



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

March 15, 2013

**Via Electronic Mail and First Class Mail**

Mr. Stephen Crane  
Solomon Charter School  
1209 Vine Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

**RE: Solomon Charter School  
Order to Show Cause and Notice and Charges in Support of Revocation of  
Charter**

Dear Mr. Crane:

Enclosed, please find a true and correct copy of the Order to Show Cause and Notice and Charges in Support of Revocation of Charter (Order to Show Cause), which has been filed with the docket clerk in the Department of Education, and pursuant to which the Department is pursuing, under Sections 1729-A and 1741-A of the Charter School Law (CSL), 24 P.S. §§ 17-1729-A and 17-1741-A, the revocation of the charter approved for Solomon Charter School. This notice institutes a formal administrative action pursuant to which the revocation of Solomon Charter School's charter may be ordered. As noted in the Order to Show Cause, you are to file a written answer to the averments within 20 days.

A formal hearing will be scheduled at a date, time and location to be provided in a future notice. The hearing will be held before a hearing officer in accordance with the provisions of the Administrative Agency Law, 2 Pa.C.S. §501-508, and the General Rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure, 1 Pa. Code § 31.1 *et seq.* Please be advised that you have the following rights at the hearing:

- 1) The rights to be represented by counsel;
- 2) The right to hear witnesses and evidence against you, to question and cross-examine witnesses, and to object to any evidence another party to the proceeding attempts to present;
- 3) The right to present witnesses and evidence on your own behalf; and,
- 4) All other rights guaranteed to you by the U.S. and Pennsylvania Constitutions and applicable law.

All filings related to this matter shall be filed with:



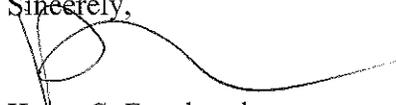
Carol J. Hrobak, Docket Clerk  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Office of Chief Counsel  
333 Market Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126

Any document you file with the docket clerk must also be accompanied by certificate of service and served on counsel for the Department at:

Robert T. Datorre, Assistant Counsel  
Karen S. Feuchtenberger, Senior Assistant Counsel  
Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Office of Chief Counsel  
333 Market Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126  
Telephone: (717)787-5500  
Fax: (717)783-0347

If you have any questions, you or your attorney may contact counsel for the Department in this matter.

Sincerely,



Karen S. Feuchtenberger  
Senior Assistant Counsel

Enclosure

cc: Carol J. Hrobak, Docket Clerk  
Ronald J. Tomalis, Secretary of Education  
Robert J. O'Donnell, Esq. (via email and first class mail)

**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

<b>PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,</b>	:	
	:	
	:	
<b>Petitioner,</b>	:	
	:	
<b>v.</b>	:	<b>DOCKET NO.</b>
	:	
<b>SOLOMON CHARTER SCHOOL,</b>	:	
	:	
	:	
<b>Respondent.</b>	:	

**ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE AND  
NOTICE AND CHARGES IN SUPPORT OF REVOCATION OF CHARTER**

You are hereby notified that, pursuant to Sections 1729-A and 1741-A of the Charter School Law<sup>1</sup> (CSL), 24 P.S. §§ 17-1729-A and 17-1741-A, 1 Pa. Code § 35.14, and for the reasons below, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) intends to revoke the charter issued to Solomon Charter School (“Solomon Charter School” or “School”), and will conduct a hearing for the purpose of determining whether the charter approved for the School should be revoked. Pursuant to 1 Pa. Code § 35.37, you are directed to file a written answer to the averments below within 20 days.

The grounds for revocation include:

- not providing a material component of the student’s education (24 P.S. § 17-1741-A(a)(3)(ii)(A));
- one or more material violations of a condition, standard or procedure contained in Solomon Charter School’s written charter (24 P.S. § 17-1729-A(a)(1));
- violation of the CSL (24 P.S. § 17-1729-A(a)(4)); and,

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<sup>1</sup> 24 P.S. §§ 17-1701-A - 17-1751-A.

- violation of provisions of law from which Solomon Charter School has not been exempted (24 P.S. § 17-1729-A(a)(5)).

In support, the Department states:

### **INTRODUCTION**

Schools that operate under a charter are divided into three general types – charter schools, regional charter schools, and cyber charter schools. The first two, charter schools and regional charter schools, are authorized to operate through charters granted by a local board of school directors. *See* 24 P.S. §§ 17-1717-A(c) and 17-1718-A(b) and (c). These schools are commonly referred to as “brick-and-mortar” charter schools and focus on teacher-centered instruction, including teacher-led discussion and teacher knowledge imparted to students, through face-to-face interaction at the schools’ physical facilities. By contrast, cyber charter schools are authorized by the Department, *see* 24 P.S. § 17-1741-A, and offer a structured education program in which content and instruction are delivered over the Internet without a school-established requirement that the student attend a supervised physical facility designated by the school, except on a very limited basis, such as for standardized tests.

By establishing different provisions for the authorization of the individual types of charters by separate agencies, the General Assembly acknowledged that significant differences exist between these types of schools and signaled its intent that cyber charter schools are materially different from charter schools and regional charter schools.

As defined by the CSL, a cyber charter school is “an independent public school established and operated under a charter from the Department of Education and in which the school uses technology in order to provide a significant portion of its curriculum and to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means.”

*See* 24 P.S. § 17-1703-A. The CSL’s definition of a cyber charter school is not the exclusive legislative guidance for the requirements applicable to cyber charter schools, however. *See* 1 Pa.C.S. § 1921(a) (statute shall be construed to give effect to all its provisions). Additional provisions of the CSL, in addition to the fact that subarticle (c) specifically addressed cyber charter schools separately from other schools that operate under a charter, lead to the conclusion that a cyber charter school must exist exclusively, or at least in all material respects, in a virtual environment, as further explained below, and use physical facilities only as a supplement to virtual instruction.

For example, section 1723-A(c) of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1723-A(c), permits charter schools and regional charter schools to “enroll nonresident students on a space-available basis.” This and other similar features are irrelevant and legally inapplicable to cyber charter schools, which provide their curriculum in a virtual environment. Likewise, section 1726-A of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1726-A, which relates to transportation to charter schools and regional charter schools, does not apply to cyber charter schools. *See* 24 P.S. § 17-1749-A(a)(1). The General Assembly did not find it necessary to ensure enrollment preference for resident students or provide provisions for transportation of cyber charter school students, because it intended that a cyber charter school deliver instruction in a virtual environment, and not at a school’s physical facility that would be located within the boundaries of a particular school district or require that students be transported to the physical facility for attendance.

Specific cyber charter school application requirements — which supplement those that are otherwise applicable to all applicants that seek to operate schools under a charter — further evidence that the General Assembly recognized the significant differences between brick-and-mortar charter schools and cyber charters schools. For example, in addition to the requirement in

24 P.S. § 17-1719-A(12) that a charter application include information on the length of the school day, a cyber charter application must include an “explanation of the amount of on-line time required for elementary and secondary students” and a “description of how the cyber charter school will define and monitor a student’s school day, including the delineation of on-line and off-line time.” 24 P.S. § 17-1747-A(3) and (7). The collection of this additional information in the application is necessary because cyber charter school students “attend” school in a virtual (on-line) environment and not at a physical school facility. Also, in addition to providing a description and address of the physical facility in which the school will be located, 24 P.S. § 17-1719-A(11), a cyber charter school application must include the “addresses of all facilities and offices of the cyber charter school. . . .” 24 P.S. § 17-1747-A(16). Here, the General Assembly recognized that a cyber charter school would operate from multiple locations for any in-person interaction with students to supplement virtual instruction, if at all, and required that applications provide a description of “all” facilities and offices as compared to “the physical facility.”

As an administrative agency, the Department must act within the scope of the authority delegated to it by the General Assembly. *Mack v. Civil Service Commission*, 817 A.2d 571, 574 (Pa. Cmwlth. 2003). Both local boards of school directors and the Department are independently granted authority to review and act upon applications for the establishment of public schools that operate under a charter, and to oversee and regulate the schools. Acting within the authority granted to the Department by the General Assembly also requires the Department not invade upon the separate authority granted to local boards of school directors by the General Assembly. Consequently, in considering applications for the establishment of cyber charter schools and in the general oversight and regulation of cyber charter schools, it is essential that the Department recognize the differences between these types of schools. As a practical matter, this means the

Department is not authorized to permit the establishment or operation of a cyber charter school that provides face-to-face instruction in a physical facility and which should instead be authorized by local boards of school directors. The Department's public recognition of these distinctions assists charter applicants with identifying the appropriate charter authorizer for submission of an application for the establishment of a charter school, regional charter school or cyber charter school, and in determining the proper procedures for submission of an application to the authorizer.

Because of the limitations of the CSL described above, cyber charter schools must be able to function and provide all curriculum and instruction to all of its students without the need for students to attend any physical facility designated by the cyber charter school. A cyber charter school may only use a physical facility as an administrative office or as a resource center for the purpose of providing no more than supplemental services (e.g., tutoring, counseling, extra-curricular activities, standardized testing) to enrolled students. Any use of physical facilities by a cyber charter school for these supplemental services shall provide equitable access to such services for all students enrolled in the school. To ensure equitable access, a cyber charter school must have materially the same supplemental services available to all enrolled students wherever they live in the Commonwealth. If the physical facilities designated by the cyber charter school are not accessible to a student, the cyber charter school must be prepared to demonstrate that it can provide for suitable electronic communication with the student or provide for a staff member or contracted consultant to travel to a location convenient to the student to provide such services. Finally, to ensure that the operation of a cyber charter school will not have a significant impact on one or a defined group of school districts, which would legally require authorization of the school as a charter school or regional charter school, the cyber

charter applicant or operating cyber charter school must demonstrate the ability to enroll students from across the state and provide all services to those students in a materially consistent way, regardless of where they reside.

In 2011, Solomon Charter School submitted an application and revised application to the Department to operate a cyber charter school under a charter authorized by the Department pursuant to subarticle (c) of the CSL, 24 P.S. §§ 17-1741-A – 17-1751-A. Based on the representations and assurances in its cyber charter application and revised application, and those provided during the December 1, 2011 public hearing on its application, the Department granted a charter to Solomon Charter School to begin operation during the 2012-2013 school year.

During the 2012-2013 school year, Solomon Charter School did not operate as a cyber charter school. Instead, as detailed below in all the numbered averments, Solomon Charter School operated as a brick-and-mortar charter school. Solomon Charter School did not deliver a significant portion of its curriculum and instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means. Additionally, Solomon Charter School did not provide or reimburse for each student enrolled, all equipment, technology and services necessary for the on-line delivery of curriculum and instruction. To the extent that Solomon Charter School incorporated the Internet and electronic instruction into its operations, such instruction was secondary to live instruction provided by Solomon Charter School's teachers and staff at its physical school facility at 1209 Vine Street, Philadelphia.

For the reasons below, the charter of Solomon Charter School should be revoked and the School should be ordered to discontinue operations at the end of the 2012-2013 school year.

## BACKGROUND

1. The Pennsylvania Department of Education (Department) is a Commonwealth agency as defined in the Administrative Agency Law, 2 Pa.C.S. §§ 101 *et seq.*, and the General Rules of Administrative Practice and Procedure, 1 Pa. Code §§ 31.1 *et seq.*
2. Pursuant to Sections 1741-A – 1751-A of the CSL, 24 P.S. §§ 17-1741-A – 17-1751-A, the Department is responsible for reviewing and acting upon charter applications for cyber charter schools in Pennsylvania, renewing and revoking cyber charter school charters, and continuously assessing and evaluating cyber charter schools to ensure compliance with the charter and applicable statutes and regulations.
3. Solomon Charter School is authorized as a cyber charter school as defined in Section 1703-A of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1703-A.
4. On or about October 1, 2011, Solomon Charter School submitted a Cyber Charter School Application (Charter Application) to the Department pursuant to Section 1745-A(d) of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1745-A(d). A copy of Solomon Charter School's Charter Application is available on the Department's website at <http://www.pde.state.pa.us>.
5. On or about December 1, 2011, the Department held a public hearing on Solomon Charter School's Charter Application as required by Section 1745-A(e) of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1745-A(e).
6. On January 30, 2012, the Department issued a decision, denying Solomon Charter School's Charter Application (Department's January 30, 2012 Decision).
7. Pursuant to Section 1745-A(g) of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1745-A(g), Solomon Charter School resubmitted a Revised Cyber Charter School Application to the Department (Revised Charter Application).

8. On May 16, 2012, based on the information and representations made in Solomon Charter School's Charter Application and Revised Charter Application, and the testimony and other official record of the December 1, 2011 public hearing, the Department issued a decision, authorizing a charter for Solomon Charter School to operate a cyber charter school (Department's May 16, 2012 Decision).
9. Pursuant to Section 1745-A(f)(3) of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1745-A(f)(3), upon approval of Solomon Charter School's charter, the provisions of Solomon Charter School's Charter Application and Revised Charter Application became part of and were incorporated in Solomon Charter School's charter.

#### **2012 Assessment**

10. Pursuant to Section 1742-A of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1742-A, the Department is authorized to assess and evaluate cyber charter schools, including Solomon Charter School.
11. Based on a review of information received by the Department following the issuance of the Department's May 16, 2012 Decision, the Department determined that evidence existed warranting additional inquiry into whether Solomon Charter School was meeting the goals of its charter and was in compliance with its charter and applicable statutes and regulations during the 2012-2013 school year (2012 Assessment).

#### **Solomon Charter School's Application and Charter**

12. Solomon Charter School's Charter Application, as incorporated in its charter, provides that the School's students "will learn in a virtual school environment." Charter Application, Pg. 39.
13. Solomon Charter School's Charter Application, as incorporated in its charter, provides that the School's "[t]eachers will direct student learning using standards-based curricula

- from national publishers through online one-to-one tutoring, online distance-learning classrooms, and extended learning projects.” Charter Application, Pg. 53.
14. Solomon Charter School’s Charter Application, as incorporated in its charter, provides “the parent and student must agree to login to the virtual classrooms regularly and use the Learning Management System to access assignments and lessons based on the student’s Learning Plan. The teachers will teach virtual classes of students using two-way microphones and interactive whiteboards, on a regular class schedule.” Charter Application, Pg. 53.
  15. Solomon Charter School’s Charter Application, as incorporated in its charter, provides that the School “will use both real-time and ‘delayed-time’ instruction with students, providing access of parents and students to lesson plans, curricula, online lessons, interactive ‘virtual classroom’ session, online assessments, on-line tutoring, and an on-line learning management system that helps them to make the most of the paper- and computer-based curriculum materials that we have provided for them.” Charter Application, Pg. 71.
  16. Solomon Charter School’s Charter Application, as incorporated in its charter, provides, “Teachers will teach ‘virtual classes’ at particular times, during which time students may participate or not, depending on their schedules or their particular needs.” Charter Application, Pg. 71.
  17. Solomon Charter School’s Charter Application, as incorporated in its charter, states that the School “will provide all of the computer hardware, software and Internet connections needed to allow all students enrolled to fully participate in the school. The school will provide each family a stipend for the Internet connection recommended by the school, or

with reimbursement for their current internet connection, on the discretion of the school.”  
Charter Application, Pg. 74.

18. Solomon Charter School’s Charter Application, as incorporated in its charter, states that the School “will also provide a printer with each computer.” Charter Application, Pg. 75.

#### **Solomon Charter School’s Handbook**

19. As part of the 2012 Assessment, the Department reviewed Solomon Charter School’s “Student and Family Handbook” for the 2012-2013 school year (Handbook). A copy of the Handbook, which states it is effective as of August 13, 2012, is attached as Exhibit 1 and is also available from Solomon Charter School’s website, [www.solomoncharter.org](http://www.solomoncharter.org) (last accessed January 3, 2013).
20. The Handbook states that Solomon Charter School offers a “blended approach” and is “what is called a *rotating blended cyber school*.” Handbook, Pg. 2 and 3. *See also*, Handbook, Pg. 13 (describing the School as a “Hybrid School, combining the best of cyber and real space education for [the School’s] students, their families and for the larger community.”)
21. The Handbook states that Solomon Charter School will have a “defined dress code,” and provides students and parents with specific information concerning the attire approved for use at the School and the student “detentions and/or suspensions” that will be imposed for failure to follow the dress code. Handbook, Pg. 6 and 24.
22. The Handbook states, “Every student will have a locker in the school building.” Handbook, Pg. 6.
23. The Handbook states that Solomon Charter School is “expecting that most students who are in geographically accessible areas will be in attendance in our physical space every

day,” and further offers, “When students are ill or away, they can use the cyber means for attending their classes.” Handbook, Pg. 6.

24. The Handbook states that Solomon Charter School’s “teachers/educational professionals will mostly be conducting the real time learning (for which [the School] will have students that are not geographically accessible ‘in the room’ through cyber connections) . . .” Handbook, Pg. 15.
25. The Handbook provides the following School attendance policy:

#### **Attendance Policy**

Daily attendance is required for every school day, through in person appearance or technology enabled log on. Students who cannot attend school in person, due to mild illness or being out of town, must log in and attend classes by cyber means. Daily attendance by physical and/or cyber presence is required given the rigorous nature of our academic program.

When absence is unavoidable, it is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to make up missed assignments and work. . . . When possible, this is one of the areas where the cyber component of our learning may be a most useful and helpful tool. . . .

\* \* \*

Please note that if the student is ill for one or two days and is at home but attends classes through cyber means, there is no need for notification. However, if the student stays home selectively and DOES NOT APPEAR on our campus repeatedly, this will constitute a problem for which there will be consequences.

Handbook, Pg. 29-30.

26. The Handbook does not include any information on how a student can attend classes or receive the School’s instruction through on-line or other cyber means and does not include a website for accessing on-line or cyber instruction.
27. Solomon Charter School’s Handbook states, “transportation will be the responsibility of our students and families.” Solomon Charter School’s Handbook, Pg. 27.

28. With respect to transportation, Solomon Charter School's Handbook also states, "Students from families with economic need will get tokens. In the future, we believe that grade-school students will be provided with transportation." Solomon Charter School's Handbook, Pg. 6.

#### **September 5 On-Site Visit**

29. On September 5, 2012, as part of the 2012 Assessment, a representative of the Department conducted an on-site visit at Solomon Charter School's physical school facility at 1209 Vine Street, Philadelphia (September 5 On-Site Visit).
30. During the September 5 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's students were present and receiving instruction at the School's 1209 Vine Street facility and the School was not providing synchronous or asynchronous cyber instruction.
31. During the September 5 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's students did not have computers to enable the students to receive synchronous or asynchronous cyber instruction.
32. During the September 5 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's 1209 Vine Street facility included various classrooms and other school related spaces, including a cafeteria, and classes were conducted in accordance with a set time schedule, including time for students to walk between classrooms to their next class and eat lunch.
33. During the September 5 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's teachers and staff advised students that attendance would be manually taken each school day during the students' homeroom classes.

34. During the September 5 On-Site Visit, unless a student was present at Solomon Charter School's 1209 Vine Street facility, there was no means for the student to attend the School or classes as there was no on-line or cyber instruction.
35. During the September 5 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff stated that the School had selected iPads as the computer to be provided to the School's students.
36. During the September 5 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff stated the School would only reimburse eligible low-income families for at-home internet and the determination regarding reimbursement would be made based on eligibility for a local internet service provider's reduced rate program available to families of students that qualify for free or reduced priced meals in the National Student Lunch Program (NSLP).

#### **October 4 On-Site Visit**

37. On October 4, 2012, as part of the 2012 Assessment, representatives of the Department conducted a second on-site visit at Solomon Charter School's 1209 Vine Street facility (October 4 On-Site Visit).
38. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's students were present and receiving instruction at the School's physical 1209 Vine Street facility, and the School was not providing synchronous or asynchronous cyber instruction.
39. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff stated that the School was not providing synchronous or asynchronous cyber instruction at that time.
40. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's 1209 Vine Street facility still included various classroom and other school related spaces, including a cafeteria, lockers and a detention or disciplinary room, and the classes were conducted in

accordance with a set time schedule, including time for students to walk between classrooms to their next class and eat lunch.

41. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's teachers and staff stated that attendance was manually taken each school day during the students' homeroom classes and in each live class session and the information was entered into the School's student information system by the teacher. The School did not have any other means for recording attendance.
42. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, unless a student was present at Solomon Charter School's 1209 Vine Street facility, there was no means for the student to attend the school or classes as there was no on-line or cyber instruction.
43. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, not all of Solomon Charter School's students had received iPads, the computer selected by the School to be provided to students, and students had not been provided any other computers by the School.
44. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff confirmed that not all students had received iPads.
45. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's records evidenced that, prior to providing a student with an iPad, the School required that the student and the student's parent or guardian complete a number of forms and documents, including an application for a determination of qualification in the NSLP.
46. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff stated students would only be provided with an iPad and charging/syncing cable and would not receive any other items, including a keyboard, stylus, printer or hard-wired Ethernet router.

47. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff again stated the School would only reimburse eligible low-income families for at-home internet and that the determination regarding reimbursement would be made based on eligibility for a local internet service provider's reduced rate program available to families of students that qualify for free or reduced priced meals in the NSLP. Solomon Charter School's staff further stated that if a student did not qualify for free or reduced meals under the NSLP or already had at-home internet access, the School was not required to and would not reimburse the student or student's parent or guardian for at-home internet access.
48. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School staff and students used iPads to supplement the live instruction provided by the School's teachers.
49. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff confirmed that iPads were used to supplement the live instruction provided by the School's teachers.
50. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff stated the School was only providing information about the School to prospective students and families in Philadelphia and the immediately surrounding area and that the School did not plan to expand marketing or distribution of information to other areas in the immediate future.
51. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, the Department's staff was further informed by Solomon Charter School's staff that to the extent that the School would expand marketing or distribution of information to areas other than Philadelphia in the future, it would be done so by individual communities on a basis selected by the School.
52. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff confirmed that there was no way, other than word of mouth, for students and families outside of the Philadelphia region to become aware of the School.

53. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, the Department's staff obtained a copy of a letter addressed to "Solomon Charter School Families" from Solomon Charter School's Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Saundra Epstein, dated Friday, September 21, 2012 (Dr. Epstein's September 21 Letter).
54. Dr. Epstein's September 21 Letter states that Solomon Charter School is beginning the School's NSLP and provides information regarding the cost and availability of lunch in the NSLP. Dr. Epstein's letter further states, "Family status and eligibility level in the NSLP will allow participation in other programs including discounted SEPTA fares."
55. Dr. Epstein's letter reminds "Solomon Charter School's Families" to be sure that "students come to school in proper dress, wearing their Identification Cards. . . ."
56. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's records included a document constituting a checklist of information items or documents that the School's staff are required to obtain from each student or the student's parent or guardian prior to issuance of an iPad to the student (Student Information Checklist).
57. The Student Information Checklist states, "WE NEED INFORMATION FROM EVERY STUDENT BEFORE THEY CAN RECEIVE THEIR IPAD," and "**ALL ITEMS ON THIS LIST MUST BE COMPLETED AND CHECKED OFF BY A [SOLOMON CHARTER SCHOOL] STAFF MEMBER IN ORDER FOR A STUDENT TO RECEIVE HIS/HER IPAD.**" (emphasis in original).
58. The Student Information Checklist requires that the "FAMILY APPLICATION FOR MEAL BENEFITS (IF APPLICABLE)" document be completed and returned to Solomon Charter School prior to the student receiving an iPad.

59. During the October 4 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's records included a document entitled, "Apple iPad Deployment Guide."
60. The Apple iPad Deployment Guide requires that a student's parent or guardian go to the cafeteria on the third floor of Solomon Charter School's 1209 Vine Street facility to complete student information records, receive an iPad for the student and participate in presentations concerning the Child Internet Protection Act (CIPA).

#### **December 17 On-Site Visit**

61. On December 17, 2012, as part of the 2012 Assessment, representatives of the Department conducted a third on-site visit at Solomon Charter School's 1209 Vine Street facility (December 17 On-Site Visit).
62. During the December 17 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff and students used iPads to supplement the live instruction provided by the School's teachers.
63. During the December 17 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff stated that all students would be required to return their iPads to the School for "updates" and other software and application or "app" changes prior to the winter break, and the iPads would not be accessible to the students during the School's scheduled winter break.
64. During the December 17 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff stated that the School divided its students into three categories: Learning Center Learners or LCLs, Partial Distance Learners or PDLs, and Distance Learners or DLs.
65. During the December 17 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff confirmed that almost all of the School's students were residents of the Philadelphia School District or immediately surrounding school districts.

66. During the December 17 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff stated that a student that was a Partial Distance Learner or Distance Learner, or that was unable to attend a class session at the School's 1209 Vine Street facility on a particular day, would "attend" school by e-mailing the School to record attendance and accessing links, documents, videos or other materials posted on the School's LMS that were part of the School's live in-person instruction.
67. During the December 17 On-Site Visit, Solomon Charter School's staff stated that some of the students classified as Distance Learners were excluded from the School's 1209 Vine Street facility and not permitted to be Learning Center Learners due to disciplinary reasons.
68. During the December 17 On-Site Visit, unless a student was present at Solomon Charter School's 1209 Vine Street facility, there was no means for the student to attend the school or classes as there was no on-line or cyber instruction.

#### **Solomon Charter School's Website**

69. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School made certain documents and information accessible on its public website, [www.solomoncharter.org](http://www.solomoncharter.org).
70. One of the documents accessible from Solomon Charter School's website is entitled, "Solomon Charter School Education Contract."
71. The Solomon Charter School Education Contract requires that a student's parent or guardian agree to, "Require regular school attendance in class or online."
72. The Solomon Charter School Education Contract requires that a student agree to:
  - Take home materials and information needed to complete the assignment.
  - Attend school regularly, in class and online.

- Comply with the dress code: business casual.

73. Solomon Charter School's website, [www.solomoncharter.org](http://www.solomoncharter.org) (last accessed January 3, 2013), does not include any information on how a student can attend classes or receive the School's instruction through on-line or other cyber means and does not include a website for accessing on-line or cyber instruction.

### **Charter School Law Cyber Charter School Requirements**

74. The CSL defines a "cyber charter school" as

an independent public school established and operated under a charter from the Department of Education and in which the school uses technology in order to provide a significant portion of its curriculum and to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means. A cyber charter school must be organized as a public, nonprofit corporation. A charter may not be granted to a for-profit entity.

24 P.S. § 17-1703-A.

75. A cyber charter school offers a structured education program in which content and instruction are delivered over the Internet without a school-established requirement that the student attend a supervised brick-and-mortar location designated by the school, except on a very limited basis, such as for assessment tests.

76. A cyber charter school must deliver its curriculum and instruction exclusively in a cyber or virtual environment and without the need for students to attend any physical facility designated by the cyber charter school.

77. A cyber charter school may only use a physical facility as an administrative office or as a resource center for the purpose of providing no more than supplemental services (e.g., tutoring, counseling, extra-curricular activities, standardized testing) to enrolled students.

78. A cyber charter school's use of physical facilities shall provide equitable access for all students enrolled in the school, and a cyber charter school must have materially the same

supplemental services available to all enrolled students wherever they live in the Commonwealth.

79. If a cyber charter school's physical facilities are not accessible to a student, the cyber charter school must provide for suitable electronic communication with the student or provide for a staff member or contracted consultant to travel to a location convenient to the student to provide such services.
80. A cyber charter school must demonstrate the ability to enroll students from across the state and provide all services to those students in a materially consistent way, regardless of where they reside.
81. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School operated exclusively or primarily from the School's 1209 Vine Street facility, and required that students be present and attend classes at that facility.
82. At all times material hereto, all or a majority of Solomon Charter School's instruction to students was provided live and in-person by the School's teachers at the School's 1209 Vine Street facility.
83. At all times material hereto, almost all of the School's students were residents of the Philadelphia School District or immediately surrounding school districts.
84. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School provided little or no synchronous or asynchronous on-line or cyber instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means.
85. At all times material hereto, as a complete substitute for providing for instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means, Solomon Charter School required

that its students access curriculum and instruction at the School's 1209 Vine Street facility.

86. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School's physical facilities were not available to Solomon Charter School students who were not in the Philadelphia area.
87. As a cyber charter school, Solomon Charter School's instruction must be accessible to students at home through on-line or other cyber means and students should not be prohibited from or restricted in attending class through on-line or cyber means.
88. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School did not deliver its curriculum and instruction exclusively in a cyber or virtual environment.
89. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School required that its students attend its supervised physical facility at 1209 Vine Street to receive curriculum and instruction.
90. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School did not provide equitable access for all students enrolled in the school.
91. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School did not have materially the same services offered at its physical facility at 1209 Vine Street available to all students wherever they reside in the Commonwealth.
92. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School did not provide for suitable electronic communication with a student or provide for a staff member or contracted consultant to travel to a location convenient to a student to provide materially the same services to a student in areas of Pennsylvania where Solomon Charter School's physical facility at 1209 Vine Street is not accessible to a student.

93. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School was unable to enroll students from across the state and provide all services to those students in a materially consistent way, regardless of where they reside.
94. Pursuant to Section 1743-A(e) of the CSL, 24 P.S. § 17-1743-A(e), Solomon Charter School shall, for each student enrolled:
- a. Provide all instructional materials;
  - b. Provide all equipment, including, but not limited to, a computer, computer monitor and printer; and,
  - c. Provide or reimburse for all technology and services necessary for the on-line delivery of the curriculum and instruction.
95. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School did not provide for each student enrolled a printer.
96. At all times material hereto, Solomon Charter School did not provide or reimburse each student for at-home internet access charges actually incurred or that should have been incurred by the student to obtain on-line delivery of curriculum and instruction.
97. As a result of the 2012 Assessment, the Department discovered that grounds exist for revocation of Solomon Charter School's charter as set forth in detail below.

**I. GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE REVOCATION OF SOLOMON CHARTER SCHOOL'S CHARTER UNDER SECTION 1741-A(a)(3)(ii) OF THE CSL.**

98. For each and any of the following reasons, the charter approved for Solomon Charter School should be immediately revoked.

**A. Solomon Charter School did not provide a material component of the students' education.**

**24 P.S. § 17-1741-A(a)(3)(ii)(A)**

**i. Solomon Charter School did not deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means.**

99. Paragraphs 1-98 above are incorporated herein by reference.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School failed to provide each student with a material component of the student's education by not providing instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means and the charter should be immediately revoked.

**ii. Solomon Charter School did not provide or reimburse for each student enrolled, all equipment, technology and services necessary for the on-line delivery of curriculum and instruction.**

100. Paragraphs 1-11, 17-19, 29-31, 35-37, 43-49, 53-54, 56-63, 74-76, 94-98 above are incorporated herein by reference.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School failed to provide each student with a material component of the student's education by not providing equipment, including printers, to each student and/or by not providing or reimbursing each student for at-home internet access charges to obtain on-line delivery of curriculum and instruction and the charter should be immediately revoked.

**II. GROUNDS FOR REVOCATION OF SOLOMON CHARTER SCHOOL'S CHARTER UNDER SECTION 1729-A(a) OF THE CSL.**

101. In addition to the reasons stated above for immediate revocation, for each and any of the following reasons, the charter approved for Solomon Charter School should be revoked.

**A. Solomon Charter School committed one or more material violations of the conditions, standards or procedures contained in its written charter.**

**24 P.S. § 17-1729-A(a)(1)**

**i. Solomon Charter School did not deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means.**

102. Paragraphs 1-98 and 101 above are incorporated herein by reference.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School's failure to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means constitutes a material violation of the conditions, standards or procedures contained in its written charter and the charter should be revoked.

**ii. Solomon Charter School did not provide or reimburse for each student enrolled, all equipment, technology and services necessary for the on-line delivery of curriculum and instruction.**

103. Paragraphs 1-11, 17-19, 29-31, 35-37, 43-49, 53-54, 56-63, 74-76, 94-98 and 101 above are incorporated herein by reference.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School's failure to provide each student with a material component of the student's education by not providing equipment, including printers, to each student and/or by not providing or reimbursing each student for at-home internet access charges to obtain on-line delivery of curriculum and instruction constitutes a material violation of the conditions, standards or procedures contained in its written charter and the charter should be revoked.

**iii. Solomon Charter School used its physical facility for purposes other than those permitted for a cyber charter school.**

104. Paragraphs 1-98 and 101 above are incorporated herein by reference.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School's use of its physical facility for the delivery of curriculum and instruction and for other purposes not permitted by cyber charter schools

constitutes a material violation of the conditions, standards or procedures contained in its written charter and the charter should be revoked.

**B. Solomon Charter School violated the CSL.**

**24 P.S. § 17-1729-A(a)(4)**

**i. Solomon Charter School did not deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means.**

105. Paragraphs 1-98 and 101 above are incorporated herein by reference.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School violated the CSL by failing to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means and the charter should be revoked.

**ii. Solomon Charter School did not provide or reimburse for each student enrolled, all equipment, technology and services necessary for the on-line delivery of curriculum and instruction.**

106. Paragraphs 1-11, 17-19, 29-31, 35-37, 43-49, 53-54, 56-63, 74-76, 94-98 and 101 above are incorporated herein by reference.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School violated the CSL by not providing equipment, including printers, to each student and/or by not providing or reimbursing each student for at-home internet access charges to obtain on-line delivery of curriculum and instruction and its charter should be revoked.

**iii. Solomon Charter School used its physical facility for purposes other than those permitted for a cyber charter school.**

107. Paragraphs 1-98 and 101 above are incorporated herein by reference.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School violated the CSL by using its physical facility for the delivery of curriculum and instruction and for other purposes not permitted by cyber charter schools and its charter should be revoked.

**iv. Solomon Charter School failed to provide for each employee of the school to enroll in the Public School Employees' Retirement System.**

108. Paragraphs 1-11 above are incorporated herein by reference.
109. The CSL provides that all employees of a cyber charter school shall be enrolled in the Public School Employees' Retirement System (PSERS) in the same manner as set forth in 24 Pa.C.S. § 8301(a) unless at the time of the application for the charter school the board of trustees has a retirement program which covers the employees or the employee is currently enrolled in another program. *See* 24 P.S. § 17-1724-A(c).
110. Under the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code, the PSERS pension plan is classified as a "401(a)," governmental defined benefit plan.
111. At the time of its application, Solomon Charter School did not have a retirement program which covered the employees and indicated such on its application.
112. Solomon Charter School is required to provide that all its employees enroll in PSERS unless the employee is enrolled in another program.
113. Solomon Charter School's employment contract with its employees states that the school will enroll the employee in a 403(b) retirement plan.
114. Solomon Charter School and its employees have not enrolled in or made contributions to PSERS during the 2012-2013 school year.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School violated the CSL by not providing for each employee of the school to be enrolled in PSERS and its charter should be revoked.

**C. Solomon Charter School violated provisions of law from which it has not been exempted.**

**24 P.S. § 17-1729-A(a)(5)**

**i. Solomon Charter School violated the provisions of 24 P.S. § 6-696.**

115. Paragraphs 1-98 and 101 above are incorporated herein by reference.

116. Pursuant to Section 696 of the Public School Code, 24 P.S. § 6-696, the General Assembly provided for the establishment of the School Reform Commission (SRC) to be responsible for the operation, management and educational program of a school district of the first class.
117. The School District of Philadelphia is a school district of the first class.
118. Pursuant to Section 696(i)(2), 24 P.S. § 6-696(i)(2), the General Assembly empowered the SRC with the authority to “enter into agreements with persons or for-profit or nonprofit organizations to operate one or more schools.”
119. Pursuant to Section 696(i)(2)(i), 24 P.S. § 6-696(i)(2)(i), as a component of the SRC’s authority as quoted above, the General Assembly suspended the applicability of portions of the CSL, including those relating to the procedures and timelines for review and decision on charter school applications, for the school years following the issuance of a declaration of distress by the Secretary of Education.
120. The SRC has established the Charter School Office within the School District of Philadelphia’s Office of Charter, Partnership and New Schools.
121. The SRC has published a Charter School Policy that includes procedures for review and action on new charter applications (SRC Charter School Policy).
122. The SRC Charter School Policy permits the SRC to consider certain criteria for authorizing a new charter that the Department is not permitted to consider under the CSL.
123. The SRC Charter School Policy establishes a scoring system and competitive preference criteria for authorizing a new charter that the Department is not permitted to consider under the CSL.

124. Solomon Charter School does not operate as a cyber charter school and instead operates a charter school within the School District of Philadelphia, which required approval by the SRC's Charter School Office pursuant to the SRC Charter School Policy.

125. Solomon Charter School's policies and procedures and use of the School's 1209 Vine Street facility for the delivery of in-person, live instruction to the School's students has the effect of operating a charter school within the School District of Philadelphia, which required approval by the SRC's Charter School Office pursuant to the SRC Charter School Policy.

WHEREFORE, Solomon Charter School is in violation of provisions of law from which it has not been exempted, specifically section 696 of the Public School Code, and the School's charter should be revoked.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The evidence cited above in support of revocation of Solomon Charter School's charter, and Solomon Charter School's failure to properly educate its students or comply with its charter and applicable law, go beyond the difficulties expected during the first year of the operation of a new cyber charter school. Solomon Charter School failed to operate the School as a cyber charter school in a manner that provided the education required by law and that it promised to the Department and students in its charter and other materials. In any combination, Solomon Charter School's failures and violations are severe, pervasive and inherent in the School's operations. For the reasons above, and for any additional reasons that may be presented at the hearing scheduled in connection with this Notice, the charter approved for Solomon Charter School should be immediately revoked.

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Ronald J. Tomalis, Secretary of Education

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Roberto T. Datorre, Assistant Counsel  
Attorney I.D. No. 94957

Karen Feuchtenberger, Senior Assistant Counsel  
Attorney I.D. No. 58995

Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Office of Chief Counsel  
333 Market Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Harrisburg, PA 17126  
Tel.: (717)787-5500

Date: March 15, 2013

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I, Karen S. Feuchtenberger, Senior Assistant Counsel, Office of General Counsel assigned to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, hereby certify that on March 15, 2013, I caused to be served a copy of the foregoing Order to Show Cause and Notice and Charges in Support of Revocation of Charter by Electronic Mail, and First Class mail, postage prepaid, on the following parties or counsel of record:

Mr. Stephen Crane  
Solomon Charter School  
1209 Vine Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Robert W. O'Donnell  
O'Donnell Associates  
1601 Market Street  
Suite 2310  
Philadelphia, PA 19103



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Karen S. Feuchtenberger

# **EXHIBIT**

**1**



Solomon Charter School  
Student and Family Handbook  
2012 – 2013

# Solomon Charter School Student and Family Handbook 2012 – 2013

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Dear Solomon Charter School Student and Family,

Welcome to this brand new adventure. We are beyond excited about this amazing journey on which we are all about to embark together. There is so much we want to accomplish with our wonderful faculty, students and families. We sincerely hope to become a center of excellence and innovation that will lead the way as we all move into the future of educational endeavors.

Through our blended approach, we bring together the best of cyber teaching in terms of individualized pacing and reinforcement as well as enrichment opportunities for our students. Excellence in all academics is our goal with our students being the “best they can be in every way possible.” We are also a leadership training center, will be steeped in community service, emphasize the arts and use the city and the entire state as our campus. Our signature offering of Asian Language/Culture/Civilization clusters brings so many of us back to our rooted cultures and identities while adding to the celebration of our American selves and way of life. Our shared values of democracy, freedom, accountability to self, taking the initiative to lead and so much else will be part of the air we breathe collectively at Solomon Charter School.

We hope that you will join us with your children in every possible involvement and grow with us as we move towards our entire Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade community in 2013 -- 2014. This is truly a unique opportunity to help build something new.

Harold Rugg, a social Reconstructionist from the 1930's, taught that when society is at its ideal, our schools should prepare our students to be ideal citizens in our ideal society. When our society is at less than its ideal, our schools should teach our students to bring society closer to the desired ideal. This is clearly where we are today and this is what we hope to bring to all of the students and families of Solomon Charter School.

We want to *inspire, enable, inform, and empower* our students to do and be their best so that we all benefit collectively from their creativity, their efforts and their wonderful minds and souls.

We warmly and excitedly welcome all of us as new members of this new community, striving to be its best so we can all be our best.

*Dr. Saundra Sterling Epstein*  
*Chief Academic Officer*

*Mr. Steve Crane*  
*Chairman, Board of Directors*

*Ms. Mabel Chen*  
*President, Board of Directors*

## **How and why Solomon Charter School came into being**

In the winter of 2009 – 2010 a group of concerned business people in the Philadelphia area felt that something is not right in our various educational systems and we can and should do much better. Led by their head visionary, Steve Crane, the thinking was that our schools are simply too often not equipped to teach proper citizenship skills, values and ethics that should be foundational to who and what we are as Americans and so much else.

At about the same time, there was a new fledgling system of Hebrew Charter Schools that were looked to as a model for the value of community and multi-lingual education that they promised. As the summer of 2010 approached, Dr. Saundra Sterling Epstein, a professional educator with over thirty five years of experience, was hired to try to give some form and function to the vision that would result in a school. As time went on, the Chinese and larger Asian community found themselves drawn to the idea of a school that is based on our roots and foundational values as citizens and individuals, the value of teaching and building upon our cultural beginnings and looking to the future in hopes of becoming better, more ethically based and better equipped individuals and community members.

As this conversation continued, we were acutely aware that the world of education is changing with the realization that technology is a required part of the equation. Therefore, we became what is called a *rotating blended cyber school*. We are using the wonders of technology to increase significantly the amount of information and resources that are available to our students and to allow us to individualize aspects of our educational program to meet the needs of individual students.

We also were fundamentally committed to being an *intentional community of diversity and invested learning*. Therefore, almost immediately it was clear that we were going to work towards becoming an ADL *No Place for Hate*® school where every person and their culture, their roots, their ideas and their wishes for our world are valued and validated.

Thus the idea of Solomon Charter School began to truly take root. In Summer 2011, work began in earnest to submit a fully developed proposal for authorization to the Pennsylvania Department of Education in Harrisburg. Our charter was authorized on May 18, 2012.

Now it is up to us to build and expand this wonderful idea. We are so happy that you are all part of this.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Will there be a dress code?** There will be a defined dress code. Students may wear dark pants or knee length skirts (for girls) of the following colors: black, dark brown, dark blue, dark green, dark grey. The light option is khaki. Shirts (with collars), blouses, sweaters and vests may be any light color (no logos or writing) including white, light blue, light pink, etc., The dark option is navy blue. Shoes and socks should be worn. No jeans are permitted.
2. **Will lunch be available?** This will be dependent upon the needs of the students and our community. We are still working on the details of what we will be able to provide.
3. **What percentage of the school day will be cyber learning and what percentage will be real space learning?** While this will be fluid, both cyber and real space learning will be ongoing elements in the life of every student at Solomon Charter School. We are expecting that most students who are in geographically accessible areas will be in attendance in our physical space every day. As we begin in September 2012, this will apply to most if not the vast majority of our students. When students are ill or away, they can use the cyber means of attending their classes. Later, we will be including students from the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and more students will be cyber attendees, joining our well formed and intentional community of diversity.
4. **Will students get personal space/lockers?** Every student will have a locker in the school building.
5. **Will transportation be provided?** Students from families with economic need will get tokens. In the future, we believe that grade-school students will be provided with transportation. We are waiting for the policies regarding our school to catch up with us and we will keep you advised as this is resolved.
6. **What grades will be included?** During 2012- 2013, we will be a 7 – 10 school. We plan expand to be a full K – 12 school. Our eleventh graders will be our first graduating class in June, 2014.
7. **Will the Solomon Charter School meet all regulations of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania?** Yes, it will, and all students will be tested by the PSSA's and other assessment tools to insure that all benchmarks and standards are met.
8. **Will there be sports and other extra-curricular activities (e.g., art class, band)?** We fully intend to offer as many different programs and activities that are co-curricular and extra-curricular as there are interests in the student body. We envision these efforts as being co-facilitated by adult members of our community and student members of our school community. This is the way in which we want

to have our students (and their family members) take leadership roles in our school life.

9. **Will there be a school library?** We will definitely have an ongoing library, both including our cyber sources and hard copies. This will take time to develop and in the beginning we will rely on the resources in our campus of the city and state, through the Public Library System as well as online resources.
10. **What are the hours of the school day?** We will have our students in learning programs and classes on Monday through Thursdays, from 8:30 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. On Friday, our school day is 8:30 a.m. through 1:30 p.m., with Fridays being used mostly for cyber skills-based learning and teacher appointments as well as group work.
11. **Will every student receive a computer?** Yes, students will receive and be responsible for their own computer, which will remain with them, enabling them to connect with their courses, teachers, classes, and projects.
12. **What is the class size and teacher/student ratio?** Class size will vary. The overall teacher/student ratio will be between 15 and 18 students per teacher.
13. **Will my student/child receive appropriate college preparation?** Solomon Charter School is an academic school with high energy and well-defined academic standards. Additionally, the learning of a world language in every year of our program will enable our students to be well-equipped to deal with our global community and continue their academic journeys in college, as well as undertake entrepreneurial ventures, depending on each student's goals.
14. **Is there a second language requirement?** Yes, every student in the Solomon Charter School will participate in one of our language/culture/civilization clusters each year in the school. Involvement in these clusters is critical to identity in this community of intentional diversity.
15. **How will special needs and learning differences be addressed?** We have a department of Special Needs and Learning Differences and are ready to insure that every student who needs an IEP or a 504 plan will feel comfortable in our school. Specific questions can be addressed to Dr. Robyn Forbes Drucker, our Director of Learning Needs and Differences.
16. **Will there be TESOL (Teaching English as a Second Language) at Solomon Charter School?** Yes, we are aware that many of our students will need to reinforce and bolster their English Language skills and competency. We will accommodate these needs as part of our program and meet all requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in doing so.

17. **What's the discipline policy?** We plan to be a *No Place for Hate*® school. Our expectation is that all members of our community will appreciate and respect each other. There will be a no tolerance policy regarding any type of negative, disruptive or destructive behaviors that compromise the well being of individuals, the collective school community, or school property.

### **Communication between School and Families**

Communication between home and school will be constant and ongoing, from weekly newsletters to group notices to individual communication regarding specific students and their concerns and achievements. These communications will occur several ways, including through our Parent Portal, our Learning Management System and Student Information System. All members will receive the specific details regarding these systems through our school/home communication as soon as all systems are in place.

### **The Solomon Charter School Web Site**

Go to [www.solomoncharter.org](http://www.solomoncharter.org) for all of the most important and updated information about our school and our many involvements and activities.

### **Accessing Daily Classes, Assignments, Homework and Grades**

Each class and teacher will have access to appropriate cyber sites and designated pages that not only provide information about daily and long term assignments, but also provide important information about the course, the grading policies, links to a variety of internet sites that offer additional academic support and information, and class blogs or wikis. All of the specifics of these elements will be communicated during the first days of school.

### **Telephone Communication and Numbers to Call for Various Reasons**

To get in touch with the Solomon Charter School by telephone, please call our main office at 215.569.9779. You may leave a voicemail message for the teacher or

appropriate school staff member at his/her extension. These extensions will be made available to you once school opens and our phone system is completely in place.

Please note that *students are not allowed to have access to their cell phones or personal electronics during the school day for any reason*, except before school, after school, during breaks and during lunch. If there is a family emergency or if parents or family members need to get messages to your student, please call the general school number and leave your information with a receptionist or in the designated voice mailbox. Indication of this message will be posted on the student message/information board and/or the student will be contacted directly as needed.

### **Contacting Faculty and Staff: Emails and School Phone Contacts**

The faculty, staff and educational leadership are committed to respond to parent and student concerns and questions in a timely fashion, showing respect and regard. In return, we ask that all contact be initiated in the same manner, with consideration of professional responsibilities, personal time and observances/holidays of all members of the Solomon Charter School community.

To effect appropriate and timely communication and responses, we suggest that all follow the following procedures:

1. Call or email the person you wish to be in contact with directly.
2. Allow for a sufficient amount of time to pass, a full 24 hours during school weeks, and more when holidays, observances or vacations are involved, please allow for a suitable amount of time on both ends of these non-school cycle time events.
3. If additional issues need to be resolved, contact the department chair or the educational leader responsible for that area of our programming.
4. If after following these steps, there are still concerns, contact the Chief Academic Officer.

We will provide you with these emails and phone numbers as soon as they are available.

## **Members of our Professional Staff**

Emails and phone numbers to reach our professionals will be made available shortly. For more information on each of our faculty members, go to our web site.

Dr. Saundra Sterling Epstein,  
Chief Academic Officer

Mr. Alberto Romero,  
Department Head of English and Language Arts  
Dean of Students, Middle School

Mr. Clifford Stanton,  
Department Head of Social Studies/History and Clusters  
Dean of Students, High School

Ms. Shira Simon,  
History/Social Studies Department  
Head of Holocaust Education

Ms. Sara (Yumin) Hu,  
Chinese Studies  
TESOL

Mr. Joshua Block  
Mathematics Department  
Technology Use

Mr. Ron DeMuro  
Department Head of Science and Math

Ms. Caroline Lee  
Science Department

Mr. Cuong Do  
Mathematics Department

Ms. Debra Klinger  
Learning Differences and Needs  
English Department

Ms. Charity Marie Lynch-Harris  
Learning Differences and Needs  
Music

Mr. Jason Weinberg  
Director of Community Outreach  
English Department

Ms. Bonni Kraus  
Executive Coordinator

Ms. Mirah Kriger  
Administrative Associate

Ms. Mai Tran  
Community Liaison

Mr. Jesse Klapholz  
Operations Manager and Food Services

**THIS LIST WILL BE AMENDED AS NEEDED WITH ADDITIONAL  
MEMBERS OF OUR PROFESSIONAL STAFF AND NEEDED  
PHONE NUMBERS AND EMAILS.**

## **Solomon Charter School Mission Statement**

The Solomon Charter School works to prepare our students for life by nourishing their minds and bodies through a curriculum rich in core knowledge, the arts and technology skills. The most fundamental aspect of this school will be the continued focus on and planning for academic excellence. The signature offering of our unique educational program is the Language/Culture/Civilization clusters. This will be part and foundational to all other aspects of the program, as all members of our community cherish our roots in terms of who we are individually and collectively today and in preparing for our future. Mathematics, English, Science, History and other academic areas of exploration are all included. Also, music, journalism, art, drama, computers and technology, athletics and incorporation of available institutional resources will also be included. Learning at Solomon Charter School starts with *inspiration* to learn, moves towards acquisition of *information*, development of skill sets to be *enabled* and ultimately feeling *empowered* to go forth and work to improve our worldwide community. Lifelong love of learning, critical thinking, entrepreneurial spirit, ethical standards, and well honed decision making skills are our ultimate goals.

## **Solomon Charter School Philosophy and Goals**

The **Solomon Charter School** is a Hybrid School, combining the best of cyber and real space education for our students, their families and for the larger community. We will ultimately be a K – 12 school; although, we are opening in 2012 – 2013 with only some of our Middle and High School grades. The reason we are beginning with these grades is to respond to needs that are critical and imminent in our state. Further, we want to create a special type of leadership in the school that we want to encourage and enable, ultimately contributing to a different type of educational community.

In achieving our mission statement, we will focus and include the following foundational elements in our multi-faceted and expansive program:

- a. **Excellent academics** – We will offer a high level program of studies using state of the art technology and the most recent strategies of learning, combining many different modalities. We are educating our students for success and are greatly interested in students and families who agree with high standards and being the best we can be.
- b. **Individualized progress and monitoring** – Through use of cyber means and in implementing our stated mission, we will be monitoring the progress and growth of each individual student, encouraging each student to learn at the rate that is best for him or her while both meeting standards of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and learning important collaborative skills in working with others and in being part of a community.
- c. **Leadership training for all** – In our community of learners, we want to provide opportunities for our students to truly learn valuable skills for the leadership positions they will take for our society in the future. The best way to learn to be a leader is to have the opportunity to do so, and this is the opportunity we will provide as part of our educational community.
- d. **Our teaching and learning community** – We all have so much to teach each other and learn from each other. At various appoints all members of our community will take on both roles. Our students will learn to have confidence in themselves as teachers and our teachers will model the value and important elements of being an effective learner.
- e. **Conflict resolution** – In our fractured world, it is so critical that we create a generation of people who are open-minded, can express important points of view, listen deeply to and consider those that are different than the ones they hold and work together collaboratively with those who are different than them as well as those who are not. These skill sets are important in the fabric of a Solomon Charter School education.

- f. **Our intentional community of diversity** – As a community rooted in the cultures and civilizations that birthed us individually and collectively, we value the diversity in our community and respect for self, others and communal space are foundational at the Solomon Charter School.
- g. **Asian Language/Culture/Civilization clusters** – As the signature offering of the Solomon Charter School, intensive study of the languages, cultures and civilizations from which we come will be emphasized. We begin in the 2012- 2013 school year with Hebrew, Chinese/Mandarin, and Vietnamese. We will be adding other Language/Culture/Civilization clusters as we continue growing our community.
- h. **Partnerships with other institutions** – As we are a community based school, we will be partnering with a variety of agencies and institutions in our larger community. These will include arts centers, music and drama institutions, museums, research institutes and the like. We also plan to be a *No Place for Hate*® School, insuring that the Anti-Defamation League will be another important partner with the Solomon Charter School.
- i. **City and State as our campus** – We will constantly use the resources that our cyber technology and connections to city and state agencies afford us. Trips to Harrisburg, visiting and learning from Farmers’ Markets, using educational programs and facilities such as the zoo, and local universities, learning from our community businesses and financial institutions as well as individuals who have created a positive community impact will be an ongoing part of our program.
- j. **Community Service** – Every student in Grades Six through Twelve will be engaged in ongoing community service, both in the school community and outside in our larger community as well. A specified number of hours will be designated for each grade level in our community.
- k. **Our international learning community** – With the increased accessibility afforded by our cyber learning nature, we will partner with communities and learners throughout Asia and elsewhere in the world as appropriate and meaningful in our learning program. Whether our Science program is augmented by the resources of the **Technion Institute of Science** in Israel or learning with other students in China, our learning community will include those we see on the screen as well as those sitting next to us.

Reflective of this philosophy and vision as well as focused on meeting stated goals, our curricular materials will come from a wide range of sources. Basically, our skills based

courses (e.g., Spelling, Language Arts, Mathematics skill sets, etc.) will be through cyber courses with teachers/educational professionals helping to facilitate the students' journey through these materials and monitoring their progress. We are generally using Prentice Hall materials as our main frame as it meets all requirements regarding the Standards Aligned System and is successful with students of varying levels of academic potential and are well thought of and used by successful school districts with which we have contact. We are also using an array of other resources that are proven as successful such as Study Island (cyber delivery) and aspects of Singapore Math, to cite a few examples. In short, through a great deal of research, vetting and speaking to different educators, we are using what we consider to be the best materials available for our academic focus and to validate our intentional community of diversity. Our teachers/educational professionals will mostly be conducting the real time learning (for which we will have students that are not geographically accessible "in the room" through cyber connections) in discussion areas and community building courses (Social Studies/History, Health and, of course, our own developed Language/Culture/Civilization clusters). Additionally, we will have laboratory time for appropriate courses, e.g., Science and Art, and there will be ongoing use of educational strategies to include use of multiple modalities, group work, long-range projects and other recognized best practices in education. To be clear, we will be using courses that are already developed as well as develop our own, specifically in our signature language/culture/civilization clusters, and in connecting those clusters to other subjects and disciplines within our curricular and educational program.

## **Elastic Clause**

The school and its educational leadership reserve the right to establish fair and reasonable rules and regulations for situations requiring actions that are not covered in the handbook that may arise. In all cases, rules, regulations and possible consequences shall be as consistent as possible with previously established rules, regulations and possible consequences for similar situations. Matters that are omitted here are not to be taken as permitted or inconsequential but rather categorically connected to those included.

All policies and regulations within this handbook, those expressly indicated as well as those implicitly understood, apply for all school sponsored activities, including in and out of the building, transportation, and off the campus. Anyone who compromises the safety of oneself, other individuals or the group in any way will immediately be removed from the activity or involvement and appropriate consequences as indicated in the Discipline and Behavior Policy will be applied.

## **Statement of Non-Discrimination**

Applicants for admission, employment, provision of services and any involvement with the Solomon Charter School are hereby notified that this institution does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, identity, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs, activities or policies.

As an *intentional community of diversity*, welcoming and encouraging representation from each and every grouping of people is tied to our mission.

## **Right to Object to Release of Directory Information**

Generally, school officials must have written permission from the parent/legal guardian of a student or eligible student before releasing any information from a student's record. However, Federal law allows schools and school districts to disclose, without consent, directory information. This includes the name of the student, address, date of birth and participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance and degrees and awards received.

Unless you advise the administrative office of the Solomon Charter School that you do not want any or all of this information released, school officials may do so. Upon the

signed notification of such objections, this information will not be released without the prior consent of the parent/guardian or eligible student.

## **Academic Requirements and Expectations/Academic Program**

The Solomon Charter School offers a rigorous academic program and it is fully expected that all students in our learning community will work up to their potential and achieve the best they can given the many resources that will be available to them. Every student in our program will be expected to be actively and fully involved in all subject areas that are part of the program for each year. Included as the main elements in this holistic and multi-faceted curriculum are the following:

- English/Language Arts
- Social Studies/History
- Science
- Mathematics
- World Language/Culture/Civilization cluster
- Physical Education/Health
- Arts, Music and Drama
- Skills Building Courses in Leadership, Communication and Personal Growth

Additionally there will be many opportunities for our students to participate in a variety of co-curricular and extra-curricular programming that will further supplement our rich program. All students and their families are strongly encouraged to take advantage of these wonderful resources.

Also, in Grades Six through Twelve, all of our students will be involved in a stipulated number of Community Service hours, to be completed both within our school community and outside of our school community. Finally there will be various projects that will be important opportunities for our students to take the initiative in thinking creatively and producing a product that will be meaningful to them and potentially valuable to the larger community.

## **Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law, which governs the maintenance and disclosure of students' educational records in public education. According to FERPA, all parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to check their records for accuracy and request changes of inaccuracies as needed. You may request compliance documents regarding FERPA and report complaints if Solomon

Charter School fails to comply with FERPA. Parents/guardians may and will be asked for their signature before release of records for various reasons according to the standards of FERPA. Solomon Charter School pledges to comply with all regulations of FERPA.

### **Meeting Commonwealth Defined Standards and Benchmarks**

Our program is highly academic and not only is designed to meet all standards set by the Secretary of the Department of Education of Pennsylvania, but exceeds the number of required school hours and includes more subjects to be studied in a concentrated manner than the standards of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania dictate. We are anticipating and have already created a schedule for an 8:30 a.m. – 4:05 p.m. school day on Mondays through Thursdays and shorter instructional hours on Friday for cyber coursework, testing, work on projects, and research only (8:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.) to allow for teacher/student meetings, professional teams to meet and so forth on that day. There may be times on Fridays when our students who are part of our physical community and travel a longer distance may work at home as cyber students if there are no specific scheduled meetings. They will still have to indicate their presence through cyber means on these occasions. Also there will be our *Wednesday Nights at Solomon Charter School* program that will include students, families, and communities as well as use the institutions that are accessible as they generally have late operational hours on Wednesdays. There will be shows, lectures, cultural activities, art exhibits and other such experiences included in this program. Additionally, given the cyber component of our educational program delivery, there is ongoing 24/7 access to many of our learning opportunities after hours and during summer and vacation times as well, as needed.

## **Graduation Requirements**

All standards and requirements as stated by the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be maintained and determined as criteria for graduation from and completion of the educational program of the Solomon Charter School.

Further, given the nature of the program of the Solomon Charter School, our students will have additional criteria to meet that go above and beyond the requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For example, our students study in a language immersion program every year of their participation in our program. Through our partnership with Asian Arts Initiative, various museums and other agencies, our students will participate in more arts related programming than required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

For more information about the standards for graduation as required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education go to [http://static.pdesas.org/Content/Documents/Pennsylvania\\_Graduation\\_Requirements\\_Frequently\\_Asked\\_Questions.pdf](http://static.pdesas.org/Content/Documents/Pennsylvania_Graduation_Requirements_Frequently_Asked_Questions.pdf)

## **The Ideal Solomon Charter School Graduate**

Our stated goals are that the diverse population of students who complete the programs of the Solomon Charter School system will:

- Be confident and ethical learners and citizens,
- Value reaching their full potential,
- Love and engage actively in learning,
- Be skilled and informed members of society,
- Be proud and empowered leaders in their own community,
- Take initiative in working through problems of our world and finding constructive solutions, and

- Respect others and command respect through use of their own actions, knowledge and skills.

## **Behavior Standards and Contract**

It is our expectation that all of our students and community members will behave in a manner that is respectful and caring towards all members of the community and the space in which we learn, both in real space and as enabled through our cyber learning component. As an intentional community of diversity, there will be a **No Tolerance Policy** in place regarding any behavior that is disrespectful or contrary to the foundational principles on which the Solomon Charter School community is based.

To that end, the following **Behavior Standards and Contract** includes each of the following elements, which must be observed by all students and this agreement is indicated by the signature of the student and his or her parent/guardian as required in this handbook.

- Expectations regarding behavior
- Each person is responsible for his or her own behavior and actions
- Consequences for breaking of contract
- Student-Teacher *Beit Din*/Court to enforce community policies
- Suspensions and re-entry conditions or expulsion from Solomon Charter School

**Expectations regarding behavior** – We pledge to act at all times in a manner that shows respect and regard for all members of the Solomon Charter School community. We will show acceptance and appreciation of all differences in our community, be they a function of national, ethnic or racial identity; learning differences; or various held political and philosophical belief systems. There will be no toleration of speech, physical acts or gestures that are not respectful and appropriate.

**Each person is responsible for his or her own behavior and actions** at all times. We will act with respect at all times and take responsibility for our own behaviors as well as the consequences for falling short of given expectations as members of our community of intentional diversity.

Therefore, there is a **No Tolerance Policy** in place for the following inappropriate behaviors:

- Physical fighting
- Inappropriate physical contact
- Physical or verbal abuse
- Inappropriate use of words

- Any type of bullying, including cyber bullying
- Disruptive behavior in classes, gatherings or public spaces
- Defacement of property
- Inappropriate and disrespectful behavior of any type in dealing with other community members, students, professionals and staff
- Academic dishonesty
- Substance abuse of **any type or possession of any forbidden substances**
- Possession of any weapons, such as and not limited to **knives, guns, matches, lighters, firecrackers, caps, handcuffs, toy guns or other weapon-like items.**

The school will hold each and every member of our learning community responsible for any of these inappropriate actions, including those that take place during school hours as well as before and after school hours in and around the school grounds and buildings.

**Any action, threat of action, or possession of forbidden items that compromises the feeling of safety and well being of every member of our community will be severely disciplined and could, when appropriate result in immediate expulsion from the Solomon Charter School.** Note that consequences for various types of actions are indicated in appropriate sections in this handbook.

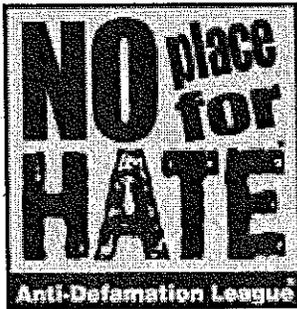
**Consequences for breaking of contract** – Due to our promise of a safe and secure learning and living environment for all members of the Solomon Charter School community, our **No Tolerance Policy** will be strictly enforced. As each person is responsible for his or her own behaviors, no “explaining away” of offenses will be accepted. The generally accepted rule is that correction of or compensation for the offense committed must be effected. The specifics of how this is done is explained as appropriate, e.g., written apologies for insulting behaviors to other students or cleaning up and removal of any defacement of property. Additionally conferences with the student, parents, Chief Academic Officer, and other professional staff as appropriate will accompany each offence. Generally the first offense will result in an after school detention in addition to the above consequences; the second offense in a suspension from school; and the third offense in more severe consequences. Any pattern of such behavior will result in expulsion from the Solomon Charter School. Offenses are cumulative; this is the nature of our **No Tolerance Policy**.

**Student-Teacher *Beit Din*/Court to enforce community policies** – When appropriate and needed, cases of abuse or inappropriate behavior may be referred to our School Court (*Beit Din*) system for judgments and enforcement of our policies as needed. Our *Beit Din*/School Court will include representatives of our faculty/adult population and representatives of our student population. There will be three of each with a designated head of the Court whose vote will count when ties need to be broken. The *Beit Din* will enforce the consequences for various offenses as indicated here and also be involved when members of the community petition for re-entry as appropriate.

**Suspensions and re-entry conditions or expulsion from Solomon Charter School** – As explained in appropriate sections, suspensions will be indicated for serious offenses.

Students must petition for re-entry after a suspension and this petition is presented to the *Beit Din* as described above.

**Our *No Place for Hate*® Community** – We are planning to be a *No Place for Hate*® school community. This is a program that is sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League and is described as follows:



**No Place for Hate®**

The No Place for Hate® initiative provides educators and students with the resources to ensure that anti-bias and diversity education are an integral part of the school curriculum. No Place for Hate® also helps to create and sustain inclusive school environments where all students feel valued and have the opportunity to succeed by promoting respect for individual difference while challenging bigotry and prejudice. Launched in schools in 2001, the popular initiative has been embraced by hundreds of campuses throughout the United States.

We will be engaged in programming and take the appropriate steps in our first year of 2012 – 2013 so that we can officially be recognized by this important initiative. Any questions regarding this program should be addressed to Dr. Epstein, our Chief Academic Officer.

I \_\_\_\_\_ have read and agree to abide  
(Name of student)

completely with all conditions of this Behavior Contract, as well as the additional sections in this handbook that are referenced here, and understand the consequences for not doing so.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Internet Safety and Use Contract

### Pledge for Students of Solomon Charter School Community

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to the following:

- I will talk with my parents or guardian so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide when I may be online and for how long, with whom I can communicate online and appropriate Web sites for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.
- I will never share personal information, such as my full name, address, telephone number, the name of my school or any other information that could help someone determine my actual identity. I also will not share personal information about my friends or family.
- I will never download anything from anyone I don't know. I will check with my parents or guardian before downloading or installing software that could possibly hurt our computer or jeopardize my family's privacy.
- I will never agree to get together with someone I meet online, and I will tell my parents or guardian if anyone online asks me to meet in person.
- I will never send someone I meet online my picture or pictures of my friends or family.
- I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. If I do receive such messages, I will tell my parents or guardian right away so they can contact the Internet service provider. In turn, I will not use rude or mean language on the Internet.
- I will not give out my Internet passwords to anyone (even my best friends) other than my parents or guardian.
- I will help my parents or guardian understand how to have and learn things online and teach them about the Internet, computers and other technology.
- I will abide completely with all conditions and practices indicated in my Internet and Computer Use Contract that I have received and agreed to upon receipt of my computer and school owned equipment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Dress Code**

It is desired that we all look and act in a manner that is professional and appropriate as this is our “place of work and learning” as well as our shared community. To that end, there will be a defined dress code with the following elements.

1. Students may wear dark pants or knee length skirts (for girls) of the following colors: black, dark brown, dark blue, dark green, dark grey. The light option is khaki.
2. Shirts (with collars), blouses, sweaters and vests may be any light color (no logos or writing) including white, light blue, light pink, etc., The dark option is navy blue. All shirts must have sleeves and finished collars.
3. Shoes and socks/stockings must always be worn. During particularly warm days, sandals may be worn but they must be appropriate (e.g. no flip flops or thongs).
4. No jeans, tee shirts or other informal clothing are permitted.
5. All members of the Solomon Charter School are expected to look neat and respectful at all times.
6. Once school begins, we will have special “school spirit” themed dress days. More details about this will be announced at the appropriate time.

Any student who does not follow this dress code and appears at school inappropriately dressed will serve detentions or/and suspensions as follows:

- a. First offense – A meeting with Dean of Students with possible after school detention
- b. Second offense – A meeting with Dean of Students and up to three after school detentions
- c. Third offense – A meeting with Dean of Students, Chief Academic Officer and up to one week suspension

There may and will be more serious consequences if disregard for these guidelines becomes a persistent behavior. This is an institute of learning and respect and we expect all members of our community to come attired appropriately. Please note that our facility is fully air conditioned and heated so that our students can learn and dress comfortably and appropriately.

## **Academic Honesty**

Honesty and integrity are hallmarks of the foundational principles on which Solomon Charter School was founded. As such, we expect that all members of our educational community of learners and teachers will act in a manner that is reflective of these

standards. Any form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and there will be dire consequences for any form of cheating, stealing the hard work of another student or passing off the work of someone else as your own.

Papers should be submitted through [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) which will insure that the work you submit is your own and only your own. Further, this will protect your work and your intellectual property as it should be.

### ***Cheating, Plagiarism and Citations***

Cheating is the act of giving or receiving information from another for any assignment or assessment and passing of the information provided as belonging to someone other than its actual author or creator. Cheating and plagiarism are both unethical and unacceptable in the Solomon Charter School learning community. Serious consequences will result from such activity either in sharing information or in taking information from another, as indicated in the **Behavior Standards and Contract**.

As part of our ongoing curriculum and study skills development program, we will insure that our students and community members understand the value of protection of their own intellectual property as well as respecting the need to protect that of others in our community. Students will also be instructed on proper citations and rules of paraphrasing correctly and appropriately. By proper use of citations, one is giving the needed credit to sources of information. Using the words of another author, including fellow students and teachers in our learning community, without giving appropriate credit through needed citations is the same as stealing intellectual property.

Our students will be encouraged to share what they learn about appropriate use of the information that others provide us through such means as footnotes, endnotes or parenthetical notes; proper reference to books and articles; quoting people who made important contributions that we use; and such.

A first offense of cheating will result in a zero for the work involved and a conference with the student, parents and teacher with the appropriate Dean of Students. A second offense will result in a zero for the course and a conference with the student, parents, teacher and Dean of Students and Chief Academic Officer. A third offense will result in a zero in the course and a suspension of one week, after which the student will be readmitted on probation. Consistent behavior that does not show absolute respect for the intellectual property of self and others and is not reflective of the integrity that is foundational to this community will result in expulsion from Solomon Charter School.

## Respect for Property

As part of our community of respect and regard for each other, this extends to the property and space in which we all live and learn together. We will expect that all members of our community respect personal and public space in all actions, including moving through the building. Through our Adopt-A-Space program, different groups of students and adult members of our learning and living community will take responsibility for insuring that our Solomon Charter School community home is always clean, neat and pleasant for all.

Any show of disrespect for property, including defacing of property, writing on furniture or walls, littering, etc. will result in consequences. The first offense will result in an after school detention and repairing the damage done. The second offense will result in up to one week suspension, a conference with the student, parents and Chief Academic Officer, and repairing the damage done. The third offense will result in a one week suspension, a conference with the student, parents and Chief Academic Officer, repairing the damage done and an appropriately assigned 20 hour community service clean up assignment. Consistently acting in a manner that does not show respect for property will result in expulsion from the Solomon Charter School.

Please also note that we are an Environmentally Sustainable Community and we expect that all students and members of our community will be mindful and respectful for the resources and elements of our world in which we live. This will be an ongoing part of life at Solomon Charter School.

## Responsibility for Personal Property

Maintaining of lockers, personal materials, and responsibility for appropriate use of technology and books is placed on each individual student. **Any loss or damage to any of these materials is the responsibility of the student who will have to cover the cost of repairing of any intentional damage or replacement of materials or technology as appropriate.**

All students and parents must acknowledge that Solomon Charter School is providing our students with computers, printers and other materials for which they are completely responsible. If there is neglect or lack of responsibility shown in careful maintenance, use and possession of these materials, there will be dire consequences. Lost or damaged personal devices will result in students only able to use other computers on school property and the privilege of personal possession will be withdrawn and the student will have to assume the expense of replacement. Additional references regarding these responsibilities can be found in the Behavior Contract and in the Technology Usage Contract, both of which are to be signed by the student and parent/guardian and kept on file at school.

## **Use of Cell Phones and Other Personal Electronic Devices**

As indicated in several places, there will be *no permitted use of cell phones or other personal electronic devices during the entirety of the school hours*, except for before and after school and during lunch and recess. In the case of an emergency, students must contact an adult member of our community and we will arrange for appropriate communication. Devices that are used during non-permitted times will be immediately confiscated and returned by the Dean of Students at the end of the day. If this happens repeatedly there will be more dire consequences, including detentions and possibly a suspension. Consistently acting in a manner that does not show respect for our community will result in expulsion from the Solomon Charter School.

## **Transportation**

During the first year of the Solomon Charter School, transportation will be the responsibility of our students and families. We are researching various options for future years as the school grows and become a full K – 12 community.

## **Student life and clubs and ensembles**

With the region of Greater Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as our campus, the possibilities are endless in terms of meeting the varied interests and encouraging the talents of our students. We will also work with partner organizations and institutions, such as the Asian Arts Initiative, in offering a wide selection of possible co-curricular and extra-curricular involvements for our students and their families. Our offerings will include but not be limited to the following:

- Drama
- Performing Arts
- Visual Arts
- Fine Arts
- Music Ensembles
- Photography
- Community Political Actions
- You decide what we add here!
- And here!
- And here!

The actual listing of options will also be dependent on our actual student population and the number of our students who will be accessing our programs solely through cyber means as well as the students who will be present in our physical locations. Each club and activity will be co-led and facilitated by both adults/faculty members and student leaders.

## **Sports**

We will have sports activities and teams sponsored as our facility, the surrounding area and those accessible to all of our students in their various locations will allow. Often we will partner with other agencies and institutions to provide our student population with the most options for recreational sports and maintaining of healthy lifestyle through physical fitness as possible. We will use all Commonwealth of Pennsylvania standards in determination of the fulfillment of physical education credits for our students including the use of these various sports and team options.

## **Student Government**

Teaching and learning of leadership skills is one of the fundamental principles of Solomon Charter School. As such, the best way for our student community members to learn leadership skills is to take leadership positions. There will be so many opportunities for our students to take initiative to contribute in a meaningful manner to our community, to take initiatives to bring additional programs and resources to the community, to do community service and to be part of the leadership of our school. Through representation and involvement in our Student Government and its judicial court, our *Beit Din*, our students will learn first hand how to govern with care and compassion and how to be governed with responsibility and accountability.

In working to build and define our community of learners and teachers, personal involvement and leadership initiative will be fully encouraged and facilitated in as many different venues as possible throughout the program of the Solomon Charter School!

## **Attendance Policy**

Daily attendance is required for every school day, through in person appearance or technology enabled log on. Students who cannot attend school in person, due to mild illness or being out of town, must log in and attend classes by cyber means. Daily attendance by physical and/or cyber presence is required given the rigorous nature of our academic program.

When absence is unavoidable, it is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements to make up missed assignments and work. Teachers and students will negotiate arrangements for making up work in these instances. When necessary, the appropriate Dean of Students may be contacted for assistance and guidance. When possible, this is one of the areas where the cyber component of our learning may be a most useful and helpful tool. Every effort must be made to keep pace with your class. This is part of your responsibility as a member of our learning community.

When students are too ill to attend class in person or by cyber means, teachers will accommodate students, granting them permission to have special arrangements regarding the completion and submission of assignments and other obligations. These arrangements will be made responsibly on the part of the student and with care and compassion on the part of the teachers and school.

Excused absences are the following:

1. Personal illness
2. Serious illness of a family member
3. Death of a family member or close friend
4. Required appearance in court
5. Required observance of a holiday or ceremony in the student's religion
6. Personal reasons that may be appropriate in advance. The appropriate Dean of Students should be consulted for permission when there is a question. For students who are not maintaining appropriate average or who are not in good standing, permission for this category of reasons may or may not be granted.

Absences for any reason other than these mentioned will be unexcused unless the appropriate Dean of Students determines that there are extenuating or appropriate circumstances.

The verification of absence must be satisfied by one of the following:

1. Phone call from parent in advance of the absence and note from parent on day of return;
2. Note from physician in the case of missing more than three days within a week due to illness;
3. Note from physician in the case of missing more than ten days within a semester due to illness;

4. Note from home or appearance of parent to take child in the case of an appointment that is necessary.

All written notes regarding absences must be submitted either prior to the absence if known or no later than by the end of the day of return if it was not feasible to notify the school ahead of time.

Please note that if the student is ill for one or two days and is at home but attends classes through cyber means, there is no need for notification. However, if the student stays home selectively and DOES NOT APPEAR on our campus repeatedly, this will constitute a problem for which there will be consequences.

### **Counseling, Community Liaisons and Learning Coaches**

Given the unique community base of our school, our Community Liaisons are often the first real contact students and families will have with our school. Our Community Liaisons work with the family and the student to introduce them to the concept and community that is Solomon Charter School. Once the student and family are part of the community, counseling and learning coaches will be available as needed to insure the most optimal learning experience possible. Also, our community liaisons and other members of the faculty will act as translators and interpreters as needed for our families throughout their association with our community. For questions, please contact Ms. Mai Tran, our Community Liaison or Mr. Jason Weinberg, Director of Community Outreach, as appropriate.

### **Addressing Learning Differences and Different Learners**

We will accommodate all documented learning needs and differences within the scope of the program of Solomon Charter School as indicated in our Mission Statement and Philosophy and Goals. We have professionals trained in learning differences, a school psychologist, guidance counselor and our community liaisons, all of whom will help you benefit the most from all that Solomon Charter School has to offer. For questions, please contact Ms. Debra Klinger or Ms. Charity Marie Lynch-Harris, our Learning Differences and Needs educators.

### **Extra Support for Learning**

Study Halls, appointments with Learning Coaches, and unassigned periods are all part of the ongoing schedule of the student for the purpose of offering extra time needed to complete work, additional support as needed, and the opportunity to take initiative for

one's own learning program. It is expected that students will take advantage of these important opportunities to use their own time efficiently and productively. Teachers and all professional staff will be available to our students to help, support and guide. Our Learning Coach program will insure that every student has a "go-to" member of our professional staff to help them advocate for themselves and advocate for them as needed.

## Report Cards, Grading and Evaluation

Grading for all courses and work at Solomon Charter School will be reported as follows.

Grades K – 5

- O – Outstanding
- G – Good
- S – Satisfactory
- U – Unsatisfactory

Grades 6 – 12

- A – 90 – 100 average
- B – 80 – 89 average
- C – 70 – 79 average
- D – 60 – 69 average
- F – 59 and below

Students are expected to keep up with their course work and in Middle School and High School grades, should always take the initiative to contact the appropriate teachers if there are any concerns.

Appropriate communications will be sent if students are not doing well as needed.

Report cards are issued four (4) times per year, each after a nine (9) week grading period. Please refer to the Academic Calendar for the dates of the end of each of the terms and semesters. Twice per year parent/teacher conferences will be held. This is a time for parents and teachers to talk about their students' progress in school and their individual and special needs. Please become a partner with the wonderful faculty and educational leadership of Solomon Charter School in insuring that we best meet the needs and goals of **your students**. If you ever have a question or concern, do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher.

Semester averages will include the averages of each quarter with any mid-terms or finals given in specified subjects. Final grades for the entire year will include the average of the two semesters and any final examinations indicated. Full credits for a given subject in a year will only be awarded after completion of the full year of work for that subject.

Remember that your cumulative school records include all of this information and will be used for various purposes through the years. It will be your ticket into further educational opportunities or professional avenues. Always give your best so that this record represents your best!

### **Transcripts for post High School plans**

All student records will be maintained in the Guidance Office. When our students complete our program or leave our program for any reason, these records will be released to those institutions that file a formal request with our office, meeting all criteria for the filing of such a request. Appropriate indication of permission for such release will also have to be satisfied. No records will be released for any reason without granted permission. These transcripts will list the final grades for each year long course completed.

### **Add/Drop Policy**

Students who need to add, change or drop any course may do so through the end of the second week of each quarter. These changes should be made through the appropriate Dean of Students. Mr. Alberto Romero is our Dean of Students for Middle School and Mr. Cliff Stanton is our Dean of Students for High School students.

### **Academic Probation**

The academic program at Solomon Charter School is intentionally vigorous and we expect that every student will do and be his or her best. Any student who receives an F as the year's average in any subject will have to repeat that subject again, either during the following year or in the summer at a PDE designated summer school program. Any student with an F average in any major subject and/or a D average in two or more major subjects will be considered on Academic Probation. These students will have to meet with the appropriate Dean of Students on a regular basis while their progress is being closely monitored.

## **Grading and Determination of Honors and Course Placement**

Please note that we will determine our complete offering of Honors and Advanced Placement courses as soon as possible. Students will be recommended for each of these special placements through their teachers and as indicated in their achievement. Students may initiate these requests but will have to meet all standards as established. Students will also have to have parental permission to take Honors and Advanced Placement courses as there must be home support and guidance to insure that extra attention and effort are made for these courses. No student on Academic Probation will be permitted to take Honors or Advanced Placement courses.

## **Assessment and Testing**

Testing will always be done in settings that are conducive to such. Students are expected to be prepared for these assessments and come to these tests appropriately prepared. Any lack of honesty or integrity in testing situations will be addressed according to the criteria established in the section on Academic Integrity.

## **Promotion requirements from grade to grade**

Each student must satisfy all requirements as indicated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in order to be promoted from one grade to the next. For those who must complete work during a summer to insure such promotion, plans will be indicated for this as will options of how to do so.

Retention in a grade or a course will be required if the student has not achieved successful completion of the work in a given course or accumulated enough completed grades to insure promotion to the following grade.

## **Health Services**

1. A registered school nurse will be available during hours to be determined. More information will be forthcoming shortly.
2. Please note that in our school office, we will maintain scrupulous health records, including proof of required immunizations of all of our students, which are

needed for school attendance. All health records are completely confidential. We do ask that parents consider sharing information that is relevant to the student's learning experience with the appropriate people in the school.

3. Students who are taking medication should have their medicines kept in the school office and they will be administered according to the student's physician and his/her explicit instructions. Documentation of this information **MUST BE IN OUR FILES** before any medication will be disbursed. All medications must be in the original prescription bottle **AND INCLUDE THE NAME OF THE STUDENT, THE NAME OF THE PHYSICIAN, DATE AND NAME OF MEDICATION AND DOSAGE AND INDICATION OF USE.**
4. Any student who is feeling ill should come immediately to the school office. First aid is the only care that may be administered by the school. If any more serious aid is needed, parents will be notified and must arrange to pick up the student in a timely manner.
5. In case of serious illness or injury, we will immediately contact the EMT for immediate transport to our nearest hospital, Hahnemann Hospital.
6. Students should not come to school if they are not feeling well. Remember that due to the unique nature of our hybrid program, students can still "attend" school if they are home by webinars, working with their study groups on line, completing required work tasks, and the like.
7. Solomon Charter School takes the safety and well being of each and every student as well as the entire community very seriously. Therefore, while it is our intent to keep chronic medical conditions confidential, if such information must be shared with responsible parties due to the needs of the student, this will be done (e.g. access to lavatories for students with IBD, access to special foods for students with diabetes, care for students with allergies, accommodations for students with asthma, etc.)

### **Student's Bill of Rights and Code of Conduct**

THIS WILL BE DEVELOPED DURING THE YEAR OF 2012 – 2013 BY A COMMITTEE OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY AND MADE AVAILABLE AS SOON AS IT IS PROPERLY PROCESSED AND APPROVED BY ALL PARTIES. THIS WILL BE A WONDERFUL STATEMENT OF THE SPECIAL NATURE OF THE SOLOMON CHARTER SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING THIS SPECIAL DOCUMENT BY, FOR, AND OF OUR WONDERFUL STUDENTS (to borrow a phrase, so to speak).

## General Information

1. **Fire Drills and Lock-Down Drills** – As required for every institution that occupies physical space there will be scheduled fire drills and lock-down drills. This is to insure that all members of our learning community know what to do in the case of an emergency. Maps and instructions will be posted throughout our building in the beginning of the school year. While the specifics of this plan may not generally apply to our full cyber students, we do ask those students to be sure that they know how to act and where to go in emergency evacuation plans of the buildings in which they learn.
2. **Security, Entering and Leaving the Building** – Every student, teacher and member of the Solomon Charter School community will be issued identity cards that they must use and show upon entry to our building. All security measures will be shown and explained during our orientation sessions during the beginning of the year and all members of our community are expected to follow established procedures carefully and consistently. Any attempts to tamper with the security system in any way is an *extremely serious offense* and will be addressed as such, perhaps even in resulting in immediate expulsion from our community.
3. **Individual Injuries and Medical Emergencies** – Every attempt will be made consistently to insure the safety and well being of our students and faculty and all members of our learning community. Any problems or what seem to be medical emergencies should be reported to the school office immediately as indicated under health services. Please note that members of our professional staff are trained in CPR and we are quite close to Hahnemann Hospital.
4. **Student Insurance** – A student accident policy is available for all students, on a voluntary basis. Applications with the various options explained will be distributed to parents during Orientation Week at the beginning of the school year.
5. **Alternate Cyber Learning Days** – Due to the unique nature of our program, students can technically “be in school” when they are not feeling well as long as they can work from home through cyber enabled contact. Additionally, as we are an *intentional community of diversity*, there will be “alternate cyber learning days” indicated when various parts of our population are participating in meaningful and important celebrations and observances. The Solomon Charter School values our rooted identities and wants to support our students and their families in maintaining these important observances in their lives. During our **alternate cyber learning days**, students who are not marking indicated observances and celebrations will work on skills based learning and ongoing projects. The school site may be open during these days, but no scheduled group learning experiences will occur. More will be explained about this unique feature of our curriculum during our Orientation Week sessions.

6. **Inclement Weather and other disruptions to schedule** - Again, due to the cyber component of our program, when weather is too severe for us to gather in our physical space we will all go to class through our cyber connections. Of course if all power is out and cyber connections are not possible, this will be taken into account and appropriate notice communicated to the best of our ability. Whenever the Philadelphia public and parochial schools are closed, we will be closed for campus based attendance but not cyber attendance. This information will be communicated through cyber notice as well as announced on radio and television stations that carry this information, including the following:
  - a. **AM:** 560WFIL, 610WIP, 950 WPEN, 1060 KYW, 1210 WCAU, 1310 WSSJ, 1480 WDAS
  - b. **FM:** 98.1 WCAU, 105.3 WDAS
7. **Family and Community Involvements** – Research shows that one of the best indicators of the success of each and every student is the support they receive at home. To that end, the Solomon Charter School will have many opportunities for the involvement of your family in our programs and we encourage all to take full advantage of these available programs and resources.
8. **Wednesday Nights at Solomon Charter School** – Our signature offering will be our weekly afternoon/evening schedules of cultural, academic and recreational programming. Please make Wednesday Nights at Solomon Charter School your weekly family outing. We promise it will be enriching for all!

## **Parental Involvement in School**

We know well that when parents show ongoing interest in their children's work in school and carefully monitor that they are doing what is needed to succeed, these students will be more successful.

Some of the documented and anecdotal differences that have been observed by teachers throughout the United States as a result of this involvement include the following:

1. Higher grades throughout a student's career
2. Better test scores on assessments throughout a student's career
3. Positive attitudes and behaviors
4. More successful academic programs
5. Better and more effective schools

The earlier and more consistent the involvement of parents, the more far reaching and pronounced the results yielded will be. Solomon Charter School is as committed to our parents and families as we are to our students and we sincerely hope that our parents and families will take advantage of the many programs we offer in addition to ongoing involvement and encouragement in their children's educational journey.

**Please affix the signatures of the student and parents on this page to indicate that you have read and understand the entire Student and Family Handbook for the Solomon Charter School.**

**By signing and returning this page, you attest that you will follow all procedures and policies of the Solomon Charter School, put in place to insure the safety and well being of every individual member of the community as well as the community as a whole.**

**This signed page as well as other required signature pages in this document will be placed in the student's file and referred to if there are any infractions or misbehaviors that indicate a lack of adherence to the procedures and policies herein.**

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**Student's Name (printed or typed)**

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Student's Signature

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**Parents Name (printed or typed)**

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Parent's Signature

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Date

Please return this signed form to the school office no later than September 5, 2012 or five days after receipt of the handbook, if that comes after this target date.

# Academic Calendar – Solomon Charter School

## 2012 - 2013

School Year Calendar | Days in Attendance | About the Calendar | 2012-2013 Academic Calendar

### Solomon Charter School Year Calendar: 2012 - 2013

*\* Since the calendar is subject to change during the course of the school year, the web version may contain updates not reflected in the printed version of this publication. Please note that this is based upon the Philadelphia School District calendar.*

The following is the calendar for the Solomon Charter School for the 2012-2013 school year:

Monday, September 3, 2012	<b>Labor Day</b> - <i>Administrative Offices and Schools Closed</i>
Monday – Thursday, August 27 – 30 and Tuesday, September 4, 2012	<b>Staff Only</b> - <i>Professional Development</i> - <i>Please note that as this is the first year for the Solomon Charter School, there will be additional days of professional development as needed.</i> - <i>Students and families may come in for appointments as needed.</i>
Wednesday, September 5, 2012	<b>First day for all grades - Student Attendance</b>
Monday – Friday, September 10 - 14, 2012	<b>Testing and solidification of schedules for all students and faculty; initial class meetings, explanation of all procedures and school policies regarding our hybrid learning model</b>
Monday – Tuesday, September 17 - 18, 2012	<b>Rosh Hashanah</b> - <i>Administrative Offices and Schools Closed</i>
Wednesday, September 19, 2012	<b>Classes resume</b>
Wednesday, September 26, 2012	<b>Yom Kippur</b> - <i>Administrative Offices and Schools Closed</i>

Monday – Tuesday, October 1 – 2, 2012 Monday – Tuesday, October 8 - 9, 2012	<b>These are Jewish Holidays and will be cyber learning days, except for:</b> <b>Monday, October 8 -Columbus Day</b> <i>- Administrative Offices and Schools Closed</i>
Tuesday, November 6, 2012	<b>Staff Only</b> <i>- (Election Day) Professional Development Day</i> <i>- Alternate Cyber Learning Day</i>
Friday, November 9, 2012	End of First Academic Term
Monday, November 12, 2012	<b>Veterans' Day Observed</b> <i>- Administrative Offices and Schools Closed</i> <i>- Alternate Cyber Learning Day</i>
Thursday and Friday, November 22 - 23, 2012	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday</b> <i>- Administrative Offices and Schools Closed</i>
Monday – Tuesday, December 24, 2012 – January 1, 2013	<b>Winter Recess</b> <i>- Schools Closed</i>
December 24-25, 2012	<b>Winter Recess</b> <i>- All Administrative Offices closed</i>
Tuesday, January 1, 2013	<b>New Year's Day Observance</b> <i>- All Administrative Offices Closed</i>
Monday, January 21, 2013	<b>Dr. Martin Luther King Day</b> <i>- Administrative Offices and Schools Closed</i> <i>- School Community Service Day</i>
Friday, January 25, 2013	End of First Academic Semester (Second Term)
Wednesday, February 6, 2013	<b>Staff Professional Development</b> <i>- Alternate Cyber Learning Day</i>
Monday, February 11, 2013	<b>No classes- Chinese New Year</b>

Monday, February 18, 2013	- Alternate Cyber Learning Day  <b>Presidents' Day</b> - Administrative Offices and Schools Closed
Monday, March 25 - Tuesday, April 2, 2013	<b>Spring Recess</b> - Schools Closed
Wednesday, April 3, 2013	School Reopens
Friday, April 5, 2013	End of third academic term
Wednesday – Thursday, May 15 – 16, 2012	Cyber Learning Days and Optional Teacher/Student Conference Days
Monday, May 27, 2013	<b>Memorial Day</b> - Administrative Offices and Schools Closed
Friday, June 21, 2013	<b>Last Day for Students</b>
June 24 – 25, 2013	<b>Staff Only</b> - End of Year Transition - Last Day for Staff

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**Total Number of Days Scheduled Student Attendance: 182**

2012	Days of Attendance	2013	Days of Attendance
JULY	0	JANUARY	21
AUGUST	0	FEBRUARY	19
SEPTEMBER	15*	MARCH	16
OCTOBER	22	APRIL	20*
NOVEMBER	18	MAY	21*
DECEMBER	15	JUNE	15

**Total Number of Days Scheduled Teacher Attendance: 188**

2012	Days of Attendance	2013	Days of Attendance
JULY	0	JANUARY	21
AUGUST	5	FEBRUARY	19
SEPTEMBER	16*	MARCH	16
OCTOBER	22	APRIL	22*
NOVEMBER	19	MAY	22*
DECEMBER	15	JUNE	16

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**Please note that due to calendar considerations for various members of our community and the rhythm of their community life, we have designated several days as Alternate Cyber Learning Days\*\***

1. Due to the hybrid program offered at the Solomon Charter School, note that the schedule for the week will generally be as follows for classes:
  - a. Mondays through Thursdays 8:30 – 4:00 classes
  - b. Fridays 8:30 – 1:30 p.m. for Cyber Learning groups and Teacher/Student meetings and team work as well as ongoing professional collaboration and development.
2. Due to the cyber nature of our learning program, there will not be any planned inclement weather days. When there is inclement weather, it may be noted that no class sessions will take place in our physical location, but these will be noted as Alternate Cyber Learning Days and used as such by our students. Teachers will be available for contact through Internet means.
3. Due to this new form of educational programming, please note that there will be changes as we go through the year as necessitated by the combination of learning in dedicated physical space along with delivery of cyber learning programs.
4. This calendar exceeds all requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania both in number of learning days and in cumulative hours of learning time. This is intended as our program will be intensive and expansive throughout the year.
5. Parent/Teacher/Student conferences will be scheduled in the early part of the year and will most likely take place on designated Fridays during team meeting and conference times.

6. Other elements will be added to this calendar as needed.