

AN AMERICAN CLASSICAL SCHOOLS OF IDAHO  
CSP Grant Narrative



K-12  
Opening 2025

PO Box 734  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

North Idaho Classical Academy (NICA) will open in the Bonners Ferry community in time for the 2025-2026 school year. NICA will serve students from Boundary and Bonner Counties in the communities of Bonners Ferry, Moyie Springs, Naples, Samuels, and Ponderay. NICA will open as a K-6 school in August 2025 and will add an additional grade each year, growing to serve up to 390 students (30 per grade) in grades K-12 by the 2032-2033 school year.

NICA is an American classical charter school and a Hillsdale K-12 Candidate Member School. American classical education is a variant of classical education that blends an intensive focus on the development of literacy and numeracy in the early years with a rigorous liberal arts and science curriculum that students grow into as they advance in grade level. NICA's curriculum is provided free of cost through its partnership with the Office of K-12 Education at Hillsdale College. In addition to curricular resources, Hillsdale K-12 also provides leadership and instructional training to administrators and faculty at member schools.

The mission of NICA is “to train the minds and improve the hearts of students through a classical, content-rich curriculum that emphasizes virtuous living, traditional learning, and civic responsibility.” NICA will be governed by the board of American Classical Schools of Idaho (ACSI). ACSI is a 501c-3 organization and accompanying foundation (for philanthropic purposes). ACSI also functions as a School Support Office (SSO). This SSO operates exclusively for benefit of NICA, Idaho Novus Classical Academy (INCA), and Treasure Valley Classical Academy (TVCA), to create economies of scale for services such as business management, food service, transportation, and instructional support.

## PART 2A: SMART GRANT PROJECT GOALS

NICA is requesting \$2,000,000.00 to pursue five ambitious goals related to the operation of our new charter school. The themes that unite these goals are access and outcomes. We want to offer families throughout the region a high quality, classical liberal arts and science school option and ensure their children can access it regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances or geographic location. The goals, objectives, and measures are outlined in the table below

### *Goals, Objectives, and Measures*

GOAL AND OBJECTIVE(S)	MEASURE(S)
1. NICA will create and fill 210 new, high quality (K-6) charter school seats in its first year of operation and expand to 390 available seats (K-12) by adding one grade per year thereafter. This includes offering a school of choice to parents for the very first time in the rural communities of Bonners Ferry, Moyie Springs, Naples, and Ponderay. The student population will reflect our commitment to serving all children.	A: Enrollment data will show that every available seat is filled. B: Demographic data will show a regionally representative (within a 5% margin of the weighted average of sending school districts) student population with regard to race, socioeconomics, and special education status.
2. NICA will provide busing and a federally compliant school lunch program to ensure that transportation and nutrition are not barriers to enrollment and retention for economically disadvantaged students.	A: The number of economically disadvantaged students (operationally defined as Title I status) enrolled at NICA will meet or exceed the average of sending districts. B: 95% or more of economically disadvantaged students will re-enroll at NICA each year.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVE(S)	MEASURE(S)
<p>3. NICA will offer a high-quality liberal arts and science academic program designed to train the minds of our students and prepare them to flourish as citizens. This program will produce excellent academic results and exceed Idaho’s required performance criteria for achievement and growth outcomes in each subject at all grade levels (including 4 and 8).</p>	<p>A: NICA will outscore the state average in ELA, mathematics, and science on the ISAT by 5% and scale up by an additional 5% every year thereafter (e.g., 10% in year two) until we approach full proficiency.</p> <p>B: NICA students will exceed the state ISAT growth average in ELA and mathematics each year.</p>
<p>4. NICA will improve the hearts of our students through an approach to character development rooted in the classical virtues, including courage, courtesy, honesty, perseverance, self-government, and service. Parents will be satisfied with the quality of the character education received by their children at NICA.</p>	<p>The annual family survey will ask parents and guardians to use a 5-point Likert scale to rate their agreement with the following statement: “The school cultivates a sound culture that fosters the virtues and builds good character.” NICA will achieve a 90% or higher positive rating on this prompt each year of operation.</p>
<p>5. NICA will provide a high-quality high school program beginning in the fourth year of operation. All high school students will develop and pursue a post-secondary transition plan aligned with their individual goals and objectives. NICA will invest resources to support the achievement of post-secondary transition goal(s) for all students, including advanced opportunities, apprenticeships, and internships.</p>	<p>A: With staff and parent assistance, 100% of high school students will develop a post-secondary transition plan.</p> <p>B: Students in 12th grade will participate in an exit meeting to discuss the completion of their post-secondary transition plan. Outcomes of those meetings (displayed in a table) will show that 100% of graduating seniors achieved their post-secondary transition goal(s).</p>

## **PART 2B: EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY, INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES, AND CURRICULUM**

The educational program is designed to meet the needs of all learners. Many contemporary educators possess a desire to educate the whole child and American classical education does exactly that. In addition to offering a robust, content-rich liberal arts and science scope and sequence of coursework, NICA will emphasize character development to provide students with a foundation for resilience and the fortitude necessary to work through life's challenges. Our goal is not to simply teach children information, but to be the best partner that a parent could hope for in the cultivation of students who will mature into adults that lead successful and happy lives. The character development program supports these aims by focusing on the attributes of good citizenship that will serve to strengthen individuals, families, and communities. This includes an emphasis on six classical virtues: courage, courtesy, honesty, perseverance, self-government, and service. These virtues are the foundation of the school culture, inform our approach to behavior management, and are integrated into the curriculum across all subject areas.

NICA will be an American classical school that utilizes the scope and sequence developed by the Hillsdale College Office of K-12 Education as outlined in the K-12 Program Guide v3.2. This includes a variety of different programs and curriculum maps that exceed the levels of rigor contained within the Idaho Content and Common Core Standards. NICA is part of a burgeoning movement rooted in the belief that classical, whole person education is appropriate for everyone. This commitment is completely inseparable from the mission and vision of our school.

### *Mission and Vision*

American classical education is a unique variant of classical education that was designed for implementation in public schools across the nation. Its purpose is encapsulated in NICA's mission statement, which is to "train the minds and improve the hearts of students through a classical, content-rich curriculum that emphasizes virtuous living, traditional learning, and civic responsibility." It is nonsectarian, nonpartisan, and entirely focused on training up a generation of citizens with the depth of knowledge and strength of character needed to preserve, protect, and improve their communities. The health of community life directly impacts the stability of the nation and so this is a civic vision focused on improving the individual for the benefit of all.

While students in any type of classical school will explore the history of Western civilization and its philosophical tradition, American classical education is set apart by its unique focus on the American civic tradition. This orientation is encapsulated in our vision statement, which is "to form future citizens who uphold the ideals of our country's founding and promote the continuation of our American experiment – through a classical, great books curriculum designed to engage the student in the highest matters and the deepest questions of truth, justice, virtue, and beauty." From the earliest grades onward, students at NICA will learn about both the triumphs and failures of their country and reflect on their responsibilities as citizens and inheritors of the American experiment. This honest, forthright, transparent, and comprehensive civics education is a unique aspect of American classical education that appeals to our families.

### *Educational Program*

The educational program selected for NICA has been proven in diverse contexts throughout the United States and elsewhere in Idaho. It includes everything that you would expect at a school offering a broad, liberal arts and science education. Literacy and numeracy are taught with precision, but no more so than the sciences, history, fine arts, foreign languages, and

physical education. Students receive an education that includes all these subjects as educating the whole child requires a robust and content-rich course of study. The educational program includes:

- Explicit phonics instruction using *Literacy Essentials* and a focus on language mastery including spelling, grammar (*Well-Ordered Language*), vocabulary (*Wordly Wise*), sentence diagramming, and writing (*Institute for Excellence in Writing*).
- Mathematics taught conceptually using *Singapore Math Dimensions* in cross-grade ability groups to facilitate targeted, differentiated instruction for all students.
- Science and history courses informed by the *Core Knowledge Sequence* to inspire wonder and promote cultural literacy.
- Spanish taught K-5 with Latin and Greek roots introduced in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, Latin (*Wheelock's*) required in 6<sup>th</sup> through 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and two additional years of a foreign language at the advanced level in grades 10, 11, or 12 (contributing to language mastery).
- Text-centered, teacher-led instruction and discussions fostering pre-Socratic inquiry.
- Purposeful use of technology to enhance but not supplant teacher-led instruction by aiding with text analysis, class discussions, demonstrations, and academic assessments. This includes projectors in every classroom, Chromebooks for interactive mathematics instruction and text-centered lessons, and Chromebooks for testing.
- Visual and performing arts classes that emphasize theory, history, and performance.
- Memory work, recitation, and public speaking cultivated through practice beginning with the earliest grades and culminating in the public defense of a senior thesis in grade 12.
- A comprehensive K-12 civics program that includes *Moral and Political Philosophy*.

The entire scope of the educational program is outlined in the curriculum overview at the end of this section.

## *Evidence of Success*

American classical education is designed to align with students' natural stages of development utilizing a cohesive K-12 curriculum with intentional horizontal and vertical alignment. This has led to tremendous results in diverse community contexts throughout the country. This demand is fueled by a combination of high academic performance, a school culture of virtue and respect for all, and a unique educational offering that has no comparable competition in most markets.

Treasure Valley Classical Academy (TVCA) is our sister school in Payette County, Idaho. TVCA is excelling in many areas and ways; consider the following evidence:

- 96.9% of students returned to TVCA this school year; more than 250 students remain on the waitlist.
- 94% of teachers employed by TVCA choose to return year after year.
- 46% of TVCA teachers have advanced degrees, with 14% holding doctorates (and several more currently in the doctoral pipeline).
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade students at TVCA recently outperformed the state average on the ISAT in mathematics by 14% and English language arts by 18%.
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at TVCA recently outperformed the state average on the ISAT in mathematics by 8% and English language arts by 20%.

These outcomes occurred in a rural, predominantly agricultural county an hour west of Boise. We will work to meet or exceed TVCA's success in northern Idaho.



# K-12 Curriculum Overview

*An American Classical Education*

	Grammar School (K-6)					Middle School (6th-8th Grade)			Upper School (7-12)					
	ELEMENTARY SCHOOL   K-6					MIDDLE SCHOOL   6TH-8TH GRADE			HIGH SCHOOL   9TH-12TH GRADE					
	Kindergarten	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
MATH	Singapore Math Dimensions								Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Trigonometry/Pre-Calculus	Calculus	
SCIENCE	Life, Physical, & Earth Science					Intro to Life & Chemical Sciences			Conceptual Physics	Biology	Chemistry	Physics or Other Advanced Science	Astronomy or Other Advanced Science	
LITERATURE	Classic Children's Literature, Sayings & Phrases, Poetry					Classic Literature & Poetry			Ancient Literature	Medieval & British Literature	American Literature	Modern Literature		
HISTORY & CIVICS	American History & Geography, Memorization & Recitation of American Documents					World History & Geography			America to 1877	America 1877-Present	Ancient World to 500	Europe 500-1815	America 1607-Present	Modern World 1815-Present
READING, WRITING, & SPEAKING	Writing, Spelling, & Reading <i>Literacy Essentials: Phonics</i>		Grammar & Composition						Logic & Rhetoric	Elective	Senior Thesis			
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	French, Spanish, or German			Greek & Latin Roots		Latin Ia	Latin Ib	Latin II	Latin III	Advanced Latin or Other Foreign Language Elective				
FINE ARTS	Fine Arts (Art & Music History, Art & Music Appreciation, Studio Art, Music Theory)								Physical Education, Fine Arts, or Other Electives					
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	Physical Education													

\* Newer schools may choose to offer composition instead of formal logic  
 \*\* Recommended course of study

## PART 2C: TEACHING AND LEARNING

The foundation of NICA is a high-quality liberal arts and science curriculum that has been proven nationally and is regularly updated on a triennial cycle in response to feedback from teachers, student outcomes, and advice from professors in their respective disciplines. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all learners and will be accompanied by a full range of academic services. These services will be provided through a Response to Intervention (RTI)/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework built around core instruction (tier one), including targeted interventions (tier two), and intensive support (tier three) to effectively serve all students. The RTI/MTSS framework at NICA will be data-driven and informed by the nationally benchmarked Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), conducted three times per year. Additional information about our data-driven approach to academic support is available in Part 2D.

### *Instructional practices*

NICA will anchor its pedagogical practices on Dr. Copeland's acclaimed work, *Tried and True: A Primer on Sound Pedagogy* from Hillsdale College. This influential text serves as a comprehensive guide for educators, offering invaluable insights into lesson planning, assessment techniques, classroom dynamics, and effective parent engagement. By implementing the principles outlined in this book, NICA aims to foster an environment conducive to student success. From captivating student interest to streamlining classroom management, the book equips teachers with practical strategies to optimize learning experiences.

### *Literacy*

The elementary literacy curriculum, *Literacy Essentials*, focuses on mastery of phonics through a process whereby students learn to write and spell while developing an understanding

of English language rules. During the earliest years of instruction, students learn 72 phonograms and memorize the rules associated with their use. This process then flows into the development of reading fluency and comprehension as they progress through the grades. One of the strengths of *Literacy Essentials* is that it contains all the components of a reading intervention program, and these are deployed within the general education classroom for the benefit of all students.

Moreover, *Literacy Essentials* utilizes Orton-Gillingham methodology, which includes a multi-sensory approach to phonics instruction. Orton-Gillingham methods were originally designed to serve students with dyslexia, but experience shows that all students benefit from seeing, hearing, speaking, and writing as they learn to read.

Although every student will receive support through the robust scaffolding built into *Literacy Essentials*, NICA will hire a literacy specialist in year one to build and operate an elementary reading intervention program. Each elementary classroom will have the assistance of an academic aide to provide targeted interventions under the supervision of the literacy specialist and classroom teacher. The purpose of this program is to ensure that every student receives the support necessary to progress toward language mastery.

### *Numeracy*

*Singapore Math Dimensions* is a conceptual approach to teaching mathematics that includes a three-part cycle where students begin with concrete concepts, move on to pictorial representations, and then work through abstract problems only once they have developed the requisite knowledge for success. This cycle is embedded within each grade-level and across the curriculum as new concepts are introduced. There is a strong emphasis on the use of manipulatives and hands-on learning in mathematics, especially in the earliest years when students focus on developing a keen number sense (including an emphasis on number bonding, place values, and fractions). Later, students utilize pictorial strategies such as bar modelling to

solve complex problems visually. These strategies help students develop a deep, conceptual understanding of mathematics before they encounter challenging abstract concepts in algebra, geometry, and calculus. The heavy emphasis on concrete and pictorial approaches in Singapore Math reflects what a math intervention might look like in other school contexts. Additionally, grades two through six will share a common math period so that students can be taught in inter-grade and cross-grade ability groups as necessary. This means that all students will receive additional support or accelerate their learning as appropriate within and across school years.

### *Special Education*

We recognize that some students will require intensive support beyond targeted academic interventions. To address those needs, NICA will operate a comprehensive special education department including a coordinator/director, teachers, paraprofessionals, and other contracted service providers based on student need. NICA will hire a special education coordinator who will begin working three months before the school officially opens (and after the enrollment lottery) to ensure that appropriate systems are in place and fully prepared to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities when they arrive on the first day of school.

## **PART 2D: STUDENT ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS**

To achieve our student achievement goals, academic progress will need to be monitored with regularity. This is a necessary component of an RTI/MTSS model because teachers and school leaders cannot engage in data-driven decision-making without current and reliable data to reflect on. NICA will utilize a tripartite data collection system including curriculum-based measures (CBMs), NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), and the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT).

CBMs occur regularly within the *Singapore Math Dimensions* and *Literacy Essentials* programs and provide teachers with frequent updates regarding student progress that they can use to tailor instruction to meet the needs of individual students between benchmarks. This constitutes an essential form of progress monitoring which all NICA elementary teachers will utilize to inform their instructional choices. This will occur individually throughout the year.

The NWEA MAP is scheduled three times per year, in the fall, winter, and spring. This provides periodic benchmark data regarding student achievement in relation to national norms, using the Rasch Unit Scale, or RIT score. In that manner, MAP provides essential data to classroom teachers, but also to the process improvement team at the school where system-wide decisions can be made in response to multi-year trends. MAP data will be analyzed during grade-band meetings and by the school leadership team to inform academic support decisions and priorities for professional development. Parents will also be provided with MAP reports to ensure that they have the necessary information to be equal stakeholders in their child's academic progress.

The ISAT will be conducted during the required window each year and will be viewed as the summative assessment of academic progress at NICA. While CBMs and MAP provide us with data to monitor progress and benchmark (respectively), the ISAT is an accountability tool that provides the entire NICA community with an understanding of student, and consequently school, performance. That is why our academic goals are linked directly to the ISAT. Results from the ISAT will be discussed internally and shared publicly to maintain a focus on our school goals.

NICA will leverage longitudinal data collected from assessments such as MAP, SAT, ACT, CLT, ISAT, as well as records of attendance, behavior, GPA, referrals, and survey

responses, among other sources. This data will not only enable the tracking and monitoring of students' academic progress but also facilitate an evaluation of the school's alignment with its mission statement and overall performance culture. Staff members will analyze this data, making it a focal point in staff meetings, training sessions, and the monitoring of the school improvement plan. Moreover, this data will inform decisions regarding professional development, school enhancement initiatives, hiring practices, interventions, and more.

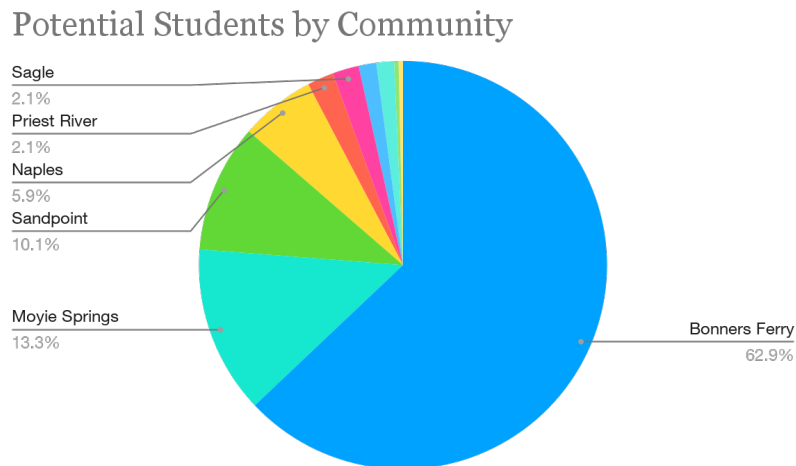
In the implementation of the curriculum, formative assessments will play a pivotal role. Comprehensive training will be provided to all teachers on effective formative assessment methodologies. The insights gathered from these assessments will drive the development of lesson plans, instructional strategies, remedial actions, interventions, and other instructional decisions.

## **PART 2E: STUDENT DEMAND AND COMMUNITY/LOCAL SUPPORT**

NICA is scheduled to open in 2025 and will serve a primary attendance zone which includes several rural communities spread over a generous geographic expanse of norther Idaho. NICA will open with 30 students per grade (K-6) in its first year of operation and add a new kindergarten cohort of 30 each year until a maximum student population of 390 (K-12) is achieved in year seven.

Although NICA will not officially open for another 15 months, there are already over 550 students on the intent-to-enroll list to fill a total of 210 open seats. The chart below shows our current intents-to-enroll data organized by community. There is significant demand within the primary attendance zone, but also throughout the region. We anticipate that these numbers will continue to grow as word spreads about NICA.

### *Distribution of Potential Students by Community*



### *Community Outreach Strategies*

The team at NICA has generated interest in American classical education utilizing a predominantly grassroots approach to marketing. We hosted five public information sessions throughout our primary attendance zone over the past year and over 50 individual and group tours and discussion sessions. We have also presented to the local Rotary club and attended monthly community leader gatherings. To generate attendance at the information sessions and tours, we have paid for advertising space on Facebook to inform residents of the date, time, and location. We have also sent out a newsletter every six weeks. With the goal of facilitating maximum engagement and reaching all prospective families in our primary attendance zone, we have posted a billboard on State Highway 95, the main thoroughfare of Bonners Ferry. The school has been written about in local and state news outlets (e.g. The Bonners Ferry Herald, Idaho Ed News) and has been featured in the local *Bonners Ferry Living Local* magazine. Further, the school has been donated six months of free advertising in *Bonners Ferry Living Local* magazine that has a large audience.

Our outreach campaigns and open houses have emphasized five points: (a) our educational model, (b) school location, (c) no cost to attend the school, (d) bus transportation provided, and (e) school lunch program including free or reduced meals for those that qualify. These efforts have paid dividends as awareness of our school and educational model have increased significantly.

Another aspect of our grassroots approach to marketing has been participation in outdoor community activities. NICA has had booths at the county fair and the local farmers market and will be hosting booths at both again this summer.

Moving forward, our approach to marketing will continue to focus on face-to-face efforts that enable us to share information about the school, answer questions, and build relationships with future members of our school community. Currently, we have open house information sessions already scheduled across May, June, and July. Our goal is to host one information session each month in addition to personal and small group tours of the school. As with our previous events, we will advertise using ads on Facebook, newsletters, and flyers.

*Anticipated Student Demographics*

The table below displays NICA’s anticipated student demographics, based on assumptions outlined in the enrollment demographics worksheet which was provided as an attachment. These figures are a combined weighted average of the enrollment attachment.

*Anticipated Student Demographics*

White	Nat Am	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Nat. Haw./ Pac. Isl.	2 or More Races	Title I	SPED	EL
86.19%	2.25%	0.23%	0.41%	6.29%	0.21%	3.71%	43.50%	14.22%	0.37%

*Parent and Student Engagement*

NICA was initially conceptualized by a founding group of parents and community members. The nine founders and their families remain actively involved in the development of



the school through collaborative work with the principal. Currently, they are working on community outreach efforts to generate support for NICA. Once NICA officially opens, the founding group will serve as a blueprint for two different parent and community leadership groups: the Parent Teacher Community Association (PTCA) and the Mission Support Team (MST). The PTCA will assist with events, outreach, fundraising, and other activities that contribute to the success of NICA. The MST will operate as a multi-constituent, interdisciplinary process improvement team and include parents, teachers, community members, and school leaders as partners in continuous improvement. Through these venues, parents and families will have the option to be active participants and leaders in the school community.

As the school grows over time and upper school grades are added, a student council will be developed. The principal will work directly with this organization and members will advise school leadership on topics of concern and student government goals and priorities. This opportunity for student leadership is a significant priority that aligns with the school's vision of forming future citizens by providing an early and meaningful opportunity for civic engagement in an institution that significantly impacts their lives.

## **PART 2F: EFFECTIVELY SERVING ALL STUDENTS**

Our ambition to provide an American classical education to students throughout the northern part of Idaho will require extensive resources and planning. NICA is committed to providing a full range of services to students and going above and beyond what is required to ensure that student needs are met. The following subsections outline the operation of our special education program, transportation plan, school lunch program, and additional considerations for meeting the needs of all students.

### *Student Services*

In addition to a strong academic program and the previously outlined interventions that will be available to all students, NICA will also operate a special education program aligned with our mission to train the minds and improve the hearts of all students. The design of our special education program will emphasize inclusion in the classroom to the maximal extent possible and will incorporate pullout services only where necessary to meet the unique needs of an individual student. This means that special education teachers and paraprofessionals will be active participants in the classroom and a resource that is available to students not only when they are receiving specific services, but also at the exact moment that they need assistance to understand a concept or develop proficiency with a skill. This full-service department will grow and expand along with the student population, as detailed in the operating budget included in the application packet.

### *Nutrition*

NICA will participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), including free or reduced-price meals for eligible students. This endeavor is expected to be achieved through collaboration with ACSI's food service director and the recruitment of skilled individuals capable of delivering a high-quality food service program. Our meals will stand out as they will be scratch-made to the greatest extent possible, ensuring both nutrition and flavor at an affordable rate for families. Financial backing for our school lunch program will come from a blend of federal reimbursements and meal fees.

### *Transportation*

The primary attendance area for NICA includes low-income rural communities spread over a generous geographic area. This decision will inevitably increase costs, as it necessitates the development of a busing program to serve the entire primary attendance zone. We plan to

purchase (as opposed to lease) three full-size buses and establish bus stops at central locations throughout Bonners Ferry, Moyie Springs, Naples, and Ponderay. Precise bus routes will be developed after the enrollment lottery, with the needs of our student population in mind.

### *Additional Considerations*

Other American classical schools in their first year report a notable percentage of students behind grade-level in academic subject areas and with a range of behavioral needs. We anticipate the same experience at NICA and have accounted for this in our planning process. During the initial phase of operation, we will build additional academic interventions into the educational program. All students will receive supplementary instruction in the 72 phonograms during the first year. We will also offer remedial math courses for those that need them in the first few cohorts entering seventh and eighth grade. Further, the school administration will work with all K-6 students, every morning during story time, to teach appropriate behavior through a character education program rooted in classical children's literature. Teachers and support staff will receive comprehensive training in diverse intervention strategies, ensuring all students reach their potential. This includes identifying early warning signs, providing timely support, and fostering a supportive learning environment.

## **PART 2G: STAFFING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

Prior to the first year of operation, NICA will hire an entire elementary school staff (K-6). These individuals will primarily come from local and regional markets and include a blend of new and experienced educators with K-12 backgrounds and subject area experts from other sectors. It is important to recognize that there is not a large pool of American classical educators to hire from, so each new school that opens must train and develop their own teachers. For that reason, we anticipate recruiting a faculty made up of professionals with a range of backgrounds.

The qualifications that will unite them are: (a) subject area expertise, (b) a love of learning, and (c) a desire to teach and instill virtue in students.

One of the most valuable components of our partnership with the Hillsdale College Office of K-12 education is that they provide intensive training to the faculty of a new school before it opens (at no cost). The summer before we launch, a team of teacher trainers and professors will come to NICA for two weeks and provide a deep dive for our faculty in all aspects of curriculum and classical pedagogy. This training will be followed up on internally with twice-monthly professional development sessions built into the faculty meeting schedule and classroom observations conducted by the principal. Observations will occur at minimum once every two weeks and include follow-up coaching as needed. Moreover, Hillsdale College hosts a free classical education professional development conference every summer that includes segments on curriculum, instruction, and leadership. This conference is a focused follow-up to the initial training provided to school faculty and sessions are presented by a combination of Hillsdale K-12 staff and teachers employed at American classical schools throughout the country. NICA has budgeted enough money to ensure that every teacher will have the financial means to travel to the conference annually.

After the first year of operation, NICA will begin to build an upper school (7-12). Desired qualifications for teachers in the upper school will be more specific, with a preference for candidates with graduate level education in a subject area. Efforts to build recruiting relationships with colleges and universities are underway, including Baylor University, George Fox University, St. Johns College, Templeton Honors College, Torrey Honors College, University of Dallas, and Wyoming Catholic College. We will continue to build these pipelines

and establish new ones over the next few years so that when we are ready to begin upper school hiring, necessary recruiting relationships will already be in place.

**PART 2H: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN**

NICA’s 3-year operating budget is included as an attachment. Please note that NICA anticipates approximately \$1.4MM in grant funds from the Albertson Family Foundation to assist with operating costs. These funds are spread out over five years (including one pre-operational year) and close budgetary gaps until enrollment increases to the point where grant support is no longer necessary to operate the academic program at full capacity. Additionally, the founding principal is receiving a fellowship through Bluum and the assistant principal is receiving a fellowship through the Borbonus Family Foundation. These fellowships enable the school’s leadership team well in advance of opening to help set up and launch the school.

NICA intends to remodel a former at-risk youth facility located on a 13.5-acre parcel of land five miles outside of Bonners Ferry. The facilities will provide enough space to open as a K-12 school. The total square footage of all the facilities combined is 46,550 square feet. The list below provides a detailed outline of classroom and facility needs.

ROOM PURPOSE	ROOMS NEEDED
Kindergarten	2
First Grade	2
Second Grade	1
Third Grade	1
Fourth Grade	1
Fifth Grade	1
Sixth Grade	1
Seventh Grade	1.5
Eight Grade	1.5
Ninth Grade	2

ROOM PURPOSE	ROOMS NEEDED
Tenth Grade	2
Eleventh Grade	2
Twelfth Grade	2
Art Room	1
Music Room	1
Science Lab	1
Gymnasium	1
Main Office	1
Student Services	1
Resource Center	1
Kitchen	1

Based on the proposed remodel floorplan, NICA anticipates a total launch cost of slightly under \$5,900,000. The property acquisition cost will be \$3,500,000 and the single-phase remodel just under \$2,400,000. These estimates are subject to adjustment based on economic conditions (labor and material costs) at the time of construction. Currently, NICA is planning around a cost of \$127 per square foot (total square footage is 46,550) for the purchase and remodel of the facilities.

NICA has a purchase and sale agreement for the property and facilities. NICA is working with Raymond James Financial to secure finances for the acquisition. Further, NICA will be working with Raymond James to apply for a USDA loan after three years which would greatly reduce the overall costs due to its low interest rates. Further, NICA has retained Paradigm of Idaho as an experienced owner’s representative to manage the construction project and mitigate costs. We expect to the remodel and upgrades to start in July of 2024.

Each year, the school leader will prepare a budget inclusive of all costs. The budget will be reviewed by the board and adjusted as necessary prior to final approval. Bluum will provide

no-cost business management services to the school during the first few years of operation while internal capacity is developed. Accounting practices will align with state laws and best practices in public accounting. The board will provide ongoing financial oversight as outlined in the application packet.

## **PART 2I: BOARD CAPACITY AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

NICA will be governed by the board of American Classical Schools of Idaho. While NICA is a Hillsdale K-12 school, Hillsdale College has absolutely no role in its operation or governance. ACSI is a non-profit charter support organization launched in Idaho to assist and govern American classical schools as interested families begin school development projects throughout the state. ACSI will focus on the development of economies of scale in areas such as food service, transportation, and business management to provide support that will enable consistent and reliable implementation of services in new schools within the network. The ACSI board is the governing authority for NICA, which includes, but is not limited to, responsibility for financial oversight as well as supervision and evaluation of the principal to ensure high quality implementation of the educational model.

The governing board of ACSI currently includes four (with two more joining in June 2024) talented board members with strong backgrounds in charter school governance and American classical education. Two board advisors have also been retained to provide professional advice to the ACSI board in their areas of specialization. This is an important practice, because board advisors serve as non-voting members who provide a valuable layer of support to the board as they consider different options or work through challenges. ACSI's CEO, an employee of the board, has extensive military leadership experience and is a nationally

recognized leader in American classical education. Resumes and biographies for the board members, board advisors, and CEO of ACSI are provided as an attachment.

The initial board was developed to include a combination of representatives from each of the schools that ACSI currently governs and individuals with previous experience in board governance or related expertise. It is important to note that the board is designed so that the current slate of directors will select additional members, with a minimum membership of three and a maximum of 11. Since ACSI is actively working to support founding groups that want to bring an American classical education to their communities, it is conceivable that several additional schools will open over the next five years. The intent of the board is that additional directors will be added as new school development projects come online, so that all schools have local representation on the ACSI board. Board policies and procedures are fully compliant with the law and include the requisite open meetings and open records requirements. There are also clear directives that ensure directors will avoid conflicts of interest. These were developed in conjunction with the board's legal counsel, Chris Yorgason, who is a well-known and respected practitioners of charter school law in Idaho.

Oversight of NICA's finances is a chief responsibility of the board. Directors receive regular reports pertaining to the status of school budgets. Part of the oversight process involves monitoring implementation of spending procedures, including a robust internal controls policy. Additionally, the board will select an independent auditor each year to review and publicly report on NICA's financial status and compliance with law and internal policy. The board conducts a self-evaluation and arranges targeted ongoing training annually.

Some training, especially related to policies and procedures, will be conducted internally. However, the Hillsdale College Office of K-12 education offers in-depth training on effective



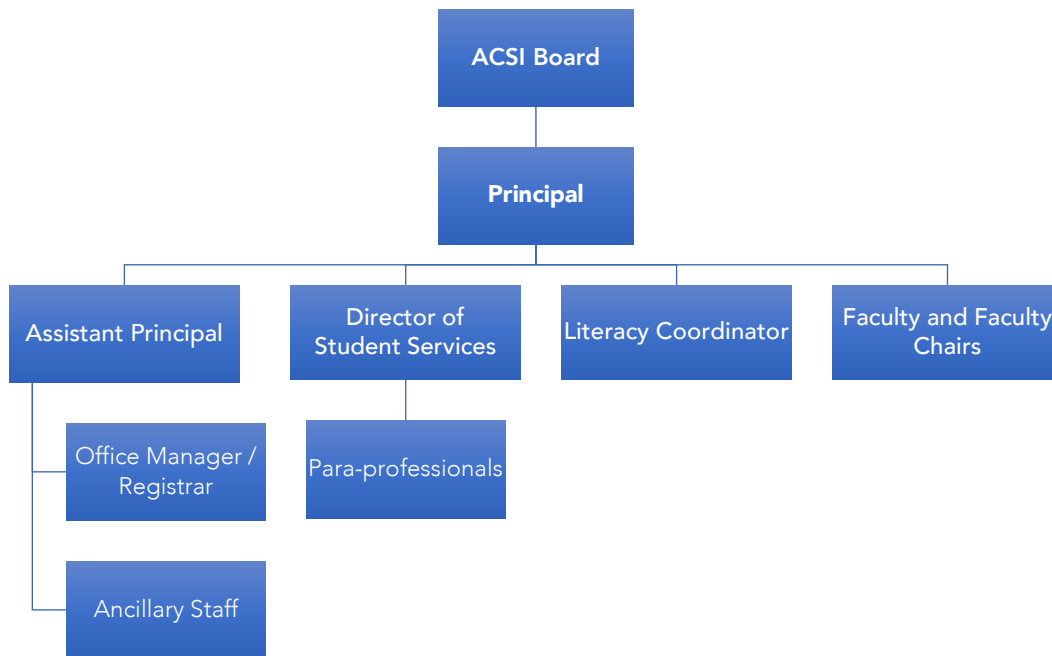
governance and oversight twice a year at no cost and the ACSI board participates to help facilitate continuous improvement. This training includes information on the responsibilities of a governing board and the distinction between governance and management activities.

## **PART 2J: SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The initial leadership model that NICA has selected will enable a successful launch in year one. We have also developed a target leadership model to effectively support students, faculty, and staff as the school continues to grow. These models are outlined in the subsections that follow. Please note that NICA has already retained a principal and assistant principal who are on the ground supporting school founding efforts. Their resumes and biographies are included as an attachment.

### *Leadership Team Structure Through Year Three*

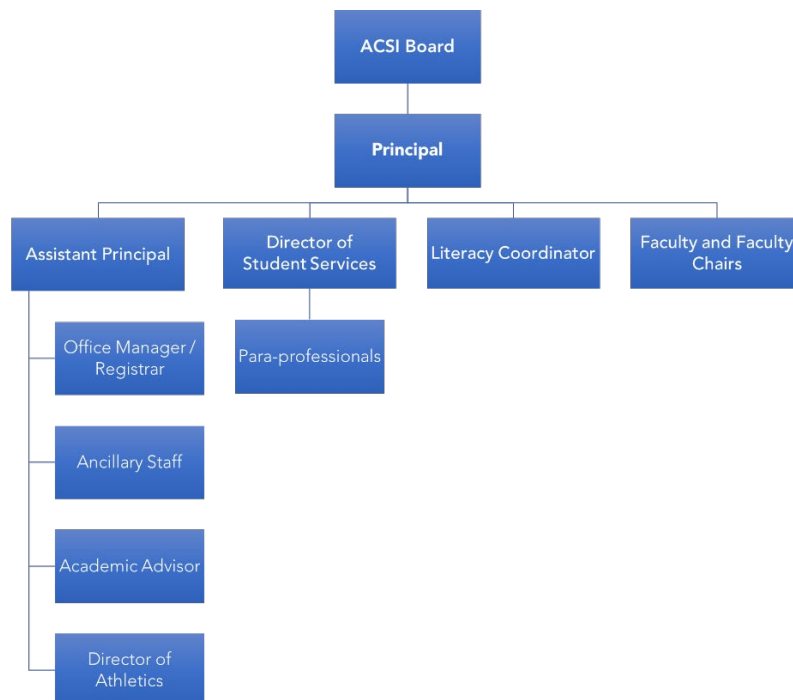
#### *Initial Leadership Model*



- The school will be led by a principal under the authority of a governing board.
- The principal will serve as the chief academic officer of the school and supervise an assistant principal, special education coordinator, all faculty, and academic support staff.
- The assistant principal is the head of operations and will supervise all ancillary staff, including office staff, maintenance, and food service contractors.
- The special education coordinator will develop and implement the special education program and supervise all paraprofessionals.
- The office manager/registrar is responsible for managing workflow in the office and all processes that intersect with the student information system (PowerSchool).
- The educational resource coordinator is responsible for distribution activities for curriculum, instructional materials, classroom supplies, and equipment to reduce the burden on teachers for clerical work related to the academic program.

*Leadership Team Structure in Year Four and Beyond*

*Target Leadership Model*



- Faculty chairs will be identified to create additional opportunities for teacher leadership.
- An academic advisor will be added to facilitate student post-secondary transition planning.
- A director of athletics will be identified to provide support for extra-curricular programs.

### *Supervision and Evaluation of the Principal*

Throughout the school year, there will be an ongoing conversation about the progress of the school between the board of directors and the school leader. The board will inevitably have questions about how certain practices or policies are being implemented and any challenges the school faces, along with signs of success. At the end of the academic year, the board will conduct a formal evaluation of the school leader, drawing on several sources: an annual parent survey, an annual employee survey, school visits, as well as observation of faculty training, classes, standardized testing results, enrollment numbers, the school's budget, and the school leader's self-evaluation.

### *Classical Innovations in Leadership*

Another important element of the leadership structure at NICA is that all administrators will teach one or more courses after the first year of operation. This is a central aspect of American classical education, where leaders are expected to be teachers first. This enables administrators to incorporate first-hand experience into educational policy decisions and fosters reciprocal empathy between school leadership and teachers. Combining leadership and teaching positions also distributes administrative labor costs across a wider range of individuals and creates the necessary fiscal conditions to support our target leadership model.