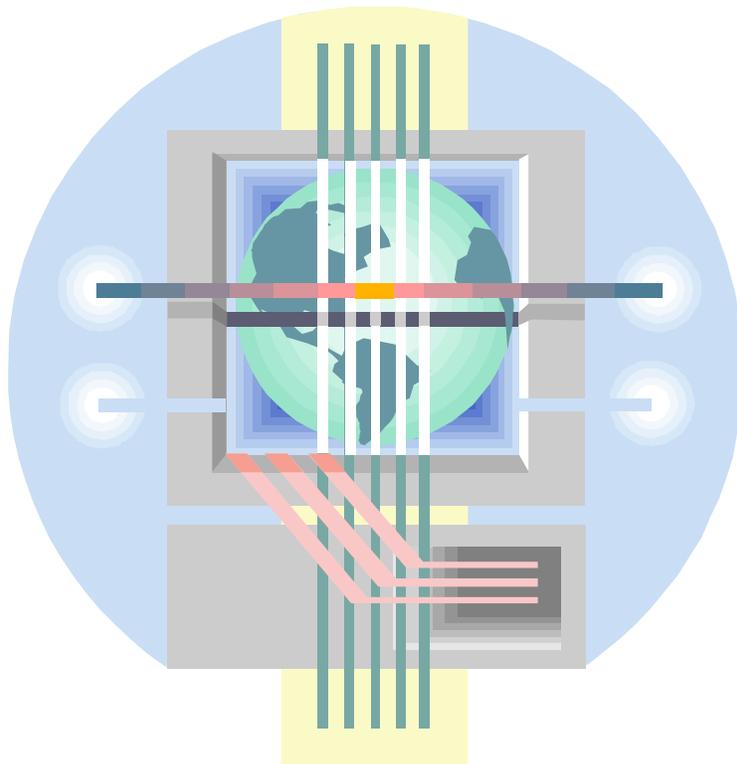


Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education Cyber Charter School Application

2011



Inspiring productive, fulfilled, life-long learners

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If you have any questions about this publication, or for additional copies, contact:

Department of Education
Division of Curriculum
333 Market Street, 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
Voice Telephone: (717) 783-9294
Fax: (717) 214-4389
Text Telephone TTY: (717) 783-8445

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Fax: (717) 783-9348
Text Telephone TTY: (717) 783-8445*

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*Pennsylvania Department of Education, Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator
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Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
Voice Telephone: (717) 787-4417
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5th Floor, 333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
Voice Telephone: (717) 783-3750
Fax: (717) 783-6802
Text Telephone TTY: (717) 783-8445*

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2011 Cyber Charter Schools Requirements and Application

Introduction

This application format serves as the framework for the official 2011 application, submitted by a cyber charter school applicant to the Department of Education. In developing this format, the research-based components that are identified as essential in the planning process for the creation of a cyber charter school serve as the basis for this framework. The five essential components are School Design, Needs Assessment, Governance, Finance/Facility; and Administration. In addition to the requirements that follow, when completing the application the applicant should review and refer to the two Basic Education Circulars on charter and cyber charter schools. The charter and cyber charter school Basic Education Circulars are available at:

http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/purdon's_statutes/7503/charter_schools/507318 (charter schools)

The deadline for submitting the 2011 Cyber Charter School Application is 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time, Monday October 3, 2011. If you are planning to submit an application, please contact the PDE Charter School Office for additional information regarding submission requirements.

Questions should be directed to:

Marlene Kanuck
(717) 783-9294
mkanuck@state.pa.us

Application Requirements

In the development of your application, you are required to expand upon each of the five essential components as outlined on pages 8 through 16. Successful applicants will be knowledgeable in the implementation of all federal and state requirements that are applicable to cyber charter schools. Successful applications will include all of the following information per sections 1719-A and 1747-A of the Charter School Law, and describe how the school will meet the requirements of section 1743-A(c) and (d), the provisions regarding the dissemination of information to parents and school district, and section 1748-A, the provisions requiring the notification of enrollment and withdrawal from a cyber charter school.

Section 1719-A:

1. The identification of the cyber charter applicant.
2. The name of the proposed cyber charter school.
3. The grade or age levels served by the cyber charter school.
4. The proposed governance structure of the cyber charter school, including a description and method for the appointment or election of the board of trustees.
5. The mission and (measurable) education goals of the cyber charter school, the curriculum to be offered and the methods of assessing whether students are meeting educational

goals. Cyber charter school students shall be required to meet the same testing and academic performance standards established by law and regulations applicable to public school students.

6. The admission policy and criteria for evaluating student admission which shall comply with the requirements of section 1723-A (of the Charter School Law).
7. Procedures which will be used regarding the suspension or expulsion of pupils.
8. Information on the manner in which community groups will be involved in the cyber charter school planning process.
9. The financial plan for the cyber charter school and the provisions which will be made for auditing the school under section 437 (of the Public School Code).
10. Procedures which shall be established to review complaints of parents regarding the operation of the cyber charter school.
11. A description of and address of the physical facility in which the cyber charter school will be located and the ownership thereof and any lease arrangements.
12. Information on the proposed school calendar for the cyber charter school, including the length of the school day and school year consistent with provisions of section 1502.
13. The proposed faculty and a professional development plan for the faculty of a cyber charter school.
14. Whether any agreements have been entered into or plans developed with the local school district regarding participation of the cyber charter school students in extracurricular activities within the school district. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, no school district of residence shall prohibit a student of a cyber charter school from participating in any extracurricular activity of that school district of residence: provided, that the student is able to fulfill all of the requirements of participation in such activity and the cyber charter school does not provide the same extracurricular activity.
15. A report of criminal history record, pursuant to section 111, for all individuals who shall have direct contact with students. Direct contact includes contact through any electronic means.
16. An official clearance statement regarding child injury or abuse from the Department of Public Welfare as required by 23 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 Subch. C.2 (relating to background checks for employment in schools) for all individuals who shall have direct contact with students. Direct contact includes contact through any electronic means.
17. How the cyber charter school will provide adequate liability and other appropriate insurances for the cyber charter school, its employees and its board of trustees.

Section 1747-A:

1. The curriculum to be offered and how it meets the requirements of 22 Pa. Code Ch.4 (relating to academic standards and assessment) or subsequent regulations promulgated to replace 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4.
2. The number of courses required for elementary and secondary students.
3. An explanation of the amount of online time required for elementary and secondary students.
4. The manner in which teachers will deliver instruction, assess academic progress and communicate with students to provide assistance.
5. A specific explanation of any cooperative learning opportunities, meetings with students, parents and guardians, field trips or study sessions.
6. The technology, including types of hardware and software, equipment and other materials

- which will be provided by the cyber charter school to the student.
7. 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.
 8. A description of commercially prepared standardized achievement tests that will be used by the cyber charter school in addition to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment test, including the grade levels that will be tested and how the data collected from the tests will be used to improve instruction.
 9. The technical support that will be available to students and parents or guardians.
 10. The privacy and security measures to ensure the confidentiality of data gathered online.
 11. The level of anticipated enrollment during each school year of the proposed cyber charter school including expected increases due to the addition of grade levels.
 12. The methods to be used to insure the authenticity of student work and adequate proctoring of examinations.
 13. The provision of education and related services to students with disabilities, including evaluation and the development and revision of individualized education programs.
 14. Policies regarding truancy, absences and withdrawal of students, including the manner in which the cyber charter school will monitor attendance consistent with the provisions of section 1715-A (9).
 15. The types and frequency of communication between the cyber charter school and the students and the manner in which the cyber charter school will communicate with parents and guardians.
 16. The addresses of all facilities and offices of the cyber charter school, the ownership thereof and any lease arrangements. If the cyber charter school has more than one facility, it must designate the administrative office where all student records shall be maintained as required by section 1748-A(h).

Section 1743-A(c)(d)

1. Describe how your cyber charter school will make available upon request, either in writing or electronically, the following information to each student's school district of residence:
 - a. A copy of the charter.
 - b. A copy of the cyber charter school application.
 - c. A copy of all annual reports prepared by the cyber charter school.
 - d. A list of all students from that school district enrolled in the cyber charter school.
2. Describe how the cyber charter school upon request and prior to the student's first day in the cyber charter school will provide, either in writing or electronically, the following information to the parent or guardian of a student:
 - a. A list and brief description of the courses of instruction the student will receive. The list shall be updated annually for each grade level in which the student is enrolled.

- b. A description of the lessons and activities to be offered online and offline.
- c. The manner in which attendance will be reported and work will be authenticated.
- d. A list of all standardized tests the student will be required to take during the school year and the place where the test will be administered, if available.
- e. The meetings to be held during the school year between a parent or guardian and a teacher and among other school officials or parents or guardians and the manner in which the parent or guardian will be notified of the time and place for the meeting.
- f. The address of the cyber charter school and the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the school administrator and other school personnel.
- g. A list of any extracurricular activities provided by the cyber charter school.
- h. The names of the student's teachers, if available, and the manner in which each teacher can be contacted by the student or the parent of guardian.
- i. A list of all services that will be provided to the student by the cyber charter school.
- j. Copies of policies relating to computer security and privacy, truancy, absences, discipline and withdrawal or expulsion of students.
- k. Information on:
 - i. The cyber charter school's professional staff, including the number of staff personnel, their education level and experience.
 - ii. The cyber charter school's performance on the PSSA and other standardized test scores.
- l. Information regarding the proper usage of equipment and materials and the process for returning equipment and materials supplied to the students by the cyber charter school. A parent or guardian shall acknowledge, either in writing or electronically, the receipt of this information.
- m. A description of the school calendar, including, but not limited to, the time frame that will constitute a school year and a school week, holiday and term breaks.

Section 1748-A

1. Within 15 days of the enrollment of a student to a cyber charter school, the parent or guardian and the cyber charter school shall notify the student's school district of residence of the enrollment through the use of the notification form developed by the Department of Education.
2. The cyber charter school and the parent or guardian shall provide written notification to the school district of residence within 15 days following the withdrawal of a student from the cyber charter school.

CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

APPLICATION FACT SHEET

This application fact sheet is intended to be a “finger-tip” summary of your application. The information furnished below must be an accurate representation of the application and must correspond to the information provided in the body of the application.

Proposed Cyber Charter School Name (Must Include “Charter School” in the Title)

Innovate-U Cyber Charter School

Proposed Cyber Charter School Administrative Location (City/Town and Zip Code)

Allentown, 18109 County: Lehigh

Intermediate Unit _____

Proposed Start Date August 21, 2012

Federal Employer Identification Number 45-2989314

Contact Person: First: Owen Middle: Wesley Last: Schmitt

Organization: Innovate-U

City: Silver Spring State: MD Zip Code: 20904

Telephone: 301 288 7830 Fax Number: 202 318 8797 E-mail: schmitt.owen@gmail.com

| Founding Coalition: Indicate Number of Representatives per Group | Grade and Age Ranges | Projected Student Enrollment Year 1-5 |
|--|---|--|
| Parents: <u>1</u> Teachers: <u>5</u> Business Partners: <u>1</u> Community Based Orgs.: <u>1</u> Museums: 0 Higher Education: 0 Other Group (Identify) | Elementary: <u>K-5</u> Secondary: <u>6-12</u> Age of Kindergarten: <u>4.5</u> Age of Beginners: <u>N/A</u> Circle Appropriate Grade(s) all ** <u>K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12</u> Kindergarten: Full Day or <u>Half Day</u> ? **Note: Year 1 (Only serving K-2, and 6-7) | 1 st Year: <u>750</u> 2 nd Year: <u>800</u> 3 rd Year: <u>900</u> 4 th Year: <u>1100</u> 5 th Year: <u>1300</u> Total Number of Teachers <u>25</u> |

Does the cyber charter applicant have an existing retirement system? **No**

Does the applicant group presently have access to a facility suitable for the cyber charter school’s administrative offices? **Yes**

School Focus: Describe, in brief terms and on an additional page, the proposed cyber charter school’s mission, educational focus, and other essential characteristics.

School Focus

Innovate-U Cyber Charter School (ICCS) is a K-12 state wide public charter school in the state of Pennsylvania where students access the curriculum online, in their homes, and through activities in their local communities. After enrolling, students will receive all of their required materials to complete the program at their enrolled year. Our mission is to provide a holistic, world-class educational opportunity for all of our students centered on the theme driven focus of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S.T.E.M.).

Our curriculum uses the strongest components from different programs: Compass Learning, Holt, MacMillian McGraw-Hill, Math in Focus, TechStep, Pearson, Apangea, Rosetta Stone, and Triumph Learning. We believe that because these curriculums were developed from educational research and expertise, and are skill based, content rich, and utilize various levels of technology, that they will support our mission. Our graduation-rate objective is 90% of the graduating 12th graders will be eligible to enroll in a two or four year college.

Every aspect of our program will have integrated assessments connected to individual profiles. Student profiles will show their growth and struggling areas. Staff profiles are similar and focus them on areas of professional development for their own continuing growth.

Assessments and evaluations for staff and students ensure that ICCS will always have data for accountability purposes and to measure its own success, measuring compliance with its own mission. Parents are also important partners, helping shape the education for their children, and keeping the school true to its mission. Parents are invited to communicate with all levels of staff, and will be invited to be part of the school's governing body.

Pennsylvania as a state has cyber charter and continues to support their presence. ICCS will give students a solid academic foundation as well as build tech-savvy skills that are essential for life beyond the classroom in the competitive global market place.

I. SCHOOL DESIGN

1. MISSION STATEMENT:

A. BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE CORE PHILOSOPHY OR UNDERLYING PURPOSE OF THE PROPOSED SCHOOL.

Our mission is to provide Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S.T.E.M.) instruction that inspires students to have a global vision and to be able to use their knowledge to solve national and global issues.

B. WHAT IS YOUR OVERARCHING VISION OF THE SCHOOL?

The vision of Innovate-U Cyber Charter School (ICCS) is to provide innovative, progressive and cutting-edge instruction for students in grades K-12. Innovate-U will provide students with a world class S.T.E.M. education which will provide the foundation for them to compete in the global market place. Students who attend ICCS will be prepared to enroll in 2 or 4 year accredited colleges and universities and/or be prepared to enter the workforce in S.T.E.M. fields.

Explanation: Define a concise plan for an innovative public school that will lead to improved educational performance. Consistency between the mission and the educational programs should be articulated to achieve improved performance.

2. MEASURABLE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

A. WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S MEASURABLE ACADEMIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES TO PROMOTE STUDENT LEARNING?

ICCS will meet the needs of students who have had success in a traditional academic setting and those, who for a variety of reasons are not successful in a traditional classroom setting. ICCS will meet their needs by providing students with an interactive and rigorous curriculum that can be completed at home (or elsewhere, such as in small group settings). We intend to use the curriculums, technology, and services provided by the Compass Learning/Odyssey online curriculum for grades Pre-k- 6, in conjunction with Science Fusion by Holt, for grades K-8. Texts used for ELA and Social Studies will be from MacMillian McGraw-Hill, and Math in Focus-Singapore Math K-8. TechStep for Technology will be used for grades k-12. Pearson Virtual Learning will be used in conjunction with Pearson texts for grades 7-12. The Apangea Math program will be used as a supplemental for grades 3-12. We also intend to use the Rosetta Stone to offer our students the opportunity to learn Mandarin and Spanish. We will use Triumph Learning PSSA Coach for Math, Science, and Reading for grades 3-8, and the Triumph Learning PSSA Writing Coach for grades 5-11. We believe that because these curriculums were developed from educational research and expertise, and are skill based, content rich, and utilize various levels of technology, that they will support our mission to provide a holistic, world-class educational opportunity for all of our students. Beginning in the primary grades and continuing until the 12th grade, ICCS will offer a comprehensive curriculum based on proven methods of instruction, rich, challenging content, and integrated assessments centered around the theme driven focus of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S.T.E.M.).

Academic Goals:

1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in core curriculums that meets or exceeds the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Content Standards.
2. Students will demonstrate proficiency in English/Language Arts concepts and skills as a foundation of achievement.
3. Students will demonstrate proficiency in Math concepts and skills as a foundation of achievement.

4. Students will demonstrate proficiency in utilizing various types and levels of technology.
5. Students will demonstrate proficiency in basic Engineering concepts and skills.
6. Students will demonstrate proficiency in Science concepts and skills, as a foundation for achievement.
7. Students will demonstrate proficiency in acquiring and developing a strong foundation of knowledge, facts, and skills across academic disciplines.
8. Students will develop critical reasoning and higher-order thinking skills.
9. Students will be prepared for the challenges and opportunities of higher education.
10. Students will acquire skills in a foreign language.
11. Students will acquire skills in both art and music.

Academic Goal 1

1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in core curriculums that meets or exceeds the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Content Standards.

Goal 1 Objectives

- a. Students will demonstrate proficiency in a core curriculum that is directly aligned and correlated to Pennsylvania's Content Standards.
- b. Students enrolled in the school for at least two years will exceed the state average on all PSSA tests.
- c. Students will demonstrate a greater and faster rate of gains over time on their PSSA scores, than other students across the state (on average).

Academic Goal 2

2. Students will demonstrate proficiency in English/Language Arts concepts and skills as a foundation of achievement.

Goal 2 Objectives

- a. Students will demonstrate mastery of basic reading skills.
- b. Students will demonstrate proficiency in reading comprehension of grade level literary works from various genres.
- c. Students will demonstrate proficiency in reading comprehension of grade level document and scientific based texts.
- d. Students will master the skills of the writing process: brainstorming, outlining, drafting, , revising, editing, and publishing.
- e. Students will master the use of the conventions of writing: spelling, grammar, and mechanics.
- f. Students will develop their skills in utilizing a variety of writing strategies appropriate for different audiences and purposes in the following genres: persuasive, creative, descriptive, and research writing.
- g. Students will develop their use and understanding of story and literary elements.
- h. Students will develop their use and understanding of collegiate level vocabulary.
- i. Students will develop their skills and demonstrate proficiency in listening and speaking skills.
- j. On average, students will exceed the state performance levels on the ELA sections of the PSSA and the verbal and writing sections of the SAT.

Academic Goal 3

3. Students will demonstrate proficiency in Math concepts and skills as a foundation of achievement.

Objectives

- a. Students will understand and apply advanced properties of numbers.
- b. Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying basic and advanced procedures while performing computations.
- c. Students will demonstrate proficiency in understanding and applying basic and advanced properties of: Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, Division, Fractions, Decimals, Money, Time, Measurement, Statistics, Probability, Geometry, Algebra, Trigonometry, and Calculus.
- d. Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying mathematical skills to solve real world problems.
- e. Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying mathematical skills to solve word problems.
- f. Students will exceed the state average performance levels on the Math sections of the PSSA and SAT.

Academic Goal 4

4. Students will demonstrate proficiency in utilizing various types and levels of technology.

Objectives

- a. Students will demonstrate proficiency in using the basic components of a computers and of its functions: typing, word processing, editing, internet, etc..
- b. Students will demonstrate proficiency in using the computer as a tool for research and educational resources for academic support.
- c. Students will demonstrate proficiency in using grade level virtual labs, and other simulated/virtual Science programs to increase their understanding of concepts and apply skills.
- d. Students will demonstrate proficiency in using multi-media to learn from and to share information.

Academic Goal 5

5. Students will demonstrate proficiency in Science concepts and skills as a foundation of achievement.

Objectives

- a. Students will demonstrate proficiency in Earth Science concepts and skills.
- b. Students will demonstrate proficiency in Biology concepts and skills.
- c. Students will demonstrate proficiency in Chemistry concepts and skills.
- d. Students will demonstrate proficiency in Physics concepts and skills.
- e. Students will demonstrate proficiency in Nutrition/Health concepts and skills.

Academic Goal 6

6. Students will demonstrate proficiency in acquiring and developing a strong foundation of knowledge, facts, and skills across academic disciplines.

Objectives

- a. Students will develop a sophisticated understanding of History, Geography, Civics, Economics, and other disciplines.
- b. Students will demonstrate proficiency in understanding the concepts of each course and identify connections among them.
- c. Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying the concepts to themselves and the real-world.
- d. Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying the interdisciplinary connections when faced with complex issues and problems, demonstrating an ability to analyze from multiple perspectives.

Academic Goal 7

7. Students will develop critical reasoning and higher-order thinking skills.

Objectives

- a. Students will demonstrate proficiency in the use of problem-solving and analytical techniques on open-ended questions.
- b. Students will demonstrate the ability to recognize alternative positions and evaluate their validity.
- c. Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying their knowledge, with regard to analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Academic Goal 8

8. Students will be prepared for the challenges and opportunities of higher learning.

Goal 8 Objectives

- a. At least 90% of the graduating 12th graders will be eligible to enroll in a two or four year college.
- b. At least 60% of the graduating 12th graders will be eligible to enroll in a selective college.
- c. Students will demonstrate proficiency in constructing critical analysis essays, research and thesis papers, and scientific research reports.
- d. Students will demonstrate proficiency in deconstructing literary and informative texts.

Academic Goal 9

9. Students will acquire skills in a foreign language. (Mandarin & Spanish)

Goal 9 Objectives

- a. Students will learn integral components of the culture and country.
- b. Students will learn to read a second language with proficiency.
- c. Students will be able to write in a second language with proficiency.
- d. Students will be able to speak in a second language with proficiency.
- e. Students will be able to comprehend verbal articulation of that second language with proficiency.

Academic Goal 10

10. Students will acquire skills in both art and music.

Goal 10 Objectives

- a. Students will understand and implement artistic and musical techniques.
- b. Students will demonstrate proficiency in their ability to present their knowledge of great works of art and music.

- c. Students will develop a sense of history of art and music, and how ideas, movements, and trends changed from one era to another.

2C. WHAT ARE THE SCHOOLS MEASURABLE NON-ACADEMIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES TO PROMOTE STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

Background

ICCS strives to promote an online experiential learning environment where 21st century skills, rigorous STEM academics and character education ensure the holistic development of the whole child.

The primary purpose of ICCS non-academic goals is to develop character traits and life skills that will not only prepare our students to be college ready, but also become an active, self-driven, responsible and reflective citizen.

The non-academic goals listed by ICCS are:

1. Students will develop character traits such as diligence, compassion, self-discipline, honesty, courage, fairness, respect and integrity.

Objectives

- Students will take responsibility for mistakes, and accepts responsibility for setting a good example.
- Students will demonstrate self-discipline and perseverance even in face of difficulty.
- Students will show understanding of others by treating them with kindness, generosity and a forgiving spirit.
- Students will strive for excellence, putting in their best efforts in all situations and take pride in their work.
- Students will understand and recognize the uniqueness and value of each individual within our diverse society, and demonstrate the right of conscience to disagree respectfully with others' beliefs or behaviors.
- Students will conduct themselves with high moral character.

2. Students will develop a sense of commitment towards their family, school and community.

Objectives

- Students will develop an understanding of the larger community which they belong.
- Students will show an appreciation of the nation's democratic heritage and democratic values
- Students will sense of responsibility in improving the community through participation in community involvement program.
- Students will participate actively in both academic and non-academic activities, modeling by the school.

3. Students will develop competencies (cognitive, social and emotional) that will prepare them for the demands and challenges, in school, life and work.

Objectives

- Students will demonstrate the ability to make responsible personal choices (including financial choices) that contribute to ongoing self-development, a healthy lifestyle, and a positive future.
- Special education students will participate in meaningful activities that ensure compliance with the transition plan written in their IEP.
- Special education students will participate in meaningful individual and small group counseling services, behavior management plans, and/or social and emotional skills training as written in their IEP.
- Students will develop a healthy self-confidence and a positive attitude.
- Students will demonstrate ability to set personal goals and assess its progress.
- Students will demonstrate ability to collaborate effectively and respectfully with diverse teams.
- Students will learn to use technology effectively and responsibly.
- Students will be able to work independently, self-motivate and meet deadlines without much direct supervision.

*Explanation: Develop clear, **measurable** goals with objectives for building the educational program that reflects a commitment to academic excellence for all students.*

A. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM:

A. DESCRIBE THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM OF THE SCHOOL, PROVIDING A DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRICULUM AND THE CONTENT IN ALL SUBJECT AREAS.

ICCS Approach to STEM Education

The theory of constructivism suggests that learners construct knowledge by accommodating new experiences and reframing their perceptions and models of the way the world works. A student's world is full of simulation that spurs him or her to question. A student becomes more and more sophisticated at problem solving as he/she grows up. Knowledge and understanding are socially constructed through talk, activity and interaction around meaningful problems and tools (Vygotsky, 1998). Tinkering, experimenting and questioning become a student's means of learning, and developing knowledge and understanding.

According to Vygotsky's "Zone of proximal development", there is a difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help. Similar to Burner's theory of scaffolding, Vygotsky's "Zone of proximal development" suggests that a student's cognitive skills can be further developed when instructional scaffolding is provided.

ICCS's program is modeling on the theory of constructivism and uses scaffolding as a tool of teaching. Adopting concepts, central to constructivist design, teaching and learning, from Wilson and Cole (1991) cognitive teaching models, ICCS will implement the following in its education programs:

1. Rich authentic problem-solving environment;
2. Authentic and academic contexts for learning;
3. Student centered learning opportunities;
4. Use of errors as a mechanism to provide feedback to students' understanding;

STEM Education at ICCS can be summarized in the table below:

| STEM Education is | STEM Education is not |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An interdisciplinary approach to learning that is rigorous and links student learning with real world challenges. 2. An approach that emphasizes process and design with a goal to develop problem solvers and critical thinkers. 3. A teaching method used to create an environment that promotes discovery, exploration and problem solving skills. 4. A move to drive STEM literacy into the class room for all students | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A name for the traditional approaches to teach Math and Science 2. Grafting to traditional Engineering and Technology onto Math and Science 3. An emphasis on solutions and replication of factual information 4. Movement to educate the best and brightest 5. Simply more Math and Science classes |

(Adapted from: “Alaska S.T.E.M: Education and the Economy, Report on the Need for Improved Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education in Alaska”, Juneau Economic Development, Nov 2010)

STEM Education at ICCS is not just only about teaching Math and Science, but an interdisciplinary approach to drive STEM literacy into the classroom for all students by providing an environment that promotes discovery, exploration and problem solving skills, and linking students’ learning with real world challenges, with the goal of developing problem solvers and critical thinkers.

The foundation for a successful STEM education will be laid out in the elementary and middle school years. During the elementary and middle school years, students will be given a rigorous exposure to Math and Science through an integrated approach that is different to traditional teacher centered approach to teaching Math and Science. ICCS’s integrated approach links student learning with real world challenges, emphasizing on process and design with a goal to develop problem solvers and critical thinkers.

At different grade levels, students will be exposed to problem based or thematic based integrated cross-curricular units, activities or projects, which are linked to real world authentic context or problems. Approaches, concepts and strategies, central to constructivist design and scaffolding, will be used when designing these integrated cross-curricular units, activities or projects. Such units, activities and projects are designed for students to enjoy challenges and investigating the world around them. Teachers and parents will act as a facilitator, guiding their children through assigned problem based or thematic-based, activities or projects. The big idea is to create a sense of wonder and sense of query by involving the child in exploration, asking questions, and finding answers to real world issues- promoting discovery, exploration and problem solving skills along the way. These integrated units, projects or activities will allow students to put into practice their math, science, reading, and communication skills, and, at the same time, help students in finding a common thread of understanding between Math, Science and other subjects.

Example of how an integrated unit is put together to promote STEM Education at ICCS

To make STEM Education meaningful for students, teachers at ICCS will be putting together integrated units that are both engaging and meaningful. The teachers will be using the curriculum materials from Compass Learning Odyssey, Pearson Virtual Learning, Holt Science Fusion, Edvation TechStep and online resources. The unit put together will incorporate science, math, language arts and technology skills.

Take for example a teacher who is doing grade 4 Ecology with her students. The teacher will first assign the reading “Invisible Alligators” (<http://www.magickeys.com/books/invis-allig/index.html>) to the

students. Students will then be assigned the digital lesson on Ecology from Holt Science Fusion. After which they will be assigned the student's project "Alligators Up close". The student will be given access to an activity sheet and a video.

(http://www.hmhededucation.com/sciencefusion/downloads/hmh_sciencefusion_vbp_ecol_se.pdf and <http://www.hmhededucation.com/sciencefusion/video-alligators-up-close.php>).

The teachers (through web sessions) and parents will facilitate the student's activity. Students will be asked to reflect on questions posed in the project, and they will also get to practice note-taking skills. The teacher may also use online games to further engage her student.

(http://www.ecokids.ca/pub/games_activities/wildlife/index.cfm) Lessons can also be further integrated using Easy Tech, a technology literacy curriculum, to build up the student's range of abilities with technology skills.

Another example is the teaching of the topic of bacteria and viruses. Using the thematic approach to put together an integrated unit, as part of their science lesson, the students will be given the opportunity to culture bacteria at an off-site lab; they will then compare and identify what was found. Then as part of their History or Social Study lesson, students will be assigned readings on the effects of plagues and pandemics on populations and civilizations from around the world and through time. In Language Arts, students will be assigned an article on the Black Death and be asked to relate the article to what was being done in the other classes. During their math lesson, using provided data together with online excel sheets and online graphing tools, students will be assigned a project that will require them to produce graphs, and using mathematical modeling, predict possible outcomes of possible pandemics outbreaks in cities. Using an online learning community platform, students can come together and discuss their projects and progress.

In addition an online community platform will be provided for students to connect with STEM professionals as e-mentors. STEM professionals will be invited to deliver virtual live sessions to students with student interaction. This platform will provide the students an opportunity to virtually communicate and collaborate with peers and make live virtual presentations. It will also involve parents and industry, where industry can post internships and job shadowing opportunities. (Possible tie down with www.ican-network.com)

Guiding Principles behind the Structure of ICCS Curriculum and Instructional Program

The curriculum and instructional program in ICCS are guided by the following principles, which reflect national standards of quality for online courses and program design as recommended by the International Association for K-12 Online Learning:

- Curriculum fosters breadth and depth of understanding in each subject area
- Content is aligned to PA state standards and Common Core
- Curriculum is driven and supported by quality, reputable, recently published textbooks and/or proven instructional resources and materials
- Content and assessments are accurate and unbiased
- Content is current, relevant and provides real-world applications
- Content is appropriate for the learner (age, ability, background, reading level, learning style)
- Instructional design is adaptable and flexible to meet individual needs
- Instructional design provides students with opportunities to improve learning skills using technological tools (e.g., virtual labs and instruments, online tutorials, software, online calculator, etc.)
- Navigation is intuitive and age-appropriate
- Scope of course is appropriate with regard to amount of content, length of course and lessons, and course requirements

- Lesson introduction is effective and presents lesson objectives, accesses prior knowledge (constructivism and effective scaffolding) , sets expectations and motivates students
- Background information effectively prepares students to access new content, skills and strategies (constructivism and effective scaffolding)
- Curriculum includes opportunities for developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- Curriculum includes opportunities for collaboration and independent study
- Curriculum includes opportunities to develop oral and written communication skills
- Curriculum incorporates timely and appropriate feedback to students

At ICCS, students will have access to the online curriculum and instructional program seven days a week, 24 hours a day. Students' learning is self-paced, using both online and published materials. The students will progress at a pace appropriate to their instructional level, maximizing their learning. Through this self-paced differentiated instruction the students eventually meet individual mastery.

Curriculum Overview

The K-12 curriculum that ICCS intends to use is a Pennsylvania State aligned, comprehensive program that includes:

A. Science and Technology

In ICCS's program, students will go through an exciting experience of digital, hands on and print curriculum. Our Science and Technology online curriculum and materials will be provided by Calvert School, Compass Learning Odyssey, Holts Science Fusion, Pearson Virtual Learning and TechSteps by Edvation (integrating technology learning into curriculum). Using digital lessons, simulations, videos, animations, virtual lab, and support print or kit-based materials, ICCS will make science concepts come alive for our students through problem based, experiential or thematic based science inquiry. Supplementary practice books from Triumph Learning PSSA COACH series will also be used.

Our curriculum encompasses the development of knowledge of the natural world and facts, principles, theories and laws in the areas of biology, chemistry, physics and earth sciences; the knowledge and understanding of technology as the application of science to enable societal development, including food and fiber production, manufacturing, building, transportation and communication; and important skill and competencies like the use of the senses, science processes, inquiry, investigation, analysis and problem solving strategies.

A. Environment and Ecology

The study of Environment and Ecology is fully integrated within the curriculum of Science and Technology. Students will go through an exciting experience of digital, hands on and print curriculum provided by Calvert School, Compass Learning Odyssey, Holts Science Fusion, Pearson Virtual Learning and TechStep. Students will gain an understanding of the complexity of the world through the learning of the ecological systems and their interrelationships with social systems and technologies. These components incorporate the disciplines of resource management, agricultural diversity, government and the impact of human actions on natural systems, which lead to the study of watersheds, threatened and endangered species, pest management and the development of laws and regulations.

Though our curriculum, students will be aware of his/her dependence on a healthy environment, and be capable of making sound decisions that will impact our natural systems. At the same time, they will learn to become active participants and problem solvers in real issues that affect them, their homes, schools and communities.

A. Social Studies

Social Studies program will be driven by the materials and online curriculums provided by Calvert School, Compass Learning Odyssey and Pearson Virtual Learning, and supported by additional textbooks

from Macmillan/McGraw-Hill and Pearson, and supplementary practice books from Triumph Learning. The study of social studies incorporates the study of History, Geography, Civics and Government, and Economics. There will be a chronological study of History, complemented by integrated lessons in Geography, Civics and Government, and Economics; and in selected themes, Science and Math.

History

Our curriculum comprises the study of the record of human experiences including important events; interactions of culture, race and ideas; the nature of prejudice; change and continuity in political systems; effects of technology; importance of global-international perspectives; and the integration of geography, economics and civics studies on major developments in the history of the Commonwealth, the United States and the world.

3.2 Geography

In Geography, students will be studying the relationships and interdependence between people, places and environments. They will also get to learn the different geographic tools and methods; and characteristics of places, concept of region and physical processes.

3.3 Civics and Government

In Civics and Government, students will learn about the United States constitutional democracy, its values and principles; they will also study the Constitution of the Commonwealth and government including the study of principles, operations and documents of government, the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, how governments work and international relations.

3.4 Economics

Students will learn about how individuals and societies choose to use resources to produce, distribute goods and services; and consumption of goods and services. They will gain the knowledge of how economies work, economic reasoning and basic economic concepts, economic decision making, economic systems, the Commonwealth and the United States economy and international trade.

A. Arts and Humanities

Arts and Humanities program will be driven by the materials and online curriculums provided by Calvert Learning, Compass Learning Odyssey and Pearson Virtual Learning. The curriculum includes the study of dance, theatre, music, visual arts, language and literature including forms of expression, historical and cultural context, critical and aesthetic judgment and production, performance or exhibition of work. Enrichments lessons will be organized and conducted to complement the curriculum provided by Compass Learning Odyssey and Pearson Virtual Learning.

A. Career Education and Work

Mentoring, enrichments, workshops, and opportunities will be worked into the students' learning calendar to help them explore, gain awareness, and at the same time, understanding of career options in relationship to their individual interests, aptitudes and skills, including the relationship between changes in society, technology, government and economy and their effect on individuals and careers. Opportunities will also be provided to help develop knowledge and skill in job-seeking and to succeed in the occupation for which they are prepared.

A. Health, safety and physical education

A versatile, grade appropriate Health, Safety and Physical Education program will be offered to the students. A variety of lesson plans, together with instructions, will be loaded on the school's website. Under the supervision of their parent or guardian, using the appropriate and suitable lesson plans, students will be able to involve themselves in physical and health education at the comfort of their home. Physical education activities will also be organized in a physical site, and supervised by guardians/parents and teachers. Under the oversight of guardians or parents and teachers, Health and Safety classes will also be

offered both online and in physical locations. ICCS's Health, Safety and Physical Education program focuses on the learning and development of concepts and skills which affect personal, family and community health and safety, nutrition, physical fitness, movement concepts and strategies, safety in physical activity settings, and leadership and cooperation in physical activities.

A. Family and consumer science

Family and consumer science will be incorporated in the Health, Safety and Physical Education program. Students will gain an understanding of the role of consumers as a foundation for managing available resources to provide for personal and family needs and to provide basic knowledge of child health and child care skills.

8. Reading, writing, speaking and listening

The Language Arts materials and curriculum will be provided by Calvert School, Compass Learning Odyssey and Pearson Virtual Learning, and supported by additional textbooks from Macmillan/McGraw-Hill and Pearson, and supplementary practice books from Triumph Learning PSSA COACH series. Students are still developing the foundations for future communication skills, so an interactive learning environment that catches and holds their attention while introducing new skills and concepts verbally and visually are being used. Emphasis will be placed on the skills, and the joys of reading and writing. Students will be provided with systematic and explicit instruction in phonics, meaningful instruction in context, and direct instruction in decoding and comprehension. Students will also begin synthesizing ideas into coherent essays and papers using online-writer and will learn the building blocks of the English language through the study of roots, prefixes, and suffixes, etc.

8.1 Reading

In Reading, students will learn the application of phonemic awareness, phonics and word study, vocabulary, fluency and text comprehension in reading critically across subject areas; the interpretation and analysis of literary expression with analysis of the origins and structures of the English language and learning how to search a variety of texts to conduct research.

8.2 Writing

In Writing, students will learn and develop the skills for narrative, informational and persuasive formal writing for an audience, including spelling and editing skills; and informal writing to capture and organize information for individual use.

8.3 Speaking and listening

Throughout the language arts program, students will be given opportunities to participate in online conversation and online formal speaking presentations.

9. Mathematic

The Math program will be powered by the materials and online curriculums provided by Calvert School, Compass Learning Odyssey and Pearson Virtual Learning, and supported by additional textbooks from Math in Focus carried by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and Pearson. Supplementary practice books from Triumph Learning PSSA COACH series will also be used. As further intervention and supplemental to the weaker students, intervention through Apangea is provided.

In the earlier grades, using the principles from the renowned Singapore Math program, emphasis will be put on (1) coherent syllabus, (2) a visual approach (concrete-to-pictorial-to-abstract progression), (3) developing strong number sense, (4) problem solving and (5) developing strong meta-cognition.

Through our program of daily practice, review and application, a solid early foundation in Math concepts and understanding will be built. Math learning incorporates exploratory, hands on activities, and real world simulations. The learning of Math is also intertwined with the learning of other subjects in the form of integrated units, and cross curriculum projects and activities.

Students will develop the understanding of fundamental ideas and the development of proficient mathematical skills in numbers, computation, measurement, statistics and data analysis, probability and predictions, algebra and functions, geometry, trigonometry and concepts of calculus. Using this content knowledge, students will learn to think, communicate and reason mathematically. Students will also learn to model real-world situations by creating appropriate representations of numerical quantities and plan and implement problem-solving strategies to answer the question in the context of the situation.

3B. DESCRIBE HOW YOUR SCHOOL WILL MEET THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH CHAPTER 711. PROVIDE A PROJECTION OF THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS THAT WILL BE OPERATED DIRECTLY BY YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL OR THROUGH CONTRACTS. PROVIDE A PROJECTION OF THE NUMBER AND TYPE OF RELATED SERVICES THAT WILL BE PROVIDED DIRECTLY BY THE CHARTER SCHOOL OR THROUGH CONTRACTS.

In accordance with Chapter 711, ICCS will employ certified Special Education teachers to ensure that the IEP for each student is implemented and developed annually. In addition, ICCS will employ on a contract basis the following personnel to ensure that evaluations and related services are delivered: one school psychologist to evaluate students with autism, emotional disabilities, specific learning disabilities, mental retardation, and other children with disabilities that qualify for services under Chapter 711; at least one school social worker to service the students that require individual or group counseling per the IEP; at least one occupational therapist to deliver services to students; at least one speech and language pathologist to deliver services according to the IEP. ICCS will pursue relationships with community counseling agencies in order to ensure that all students with an IEP receive services either in their home or in a central location, depending on the severity of the disability and the individual needs of the student. ICCS will work closely with the parents to ensure the success of each student.

Every student that attends ICCS with an existing IEP will have access to specialized learning experiences according to the accommodations written in the IEP, while at the same time accessing the general education curriculum provided by ICCS. ICCS will not discriminate against any student with a disability that wishes to enroll in its programs. It is projected that ICCS will offer at least one special education program per grade level to ensure optimal service delivery and individualized attention.

In accordance with Chapter 711, ICCS will post and update all relevant information on its website so that parents and students will know what special education services and programs are available to them and how to request those services. Also, parents and students that attend ICCS will access via their personal profile pertinent information regarding the initial screening process, how to request a referral to receive special education services, and the available community and state resources specific to the child's disability. ICCS will hold annual IEP meetings in person at a central location with all responsible parties in attendance. Written documentation of all screenings, referrals, observations, formal requests and permission will be provided.

Finally, ICCS will provide access via the student's profile all grade level academic assessment score reports. If a behavioral or emotional disability exists and a student's IEP reflects these concerns, ICCS will provide behavioral observations while the student is engaged in the cyber school environment. Research based interventions including but limited to, positive behavior supports, individual or small group counseling, academic accommodations, specific teaching methods, etc. will be utilized. Repeated assessments in the cyber school environment with parental support and consent will be conducted and the results will be made available for the IEP team to review.

3C. DESCRIBE THE TEACHING METHODS THAT WILL BE USED TO DELIVER INSTRUCTION AND ASSESS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE. HOW WILL THIS PEDAGOGY ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING?

ICCS will utilize varied teaching approaches to the delivery of instruction with the goal of achieving the intended ICCS academic and non-academic outcomes. ICCS will incorporate the following best practices and habits of practice as defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. ICCS will also adopt and implement best practices and standards as outlined by Hanover Researchⁱ, Pietro et. Al. ⁱⁱ and the International Association for K-12 Online Learning. The list of best practice and habits of practices is as follows:

BEST PRACTICES

A. Provide meaningful continuous assessment that is aligned with standards

- Multiple methods of assessments; and timely and frequent feedback about student progress are built into the Learning Management system. This information will be used as feedback to assess and promote students' progress, and for ongoing course improvement, design and revision.
- In order to meet the needs of special education students, ICCS will provide test items in varying formats including, but not limited to, true-false items, matching items, multiple choice items, pictorial and graphical items, and short answer responses. Test items will cover the same concepts contained in the general education curriculum but will be modified to ensure that each student can comprehend the question. Test questions will be presented verbally, written, and/or graphically depending on the IEP and needs of the student. The size and style of the font, colors, and/ or presentation of the test item (one at a time) will be tailored to meet the needs of the student according to the IEP.
- Per the IEP, if the special education student requires positive behavior support, the online test items will be followed by applause, positive praise, or encouragement at intervals throughout the test to ensure that the student continues to move through the exam. Depending on the specific behavior plan, students can earn points towards a tangible reward for performing on assessments.
- Special education students that are required to write essay responses will be provided with pop-up graphic organizers to guide their responses. If a special education student is required to provide support from a given text during an assessment, that text will be pre-recorded and read aloud as the student follows along. The student will be able to mark up the text via highlighters embedded in the software in order to assist with comprehension.
- In addition, if a special education student has difficulty typing due to deficiencies in motor skills, a head set will be provided to record the student's verbal response.
- Regular and systematic feedback will be given to students, parents and teachers, enabling students to monitor their own learning progress, and allowing teaches to adapt their instruction to meet learners needs.
- Progress is compared to and aligned to PA Academic Standards (Assessment Anchors) and Common Core.
- Allocation of additional resources and alterations to a student's learning plan or road map will be made, based on students' needs, to ensure their success in all academic areas.

A. Providing a standard aligned, rigorous and engaging curriculum

- ICCS's curriculum is grounded in the program's mission, beliefs, and expectations for student learning and is supported by research and best practices.

- ICCS’s curriculum has the necessary opportunities for students of different abilities and strength to achieve their personal peaks of excellence, and pursue their STEM education in college, or a career in STEM.
- ICCS’s curriculum has clearly stated and attainable educational goals that are clear and coherent; and utilizes quality instructional materials and appropriate technology, from reputable content providers, to enable and enrich student learning. The curriculum has also considerations for time and place limitations of students, accommodating different learning styles.
- ICCS’s curriculum meets requirements of Pennsylvania State Standards.
- Using a combination of online curriculum, textbooks, and hands on experiences, ICCS’s students will be provided a variety of learning experiences that will be tailored to their particular strengths and interest.
- ICCS’s curriculum also incorporates health, safety and physical education programs.

A. **Innovative, creative and effective instruction**

- Improved student achievement will be the full focus of our instruction. ICCS will work closely with the parents to employ differentiated instructional techniques that will work best for each individual child.
- In order to meet diverse learning styles, students will be afforded the opportunity to produce work samples in a variety of ways including, but not limited to: charts, graphs, drawings, and poems; in addition to the traditional verbal and written responses required in the curriculum. Students will be able to scan and upload their work products via the Learning Management System. Providing students with a rubric and scoring guide, as well as, the opportunity to be creative in their responses allows for student centered learning to take place.
- Other cognitive strategies for students, especially special education students, that will be utilized include: mnemonic devices, jingles and trigger sentences, chunking of information, specific note taking styles used in conjunction with pop-up graphic organizers (Cornell notes, main idea and supporting details, idea webs, sequence charts, fishbone graphic organizers, etc). These research based instructional strategies ensure that students build connections between new knowledge and existing knowledge. These strategies allow students to organize knowledge and process information, thereby committing it to memory.
- Students will become self-directed learners through the use of explicit instructional strategies. For example, comprehension monitoring will be utilized in reading, science, social studies, and other heavy reading courses to ensure that students learn to evaluate their own understanding of the text. A video demonstration by a teacher will be provided in order to model the strategy. Prior to reading the text (or having the text read aloud to them via the read aloud option) students will be asked to make predictions about the text by looking at the title, pictures, subtitles, captions, and any other information that can be gathered while scanning the page. Students will record their predictions in a graphic organizer. While reading, questions about the main idea and details of the text will given and the student will have to record their information on the graphic organizer. Students will be able to highlight key words and phrases while reading and record that information in the graphic organizer. Once this entire process is modeled for the student via video demonstration the student will be able to replicate the strategy online with pop-ups that ‘read aloud’ each phase of the process. The students will record their information on a pop-up graphic organizer on the side of the screen. All students, including special education students, benefit from comprehension monitoring because it increases their understanding of the text, as well as, provides a way to take notes while reading.
- A research based method of indirect instruction that will be imbedded into the curriculum is the use of examples and non-examples of a given topic. This strategy is particularly helpful to special education students because the examples can be written or represented pictorially. This instructional strategy can be used across content area and is an easy way to introduce and

organize new information for students. Students can be creative and produce charts to promote their own understanding of a concept on their own as a way of checking their understanding.

- When reading novels, special education students will be provided the option of an audio book. In order to improve comprehension, a video demonstration will be provided to the student to assist in the recognition of story structure. Students will practice using plot diagrams to distinguish between the various elements of a story. Online story maps will be used as one assessment tool while reading the novel. Students will also be taught the skill of summarizing information in order to ensure during reading and post reading comprehension; as well as, a review of sequencing and the use graphic organizers to sequence the events of the novel. Modifying the text, mapping, making text connections, and the use of an audio book provide special education students with opportunities to excel.
- Regular, appropriate assessments will be conducted and meaningful feedbacks will be given to students regarding their progress relative to their personal goals and the goals set out for them.
- Through the use of technology, online learning via the Learning Management System, provides students with opportunities to learn from a wide range of resources (digital, paper and hands on activities), including their teachers (on-line- synchronously and asynchronously- and face-to-face), professional mentors, their parents, other students, museums, libraries, and web-based learning software.
- The use of technology, including graphics, animation, sounds, and the ability to show objects in motion will appeal to students of all learning styles.
- Students will be stimulated to think creatively and use higher-order thinking skills by working independently, or collaborating with others to solve projects dealing with real world problems (through computer-supported collaborative learning).

➤ **Practice artful use of infrastructure**

- Technology forms the backbone of our teaching infrastructure.
- Technology (Learning Management System) will make it easy for teachers to set goals for students' work, chart paths for their learning, set deadlines for completion of the work, and continual assessment of students' learning.
- Training and orientation to online learning technologies will be provided to students, parents, and members of ICCS.

➤ **Foster deep partnerships with community organizations, universities, businesses and/or, regional and national organizations**

➤ **Provide intensive Professional Development Training**

- Teachers and school administrators will be the first line of contact with our students and parents, and partners, therefore there are ample professional development opportunities provided to ensure our teachers and school administrators will perform effectively in their work and area of responsibility.
- We will provide our teachers with regular professional development that will be focused on developing skills and knowledge in using tools to assess students' progress, and promote and advance students' learning.
- Technological workshops will be conducted to develop skills in interactive distance learning techniques to teach our students to become knowledgeable.
- Teachers will receive intensive and on-going training on how to work with and train parents and guardians to become "co-owners" of their child's education.
- School administrators will receive intensive and on-going training (on Internet-based tools such as Wikis, email, web chats, online conferences, and message boards)

HABITS OF PRACTICE

- **Serve students who have traditionally been underserved by the public schools, are considered hard to reach and/or are underrepresented in future career fields.**
 - Intervention programs will be put together to assist underserved students.
 - Being a STEM school, we will provide the opportunities for these students to excel in STEM education.
 - ICCS is committed to serving a population of students that has not been traditionally well-served by schools and school districts. Our commitment to work with the whole family, in areas throughout Pennsylvania, means that ultimately we will be assisting the whole state by building the skills of many of its underserved citizens.

- **Focus on building relationships and trust**
 - Parents and guardians play an integral part in the success of students. ICCS will build a strong foundation of relationships and trust by providing open access to our teachers and administrators through email, chat rooms, and conducting regular face-to-face meetings with students and families.
 - ICCS will provide continual monitoring and meaningful feedback regarding students' well-being, work and progress to parents, students and teachers, creating a bond of mutual responsibility and support for their academic success.
 - Sharing will be done regularly with parents and guardians on ICCS's program, successful online student practices and supportive learning environments.

- **Build upon education practices proven successful nationally and/or are supported through scientifically based research**
 - Approaches and strategies like authentic problem-solving, student-centered learning opportunities, use of errors as a mechanism to provide feedback to students' understanding, which are central to constructivist and scaffolding, are build into the lessons.
 - Use of Scientific Enquiry.
 - Use of the world renowned Singapore Math Program.
 - Computer-based learning has been proven to be successful in helping students to achieve both basic skills and higher-order thinking skills (Papert, 1994, *The Children's Machine : Rethinking School in the Age of the Computer*).
 - Computer-supported collaborative learning, a primary approach that will be used by ICCS for students' learning, has been shown to be highly valuable for teaching and learning both social and academic skills, and is recommended as an educational technique by the US Department of Education (Scardamalia, M., & Bereiter, C. (1994). Computer support for knowledge-building communities.
 - Online language instruction has also been proven to be effective by Jim Cummins in his work with the Elective language learning system (Cummins, 1998, *E-Lective Language Learning: Design of a Computer-Assisted Text Based ESL/EFL Learning System*).
 - Foster positive partnerships with local school district in order to inform each other's practice, share knowledge and leverage resources

 - Commitment to participate in networks with colleagues at other Pennsylvania charter schools and charter schools in other states

3D. Attach the school calendar and identify hours of the school operation, as per Section 1715-A(9).
See Attached School Calendar

4. SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY:

A. WHAT METHODS OF SELF-ASSESSMENT OR EVALUATION WILL BE USED TO ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOL IS MEETING ITS STATED MISSION AND OBJECTIVES?

▪ **Stage 1: Target Setting**

During the beginning of the school year, The Right Prep, the principal, and the Board members using the rubrics, will meet to discuss the school's mission and objectives and then discuss and set targets in key areas for the Mid-year, or the end of the year, depending on the period of the school year. This helps administration and the board to clarify and understand their expected roles, their duties and required competencies to effectively carry out their work. Progress on the targets is revisited throughout the year. The school will be evaluated on key areas like: attendance, parent surveys, standardized testing, student grades, graduation rates, employment rates after grade 12, college admission after grade 12 and professionalism.

▪ **Stage 2: Mid-Year Review**

Mid-year reviews are conducted by managers from The Right Prep and The Board members. The purpose of the mid-year review is to discuss the school's progress. Evaluators will use data (e.g. attendance, grades, parent surveys, graduation rates, entrance into workforce or college, logs, etc.) from the Learning Management System and from other secondary sources (e.g. hardcopy work), to discuss and review the progress of the school using the targets set from **Stage 1**. Possible adjustment to the targets from **Stage 1** may be made.

▪ **Stage 3: End of Year Review**

The end of the year review is conducted at the end of the fiscal, or school year. The same evaluation rubric will be used. Evaluators will again use data (e.g. attendance, grades, parent surveys, graduation rates, entrance into workforce or college, logs, etc.) from the Learning Management System and from other secondary sources (e.g. hardcopy work), to discuss and review the progress of the school using the targets set from **Stage 2**. The evaluator will give the school an overall rating.

B. HOW WILL TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS BE EVALUATED? DESCRIBE YOUR STANDARDS FOR TEACHER AND STAFF PERFORMANCE.

Teaching Staff

There have been a lot of discussions on how teachers should be assessed and how their effectiveness should be evaluated, while there have been disagreement, many will still agree that helping teachers to become effective educators is perhaps the most important step any school can take to raise student achievement¹, because of two assailable reasons: (1) teaching is one of the most important factors in student achievement² and (2) that improving teacher effectiveness can raise overall student achievement levels³.

¹ Robert. R and Linda. D-H, " *Teacher and School Leader Effectiveness: Lessons Learned from High-Performing Systems*", Alliance for Excellence in Education , Issue Brief, March 2011

² National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, " *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*", New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1996.

³ L. Darling-Hammond, R. C. Wei, A. Andree, N. Richardson, and S. Orphanos, " *Professional Learning in the Learning Profession: A Status Report on Teacher Development in the United States and Abroad*", Washington, DC: National Staff Development Council, 2009; Yoon, T.

For these reasons, we at ICCS strongly believe that it is important to focus on teacher effectiveness and will be designing an evaluation system that is linked to improving the effectiveness of our teachers, a concept that is similar to the Enhanced Performance Management System¹ that the Singapore education system has in place.

Using the published set of performance standards designed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (426) as a guide, ICCS will design a detailed set of rubrics reflecting focuses of the school and the different domains of qualities in key areas that ICCS believe an effective teacher should encompass. These rubrics will be used as the basis for the evaluation of teachers and for the teachers' own self evaluation. When new teachers are hired, they will be given a copy of this set of rubrics, so that they will be able to familiarize themselves with ICCS's focuses and its expectation of the qualities an effective teacher should have.

Either the principal or an assigned manager by ICCS will be designated to evaluate the teachers. The ICCS evaluation procedures are as follows:

- **Stage 1: Target Setting**

During the beginning of the school year, or when newly hired, the managers from The Right Prep or the principal, using the rubrics, will meet with the teachers to explain the school focuses, and then discuss and set targets in key areas for the Mid-year, or the end of the year, depending on the period of the school year. This helps teachers to clarify and understand their expected roles, their duties and required competencies to effectively carry out their work. Progress on the targets is revisited throughout the year. Teachers will be evaluated on key areas like: content mastery, teaching and learning, pastoral care and students' and professionalism. Expectations will be moderated according to the teacher's position and portfolio. Both teacher and the evaluator will sign on the document (the evaluation rubric). A copy of the rubric will be made and given to the teacher while the original copy will be kept by ICCS.

- **Stage 2: Mid-Year Review**

Mid-year reviews are conducted by managers from The Right Prep or principal. The purpose of the mid-year review is to discuss the teacher's progress. Evaluators will use data (e.g. attendance, grades, logs, etc.) from the Learning Management System and from other secondary sources (e.g. hardcopy work), to discuss and review the progress of the teacher using the targets set from **Stage 1**. Possible adjustment to the targets from **Stage 1** may be made. ICCS would like to reiterate that our evaluation system is link to improve the effectiveness of our teachers; therefore, appropriate support (e.g. professional development courses, new materials, etc.), in key areas where the teacher needs assistance or intervention, or has perceived low performance standards, will be provided. Similarly, both teacher and the evaluator will write their comments and sign-off the document (the evaluation rubric). A copy of the evaluation rubric will be made and given to the teacher while the original copy will be kept by ICCS.

- **Stage 3: End of Year Review**

The end of the year review is conducted at the end of the fiscal, or school year. The same evaluation rubric will be used. Evaluators will again use data (e.g. attendance, grades, logs, etc.) from the Learning Management System and from other secondary sources (e.g. hardcopy work), to discuss and review the progress of the teacher using the targets set from **Stage 2**. The evaluator will give the teacher an overall rating for his or her individual key areas and an overall rating for the teacher's performance.

If a teacher receives a low rating in a particular key area, the teacher will be expected to remediate his or her relative weaknesses with an approved professional development course within six months of the

Duncan, S. W.-Y. Lee, B. Scarloss, and K. Shapley, "Reviewing the evidence on how teacher professional development affects student achievement", Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2007.

evaluation. Failure to do so may result in the teacher being placed on probation, as determined by The Right Prep.

Any teacher receiving an overall “does not meet expectation” rating will be required to remediate his or her areas of weakness through approved professional development. The teacher will create a remediation plan for him or herself, specifying the professional development that he or she will pursue, and will submit the plan to The Right Prep.

Principal or Managers from The Right Prep and the teacher will both sign the agreed upon course of action. This signed agreement will serve as a commitment by the teacher to address his or her weaknesses. Failure to complete the agreement will constitute grounds for teacher termination, as determined by The Right Prep.

Non-Teaching Staff

Non teaching staffs will be evaluated by a manager together with the principal from the The Right Prep. The evaluation will be accomplished in a manner similar to the teaching staffs using rubrics designed according to their job functions. When newly hire, non-teaching staffs will be given a description of their job function. The description may be updated as needed by The Right Prep approval and by providing proper notice to all. Similarly, individual professional development will be considered in the evaluation process of non-teaching staffs. Opportunities will be given to attend professional development courses that are applicable to their position and to the mission of the school. These includes but not be limited to workshops, seminars, software and technology training.

Based upon the performance review, each non-teaching staff will be given a rating of “frequently exceeds expectations,” “sometimes exceeds expectations,” “meets expectations,” or “does not meet expectations”. When a non-teaching staff’s evaluation is low they will be given an opportunity to remediate. The Right Prep will work with the non-teaching staff to come up with a plan to remediate that will include a timeline for completion and periodic review.

Principal

According to his role and responsibility as an educational leader, the Principal will be evaluated in the following 5 key areas:

- **Key Area 1: School Vision**

S/He will promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of ICCS’s vision that is shared and supported by the community.

- **Key Area 2: Instructional Leadership**

S/He will promote the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional development.

- **Key Area 3: Management of Learning**

S/He will promote the success of all students by ensuring the management of ICCS’s technology and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

- **Key Area 4: Family and Community Collaboration**

S/He will promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, and responding to diverse community interests and needs.

- **Key Area 5: Professional Ethics**

S/He will promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Multiple forms of data and mediums will be used to obtain a holistic view of the principal's performance (e.g. portfolio, surveys, interviews and feedbacks from stakeholders, etc.). However for a further degree of accountability, the Principal will be subject to an annual performance review conducted by the Board of Trustees and will be judged based upon attainment or progress toward the school's stated quantitative annual school goals (e.g. AYP, PSSA score, parents' satisfaction survey, etc.).

Performance Management of Teaching and Non-teaching Staff

The ratings for the Principal, Teaching Staff and Non-teaching Staff will be considered by the Board in determining retention, assignment, and salary increases. Depending on the setting and quantitative annual school goals (e.g. AYP, PSSA score, parents' satisfaction survey, etc.) set by the Board of Trustees, additional bonus may be made out to teachers and administrator.

Professional development opportunities that Teaching and Non-teaching Staffs experience will be noted in each individual's professional portfolio and considered in their annual performance review.

In addition to budgeting for professional development opportunities, ICCS will establish protocols and opportunities for the sharing and dissemination of learning within the school community, as to learn in isolation without the benefit of discussion and sharing would limit the purpose of professional development

4C. HOW WILL YOUR SCHOOL BE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PARENTS OF THE CHILDREN ATTENDING YOUR SCHOOL?

Parents are integrally involved in educating their children as part of the ICCS school model, because we believe that we need to be responsive to the needs of our students and parents to achieve success, and to give parents more of an opportunity to participate in shaping their child's educational experiences. ICCS aims to be both student and community oriented, and incorporate their needs and goals together toward common ends.

Regular meetings with parents both individually and by group will be required. Parents will be invited to share their concerns and ask questions to teachers, staff, administrators, and the Board of Trustees.

Parents will be asked to provide support for:

- All Board of Trustee meetings listed on the official school calendar
- The web portal, where a parent link will be provided for parents to voice their concerns, get up-to-date announcements and other pertinent school information on a 24 hour basis
- Parents, teachers, and counselors will meet periodically, including home visits, to ensure that the program guidelines are being followed.

Multiple ways of communicating with parents will be established. These methods include a school web site, email, school and class newsletters, school calendar, and letters from the administration.

- A Community and Parent Advisory Council will be organized and will consist of parents who will meet regularly with the CAO to discuss their recommendations/suggestions for school improvement, and the role of the parents in facilitating the improvements, if applicable.

Parents will have opportunities to be active members of the Board of Trustees, and other Board appointed committees. In addition, their input will be analyzed through end of year surveys that evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

- Parents will be informed regarding the goals and objectives of the school via the on-line forum, including the expectations of all students, forms of assessment, etc.

- ICCS will provide special links and areas on the school's website designated specifically for parents to communicate regularly with teachers and administrators. The student information system is designed so that parents can access reports on their child's progress. In addition, the system gives parents, students, teachers, and administrators the opportunity to provide continual feedback on-line about any and all aspects of the school. This feedback will be reviewed regularly and when appropriate into the school's system.
- Teacher, parent and student conferences will be held quarterly. These conferences will provide an opportunity for face to face communication pertaining to the academic performance of the child. Parents will be encouraged to attend these conferences, as well as, to request conferences when needed.

As per the ICCS Parent Complaint Policy, parents have formal ways to communicate their complaints.

4D. DISCUSS YOUR PLAN FOR REGULAR REVIEW OF SCHOOL BUDGETS AND FINANCIAL RECORDS.

The treasurer of the charter shall deposit the funds belonging to the charter school in a depository approved by the board and shall at the end of each month make a report to the charter Board of the amount of funds received and disbursed by him or her during the month. All deposits of charter school funds by the charter treasurer shall be made in the name of CCA. The Board of Trustees shall invest charter school funds consistent with sound business practice only in the following instruments:

- United States Treasury bills.
- Short-term obligations of the United States Government or its agencies or instrumentalities.
- Deposits in savings accounts or time deposits or share account of institutions insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation or the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund to the extent that such accounts are so insured, and for any amounts above the insured maximum, provided that approved collateral as provided by law therefore shall be pledged by the depository.
- Obligations of the United States of America or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith and credit of the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith of the Commonwealth, or of any political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith and credit of the political subdivision.
- Shares of an investment company registered under the Investment Company of America 39 Act of 1940 (54 Stat.789, 15 U.S.C. * 80a-1 et seq.) as defined in PA 24 PS 4-440.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code.

All Investments shall be subject to the standards set forth in PA 24 PS 4-440.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code. The school treasurer shall settle his or her accounts annually with the Board of School Directors for each school year.

E. DESCRIBE YOUR SYSTEM FOR MAINTAINING SCHOOL RECORDS AND DISSEMINATING INFORMATION AS REQUIRED UNDER THE FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT (FERPA).

Innovate-U will maintain and protect the security of all records. Hard copies of student educational records will be maintained in a locked room dedicated only to such files, in locked file cabinets. All electronically kept student information will be password restricted. Everyone entering a student record

will sign for that record, which will record said person as having accessed that student's records. Parents will have the right to access their children's education records; an opportunity to seek an amendment; and some control over the disclosure of information from the records. Students will have the same previously mentioned rights over their records. Parents will have the right to access, seek to amend or consent to disclosures of their children's educational records except when the school has been provided information by appropriate authorities that a court order denies this right.

In compliance with FERPA, Parents and students of Innovate-U will have access to view their child's/their educational records upon written request and be in receipt of these records within 30 days. Parents can also request a copy of their child's records in writing and one will be sent within 30 days. The initial copy will be of no cost to the parent. Any copy thereafter will be at the cost of the parent (determined at time of copy). All information in reference to any student other than the legally requested student will be redacted. Any and all parent's statements will be entered into the student's record representing the parent's corrected perspective on a record perceived to be erroneous. If a parent is not satisfied by this action, they may be granted a hearing to amend the records. If the hearing does not result in an amendment of the records, the parents will again be offered the opportunity to place a statement that will be both kept in the record and will be disclosed with educational records.

Disclosure of Education Records

In compliance with FERPA, Innovate-U will require parental consent stating the purpose of the disclosure before disclosure of student education records. This consent must be written, dated and signed. Innovate-U will also make certain that the consent is signed and dated by authorized persons, and that it states the purpose of the disclosure.

Innovate-U will only disclose student records without parental consent when such disclosure is allowed under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

Appropriate Notification

Innovate-U will post on the website and included in the Student Handbook notification that parents have the right to access, review, request correction and consent to appropriate disclosures of personally identifiable information their children's education records.

F. DESCRIBE YOUR SYSTEM FOR MAINTAINING ACCURATE STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND WITHDRAWAL INFORMATION AS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 1748-A, ENROLLMENT AND NOTIFICATION.

Innovate-U recognizes and acknowledges the significance of child accounting, Innovate-U will access and use the required forms mandated by the PDE and the school district of residence. As a charter school, Innovate-U understands that funding is enrollment based. Attendance and accounting personnel will communicate student enrollments and withdrawals. Innovate-U will make the notification to school districts of origin of students within the time frame mandated by Charter School Law its top priority. The Attendance Department will be responsible to provide all information which will be included in the enrollment and withdrawal packets and will, within 3 days of receipt, notify the Accounting Department. The Accounting Department will submit all the necessary information to the district of origin on the next district school day or day of school office operation. (whichever comes first) In an effort to secure enrollment and withdrawal data, Innovate-U will use a data storage program to maintain current student data, including (but not limited to) enrollments and withdrawals for the purpose of accounting for PIMS and the Pennsylvania Department of Education and School District child accounting forms.

G. DESCRIBE PLANS TO EVALUATE STUDENT PERFORMANCE.

Student performance guidelines will be developed by the Board of Trustees for each grade level, in conjunction with the performance guidelines already built into the student learning system, which will ensure that the school's goals for student performance meet or exceed the Pennsylvania State Standards.

The ICCS model is structured so that students will not progress to more challenging material until they have achieved a level of mastery of current material. If a student fails to pass a unit, he/she is redirected back to the areas of weakness to ensure that the gaps are addressed. ICCS provides supplemental support for the students and teacher support to ensure that every child can succeed. ICCS utilizes a student learning system that allows for varying growth rates in each subject area. Student performance will be measured quantitatively and qualitatively.

ICCS plans to assess the success of our program quantitatively in three ways. The first is a component of our on-line curriculum model, which has the ability to generate detailed and on-going data on academic achievement. Data compiled off-line will be entered into the system when necessary. Secondly, participation in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) will provide data on individual strengths and weaknesses in relation to the state standards. Thirdly, Benchmark assessments will be administered quarterly in Math and Reading. Longitudinal data will enable us to examine patterns of areas of weakness and strength and gains/losses.

Students in grades two through eight will take the verbal ability and the math sections of the Stanford 9 exam, except in years when they will take the PSSA. ICCS will provide age appropriate assessments for students in grades K-1. Students in high school will either take the PSAT or SAT annually. Results from these tests will be used as an external measure of student progress and will be analyzed longitudinally to identify areas of strength and address areas of weakness, and ensure progress.

Qualitative evaluation will be in the form of portfolio assessment, evaluated with rubrics. A formal letter-grade system (A-F) will be used beginning in the third grade. Every quarter, students will be issued a formal report card, reflecting their completed work, progress towards stated goals, and results from all quantitative assessments. Quantitative and Qualitative information will be taken into consideration in assigning grades and recommending promotion for individual students.

4H. HOW WILL STUDENT DEVELOPMENT TOWARD THE SCHOOL'S OVERALL LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES BE MEASURED?

Measurement of student development towards the school's goals will occur through several linked approaches:

- ICCS utilizes curriculum and technology that allows us to measure each student's development towards the school's overall learning goals and objectives. The data collected will be instrumental in assisting in refining individual achievement goals among parents, teachers, and students.
- Data from the PSSA will be used to help us understand how well each of our students is progressing individually, and how he/she compares with peers across the state. In addition, the data will be taken into consideration in setting each student's individual academic goals.
- Teachers and parents will evaluate each student's portfolio on a regular basis and will produce reports on particular strengths and weaknesses. This information, in addition, to the quantitative data is the basis for goal setting and quarterly report cards. The school administration will develop and oversee a grading policy that uses descriptive remarks in grades K-2, and letter grades (A-F) in grades 3-12.
- Special education students will use the aforementioned approaches, as well as, the BRIGANCE CIBS II and the BRIGANCE TSI to measure individual development toward the school's overall learning goals and objectives. The BRIGANCE CIBS II and TSI provide skill specific follow up assessments that will be used quarterly to measure continued growth and student progress.

4I. DESCRIBE HOW STUDENT EVALUATION WILL BE USED TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND ATTAIN THE STATED LEARNING OBJECTIVES.

Student evaluation will be used to improve student achievement and attain the stated learning objectives using a seven strategy system. The first level of evaluation will be a diagnostic test to initially assess the strengths and weaknesses of the students' content/skill levels and to assist in creating student learning plans and individual learning objectives. The next level of evaluation will be curriculum based daily assessments, followed by weekly assessments. Cumulative assessments will be monthly/bi-monthly. The latter will be analyzed by teachers to identify areas of mastery, proficiency, and areas that need re-teaching. Benchmark assessments will be administered quarterly and analyzed to also identify areas of mastery, proficiency, and areas that need re-teaching in preparation for the PSSA. The results of the assessments will be stored in the student information system. Teachers will use this data and analyze it in detail to ascertain and to report to parents strategies for helping students meet the stated learning goals. The constant flow of data helps teachers identify and address any areas of weakness. In addition, standardized test results will be analyzed to identify increasing, decreasing, and stable testing trends. We will use standardized tests as a measure of both student growth and an evaluation tool of how effective the teachers and staff have been in helping each student learn. Lastly, portfolio work will be assessed regularly by teachers using rubrics, and the results of these evaluations will be integrated into setting student goals.

With regard to special education students, the BRIGANCE CIBS II and the BRIGANCE TSI will be used to initially assess each student. Teachers will be able to set yearly learning goals based on the results of the initial exam. Students will receive weekly skills based intervention with accommodations via the online curriculum in order to move forward academically. The BRIGANCE offers additional skill specific assessments that will be used quarterly to determine each student's progress towards their learning goals. This data, in conjunction with the aforementioned assessments, will be used to drive instruction and student achievement.

Explanation: Describe your commitment to high academic standards for all students; well-developed evaluation program for either school-developed or standardized testing; use of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) or the PA Alternate School Assessment (PASA); and an analysis of assessment results to improve student performance.

5. SCHOOL COMMUNITY:

5A. DESCRIBE THE RELATIONSHIP OF YOUR SCHOOL WITH THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY.

The relationship between the school and the community will be very strong because this is a virtual school and recruitment is statewide. Statewide recruitment affords the school to hire staff from around the country, and the world. This allows us to use effective academic learning sites that are identified by the administrators, teachers and the technology team. So that our students will be able to interact with students from all over the world, the school will develop relationships with schools all around the world. Currently the school has developed a relationship with DeSales University and will work with other universities and community leaders to promote a strong structure of support for the school.

5B. DESCRIBE THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL'S MISSION.

At Innovate-U our belief is parents are our core partners in education. One of the main reasons students are successful in school is a strong parental presence, according to any relevant research. That is why Innovate-U will incorporate parents in all possible activities that involve our students. As a condition of enrollment parents will be required to undergo a 16 hour training course that includes topics such as use

of technology in the home, time management for the school day, methods for interacting with teachers and administrative staff, etc. Our current parents will be on the forefront of parent outreach which will include activities designed for increasing of student enrollment. Innovate-U will also support parents with their goals of academic excellence. Those efforts will include classes on technology, trades, parenting and diploma support. Innovate-U understands that success in the classroom starts with confidence at home. And that is why we will nurture a student's surroundings to increase that confidence. To keep parents invested in their student's academic success, parents will be required to meet teachers/counselors in person at least 3 times a school year.

5C. DESCRIBE PROCEDURES ESTABLISHED TO REVIEW COMPLAINTS OF PARENTS REGARDING OPERATION OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL.

See Attached Parent Complaint Policy

Explanation: Describe expectations of family members (or guardians) to be active participants in their children's education and the integration plan of the school to collaborate with other community organizations.

6. EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (ATHLETICS, PUBLICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS):

A. DESCRIBE THE PROGRAM OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE CHARTER SCHOOL.

Innovate-U students will have access to participate in their sending districts' sports, publication and other organizational activities.

Note: Charter schools shall be permitted, if otherwise qualified, to be members of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association.

B. DESCRIBE WHETHER ANY AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN ENTERED INTO OR PLANS DEVELOPED WITH THE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT REGARDING PARTICIPATION OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Innovate-U does not currently have any agreement regarding participation of the charter school students in extracurricular activities within the school district. However, Innovate-U intends to enter into agreements with sending school districts to ensure student participation in extra-curricular activities.

Explanation: Identify organized activities that complement the mission of the cyber charter school and the programs in the students' school districts of residence.

7. TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT:

A.DESCRIBE HOW YOUR CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL USES TECHNOLOGY TO PROVIDE A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF ITS CURRICULUM AND TO DELIVER A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF INSTRUCTION USING THE INTERNET OR OTHER ELECTRONIC MEANS.

ICCS will utilize latest technology to deliver an engaging and meaningful education to its students. ICCS's curriculum will be delivered via blackboard and third-party plug-ins. Blackboard provides the platform where students and parents have access to school announcements, activities and the online school. ICCS will be using We intend to use the curriculums, technology, and services provided by the Compass Learning/Odyssey online curriculum for grades Pre-k- 6, in conjunction with Science Fusion by

Holt, for grades K-8. Texts used for ELA and Social Studies will be from MacMillian McGraw-Hill, and Math in Focus-Singapore Math K-8. TechStep for Technology will be used for grades k-12. Pearson Virtual Learning will be used in conjunction with Pearson texts for grades 7-12. The Apangea Math program will be used as a supplemental for grades 3-12. We also intend to use the Rosetta Stone to offer our students the opportunity to learn Mandarin and Spanish. We will use Triumph Learning PSSA Coach for Math, Science, and Reading for grades 3-8, and the Triumph Learning PSSA Writing Coach for grades 5-11. We believe that because these curriculums were developed from educational research and expertise, and are skill based, content rich, and utilize various levels of technology, that they will support our mission to provide a holistic, world-class educational opportunity for all of our students. The online courses will be both asynchronous and synchronous.

Being a web based curriculum, ICCS's curriculum can be accessed anytime, any day and anywhere by students and their parents, as long as they have a laptop and wireless access. Our curriculum was designed with the needs of students, teachers and parents in mind. Online lessons provided will have video, audio and interactive features embedded to facilitate student involvement, motivation, understanding and retention of the information presented.

ICCS's online curriculum is comprehensive; it comes with complete lesson plans, assessments throughout school year, a comprehensive online help system, technical support, optional challenge problems and secondary lessons. Our planning, progress, and attendance tools facilitate the development of schedule and lesson plans needed for each student, and the monitoring of students' progress.

Each student's learning is managed by an assigned teacher. The teacher uses the planning tools to provide a recommended schedule for lessons. These include a Daily Plan, Weekly Plan, Lesson List and Materials List. The student's parent serves as a monitor and guide; the parent will oversee the student's work and assist with assessment. The Progress tool gives teachers, students and parents a look at both completion of lessons and mastery of lessons that have assessments. There are two ways to look at progress: a complete lesson overview and a detailed view. In the latter, one can view lessons by status, get information about the assessments, view lesson objectives, or go directly to the lesson. The Attendance tool allows one to record the amount of time the student spends in school. The amount of time spent on each subject is recorded, and the Attendance tool automatically calculates the total number of hours and minutes for each day, year to date, and the total of number of days in school.

The online curriculum is supplemented by additional curricular materials (textbooks and workbooks) that will be supplied to the students, allowing them to have access to traditional learning materials found in the classroom. Students will use these materials to study offline, and to participate in asynchronous online lessons that they have access. Students are expected to spend a balanced amount of their learning time learning directly from the computer and curricular materials. Generally, children in grades K-5 do a lesser percentage of the work online. They do things like reading books, solving math problems on paper, drawing, and conducting science experiments, which are offline.

As the children grow older and their reading skills improve, instructions and activities will involve increased independence and computer use. However, offline work will still be essential. Parents or guardians will be given comprehensive training in how to make the most of the online curriculum materials for their child. In addition, our school will also organize and facilitate the outings or excursions for both parents and students for important socialization activities. Students will get to participate in school outings (e.g. to historical sites, museums, zoos), picnics, and other social events throughout the school year. Local clusters of students and parents will be encouraged to get together on a regular informal basis in their areas.

Interaction and communication is an important element in education. Drawing on the possibilities provided by technology, teachers will harness the strength of Blackboard and online curriculum providers

to provide online learning services: VOIP, two-way voice conference, video conferencing, virtual document sharing, virtual cooperative learning environment, lesson plans, curricula, online lessons, interactive “virtual classroom” session, online assessments, on-line tutoring, and an on-line learning management, etc. On days when teachers teach “virtual classes”, students will be able to participate in these classes via the blackboard. These “virtual classes”, will be archived, and students will be allowed to access, depending on their schedule and particular needs.

Special education students will be provided with assistive technology according to their IEP, including but not limited to, audio books, voice response headsets, sound reproduction, voice recognition typing software, and large print.

ICCS’s combination of “textbook”, “virtual lessons” and “web based lessons” provides an extremely valuable set of resources for students. Students can access these resources based on the level that they need most practice in, or learning another lesson at a higher level, allowing the students to pace and regulate their own learning that best suits them.

7B. DESCRIBE HOW YOU WILL IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH EFFECTIVE USES OF TECHNOLOGY.

In their work on the impact of technology on student’s achievement, Schacter and Fagnano (1999)⁴ suggested that technologies are best suited to enhance student learning and achievement when they are designed to serve and augment different learning experiences according to sound learning theories and pedagogy. With this in mind ICCS has adopted an online curriculum that is developed using the latest in brain research as its core curriculum provider.

To ensure that technology is effectively used to improve students achievement, ICCS will be adopting some of the best practices found in the research “Best Practices in Online Teaching Strategies” published by Hanover Research Council⁵. ICCS will be using technology to:

1. To provide a platform where students and parents can have access to school announcements, activities and online school matters;
2. To assess and track students’ learning for accurate, on-going diagnosis of strengths and weakness;
3. To deliver online curriculum material to students and parents;
4. To provide a platform for students and parents to connect interact with teachers and school administrator;
5. To provide a platform for teachers and school administrator to connect and interact;
6. To provide a platform for teachers and school administrator to support both students and parents;
7. To provide one-to-one tutoring or remedial in areas of need to students;
8. To provide engaging and interactive multimedia learning tools to the students;
9. To provide a virtual environment for students to collaborate on projects;
10. To provide an online discussion forum;
11. To provide feedback and support to students and parents;
12. To provide information on course goals, expectations and policies;
13. To promote students’ active, constructive participation in learning through effective online interaction;
14. To provide Parents, staff and students will have varied levels of access to student information and assessment data.

⁴ John Schacter and Cheryl Fagnano (1999), “Does Computer Technology Improve Student Learning and Achievement? How, When, And Under What Conditions?”, Journal of Educational Computing Research, volume 20, Number 4 , pg. 329 - 343

⁵ Hanover Research Council (2009), “Best Practices in Online Teaching Strategies”

15. To direct each students' journey of learning.
16. Special education students will be provided with assistive technology according to their IEP, including but not limited to, audio books, voice response headsets, sound reproduction, voice recognition typing software, and large print.

All these will be accomplished by providing a secure web portal through which interactions and access to online resources can take place.

7C. DESCRIBE THE TECHNICAL SUPPORT THAT WILL BE PROVIDED TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS.

Extensive technical support will be provided to students and parents of ICCS, teachers, and other staff members. Every effort will be made to ensure that both students and parents have access to the technical support required to maximize achievement and student productivity while online.

Training sessions will be conducted by ICCS's teachers and Technology Coordinator, together with ICCS's online curriculum provider, for students and parents during each enrolment period. Students and parents will be taught how to set up their home network and access the online school. When necessary, a contractor contracted by the school will be sent to the home to help with training or setting up network.

Throughout the school year, technical assistance will be available by toll-free number, by email, or web chat from 8 am to 6 pm each school day, and from 9 am to 1 pm on Saturday and on Sunday. The toll free number also acts as a chat line for further technical support for those needing to be walked through a procedure.

Every student's computer will be configured exactly the same way, and the configuration will be set by the ICCS's Technology Coordinator. Each school computer will have recovery software installed. This will allow the technical support to remotely determine if a particular problem is a hardware or software issue. When it is not feasible for ICCS to provide appropriate technical support, additional technical support will be provided to parents and students by hardware and software providers. For example, If the hardware or software problems are related to a particular piece of hardware or software, they will be directed to that particular company's technical support for assistance.

The hours of available support and types of support will be adjusted based on the demand for such support, and feedback obtained through regular surveys.

7D. DESCRIBE THE POLICY FOR ENSURING THE PRIVACY AND SECURITY MEASURES THAT WILL GUARANTEE THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA GATHERED ONLINE.

ICCS will abide by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), these regulations are codified in 34 CFR Part 99(<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>) .

A registration ID, username, and password will be given to each student admitted to ICCS. The online curriculum is also password protected.

ICCS will utilize passwords, and secure data transmission to reasonably ensure that school records are confidentially maintained.

With regards to internet safety, internet security/filtering software will be installed in each computer issued through ICCS. It is ultimately the parents and the students themselves who are responsible for their internet safety.

In addition, the school server that houses student data will be protected by a firewall, which will only allow for needed and specified connections. This additional security measure will protect against outside attacks and close possible security holes.

The Technology Coordinator will be responsible for maintaining and assigning passwords and access to electronic records for the school's staff. The teachers and school administrators are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of the student records. Permission to access student's information will only be granted on a need to know basis.

7E. DESCRIBE THE METHODS TO ENSURE AUTHENTICITY OF STUDENT WORK AND THE PROCTORING OF EXAMS.

Placement tests, semester assessments, and all standardized test will be conducted at the support center, or any suitable holding location. ICCS students will be subjected to the same test security as other students from "Brick and Mortar" schools participating in such similar exams.

Frequent contact between teachers and student, online classes, chat and student projects will also help to ensure authenticity. Teachers and schools staffs will be responsible for scheduling, and authenticating and proctoring of assignments.

Parents may also request that their children be assessed in-person regardless of the exams' format.

All special education students will undergo face to face evaluations with respect to yearly IEP compliance. In addition, all initial BRIGANCE assessments and quarterly BRIGANCE assessments will be administered in person to ensure authenticity.

To ensure the authenticity of student work that is uploaded, including all documents, assignments, attachments and completed work products will require that both the student and the parent electronically sign off on the submission.

7F. DESCRIBE EQUIPMENT SUCH AS HARDWARE, SOFTWARE AND INTERNET CONNECTIONS TO BE PROVIDED TO STUDENTS.

ICCS will be using a variety of computer equipment to perform its functions. Dell will be contacted as our primary equipment provider, with intent to provide students with computers similar to the Inspiron desktop model and all necessary accessories (keyboard, monitor, cables etc...) Dell will also be contacted for supplying printers and headsets. Technical specifications of the equipment will be determined by the contract with Dell, based on the needs of the students, and recommendations by the Board. Dells reputation as a leading provider of computer equipment for educational institutions made them the 1st choice provider for ICCS.

All students will be provided equipment based on their need.

Internet will be provided through contracts with regional Internet service providers. RCN, Service Electric, Verizon and other potential providers will be contacted, and necessary equipment and agreements will be arranged and provided.

Software provided will include all necessary applications for connecting to the Internet and running all of the programs associated the curriculum. Software will also include a web-content restriction program, Content-Watch. This program, which is remotely managed, restricts access to the Internet for web-browsers and applications, to ensure that the computer and other equipment is only being used for the purposes of ICCS. Computer Virus Protection software will most likely be provided with the computer.

Special education students will be provided with assistive technology according to their IEP, including but not limited to, audio books, voice response headsets, sound reproduction, voice recognition typing software, and large print.

Similar equipment will be used for the administration, with additional firewall and other protection software.

ⁱ Hanover Research (2009), Best Practices in Online Teaching Strategies, July

ⁱⁱ Meredith, D., Richard, E. F., Erik, W. B. & Megan, P. (2008), Best practices in teaching K-12 online: Lessons learned from Michigan Virtual School teachers, Journal of Interactive Online Learning, Vol 7, No. 1, Spring 2008

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1.A. – WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR THIS TYPE OF SCHOOL?

In Pennsylvania, America and across the globe, a basic understanding of STEM concepts and skills is vital to being a productive member of our workforce and society. Nationally, jobs in STEM-related fields are among the fastest growing careers. On an international scale, the ability of the US to compete in a global economy depends on our ability to produce a highly-qualified generation of researchers, workers, and teachers in the widespread fields of science, engineering, and technology.¹ Innovate-U intends to educate students so that they are prepared to take advantage of these careers by preparing them in STEM education from K-12. Beyond STEM-specific careers, employers in every field are looking for employees who can work effectively with others to creatively solve problems. These skills are particularly highlighted in a STEM education.

The issues facing our nation and the world today also have explicit connections to STEM fields. As citizens, confronting and solving issues like the energy crisis, the threat of terrorism, and the national healthcare debate will require knowledge of STEM fields and the skills that a STEM education builds. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, professional information technology (IT) jobs will increase 24% between 2006 and 2016.² However, as jobs requiring a solid background in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are growing – more students are choosing not to major in these areas. Additionally, workforce projections for 2014 by the U.S. Department of Labor show that 15 of the 20 fastest growing occupations require significant science or mathematics training to successfully compete for a job.³ By 2010, if current trends continue, more than 90 percent of all scientists and engineers will be living in Asia.⁴ If students continue to pursue degrees and careers in fields other than STEM related areas, the U.S. will find it difficult to compete in the global economy. Further, the U.S. will not be able to meet its future workforce needs. The U.S. needs 400,000 new graduates in STEM fields by 2015.⁵ Without a solid foundation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, students will not be qualified for many jobs in the workplace – including many jobs beyond traditional engineering or science-related jobs.

The initial force behind STEM education initiatives was to develop future engineers and scientists through the implementation of specialty or magnet high schools focusing on science, technology,

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The initial force behind STEM education initiatives was to develop future engineers and scientists through the implementation of specialty or magnet high schools focusing on science, technology,

engineering, and mathematics.⁶ There are only 100 schools specializing in mathematics, science, and technology serving 37,000 students nationwide.⁷ While this approach works for students enrolled in these schools, the majority of kids in most school districts in the country do NOT have STEM school options. Instead, in most school districts, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are included as part of the entire curriculum – not as a specific focus. Many of these STEM subject areas are not integrated into the curriculum or taught on an everyday basis. For example, 29% of K-5 teachers report teaching science two or fewer days per week.⁸ It is vitally important that students from various backgrounds be provided with access to STEM education.

Resources

1 Education Forum: What it Takes to Compete, Seeing US education through the prism of international comparisons, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2007.

2 Bureau of Labor and Statistics, Fastest growing occupations, 2004-14, <http://www.bls.gov/emp/emptab21.htm>.

3 Ibid.

4 Fewer students seek tech-related degrees, (2008, June 24), E-School News.

http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/top-news/?i=54247;_hbguid=900b8324-daf2-46d3-b631-ca35461b9736.

5 Ibid.

6 U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Higher Education.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

1B. EXPLAIN WHY THE CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL MODEL IS AN APPROPRIATE VEHICLE TO ADDRESS THIS NEED.

The cyber charter school model is appropriate to address this need because it allows students from across the state access to STEM education, whether they live in populated urban areas, suburban areas or more rural areas. Specifically, the cyber charter school model allows parents from low income families to have greater school choices for their children.

By bringing technology along with textbook and material support into the home, the cyber charter school model allows parents who would like to have more involvement in their child's daily education an opportunity to do so while still getting the necessary academic services from a public school.

One-to-one computing initiatives have great potential. They can prepare students for the demands of citizenship and employment as we approach a future of ubiquitous computing. They can enhance student learning in the classroom today. They can improve student performance on the tests that serve as the basis of school accountability under state law and No Child Left Behind.

The ability to use computers is becoming fundamental to employment, citizenship and daily life — and will only become more so. Public education has created the basic infrastructure for launching one-to-one initiatives: Almost every public school classroom is wired. Overall, student-to-computer ratios are moving well along the technology adoption curve. Exhibits are drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Education Week's Technology Counts report, the Center for Digital Education and other private research.

Explanation: Provide recognition of potential opportunities to improve service and expand choices for students and parents.

2. SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS:

- A. WHAT ARE THE SCHOOL'S ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS FOR EACH OF THE FIRST FIVE YEARS? WHAT IS THE SCHOOL'S ULTIMATE ENROLLMENT GOAL? WHAT GRADES WILL BE SERVED? WHAT IS THE ENTRY AGE FOR KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS AND THE ENTRY AGE FOR BEGINNERS ? HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE IN EACH GRADE OR GROUPING?

Enrollment Projections

Year 1 750 Year 2 800
Year 3 900 Year 4 1100
Year 5 1300

Ultimate Enrollment

1300

Grade Levels

2012-2013 school year we will only enroll grades K-2, 6-7. Year 2013-2014 we will add grades 3-5 and 8, year 2014-2015 we will add grades 9-12.

Entry Age

4.5

Students In Each Group

Elementary 400
Secondary 350

- 2B. DESCRIBE THE COMMUNITY OR REGION WHERE THE SCHOOL, PARTICULARLY THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, WILL BE LOCATED.

Innovate-U will attract students throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania because it is a virtual charter school. We currently have a letter of intent to have our administration office at 1134 East Clair Street, Allentown, PA 18109.

- 2C. WHY WAS THIS LOCATION SELECTED? ARE THERE OTHER LOCATIONS SUITABLE TO THE NEEDS AND FOCUS OF THE SCHOOL?

This location was selected for the following reasons:

1. Our School Support Services Company, The Right Prep LLC, already has a relationship with schools of higher education ie DeSales University, educators and community organizers in the city of Allentown, PA.
2. Innovate-U is in discussion with DeSales University in order to set up a partnership with the university to serve as a resource to our students.
3. The accessibility is convenient for both students and parents
4. Technological set-up is already available

In order for our teachers to interface with their students and parents, a location is needed to accommodate the type of technology to make this meeting effective. Innovate-U is requesting that DeSales University provide Innovate-U with both telecommunications and classroom related technology. This includes computer, technology equipped classrooms; common areas for parent conferences and other school-related activities; access to conference rooms; and separate space for student records and special education records.

2D. DESCRIBE ANY UNIQUE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STUDENT POPULATION TO BE SERVED INCLUDING PRIMARY LANGUAGES SPOKEN.

Innovate-U focuses on students' needs from scholastic achievement to the academically challenged student. Innovate-U will personalize our students' educational programming according to the needs of the student.

Explanation: Provide a description of the students to be served and the community in which the school will be located.

3. DISTRICT RELATIONS/EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT:

A. PROVIDE EVIDENCE THAT YOUR CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL HAS THE SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT TO OPERATE.

ICCS has substantial support to operate. ICCS has hired Latsha, Davis & McKenna, P.C. as legal counsel. ICCS has also contracted with Foundations, Inc. for accounting, financial and business services.

ICCS will contract with The Right Prep to serve as its School Support Services Company (SSSC). The contract, which is still being drafted, is being vetted by professionals who are well versed in rules and regulations regarding charter schools and eligibility for federal assistance. The school's governing board will be independent of The Right Prep as the charter school's governing board is NOT selected by, or includes members who are employees of the SSSC. The charter school will have an independent attorney, accountant, and audit firm that works for the charter school and not SSSC. The school's lawyers have ensured that the contract is negotiated at "arms length," clearly describes each party's rights and responsibilities, and specifies reasonable and feasible terms under which either party may terminate the contract. The legal team was also consulted to ensure that the fee paid by the charter school to the SSSC is reasonable for the type of management services provided. Any and all other agreements (e.g., loans, leases, etc.) between the charter school and the SSSC are fair and reasonable, documented appropriately, align with market rates, and include terms that will not change if the management contract is terminated.

The Right Prep will manage ICCS staff and database information. Staff management is primarily in the fields of hiring and firing, and the recommendations of professional development opportunities to staff. The Right Prep will make actions in partnership with ICCS. Database management will be delivered through researching potential vendors and contract negotiation. The information itself is the property of ICCS. The Right Prep will also handle the extensive technology needed to operate the school. The goal of the partnership between Innovate-U and The Right Prep is that after the first three years of school support from The Right Prep, Innovate-U will be able to self-manage and outsource services as needed.

The Right Prep's management team contains an array of motivated professionals with decades of experience providing Education, Legal, and Business services. The management team and advisors include; charter school leaders, certified teachers, retired teachers, lawyers, and qualified business professionals. The Right Prep is also an approved Charter School Board trainer in Texas; and an SES (Supplemental Education Service) provider, working in multiple states, including Pennsylvania (DC, VA, TX and WA). Operations in PA are have been focused in and around Allentown, PA, for the past 3 years, which is where ICCS will be located.

The management team will also closely work with industry experts to receive advice and counsel on actions as necessary.

- The Right Prep management team is as follows:

Tawanda D. Lane Esq. (The Right Prep, President) Tawanda D. Lane, Esq. is the Founder and President of The Right Prep, LLC. Since 2006, Ms. Lane has managed all of the educational programming, consulting and operations of The Right Prep. Prior to joining the field of Education, Ms. Lane owned and operated a law firm where she advocated on behalf of juveniles in criminal and domestic proceedings. As a New York City Teaching Fellow, she served as a High School Global Studies Teacher and chaired the student Mock Trial Team and the Model United Nations program. Ms. Lane received her Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Sociology from the University of Connecticut, Juris Doctor from William and Mary School of Law, and is a Master's Degree candidate in Secondary Education at Pace University.

Diane Middleton: (Director of Charter School Services) Diane Hayward Middleton holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Maryland, Masters in Education from Cambridge College in Massachusetts and was one of six (6) DC educators to acquire certification in the Wilson Reading Program for Dyslexics. Ms. Middleton has more than 30 years of educational experience, including expertise with various experiential configurations such as Non-graded Multi-Age classrooms, Homogeneous groupings, Heterogeneous grouping, Departmentalization, Cooperative learning and Team Teaching.

As a Reading Recovery teacher for Title I, Diane earned a reputation among her fellow cohorts as a Miracle Worker. The individualized Reading Recovery program helped her to raise many struggling young readers from below grade level to at or above grade level, sometimes becoming the head of their class. Later in her career, Ms. Middleton further impacted Urban education as Lead Teacher/Director of a School-within-a-School Charter in Southeast, Washington - The Lotus Center School, based on the philosophy of Japanese educator, Daisaku Ikeda. During her tenure, this school of Kindergarten through third grade placed consistently in the top ten rankings in Washington, DC on the Standardized CTBS test.

Ms. Middleton has held positions as a Computer Assisted Instruction Teacher, Standards Specialist, Site Coordinator of the Innovative Education After-School Program, Summer School Out-of-Time Coordinator, TOPS American University, Teacher Mentor and Teacher Consultant for the National Writing Project. She has attended educator Round Tables with DC Public Schools Superintendents and served on the Literacy textbook review committee for DC Public Schools. Before joining The Right Prep, Ms. Middleton served as Consultant for the Program Development Review Team for the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board.

Rebecca Jones: (The Right Prep, Director of Curriculum-Reading) Rebecca Jones has been a Literature Teacher and Curriculum Specialist for more than 15 years securing two master degrees: Master of Science, Curriculum Development & Instructional Technology as well as Master of Arts, English Secondary Education. She has been a University Supervisor for Student/Uncertified Teachers and Language Arts Department Chair for a DC Charter School. As a National Trainer she implemented, monitored and evaluated education programs in low performing schools. Other accomplishments include being a Saturday and Summer school principal, publishing for The Advocate, and being a panelist/speaker at Harvard University, Trenton College, and University of the District of Columbia. She is a member of *Phi Delta Kappa* – International Educational Organization.

Benny Ong: (The Right Prep, Director of Curriculum-Math Singapore Embassy, Education Outreach) Mr. Ong has five years of experience with the Singapore Ministry of Education as a program head, and then later as a full department head. Mr. Ong began his career in engineering and has an extensive math

background. He has secured a Masters degree in Business Administration from the University of Hull, United Kingdom. Other Accomplishments include a Certificate in Special Needs Support and a Post Graduate Diploma in Education with Merit from the National Institute of Education – Nanyang Technological University

Erica Lane (The Right Prep, Executive Director of Education Services) Ms. Lane manages educational services for all states and districts, provided by The Right Prep. During her time in the New York City Public Schools as a Student Teacher, Ms Lane was a mentor to students and a liaison between the staff and the students. She was also a volunteer peer tutor for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Ms. Lane received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science at Brooklyn College.

Owen Schmitt: (The Right Prep, Business Development Specialist) Mr. Schmitt joined The Right Prep as a grants writer before moving onto the business development team where he is part of a task force to keep the company abreast of the latest developments across the charter school community. Before coming to The Right Prep, Mr. Schmitt was secondary school tutor while attending Boston University and attaining his Bachelor of Arts in International Relations.

3B. WHAT EFFORTS HAVE YOU MADE TO NOTIFY THE DISTRICT(S) FROM WHICH YOUR CHARTER SCHOOL WOULD DRAW STUDENTS?

ICCS sent out a letter to all 501 school districts with our intent to open in for the school year 2012-13. See attached Letter to Superintendents

3C. WHAT EFFORTS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED TO MAINTAIN A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS?

In order to maintain a collaborative relationship with school districts, the principal will work closely with the school districts and foster a relationship of open communication and exchange of ideas. Ensuring open communication with the school districts will be one of the Principal's main responsibilities. We will ensure timely response to districts requests for information and timely notify them of enrollments and withdrawals.

Note: Please attach letters of intent that were sent to all school districts from which the cyber charter school could reasonably expect to draw students.

3D. Convey the scope of community backing for the proposed charter school and its founding coalition. Document community support among teachers, parents, students, community members, institutional leaders and others through the use of letters of support, surveys, or other tangible means.

We are currently soliciting letters of support from local community organizers and politicians. We will begin hosting community outreach meetings for parents and have them complete surveys and pre-application forms.

Explanation: Document efforts to foster open communications with local school districts; evidence that the founders inspire the confidence of their targeted community; evidence that the program provides an attractive educational alternative to students and parents; and evidence that the breadth of community support extends beyond the core group of founders.

III. GOVERNANCE

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III. GOVERNANCE

1. PROFILE OF FOUNDING COALITION:

A. DESCRIBE THE MAKE-UP OF THE GROUP OR PARTNERSHIP THAT IS WORKING TOGETHER TO APPLY FOR A CHARTER, INCLUDING THE NAMES OF THE FOUNDERS, THEIR BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCES, AND REFERENCES FOR EACH.

Profile of the Founding Coalition

The Coalition of the Charter School are Tamika Jenkins, Erica Lane, Tawanda D. Lane, Esq., Tonika Lowe, Owen Schmitt, Rebecca Jones, Benny Ong, Monique Marshall and Yasmeen Grandison. The founders have diverse and extensive experience in the education, business, human resource and legal arena. They are committed to establishing and providing an innovative and novel alternative to both standard and cyber charter educational forums. The Founding Coalition consists of the following:

Tonika Lowe (Chair) Ms. Lowe holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master of Science in Education from Southern Connecticut State University. Ms. Lowe previously served as a mentor and instructor for Capital Community college in Hartford, Connecticut and is currently an educator working for the New Haven Board of Education.

Tamika Jenkins (Vice Chair) Mrs. Jenkins is currently a Lease Administrator at Thor Equities, a REIT, where she handles specialty leasing and lease and contract compliance. She was also a volunteers as a youth counselor at Morning Star Community Christian Center in Linden, NJ. Mrs. Jenkins received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration majoring in Business Management at Bloomfield College and holds a Certificate in Paralegal Studies from Blackstone Career Institute.

Erica Lane (Secretary) Ms. Lane manages educational services for all districts, which includes public and charter schools, in the District of Columbia provided by The Right Prep. During her time in the New York City Public Schools as a Student Teacher, Ms Lane was a mentor to students and a liaison between the staff and the students. She was also a volunteer peer tutor for the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Ms. Lane received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science at Brooklyn College.

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Yasmeen Grandison (Member of Human Resources) is currently the Director of Human Resources at ITHAKA. ITHAKA is a not for profit dedicated to helping the academic community use digital technology to preserve the scholarly record and to advance teaching and learning. ITHAKA's services include JSTOR, a trusted digital journal archive, the scholarly preservation services of Portico, and the strategic research and learning consulting group, Ithaka S+R.

Before joining ITHAKA, Ms. Grandison worked at Siemens Government Services, Inc. where she led all human resources activities including: recruitment, compensation, training, benefits planning, employee relations, corporate communications and the creation and communication of policies and procedures. Prior to Siemens, Ms. Grandison was a human resources generalist role, was responsible for the delivery

of HR services for the Washington DC branch of URS Corporation Global Architecture and Engineering division. She has also worked in an HR capacity with Donovan Data Systems and Credit Suisse in New York. Yasmeeen is PHR certified with over 16 years of Human Resources related experience. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, majoring in Human Resources from West Virginia University, College of Business and Economics.

Monique Marshall is the Director of Curriculum – Special Education for The Right Prep. Ms. Marshall monitors instructors and site-aides and enables students to achieve academically. Ms. Marshall is responsible for the development of the curriculum used by The Right Prep in all of its educational programs. Ms. Marshall received her B.A. in Sociology with a Concentration in Race and Urban Studies with Honors from Georgia State University and her Masters of Arts in Teaching with Honors from Bowie State University. Her certification is in Secondary Social Studies. She has more than six years of teaching experience. Ms. Marshall has enriched the lives of many students from elementary to high school with her experience in Math, Reading, History, and SAT Prep. Skills such as researching, reading, writing, rewriting, and development of different curricula have allowed Ms. Marshall to become a valuable instrument in the field of Education.

Rebecca Jones: (The Right Prep, Director of Curriculum - Reading) Rebecca Jones has been a Literature Teacher and Curriculum Specialist for more than 15 years securing two master degrees: Master of Science, Curriculum Development & Instructional Technology as well as Master of Arts, English Secondary Education. She has been a University Supervisor for Student/Uncertified Teachers and Language Arts Department Chair for a DC Charter School. As a National Trainer she implemented, monitored and evaluated education programs in low performing schools. Other accomplishments include being a Saturday and Summer school principal, publishing for The Advocate, and being a panelist/speaker at Harvard University, Trenton College, and University of the District of Columbia. She is a member of *Phi Delta Kappa* – International Educational Organization, *The Modern Language Association*, and *The National Education Association*.

Benny Ong: (The Right Prep, Director of Curriculum – Math and Science; Singapore Embassy, Education Outreach) Mr. Ong has five years of experience with the Singapore Ministry of Education as a program head, and then later as a full department head. Mr. Ong began his career in engineering and has an extensive math background. He has secured a Masters degree in Business Administration from the University of Hull, United Kingdom. Other Accomplishments include a Certificate in Special Needs Support and a Post Graduate Diploma in Education with Merit from the National Institute of Education – Nanyang Technological University

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1B. DISCUSS HOW THE GROUP CAME TOGETHER, AS WELL AS ANY PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS WITH EXISTING SCHOOLS, EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS, BUSINESSES, NON-PROFITS, OR ANY OTHER ENTITIES OR GROUPS. PROVIDE INFORMATION ON THE MANNER IN WHICH COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE INVOLVED IN THE CHARTER SCHOOL PLANNING PROCESS.

The Founders came together in 2011, when they realized that they could contribute to the existing educational options by offering an alternative to the standard educational process while also adding to and expanding the educational focus of the established cyber charter school. The Founders committed to the common goals of quality and higher educational achievement and an enhanced quality of life for our children by seeking to create a new and innovative school of choice as an alternative for our children who are not receiving an educational standard that meet the needs for those children who stand ready to be challenged and meet the growing global demand for advanced education in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics that only cyber education and technologies can offer and deliver.

1C. INCLUDE ANY PLANS FOR FURTHER RECRUITMENT OF FOUNDERS OR ORGANIZERS OF THE SCHOOL.

2. GOVERNANCE:

A. DESCRIBE THE PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENT:

An affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Trustees of the cyber charter school, duly recorded, showing how each member voted, shall be used in order to take action on the following subjects:

- *School calendar (must include 990 hours or 180 days of instruction for secondary students [grades 7-12] and 900 hours or 180 days for elementary students [grades 1-6]. School cannot be kept open for students or staff on Sundays, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, the first of January, Christmas, or Saturdays unless Monday is the weekly holiday for the entire school year)*
- *Adopting textbooks*
- *Appointing or dismissing charter school administrators*
- *Adopting the annual budget*
- *Purchasing or selling of land*
- *Locating new buildings or changing the locations of old ones*
- *Creating or increasing any indebtedness*
- *Adopting courses of study*
- *Designating depositories for school funds*
- *Entering into contracts of any kind where the amount involved exceeds \$200*
- *Fixing salaries or compensation of administrators, teachers or other employees of the charter school.*
- *Entering into contracts with and making appropriations to an intermediate unit, school district or Area Vocational/Technical School for the charter's proportionate share of the cost of services provided or to be provided by the foregoing entities.*

The Board shall be responsible for the complete operations and budget for the school. By an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Trustees of ICCS, shall approve and authorize the following:

- Adopting textbooks

-
- Appointing or dismissing charter school administrators
 - Adopting the annual budget
 - Purchasing or selling of land
 - Locating new buildings or changing the locations of old ones
 - Creating or increasing any indebtedness
 - Adopting courses of study
 - Designating depositories for school funds
 - Entering into contracts of any kind where the amount involved exceeds \$200
 - Fixing salaries or compensation of administrators, teachers or other employees of the charter school.
 - Entering into contracts with and making appropriations to an intermediate unit, school district or Area Vocational/Technical School for the charter’s proportionate share of the cost of services provided or to be provided by the foregoing entities.

Management Organization

Following approval from the ICCS Board, ICCS will contract with a Charter Management Organization (CMO). The contract, which is still being drafted, will be vetted by professionals who are well versed in rules and regulations regarding charter schools and CMOs, and eligibility for federal assistance. Therefore, while CMO will manage the day-to-day operations of the charter school, ICCS will directly supervise the administration of the contract in accordance with ICCS policies and federal and state regulations.

2B. HOW WILL THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES BE SELECTED?

Recruitment and Selection

All future Board members will be selected by the founding partners from those individuals who express an interest and demonstrate values consistent with our school’s vision. The Board will consist of at least 7 members. Consideration in the election to the Innovate-U Board of Trustees includes the following:

- Clear commitment to the mission and vision of the school and to the welfare of children
- Experience working with a non-profit organization in some capacity
- A reputation for and record of high integrity
- A successful record of activity in education reform or community building
- Willingness to serve in one of the following Board areas: policy development, planning, fiscal review, grant writing, staffing, community relations, or school development
- Proven leadership abilities
- Familiarity with educational technology
- Leadership in the community across multiple sectors
- Integrity and credibility in the community
- A desire to help the children of Pennsylvania/Louisiana improve their educational prospects and character development

Profile Summaries – Board of Trustees

| Role | Desired Skills/Profile |
|------|------------------------|
|------|------------------------|

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Chairman</p> <p>The Chairman shall preside at meetings of the Board and shall discharge the duties, which pertain to this office.</p> | <p>Prior Board Experience in educational environment. Advanced Degree Required.</p> |
| <p>Vice Chairman</p> <p>In the absence of the President, the Vice-Chairman shall preside.</p> | <p>Prior Board Experience in educational environment. Legal, Contracts experience required.</p> |
| <p>General Counsel /Secretary</p> <p>The Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board and shall be responsible for preserving the minutes of such proceedings, and shall be the custodian of copies of minutes of all Board meetings and shall transmit a record of actions and resolutions to the appropriate officers after each meeting.</p> | <p>Strong experience educational or non-profit environment. Legal, Contracts, Intellectual Property, International Law.</p> |
| <p>Member - Treasurer</p> <p>The Treasurer shall be responsible for the oversight of the Corporation's financial books, and shall make regular reports to the Board of Trustees regarding the finances of the Corporation.</p> | <p>Strong Accounting and Financial Services Background. Non-profit CFO experience a plus. Experience in financial planning and strategy.</p> |
| <p>Elected Member – Parent/Community (2)</p> | <p>Parent of student currently in the school system. Teacher or educational background a plus.</p> |
| <p>Member – Education</p> | <p>Experience as education advisor/administrator, K12 curriculum a plus.</p> |
| <p>Member – Special Education</p> | <p>Experience as special education advisor/administrator, K12 curriculum a plus.</p> |
| <p>Member – Technology</p> | <p>Computer Science or strong educational technology background. Experience in online learning platforms and emerging technologies a must.</p> |
| <p>Member – Marketing/Business Development</p> | <p>Skill in growing new organizations, marketing new businesses.</p> |

2C. WHAT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO MAINTAIN CONTINUITY BETWEEN THE FOUNDING COALITION'S VISION AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES?

To ensure long-term achievement and sustainability of the ICCS vision, the coalition with partner with the Board to conduct regular organizational review and planning processes to assess the performance against the ICCS vision and achievement of the school’s mission. Initially, the planning process will be conducted annually and will include confidential feedback and performance evaluations from parents, students, teachers, administrators and community partners. There are no plans at this time to recruit additional founders for the school.

2D.DESCRIBE THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD.

The fundamental responsibilities of the Board of Trustees are identified in the following:

- To govern the organization by establishing broad policies and objectives.
- To appoint, support, and assess the performance of the CEO/President.
- To clarify the mission.
- To approve long-range plans.
- To approve the educational programs and services.
- To ensure the well-being of faculty, students, parents, and staff.
- To ensure strong financial management and adequate financial resources.
- To develop and prepare school budget.
- To preserve institutional autonomy.
- To authorize major resource expenditures, substantial program changes; addition or development of new programs, facility and inventory issues;
- To evaluate and monitor the activities of the CEO and the other members of the executive school administration.

Role Definition – Financial Management

The Board of Trustees will meet at regularly scheduled times to oversee the activities and affairs of the charter school which includes management and operation of the school.

| Board’s Role | Finance Committee’s Role | Charter School Administrator’s Role |
|--|--|---|
| Approves a budget that reflects the charter school’s goals and board policies | Revises budget as needed and makes recommendations. | Prepares the budget and presents it to the Finance Committee or full board with backup information. |
| Approves the format and frequency of financial and programmatic reports. | Recommends format for financial and programmatic summary reports for board approval. | Makes recommendations for financial and programmatic reports to the board; assures reports include information required by charter contract. |
| Reviews monthly or quarterly financial statements. | Reviews monthly financial statements with charter school administrator, school business manager, and/or CPA. | Monitors income and expenses on a daily basis. Prepares financial and educational program reports that can be compared to the charter school contract, budget and projected activities. |
| Ensures adequate financial controls are in place and that financial reports are in accordance with accounting practices and applicable provisions of the charter contract. | Reviews accounting and control policies and makes recommendations for changes and improvements. | Raises policy issues and provides information for standard accounting policy decisions. Carries out policies established by the charter school board. |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Reviews the audited financial statements, management letter, and senior staff's response. | Reviews the audited financial statements, management letter, and senior staff's response with administrator and auditor. | Provides information and offers recommendations to Finance Committee. If necessary, responds to the audit firm's management letter. |
| Approves charter school's investment policies and reviews them annually. | Regularly reviews and makes recommendations about investment policies. | Provides additional information and financial analysis if needed. |
| Is well-informed about the charter school's finances. | Coordinates board training on financial matters. Acts as liaison between full board and charter school administrator on financial matters. | Provides training and information as requested. |

2E. WHAT STEPS WILL BE TAKEN TO FACILITATE A PRODUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS?

The ICCS Board and Founding Coalition seek to develop trusting and cooperative relationships between administrators and teachers. To facilitate and reinforce these interactions, administrators will be encouraged to participate in the various ICCS performance development and social activities which will be conducted throughout the Commonwealth on a regular basis. Since teachers and school administrators will be the first line of contact with our students and parents, actively working to build these important relationships will also be a component of the evaluation process for teachers and administrators.

2F. DISCUSS THE NATURE OF PARENTAL AND STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING MATTERS WHERE APPROPRIATE.

The success of ICCS requires strong collaboration and partnership with Commonwealth parents and students. The Parent Collaboration and Partnership Groups (PCPG) will be established within each region and convene quarterly to provide recommendations to the administration and the ICCS Board.

Student concerns and recommendations will also be collected and communicated to the ICCS Board and administrators through student surveys, student government organizations for grades 7-12, and student feedback interviews.

2G. SUBMIT COPIES OF THE SCHOOL'S ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION, BY-LAWS AND CONTRACTS, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY APPLICABLE LAW. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE BYLAWS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

THE BYLAWS MUST CONTAIN A PROVISION FOR "FAILURE TO ORGANIZE OR NEGLECT OF DUTY". SPECIFICALLY, THE BYLAWS MUST OUTLINE A REMOVAL PROCEDURE FOR THE FAILURE OF A BOARD MEMBER TO PERFORM HIS OR HER DUTIES AS OUTLINED IN THE CHARTER SCHOOL LAW. NO BOARD MEMBER SHALL, AS A PRIVATE CITIZEN, ENGAGE IN ANY BUSINESS TRANSACTION WITH THE CHARTER SCHOOL OF WHICH HE OR SHE IS A TRUSTEE, BE EMPLOYED IN ANY CAPACITY BY THE CHARTER SCHOOL OF WHICH HE OR SHE IS A TRUSTEE, OR RECEIVE FROM SUCH

CHARTER SCHOOL ANY PAY FOR SERVICES RENDERED TO THE CHARTER SCHOOL. A CHARTER SCHOOL BOARD OF TRUSTEES SHALL HAVE A DESIGNATED TREASURER WHO SHALL RECEIVE ALL FUNDS INCLUDING LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS AND PRIVATELY DONATED FUNDS. THE TREASURER SHALL ALSO MAKE PAYMENTS OUT OF THE SAME ON PROPER ORDERS APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, SIGNED BY THE PRESIDENT OR VICE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD. THE TREASURER MAY PAY OUT SUCH FUNDS ON ORDERS THAT HAVE BEEN PROPERLY SIGNED WITHOUT THE APPROVAL OF THE BOARD FIRST HAVING BEEN SECURED FOR THE PAYMENT OF AMOUNTS OWING UNDER ANY CONTRACTS, WHICH SHALL PREVIOUSLY HAVE BEEN APPROVED BY THE BOARD, AND BY WHICH PROMPT PAYMENT THE CHARTER WILL RECEIVE A DISCOUNT OR OTHER ADVANTAGE.

PROCEDURES FOR DISMISSAL OF AN EMPLOYEE MUST BE CONTAINED IN THE BY-LAWS.

See attached bylaws draft. Not official till approved by the board.

2H. SUBMIT BOARD MEMBERS' NAMES, ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS AND RESUMES.

The Innovate-U Board is currently comprised of the following members. Additional members are currently being recruited using the guidelines as established by the recruitment and selection processes outlined by the Founding Coalition.

- Tamika Merchant, Vice Chairman – Linden, New Jersey (973-715-8492)
- Yasmeeen Grandison, Member – West New York, New Jersey (646-234-1519)
- Jay Radio*, Treasurer – Allentown, Pennsylvania (610-690-3988) Currently the financial secretary of East Side Youth Center.

* Resumes will be provided before the hearing date.

2I. Submit copies of the school's management contracts, if any.

ICCS has requested an RFP from the "The Right Prep" for management of the Innovate-U Cyber Charter School. Fully executed contracts will be made available at a later date.

Explanation: Describe the effective governance model; consistency with the mission; clearly defined roles of the Board of Trustees; teacher, student and parent input in school decision-making; and the well-developed, viable management structure.

IV. FINANCE AND FACILITY

1. FINANCING:

- A. DEVELOP A PRELIMINARY STARTUP AND OPERATING BUDGET. USE THE ATTACHED PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BUDGET TEMPLATES; DRAFT A PRELIMINARY OPERATING BUDGET COVERING ALL

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- Tamika Merchant, Vice Chairman – Linden, New Jersey (973-715-8492)
- Yasmeeen Grandison, Member – West New York, New Jersey (646-234-1519)
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PROJECTED SOURCES OF REVENUE, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, AND PLANNED EXPENDITURES. See attached Cyber Proposed Budget

IV. FINANCE AND FACILITY

1B. DEVELOP A PURCHASING PROCEDURE THAT ADDRESSES A COMPETITIVE WAY TO PURCHASE GOODS AND SERVICES.

Expenditures in excess of \$10,000 will require prior approval of the Board of Trustees after the submission of a minimum of three bids to ensure competition and advertising where appropriate. Purchasing procedures used by the Board will be modeled after the requirements of the Public School Code. The CEO will establish a revolving checking account with a \$2,500 limit. From that account, the CEO will be authorized to spend up to \$500 on any single transaction for the purchase of supplies, materials, instructional aides, educational software, books, transportation and/or tickets for special events. This checking account will be established with the signatures of the CEO and Treasurer. Upon receipt of adequate documentation, the Treasurer is authorized to reimburse the checking account at appropriate times to reestablish a \$2,500 limit out of the general school account.

Expenditures in excess of \$500 but not exceeding \$10,000 will be permitted only when sufficient funds remain in the budget and only after the submission of three bids have been submitted to and authorized by the Board of Trustees.

1C. WHAT FUND RAISING EFFORTS HAVE OCCURRED AND/OR ARE PLANNED TO GENERATE CAPITAL OR TO SUPPLEMENT THE PER PUPIL ALLOCATIONS?

Fundraisers are being planned to generate capital to offset the per pupil allocations. Grant writing has already commenced to solicit funds from private and for-profit foundations and corporations which support public education and shall continue in an ongoing effort.

1D. Describe the implementation of the following required financial procedures: The treasurer of the charter shall deposit the funds belonging to the charter school in a depository approved by the board and shall at the end of each month make a report to the charter Board of the amount of funds received and disbursed by him or her during the month. All deposits of charter school funds by the charter treasurer shall be made in the name of the charter school. The Board of Trustees of a charter school shall invest charter school funds consistent with sound business practice. Authorized types of investments for charter schools shall be:

- United States Treasury bills.
- Short-term obligations of the United States Government or its agencies or instrumentalities.
- Deposits in savings accounts or time deposits or share account of institutions insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or the Federal Savings and
- Loan Insurance Corporation or the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund to the extent that such accounts are so insured, and for any amounts above the insured maximum, provided that approved collateral as provided by law therefore shall be

-
- pledged by the depository.
 - Obligations of the United States of America or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith and credit of the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith of the Commonwealth, or of any political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania of any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith and credit of the political subdivision.
 - Shares of an investment company registered under the Investment Company of America Act of 1940 (54 Stat.789, 15 U.S.C. * 80a-1 et seq.) as defined in PA 24 PS 4-440.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code.

Note: All investments shall be subject to the standards set forth in PA 24 PS 4-440.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code

The school treasurer shall settle his or her accounts annually with the Board of Trustees for each school year. Pursuant to 24 P.S. §4-437, the accounts of the cyber charter school treasurer shall be audited annually.

2.FACILITY:

2A. PROVIDE DESCRIPTIONS OF AND ADDRESSES FOR THE PHYSICAL FACILITIES, INCLUDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE, AND THE OWNERSHIP OF THE FACILITIES AND ANY LEASE ARRANGEMENTS.

The facility which will serve as our administrative office is 1134 Clair Street, Allentown, PA, 18109. (See attached Letter of Intent to Lease).

2B. EXPLAIN HOW THIS SITE(S) WOULD BE A SUITABLE FACILITY FOR THE PROPOSED CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL. CONSIDER THE NECESSITY OF RENOVATION TO THE FACILITY AND COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE BUILDING CODES AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES. DESCRIBE THE SERVICES OF THE FACILITY INCLUDING HEATING, VENTILATING, LIGHTING, SANITARY CONDITIONS AND WATER SUPPLY.

Before securing any facility we will ensure that the building complies with all state and local ordinances with regards to heating, ventilation, lighting, sanitation and water supply. All building codes are up to date prior to occupancy.

2C. DISCUSS THE PLAN FOR MAINTAINING THE FACILITY ON A DAILY BASIS (CUSTODIAL) AND EXTENDED BASIS (FACILITY MAINTENANCE).

We will hire our own part-time custodial services to augment the custodial services which are already in place by the Lessor.

2D. DISCUSS ANY PROGRESS, PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENTS OR OTHER FUTURE STEPS TOWARDS ACQUISITION OF A FACILITY/LAND.

Not applicable at this time.

2E. DESCRIBE FACILITY-FINANCING PLANS.

A portion of the Per Pupil Allocation will be used to pay the monthly rental fees of the facility. In addition, a portion of any monies raised/received from on-going fundraising and other grants may be used to help offset the costs of rent, maintenance and facility enhancements as well.

3. LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

A. DESCRIBE THE PROPOSED CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL'S INSURANCE COVERAGE PLANS, INCLUDING HEALTH, GENERAL LIABILITY (INCLUDING SCHOOL OPERATION, EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND PARENT VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES), PROPERTY, AND DIRECTOR AND OFFICER'S LIABILITY COVERAGE (SEE SECTION 1727-A OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL LEGISLATION).

Innovate U Cyber Charter will provide an insurance certification with all required coverages prior to the time of the hearing in this matter.

Explanation: Provide evidence of insurability in all areas identified above.

4. CHILD ACCOUNTING

A. DESCRIBE THE PROPOSED CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL'S ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES. NOTE: STATE CHILD ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES MUST BE FOLLOWED. (24 PS 13-1332)

See Attached Enrollment policy cyber school

Explanation: Cyber charter school funding is based on enrollment; therefore, a totally accurate child count is necessary to meet audit standards.

V. ADMINISTRATION

1. RECRUITING AND MARKETING PLAN:

A. DEMONSTRATE HOW YOU WILL PUBLICIZE THE CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL TO ATTRACT A SUFFICIENT POOL OF ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS.

Upon notice of approval of this charter, we will develop a marketing plan which will include A detailed marketing plan for attracting students to Innovate-U will be developed and outlined upon notice of approval of this charter. We intend to include but not limited to:

- Community Program Partners
- Television
- Social Media advertising
- Radio

B. WHAT TYPE OF OUTREACH WILL BE MADE TO POTENTIAL STUDENTS AND

Not applicable at this time.

2E. DESCRIBE FACILITY-FINANCING PLANS.

A portion of the Per Pupil Allocation will be used to pay the monthly rental fees of the facility. In addition, a portion of any monies raised/received from on-going fundraising and other grants may be used to help offset the costs of rent, maintenance and facility enhancements as well.

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- Community Program Partners
- Television
- Social Media advertising
- Radio

B. WHAT TYPE OF OUTREACH WILL BE MADE TO POTENTIAL STUDENTS AND

THEIR FAMILIES?

We will host several outreach events that caters to the needs and interests of students and parents in the communities we intend to serve. We intend to use the effectiveness of television and radio ads, community partnership events, and social media advertising. Mailings of informational materials will be sent to residents using mailing lists

Explanation: Develop a solid plan to attract sufficient students to operate a cyber-charter school; publicize the cyber charter school; and ensure a match between the cyber charter school program and applicants' educational and personal needs.

2. ADMISSIONS POLICY:

A. DESCRIBE THE ADMISSION METHODS AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA YOU WILL USE TO SELECT STUDENTS.

Innovate-U Cyber Charter School will enroll students in accordance with the policies for public school education. Students will be required to be residents of Pennsylvania. Parents or guardians can demonstrate this requirement with a lease, utility bill, mortgage or other evidence that they are Pennsylvania residents, and that they are in the grades served by the school. As a public school, all students are eligible to attend.

2B. EXPLAIN ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS PERTAINING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION.

See attached Child find document as well as all attached special education policies

2C. DESCRIBE THE TIMETABLE TO BE USED FOR ADMITTING STUDENTS, INCLUDING A PLAN FOR THE ADMISSION LOTTERY FOR STUDENTS FROM BOTH WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE DISTRICT.

ICCS will begin accepting students February 1 of 2012 and have open enrollment until October 1, 2012 on a first come first served basis. If interest exceeds the number of spaces available ICCS will hold a lottery within 90 days of the first day of school.

2D. EXPLAIN HOW THESE POLICIES FURTHER THE MISSION OF THE SCHOOL IN A NON-DISCRIMINATORY FASHION.

Our mission as it relates to providing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (S.T.E.M.) education and our vision for inspiring students to think globally is furthered by having a diverse population of students that vary in age, economic status, level of ability, ethnicity, race and gender.

Explanation: Establish consistency with the mission of the school and the non-discriminatory policies for timely and realistic procedures for admitting students in accordance with charter school law (Section 1723-A).

3. HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION:

A. DESCRIBE THE STANDARDS TO BE USED IN THE HIRING PROCESS OF TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF.

Innovate-U seeks high-quality and mission driven professionals to fulfill the ICCS vision. ICCS adheres

to strict hiring standards when evaluating potential candidates for employment. These standards apply to anyone working with Innovate-U and are reviewed semi-annually by the recruitment and staffing committee to ensure the standards are clear and reflect the interests of the students and community we serve. Additional guidelines can be found in the attached “Employment of Personnel” and HR policies.

ICCS teachers, administrators, staff and partners will be held to the following hiring standards:

- **Educational Requirements:** A college degree is required for all teachers. A master’s degree is preferred for grades 7-12.
- **Equal Employment Opportunity:** There should be neither favoritism nor discrimination shown to any candidate on the basis of experience, previous salary or any reason prohibited by State and Federal Laws. (See attached HR Policies for additional guidelines)
- **Competitive Process:** Innovate-U seeks to hire the finest available teachers, administrators and teaching assistants. Vacant positions are filled competitively unless a specific individual has a legal or contractual right to the position.
- **Teacher and Administrator Participation:** Building administrators and teachers are key partners in the instructional staff hiring process. Administrators and teachers carry the responsibility for supervision of new employees and ultimately determine the success of the employee and the success of the school program.
- **Certification Standards and Requirements:** Teacher certifications will be required in accordance with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards as well as the specific certification required by grade level. Teachers for grades 7-12 must prove that they are “highly qualified” by getting certified for secondary school and adding one (or more) subject area endorsements in math, science, or history. All special education teachers must possess federal and state mandated certification.

Subject area certification, particularly for our school counselors and special needs staff, will be required.

- **Administrative Requirements:** Job Descriptions/Profiles are created for each role and include primary responsibilities, role expectations and competencies, required qualifications (skills, education, experience, and certifications), desired qualifications and characteristics, and position information (FLSA, location, hours worked, benefits eligibility). (Please see attached selection policies)

B. WHAT IS THE TARGETED STAFF SIZE AND TEACHER/STUDENT RATIO?

- **Student teacher/student ratio:** The target teacher/student ratio is 1 teacher per 50 students for K-8. This requires that there is 100% parent involvement for lower grades and no less than 50% parent involvement through grade 8. Parent involvement for grades 9-12 no less than 30%. ICCS requires training for all parents who enroll their kids in our program.

The target teacher student ratio for special needs students is 1 teacher for every 10 students. The parent involvement will be required by the children’s annual Individual Education Plan (IEP).

- **Targeted staff size:** The target staff size for ICCS includes:
 - 1 Principle
 - 1 Human Resources Officer

-
- 1 Technology Advisor
 - 1 Office Manager/Administrative Assistant
 - 2 Part-Time Counselors (1FTE)
 - 1 Special Education Coordinators
 - 1 School Nurse

C. WHAT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE AVAILABLE TO TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF?

ICCS recognizes that student learning largely depends on the knowledge and skills of teachers. Our underlying assumption is that individual and staff training needs are identified through a collaborative process between the teachers, administrators, and Learning and Development board sub-committee.

- **Leadership and Educator Enrichment Program:**
To foster a high performing virtual charter school, ICCS has established the Leadership and Educator Development Program that is guided by the following principles:
 - Align training activities with the ICCS mission and organizational goals.
 - Support creating a common language for staff to identify with that focuses on our important values and culture.
 - Support best practice on-boarding process.
 - Support the skill development of our bench strength.
 - Utilize a variety of training methods customized to meet diverse learning styles.
 - Recognize that learning in different contexts is not limited to traditional learning events.
 - To support a targeted (data-driven) approach to organizational development and training.
 - Strengthen leadership capabilities in communication and problem solving skills
- **Nationally Recognized Teaching Certification:** Ongoing development towards Nationally Recognized Teaching Certification ensures that IVUCS teachers possess the skills that are consistent and transferable across the United States.
- **Emerging Technology Training (ETT):** To ensure ICCS remain informed about advances and best practices in virtual/online education, emerging technology training (ETT) through independent service providers and technology consultants.
- **PIL & Continuing Education:** Innovate-U has identified the Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) and Continuing Education curriculum as a key element of our Leadership and Teacher Development Program (LTDP). Participation in PIL will enable certain school administrators to participate in professional education activities geared towards improving Student Achievement and meet the [Pennsylvania School Leadership Standards](#).

In accordance with ACT 48, the ICCS staff required to complete their ACT 48 continuing professional education requirements include:

- Principal and Assistant/Vice Principal
 - Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents
 - Intermediate Unit Executive Director and IU Assistant Executive Director
 - Administrators and other positions as appropriate or as mandated by the Innovate-U Board
- **Annual Goal Setting:** Performance Goals established annually that align with organizational mission, student achievement goals. Goals are intended to be *SMART; Specific, Measurable,

Attainable, Realistic, and Timely.

- **Professional and self-study:** ICCS staff members are encouraged to pursue professional development courses which meet or exceed the required certification standards. This can be accomplished through college and university courses, online learning vendors, or industry seminars and conferences.

D. DESCRIBE YOUR HUMAN RESOURCE POLICES GOVERNING SALARIES, CONTRACTS, HIRING AND DISMISSAL, AND BENEFITS. See attached Human Resources Policy Addendum.

E. IDENTIFY THE PROPOSED FACULTY.

Innovate-U has not hired any staff at the present time. Innovate-U seeks to hire the most qualified teachers, administrators and teaching assistants. Vacant positions are filled competitively unless a specific individual has a legal or contractual right to the position. There will not be favoritism or discrimination shown to any candidate on the basis of experience, previous salary or any reason prohibited by State and Federal Laws.

F. ATTACH A REPORT OF CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD, PURSUANT TO SECTION 111 OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CODE FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS SEEKING THE CHARTER WHO SHALL HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH STUDENTS. DIRECT CONTACT INCLUDES CONTACT THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC MEANS.

The Right Prep, the ICCS service provider retained to provide teacher and student services requires that all staff, teachers, and administrators participate and successfully complete a full criminal, education, and employment background staff.

Currently, staff members have not been assigned to the ICCS charter school, however, at the time of assignment, all staff will have completed the appropriate clearances as a condition of employment.

G. ATTACH AN OFFICIAL CLEARANCE STATEMENT REGARDING CHILD INJURY OR ABUSE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE AS REQUIRED BY 23 PA. C.S. CHAPTER 63 SUBCHAPTER C. 2 (RELATING TO BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR EMPLOYMENT IN SCHOOLS) FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS WHO SHALL HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH STUDENTS. DIRECT CONTACT INCLUDES CONTACT THROUGH ANY ELECTRONIC MEANS.

The Right Prep, the ICCS service provider retained to provide teacher and student services requires that all staff, teachers, and administrators participate and successfully complete a full criminal, education, and employment background staff.

Currently, staff members have not been assigned to the ICCS charter school, however, at the time of assignment, all staff will have completed the appropriate clearances as a condition of employment.

H. WHAT PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED, THROUGH RESEARCH OF NCLB GUIDELINES, THAT ENSURE THE HIRING OF CERTIFIED, HIGHLY QUALIFIED TEACHERS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL STAFF?

In support of the ICCS mission, we have established highly professional and competitive application processes to maximize our ability to assess candidates' qualifications and passion for teaching. Rigorous training and quality control for the interview committee is conducted quarterly to ensure that the selection

process is implemented effectively and fairly.

- **ICCS Job Profiles:** Each job description/profile is required to include selection criteria that emphasizes, leadership, problem-solving, and continuous learning. A proven set of selection criteria based on achievement, character, leadership and other fundamental qualities and behaviors.
- **NCLB Compliance:** In compliance with the No Child Left Behind act (NCLB), Innovate-U requires that all teachers of core academic subjects be highly qualified. Each candidate must possess a bachelor's degree, subject matter competence in each of the core academic subjects they teach, and an active and valid Pennsylvania license to teach.
- **Guidelines for Emergency Permits:** We have established a target maximum of 10% teachers working on emergency permit during the first two years of Innovate-U's operation. We have established a target maximum of 3% emergency teachers in years 3 and beyond. Innovate-U's board must review and approve these targets annually.
- **Job Sources:** A combination of techniques will be used to source top talent including posting at nationally recognized teaching associates including INACOL, social media networks (LinkedIn), governmental resources provided by (PA DOL and DOE). Partnerships with Pennsylvania colleges and universities to participate in Teacher intern programs to establish an ongoing partnership to ensure and grow an ongoing pipeline of Highly Qualified candidates.
- **Competitive compensation and benefits:** To ensure competitive compensation and benefits, we pursue annual benchmarks from the American Federation of Teachers annual salary survey; the US Bureau of Labor Statistics occupational employment and wage report for teachers.

ICCS offers the following benefits:

- Health care: a choice of medical plans, as well as prescription drug, vision and dental care plans
- Insurance: life, disability and sickness, and business travel accident insurance plans
- Holiday and vacation policies: a competitive offering of holidays and vacation time, generally based on employee status and years of service.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT:

4A.DISCUSS ANY RULES OR GUIDELINES GOVERNING STUDENT BEHAVIOR.

See Attached

4B. DESCRIBE YOUR SCHOOL'S POLICIES REGARDING STUDENT EXPULSION AND SUSPENSION, INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

See Attached Discipline and Exclusion of Special Education students policy.

4C. DESCRIBE YOUR SCHOOL'S MANDATORY STUDENT ATTENDANCE PLAN AND ITS FIT WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT.

See attached Student Attendance and Punctuality policy.

Explanation: Provide evidence that the founders inspire the confidence of their targeted community; program provides an attractive educational alternative to students and parents; and

community support extends beyond the core group of founders. Expectation for student behavior is clear and specific processes for disciplinary actions are established.

5. TIMETABLE:

A. PROVIDE A DETAILED TIMETABLE OF PROJECTED STEPS AND DATES LEADING TO THE OPENING OF A CHARTER SCHOOL.

- Mid-January, 2012 - Implement marketing and outreach strategy
- Mid-January, 2012 - Begin hiring staff
- February 1, 2012 - Begin student registration
- March 30, 2012 – Complete integrating technology for online learning
- July, 2012 – Complete hiring and training staff
- July 2012 – Parent training
- Open School August 2012

Explanation: Establish a well-developed, realistic plan of action for opening a charter school.

6. SAFETY:

A. SUBMIT WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION OF INTENT TO COMPLY WITH ALL APPLICABLE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING TO DEMONSTRATE THE SAFETY AND STRUCTURAL SOUNDNESS OF THE SCHOOL:

- **Inspection by a local building inspector.**
- **Inspection by a local fire department.**
- **Approval from the municipal licensing authority for use of any explosives and flammable compounds or liquids in connection with courses taught at the school.**
- **Compliance with all other federal, state, and local health and safety laws and regulations.**
- **Application for certificates, licenses, etc. are part of the planning process.**

We will comply with all applicable safety requirements as pertains to the operation of a virtual charter school.

Note: All necessary certificates and occupancy permits must be issued and in effect prior to the opening of the charter school. Preliminary clearances on all these requirements should be obtained prior to a lease being executed.

7. SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

7A. DESCRIBE YOUR PLAN FOR PROVIDING SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES AS REQUIRED UNDER ARTICLE XIV OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL CODE.

We will hire a school nurse who will administer the health services component of the school, including maintaining current health and immunization records of all students. See Attached - **STUDENT IMMUNIZATION POLICY**

7B. DESCRIBE HOW SCHOOL NURSING SERVICES, INCLUDING ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION, WILL BE DELIVERED.

School nursing services will be delivered by having district health and immunization drives. The school nurse will ensure that all students have access to health related services, such as dental and vision. The School Nurse, during on-site activities will be responsible for following all 504 accommodation plans.