contained in this application is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the charter application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered.

The charter school applicant acknowledges that it has read all Utah statutes regarding charter schools and that, if approved, it is subject to and will ensure compliance with all relevant federal, state and local laws and requirements. The charter school applicant acknowledges that, if approved to operate a charter school, it must execute a charter contract with the Utah State Charter School Board within twelve months of the date of approval of the charter by the Utah State Charter School Board and must begin providing educational services within the timeframe outlined in the charter. Failure to do so may result in revocation of the charter approval and, if applicable, termination of the contract and revocation of the charter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Agent (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**All information presented in this application becomes part of the charter contract and may be used for accountability purposes throughout the term of the charter contract**

**Attachment A (cont'd)**

Submitted to McKell Withers, Superintendent who works at Salt Lake City  
School District on 440 East 100 South, SLC Utah 84111. (NOTE: repeat this statement for each  
district in which the school may draw students)

I certify all information contained in this application is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the charter application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered.

The charter school applicant acknowledges that it has read all Utah statutes regarding charter schools and that, if approved, it is subject to and will ensure compliance with all relevant federal, state and local laws and requirements. The charter school applicant acknowledges that, if approved to operate a charter school, it must execute a charter contract with the Utah State Charter School Board within twelve months of the date of approval of the charter by the Utah State Charter School Board and must begin providing educational services within the timeframe outlined in the charter. Failure to do so may result in revocation of the charter approval and, if applicable, termination of the contract and revocation of the charter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Agent (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**All information presented in this application becomes part of the charter contract and may be used for accountability purposes throughout the term of the charter contract**

**Attachment A (cont'd)**

Submitted to Michael Jacobsen, Superintendent who works at Weber  
School District on 5320 South Adams, Ogden Utah 84405. (NOTE: repeat this statement for  
each district in which the school may draw students)

I certify all information contained in this application is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the charter application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered.

The charter school applicant acknowledges that it has read all Utah statutes regarding charter schools and that, if approved, it is subject to and will ensure compliance with all relevant federal, state and local laws and requirements. The charter school applicant acknowledges that, if approved to operate a charter school, it must execute a charter contract with the Utah State Charter School Board within twelve months of the date of approval of the charter by the Utah State Charter School Board and must begin providing educational services within the timeframe outlined in the charter. Failure to do so may result in revocation of the charter approval and, if applicable, termination of the contract and revocation of the charter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Agent (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**All information presented in this application becomes part of the charter contract and may be used for accountability purposes throughout the term of the charter contract**

**Attachment A (cont'd)**

Submitted to Greg who works at Provo  
School District on greg@provo.edu . (NOTE: repeat this statement for each district in which the school may draw students)

I certify all information contained in this application is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the charter application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered.

The charter school applicant acknowledges that it has read all Utah statutes regarding charter schools and that, if approved, it is subject to and will ensure compliance with all relevant federal, state and local laws and requirements. The charter school applicant acknowledges that, if approved to operate a charter school, it must execute a charter contract with the Utah State Charter School Board within twelve months of the date of approval of the charter by the Utah State Charter School Board and must begin providing educational services within the timeframe outlined in the charter. Failure to do so may result in revocation of the charter approval and, if applicable, termination of the contract and revocation of the charter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Agent (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**All information presented in this application becomes part of the charter contract and may be used for accountability purposes throughout the term of the charter contract**



**Attachment A (cont'd)**

Submitted to David Doty, Superintendent who works at Canyons  
School District on 2415 East 7600 South Cottonwood Heights, Utah 84121. (NOTE: repeat this  
statement for each district in which the school may draw students)

I certify all information contained in this application is complete and accurate, realizing that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the charter application process or revocation after award. I understand that incomplete applications will not be considered.

The charter school applicant acknowledges that it has read all Utah statutes regarding charter schools and that, if approved, it is subject to and will ensure compliance with all relevant federal, state and local laws and requirements. The charter school applicant acknowledges that, if approved to operate a charter school, it must execute a charter contract with the Utah State Charter School Board within twelve months of the date of approval of the charter by the Utah State Charter School Board and must begin providing educational services within the timeframe outlined in the charter. Failure to do so may result in revocation of the charter approval and, if applicable, termination of the contract and revocation of the charter.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Agent (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Authorized Agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**All information presented in this application becomes part of the charter contract and may be used for accountability purposes throughout the term of the charter contract**

## 2. Title Page

### Attachment B

Name of Proposed Charter School Aspire Online Charter School  
 New School  Converted School

Name of Applicant Applying for the Charter Children First Utah  
 (This may be a public body, private person, or private organization.)

Authorized Agent for Applicant Robert Ralphs  
 (This may be the individual applicant or an authorized member of the corporate board.)

Authorized Agent Mailing Address [REDACTED]

City Salt Lake City State Utah Zip 84111

District school will be located Several E-mail [REDACTED]

Daytime Phone [REDACTED] Fax [REDACTED]

#### Form of Organization

Non Profit Corporation

Tribal Entity

\_\_\_\_\_

The governing body of a charter school is responsible for the policy decisions of the school. Please indicate the makeup of this body below.

Name (if known at time of application)	Phone Number	Type of Member (examples: parent, business, potential staff)	Position on Board (examples: chair, vice chair, secretary)
Courtney Lassetter	[REDACTED]	Business	Chair
Jordan Clements	[REDACTED]	Business	Founder
David Knight	[REDACTED]	Business	Treasurer
Diana Peterson	[REDACTED]	Parent	

**Attachment B (cont'd)**

**Founding Members of Aspire Online Charter School are:**

Jordan Clements  
David Knight  
Courtney Lassetter  
Diana Peterson

Preferential enrollment for students will not exceed 10% of the student's population and will only be granted to those eligible under State and Federal Charter School law 53A-1a506(b)(i)(A). None of the current founding members need preferential enrollment.

### 3. Target Population

### Attachment C

**Mission Statement (use only this space):**

The mission of Aspire Online Charter School is to offer K-8 instruction with a strong commitment to academic achievement, character development, and leadership training for low-income and minority children.

	GRADES AND SPECIFIC NUMBER OF STUDENTS SERVED BY GRADE													TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS (Enrollment cap)
<b>Year 1</b>	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	80	60	60	55	55	55	55	40	40					500
<b>Year 2</b>	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	80	60	60	55	55	55	55	40	40					500
<b>Year 3</b>	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	80	60	60	55	55	55	55	40	40					500
<b>Ultimate Enrollment</b>	80	60	60	55	55	55	55	40	40					500

*(The number of students should be at maximum the enrollment that is being requested. Insert as many rows as needed to accurately reflect the school's growth model.)*

**School Calendar**

Standard       Extended School Year      Instructional Days 180

Alternative (please describe in 5 words or less)      Start Date August 29, 2011

### Charter School Purposes

### Attachment C (cont'd)

## 1. Continue to improve student learning:

Aspire's innovative combination of online curriculum and adult supervision supports individualized learning by allowing students to work at their own performing grade level and practice until they demonstrate mastery of skills and concepts through online testing. Central to student success is the infrastructure and support that Learning Centers provide its students.

The standard virtual learning model can be challenging for some students. According to the report The Effects of Distance Education on K-12 Student Outcome: A Meta-Analysis, published by Learning Point Associates in October 2004, "In an online environment, students may feel isolated, parents may have concerns about children's social development, students with language difficulties may experience a disadvantage in a text-heavy online environment." It recommends that teachers must help "children acquire the skills of autonomous learning, including self-regulation."

Aspire's Learning Center professional staff will address these challenges while giving attention to the individual needs and progress of students in their classrooms. Regular Teacher and Mentor contact offers an accountable and nurturing environment that ensures student success. Multi-age Learning Centers, with a low Mentor/student ratio (1:20), combine a supportive atmosphere with the benefits of a complete online educational program.

Teachers and Mentors work together at Learning Centers to improve student learning in this unique instructional model. These three key elements are essential to student success in the Aspire program:

- **Teachers**—Teachers are licensed by the state and qualified under the NCLB. Teachers customize student learning plans and carefully monitor student success. They guide the progress of Aspire students, oversee and support Mentors, and ensure compliance with state and district standards by conducting student assessment.
- **Mentors**—Mentors are highly qualified adults, under the supervision of licensed teachers, who are responsible for providing daily supervision at the Learning Centers. They guide students through the online lessons and ensure they are learning. Mentors alert Teachers when students are experiencing academic problems, help students manage their time, monitor student work, and fill out daily attendance logs. Mentors also provide encouragement and discipline within a safe and an inviting learning environment.
- **Learning Centers**—Aspire will establish up to four Learning Centers in neighborhoods with high concentrations of low-income and minority families. Each Learning Center is provided support from a central administrative office and each offers its students computers, filtered internet access, high-quality curricula, and adult supervision.

Aspire's Teachers and Mentors guide student progress and intervene as required to support a pace of learning that enables students to achieve grade-level progress or better. This model not only offers students the ability to pace themselves but also to adjust classroom time to needed subject areas. Once students have achieved lesson mastery, they move forward. While students

learn online, Teachers and Mentors manage their support activities to optimize individual student learning.

## **2. Encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods:**

Online education is increasing in the United States with more than 700,000 K-12 students enrolled in electronic courses in 2006, as reported by a Sloan Consortium study. *Online learning* is also referred to as *internet-based education*, *web-based education*, *e-learning*, and *online education*. The National Council of Online Learning (NACOL) defines online learning as “education in which instruction and content are delivered primarily via the Internet.”

A 2006 report from the National Center for Education Statistics cites data from 2003 that indicates that low-income and minority families are unsurprisingly digitally disadvantaged:

There is a ‘digital divide’...Computer and internet use are divided along demographic and socioeconomic lines. Use of both technologies is higher among Whites than among Blacks and Hispanics. Students living with more highly educated parents are more likely to use these technologies than those living with less well-educated parents, and those living in households with higher family incomes are more likely to use computers and the internet than those living in lower income households.”

The latest census information (2000) states that 51% of American families have access to a computer, and 41% have internet access. The census reveals a disparity of over 67% from low- to high-income family households who have access to a computer. The same census attributes half of the gap between Blacks and Hispanics and the national average to income and education differences.

Aspire was created within this disparate landscape. Focusing on the digitally disadvantaged, Aspire explores new options to serve at-risk students. The standard online learning model—students working from their home on a computer—proves impractical for low-income and minority students, most of whom do not have either the resources or adult support needed to achieve online-learning success. Aspire addresses these challenges by providing computers, internet access, quality online curricula, and highly qualified professionals in a safe physical location.

## **3. Create new professional opportunities for educators that allow them to participate in designing and implementing the learning program:**

Teaching students in an online learning center is significantly different from teaching in a traditional classroom. Teachers spend less time preparing group lessons and more time facilitating individualized learning with each student. Since this is a new and evolving instructional model that reconfigures existing principles of instruction within a new delivery method, teachers will be required to innovate and experiment with the techniques required to engage students and help them self-regulate their learning progress.

## **4. Increase choice of learning opportunities for students:**

Aspire presents Utah families with a new educational alternative that couples adult supported Learning Centers with proven electronic curricula that gives low-income and minority students, previously excluded from virtual learning, new options for academic preparation. Because these learning centers will be located in their neighborhoods they represent real options that open enrollment in schools across the city.

**5. Establish new models of schools and new forms of accountability that emphasize measurement of learning outcomes and the creation of innovative measurement tools:**

Aspire establishes an innovative and unique education model tailored after Hope Co-Op in Denver that will utilize daily attendance at Learning Centers, outside of the home, where children have web-based curriculum and professional, adult-supervision and support.

At Aspire Learning Centers, students attend Monday through Friday to study online with self-paced curricula. Each Learning Center offers classrooms with computers, internet connections and a professional adult Mentor. Children will find consistency and stability in schedules and expectations that encourage their academic growth and achievement.

The Aspire educational plan includes all required state assessments of student progress for grades K-8, as well as additional measures that will serve to inform instruction and provide broader comparisons of student achievement. The academic goals at Aspire are measured, monitored, and evaluated from the first day of class and updated continuously throughout each school year. In addition to state standardized testing, Aspire assesses student performance in the six core subject areas: Language Arts, mathematics, science, history, social science, art, and music.

Online curricula include powerful, integrated tools to measure and track student progress. These help the parent, teacher, and student assess progress against key learning objectives and flag areas that need extra work. The system is designed to determine how students are meeting their academic goals.

The authors of *Disrupting Class: How Innovation Will Change the Way the World Learns* (Clayton Christiansen, Curtis W. Johnson, and Michael B. Horn, McGraw Hill, 2008) emphasize the importance of this real-time-evaluation feature of online instruction:

When students learn through student-centric online technology, testing doesn't have to be postponed until the end of an instructional module and then administered in a batch mode. Rather, we can verify mastery continually to create tight, closed feedback loops. Misunderstandings do not have to persist for weeks until the exam has been administered and the instructor has had time to grade every students test. Rather than a fixed time to learn with variable results student by student, the amount of time to learn can vary, but the resulting learning can be much more consistent. In other words, assessment and individualized assistance can be interactively and interdependently woven into the content-delivery stage, rather than tacked on as a test at the end of the process.

The online model also provides a way to efficiently track attendance, time spent on specific subjects, and progress made within subjects. This information ensures compliance with all Utah attendance and lesson mastery requirements.

The school has several options for professionally developed, proven online curricula from which to choose. Each has advantages, but all have a rigorous academic focus that meets **the state of Utah's requirements**. The school has no intention of developing its own curricular content, but will purchase them using the same standards for evaluation that conventional school districts use to purchase text books adapted to a new media.

**6. Provide greater opportunities for parental involvement in management decisions at the school level:**

Aspire will provide several important methods of parental influence on decisions that affect their children, including leadership roles on the board of directors and parent advisory council, priority consideration for employment opportunities at the Learning Centers, and student academic support. A more detailed explanation of parental involvement is offered in section 13.

**7. Expand public school choice in areas where schools have been identified for improvement, corrective action or restructuring under the *No Child Left Behind Act*:**

The goal of Aspire is to establish Learning Centers *only* in neighborhoods with predominantly low-income and minority students who are under-performing in their current school. (See details in the Market Analysis section.)



## 4. Market Analysis

### a. Market Context

According to state records the enrollment for 2008-09 in Utah’s public school system is 551,370. Of those, 33% are children from low-income families and 20% from ethnic minorities. The Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Utah calculated that from 2000-2007 minorities accounted for one third of the increase in the total population and two thirds of total school enrollment.

According to census estimates, Hispanics make up approximately 28 percent of the population in Salt Lake’s West Valley, 27.2 in South Salt Lake, 27.8 in Ogden, and 27.3 in Midvale. Sections of other neighborhoods, such as Rose Park and Glendale, are also predominantly Spanish-speaking, with Latinos accounting for 60% of the public school children. These are the kind of neighborhoods Aspire will focus on.

Low-income and minority children under-perform academically at disproportionate rates. A 2006 study conducted by the Utah Education Policy Center suggests that ethnicity affects academic achievement. Even after the disadvantages associated with family income and parental education level had been taken into account, there is still a distinct academic gap between Whites and minorities. Researchers suggest that this gap is caused by two main complications: first, because of the unequal distribution of school resources (teacher quality, etc.), minorities more often attend schools of concentrated poverty, and second, because of institutional barriers such as deficit views and low expectations, minorities receive lower quality public education.

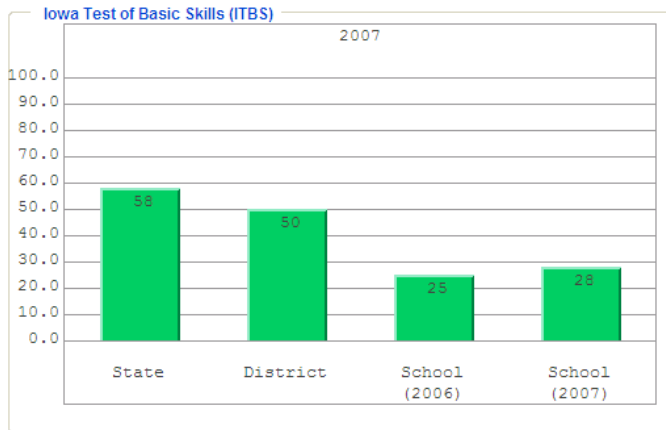
Statistics from the Utah State Office of Education demonstrate disparity in school performance across ethnic and socio-economic groups:

<b>Core CRT Language Arts Testing 2008</b>		<b>Core CRT Mathematics Testing 2008</b>	
<i>Demographic</i>	<i>% Passing</i>	<i>Demographic</i>	<i>% Passing</i>
American Indian	54	American Indian	47
Hispanic	55	Black	49
Black	59	Hispanic	49
Pacific Islander	67	Pacific Islander	59
Asian	80	Asian	77
White	83	White	77
<hr/>		<hr/>	
Low-income	64	Low-income	58
Not low-income	85	Not low-income	78

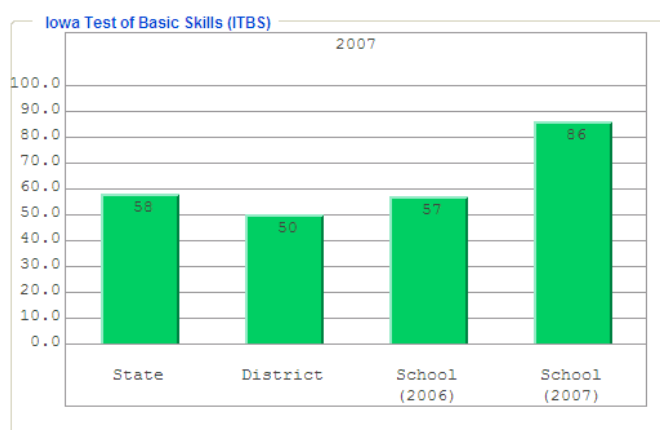
The following data are one illustration of geographic disparity in academic achievement among Utah’s students. Both schools are in the Salt Lake City school district. Rose Park Elementary (a west side school) scored in the 28<sup>th</sup> percentile and Bonneville Elementary (an east side school)

scored in the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile. Unfortunately, these are not exceptions, but examples of the larger reality.

### Rose Park Elementary



### Bonneville Elementary



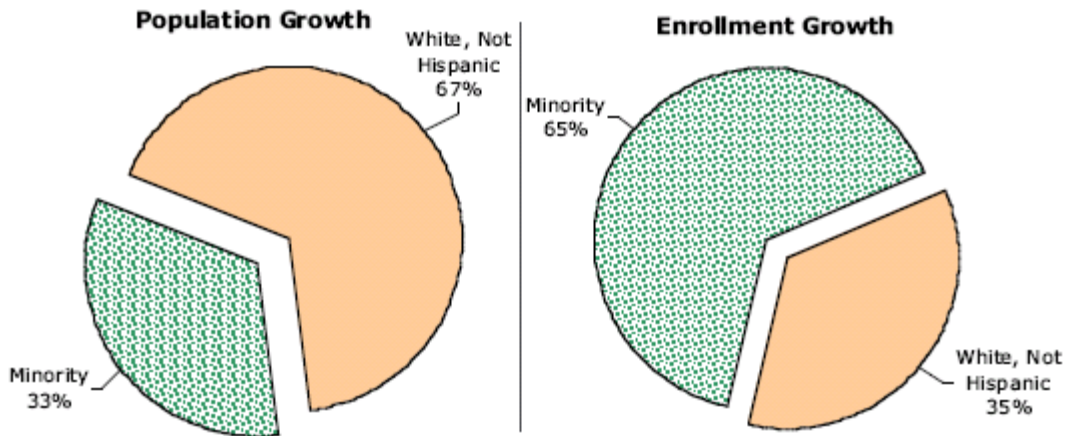
Clearly, if this data is as typical as it appears to be, children on the west side have the greatest need for improved educational opportunity, yet they have the fewest options. The only charter school alternatives on the west side that specifically target low-income and minority children in Salt Lake are the Dual Immersion Academy and the Guadalupe Schools. Aspire offers a new learning opportunity targeted to neighborhoods with low-income and minority populations that are lacking quality educational opportunities.

## b. Market Trends

According to a recent article in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Utah is in the midst of a demographic transformation, exhibiting more diversity than ever before—a trend that is expected to continue. Two crucial factors will exacerbate existing conditions for low-income and minority students: (1) a projected school enrollment increase of 145,000 over the next 5 years and (2) an exploding minority population. Utah ranks first among states in both the percentage of increase in its minority student population and in its students eligible for free/reduced lunch program.

Last year Utah's public school enrollment grew by almost 10,000, and this fall it is expected to grow by another 14,000. Utah's school age population is expected to hit the 700,000 mark by 2014 or shortly thereafter. Ethnic minorities represented 41% of the state's overall population increase between 2000-2004. Of the 34,743 new students in Utah's public schools between 2000-2005, 75% of them were ethnic minorities. This trend is worsening.

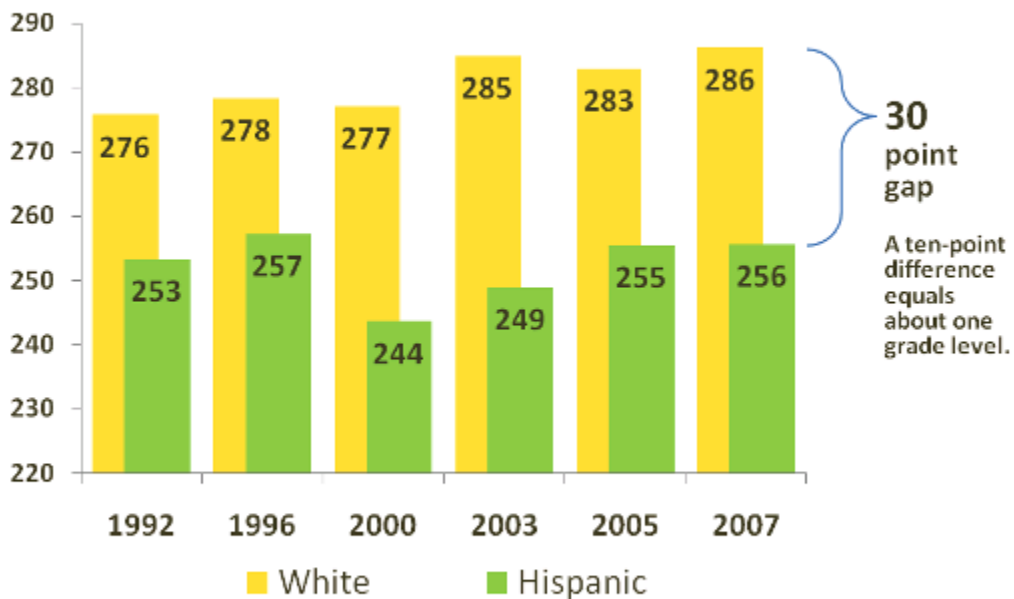
**Minority Contribution to Utah Population and School Enrollment Growth: 2000–2007**



Source: Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Utah analysis of Utah State Office of Education data and Bureau of the Census estimates.

The increase in population is occurring mostly within the demographics with the largest achievement gap. On the 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress Writing Test, Utah Hispanic students scored the lowest among Hispanic students in the U.S. The average score for Utah Hispanics was more than a grade level below the national average. The chart below reflects the trend for academic achievement in mathematics.

**Utah's Minority Achievement Gap, 8th Grade Math**  
 Utah Foundation<sup>1</sup> & National Assessment of Educational Progress<sup>2</sup>



The minority achievement gap in 8th grade math has increased 37% since 1992.

Low-income and minority families live in the most affordable neighborhoods which are often on Salt Lake City's west side. Few charter schools are located in these neighborhoods because the process requires parental sponsors with the time, expertise, and funding—insurmountable obstacles among disadvantaged families with little education, long work days, and few economic resources.

The creation of new charter schools in these neighborhoods may best be achieved in partnership with groups like ours that can help clear such resource obstacles. Aspire will fill this critical unmet need in low-income and minority communities that lack the quality educational options that east-side communities enjoy. The Aspire model gives the state of Utah a cost-efficient and effective method of addressing the special needs of a growing population that may otherwise challenge the conventional classroom methods.

### C. Competitive Advantage

Aspire has a competitive advantage for several reasons:

- It brings a new cost structure to classroom education by leveraging teacher time through the use of technology
- It offers a new student-centric learning model that is currently not available in Utah
- It targets neighborhoods with few other educational choices
- It at the underserved low-income and minority population
- It will have the support of successful, educated, and concerned board members with extensive experience with the educational issues of this population
- It begins with a 1,500-family list of parents with children—largely in the targeted neighborhoods—who are looking for educational alternatives to their neighborhood schools

Aspire's new cost model means that it can reduce the heavy overhead of salaries characteristic of conventional educational methods. Teachers, liberated from the administrative burdens associated with classroom instruction, can focus time on student progress and special needs in the classrooms they supervise with the help of Mentors. Instruction is delivered electronically with human intervention only as required to address issues as they arise.

Aspire will supply proven educational technology to serve a population that has been effectively excluded from this style of learning by the prohibitive costs of computers, content, and internet access. Aspire will provide each classroom of students with computers and educational content, delivered to the desktop and supported by adults with the knowledge required to facilitate their use and the educational process for which they are intended.

Learning Centers will provide an option for families in neighborhoods where educational choice is limited by a lack of sophistication, financial means, English language competency, and transportation. Many of these families aspire to better conditions and education for their children but lack the resources to achieve these goals. The Aspire Charter School recognizes this reality and will help direct Utah educational funds cost effectively to serve the urgent needs of this disadvantaged population.

The support Aspire receives from its parent organization provides a competitive advantage in the pursuit of this underlying objective, both in the strength of its board experience and expertise and in its commitment from financial supporters. Children First Utah (CFU) was incorporated in 2000 as a 501C3 nonprofit organization under the leadership of its first chairman, attorney Jordan Clements, Managing Partner of Peterson Partners. Mr. Clements formed CFU in response to a deep concern for the academic achievement gap that exists between the children of low-income and affluent families in Utah. Under the direction of its current chairman, Courtney Lassetter, a business executive with decades of general management and marketing experience, CFU's Executive Director, Leah Barker, has successfully built a coalition of financial support ranging from national foundations to local corporations and community business leaders.

Aspire will leverage its relationship with CFU by:

- Reaching out to its waiting list of applicants.
- Tapping its fundraising experience and donor lists
- Follow its administrative discipline which includes operational controls, annual financial audits and board scrutiny of both operational and financial activities
- Engaging its committed board of directors and supporters

#### d. Outreach Plan

Aspire is committed to an outreach effort focused on low-income and minority families in the targeted neighborhoods. Outreach efforts will include but are not limited to the following:

- Coordinating efforts with non profit organizations serving low-income and minority families such as: Centro de la Familia, HeadStart, Comunidades Unidas, Boys and Girls Clubs, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Neighborhood House and others
- Tapping CFU's waiting list
- Reaching out through face-to-face meetings and flyers to churches, community groups, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, community councils and local public schools
- A public relations campaign with local media that will include interviews with the newspaper, TV, and Hispanic radio stations
- Distribute bilingual flyers at recreational centers, Hispanic stores, and libraries
- Door-to-door visits in neighborhoods around each Learning Center
- Organized word-of-mouth campaigns
- Direct mail targeting neighborhoods in the Learning Center communities
- A dedicated bilingual Website offering school details and online applications
- Open houses at Learning Centers

#### e. Plan to address high student turnover

Aspire is committed to a plan to address high student turnover that takes advantage of Children First Utah's 2000 person waiting list each year for its scholarships. Those scholarship applicants are low-income, minority students, many of whom come from areas of concentrated poverty.

They are ideal as replacement candidates should Aspire encounter issues of high student turnover.

The nature of the mentoring program within the Learning Center is a second focus of our plan to address high student turnover. It provides a level of communication between teacher and parent that is not presently found in public, charter, or private school models. That communication and the bonding of student, parent and teacher together around a common goal is intended to reduce what is a traditionally high percentage of turnover in online learning programs.

## 5. Detailed Business Plan

Aspire recognizes how important it is to have a well planned and executed budget. Aspire's board is made up largely of business and non-profit leaders who will ensure that the school's non-instructional operations use proven and accepted business practices. Whether the board hires a business manager or engages a professional management service, the school's business practices will include the following:

### **Purchasing:**

- Collect and enter requisitions for purchase orders
- Send PO's to vendors with all required documentation
- Reconcile outstanding PO's with those in system
- Close out cancelled or paid PO's
- Expedite orders from vendors
- Give up to date information on budgets
- Reconcile and manage purchasing cards
- Receive orders

### **Accounts payable:**

- Match PO's to invoices and payments
- Process check requisitions

### **Cash Management:**

- Management of student body account
- Record checks in cash ledger
- Reconcile banks accounts

### **Payroll:**

- Collect timecards
- Make payment calculations for new/terminated employees
- Make retirement plan payments
- Enter timecard info into control and payroll systems
- Get authorization for payroll from Director
- Reconcile and pay health insurance bills

### **Attendance of monthly board meetings**

- Present financial report to the board
- Discuss any issues related to non instructional operations

### **Budget General Ledger:**

- Prepare monthly board reports
- Enter journal entries
- Record payroll in general system

### **Policy and Procedure:**

- Develop school policy for board approval

- Review and develop controls for schools

**Payroll:**

- Reconcile control to system
- Send payroll to payroll processing

**Closing:**

- Reconcile system to control figures
- Month end closing
- Backup files
- File monthly information sheets
- Year end closing
- Move budget items from one year to the next

**Audit:**

- Management of audits
- Negotiate statement changes by CPA firm
- Ensure CPA firm gets all information for audit
- Ensure state reports are sent in a timely manner

**Human Resources:**

- Employee document folder
- Employee benefits folder
- Contracts
- Background checks and reference checking
- Documentation

The cashflow worksheet included with this application provides a clear and complete operational budget, which provides the school with operational surpluses beginning with the first operational year.

**ASSUMPTIONS:**

In building this budget, Aspire made the following assumptions.

- Enrollment breakdowns will be similar to the Hope Co-op model school in Colorado
- Special Education enrollment will be similar to other Utah startup charter schools
- The school will qualify for, apply, and receive funding from the Minimum School Program as well as standard startup programs available to all Utah charter schools
- Aspire's parent organization, Children First Utah, has committed to donate or raise at least \$50,000 in startup assistance funding, plus provide ongoing financial support as required either directly or through a derivative organization specifically incorporated for its oversight and support
- Aspire's online curriculum expenses will cost about \$175 per student, with additional expense for paper and offline activities, similar to the model school in Colorado
- Aspire will pay above-average teacher salaries because teachers work a longer year and travel among several Learning Centers (reimbursed for travel expenses)



- Mentors will earn about \$18 per hour, about 70 percent higher than traditional instructional aides, reflecting the requirement for maturity and judgment required
- Maintenance and Operations for Aspire will be an information technology staff of one director and two technicians. Learning Center facility maintenance will be outsourced and is reflected in Property Services
- Grades K-6 will have one computer for every two students, while grades 7 and higher will have one computer per student
- Learning Center lease payments are similar to the Colorado model, totaling less than ten percent of total revenue
- Internet and phones will be provided for a central office and each Learning Center
- A \$5,000 monthly allowance is budgeted for student transportation, to provide or assist parents with transportation
- Lunch programs are self-sustaining and have no net impact on the school's budget, and will be outsourced, since kitchen facilities will not likely exist in Learning Centers
- Each Learning Center will receive an enhancement allowance to provide for additional services that may vary from center to center, based on community needs. Enhancement may include after school care, summer programs, lunch subsidies, or additional transportation assistance
- Expense increases will be three percent from year one to two, and five percent from years two to three, except for employee benefits which increase at ten percent per year
- If funding is materially different than projections, Learning Center enhancement will be reduced first

This budget projection is balanced, uses reasonable revenue estimates, and is inclusive of all operational costs, showing a liberal increase in expenses each year. This budget does include some fundraising (about three percent of revenue) which is the commitment of the parent organization of the school. It has successfully raised nearly 20 times that amount in each of the last five years.

## **Budget**

The projected operational budgets are attached to this application. The budget follows the Charter School Budget Template contained in the charter application and are aligned with the mission of Aspire.

## 6. Fiscal Procedures

Aspire will incorporate the following fiscal procedures to ensure that the School's assets are used for approved purposes. The fiscal procedures are categorized into financial reporting procedures and internal control policies.

Financial Reporting Procedures—Aspire's Board of Trustees will approve the annual budget submitted by the Treasurer. The financial reports will be reviewed by a certified public accountant prior to being distributed. The budget will be approved in May for the following year. The budget will serve as the basis for expected revenue and expenditures as well as personnel head count and capital expenditures. Aspire will prepare a summary financial report (statement of operations, balance sheet, statement of cash flows, personnel head count and capital expenditures) monthly to present to the Board for review and discussion. Additionally, the financial report will include a budget to actual comparison report for the Board of Trustee's review.

On an annual basis, the Board of Trustees will review the surplus or deficit generated from operations. In the event of a surplus, discretionary expenditures will be approved by the Board of Trustees and incorporated in the subsequent year's annual budget. In the event of a deficit, the subsequent year's annual budget will reflect the appropriate reduction in spending required to maintain an adequate cash flow.

Internal Control Policies—Aspire will adopt internal controls designed to ensure the School's assets are used for approved purposes. The primary internal control is the segregation of duties for the following: authorizing transactions, record keeping and maintaining custody of assets. See detailed financial policies for more information.

Authorizing Transactions—The CAO, Vice CAO and/or Treasurer are required to approve all expenditures in excess of \$10,000. The Director will approve all transactions less than \$10,000.00. Checks will require authorized signatures from the board or the Director, while disbursements will be drafted and kept by the Business Manager.

Record Keeping—A business manager will be engaged and will be responsible for the accounting (using Generally Accepted Accounting Principles,) preparing reconciliation's, disbursements and financial and other reports. Procedures will be adopted to ensure cash receipts are processed by two people with a check and balance system. The business manager will attend School Finance and Statistics trainings prior to the beginning of the school year.

Custody of Assets—Aspire will maintain an account at a financial institution. Only the CAO, Treasurer and Board of Trustees, and Director will be signers on the account. The accountant will receive the bank statement and prepare the bank reconciliation, which will be reviewed and initialed by the Treasurer.

# Aspire Online Charter School Fiscal Policies and Procedure Guide

## PART I –POLICIES

### 100 INTERNAL CONTROL POLICIES

Aspire Online Charter School, under the direction of the Board of Trustees, is required to establish and maintain adequate accounting records and internal control procedures. Internal control consists of five components: control environment, assess risk, control activities, communicate essential information, and monitor. Internal controls focus on three areas: financial reporting, operations, and compliance.

Aspire Online Charter School and all levels of administration are responsible for preventing and detecting instances of fraud and related misconduct and for establishing and maintaining proper internal controls that provide security and accountability of the resources of the school. Administration is also responsible for recognizing risks and for monitoring for indications of fraud or misconduct.

Any employee with reasonable basis for believing fraudulent or related misconduct has occurred will be required and explicitly encouraged to report such incidents to the designated authorities within the school or the State Office of Education.

Internal control policies provide Aspire Online Charter School with the foundation to properly safeguard its assets, implement management’s internal policies, provide compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, and to produce timely and accurate financial information.

### 101 *Compliance with Laws*

Aspire Online Charter School will follow all the relevant laws and regulations that govern Charter Schools within the State of Utah. Additionally, Federal Government laws and regulations that relate to grant funding will be adopted as the grant funding is received. The following are specific policies of Aspire Online Charter School:

#### A. Political Contributions

No funds or assets of Aspire Online Charter School may be contributed to any political party or organization or to any individual who either holds public office or is a candidate for public office. The direct or indirect use of any funds or other assets of

Aspire Online Charter School for political contributions in any form—whether in cash or other property, services, or the use of facilities—is strictly prohibited. Aspire Online Charter School also cannot be involved with any committee or other organization that raises funds for political purposes.

Following are examples of prohibited activities:

1. Contributions by an employee that are reimbursed through expense accounts or in other ways.
2. Purchase by the organization of tickets for political fundraising events.
3. Contributions in-kind, such as lending employees to political parties or using the school's assets in political campaigns.

#### B. Record Keeping

To provide an accurate and auditable record of all financial transactions, the school's books, records, and accounts are maintained in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles as required by state law applicable to Charter Schools.

Further, the school specifically requires that:

1. No funds or accounts may be established or maintained for purposes that are not fully and accurately described within the books and records of the school.
2. Receipts and disbursements must be fully and accurately described in the books and records.
3. No false entries may be made on the books or records nor any false or misleading reports issued.
4. No false or fictitious invoices may be paid.

## **102 Board of Trustees Authorities**

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the operation of Aspire Online Charter School in accordance with state and federal laws. The Board of Trustees is also responsible for operating the school in accordance with the representations made in its charter.

Specifically, the Board of Trustees shall have the sole authority to approve and will incorporate into its own minutes such matters as (i) change of the School's name, with the charter authorizer's approval (ii) adoption of the annual operating and capital budgets, (iii) selection or termination of key employees (iv) key employees' salary and salary changes, (v) incurrence of debt, mortgages or other encumbrances and their covenants and restrictions, within the terms of the charter (vi) investment policies, (vii) depository and investment banks, (viii) purchase or sale of property (ix) lease of equipment or property (x) opening or closing checking or savings accounts, and (xi) selection of Aspire Online Charter

School's certified public accountants and (xii) other activities associated with the operations of Aspire Online Charter School.

The Board of Trustees will meet regularly to ensure that its fiduciary duty is maintained. The Board will review the following: prior meeting minutes, business items, educational items, subcommittee reports, new business and other items.

### **103 Signature Authorities**

To properly segregate duties within Aspire Online Charter School, the President, the Treasurer of the Board and the School Director are the only individuals with signatory authority and are responsible for authorizing all cash transactions.

### **104 Government Records Access Management Act (GRAMA)**

Aspire Online Charter School will provide access to Aspire Online Charter School's records if requested to the State Office of Education, State Charter School Board, or any group or individual formally requesting such information consistent with applicable statutes or rules.

### **105 Security of Financial Data**

- A. The school's accounting software will be reviewed to ensure that general and application controls to unauthorized access to data is precluded (i.e., proper password protection and authorizations for inquiry or browse only functions.)
- B. The system's accounting data shall be backed up regularly by the Business Manager to ensure the recoverability of financial information in case of hardware failure. The back up should be stored in a fire safe area and properly secured.
- C. All other financial data, petty cash box, unused checks and unclaimed checks will be secured by the Business Manager from unauthorized access.

### **106 Security of School Documents**

Originals of the following corporate documents are maintained and their presence shall be verified on a periodic basis:

- A. Charter and all related amendments
- B. Charter School by-laws
- C. Minutes of the Board of Trustees and subcommittees
- D. Banking agreements

- E. Leases
- F. Insurance policies
- G. Vendor invoices
- H. Grant and contract agreements
- I. Fixed asset inventory list
- J. Contract and grant billings

### **107 Use of School Assets**

School employees should not use any of the school's assets for personal use without prior approval of the School Administration and with proper justification.

### **108 Use Of School Credit Cards**

Charter School credit cards and purchase cards should only be issued with the formal approval of the Board of Trustees and with proper justification. The cost/benefit to Aspire Online Charter School should be fully reviewed to ensure that no other method is appropriate. If credit cards are issued they should be assigned to certain Charter School employees and should be used only for school-related expenditures. All charges must be supported by invoices or travel reports to be eligible for payment by Aspire Online Charter School.

Monthly credit card statements are reconciled to invoices and travel reports and are approved by Aspire Online Charter School Director or Business Manager.

## **200 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

Charter school accounting policies and financial reporting adopted by the school should be consistent with a special purpose governmental entity that engages in business type activities. The Board of Trustees has oversight of the management of Aspire Online Charter School inclusive of establishing the governance structure and the financial management policies as set forth in the school's charter.

### **201 Basis of Accounting**

Aspire Online Charter School will maintain its accounting records and related financial reports on the modified accrual basis of accounting, with accrual taking place annually.

## **202 Accounting Policies**

The accounting policies and financial reporting adopted are consistent with state law and generally accepted accounting practices.

## **203 Revenues**

Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned, consistent with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to special purpose governmental units.

## **204 Expenditures**

Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, expenses are recognized when services are incurred or goods are received.

## **205 Cash Management**

- A. The school maintains cash accounts at the following banks:
  - 1. Payroll - XXXXXX
  - 2. Operating – XXXXXX
- B. A schedule of aged accounts and grants receivable is prepared monthly and reviewed by the Business Manager for collection. Appropriate collection procedures are initiated, if necessary.

## **206 Budgets**

- A. Aspire Online Charter School prepares an annual operating budget of revenues and expenses and a cash flow projection. These budgets and projections are reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees at an open and public meeting and modified, as necessary.
- B. Financial statements displaying budget vs. actual results are prepared by the Business Manager and reviewed by the Treasurer and presented to the Board of Trustees at each monthly board meeting.

## **207 Insurance and Bonding**

- A. The school maintains minimum levels of coverage, as deemed appropriate by the Board of Trustees, for the follow policies:
  - 1. General liability
  - 2. Business & personal property (including auto/bus)
  - 3. Computer equipment
  - 4. Workers' compensation
  - 5. Personal injury liability
  - 6. Unemployment
  - 7. Board Insurance
  
- B. The school requires proof of adequate insurance coverage from all prospective contractors, as deemed applicable by the Board of Trustees.

## **208 Employee Retirement Program**

Aspire Online Charter School shall participate in a retirement program as determined by the Board of Trustees and administered by the Business Manager.

## **209 Record Retention and Disposal**

- A. Records are maintained for the following minimum periods:
  - 1. Books, records, documents, and other supporting evidence including paid, cancelled, or voided checks, accounts payable records, vendors' invoices, payroll sheets and registers of salaries and wages, tax withholding statements, employee timesheets and other public documents are retained according to state law.
  
- B. The following records supporting federal contracts, as required by U.S. Office of Management and Budget, are retained for the indicated minimum periods or consistent with state law:
  - 1. For three years after submission of the final report of expenditures: general ledger, trial balance, accounts payable and accounts receivable ledger, payroll register, and petty cash book, check register and checks, invoices. Except for:
    - a) If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the 3-year period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims



or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action taken.

- b) Records for real property and equipment acquired with Federal funds shall be retained for 3 years after final disposition.
- 2. Permanently: Audit reports, annual corporate reports, charter, board minutes, tax and legal correspondence, labor contracts, insurance claims and policies, and retirement and pension records.
- C. The disposal date determined under this policy is the end of the fiscal year, or the date of final payment of government grants.
- D. All records not supporting government grants or otherwise covered by rules of the Internal Revenue Service are retained for three years from the end of the fiscal year in which the records were originally prepared.
- E. All financial records are maintained in alphabetical order, organized by vendor.
- F. In connection with the disposal of any records, a memorandum of record disposal is prepared by the Business Manager listing the record or the class of records disposed of. The Board of Trustees certifies this memorandum of records disposal.

## **210 Financial Reporting**

The Business Manager maintains supporting records in sufficient detail to prepare the School's financial reports, including:

- A. Annually:
  - 1. Financial statements for audit
  - 2. Annual budget, finance, and program reports
- B. Monthly:
  - 1. Trial balance
  - 2. Internally generated budget vs. actual financial statements with explanations for significant variances
  - 3. Updating of the cash flow projection
  - 4. Monthly report for State Office of Education
- C. Quarterly:
  - 1. IRS Form 941 and payroll tax returns and comparable state taxing authority returns, unless outsourced

2. Other reports upon request

## **211 Audit**

The Board of Trustees contracts annually with a qualified independent certified public accounting firm to conduct an audit of Aspire Online Charter School's financial statements in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, 2003 Revision (GAS) and, if applicable, the *U.S Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-133*. The selected audit firm must be familiar with these standards and related State of Utah regulations in order to properly conduct the audit engagement.

## **300 POLICIES RELATED TO ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND NET ASSETS**

### **301 Assets**

Economic resources that are recognized and measured in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Assets also include certain deferred charges that are not resources, but are recognized and measured in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The following sections describe policies related to the recognition of assets.

### **302 Bank Accounts**

- A. Bank accounts for the indicated purpose(s) and limitation(s) have been authorized by the Board of Trustees of the School at the indicated Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC)-insured banks:

<i>Name of Bank</i>	<i>Purpose/Limitation of Account</i>
Zions Bank	Savings and Checking Accounts

### **303 Petty Cash Payments**

- A. Petty cash payments are made from a fund not to exceed \$200, and should be for cash advances, local expense reimbursement, and small-dollar vendor purchases, provided proper documentation is furnished with each request. No individual payment shall be greater than \$100.

B. The petty cash account is balanced on a monthly basis by the Business Manager.

### **304 *Criteria for Capitalizing and Depreciating for Property and Equipment***

All tangible personal property with a useful life of more than one year and a unit acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more is capitalized and recorded in the statement of net assets.

Depreciation associated with the fixed asset will be calculated based on its useful life and straight-line depreciation method. The depreciation expense will be recorded in the statement of revenues, expenses, and changes in net assets.

### **305 *Impairment of Assets***

A recognized impairment of an asset is reflected when circumstances warrant. The appropriate adjustment is made for any impaired assets, accompanied by a description of the impaired asset and the measurement assumptions used in determining the impairment. All impairments should be reported to the Board of Trustees for approval of the adjustment to the fixed asset subsidiary ledger.

### **306 *Betterments***

Expenditures for significant betterments of existing leased/owned properties are recorded in fixed assets at cost. Maintenance and repairs are expensed as incurred. Depreciation associated with the betterment will be calculated based on its useful life and straight-line depreciation method. The depreciation expense will be recorded in the statement of revenues, expenses, and changes in net assets.

### **307 *Liabilities***

Economic obligations that are recognized and measured in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. Liabilities also include certain deferred amounts that are not obligated, but are recognized and measured in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles. The following sections describe policies related to the recognition of liabilities.

### **308 *Accounts Payable***

Only valid accounts payable transactions based on documented vendor invoices, receiving reports, or other approved documentation are recorded as accounts payable.

### **309 *Accounts Payable Payment Policy***

Vendors and suppliers are paid as their payment terms require, taking advantage of any discounts offered. If cash flow problems exist, payments are made on a greatest dependency/greatest need basis.

### **310 *Accrued Liabilities***

Salaries, wages earned, and payroll taxes, together with professional fees, rent, and insurance costs incurred, but unpaid, are reflected as a liability when entitlement to payment occurs. Liabilities are accrued annually.

### **311 *Accrued Teachers' Salary***

The portion of any teachers' salaries paid for a school year that extends into the next fiscal year (e.g., a twelve-month salary schedule from September 1 to August 31 of the following year) should be accrued at the end of the fiscal year for which services were rendered.

### **312 *Debt***

- A. When applicable, short-term debt consists of financing expected to be paid within one year of the date of the annual audited financial statements. Long-term debt consists of financing that is not expected to be repaid within one year.
- B. All short-term and long-term debt is approved by the Board of Trustees.
- C. Loan agreements approved by the Board of Trustees should be in writing and should specify all applicable terms, including the purpose of the loan, the interest rate, and the repayment schedule.

### **313 *Net Assets***

Net assets are recorded in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to special purpose governmental units. Net assets include the following:

- Unrestricted
- Restricted
- Investment in Capital Assets, net of related debt

## **400 COST ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

### **401 *Consistency in Cost Accounting***

Practices used by Aspire Online Charter School in estimating costs in grant/contract proposals are consistent with its accounting practices used in accumulating and reporting costs. Accounting practices used by Aspire Online Charter School in accumulating and reporting actual costs are consistent with its practices used in estimating costs in its grant and contract proposals.

### **402 *Cost Accounting Period***

The fiscal year of Aspire Online Charter School is July 1st through June 30th. The same accounting period is used for all adjusting entries and accruals.

### **403 *Gain or Loss on Disposition of Assets***

Gains and losses from the sale or other disposition of property are recorded as revenue in the year in which they occur, and are reflected as such on applicable financial statements.

## **500 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

### **501 *Property and Equipment***

Aspire Online Charter School maintains detailed records of all government-furnished property and equipment, with an identification and segregation of property and equipment acquired through government contracts.

### **502 *Identification of Property***

Aspire Online Charter School tags all property upon receipt and assigns an identification number to the property and all applicable documents.

### **503 *Recording and Reporting of Property***

A. Aspire Online Charter School maintains a log identifying all property in its possession, as follows:

1. Name and description
2. Serial number, model number, or other identification
3. Whether title vests with Aspire Online Charter School or another entity
5. Location and condition of the equipment
6. Ultimate disposition data, including date of disposal and sales price or method of disposal

#### **504 Physical Inventories**

- A. Aspire Online Charter School performs a physical inventory of all property in its possession or control on an annual basis.
- B. The physical inventory records include each asset, the related control number, location, and a brief description of its condition.
- C. The physical inventory is reconciled to the detailed fixed asset subsidiary ledger, and differences, if any, are investigated and reconciled.

#### **505 Disposal of Property and Equipment**

- A. No item of property or equipment shall be removed from the premises without prior approval from the Business Manager and/or the Board of Trustees.
- B. Aspire Online Charter School has adopted standard disposition procedures for the school staff to follow, which include an *Asset Disposal Form*, which identifies the asset, the reason for disposition, and signature of the requester. The form also allows for an identification of the asset's book value, condition of the asset, and supervisory approval or denial.
- C. When property is retired, the appropriate asset in the fixed asset subsidiary will be adjusted and properly reflected in the general ledger.

## **600 PROCUREMENT POLICIES**

### **601 *Procurement – Goods and Services***

Aspire Online Charter School procures only those items and services that are required to perform the mission and/or fill a bona fide need. Procurements are made using best value contracting which includes assessing the best value considering quality, performance, timing, and price. However, the school will use a competitive procurement process, which requires sound business practices for purchases less than \$5,000. The school will also select the best value by obtaining three written quotes for items greater than \$5,000 and less than \$50,000. Finally, a formal bid process will be used for items greater than \$50,000, in which three bids will be received and evaluated using a formal evaluation process.

- A. The School adheres to the following objectives:
1. Procurements will be completely impartial based strictly on the merits of supplier and contractor proposals and applicable related considerations such as delivery, quantity, etc.
  2. Make all purchases in the best interests of the school and its funding sources.
  3. Obtain quality supplies/services needed for delivery at the time and place required.
  4. Buy from responsible and dependable sources of supply.
  5. Obtain maximum value for all expenditures.
  6. Deal fairly and impartially with all vendors.
  7. Be above suspicion of unethical behavior at all times; avoid any conflict of interest, related parties or even the appearance of a conflict of interest in Aspire Online Charter School supplier relationships.
- B. Aspire Online Charter School will execute a *Purchase Order* for all purchases over \$1000 and it shall be approved by the Board Treasurer for purchases less than \$25,000 and by the Board of Trustees for purchase greater than \$25,000.
- C. All lease agreements will be evidenced by a lease or sublease agreement approved by the Board of Trustees and signed by the Board Chair. The agreement will identify all the terms and conditions of the lease.

## **602 *Emergency Purchases***

An “emergency purchase” is the purchase of goods or services that are so badly needed that the school will suffer financial or operational damage if they are not secured immediately. A decision to purchase may be declared in an emergency at the school’s discretion and “best value” procurement guidelines must be followed. In addition, the purchase must be authorized by the Treasurer or designee.

## **700 PAYROLL AND TRAVEL POLICIES**

### **701 *Payroll Policies***

- A. Employees are paid on a 12-month, monthly schedule from September 10 to the following August 10.
- B. Employee’s time is properly approved by both the individual and the supervisor and reported to the Business Office or designated representative.
- C. All employee payroll amounts are calculated based upon approved rates included in the individual’s personnel file.
- D. Any changes to the pay rates or benefits are properly authorized.
- E. All payroll taxes and benefits are properly calculated and any deposits made in a timely manner.
- F. All payroll tax reports are prepared in a timely manner and reviewed by a designated individual for accuracy prior to filing.

### **702 *Employee Mileage Reimbursement***

- A. All employees are reimbursed at the standard mileage rate per mile, as determined by the Board of Trustees, for use of their own vehicle for business related travel. In addition, parking fees and tolls paid are reimbursable if properly supported.
- B. All employees requesting such mileage reimbursement are required to furnish a *Travel Report* containing the destination of each trip, its purpose and the miles driven, parking fees and tolls, within 30 days after the travel date. Each employee is responsible for detailing the travel and related expenses and including the required supporting documentation.



- C. The travel report must be signed by the employee and approved by their direct supervisor.

## **800 CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS POLICIES**

### **801 *Consultant Utilization***

The utilization of all consultants and contract personnel are sufficiently evidenced by:

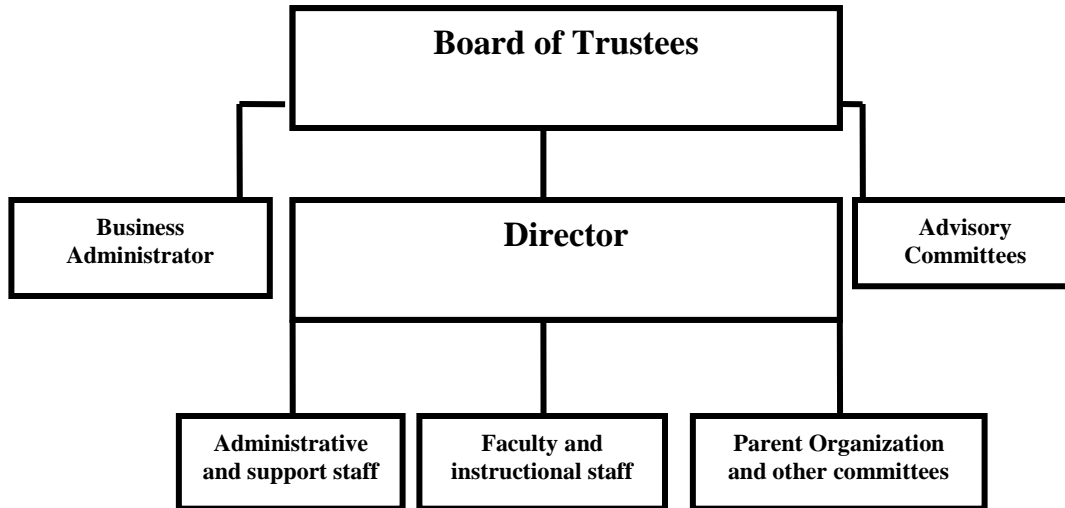
- A. Details of all agreements (e.g., work requirements, rate of compensation, and nature and amount of other expenses, if any) with the individuals or organizations providing the services and details of actual services performed.
- B. Invoices or billings submitted by consultants, including sufficient detail as to the time expended and nature of the actual services performed.
- C. The use of a management contract for educational and administrative services will clearly identify the contractor's performance requirements, including students' academic achievement, contractor's compensation and Aspire Online Charter School's rights to educational curricula and intellectual property developed.

### **802 *Independent Contractors***

The use of consultants is closely monitored so as not to vary from the rules of the Internal Revenue Code and Utah law. In particular, consultants will:

- A. Be free from the employer's control and direction in performing the service, both under a contract and in fact.
- B. Provide a service that is outside the school's usual course of business or provide a service on a temporary basis.
- C. Must be engaged in an independent trade, occupation, profession, or business of the same type.
- D. Not receive any fringe benefits as such, although their fee may include provision for fringe benefits.
- E. Use his or her own stationery or time sheet in billing for services.

## 7. Organizational Structure and Governing Body



### ***Board of Trustees***

The Board of Trustees governs Aspire. Board members are appointed consistent with the included Bylaws of Children First Utah, which also governs the non-profit parent organization and the school.

The current Board Members are: Jordan Clements, Courtney Lassetter, David Knight, and Diana Peterson.

Should this board structure be incompatible with any future statute or rule governing Utah Charter Schools, the Board will amend its bylaws, charter, and/or board makeup consistent with such changes.

After the school begins operation, the board will establish a Parent Advisory Council made up of two parents, one appointed by the Center Leader and School Director and one elected by the parents at the learning center, from each learning center. The Council will serve to provide parents a voice in school management and governance decisions, and develop ways to build parental involvement at all school levels.

### **Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees may include but are not limited to:**

- Ensure that the School follows the mission and philosophy and complies with all applicable laws and regulations
- Authorize and/or approve any and all amendment(s) before being submitted to the State Charter Board
- Promote the school's mission

- Organize and maintain additional programs
- Coordinate the efforts of volunteers for classroom help, class actives, field trips, assemblies, and other volunteer based activities
- Assist in raising funds for supplementary materials and activates
- Create advisory committees

### **Responsibilities of Chief Administrative Officer**

- Sets the agenda
- Presides at all meetings
- Appoints all committees
- Signs legal documents
- Chairs committee

### **Responsibilities of Vice CAO**

- Performs duties of CAO if the CAO is absent or disabled
- Coordinates meeting agendas

### **Responsibilities of Treasurer**

- Responsible for money received/disbursed
- Countersign disbursements w/CAO
- Submission of monthly financial report and annual report
- Submission of annual budget
- Ensure adequate financial controls

### **Responsibilities of Secretary**

- Writes and distributes meeting agendas to members
- Post public notice of meetings
- Keep minutes of meetings
- Attest to legal documents

### **Meeting frequency**

The Board of Trustees meets once a month, or as needed and will give at least 24 hour public notice. Meetings will be guided by an agenda, to a) discuss the School's operations and hear reports and updates from each board member, b) consider and adopt policies, and c) consider requests and concerns from parents, students, and teachers. A majority vote of the total board membership constitutes action by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees may not act unless a quorum of board members is present.

### **Sub Committees and the Delegation of Action**

The Board of Trustees may, at its discretion, appoint and delegate special task forces or committees, or the School Director to investigate and research specific items related to school policy, procedure, programs, and curriculum. Where possible the board will effectively give clear instructions and or suggestions so that the Board of Trustees as a whole can continue to maintain a focus of their responsibilities.

### **Parent Organizations**

The Parent Organization at Aspire is comprised of parents/guardians whose students attend each Learning Center. The Parent Organization offers parents a means to support the school through volunteer opportunities, fundraising, community relations, and school promotional activities.

The responsibilities of this organization include but are not limited to:

- Organizing and supporting, through volunteer service, the policies and procedures outlined by the board
- Coordinating the efforts of parent volunteers for classroom help, class activities, field trips, assemblies, extracurricular activities, car pooling and transportation of students, public relations, traffic control and other volunteer based activities
- Organizing and maintaining additional programs as directed by the Board
- Raising funds for supplementary materials and activities
- Assist the board in other areas such as serving on sub-committees, etc.

## 8. Background Information Sheet and Resume

### Attachment F

Name Courtney J. Lassetter

Role in School (list positions with school) Board Chairman

#### **Employment History:**

Using as much space as necessary below, please provide your employment history that supports your qualifications and relates your experiences to be considered sufficiently qualified to operate a charter school. Specifically address your qualifications and experiences as they relate to the development of academic programs, operations of a school or a small business, and background in financial management.

In my 33 year career I have served in numerous general management roles, including: President and CEO of William Underwood, Canada, the Canadian subsidiary of a Fortune 500 grocery manufacturing firm; President and CEO of Schwinn Cycling and Fitness, Canadian distribution arm of the Chicago bicycle manufacturing company; President and Founder of Performance Technology, Inc., a technology consulting and staffing firm; and President and CEO of Electronic Courseware International, Inc., a electronic courseware developer based in Utah country. In these positions I had responsibility for all business functions including the overall strategic management of the companies.

I have also held Sales and Marketing Roles at IBM, Pet Inc., SkyMall, and recently a 9-year stint as VP Marketing and Business Development at Medicity Inc., a medical software company based in downtown Salt Lake City. I believe that I am qualified to understand and address the marketing requirements of a charter school as well as the broader business and administrative requirements of operating a charter school.

My experience also includes several semesters as an instructor at BYU, teaching Freshman English and New Testament. I have published articles in national magazines, newspapers, industry journals, and an encyclopedia.

I spent time immersed in the problems of electronic curriculum design during my time as President of EKI, an early developer of electronic courseware for middle schools, high schools, and community colleges. While I do not consider myself a curriculum design expert, I do appreciate some of the problems associated with both the development and the classroom deployment of electronic learning systems.

During my career I have been active in both community and church affairs with roles on the board of directors for the Judevine Center, an innovative in-residence program for autistic children, the Opera Theater of St. Louis, counselor in the Toronto Stake of the LDS church, Director of the Youth Leadership Program a week-long in residence leadership development

initiative of the LDS church in Ontario, and most recently as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Children First Utah, a scholarship fund for low-income and minority children.

**Education History:**

Using as much space as necessary below, please provide information on your educational training (including degrees earned, dates enrolled, and institutions) that supports your qualifications to be considered sufficiently qualified to operate a charter school.

I received a degree in English Literature from BYU in 1975, where I began study in the fall of 1969 and enrolled full-time continuously except for a two year church mission in 1971-1973. I spent a year in an English Literature graduate program at BYU during the 1975-1976 school year. I have also taken graduate courses at Washington University during 1978 as a non-degree seeking student. I am a serious life-time student with a disciplined habit of reading and writing on many subjects since I left formal classroom instruction.

As a part of my professional development, I attended a four week “Managing the Enterprise” course at the Columbia University Business School during the summer of 1985 with executives from large enterprises around the world. The course is designed to expose young business executives to advanced topics in financial and strategic enterprise management. The faculty was drawn from the business school and supplemented with faculty from other business schools and senior executives from Fortune 500 companies.

**Statement of Intent:**

Using as much space as necessary below, provide a personal statement regarding your role and commitment to this application as it has been written.

I serve as the Chairman of the Board of Children First Utah, the sponsoring organization. In this role I oversee the activities of the executive director and the operational planning, site selection, and recruitment of personnel required to staff the Learning Centers of Aspire. I also expect to be responsible for working with the board of directors to raise funds for the startup costs associated with the charter school.

**Attachment F (cont'd)**

Please provide the following information on the authorized agent, each governing body member, and any individuals responsible for the day-to-day operation of the school. A resume for each individual is also required. This page may be copied as many times as necessary.\*

Name Robert Ralphs

Role in School (list positions with school) Registered Agent

**Employment History:**

Using as much space as necessary below, please provide your employment history that supports your qualifications and relates your experiences to be considered sufficiently qualified to operate a charter school. Specifically address your qualifications and experiences as they relate to the development of academic programs, operations of a school or a small business, and background in financial management.

Employment History:

2009- Present

Children First Utah

*Ensure more low-income children have access to a quality education.*

Executive Director

- Responsible for all facets of operations with emphasis on: Fundraising, board development, budgeting, and program oversight.

1985-2009

The Waterford School

Sandy, UT

History and English Teacher and Administrator

- Taught Middle and High School English and History classes continuously for 25 years
- Served in a variety of positions with responsibility for building the academic and liberal arts program of The Waterford School: Dean of Academics, Dean of Faculty, Middle School Dean, Upper School Dean. Responsibility for hiring and training faculty and staff
- Served as Assistant Headmaster for eight years with responsibility for Finances and Operations in addition to academic program. Responsible for construction of \$20MM in facilities, overall budget, hiring and training operations staff.

**Education History:**

Using as much space as necessary below, please provide information on your educational training (including degrees earned, dates enrolled, and institutions) that supports your qualifications to be considered sufficiently qualified to operate a charter school.

**EDUCATION:**

B.A. in History and English Literature and Language, 1985  
High Honors  
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

**Statement of Intent:**

Using as much space as necessary below, provide a personal statement regarding your role and commitment to this application as it has been written.

I am the registered agent for Aspire's parent organization, Children First Utah. For the past 25 years I have been a teacher and administrator in one of Utah's finest private schools. While there I have been involved with Waterford School's scholarship program and I have seen its impact on low-income and minority families trying to overcome poverty. I have witnessed first hand the impact education plays on this process and I'm convinced it's a key factor in the struggle against poverty. Most individuals who have achieved some measure of success can point to a quality education. I am honored to be part of Aspire's application to bring another option to the broad menu of existing education opportunities to Utah's neediest children. I have read the application, understand the program, and wholeheartedly support this effort.