



Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania Of Pennsylvania

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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)

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania

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

Intermediate Unit Capital Area Intermediate Unit

Proposed Start Date August, 2012

Federal Employer Identification Number 45-3504923

Contact Person: First Thomas Middle O Last Fitzpatrick

Organization Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania

City Harrisburg State Pennsylvania Zip Code 17102

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Founding Coalition: Indicate Number of Representatives per Group	Grade and Age Ranges	Projected Student Enrollment Year 1-5
Parents _____	Elementary <u>K-8</u>	1 st Year <u>650</u>
Teachers _____	Secondary <u>9-12</u>	2 nd Year <u>780</u>
Business Partners _____	Age of Kindergarten <u>5</u>	3 rd Year <u>910</u>
Community Based Orgs. _____	Age of Beginners <u>5 years 7 mos</u>	4 th Year <u>1105</u>
Museums _____	Circle Appropriate Grade(s) All	5 th Year <u>1300</u>
Higher Education _____	<u>K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12</u>	Total Number of Teachers <u>29</u>
Other Group (Identify) <u>1-legal</u>	Kindergarten: <u>Full Day</u> or Half Day?	

Does the cyber charter applicant have an existing retirement system? Yes ___ No X
 Will utilize PSRS

Does the applicant group presently have access to a facility suitable for the cyber charter school’s administrative offices?
 Yes X No ___

School Focus: Describe, in brief terms and on an additional page, the proposed cyber charter
Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania

school's mission, educational focus, and other essential characteristics.

School Focus – Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania

The mission of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania is to provide a rigorous K-12 academic program that utilizes the best aspects of blended online and classroom learning. Featuring world-class content and college-preparatory skill building, Mercury will provide compelling inquiry-based learning designed to spark students' intellectual curiosity and instill an understanding of their unique purpose and areas of strength. Mercury's balanced approach combines high-tech online learning with high-touch classroom-based instruction. Mercury students will develop a strong sense of community and cooperation as they learn both to support and to lead team initiatives.

Mercury is targeted for students and families seeking a rigorous, college-preparatory education in a non-traditional setting that provides choices as well as flexibility of attendance locations. Unlike other online educational programs, Mercury is a teacher-led instructional model with low student-teacher ratios; a proactive requirement for regular synchronous, student-teacher contact; and a high level of transparency and accountability.

Some of the other unique features provided by Mercury will include:

- A full range of college prep Core K-12 courses, Advanced Placement, multiple World Languages, Credit Recovery, Health and PE, as well courses to assist with college preparedness.
- Supplemental and advanced courses often not available in smaller school districts.
- World language instruction (choices of Spanish, German, French, or Mandarin Chinese) required for all students in all grade levels
- Flexibility of asynchronous study times
- Personalized student achievement plans (PSAP) that allow for learning acceleration and advanced achievement
- Two Instructional delivery/attendance location options including:
 - a. 100% online - Full time online instruction at home or at any location with internet access; or
 - b. 4+1 - 4-day per week online instruction at home supplemented by one day a week supplemental face-to-face instruction at the local learning center.

I. SCHOOL DESIGN

1. **Mission Statement:**

A. *Briefly describe the core philosophy or underlying purpose of the proposed school.*

The mission of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania is to provide a rigorous K-12 academic program that utilizes the best aspects of blended online and classroom learning, geared toward college preparation, and focused on engendering a lifelong love of learning.

B. *What is your overarching vision of the school?*

At Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania, we will offer students a rigorous program of the basics coupled with an innovative integrated Social Studies curriculum. The design of this program comes from Mercury Online Education, Inc., a leader in educational innovation and charter-school operation.

The program we envision is structured each aspect for maximum educational impact. Thus, it:

- Is designed to emulate the research-based best practices in reading, math, science and languages curricula.
- Provides curricula in a context that uses innovative and effective instructional methods to include all students – and provides each student with an individualized path for personal growth and development.
- Presents social studies and technology in an innovative, integrated fashion that develops student self-awareness and self-esteem as it helps students grasp their place in history and the world.
- Reflects a clear understanding that children learn in a whole variety of ways and do best when challenged at an appropriate, individualized pace.

Unlike many of today's online learning options, the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania model is built specifically to the online medium and incorporates a variety of digital resources and presentation avenues including audio, animation and images to keep students more interested and engaged. It is designed to capitalize on the best opportunities that the online venue has to offer for both synchronous and asynchronous learning. It is capable of supporting the academic needs of a wide range of students, and it provides excellent support for English Learners by combining words and images, as well as audio and visual content.

In addition to an outstanding online experience, Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania also proposes a significant classroom component: students will have the option of two different learning engagement models:

1. Full time instruction at home provided through synchronous and asynchronous teacher-led instruction.

2. Four days of instruction at home and one day in a face to face classroom setting each week. This is a unique alternative to class-room-only and online-only options. The hybrid approach will facilitate instruction, allow the students real-time interaction with their teacher and peer group, and enable students to make connections in a larger context.

In-class instructional time will focus on Paragon®, an integrated social studies program designed by Mosaica Education, and other core subjects as they are integrated into the Paragon® curriculum. Paragon is designed to be highly interactive, teaches to multiple intelligences, and utilizes a wide range of instructional strategies designed to foster student participation and optimize learning .

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?*

Academic Goals:

Goal 1: The Charter School will make Adequate Yearly Progress as defined by Pennsylvania state requirements and No Child Left Behind beginning in the 2nd year of the charter term.

- Measure 1: Beginning with the 2nd year of its charter term, the Charter School will make Adequate Yearly Progress as determined by No Child Left Behind.
- Measure 2: Beginning from a baseline in the first year of PSSA administration, each subsequent year the Charter School will exceed the baseline percentage of proficient students in each subject tested by an additional 2% per year.

Goal 2: Each year, the percentage of students meeting their growth targets, as defined on the Scantron report, will meet or exceed the national average.

Goal 3: Attendance and Promotion

- Measure 1: In each year of the charter, the percentage of students absent 15 days or more shall not exceed 10%.
- Measure 2: The average promotion rate for the school will be 85% or higher annually.

C. What are the schools measurable non-academic goals and objectives to promote student performance?

Organizational Goals:

Goal 1: Parents will express satisfaction and will be active participants in their child's education.

- Measure 1: Each year, the average rating of parent satisfaction will be at least 8.0 on a scale of 1-10.

Goal 2: Faculty members will demonstrate a commitment to constant learning and professional growth.

- Measure 1: Each year, every teacher will set and achieve individual professional development goals.
- Measure 2: Each year, every teacher will participate in at least 15 days of professional development for new teachers and 10 days for returning teachers.

Goal 3: The Charter School will be economically sustainable.

- Measure 1: Each year, the Charter Schools will operate in a fiscally sound manner as measured by an external audit.
- Measure 2: Actual and proposed budgets for each school year will demonstrate effective allocation of resources.
- Measure 3: The Charter School will meet all Generally Accepted Accounting Practices (GAAP) as demonstrated by external, annual audit reports.

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

3. Educational Program:

A. Describe the educational program of the school, providing a detailed description of the curriculum and the content in all subject areas.

Mercury is targeted for students and families seeking a rigorous, college-preparatory education in a non-traditional setting that provides choices as well as flexibility. These may include families that currently home school, families that currently use traditional schools and families that use virtual-only schools today.

Our target student profile is not limited to any particular demographic. Instead, the Charter School is designed and organized to serve students and families who have chosen an online classroom setting for any of the following reasons, or other reasons relevant to the individual:

- Individuals who are self-directed and choose a wider range of academic options.
- Students of all ability levels seeking additional academic and learning opportunities.

- Families seeking a setting that supports their family relationships and/or personal beliefs and values, and families who prefer to home school.
- Students in need of alternative scheduling (i.e. sports, drama, extracurricular activities).
- Individuals who are high-risk/at-risk for successfully achieving high school graduation or equivalency.
- Students with health reasons that prohibit them from attending normal classroom programs.

In education, one size does not fit all and Mercury is dedicated to providing students and families with an online learning environment that can meet individual students' unique needs. The goal of the Charter School is to create a school that enables all of its students in becoming self motivated, competent, lifelong learners. The Mercury school model therefore has two different programs from which students may choose:

Online Program

This program is 100% online. All core subjects and Paragon are delivered via synchronous and asynchronous methods via the Internet.

4+1 Hybrid Program

This program consists of 4 days at home learning via synchronous and asynchronous instruction via the Internet and 1 full hands-on day of interactive Paragon K-5 or Paragon Humanities 6-12 at a tech center.

The hybrid program of Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania (MOCS) implements online instruction combined with one day per week in the classroom. This new model allows for a number of measurements to be used in determining learning outcomes. Because each student will have access to technology, we will be able to use technology-based assessments along with traditional teacher assessments, standardized testing, student portfolios and teacher observation. During the one day per week of brick-and-mortar classroom experience, teachers will be able to assess students formally and informally through discussion, observation, small group work, one-on-one interactions, and myriad hands-on student projects, presentations and performance pieces. The hybrid model will allow for a state-of-the-art individualized student portfolio-combining standardized and authentic assessment in order to have a clear and accurate detail of each student's mastery of specified learning objectives. Teachers will be involved in the development of innovative measurement tools that will encompass each of these assessment options. In addition, upon enrollment, all students and parents are asked to sign a participation agreement outlining the specific instructional plan as well as specific attendance and participation requirements.

The curriculum and teaching strategies at MOCS will accommodate the needs of a diverse set of learners – those students who are eager to stretch their horizons on a challenging path of individual-based inquiry and those students who require more time-on-task and personalized courses that spark their interest and open a world of engagement. Innovative and effective instructional methods include: cooperative learning, graphic organizers, role-playing, activating prior knowledge, personal connection journaling and Socratic Method. Each of these is discussed in further detail in this application.

As stated, the mission of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania is to provide a rigorous K-12 academic program designed to utilize the best aspects of online and classroom learning, featuring world-class content and college preparatory skill building. Through compelling inquiry-based learning, Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania instills in students intellectual curiosity and a sense of their unique purpose and areas of strength. The balanced approach of high tech and high touch builds a strong sense of community and cooperation among Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania students, as they learn both to support and to lead team initiatives. Online/blended learning has proven its worth as a format for maximizing student achievement through academic and organizational innovation. As stated previously, the Mercury model has been implemented in Southern California and the most recent statewide standards-based testing results (API) showed Mercury with a score of 767, which placed it in the top 3% of all online programs in California.

Mercury intends to offer a full curriculum for students in grades K-12. The curriculum will be fully aligned with Pennsylvania State Core Curriculum by the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania staff with a combination of vendor-created and instructor-designed materials and the support of Compass Learning's award winning content. The proposed educational program at Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania pairs a Core program devoted to intensive study of basic skills, and an arts and humanities program focused on Paragon® curriculum. Both will incorporate service- and community- based learning activities for applied learning experiences. The proposed curricula are also aligned with ASCD National Content Standards. Full alignment to the PA Standards will be provided upon request.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will offer a full line of curricula for students in grades K-12 utilizing a combination of vendor-created and instructor-designed materials. An intensive Core Program focused on forming strong skills in Mathematics, Science, English Language Arts (ELA) and World Languages will be complemented by an Arts and Humanities program.

The curriculum and teaching strategies of Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will accommodate the needs of a diverse set of learners – those students who are eager to stretch their horizons on a challenging path of individual-based inquiry and those students who require more time-on-task. Personalized courses will spark student interest and open a world of engagement.

English/Language Arts

Mercury's English/Language Arts sequence combines content-rich classic and multicultural literature in conjunction with explicit phonics instruction to develop reading skills in grades K-2 when children are making the transition from learning to read to reading to learn. The scope and sequence of basic reading involves mastery of "tool skills" in the areas of phonics, writing and listening. The skill areas gain in difficulty and spiral through the primary grades K-2. As students move up through the upper elementary and middle school grades, they will continue to experience multicultural reading selections which are compatible with the social studies/humanities program. The literature program will use Socratic discussion and interpretive activities enable students to become more aware of their reactions as they read, develop

sensitivity to language, value their own curiosity about a text, and explore new ideas through writing. Through the literature curriculum, students will practice many reading and thinking skills: recalling and organizing details from the story, drawing inferences, analyzing characters' motives, and finding the main idea of a passage or the text as a whole. Literary selections will tie-in with the historical period featured in the afternoon program.

In conjunction with Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania's literacy initiative, students will write across the curriculum and for a variety of purposes and projects. Some will be informal daily assignments such as journal writing; some are short-term assignments involving very few drafts such as letter writing and project proposals. Still other writing assignments will be longer term assignments based on a theme of World Culture in a historical context. Each type of writing will be distinct from the others and involves discrete sub-skills in reading, writing, thinking, and listening.

Literature

The literature program will introduce multicultural reading selections compatible with the social studies/humanities program. Both the reading program session and the humanities program will employ an integrated interpretive approach to reading and discussion that covers all disciplines across the curriculum. Interpretive activities will enable students to become more aware of their reactions as they read, develop sensitivity to language, value their own curiosity about a text, and explore new ideas through writing. Through the literature curriculum, students will practice many reading and thinking skills: recalling and organizing details from the story, drawing inferences, analyzing characters' motives, and finding the main idea of a passage or the text as a whole. Literary selections will often tie-in with the historical period featured in the social studies program.

Phonics

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will use a highly effective phonics program and phonetically controlled literary selections to promote reading fluency and phonetic awareness. Phonemes are the smallest components of sound in language. As students learn their letter formations, they acquire simultaneously the phonemic rules that govern the spelling and the pronunciation of the English language. Mercury Online is a strong proponent of teaching students the correct spelling at the initial encounter; saving time and frustration in having to relearn rules after "inventive" spelling patterns have taken root. World language options at all levels (see World Languages below) will further enable students to understand parts of speech and other linguistic principles.

Writing

Students will write for a variety of purposes and projects ranging from daily assignments such as in online journals to short-term assignments involving very few drafts, to more extensive assignments based on a theme of World Culture in a historical context. Still other writing assignments will be longer term and will involve discrete sub-skills in reading, writing, thinking, and listening. These longer-term writing assignments will be thematic and either narrative or expository in nature. Expository research assignments will typically focus on a body of knowledge in one of the subject-matter areas such as literature, social studies, science, mathematics, etc. Materials will be organized around models of literary genre such as fables,

folk tales, historical fiction, modern fiction, science fiction, poetry, fantasy, adventure, and mystery. Students will use elements of style unique to each genre as models for their own writing.

Mathematics

The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania mathematics program will teach students the essential skills of critical thinking and problem solving. Students are engaged in numerous project-based learning activities, which focus on applied math skill concepts taught in the program. Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will teach mathematics as a discrete subject, fully aligned with the Pennsylvania state curriculum and national content standards. Varied applications of math will also be integrated through STEM projects for additional practice and application, exposing students to mathematical applications in everyday life.

Science

The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania's Science program will engage students in scientific inquiry by tapping into their sense of wonder about the world around them. Students will develop question and create plans to find the answers to their questions. This will lead to conducting investigations in the form of activities, research, reading or interviews with experts. Students will reflect on what they have learned through their investigations and share outcomes of their discoveries. Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania students will virtually explore museums, conduct field research and visit research facilities. Working with naturalists and researchers enhance student appreciation and respect for the world around them.

World Language

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania views World Language as an integral part of the Core curriculum, providing all instruction in the target language to simulate an environment of immersion. World language options will start in Kindergarten and build towards proficiency with each successive grade level. Students are offered multiple languages including Spanish, French, and Mandarin Chinese communication with lively and animated vocabulary content tied thematically to the integrated curriculum. Multimedia resources (videos, children's books) in the target language convey to students the cultural experiences of their peers in Spanish-speaking countries. The school cultivates the natural facility of younger students for world language acquisition by beginning at an early age with a high quality program. Students will learn the basic distinctions between alphabets, numbers and sounds of various languages.

Humanities/Social Studies

Paragon® is a unique, interdisciplinary, student-centered world history curriculum that combines the rigor of a classical education with the relevance required by contemporary society. The content-rich Paragon Curriculum is engaging, discovery-based, and multi-cultural. Paragon® teaches rich content through constructivist strategies and fulfills state and national history, social studies, and civics and geography standards. This college preparatory program integrates the visual and performing arts and provides an exciting project-based forum in which students apply their literacy and problem-solving skills. With a hands-on approach, Paragon addresses students' multiple intelligences and individual learning styles. Through this engaging curriculum, students

gain historical information, and come to understand the expansive potential open to them if they can identify early and with clarity their individual strengths and sense of purpose.

Paragon® is divided into eight five-week units or Human Eras. Each unit immerses students in a school-wide study of the same historical time period, with each grade focused on a unique essential question, geographic location and focus of study. This structure enables Paragon® to satisfy Pennsylvania state curriculum standards by highlighting the areas that students are expected to master at a specific grade level and aligning lesson plans with grade level content expectations. Paragon® provides continuity by maintaining the over-arching chronological order dictated by history, but accommodates specific content standards with five-week units based on an essential question that can address skills and content knowledge appropriate for different grade levels. Step-by-step lesson plans are organized around these essential questions that have captivated thinkers for millennia and that will continue to fascinate students, thereby connecting them with the content more profoundly, more personally, and more purposefully.

Students learn connected networks of knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes that they will find useful both in and outside of school. The significance and meaningfulness of the content is emphasized both in how it is presented to students, how it is developed through activities - both online and off, with digital media and with visual and performing arts integration - and how it is authentically assessed.

Grades 9-12

Curriculum offerings will be fully developed for grades 9-12 and are aligned to Pennsylvania State Standards. With access to the online curriculum, students can easily expand their choices beyond this initial list and take advanced level course work as desired. All Advanced Placement courses offered will pass the College Board's AP audit.

- **English/Language Arts**

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will offer a complete selection of Language Arts courses including the basic four levels of high school English as well as a selection of Advanced Placement courses.

- **Mathematics**

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will offer a complete selection of Math courses including Pre-algebra, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, PreCalculus and Trigonometry as well as a selection of Advanced Placement courses.

- **Science**

Mercury Online offers a complete selection of Science courses including Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, and Physics as well as a selection of Advanced Placement courses. Additional Science electives are available and noted in the Mercury Online course list.

- **Social Studies**

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will offer a complete selection of Social Studies courses including the integrated Paragon® curriculum. This will meet the standards and instructional time needed to receive credit in World Studies (Geography/History),

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania

American/Pennsylvania History, American/Pennsylvania Government, Economics, and other Social Studies requirements. Additional Social Studies electives as well as Advanced Placement courses will be available for students that wish to expand their educational experience.

- **Technology, World Languages, and Electives**
 - Mercury Online offers a full high school curriculum that covers four years of World Languages.
 - Mercury Online offers a selection of courses designed to develop computer and keyboarding skills.
 - Mercury Online offers a variety of electives in music and the arts.

- **Physical Education**
 - Mercury Online will offer Physical Education/Health and additional offerings of Health, Personal Fitness, Participation Skills, Fitness for Life, and Individualized Lifetime Activities.

Professional Development

Personalized instruction and continuous assessment are cornerstones of the Mercury model. The school staff will be trained in techniques of differentiated instruction, enabling them to identify students' learning styles and to customize differentiated activities compatible with the students' needs, strengths, interests, and instructional levels. At the same time, the school will use varied assessments to enable students to demonstrate authentically their understanding of concepts and skills. These assessments will also be used to develop further lessons that address individual student needs, in alignment with best practices in data-driven instruction.

Mercury Online Charter School's Professional Development Program design is derived from the Mercury Educational Model accredited by AdvancED. The process of accreditation was a significant achievement pronouncing the quality of our educational program. Teacher training is customized to the unique aspects of a blended distance-learning environment that combines the best of both worlds in high tech/high touch learning. Teacher training is perpetually refined and customized, based on feedback and data, as measured by student achievement data, teacher and Parent/Guardian surveys, interviews and observation. In addition, the requirements of the EYE program will be met, providing an even stronger support system for newer educators.

Mercury provides ongoing support to teachers by understanding their current needs and providing strategies and solutions to take teaching—and student success—to even greater levels. This includes a specific focus on developing best practices in teaching in an online environment. Mercury is leading the way in developing teaching strategies that ensure students are given every opportunity to succeed and that the ongoing Professional Development Program remains current, relevant, and successful.

Elementary Assessments/ Graduation Requirements and Master Course List

The curriculum and student-centered learning strategies at Mercury will accommodate the needs of a diverse set of learners – those students who are eager to stretch their horizons on a challenging path of individual-based inquiry and those students who require more time on task and personalized courses that spark their interest and open a world of engagement.

The intensified experiential, technology and art-based opportunities at Mercury will encourage many learners with marginal performance to participate more fully in the learning environment. Experiential learning is completely immersive and draws students to the excitement of the activity. The transition from desk-work to active, real-life learning simulations creates a curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and presents an avenue for students to authentically absorb, synthesize, and apply key concepts and content.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania uses a data driven design to guide instruction. All students receive baseline testing yearly to help determine the appropriate course of instruction. Additional benchmark testing is done three times per year to monitor gains. Through this testing teachers can identify specific areas of needs and address them throughout the year. These results along with any other data gathered in a student’s cumulative file help form the basis of the Personalized Student Achievement Plan (PSAP). The PSAP is done for each student at Mercury at all grade levels. It allows teachers, Parent/Guardians, and the student to sit down, look at data, and establish goals. The PSAP is then revisited by this same team quarterly and revised as necessary. The baseline testing done in fall is repeated with a midyear testing in January and an end of year test in May. This allows teachers to track and document student strengths and weaknesses by content strand and according to Pennsylvania standards. (PSAP form is attached at the end of this section).

Teachers are able to take the data from student testing and PSAPs and create individualized paths of instruction for students as needed. Although all students will be working to master the same standards, the path and manner in which they get there may vary. Online education is uniquely suited to being able to accommodate this sort of individualization for all student populations.

In addition to the PSAP Mercury will also use an Educational Program Implementation Chart (EPIC) to review and assess key program features which will allow for continued program improvement. A sample EPIC follows this section.

Mercury will incorporate Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science curriculum aligned to Pennsylvania state standards and the Paragon® social studies/humanities/liberal arts college preparatory curriculum. Students at all grade levels will have the opportunity to study a foreign language. The following is an outline of our education program and curriculum. The times per day are intended to average out over the course of the week since the nature of online learning allows for varied daily schedules and the combination of the face-to-face day will allow for a completely immersive all-day Paragon session:

Grades K-6

- Reading/Language Arts--120 minutes per day
- Mathematics—90 minutes per day

- Paragon—90 minutes per day
- Integrated Curriculum including: Science—60 minutes per day, Art or Foreign Language—60 minutes per day

Grades 7-8

Students must earn a minimum of 12 units of credit to be prepared for high school.

- Reading/Language Arts-- grades 7 and 8, 90 minutes per day
- Mathematics—grades 7 and 8, 90 minutes per day
- Science—grades 7 and 8, 90 minutes per day
- Paragon Social Studies—grades 7 and 8, 90 minutes per day
- Rotating quarters of Arts (visual and performing), Physical Education, Health Education, Career and Technical Education, and Foreign Language—grades 7 and 8, 45 minutes per day, (1 unit of Arts is required for promotion to HS)

Grades 9-12

Please note that although Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will have only grades 9-10 in the first year, the curriculum offerings have already been mapped out for those students through graduation. To be eligible for graduation, students must meet the minimum requirements as indicated in the course offerings below. Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will offer 28 units with the expectation that students will earn a minimum of 24 credits to be eligible for graduation.

The course offerings for grades 9-12 will include the listings below. However, please note that by having access to online curriculum students may easily expand their choices beyond this initial list and take advanced level course work as desired:

Language Arts

- MOCS will offer four years of Language Arts
- 4 units are currently required for graduation

Course	Credit Value	Prerequisites
English I	1.0	n/a
English II	1.0	n/a
English III	1.0	n/a
English IV	1.0	n/a
Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition	1.0	English II or higher

Math

- MOCS will offer four years of Mathematics
- 3 units are currently required for graduation

Course	Credit Value	Prerequisites
Algebra I	1.0	n/a
Geometry	1.0	Algebra I
Algebra II	1.0	Geometry or higher

Trigonometry	1.0	Algebra II or higher
Advanced Placement Calculus	1.0	Trigonometry or higher
Advanced Placement Statistics	1.0	Algebra II or higher

Science

- MOCS will offer four years of Science
- 3 units are currently required for graduation

Course	Credit Value	Prerequisites
Earth Science	1.0	n/a
Biology	1.0	n/a
Chemistry	1.0	Biology or higher
Physics	1.0	Biology or higher
Advanced Placement Physics	1.0	Biology or higher
Advanced Placement Chemistry	1.0	Biology or higher

Social Studies

- MOCS will offer four years of Social Studies using the integrated Paragon Curriculum which will result in meeting the standards and instructional time needed for receiving credit in Geography, World Civilizations, US History, US Government, and Economics
- 3 units are currently required for graduation

Course	Credit Value	Prerequisites
Paragon World and US History	1.0	n/a
Paragon US and World History	1.0	n/a
Economics	.5	n/a
U.S. Government	.5	n/a
Advanced Placement World History	1.0	2 years of Paragon
Advanced Placement European History	1.0	2 years of Paragon
Advanced Placement US History	1.0	2 years of Paragon
Advanced Placement Psychology	1.0	n/a
Advanced Placement Government and Politics	.5	2 years of Paragon
Advanced Placement	.5	2 years of Paragon

Microeconomics		
Advanced Placement Macroeconomics	.5	2 years of Paragon

Arts

- MOCS will offer four years of Art including sequences in visual arts and music
- 1.5 units are currently required for graduation

Course	Credit Value	Prerequisites
Foundations II, Visual Arts	.5	n/a
Art History and Criticism	.5	Foundations I or II
Commercial Art and Electronic Media	.5	Foundations I or II
Photography	.5	Foundations I or II
Foundations I—Theatre	.5	n/a
Foundations II—Theatre	.5	Foundations I
Foundations III—Theatre	.5	Foundations I or II
Foundations IV—Theatre	.5	Foundations I, II, or III

Physical Education

- MOCS will offer two years of Physical Education including health, Participation Skills, Fitness for Life, and Individualized Lifetime Activities
- 2 units are currently required for graduation

Course	Credit Value	Prerequisites
Fitness for Life	.5	n/a
Health	.5	n/a
Participation Skills	.5	n/a
Individualized Lifetime Activities	.5	n/a

Career and Technical Education

- MOCS will offer four years of Career and Technical Education with sequences in business, technology education, and marketing
- 1 unit is currently required for graduation

Course	Credit Value	Prerequisites
Beginning Programming	1.0	n/a
Marketing Principles	1.0	n/a
Fundamentals of Web Design	1.0	n/a
Banking and Investing	1.0	n/a
Business Procedures	1.0	n/a

Business Communication and Presentation	1.0	n/a
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Educational Technology

- MOCS will integrate educational technology at all grade levels; therefore MOCS students will take the state approved competency examination to meet this requirement
- ½ unit is currently required for graduation

Financial Literacy

- MOCS will offer ½ year of Financial Literacy
- ½ unit is currently required for graduation

Course	Credit Value	Prerequisites
General Financial Literacy	.5	n/a

Foreign Language

- MOCS will offer four years of Foreign Language
- No units are currently required for graduation

Course	Credit Value	Prerequisites
Spanish I	1.0	n/a
Spanish II	1.0	Spanish I
Spanish III	1.0	Spanish II
Advanced Placement Spanish	1.0	Spanish II or higher
French I	1.0	n/a
French II	1.0	French I
French III	1.0	French II
Advanced Placement French	1.0	French II or higher

Course		Credit Value	Prerequisites
English I	<p>English I is comprised of a variety of literature and expository text studies, writing activities, vocabulary strategies, grammar skills, and communication lessons. English I integrates the study of selected world literature with comprehensive grammar, usage, and composition skills. Writing will emphasize sound and varied sentence structure and patterns, the logical progression and completeness of the paragraph, and the composition of multiple-paragraph essays. A conventional, comprehensive study of grammar, usage, and mechanics will give students ample practice in honing their proficiency in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and agreement rules of standard usage. The study of world literature includes the short story, drama, and the novel. Short stories will focus on the basic literary elements exhibited by various world authors, using the anthology text as a source. Vocabulary study will also be incorporated throughout the course, with primary focus on words encountered in the literature selections. Likewise, improved oral communication and basic research skills will be covered within the context of literature and composition.</p>	1	n/a
English II	<p>In English II, students will continue to pursue a balanced, integrated standards-based program of literature and language study. Students will develop strategies to construct meaning from and interact thoughtfully with all genres of literature and non-fiction texts with an emphasis on informational texts. Writing activities are informed by interactions with texts, and students will continue to use writing process activities as they compose persuasive, expository, narrative, response to literature and research essays and papers. As well, students will continue to receive instruction in the conventions of written language, reading strategies, effective oral communication and research techniques.</p>	1	n/a

English III	<p>In English III, students will continue to pursue a balanced, integrated standards-based program of literature and language study. This class covers American literature from the pre-colonial Native American writing to modern times. Emphasis is on the careful and analytical reading of a variety of writers and genres that represent the canon of America's literature. Writing activities are informed by interactions with texts, and students will continue to use writing process activities as they compose persuasive, expository, narrative, response to literature and research essays and papers. As well, students will continue to receive instruction in the conventions of written language, reading strategies, effective oral communication and research techniques.</p>	1	n/a
English IV	<p>The first function of English IV is to continue students' exploration of literature in its different forms; students read a selection of sophisticated short stories by authors such as Conrad and Melville. In addition, students read Hamlet and sonnets of Donne and Shakespeare. Essays and in-class writing assignments are produced regularly, and students are expected to be active participants in class discussion. The second function of the course is to assist students in the college admissions process by providing feedback on their college admission essays.</p>	1	n/a

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition	An AP English Literature and Composition course engages students in the careful reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature. Through the close reading of selected texts, students deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure for their readers. As they read, students consider a work's structure, style and themes, as well as such smaller-scale elements as the use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism and tone. The course includes intensive study of representative works from various genres and periods, concentrating on works of recognized literary merit. The pieces chosen invite and reward rereading and do not, like ephemeral works in such popular genres as detective or romance fiction, yield all (or nearly all) of their pleasures of thought and feeling the first time through.	1	English II or higher
Algebra I	Students will explore and gain a firm foundation in mathematics through Algebra I. Topics include number theory and operations, linear equations, systems of linear equations and inequalities, functions, graphing, quadratics, polynomials, and radical expressions..	1	n/a
Geometry	The study of Geometry begins with an understanding of basic relationships and reasoning processes, including deductive and inductive reasoning. Additional topics include congruent segments and angles, circle chords, secants and tangent segments, parallel and perpendicular lines, angle measurements in triangles, direct and indirect triangle congruence and similarity, proof, logic, similar triangles, transformations, the Pythagorean Theorem, coordinate geometry, and surface area and volume of solids	1	Algebra I

Algebra II	Algebra II is a continuation of the concepts and processes learned in Algebra I and Geometry. Mastery of Algebra II concepts will equip students with knowledge and understanding of applications of mathematical topics including: algebraic solutions of problems in various content areas, including the solution of systems of quadratic equations logarithmic and exponential functions, the binomial theorem, and the complex number system; transformations and piece-wise functions; analysis and graphing of polynomial functions, and radical expressions.	1	Geometry or higher
Trigonometry	The study of trigonometry expounds on the foundations laid in Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. Trigonometry focuses on trigonometric functions, right triangle trigonometry, trigonometric identities, angles, and vectors. Additional topics include circles, trigonometric equations, and polar and complex numbers.	1	Algebra II or higher

<p>Advanced Placement Calculus AB</p>	<p>Calculus AB is primarily concerned with developing the students' understanding of the concepts of calculus and providing experience with its methods and applications. The course emphasizes a multi-representational approach to calculus, with concepts, results and problems being expressed graphically, numerically, analytically and verbally. The connections among these representations also are important. The course is intended to be challenging and demanding. Broad concepts and widely applicable methods are emphasized. The focus of the course is neither manipulation nor memorization of an extensive taxonomy of functions, curves, theorems or problem types. Thus, although facility with manipulation and computational competence are important outcomes, they are not the core of these courses. Technology is used regularly by students and teachers to reinforce the relationships among the multiple representations of functions, to confirm written work, to implement experimentation, and to assist in interpreting results. Through the use of the unifying themes of derivatives, integrals, limits, approximation, and applications and modeling, the course becomes a cohesive whole rather than a collection of unrelated topics. These themes are developed using all the functions listed in the prerequisites. (Adapted from the College Board Course Description)</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Trigonometry or higher</p>
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Advanced Placement Statistics	<p>The purpose of the AP course in statistics is to introduce students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing and drawing conclusions from data.</p> <p>Students are exposed to four broad conceptual themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exploring Data: Describing patterns and departures from patterns 2. Sampling and Experimentation: Planning and conducting a study 3. Anticipating Patterns: Exploring random phenomena using probability and simulation 4. Statistical Inference: Estimating population parameters and testing hypotheses <p>(College Board Course Description)</p>	1	Algebra II or higher
Earth Science	<p>This course focuses on all aspects of our planet, including the solid earth (soil and rock), water (fresh water and marine), atmosphere, and their interactions with living systems. Topics include Earth's Place in the Universe, Dynamic Earth Processes, Energy in the Earth System, Biogeochemical Cycles, Structure and Composition of the Atmosphere. To fully investigate these topics, students will perform virtual laboratory exercises and will discuss and report their findings. They will understand the need for controlled experiments and be able to explain the sources of error inherently present in laboratory investigations.</p>	1	n/a
Biology	<p>This course introduces major concepts that are common to all living things. Topics will include Cell Biology, Genetics, Ecology, Evolution and Physiology. To fully investigate these topics, students will perform hands-on and virtual laboratory exercises and will discuss and report their findings. They will understand the need for controlled experiments and be able to explain the sources of error inherently present in laboratory investigations.</p>	1	n/a

Chemistry	Chemistry is the study of matter and the changes it undergoes. Topics will include Atomic Structure, Chemical Bonding, Conservation of Matter and Stoichiometry, Gases, Acids and Bases, Solutions, Chemical Thermodynamics, Reaction Rates, Chemical Equilibrium, Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry and Nuclear. To fully investigate these topics, students will perform hands-on and virtual laboratory exercises and will discuss and report their findings. They will understand the need for controlled experiments and be able to explain the sources of error inherently present in laboratory investigations.	1	Biology or higher
Physics	Physics is the study of the relationship between matter and energy. Topics will include Motion and Forces, Conservation of Momentum and Energy, Heat and Thermodynamics, Waves, Electricity, Magnetism and Modern Physics. To fully investigate these topics, students will perform hands-on and virtual laboratory exercises and will discuss and report their findings. They will understand the need for controlled experiments and be able to explain the sources of error inherently present in laboratory investigations.	1	Biology or higher
Advanced Placement Physics B	The Physics B course includes topics in both classical and modern physics. A knowledge of algebra and basic trigonometry is required for the course; the basic ideas of calculus may be introduced in connection with physical concepts, such as acceleration and work. Understanding of the basic principles involved and the ability to apply these principles in the solution of problems will be the major goals of the course. Consequently, the course will utilize guided inquiry and student-centered learning to foster the development of critical thinking skills. Physics B will provide instruction in each of the following five content areas: Newtonian mechanics, fluid mechanics and thermal physics, electricity and magnetism, waves and optics, and atomic and nuclear physics. (CollegeBoard Course Description)	1	Biology or higher

Advanced Placement Chemistry	AP Chemistry includes the following topics: Structure of Matter, States of Matter, Reactions, Descriptive Chemistry and laboratory activities. Chemical calculations will be emphasized and attention will be given to significant figures, precision of measured values, and the use of logarithmic and exponential relationships. Critical analysis of the reasonableness of results is to be encouraged. (Adapted from the CollegeBoard Course Description)	1	Biology or higher
Paragon Contemporary World Cultures	The standards for ninth grade students provide opportunities to expand knowledge of world cultures and world regions. The standards include major emphasis on the themes of Culture, Space and Place, Individuals, Groups and Institutions, and Power, Authority and Governance. Students learn to recognize characteristics of a community or culture and explain reasons for cultural diversity. The ability to compare and contrast geographic features throughout the world is an important student outcome. Activities include using texts, maps, charts, other resources, research, and technological skills to aid in historical analysis. Students will create an Interactive Paragon Binder, compiling their annotated hand-outs, their web research and their various writing and arts integration assignment that bring history to vibrant life, while addressing the most rigorous content standards.	1	n/a

<p>Paragon World and US Studies</p>	<p>Paragon World and US Studies is a full year course that integrates the study of Humanities and Literature. This course takes students on a chronological journey in time from the Ancient World to the Modern Age. Students will be immersed in the people and events that have shaped the world today. They will read literature selections that represent different kinds of literary genres as well draw on the eras being studied. In addition, this course will include all of the traditional elements of language arts including the study of grammar, composition, library orientation and research, vocabulary, spelling, literature, oral expression, reading skills and study skills. Students will create an Interactive Paragon Binder, compiling their annotated hand-outs, their web research and their various writing and arts integration assignment that bring history to vibrant life, while addressing the most rigorous content standards.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>n/a</p>
<p>Paragon US and World Studies</p>	<p>Paragon US and World Studies is a full year course that integrates the study of Humanities and Literature. Students will be provided with an in-depth study of the United States history, politics, and governmental structures. They will read literature selections that represent different kinds of literary genres as well draw on the eras being studied. This course will heavily integrate essay writing as a means for assessment. In addition, this course will include all of the traditional elements of language arts including the study of grammar, composition, library orientation and research, vocabulary, spelling, literature, oral expression, reading skills and study skills. Students will create an Interactive Paragon Binder, compiling their annotated hand-outs, their web research and their various writing and arts integration assignment that bring history to vibrant life, while addressing the most rigorous content standards.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>n/a</p>

Economics	In this course, students will learn how to apply the tools of economic analysis to their everyday lives. They will study how economics affects community, national, and international issues. Students will also have the opportunity to learn how the economies of the world are interdependent and what affect this interdependence has on the United States. During this course, students will engage in a variety of activities to help them understand the economic issues that directly and indirectly affect them	.5	n/a
U.S. Government	In this one semester course, students will use explore the history, organization, and functions of American government. Beginning with basic theories of government, moving to the Declaration of Independence, and continuing to the present day, the course explores the relationship between individual Americans and governing bodies. It also covers the roles of political parties, interest groups, the media, and the Supreme Court.	.5	n/a
Psychology	Psychology offers students the opportunity to study the development of the individual from birth through maturity with special emphasis on the environmental and intrinsic forces that shape behavior, and to trace the development of the major schools of psychology, the researchers who originated them, and their influence on major tenets of psychology. Students will be able to explain the nature and intent of learning, personality, thinking and emotion, and methods of measuring these factors. All students will be expected to show proficient knowledge and skills in each area of this course as defined by the State standards and CollegeBoard.	1	n/a

Advanced Placement World History	The purpose of the AP World History course is to develop greater understanding of the evolution of global processes and contacts in different types of human societies. This understanding is advanced through a combination of selective factual knowledge and appropriate analytical skills. The course highlights the nature of changes in global frameworks and their causes and consequences, as well as comparisons among major societies. It emphasizes relevant factual knowledge, leading interpretive issues, and skills in analyzing types of historical evidence. Periodization, explicitly discussed, forms an organizing principle to address change and continuity throughout the course. Specific themes provide further organization to the course, along with consistent attention to contacts among societies that form the core of world history as a field of study. (CollegeBoard Course Description)	1	2 years of Paragon
Advanced Placement European History	The study of European history since 14.50 introduces students to cultural, economic, political, and social developments that played a fundamental role in shaping the world in which they live. In addition to providing a basic narrative of events and movements, the goals of AP European History are to develop (a) an understanding of some of the principal themes in modern European history, (b) an ability to analyze historical evidence and historical interpretation, and (c) an ability to express historical understanding in writing. (Excerpted from the CollegeBoard Course Description)	1	2 years of Paragon

Advanced Placement US History	The AP U.S. History course is designed to provide students with the analytic skills and factual knowledge necessary to deal critically with the problems and materials in U.S. history. The program prepares students for intermediate and advanced college courses by making demands upon them equivalent to those made by full-year introductory college courses. Students will learn to assess historical materials—their relevance to a given interpretive problem, reliability, and importance—and to weigh the evidence and interpretations presented in historical scholarship. This AP U.S. History course will thus develop the skills necessary to arrive at conclusions on the basis of an informed judgment and to present reasons and evidence clearly and persuasively in essay format. (Adapted from the CollegeBoard Course Description)	1	2 years of Paragon
Advanced Placement Psychology	The AP Psychology course is designed to introduce students to the systematic and scientific study of the behavior and mental processes of human beings and other animals. Students are exposed to the psychological facts, principles, and phenomena associated with each of the major sub-fields within psychology. They also learn about the ethics and methods psychologists use in their science and practice. (CollegeBoard Course Description)	1	n/a

<p>Advanced Placement Government and Politics: United States</p>	<p>Students successfully completing this course will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • know important facts, concepts, and theories pertaining to U.S. government and politics • understand typical patterns of political processes and behavior and their consequences (including the components of political behavior, the principles used to explain or justify various government structures and procedures, and the political effects of these structures and procedures) • be able to analyze and interpret basic data relevant to U.S. government and politics (including data presented in charts, tables, and other formats) • be able to critically analyze relevant theories and concepts, apply them appropriately, and develop their connections across the curriculum <p>The main topics examined in this course are: Constitutional Underpinnings of the United States Government, Political Beliefs and Behaviors, Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media, Institutions of National Government, Public Policy, and Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. (Adapted from the CollegeBoard Course Description)</p>	<p>.5</p>	<p>2 years of Paragon</p>
<p>Advanced Placement Microeconomics</p>	<p>The purpose of an AP course in microeconomics is to give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to the functions of individual decision makers, both consumers and producers, within the economic system. It places primary emphasis on the nature and functions of product markets and includes the study of factor markets and of the role of government in promoting greater efficiency and equity in the economy. (CollegeBoard Course Description)</p>	<p>.5</p>	<p>2 years of Paragon</p>

Advanced Placement Macroeconomics	The purpose of an AP course in macroeconomics is to give students a thorough understanding of the principles of economics that apply to an economic system as a whole. Such a course places particular emphasis on the study of national income and price-level determination and also develops students' familiarity with economic performance measures, the financial sector, stabilization policies, economic growth and international economics. (CollegeBoard Course Description)	.5	2 years of Paragon
Music Appreciation	Music Appreciation is a streamlined course that introduces student to the history, theory, and genres of music, from the most primitive surviving examples, through the classical to the most contemporary in the world at large. The course is offered in a two-semester format: The first semester covers primitive musical forms, classical music, and American jazz. The second semester presents the rich modern traditions, including: gospel, folk, soul, blues, Latin rhythms, rock and roll, and hip-hop.	1	
Art Appreciation	Art Appreciation is a survey of the history of Western visual arts, with a primary focus on painting. Students begin with an introduction to the basic principles of painting and learn how to critique and compare works of art. Students then explore prehistoric and early Greek and Roman art before they move on to the Middle Ages. Emphasis is placed on the Renaissance and the principles and masters that emerged in Italy and northern Europe. Students continue their art tour with the United States during the 20th century, a time of great innovation as abstract art took center stage. While Western art is the course's primary focus, students will finish the course by studying artistic traditions from Africa, Asia, Oceania, and the Americas.	.5	

Foundations II, Visual Arts	In this exploratory course, you'll learn the elements of design, as well as foundational concepts of visual communication. While surveying a variety of media and art, you'll use Inkscape, a popular digital art program, to put into practice what you've learned. Discover career opportunities in the design, production, display, and presentation of digital artwork. Respond to the artwork of others, and learn how to combine artistic elements to create finished pieces that effectively communicate your ideas.	.5	n/a
Art History and Criticism	The purpose of this course is to enable students to develop knowledge of the history and theory of art and the relationship between artist, artwork, and society. Students will research and critique periods, styles, and works of art from early civilizations through the Middle Ages. Emphasis will be placed on the role of works of art based on subject matter, theme, concept, symbolism, or allegory/metaphor.	.5	Foundations I or II
Commercial Art and Electronic Media	This is the perfect course for anyone who wants to create compelling, professional looking graphic designs and photos. You'll learn the basics of composition, color, and layout before moving on to technical topics like working with layers and masks, adding special effects, and effectively using typefaces to create visual impact. At the end of this course, you will have a variety of original projects for your graphic design portfolio	.5	Foundations I or II
Photography	In the digital photography course, students will learn creative photographic skills and processes. Students will build a portfolio of work and explore the fields of photography and graphic arts.	.5	Foundations I or II

Theater/Performing Arts I	Throughout the course, students learn the essential elements of acting including in depth exploration of character development. They also continue to hone essential skills such as team work, self-reflection, personal responsibility, active listening, and focused attention, as they work as an ensemble. Students will explore traditional theatrical techniques as well as cutting-edge techniques related to the time and place studied (i.e.: the craft of Brazilian director Augusto Boal.) The artist educator will also guide students in all facets of creating a large scale production—including costume and set design and blocking and pacing a production. Students will participate in a minimum of four performances through the year connected to their Paragon Humanities explorations. Each performance will build in scope allowing students to showcase and celebrate their new skills and achievements each quarter.	.5	n/a
Theater/Performing Arts II	Throughout the course, students learn the essential elements of acting including in depth exploration of character development. They also continue to hone essential skills such as teamwork, self-reflection, personal responsibility, active listening, and focused attention, as they work as an ensemble. Students will explore traditional theatrical techniques as well as cutting-edge techniques related to the time and place studied (i.e.: the craft of Brazilian director Augusto Boal.) The artist educator will also guide students in all facets of creating a large-scale production—including costume and set design and blocking and pacing a production. Students will participate in a minimum of four performances through the year connected to their Paragon Humanities explorations. Each performance will build in scope allowing students to showcase and celebrate their new skills and achievements each quarter.	.5	Theater / Performing Arts I

<p>Performing Arts/Filmmaking I</p>	<p>This class is designed to continue and deepen the work begun in <u>Theater / Performing Arts I and II</u>. Students will continue to explore all facets of performance and production in connection with their ongoing studies in Paragon Humanities. Led by the artist educator, students will extend their foundational skills in theater and live performance with in depth exploration into the world of visual media. Students will study all elements of video production work—behind and in front of the camera. Students will also explore different film genres and film styles as related to the history of film, and apply these in their own work. Students will complete several small projects throughout the course, culminating with a larger collaborative piece at the end of the year.</p>	<p>.5</p>	<p>Theater/ Performing Arts I or II</p>
<p>Foundations IV— Theatre</p>	<p>This class is designed to continue and deepen the work begun in <u>Theater / Performing Arts I and II</u>. Students will continue to explore all facets of performance and production in connection with their ongoing studies in Paragon Humanities. Led by the artist educator, students will extend their foundational skills in theater and live performance with in depth exploration into the world of visual media. Students will study all elements of video production work—behind and in front of the camera. Students will also explore different film genres and film styles as related to the history of film, and apply these in their own work. Students will complete several small projects throughout the course, culminating with a larger collaborative piece at the end of the year. During Filmmaking II, select student films will compete in international film festivals as narrative and documentary shorts.</p>	<p>.5</p>	<p>Foundations I, II, or III</p>

Fitness for Life (Physical Education)	This course is designed to provide students with the basic skills and information needed to begin a personalized exercise program and maintain an active and healthy lifestyle. Students participate in pre- and post fitness assessments in which they measure and analyze their own levels of fitness based on the five components of physical fitness: muscular strength, endurance, cardiovascular fitness, flexibility, and body composition. In this course, students research the benefits of physical activity, as well as the techniques, principles, and guidelines of exercise to keep them safe and healthy. Throughout this course students participate in a weekly fitness program involving elements of cardio, strength, and flexibility.	1	n/a
Health	Health covers Physical, Emotional, and Social aspects of Health. It also covers nutrition, substance abuse, family life and reproduction material.	.5	n/a
Participation Skills	This course provides students with an overview of individual sports. Students learn about a variety of sports, yet do an in-depth study of running, walking, strength training, yoga, Pilates, dance, and cross training. Students learn not only the history, rules, and guidelines of each sport, but practice specific skills related to each sport. Students also learn about the components of fitness, FIT principles, benefits of fitness, safety and technique, and good nutrition. Students conduct a pre- and post fitness assessment, as well as participate in weekly physical activity.	.5	n/a
Individualized Lifetime Activities	This course allows students to explore their personality type and interests, as well as refine important skills that will benefit them throughout their lives, including personal nutrition and fitness skills, time and stress management, communication and healthy relationships, goal setting, study skills, leadership and service, environmental and consumer health, and personal finances. In addition, students explore possible colleges and careers that match their needs, interests, and talents.	.5	n/a

Beginning Programming	Programmers start here. In this course, you'll learn key programming concepts and then apply them using Microsoft® Visual C++® 2008 Express Edition, the free version of Microsoft's Visual Studio® toolkit. Complete a series of increasingly complex projects while you learn C++, which is still one of the most versatile and powerful programming languages around. Learn the building blocks of programming: functions, loops, arrays, variables, and classes. At the end of the course, you will have a portfolio of compiled executables.	1	n/a
Marketing Principles	Find out what it takes to market a product or service in today's fast-paced business environment. In this two-semester introductory course, you'll learn the fundamentals of marketing using real-world business examples. You'll learn about buyer behavior, marketing research principles, demand analysis, distribution, financing, pricing, and product management. By the end of this series, you will have developed your own comprehensive marketing plan for a new business.	1	n/a
Fundamentals of Web Design	This course provides a comprehensive introduction to the essentials of web design, from creating page layouts to coding with CSS and JavaScript® to create web pages. Through real-world design scenarios and hands-on projects, you'll create compelling, usable websites using WYSIWYG and code-based web design. Your web pages will include links, images, and embedded media, as well as many popular features of dynamic web pages used today. You'll also document your work and improve on your designs through an evaluation process.	1	n/a
Banking and Investing	The purpose of this course is to provide students with the essential understandings about managing their money. The focus will be on sources of personal income, saving, and spending patterns. Students will learn such things as how to budget, how to make large purchases, how to invest, and how to minimize taxes.	1	n/a

Business Procedures	In this introductory business course, you'll learn what it takes to be an entrepreneur while mastering the basics of planning and launching your own successful business. Whether you want to start your own moneymaking business or create a non-profit to help others, this course will help you develop the core skills you'll need to be successful. Learn how to come up with new business ideas, how to attract investors, and how to market your business and manage expenses. Get inspired by stories from teen entrepreneurs who have turned their ideas into reality, and then plan and execute your own business!	1	n/a
Business Communication and Presentation	This course is designed to teach students the kind of writing and speaking used in business, from the routine report to the long formal report. Students will learn to prepare a professional resume and how to have a successful in a job interview. Focus will also be on the legal aspects of writing official communications that touch on people's civil rights.	1	n/a

Spanish I	Spanish 1 will introduce students to the Spanish language using the four basic communication skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students will be provided with the resources that will provide a basic understanding of Spanish culture, vocabulary, and grammatical concepts.	1	n/a
Spanish II	The level of instruction assumes a basic knowledge of grammar concepts and vocabulary introduced in Spanish 1. Students enhance both oral and written proficiency through continued study of vocabulary, grammar, and culture at the intermediate level.	1	Spanish I
Spanish III	The level of instruction assumes an intermediate to advanced knowledge of grammar concepts and vocabulary. Students enhance both oral and written proficiency through continued study of vocabulary, grammar, and culture at the advanced level.	1	Spanish II
Advanced Placement Spanish	AP Spanish Language is intended for students who wish to develop proficiency and integrate	1	Spanish II or higher

Language	<p>their language skills, using authentic materials and sources. Students who enroll will already have a basic knowledge of the language and cultures of Spanish-speaking peoples and will have attained a reasonable proficiency in using the language. The AP Spanish Language course will help prepare students to demonstrate their level of Spanish proficiency across three communicative modes (Interpersonal [interactive communication], Interpretive [receptive communication], and Presentational [productive communication]), and the five goal areas outlined in the <i>Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century</i> (<i>Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities</i>). The course is meant to be comparable to third year (fifth or sixth semester) college and university courses that focus on speaking and writing in the target language at an advanced level.</p> <p>(Excerpted from the College Board Course Description)</p>		
French I	French 1 will introduce students to the Spanish language using the four basic communication skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students will be provided with the resources that will provide a basic understanding of French culture, vocabulary, and grammatical concepts.	1	n/a
French II	The level of instruction assumes a basic knowledge of grammar concepts and vocabulary introduced in French 1. Students enhance both oral and written proficiency through continued study of vocabulary, grammar, and culture at the intermediate level.	1	French I
French III	The level of instruction assumes an intermediate to advanced knowledge of grammar concepts and vocabulary. Students enhance both oral and written proficiency through continued study of vocabulary, grammar, and culture at the advanced level.	1	French II
Advanced	AP French Language is comparable in content	1	French II or

Placement French	<p>and in difficulty to a course in French Composition and Conversation at the third-year college level. Students who enroll in AP French Language will already have a good command of French grammar and vocabulary and have competence in listening, reading, speaking, and writing.</p> <p>The course will emphasize the use of language for active communication and help students develop the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the ability to understand spoken French in various contexts 2. a French vocabulary sufficiently ample for reading newspaper and magazine articles, literary texts, and other nontechnical writings without dependence on a dictionary 3. the ability to express themselves coherently, resourcefully, and with reasonable fluency and accuracy in both written and spoken French. <p>(Adapted from the College Board Course Description)</p>		higher
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Personalized Student Achievement Plan (PSAP)

Please tab to each gray area to complete information – use cursor to click on and fill in check boxes

Student Name: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	Date: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>
Is there an active IEP: Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Speech and Language: <input type="checkbox"/>	OT/PT: <input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher Consultant: <input type="checkbox"/>	
Resource Room: Reading: <input type="checkbox"/> Math: <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

SECTION I: Individual Student Data (Qualitative and Quantitative)

- **ILS (Integrated Learning Assessment)** Scores: Reading: Math:
 ILS assessments indicate where students need extra assistance and will prescribe individual lessons to increase performance in those areas. This data will be compared with the data at the end of the year to measure individual student growth. It also allows the teacher to add lessons to reinforce the skills recently taught in the classroom.
- **OCR (Open Court Reading)** Scores:
 OCR Assessments are used at the completion of each story/unit in OCR. These assessments are a measurement of the student's mastery of the content and skills taught.
- **DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills)** Scores:
 DIBELS assessment shows student strengths and weaknesses in relation to their total literacy regardless of the reading program being used.
- **DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment)** Scores:
 DRA is an assessment that is used to determine a student's accuracy and comprehension rate. This assessment will also identify specific areas that students need for additional literacy instruction.
- **ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills)** Scores: Reading: Math:
 ITBS gives an overall picture of areas of strength and weakness for the student but does not provide detailed information to be able to place students instructionally or to determine discreet skills in which the student needs intervention.
- **Paragon Performance Assessment Rubrics** Unit: Scores:
 The Paragon Performance Assessment Rubric shows how a student performed on the cumulative assessment for a particular unit. This qualitative data is used to show particular student strengths or areas of student need that can be reinforced or addressed during Paragon time and throughout the day.
- **Teacher Observation**
 Teacher observation of the individual student is essential in addressing student strengths and needs. Teacher observation will help to determine a student's best learning styles to ensure that each student succeeds throughout the day. Your child's teacher observed the following:

 - Social / Emotional (i.e.: What is the student's level of participation throughout the day? When is the student most engaged? Has the student exhibited any mistaken goals? If so, explain. Which of the Multiple Intelligences are considered strengths of this student?)
 - Paragon (i.e.: Is the student excited about Paragon time? Which activities engage the student the most? What are this student's particular strengths in Paragon? What seems to challenge the student most? Does the student participate well in collaborative groups? Why or why not?)

- **Language Arts** (i.e.: Is the student excited about reading? About writing? What are this student's particular strengths in this area? What seems to challenge the student most? What strategies work best to engage this student?) [redacted]
- **Math** (i.e.: Is the student excited about math? What are this student's particular strengths in this area? What seems to challenge the student most? What strategies work best to engage the student and foster student understanding?) [redacted]
- **Science** (i.e.: Is the student excited about science? What are this student's particular strengths in this area? What seems to challenge the student most? What strategies work best to engage the student?) [redacted]

- **Parent Observation**

Parent input is helpful in developing an overall plan for the student. Add parent information gathered via survey (in person, by phone, or in writing).

- What is your child's overall attitude towards school? [redacted]
- What have you noticed to be a particular strength of your child? Please explain. [redacted]
- What have you noticed to be a particular challenge for your child? Please explain. [redacted]
- What are your child's interests at home? [redacted]
- How would you most like to help support your child's success at school? [redacted]

- **Other data:** (Observations from other teachers/staff; Data from other standardized tests).

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Personalized Student Achievement Plan (PSAP)

SECTION 2: Gap Analysis and Overview of Personalized Support Strategies

	Where is this student now as compared to where he or she should be? Refer to the data in Section 1. Summarize. State if student is at or above grade level or detail any gaps. *	Individualized Goals. If there is an achievement gap, what is the goal for this student this year? (i.e.: Student will be at grade level in reading by April of this year.)	Personalized Plan of Action. What will be done to help this student reach this goal? (i.e.: After-school tutorial, instructional grouping, etc.)
Social / Emotional		• Goal # : :	• Action Plan:
Paragon		• Goal # : :	• Action Plan:
Language Arts		• Goal # : :	• Action Plan:
Math		• Goal # : :	• Action Plan:
Science		• Goal # : :	• Action Plan:

*Reference IEP for SPED students.

Personalized Student Achievement Plan (PSAP) REVIEW

Review of Individual Student Goals and Progress

Student's Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/> Today's Date
--	---

Goal # <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> (Restate Goal from initial PSAP and number accordingly) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	
Action Plan for this goal: (Restate action plan for this goal from initial PSAP) <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	
Student Progress Has goal been met: Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/> Summarize student progress: <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 90%; height: 150px;" type="text"/>	Assessment Tools Note: means of assessment. Add scores if applicable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILS: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • OCR: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • DIBELS: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • DRA: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • ITBS: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • Paragon Performance Rubrics: • Teacher Observation: • Parent Observation: • Other:
Note any modifications to the action plan for this goal: <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 90%; height: 50px;" type="text"/>	

Personalized Student Achievement Plan (PSAP) REVIEW

Review of Individual Student Goals and Progress

Student's Name: <input style="width: 90%;" type="text"/>	<input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/> / <input style="width: 20px;" type="text"/> Today's Date
--	---

Goal # <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> (Restate Goal from initial PSAP and number accordingly) <input style="width: 90%; height: 60px;" type="text"/>	
Action Plan for this goal: (Restate action plan for this goal from initial PSAP) <input style="width: 90%; height: 60px;" type="text"/>	
Student Progress Has goal been met: Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/> Summarize student progress: <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 90%; height: 150px;" type="text"/>	Assessment Tools Note: means of assessment. Add scores if applicable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ILS: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • OCR: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • DIBELS: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • DRA: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • ITBS: <input style="width: 40px;" type="text"/> • Paragon Performance Rubrics: • Teacher Observation: • Parent Observation: • Other:
Note any modifications to the action plan for this goal: <input style="width: 30px;" type="text"/> <input style="width: 90%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	

Educational Program Implementation Chart (EPIC)
2011 - 2012

School Name:	Location:
Grade Levels Served:	CAO:
Program Facilitator:	CAO – CIO:

Student Achievement Data

State Test:	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -
ITBS Dates:	
PowerSchool Implementation:	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -
ILS Type:	
ILS Implementation:	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -
Strongest Feature:	
What's Missing:	

Literacy Initiative

Literacy Program:	Reading First Recipient	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Literacy Initiative Implementation:			
120-90-60-90	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -		
Individual Learning System	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -		
After School Tutorial	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -		
Instructional Grouping	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -		
Full OCR Implementation	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -		
Writing Across the Curriculum	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -		
Community Literacy	+ 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -		
Made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Strongest Feature:			
What's Missing?			

Math Program(s)

Math Program(s):									
Math Initiative Implementation:									
120-90-60-90	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
Individual Learning System	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
After School Tutorial	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
Instructional Grouping	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
Full Real Math Implementation	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
Problem-Solving Across the Curriculum	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
Community Numeracy	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
Implementation:	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
Made Annual Yearly Progress (AYP)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Strongest Feature:									
What's Missing?									

Science Program(s)

Science Program(s):									
Implementation:	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3	<input type="checkbox"/>	2	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
Strongest Feature:									
What's Missing?									

Paragon Curriculum

Paragon K – 5		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation:	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -
Notes:			
Strongest Feature:			
What's Missing?			
Paragon Plus		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation:	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -
Notes:			
Strongest Feature:			
What's Missing?			
Paragon Humanities 6-8		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation:	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -
Notes:			
Strongest Feature:			
What's Missing?			
Paragon World Literature 6-8		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation:	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -
Notes:			
Strongest Feature:			
What's Missing?			
Paragon Nights		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation:	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -
Dates:			
Notes:			
Strongest Feature:			
What's Missing?			
Program Facilitator		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Implementation:	+ 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> -
Notes:			
Strongest Feature:			
What's Missing?			

B. 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.

The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania shall comply with all applicable State and Federal Laws in serving students with disabilities, including, but not limited to, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (“Section 504”), the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act (“IDEIA”), as well as the Pennsylvania Special Education Rules.

The school will ensure that the CAO is fully trained in all of the rules and regulations listed above. The CAO will receive special education training as part of their comprehensive training through Leadership Institute. The CAO will receive guidance from the ESP’s special education support personnel (such as the Special Education Director) that will provide both guidance on the special education process, and build capacity with the CAO with ongoing training. In addition, school leadership will develop a special education procedural manual outlining the school’s provision of special education programs and services as well as compliance with IDEA and the Pennsylvania rules by the end of the first school year.

Special Education programs and services will be provided for students in accordance with their unique needs based on their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

- Whenever possible, a student’s annual goals and objectives will be addressed within the general education classroom setting, with special education support services provided in that setting, in addition to individually developed curriculum accommodations and if necessary, modifications.
- Whenever a student’s unique needs dictate that a more restrictive placement be made, supplemental specialized instruction may be provided within a Resource Room setting on an itinerant basis, with the majority of instruction (including general curriculum instruction) provided in the general education setting. In an online school situation, this could be in person, or additional virtual instruction provided by a special education provider.
- While the majority of special education programming will likely be provided in the first two options listed, the IEP team may determine that the following types of alternate placements are required. If the team requires such a placement, the school will locate and hire highly qualified instructors and open such programming to the students that are on such need:
 - Separate special education classes
 - Special School placements
 - Home instruction
 - Hospitalization instruction

In addition to a teacher with a mild/moderate endorsement, the school may need to hire teachers with the following appropriate endorsements: Severe, Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired.

All placement decisions will be made by the IEP team including no less than the special education teacher/provider of that student, Parent/Guardian, general education teacher of that student, a LEA representative and the student (when appropriate). Placement decisions are considered at every full IEP team meeting (at least annually) and adjusted according to team decision. In selecting a placement in the least restrictive environment, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the student or the quality of services he or she needs, as well as ensuring that a student is not removed from general education classrooms solely based on the need for modifications of the general education curriculum.

In addition to specialized instructional programming, ancillary services required by a child's IEP will be provided for through direct personnel hire or contract. Such services would include, but are not limited to: Speech/Language Pathology, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, School Social Work Services and School Psychological Services.

Regular review of special education census data will be reviewed by the Director of Behavior Support and Special Education, assuring that adequate attention is paid to compliance timelines, as well as special education personnel caseloads, with recommendations made to the school leader to add personnel as necessary to provide for not only at least 10% of the initial projected enrollment, but also to adjust for additional personnel as enrollment and identification of students increases based on that enrollment.

As more fully described below, the Charter School shall be solely responsible for its compliance with the Section 504 and the ADA.

A. *Services for Students under the "IDEIA"*

The following description regarding how special education and related services will be provided and funded is being proposed by the Charter School for the sole purpose of providing a reasonably comprehensive description of the special education program in the charter school.

Child Find and Communication

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania recognizes its responsibility to locate, identify and evaluate all incoming and enrolled students in the school who are suspected of having, or known to have, a disability so that a free appropriate public education can be made available to all these children. To ensure compliance with these Child Find provisions of IDEA, the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will put in place the following processes:

The school will establish Child Find procedures in which to identify students with disabilities within the school enrollment and provide them services. This will include:

- Informing Parent/Guardians as to the scope and breadth of special education programs and services available to the school in literature and/or web site
- Developing an Interventions process whereby:
 - All students in the school are assessed and progress monitored periodically through the school year.

- Such data is used to determine students who are struggling and require intervention, and such interventions offered to the students.
- Students not responding to secondary levels of intervention (such as structured small group interventions) will enter a student study team process, and provided the opportunity to engage in more intense, individualized instruction. Movement from general to individualized interventions will be based on how the student responds to such interventions using objective measurement and assessment. Students not responding to interventions across this continuum of interventions will be referred for further evaluation for consideration for potential special education services.

Either upon completion of the comprehensive systems of providing scientific, researched based interventions described above, or upon request from a Parent/Guardian, the student may be referred for an evaluation for eligibility for potential special education services. Such a referral will be made following:

- A comprehensive review of existing evaluation data, including state and local assessments, observations and classroom data and data provided by the student's Parent/Guardians. Often, this data is collected and reviewed in an ongoing fashion as part of the intervention team process and further summarized and reviewed at the time of referral.
 - Based on this review, the team will determine what additional information is needed to determine if the student has a disability, present levels of academic achievement and functional performance and/or what special education programs and services may be required.
 - An evaluation will only proceed once a Parent/Guardian has provided written consent for such an evaluation
 - Once that consent is received, an evaluation (based on the required additional information needed) will be provided within 45 days of that consent. Following such eligibility determination and IEP team will convene and a final IEP will be completed within 45 days of receiving written consent.
 - Implementation of an initial IEP will only take place upon a Parent/Guardian providing written consent for the provision of those initial programs and services.

When the school is made aware (through regular registration process) that a student enrolled is a student with a disability, the following steps will be taken:

- If the student's current IEP is available, then the school will make an offer of a Free and Appropriate Education that:
 - Adopts that current IEP developed by the previous school until not later than the original expiration date, at which time an IEP team meeting will take place; or
 - A temporary placement/Comparable services agreement will be drawn up that provides programs and service comparable to that on the previous IEP that are

agreed to by the Parent/Guardian and the school. This placement would be in effect for no more than 30 calendar days, at which time an IEP team meeting would be convened and a new IEP developed.

- If the student's current IEP is not available,
 - A temporary placement/Comparable services agreement will be drawn up that provides programs and service comparable to that on the previous IEP that are agreed to by the Parent/Guardian and the school. This placement would be in effect for no more than 30 calendar days, at which time an IEP team meeting would be convened and a new IEP developed.
 - The school will make regular attempts to receive the previous records of this student from the previous district by providing a release for records form signed by the Parent/Guardian, making multiple attempts as necessary.
 - If the school is unsuccessful in obtaining such records, a review of existing evaluation data will take place and the student re-evaluated to determine eligibility for continued services.

Evaluations and IEPs

Students can be referred to special education by either the Student Support Team (SST) or by the Parent/Guardians. Such referrals will result in a review of all current data regarding that child and the evaluation review team will determine if any further data is needed to determine if the student has a disabling condition that is serviceable under IDEA. This review will take place no later than 10 days after the referral. In order for the school to carry out such a plan, the Parent/Guardian will need to consent to the plan in writing in accordance with IDEA. The school will contract for psychological or other services to carry out the evaluation plan. Copies of the evaluation results will be provided to the Parent/Guardians prior to an IEP meeting.

Any student eligible for services will undergo a review of current and past data at least every three years. If the team (including the Parent/Guardian) determines a need for continued service (or if requested by the Parent/Guardian), the school will re-determine eligibility in an IEP team meeting. If the team (including the Parent/Guardians) determines that enough data exists to determine that a student continues to have a disability under State Code and continues to be eligible, an agreement will be entered into that no evaluations are necessary (for at least three years or until a determination is made that they are needed). If this option is exercised, the Parent/Guardians will be informed of their right to request an evaluation. Reevaluations will also be conducted to determine if a student is no longer eligible for services or for the purposes of exiting a student from special education programs or services in accordance with IDEA and proposed revisions to the State Code.

Any student identified with a disability that meets eligibility requirements where the team has indicated that the student requires special education programs and or services will receive appropriate programs and services as set forth in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP will be developed when the IEP team determines that a student is eligible for special education services (as outlined in the aforementioned section). The IEP team will consist

at a minimum: an administrative representative (who has authority to commit the resources of the school/district/LEA); the Parent/Guardian; a general education teacher that services the student; a special education teacher, and the student if transition to adult services is to be considered. Current data is reviewed and a statement expressing present levels of academic achievement and functional performance will be developed, with corresponding observable and measurable goals set for the student. These goals will be carried out using a variety of service delivery options. A full continuum of programs and services will be considered with a placement decision to carry out the IEP in the least restrictive environment (LRE) that is appropriate for the student. Highly qualified special education teachers will be hired to facilitate the implementation of the IEPs, with the provision of such programming taking place either in the general education classroom or in a separate special education classroom, depending on LRE determination from the IEP team. The IEP Team will determine the need for the provision of special education services such as: speech language impairments, hearing impairments, orthopedic impairments, vision impairments, as well as assistive technology and/or other related/supportive services, e.g., orientation and mobility, physical and /or occupational therapy, etc.

Progress on IEP goals will be provided to Parent/Guardians at least as often as progress is reported to Parent/Guardians of students without disabilities. IEP teams will meet to revise and update IEPs at least annually, but may also meet more often in order to modify the provision of programs and services or measurable goals when any member of the team indicates such a review is necessary.

The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania views Parent/Guardians as vital members of the IEP team and will make every attempt to come to an agreement on the provision of special education programming and services to students with disabilities, however, we recognize that there are times when disagreement may occur. Upon receipt of a due process complaint, the Charter School will respond to the complaint within ten (10) days. Within fifteen (15) days of receiving notice of the due process complaint and prior to the scheduled due process hearing, the Charter School will convene a meeting with the Parent/Guardians in attempt to resolve the situation (resolution session). Mediation may be sought to facilitate a successful resolution to the complaint. If a resolution cannot be reached within thirty (30) days of the complaint, a due process hearing will take place in accordance with IDEA and state regulations.

If both the family and school agree to such an approach, alternate methods to dispute resolution may be sought, including sessions facilitated by a Mediator approved by the PDE. Either party may file a due process complaint with the state on matters related to identification, evaluation, educational placement of a student with a disability or provision of a Free and Appropriate Public Education. Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will follow the Pennsylvania Administrative Rules for Special Education, including those rules governing complaints, mediation and due process complaints

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

The school will ensure compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act by following the steps noted below:

- ✓ Parent/Guardians or guardians (or any student over the age of 18) who request to inspect or review a student's educational records will be asked to put the request in writing to the CAO specifying the record or records they want to review. All office staff will be advised of the process at the professional development training prior to the school's opening. Within 15 days of receiving the request, the CAO will make arrangements for access and notify the Parent/Guardians/guardians/student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

- ✓ If a Parent/Guardian or eligible student requests that notations be added to student's records, they will be asked write a letter of request to the CAO, clearly identifying the nature of the additions. In addition, they will be asked to specify in their letter why they believe the information will be included in the student's file.

- ✓ All office staff will be advised of this procedure at professional development training prior to the school's opening.

- ✓ Parent/Guardians/guardians and eligible students will be provided their right to consent to any disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in a student's educational record except if the disclosure is to school officials who need the information for legitimate and sound educational reasons. The charter school considers such "school officials" to be one or more of the following:
 - CAO
 - The student's teacher/paraprofessional
 - Board member (under limited circumstances)
 - Board attorney
 - Designated school employee

- ✓ A school official must be fulfilling his/her professional responsibility to have a legitimate educational interest to review a student's educational record

Communication

Parent/Guardians/guardians of students with disabilities will be advised of student progress through Parent/Guardian conferences, report cards, updated Individualized Education Programs and by grade updates that will be provided through a Parent/Guardian's individual login to the online campus just Parent/Guardians of students without disabilities. Parents of students with disabilities will be given progress reports on progress toward IEP goals at least as often as parents receive progress reports on student progress in the general curriculum (at least quarterly, more often as dictated by general education communication practice).

The online format enables Parent/Guardians, students and teachers to track grades and progress daily. In addition, formal communications will occur periodically throughout the school year as

indicated below:

Parent/Guardian Conferences – required meetings in which the student’s progress is discussed and samples of work provided	4 times per year
Report Cards – distributed at the Parent/Guardian conference (only mailed home on exception basis)	4 times per year
Grade Level Updates – although not specific to the achievement of an individual child, provides Parent/Guardians and guardians with curriculum updates	2 times per year

The Charter School believes that the school and the family must be working in concert to have the maximum impact on the child’s development and, therefore, will strive to ensure that Parent/Guardians/guardians are in attendance at meetings, throughout the process, regarding their child so that their understanding of the child and his/her needs are discussed as a critical contribution to the development of the IEP. Meetings involving discussion of the needs of the individual student with disabilities will be scheduled so that Parent/Guardians/guardians will be able to attend.

Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Surveys

The school intends to use Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Surveys specific to special needs students in order for Parent/Guardians/guardians to have an opportunity to evaluate the quality of services provided to their child. The survey includes questions regarding the level of satisfaction concerning:

- The degree of involvement in the development of the IEP
- The extent to which the Parent/Guardian’s opinions have helped shape the special services their child is receiving
- The quality of communication with the school
- The progress being made in carrying out the special education plan for their child

Although the survey is confidential, Parent/Guardians/guardians are provided with the opportunity to give their name and phone number if they want the CAO or another individual to contact them to discuss their comments.

All students with disabilities will be assessed at the same intervals as students without disabilities. How students are assessed is determined at the IEP team meeting. Testing on a state level will take place by taking the PSSA with accommodations (as specifically determined by the IEP team and specified on the student's IEP). In addition, students will be assessed on a district level, using a standardized test such as the ITBS. Students with disabilities are often assessed using these measures as well, and some are provided standard accommodations based on their disability as discussed by the IEP team and specified on their IEP. Oversight of the administration of the assessments is provided on site by the school's assessment coordinator. Additionally, reporting is provided regionally to Mercury staff such as the Directors of Curriculum Implementation and the Director of Behavior and Special Education.

In addition to state level assessments, all students, including students with disabilities will be assessed using state and district assessments. Students for whom the IEP team determines the state assessment to be inappropriate, the IEP team may determine that the student will be assessed using the state alternate assessment following the participation guidelines associated with this assessment. An IEP team may deem the district assessment in appropriate (following the same reasoning and manifestation of disability as the state assessment), the team will outline how the student will be assessed toward the state standards they are accountable to, and may involve detailed progress monitoring of and progress evidence toward IEP goals and objectives.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

The Charter School recognizes its legal responsibility to ensure that no qualified person with a disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any program of the Charter School. Any student, who has an objectively identified disability, which substantially limits a major life activity including but not limited to learning, is eligible for accommodation by the School.

A 504 team will be assembled by the Chief Administrative Officer of the Charter School and shall include Parent/Guardians/guardians, the student (where appropriate), and other qualified persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, and accommodations. The 504 team will review the student's existing records, including academic, social and behavioral records and is responsible for making a determination as to whether an evaluation for 504 services is appropriate. If the student has already been evaluated under the IDEA, but found ineligible for special education instruction or related services under the IDEA, those evaluations may be used to help determine eligibility under Section 504. The student evaluation shall be carried out by the 504 team who will evaluate the nature of the student's disability and the impact upon the student's education. This evaluation will include consideration of any behaviors that interfere with regular participation in the educational program and/or activities. The 504 team may also consider the following information in its evaluation:

- a. Tests and other evaluation materials that have been validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and are administered by trained personnel.
- b. Tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those which are designed to provide a single general intelligent quotient.
- c. Tests are selected and administered so as to ensure that when a test is administered to a student with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement level or whatever factor the test purports to measure rather than reflecting the student's impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills.

The final determination of whether the student will or will not be identified as a person with a disability is made by the 504 team in writing and notice is given in writing to the Parent/Guardian or guardian of the student in their primary language along with the procedural

safeguards available to them. If during the evaluation, the 504 team obtains information indicating possible eligibility of the student for special education per the IDEIA, a referral for special education assessment will be made by the 504 team.

If the student is found by the 504 team to have a disability under Section 504, the 504 team shall be responsible for determining what, if any, accommodations or services are needed to ensure that the student receives a free and appropriate public education (“FAPE”). In developing the 504 Plan, the 504 team shall consider all relevant information utilized during the evaluation of the student, drawing upon a variety of sources, including, but not limited to, assessments conducted by the Charter School’s professional staff.

The 504 Plan shall describe the Section 504 disability and any program modification that may be necessary.

All 504 team participants, Parent/Guardians, guardians, teachers and any other participants in the student’s education, including substitutes and tutors, must have a copy of each student’s 504 Plan. The site administrator will ensure that teachers include 504 Plans with lesson plans for short-term substitutes and that he/she review the 504 Plan with a long-term substitute. A copy of the 504 Plan shall be maintained in the student’s file. Each student’s 504 Plan will be reviewed regularly to determine the appropriateness of the Plan, continued eligibility or readiness to discontinue the 504 Plan.

C. Describe the teaching methods that will be used to deliver instruction and assess academic performance. How will this pedagogy enhance student learning?

The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania (MOCS) program of instruction is unique in that it provides students with a choice of learning methods: completely online or a combination of face to face and virtual instruction (4+1 model). Both of these options are designed to:

- Emulate the research-based best practices in reading, math, science and languages curricula.
- Provide curricula in a context that uses innovative and effective instructional methods to include all students – and provides each student with an individualized learning path for personal growth and development.
- Present social studies and technology in an innovative, integrated fashion that develops student self-awareness and sense of purpose as it helps them grasp their place in history and the world.
- Reflect a clear understanding that children learn in a variety of ways and do best when challenged at an appropriate, individualized pace.

The curriculum and teaching strategies at MOCS will accommodate the needs of a diverse set of learners – those students who are eager to stretch their horizons on a challenging path of individual-based inquiry and those students who require more time-on-task and personalized courses that spark their interest and open a world of engagement. Innovative and effective

instructional methods include: cooperative learning, graphic organizers, role-playing, activating prior knowledge, personal connection journaling and Socratic Method. Each of these is discussed in further detail in this application. This instructional approach is enhanced by Mercury's Paragon humanities curriculum as well as the variety of attendance models described in this application.

Compass Learning's spiraled Odyssey curricula provide cross-curricular learning opportunities for students. It is aligned to state and national standards, reflects the latest research about how students learn, and promotes exploration, cooperative learning and problem solving. Use of the Odyssey curriculum has proven effective in schools nationwide, as reflected in numerous case studies available at <http://www.compasslearning.com/Products/Show.aspx?page=2.4.0>

Learning best occurs when teachers are well prepared, best practices are employed, the students are engaged, and the lessons suit individual needs. Mercury Online Charter School's educational approach features an innovative curriculum, a high degree of connectivity and personalized attention, intensive teacher training and inquiry-based, student-centered learning. Mercury's program focuses on practical application of knowledge and strong Parent/Guardian and community involvement with the school. Teachers, Parent/Guardians and students will be able to interact through webinars, online chat and email. Through effective use of technology, it enables teachers to custom-tailor academic programs to students' unique skills and interests – all aimed at optimizing our students' learning experience. Mercury students enjoy ongoing opportunities to succeed as the program draws forth and cultivates their multiple intelligences and unique gifts.

Mercury Online Charter School's educational approach stems from proven research and our team's years of experience in effective instructional and administrative practices. Some of the underlying research that supports our approach includes the following:

Teaching to Multiple Intelligences

Mercury recognizes different domains of ability, or "intelligences," as described by Dr. Howard Gardner.¹ Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences provides a foundation for recognizing the different abilities and talents of students. This theory acknowledges that while all students may not be verbally or mathematically gifted, children are likely to have expertise in other areas, such as music, spatial relations, or interpersonal skills. Our program seeks to capitalize on children's various skills, experiences, and talents to provide them with multiple opportunities to learn and succeed.

Reciprocal Teaching

Using reciprocal instruction, a teacher introduces a concept and then reinforces it by circling back to it in later lessons. The Mercury model is predicated on the balance between rigorous core courses in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and a Social Studies curriculum that applies core skills in an engaging manner, providing students with content knowledge rich in cultural literacy.

¹ Gardner, H. *The unschooled mind: how children think and how schools will teach* (1991); Gardner, H., & Hatch, T., *Multiple intelligences go to school: Educational implications of the theory of multiple intelligences* (1989) at 18(8), 4-9.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiation is a teacher-driven effort to respond to variations among learners. Teachers can differentiate instruction in at least four areas: content, process, products/culminating projects, and learning environment. Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania teachers are trained in effective strategies for successfully tailoring all of these areas to individual student needs, ensuring that different learners are all provided the best opportunity to succeed.

There is much evidence showing that students are more successful academically if they are taught in ways that match their readiness levels (e.g., Vygotsky, 1986), interests (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi, 1997) and learning profiles (e.g., Sternberg, Torff, & Grigorenko, 1998). Also, differentiating instruction is a key part of effective professional development. Expert teachers pay attention to their students' varied learning needs (Danielson, 1996); “to differentiate instruction, then, is to become a more competent, creative, and professional educator.”²

Due to its strong emphasis on technology, it is vitally important that a strong technical support infrastructure be in place. Teachers will be trained in first tier troubleshooting; however, live support via telephone, email, and webinar will be available during extended hours daily. Students, Parent/Guardians and staff will have clear information on how to contact support and which protocols to follow for certain situations. This information will be provided both online and in print format.

Online/blended learning has proven its worth as a format for maximizing student achievement through academic and organizational innovation. Through Mercury, Pennsylvania will gain:

- High-quality online and blended face-to-face programs for homeschoolers and students who do not perform well in traditional school environments, as well as for students in rural areas.
- A new college and career-prep option for high-school students providing STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) resources and AP classes through online offerings.
- Synchronous and asynchronous, blended learning fully aligned with Pennsylvania state standards
- Improved learning opportunities for students in areas with low-achieving schools - especially in math and science.

MOCS instructors will be taught how to integrate the principles of the mission statement throughout the curriculum. They will create outstanding and meaningful assignments and lesson plans. Teachers are involved in all facets of the program development. Teachers will work closely with the program design team to develop new content, revise existing lessons, and update the educational program. As the face of the online learning program they are able to provide feedback and work closely with the design team to develop educational programming that addresses the needs of the online learner. Just as students participate in online illuminate sessions, the teachers and the program design team will work closely to update, revise, and create the online program. Professional development will include ongoing training in technology, quality teaching, *school-to-home* instructional methods, and curriculum mapping.

² All references from Tomlinson, C. (2001). *Differentiation of Instruction in the Elementary Grades*. ERIC Digests.

Mercury's webinar software, Elluminate, is used for synchronous collaboration between teacher and students and among students. When working on a project, students can go to the teacher's virtual office and work together on a project. They have use of a whiteboard, typed chat, voice chat and webcams to do this. Documents can be file transferred while in an Elluminate session and the moderator can share his/her desktop to show, in real-time, how to accomplish a task. If the student is given moderator rights, the student will be able to share his/her desktop or application with other students. They can all edit a document at the same time and can all view the changes simultaneously.

Additionally, if a teacher is holding a whole-class meeting in his/her virtual office, he/she can create "breakout" rooms where collaborative groups can meet to discuss a project or work on content. There is no comparison between asynchronous blogging or a discussion board and a synchronous Elluminate session when it comes to students accomplishing the most in the least amount of time.

The learning management system has a feature called eportfolio. Through the use of this tool, students can create a portfolio of work they have submitted throughout the term. Through on-line sharing of the eportfolio with other students and the instructor, students can collaborate and give one another feedback on their creations. This tool can be used as a cumulative assessment in a course or as a way for students to organize and showcase their work in one or more classes.

The learning management system that Mercury uses also has a locker feature. Items placed in one's locker can be accessed through any of the enrolled classes. The items in a student's locker can be private and visible only to the student, or they can be shared with other students and the instructor. By sharing the documents in the locker area, students can collaborate on projects asynchronously. Instructors can set up groups in the classes and also set up locker areas for group use.

Support collaboration between students. Although the nature of an online course allows for students to work independently and asynchronously, an essential component of Mercury's program is that it is teacher directed. As such, teachers are involved with students and their work on a daily basis. There is regular feedback given on assignments as well as daily opportunity to converse and interact with Mercury teachers. Timely feedback is also important as it allows teachers to adjust lessons as appropriate for individual students; it also allows students to refine their work based on teacher comment. In addition, students are encouraged to interact with each other in asynchronous class discussions as well as synchronous webinars.

Assessment:

a. Effective learning is not limited to a "one size fits all" model. Students participating in Mercury Online programs quickly realize the unique learning advantages it offers through the one-on-one connection with and access to, each online instructor. Each student enrolled in Mercury courses has a Personalized Student Achievement Plan (PSAP). This plan contains a student's academic history as well as immediate and long term goals to work on. The PSAP is reviewed with the student and family on a quarterly basis and updated throughout the year to reflect current progress and adjusted goals with strategies for accomplishing them.

b. To monitor student progress, Mercury students participate in Scantron Performance Series assessments. Teachers will use the Performance Series from Scantron to progress monitor students against national standards quarterly. In addition, teachers will use Scantron Achievement Series to monitor progress on specific strands via curriculum based measures (weekly is the goal).

c. The blended program of MOCS implements online instruction combined with one day per week in the classroom. This new model allows for a number of measurements to be used in determining learning outcomes. Because each student will have access to technology, we will be able to use technology-based assessments along with traditional teacher assessments, standardized testing, student portfolios and teacher observation. During the one day per week of brick-and-mortar classroom experience, teachers will be able to assess students formally and informally through discussion, observation, small group work, one-on-one interactions, and myriad hands-on student projects, presentations and performance pieces. The blended model will allow for a state-of-the-art individualized student portfolio-combining standardized and authentic assessment in order to have a clear and accurate detail of each student’s mastery of specified learning objectives. Teachers will be involved in the development of innovative measurement tools that will encompass each of these assessment options. These measurement tools will include evaluating online student time on task, effectiveness of specific synchronous classes, and pacing of instruction.

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

The minimum standards for school days are 900 instruction hours (Elementary) or 990 instructional hours (HS) and 180 school days each year. Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will offer 1170 instructional hours each year.

August	6 th	First day of School
	7th-14th	Baseline testing for students using Performance Series
	31 st	Student Holiday
September	3 rd	Labor Day Holiday
	24 th	Student Holiday
October	15th-19th	Fall Interim
November	21 st	Student Holiday
	22nd-23rd	Thanksgiving Holiday
December	20th-2nd	Winter Recess
January	7th-11th	Midyear Performance Series
	21 st	Martin Luther King Day Holiday

February	15th	Presidents' Day Holiday
	21 st	Student Holiday
March	11 th	Student Holiday
	25th-29th	Spring Interim
April	1st-5th	Spring Recess
May	17 th	Student Holiday
	27 th	Memorial Day Holiday
	28th	End of Year Performance Series
June	14th	Series
	14th	Last Day of School

Explanation: Describe effective teaching methods, curriculum, and a specific plan to meet the needs of ALL students that are consistent with the mission of your school.

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?*

Mercury Online Charter School will utilize a combination of assessment tools to review the educational program on an ongoing basis and to suggest improvements in areas of low performance for all identified student populations. The school will implement a range of measurements – both quantitative and qualitative – to track to annual student achievement. These measurements will be used to make adjustments to our educational program.

The school will incorporate results analyses, from both longitudinal school-wide performance and comparisons with similar schools tested, into its School Improvement Plan for school-wide shifts in curriculum and instruction on a yearly basis. This will set the tone for teacher training.

Curriculum and accountability staff from Mercury Education will work with school leadership and teachers in training to focus instruction, further align standards in weak areas, shift pedagogical practices and analyze class and student groupings.

The school will also utilize the services of an independent evaluator to gain an additional perspective on areas for improvement and growth. The evaluator’s findings will be incorporated into the annual School Improvement Plan.

Parent feedback will be gathered annually through an independent survey. This feedback will be considered in the development of the annual School Improvement Plans as well.

In addition to the publication of an annual School Report Card, the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will compile and provide to the Board of Education an annual performance report. This report will, at a minimum, include the following data:

- Summary data showing student and school progress toward the goals and outcomes discussed above. This data will be displayed on both a Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania wide basis and disaggregated by grade level subject area and reportable subgroup categories to the extent feasible without compromising student confidentiality.
- A summary of major decisions and policies established by the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania Board during the year.
- Data on the level of parent involvement in the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania 's governance (and other aspects of the school, if applicable) and summary data from an annual parent and student satisfaction survey.
- Data regarding the number of staff working at the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania and their qualifications, proof of required credentialing, background clearance, and tuberculosis clearance.
- A copy of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania 's health and safety policies and/or a summary of any major changes to those policies during the year.
- Information demonstrating whether the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania implemented the means listed in the charter to strive to achieve a racially and ethnically balanced student population.
- An overview of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania 's admissions practices during the year and data regarding the numbers of students enrolled, the number on waiting lists and the numbers of students expelled and/or suspended.
- Analyses of the effectiveness of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania 's internal and external dispute mechanisms and data on the number and resolution of disputes and complaints.
- Other information regarding the educational program and the administrative, legal and governance operations of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania relative to compliance with the terms of the charter generally.

B. *How will teachers and administrators be evaluated? Describe your standards for teacher and staff performance.*

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania teachers are held to the highest levels of performance and expected to make data-driven decisions to drive online instruction. Performance expectations are found in the chart below.

Homepage and Course Maintenance
Post dated news announcement(s) weekly.
Update Course Checklist with daily/weekly due dates
Ensure Course Widget items are up to date and operational
Ensure weekly assignments appear in the Events Widget
Illuminate
Conduct instructive Illuminate sessions per grade level guidelines
Clearly post links to recorded lessons
Grades
Ensure Gradebook is error-free
Enter zeros in Gradebook for work due/not completed
Enter dates for late enrollments
Discussions
Facilitates a discussion at least once per unit through Desire2Learn
Participate in daily discussions
Facilitate discussions through instructive, meaningful posts and engaging questions
Facilitation of Instruction
Provide remediation and enrichment for all students (Use of CompassLearning paths cover this, teachers may add additional differentiated activities.)
Provide instructive and meaningful written feedback to students on assignments and on assessments (i.e. dropbox, D2L quizzes)
Ensure timely and appropriate feedback (Grades within 72 hours)
Monitor student progress and notify intervention specialist in writing when students are not being successful
Give clear evidence within the course and adhere to state content and curriculum standards (weekly/unit standards are posted in content).
Communication
Respond to all Admin requests/emails with 24-hours on weekdays
Submit all attendance records in a timely manner to the appropriate personnel
Demonstrate high quality communication skills with all stakeholders (i.e. parents, students, administration - appropriate, confidential, etc.)
Respond to parent/student emails within 24-hours on weekdays
Maintain shared Communication Log (updated weekly, phone calls documented, failing students cited)
Send course update email biweekly

General Duties
Adhere to Mercury Online guidelines such as, but not limited to, admin withdrawal procedures, at-risk watch list, late work policy, completion of Personalized Student Achievement Plans
Create special access for IEP accommodations when required
Attend department meetings (schoolwide and departmental)

The following information will be provided to all employees:

Performance and Compensation Reviews

Performance Reviews

MOCS conducts a formal review at least one time per year for each employee. A review may also be conducted in the event of a promotion or change in duties and responsibilities.

During a formal performance review your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor may cover the following areas:

- The quality of your work.
- Meeting established objectives
- Strengths and areas for improvement.
- Attitude and willingness to work.
- Initiative and teamwork.
- Attendance.
- Customer service orientation.
- Problem solving skills.
- Ongoing professional growth and development.
- Overall professionalism
- Additional areas may also be reviewed as they relate to your specific job.

Your review provides a golden opportunity for collaborative, two-way communication between you and your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor. This is a good time to discuss your interests and future goals. Your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor is interested in helping you to progress and grow in order to achieve personal as well as work-related goals - perhaps he/she can recommend further training or additional opportunities for you. The performance review gives your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor an opportunity to suggest ways for you to advance and make your job at MOCS more fulfilling.

Your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor can answer any questions you may have about the performance review process.

Compensation Reviews

Salary reviews are conducted annually. Increases will be based on, but not limited to, job performance, continued training and education, leadership abilities, positive attitude, willingness to accept additional responsibilities, record of attendance and overall professionalism.

Other Compensation Programs and Policies

Payment for July Pay Periods

To be eligible to receive pay for the two pay periods in July the teaching staff must have successfully completed the full school year up to and including the last day of school.

Promotion and Transfer Policy

MOCS has a policy of providing our employees with every opportunity for advancing to other positions within the organization. To qualify for a promotion or transfer, you must have held your current position for a minimum of six (6) months, and be in good standing. Approval of promotions or transfers depends largely upon training, experience, and work record. Promotions and transfers are made without regard to race, color, citizenship status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other factor protected by law.

It is our policy to advise all employees about advancement opportunities. Please submit your request for consideration for a specific position directly to your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor. You are encouraged to discuss any contemplated transfer with your current supervisor.

(i) Corrective Action

Because of our mission to provide a world-class education through teaching and example, MOCS maintains the highest standards of conduct and job performance for all its employees. We value and acknowledge every employee's effort to meet those standards.

We also recognize that on occasion there will be individual lapses in conduct and/or performance. The principle purpose of the corrective action process is corrective, not punitive. When appropriate, employees are provided a reasonable opportunity to improve if appropriate. Corrective action may be initiated at any time during an employee's service with the school.

⇒ **Performance** is how an employee performs his or her job

⇒ **Conduct** is how an employee behaves on the job

The corrective action process generally consists of four steps:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Final Warning
4. Termination of Employment

In some situations circumstances may warrant skipping one or more steps in the process. The Vice President and the Human Resources Department will be consulted prior to this occurring. Corrective action is an ongoing process taking prior infractions into account. The process does not start over each time a different problem arises.

Every effort will be made to investigate completely the circumstances prior to taking corrective action.

All corrective action will remain in effect for the period of the warning. If there are no further infractions during the warning period, the corrective action will be considered inactive for the purposes of this procedure. Documentation will not be discarded, but will be retained in the confidential section of the employee's personnel file.

An employee with a current corrective action on file is not eligible for promotions or transfers during the warning period. An employee with a current Written or Final Warning is ineligible for a salary increase.

All employees will be treated in a fair and consistent manner with regard to any corrective action taken.

Separation of Employment

MOCS operates under the principle of at-will employment. This means that neither you nor MOCS has entered into a contract regarding the duration of your employment. You are free to terminate your employment with MOCS at any time, with or without reason. Likewise, MOCS has the right to terminate your employment, or otherwise discipline, transfer, or demote you at any time, with or without reason, at the discretion of MOCS.

If you find it necessary to resign, you will provide at least two weeks (instructional staff and leadership staff must provide three weeks) advance notice in writing to your supervisor indicating the last day of work. This date will be considered the effective date of your resignation.

Organization property such as keys, computers, credit cards, forms, money, etc., must be returned by each employee and access codes and passwords disclosed to the Chief Administrative Officer/designee prior to the last day of work.

If you have Direct Deposit your final pay will be issued as a live check. If you are not able to pick up your final paycheck in person, then your check will be mailed to your last known address. It is your responsibility to notify the school of any address, telephone or other changes in contact information. Please note that your failure to submit changes in a timely manner may lead to a delay in you receiving your final paycheck, tax (W-2), and benefits information.

Insurance Conversion Privileges

According to the Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Recalculated Act (COBRA) of 1985, in the event of your termination of employment with MOCS, except for gross misconduct or loss of eligibility to remain covered under our group health insurance program, you and your eligible dependents may have the right to continued coverage under our health insurance program for a limited period of time at your own expense.

At your exit interview or upon termination, you will learn how you can continue your insurance coverage and any other benefits you currently have as an employee who is eligible for continuation. Consult your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor for additional details.

Exit Interview

In the event of your resignation, MOCS management will conduct an exit interview to discuss your reasons for leaving and any other impressions that you may have about the school. During the exit interview, you can provide insights into areas for improvement that MOCS can make.

In the event you would like to submit this information confidentially you may request an Exit Survey Form. Once you have completed the form it will be forwarded to the Human Resources Department.

Return of Organization Property

All MOCS/charter school property issued to you, including all documents, records, data, notebooks, notes, reports, proposals, lists, correspondence, specifications, drawings, blueprints, sketches, materials, other documents or property, or reproductions of any aforementioned items, computer equipment, passwords, keys, petty cash and all other property belonging to Mercury Charter School must be returned to the Chief Administrative Officer/supervisor at the time of your termination of employment. You will be asked to sign an Exit Certification Form upon termination stating that you have returned all property. You may be held responsible for any lost or damaged items.

Former Employees

Depending on the circumstances, MOCS may consider a former employee for re-employment. Such applicants are subject to MOCS's usual pre-employment procedures. To be considered, an applicant must have been in good standing at the time of their previous termination of employment with MOCS.

Post-Employment Inquiries

The school will not respond to oral requests for references. In the event your employment with the school is terminated, either voluntarily or involuntarily, your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor, may be able to provide a reference to potential employers only if you have completed and signed a release form.

As an employee of MOCS, do not under any circumstances respond to any requests for information regarding another employee unless it is part of your assigned job responsibilities. If it is not, please forward the information request to your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor or designee.

C. How will your school be accountable to the parents of the children attending your school?

The founding board of MOCS shares common goals towards the involvement of Parent/Guardians in their students' education. As stated earlier, research has clearly demonstrated that increased Parent/Guardian involvement in a child's education directly impacts

student achievement rates¹. At the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania we are interested in increasing opportunities for whole families by empowering Parent/Guardians with confidence and trust in the educational setting. Therefore, school leaders, teachers and board members will personally invite and encourage Parent/Guardian participation in all facets of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania 's operation. Mercury strives to provide Parent/Guardians with every opportunity to take an active role in the education of their student through easy access to progress reports, regularly scheduled conferences, school-wide meetings, and community involvement. The very nature of the blended program allows for Parent/Guardian involvement on a daily basis through access to the Learning Management System and all teacher/student communications. Parent/Guardians are encouraged to support students in their academic pursuits and to participate in synchronous online events with students and staff. In addition, Parent/Guardians are also very valuable to the one classroom day per week experience for the students. Below is a sampling of some opportunities that will be available, but not mandatory, for Parent/Guardians and guardians. Parent/Guardians will be made aware of these opportunities through their Parent/Guardian account access as well as through school newsletters and at Paragon Nights.

- The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will establish a local-school community organization (LSCO) that will steer partnerships with local businesses and access resources to increase arts and experiential based opportunities for our students; offer Parent/Guardians information on outside resources on a variety of continuing education options and Parent/Guardianing issues; and effect the overall educational program and policies at the school by continually providing current information on topical issues such as guidance regarding usage of social media, understanding how to maximize educational technology and how to identify quality online educational resources.
- There will be numerous opportunities for Parent/Guardians to volunteer at the school through tutoring, office assistance, fundraising events, chaperoning, working on school projects, or as members of various school committees.
- Parents will be encouraged through newsletter communications and emails to participate at Board meetings and serve on Board-established committees. Parents will also be encouraged to apply for Director positions on the Board.
- The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will establish a tax-exempt, non-profit foundation to raise money for the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania . This will largely be run by volunteer Parent/Guardians.
- There will be a newsletter committee established that is overseen by Parent/Guardians who are responsible for monitoring and reporting on school events with the participation of school staff.
- Since being online is a vital part of the program, Parent/Guardians will be encouraged to contribute to keeping the school website up to date.
- We will offer training prior to the beginning of each school year and throughout the year in the areas of school curriculum and technology for Parent/Guardians to be able to work with their children to keep them at a level where they meet and exceed the established goals of their personalized student achievement plan.
- The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will feature periodically scheduled Paragon Nights, which follow the culmination of Paragon Units. Parent/Guardians and

family members will attend these events to celebrate with their children and watch student performances.

- Parent/Guardians will receive regular email communications with detailed information about upcoming subjects, events, and areas to focus on assisting their children. This will be both online and face to face.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania evaluation process will include beginning-of-the-year and end- of-year Parent/Guardian satisfaction survey data, teacher and administration survey data, and an overall assessment of the technology response and implementation at the school conducted by the Board of Directors. A quarterly technology survey and technology educational implementation report will be provided to the Board with a request for Board response and directives within 30 days. The MOCS administration will then be responsible for developing and implementing a plan for addressing Board directives.

By continually assessing the work that the teachers are doing, the quality of the courses themselves are also reviewed and critiqued. The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) has established national standards for quality online courses. These standards are used as the base guideline for course evaluation. However, with Mercury the courses are also reviewed bi-weekly by Lead Teachers and frequently by administration. The following are the requirements within the course that are checked and addressed on a regular basis:

- Links are checked to make sure they are working, within the content area and within the Resource area.
- State standards are required to be clearly posted for each unit.
- Weekly checklists are required to be posted for the students to use.
- Student event widgets are to be populated weekly with due dates for all assignments.
- Content area is checked to ensure that clear directions are being given to the students.
- Suggestions are made for adding multi-media to the course, if needed.
- Suggestions are made for adding a variety of different types of resources and activities, if needed.
- Suggestions are made when enrichment or remediation is required.
- Methods of student assessment are checked, i.e. discussions, quizzes, dropbox items, presence at Elluminate sessions.
- Teachers are required to be regularly "present" in discussion areas.
- Gradebooks are to be well-maintained; grade items are to be linked to quizzes and discussions within the course.
- Graded items should have attached feedback for students and parents to view.
- News items are to be updated weekly, at minimum.
- A pacing guide for the entire term is to be clearly posted on the course homepage.
- Teacher contact information posted.

- Required 24 hour response time

D. Discuss your plan for regular review of school budgets and financial records.

A. Budgeting - The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania budget is essentially a tool for planning and control as well as, a yardstick for measuring performance. Revenue projections are based on the estimated total student enrollment and the estimated number of special education students. Revenue sources include: state per student aid, special education funds, start-up funds (if applicable) grants, before/after school programs and food programs. Expenditure projections include: teacher and staff payroll and benefits, staff development, curriculum materials supplies, office supplies, equipment leases, office equipment maintenance, testing materials, insurance, accounting and legal, field trips, nursing services, security, utilities, rent allowance, maintenance and repair, marketing, after school program, food/cafeteria, curriculum and services provided by the selected ESP, and contingencies.

B. Budget Preparation

1. Strategic Planning

- a. Before preparing a budget there needs to be Board input on school goals for next fiscal year
- b. The Board, upon the recommendation of the CAO, will identify a list of priorities for the school for the upcoming year. The budget will then become the financial roadmap for achieving those goals -- or whatever portion of those goals that the school can afford.
- c. At the end of the process, ideally by the end of February, there will be a "Budget Objectives" document identifying key strategic objectives for the school for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget will then be developed as the financial roadmap for achieving those goals.
 - 1) In setting these goals/objectives, the Board will establish **priorities** so that in the development of the budget we are able to say, "Goal A is more important than Goal B, so therefore we will put the money in line X rather than line Y."
 - 2) Goals and Objectives will be **realistic**.
 - The list of goals need not be all that much longer than one might reasonably expect the school to be able to afford.
 - The list will overreach just enough to be sure that all the critical issues are on the table.

2. Recommended Budget - Once the goals are done, the CAO, school accountant and CAO will develop a "Recommended Budget" – a document that will provide the Board – at a minimum – with a comparison of the current year

budget, the current year projected actual, and the recommended budget for the upcoming year.

- a. Recommended Budget “Ingredients” – The following will be assembled and available for reference throughout the Budget Development and Review process:
 - 1) Budget Schedule – developed based on the statutory or regulatory requirements and working backwards
 - 2) A recent Payroll Register listing all current employees
 - 3) The most recent monthly financial statements together with a projection of total actual current year activity
 - 4) Copy of the most recent Consolidated Grant Application, together with any preliminary work that has been done on the upcoming year’s grants
 - 5) Lease Agreements and Amortization Schedules
 - 6) Real Estate Agreements and Development plans
 - 7) Mortgage/Bond Payment Schedules
 - 8) Revenue Estimates
 - 9) Textbook purchase / replacement plans
 - 10) Equipment purchase / replacement plans
 - 11) Staffing needs
 - 12) Long term contracts / bids / proposals including:
 - Transportation
 - Custodial Services
 - Food Services
 - SPED Services
 - Copier Contracts
 - Insurance
 - 13) Budget forms / mESPs from
 - State
 - District
 - Authorizers
- b. The Recommended Budget will:
 - 1) Include all “Door Openers” – critical items that are essential to the school’s continued operation;
 - 2) Outline the financial steps necessary to move the school toward each of the highest ranking goals;

- 3) Be completed in time to submit to the Board for review and consideration at the Regular April Board Meeting.
3. Budget Revision – Following preliminary Board Review, the CAO, the CAO, and the School Accountant will apply – to the extent possible within the limits of a balanced budget – any changes or modifications requested by the Board.
4. Final Budget will be presented to the Board no later than the April Board meeting, in order to insure timely action by the Board before the applicable deadline.

C. Budget submission / publication – School Accountant

1. The approved budget is then sent back to the Office to align the coding with the chart of accounts.
2. A budget report is then developed to indicate the correct coding for all AR and AP transactions.
3. After the budget is reviewed and finalized it is sent to the appropriate state agency or authorizer. No revenues or expenditures will be coded outside of the approved budgeted line items without the approval of the VP of School Finance. Correct coding ensures that the financial statement accurately reflects the status of budgeted expenditures and encumbrances.

D. Budget Control

1. The Board of Directors generally:
 - adopts the annual budget
 - designates depositories for school fund
 - enters into contracts of any kind where the amount involved exceeds \$5,000
 - fixes salaries or compensation of administrators, teachers, or other employees of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania
 - enters into contracts with and makes appropriations to any intermediate school district or other entity for the charter’s proportionate share of the cost of services provided by such entity
 - ensures that undistributed reserves are addressed and most typically rolled over into the school’s general fund balance
2. The CAO is provided with a board-approved budget with projected revenues and approved expense amounts. It is essential for the sound financial management of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania that every effort is made to adhere to the approved budget. Deviations from budget will be granted only through board approval. Budgets project revenues for the year as accurately as possible, however, actual school revenue performance may vary. The CAO is responsible for reviewing the projected revenue as compared with the actual revenue on a monthly basis so that adjustments to expenditures can be made accordingly. Using percentages

rather than a dollar amount from the annual school budget allows for more accurate control of expenses. For example, if the current school revenue (based on enrollment) is higher than budget, by using the budgeted percentage for each line item rather than the straight dollar amount, as reflected on the budget, the CAO can calculate the increase in dollars available for each line item to spend to meet the needs of the increased enrollment. On the contrary if school revenue is less than the budgeted dollar amount the CAO can calculate the adjustments needed in expenditures to reflect the decrease in enrollment.

E. Expense Tracking

1. The accounting program used by MOA offers several reports capable of tracking expenses for budget compliance. The reports that will be used for expense tracking are:
 - a. Maintain Budgets
 - b. Maintain GL Accounts
 - c. Invoice History
 - d. Check History
 - e. Accounts Payable Aging
 - f. Accounts Receivable Aging
2. These reports will help the School Accountant, the CAO and VP of School Finance with the necessary tools to monitor budgeted expenses.

II. Depreciation

- A. All equipment purchases shall require the prior approvals.
- B. The School's Capitalization Policy is attached hereto as Attachment D, and incorporated herein by reference:
- C. Capital Assets as defined under the Capitalization Policy shall be depreciated over their useful life.

All purchases of property not fitting the definition of a capital asset shall be expensed in the period of purchase.

Describe your system for maintaining school records and disseminating information as required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

E. Describe your system for maintaining accurate student enrollment and withdrawal information as required under Section 1748-A, Enrollment and Notification.

Student admission policy and procedures for the charter school: Nondiscriminatory Admissions Criteria

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania shall comply fully with the state's Charter School Law regarding admission policies and procedures, as well as all other applicable state and federal provisions. The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will be nonsectarian in all respects. The school shall not discriminate against any student, employee, or other person on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Admission criteria will not consider intellectual or athletic ability, aptitude, disability, race, creed, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

Mercury Online Charter School's admission policies and procedures recognize IDEA 2004 and civil rights protections and will be consistent with federal guidelines on lotteries as outlined in 53A-1a-502(2)(b)(I and ii).

Generally, the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will give preference to these categories of students:

- Returning Students
- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Children of founding members and teachers less than 3% of total enrollment

Office Procedures for Student Records

Student Files

The school will need to develop an electronic and/or paper record keeping system, policies and procedures for when student information is gathered, how it is stored (including back-ups if necessary), and who may have access to it and when. This latter issue is important to ensure that confidential information is carefully protected and made available for official use only. The school may want to consult forms used by the local school districts and consult with district staff to ensure that, in the event a student returns to the district, the information file associated with that student contains information helpful to district staff.

Student files contain the following documents with a checklist of forms:

- ✓ Application (with name, address, emergency contact, relevant health/safety information, and all other information/forms required by the state charter school law and local school districts)
- ✓ Birth Certificate
- ✓ Copy of Immunization Records
- ✓ Proof of Residency (Utility Bill, Tax Record, Lease, Drivers License)
- ✓ Most recent report card
- ✓ Educational Testing
- ✓ Documentation of IEP (If applicable; complete special education records are kept separately)
- ✓ Parent/Guardian request for file transfer of student records
- ✓ Volunteer forms
- ✓ Signed Home/School Compact and participation agreement

All records will have the student's name on each document in the upper right hand corner. The date of enrollment and any withdrawal dates will be clearly marked on the application.

Student files are maintained in a neat and orderly fashion. Forms and documents are stored in a consistent manner in every file. In addition to the student information listed above, there will be a section in the student's file for all correspondence with the Parent/Guardian, as well as a section for any discipline records.

Student files will be kept up-to-date with current emergency contact information at all times.

(i) Documentation

Any contact with a Parent/Guardian for any reason will be documented and a brief summary of the contact put in the appropriate section in the student's file. These records will be initialed and dated by the person who made the contact. Likewise, when an attempt at contact is initiated and contact is *not* made, a record will be made indicating the date and time of the attempt and a brief description of the reason for the attempted contact then initialed and dated by the person making the attempt.

Injury reports and Incident reports and any follow-up due process documentation that are determined by the CAO to become part of a student's permanent record, are kept in the student's file. Additionally, the school's administrative staff will maintain a separate injury and incident file.

Student Records File Maintenance

Maintaining the student records is the responsibility of the administrative assistant. The administrative staff will set up a regularly scheduled internal audit of student records to check for any missing documents and to ensure that all information contained in the file is in the proper order.

Student Record Audits

Student records are audited by the state and an outside auditing firm on a yearly basis for verification of student funding for the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania . Proper student file maintenance is a crucial component for the financing for the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania .

Freedom of Information Law

Students have the right to accurate and complete school records, maintained in accordance with applicable federal and state law. Accurate and complete individual records shall be maintained for each student enrolled in the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania . Such records will be kept in a safe and secure manner to ensure student confidentiality.

Parent/Guardians have the right to inspect any and all records relating to their dependent. Students with written Parent/Guardian permission may inspect their own records. All inspections shall be conducted in the presence of a school representative. Information may be

released to others only with written Parent/Guardian consent. Nominal fees may be charged for duplication of records. Parent/Guardians may not remove the record or its contents.

The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will ensure compliance with the any Pennsylvania requirements as well as the confidentiality provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Upon receipt of a written request for information, the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will:

- Within five days of receipt of the written request, make the information available, deny the request in writing, or provide a written acknowledgement of the receipt of the request and note the approximate period of time in which the request will be denied or granted
- The school will deny an information request only on legally proper grounds, including reasonably protecting personal privacy from unwarranted intrusions

If a person appeals the denial of an information request, the school will fully explain the reasons for further denial or make the information available within ten business days of the receipt of the notice of the appeal. The school will forward a copy of the appeal and ultimate determination to the appropriate agency.

(ii) Student Attendance

Student attendance will be monitored closely to ensure the 180 school day – 990 hour (HS) and 900 (Elementary) requirements are met or exceeded. Attendance can be monitored through the Learning Management System.

F. Describe plans to evaluate student performance.

Using the data analysis techniques discussed below, the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will review student performance data to reflect upon and make ongoing improvements as necessary to its educational program and to these stated outcomes, and to further break these outcomes into shorter term benchmarks.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will participate in all state required assessments for applicable grade levels in assessing core subjects.

In addition, the use of computer adaptive assessments has the advantage of allowing frequent and convenient monitoring of the academic achievement of individual students, entire grades and the whole school. Thus, the most frequent assessment will be the weekly reports of student performance generated by the online program.

Other assessments will include:

- Criterion-referenced tests in Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies: specifically designed for gathering detailed information about how well a student has performed on each of the educational goals of the curriculum.
- Authentic assessments using portfolios—print and video: These portfolios will document students’ work, display a command of skills and content, and provide insight into the learning process over time. These will include a variety of student work samples along with observations and evaluations of student learning and performance by the student, school staff, parents and peers as applicable.
- Performance-based assessments: These assessments require students to actively solve problems and apply knowledge in production-driven learning activities. These activities may include science experiments, dramatic and oral presentations, video productions, research, etc. The in-class Paragon® component of our curriculum will include many of these types of assessments based on projects conducted individually and in groups.
- Documentary assessments: These assessments involve organizing the information a teacher collects regarding a child’s learning process and achievements. Interpretations of these assessments will be used to individualize curriculum and instruction. These methods of assessment are connected to students’ lives and learning experiences and represent the real-world challenges they will face.

Use and Reporting of Data

Report of Individual Student Progress

The online medium enables close tracking of student progress on an ongoing basis. Teachers, parents and students will be able to clearly track grades and performance against goals daily.

The following formal reports of student progress will also be provided to parents as indicated:

Parent Conferences – required meetings in which the student’s progress is discussed and samples of work provided	4 times per year
Report Cards – distributed at the parent conference (only mailed home on exception basis)	4 times per year
Personalized Learning Plans – either mailed home, given to parent or guardian when child is picked up, or sent home via back pack	4 times per year

Grade Updates – although not specific to the achievement of an individual child, provides parents and guardians with curriculum updates	2 times per year
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G. How will student development toward the school’s overall learning goals and objectives be measured?

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania uses a data driven design to guide instruction. All students receive baseline testing yearly to help determine the appropriate course of instruction. Additional benchmark testing (SCANTRON Performance Series) is done three times per year to monitor gains. In addition, teachers will use Scantron Achievement Series to monitor progress on specific strands via curriculum based measures (weekly is the goal). Through this testing teachers can identify specific areas of needs and address them throughout the year. These results along with any other data gathered in a student’s cumulative file help form the basis of the Personalized Student Achievement Plan (PSAP). The PSAP is done for each student at Mercury at all grade levels. It allows teachers, Parent/Guardians, and the student to sit down, look at data, and establish goals. The PSAP is then revisited by this same team quarterly and revised as necessary. The baseline testing done in fall is repeated with a midyear testing in January and an end of year test in May. This allows teachers to track and document student strengths and weaknesses by content strand and according to Pennsylvania standards. (PSAP form is attached at the end of this section).

H. Describe how student evaluation will be used to improve student achievement and attain the stated learning objectives.

Teachers are able to take the data from student testing and PSAPs and create individualized paths of instruction for students as needed. Although all students will be working to master the same standards, the path and manner in which they get there may vary. Online education is uniquely suited to being able to accommodate this sort of individualization for all student populations.

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:

A. Describe the relationship of your school with the surrounding community.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania is building relationships with Institutes of Higher Education (Carnegie Mellon University), Charter Schools (Birney Preparatory Academy and Fell Charter School), and educational service providers (Mercury Education). MOCS will continue to actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

B. Describe the nature and extent of parent involvement in the school's mission.

Parent Participation in Governance

The founding board members of MOCS shares common goals towards the involvement of parents in their students' education. As stated earlier, research has clearly demonstrated that increased parental involvement in a child's education directly impacts student achievement ratesⁱⁱ. At the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania we are interested in increasing opportunities for whole families by empowering parents with confidence and trust in the educational setting. Therefore, school leaders, teachers and board members will personally invite and encourage parent participation in all facets of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania's operation. The very nature of the hybrid program allows for parental involvement on a daily basis through access to the Learning Management System and all teacher/student communications. Parents are encouraged to support students in their academic pursuits and to participate in synchronous online events with students and staff. In addition, parents are also very valuable to the one classroom day per week experience for the students. Below is a sampling of some opportunities that will be available, but not mandatory, for parents and guardians:

- The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will establish a Local School-Community Organization (LSCO) that will steer partnerships with local businesses and access resources to increase arts and experiential based opportunities for our students; offer parents information on outside resources on a variety of continuing education options and parenting issues; and effect the overall educational program and policies at the school by continually providing current information on topical issues.
- There will be numerous opportunities for parents to volunteer at the school through tutoring, office assistance, fundraising events, chaperoning, working on school projects, or as members of various school committees.
- The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will establish a tax-exempt, non-profit foundation to raise money for the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania. This will largely be run by volunteer parents.
- There will be a newsletter committee established that is overseen by parents who are responsible for monitoring and reporting on school events with the participation of school staff.
- Since being online is a vital part of the program, parents will be encouraged to contribute to keeping the school website up to date.

- We will offer training in the areas of school curriculum and technology for parents to be able to work with their children to keep them at a level where they meet and exceed the established goals of their personalized student achievement plan.
- The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will feature periodically scheduled Paragon Nights, which follow the culmination of Paragon Units. Parents and family members will attend these events to celebrate with their children and watch student performances.
- Parents will receive regular email communications with detailed information about upcoming subjects, events, and areas to focus on assisting their children. This will be both online and face-to-face.

While some programs rely solely on parental participation to assist students, Mercury Online depends on its instructors to facilitate the online learning process. Teachers are not only highly qualified, but effective in delivering the best online curricula ensuring the highest levels of student achievement. Moreover, teachers build a relationship with each student to offer individual instruction creating a transparent online learning experience for parents. Parents and students are provided a log-in ID, which provides full access to courses, grades, discussions, homework, and other class materials. At any point, parents can track their child's participation and setup conferences with teachers. Students needing additional support can also schedule time online for extended teacher support. Thus, making the entire online learning experience one which values three-way accountability between the teacher, student, and parent.

C. Describe procedures established to review complaints of parents regarding operation of the charter school.

Parent/Guardians will be directed to consult with their child's teacher if they have a concern or complaint. If the problem is not resolved at this level, they will consult with the Chief Administrative Officer. If the conflict persists, they will contact the lead academic administrator if the conflict remains unresolved to the satisfaction of the Parent/Guardians, their complaint will be presented to the Board of Directors. The Board will act in accordance with local regulations and state law, and adhere to the Bylaws of the Board. During each phase of this process, the appropriate parties will act within 60 days of receipt of the complaint to address the complaint.

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.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania will determine extracurricular offerings based on student interests and ideas provided from surveys collected from families as well as online

discussions. Potential activities include clubs, social activities following the 4+1 model, and competitions.

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.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania does not currently have any agreements with local school districts.

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.

Mercury Online will partner with *Desire2Learn* to provide the Learning Management System (LMS) platform and registration system. Founded in 1999, *Desire2Learn* is a leader in providing innovative eLearning solutions to academic organizations around the world. Its subsidiaries support more than five million learners worldwide. The LMS adheres to both state and international standards of interoperability with assistive technologies. *Desire2Learn* demonstrates a focus and future commitment to continued improvements as adaptive technologies evolve by complying with the World Wide Web Consortium's WCAG 2.0 (standard for creating accessible web content) and WIA-ARIA (Accessible Rich Internet Applications Suite Guidelines).

Accessibility

Desire2Learn is dedicated to making Mercury Online accessible to all students. The platform's approach to accessibility is through both standards adherence and functional accessibility assessment. The accessibility program is well-integrated within the engineering lifecycle to ensure that the system will evolve in an accessible manner.

Desire2Learn follows accessibility standards development to be able to offer the latest advantages these standards present to its end-users. Examples of standards adherence within the *Desire2Learn* platform include:

- Skip navigation links are included for ease of navigation.
- Descriptive alt text is included for all links. This text may be understood out of context. Adherence to this standard is mandatory for all *Desire2Learn* products.
- When time responses are employed the system supports grace periods on any time limits, as well as ability to allow for special time limits for particular users.

- Labels are matched to input IDs to allow for assistive technology to describe the meaning of form field elements.
- Table headers and scope are used consistently. Adherence to this requirement is enforced by the architecture.
- Descriptive table summaries are provided.
- All frames are properly titled with text to allow for frame navigation and identification.
- The Learning Environment prompts users for alternative text for images.
- The HTML Editor allows designers to markup table headers.
- The HTML Editor is keyboard accessible.
- All system documentation is available in accessible PDF format.

508 Compliance

The core products that make up the *Desire2Learn* Learning Suite: Learning Environment, Learning Repository, and ePortfolio all comply with the applicable industry standards of Section 508 of the United States Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Desire2Learn believes it is imperative to make online learning accessible to all students. To reach this goal, the LMS utilizes specialists that meet with accessibility consultants throughout the year and develop strategies to implement their recommendations into its Learning Suite. The LMS reports its compliance publicly using a Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT) available for each 508 compliant product online at <http://www.desire2learn.com/access/>.

The following accessibility provisions outline a few of *Desire2Learn's* compliance features:

- *Desire2Learn* products work with desktop system settings as they are run through a web browser.
- No bitmap images are used in the *Desire2Learn* product suite.
- No animations are displayed as part of the *Desire2Learn* application. Their Content Services developers are able to provide non-animated presentations as an alternative to any animations they create.
- HEX color settings may be used when customizing the display colors of the application.
- No blinking or flashing content is used in the *Desire2Learn* product suite.
- All data tables identify row and column headers. In 8x series, adherence to this element is enforced through the framework.
- Table elements (TH and TD tags) are appropriately marked up to associate data cells and header cells when data tables have several levels of row or column headers. In their 8x series, adherence to this requirement is enforced through the framework.
- All frames are properly titled to allow for frame navigation and identification. In their 8x series, adherence to this requirement is enforced through the framework.
- Alternative time limits can be set on assignments and these time limits are interpretable by assistive technologies. Warnings are given prior to system timeouts.
- All non-text elements provide a text equivalent in the form of an ALT or LABEL property. The <ALT> tags in the system are consistent and descriptive. In their 8x series adherence to this requirement is enforced through the framework.
- All information communicated through color is also communicated through another method, such as size, text, or style.
- *Desire2Learn* products are readable without an associated style sheet.

- Tab order and focus are set on all forms to allow for easy keyboard navigation. Labels are matched to input IDs to allow assistive technologies to describe the meaning of any field elements that require input.
- Skip navigation links are provided to bypass main navigation areas.

The *Desire2Learn* suite has taken a systematic approach to accessible design, implementing the following features:

- Mark-up decisions are centralized. The *Desire2Learn* architecture has centralized decisions about page mark-up. A great deal of the mark-up used by assistive technology users is consistently and automatically included in *Desire2Learn* product tools.
- Design guidelines are in place. Design guidelines help ensure consistency between the various tools in the system. This in turn, helps with functional accessibility.
- Accessibility barriers are proactively identified. Internal quality assurance testing is done with enabling technologies to proactively identify and address issues. *Desire2Learn* products are tested against the proposed WCAG 2.0 standards.
- The entire user experience is considered and accessibility is not limited to the *Desire2Learn* products. The documentation and training teams provide resources and support for clients.
- Relentless improvement. *Desire2Learn* products follow standards development and product designers consult with external accessibility experts in order to continually improve the platform.
- The *Desire2Learn* product interface provides course creators with recommendations on how to ensure that 508 and other general accessibility guidelines are adhered to.

Additional accessibility innovations within the *Desire2Learn* Platform include:

- Personal preferences. Empowers users to tailor font typefaces, point sizes, language, and page layouts
- Quizzing. Allows for different time limits and grace periods.
- Dropbox. Allows for extended submission periods for selected users
- Homepages. The “events” widget allows for a quick overview of course events such as upcoming deadlines
- Chat. Offers numerous features to help assistive technology users control message flow and follow conversations
- Language packs. Allow for your organization to create different language packs based on level of difficulty or language.

B. Describe how you will improve student achievement through effective uses of technology.

Mercury Online can accommodate multiple learning styles. Curriculum and assessments are delivered in a variety of formats, including online and print, to meet individual learning styles and student needs.

- Students can set their own pace.
- Students can read language arts texts online or print them in PDF format for offline use.
- Auditory assistance is provided in reading and math activities.
- Activities are engaging to keep students focused and on task.

- Pages within activities are clearly organized and consistent in structure.
- Concepts are repeated, reviewed, and summarized for clarity.
- Activities teach concepts through songs, graphics, and videos.
- Visual enhancements for teaching concepts include font, font size, spacing, color, bullets, and numbering.
- Graphic organizers are used to create rubrics.
- Graphics and pictures are added to practice sheets and tests.
- Activities call on students to use the different intelligences.
- Activities use interactive games, puzzles, and programs that have built-in feedback and repetition capabilities.
- Activities are broken up into manageable units, which help improve student self-esteem.
- Multimedia in activities is used to trigger the sympathetic imagination and improve emotional intelligence.
- Writing software allows students to make frequent revisions without tedious recopying.
- Writing software includes outlining and semantic webbing (mapping ideas) so writers can easily rearrange their compositions.
- Writing software is a “What You See is What You Get” (WYSIWYG) tool.
- Online individual student work promotes more emotional honesty and self-disclosure, less fear, less shyness, and less aggressive domination of discussions.

Modifications to content delivery by course or by lesson can be made.

- Mercury provides a prescriptive, sequential and open format of the existing courses. All courses are designed with a detailed syllabus, pacing and checklist. However, these can easily be modified according to instructor preference and/or need to be open and or prescriptive.
- Mercury’s system has assessments to place students in proper level of the program, such as reading or math level. All Mercury students participate in placement testing where baseline information is gathered for math and reading/language arts. This allows students to be placed appropriately, in consultation with the district, as well as allows Mercury to measure growth and gains made over the year.
- The level at which a student is working can be separately adjusted within multiple sub-content areas, rather than presenting “blocks” of instruction that all students shall take. Students are enrolled in Mercury at the class level therefore allowing for adjustment on a student by student basis as needed
- Mercury ensures all courses are accessible via any Internet connected computer 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Methods provide synchronous and asynchronous support to students.

- **Mercury provides courses that are open entry and open exit with asynchronous delivery.** All Mercury courses are designed to be delivered asynchronously with the added component of synchronous webinars (which are also recorded for those not able to attend). Due to the nature of the online course, students can enter and exit at any time. However, courses are not designed to be at any pace. There is a structured pacing guide.
- Mercury's webinar software, Elluminate, is used for synchronous collaboration between teacher and students and among students. When working on a project, students can go to the teacher's virtual office and work together on a project. They have use of a whiteboard, typed chat, voice chat and webcams to do this. Documents can be file transferred while in an Elluminate session and the moderator can share his/her desktop to show, in real-time, how to accomplish a task. If the student is given moderator rights, the student will be able to share his/her desktop or application with other students. They can all edit a document at the same time and can all view the changes simultaneously.
- Additionally, if a teacher is holding a whole-class meeting in his/her virtual office, he/she can create "breakout" rooms where collaborative groups can meet to discuss a project or work on content. There is no comparison between asynchronous blogging or a discussion board and a synchronous Elluminate session when it comes to students accomplishing the most in the least amount of time.

Learner support systems with methods of communication are included.

- The learning management system has a feature called eportfolio. Through the use of this tool, students can create a portfolio of work they have submitted throughout the term. Through on-line sharing of the eportfolio with other students and the instructor, students can collaborate and give one another feedback on their creations. This tool can be used as a cumulative assessment in a course or as a way for students to organize and showcase their work in one or more classes.
- The learning management system that Mercury uses also has a locker feature. Items placed in one's locker can be accessed through any of the enrolled classes. The items in a student's locker can be private and visible only to the student, or they can be shared with other students and the instructor. By sharing the documents in the locker area, students can collaborate on projects asynchronously. Instructors can set up groups in the classes and also set up locker areas for group use.
- All Mercury courses have a *Resources* widget on their course homepage. This widget, depending on the course, may include links to teacher-created recordings over specific subject matter, support/enrichment resources, and/or Help websites for the content area.

For Mathematics and Science, students have usernames and passwords for Explorelearning, which allows them to manipulate a "gizmo" (applet) to investigate the changing variables for life, physical, and earth sciences as well as math topics from Grades 3 through College. The main content provider for math and science, also easily accessed by single-sign-on through their

Resources widget, uses video-driven, interactive lessons as the main format. A secondary content provider for science allows students to complete virtual labs and take notes in an on-line lab notebook. As they manipulate their virtual equipment and investigate problems, they take notes and write conclusions in this notebook. Math lessons conducted during Elluminate webinar sessions can be enhanced through the use of a graphing calculator, which is a navigation bar feature accessible to students and teachers.

Mercury's main content provider for Language Arts not only provides video-driven and interactive lessons on LA topics, but also allows students to write their assignments using an online format at the content provider's website. Their writings are reviewed and graded on-line by the teacher, who leaves feedback attached to the writing assignment. The students also have access to a "Portfolio" section of the content provider's website. In this area, students have access to digital note-taking which they can use for any of their courses.

The learning management system that Mercury employs has an eportfolio feature. Use of the eportfolio by the students allows the capability to publish the final product in a multimedia format. When students prepare Powerpoint presentations or graphics for the class, they can be delivered during an Elluminate session. This session can be a private session between the teacher and the student or it can be a whole-class presentation. A recording of the session can be made and the link can be shared with anyone that has internet access. The foreign language classes utilize the free download Audacity for preparing their speaking components for evaluation which adds an additional route for students to connect orally with the material.

Selected methodologies exhibit knowledge of current online delivery best practices and the ability to implement and evaluate these practices.

Mercury has the ability to incorporate project-based learning in a variety of areas. Our science courses implement STEM guides, which are entirely project-based. Students are given problems to solve and are required to research, design, and construct a solution using various scientific, technological, engineering, and mathematical concepts and methods. In addition to the incorporation of STEM guides, our Paragon curriculum implements project-based learning with many of the research and artistic projects required in the curriculum. Paragon® is an interdisciplinary social studies curriculum designed by Mosaica Education. Integrated with the arts, technology, character education, STEM activities, and current events, Paragon® is highly interactive, teaches to multiple intelligences, and utilizes a wide range of instructional strategies and modalities. Because Paragon is combines constructivism with an inquiry-based approach, the learning is personal, individualized, and student-centered.

Mercury supports collaboration between students. Although the nature of an online course allows for students to work independently and asynchronously, an essential component of

Mercury's program is that it is teacher directed. As such, teachers are involved with students and their work on a daily basis. There is regular feedback given on assignments as well as daily opportunity to converse and interact with Mercury teachers. Timely feedback is also important as it allows teachers to adjust lessons as appropriate for individual students; it also allows students to refine their work based on teacher comment. In addition, students are encouraged to interact with each other in asynchronous class discussions as well as synchronous webinars.

Assessment

- Students can set their own pace.
- Teachers can make accommodations for special mastery levels, time for completion of custom tests, and navigation.
- Instructions and images are clear, allowing for easy navigation.
- Auditory support for assessment questions is provided for Levels K–2.
- Diagnostic-prescriptive capabilities permit individualization of instruction based on assessment results.

C. Describe the technical support that will be provided to students and parents.

Due to its strong emphasis on technology, it is vitally important that a strong technical support infrastructure be in place. Teachers will be trained in first tier troubleshooting; however, live support via telephone, email, and webinar will be available during extended hours daily. Students, parents and staff will have clear information on how to contact support and which protocols to follow for certain situations. This information will be provided both online and in print format.

D. Describe the policy for ensuring the privacy and security measures that will guarantee the confidentiality of data gathered online.

- All content delivery system ensures security through password protected access.
- Mercury ensures that external links to internet-based content are chosen, screened and updated to ensure content is accurate and appropriate for student use. External links to Internet-based content are selected using the following criteria: content validity, objectivity, authority, authenticity, reliability, format and presentation, and accessibility. Prior to the start of each grading period (minimum of 4 times per year), subject area teachers review all courses to ensure accuracy, relevancy and appropriateness.
- Mercury provides a means for students to identify and report problems with external links. Students are encouraged to go to the instructor first so that the instructor can check and be sure that it is a problem with the link rather than an isolated student issue. This

way the problem can be routed and addressed most efficiently. However, there is a tech support link on the home page where students can report all technical issues, including broken links. In addition, the Mercury software does an external link check and notifies teachers daily through a widget of links that might need to be addressed.

- Mercury provides a prescriptive, sequential and open format of the existing courses. All courses are designed with a detailed syllabus, pacing and checklist. However, these can easily be modified according to instructor preference and district need to be open and or prescriptive.
- Mercury's system has assessments to place students in proper level of the program, such as reading or math level. All Mercury students participate in placement testing where baseline information is gathered for math and reading/language arts. This allows students to be placed appropriately, in consultation with the district, as well as allows Mercury to measure growth and gains made over the year.
- Instructional courseware and student data is managed within one system for all content, kindergarten through grade 12. Management functions are operable from any computer that meets the minimum specifications. All student information and course data is accessible from within the learning management system. However, additional detailed reports on progress and demographics may be obtained from other systems with which the main system is securely integrated.
- Student work is digitally saved in the system for automatic-scored items and for original creations made as additional activities or projects. All student work submitted is saved whether it is an automatically scored item or something electronically submitted. Additionally, teacher comments and feedback are also time/date stamped and saved with the student work.
- Courseware operations and administrative functions, including enrollment, changes in how lessons are presented and report functions, and are accomplished from simple menu choices using an easy-to-use, industry-standard interface. Mercury's interface is user friendly and allows users with appropriate permissions to toggle back and forth from student view to staff view. All administrative actions such as enrollment, lesson modification and reporting can be accomplished through an easy to use select box interface.
- The level at which a student is working can be separately adjusted within multiple sub-content areas, rather than presenting "blocks" of instruction that all students shall take. Students are enrolled in Mercury at the class level therefore allowing for adjustment on a

student by student basis as needed

E. *Describe the methods to ensure authenticity of student work and the proctoring of exams.*

The hybrid program of Mercury implements online instruction combined with one day per week in the classroom. This new model allows for a number of measurements to be used in determining learning outcomes. Because each student will have access to technology, we will be able to use technology-based assessments along with traditional teacher assessments, standardized testing, student portfolios and teacher observation. During the one day per week of brick-and-mortar classroom experience, teachers will be able to assess students formally and informally through discussion, observation, small group work, one-on-one interactions, and myriad hands-on student projects, presentations and performance pieces. The hybrid model will allow for a state-of-the-art individualized student portfolio-combining standardized and authentic assessment in order to have a clear and accurate detail of each student's mastery of specified learning objectives.

F. *Describe equipment such as hardware, software and Internet connections to be provided to students.*

All students are provided with a laptop computer, printer, and internet access, if necessary. Students are also provided a mouse and computer headset to actively participate in webinars to ensure learning free of distractions. Media materials and supplies are sent to students on a quarterly basis and may include science lab materials, art supplies, multimedia components or other items appropriate for the student's course of study.

Minimum Hardware Requirements	
Windows	Mac
1.5 GHz Pentium® 4	800 MHz PowerPC® G4
1 GB RAM	1.83 GHz Intel® Core™ Duo
100 MB free disk space	512 MB RAM
1024x768 video	100 MB free disk space
256 colors	1024x768 video
Sound card	256 colors
Speakers or headphones	Speakers or headphones

100 Mbps NIC	100 Mbps NIC
256 Kbps/student	256 Kbps/student
Operating Systems	
Windows®	Mac
Windows® XP, Windows Vista®	Mac OS X SM 10.4.9 and above
Internet Speed	
Minimum Requirement	56K modem
Recommended	cable modem, DSL, or other broadband connection

Supported Browsers	
Windows	Mac
Firefox® 3.5 (recommended)	Firefox® 3.5 (recommended) Firefox® 3.6
Internet Explorer® 7 Internet Explorer® 8	Safari® 3.1 Safari® 4.0
Plugins – All Platforms	
Adobe® Flash® Player 10	
Adobe® Acrobat® Reader 9 or 10	
Adobe® Shockwave® Player 10.0 or 11	
Apple® Quicktime® Player 7	
Sun Java™ Runtime Environment (JRE) – All Platforms	
Minimum Requirement	JRE v1.4.2.x, 1.5.x, 1.6.x
Recommended	JRE 1.6 update 13
JavaScript™	Must be enabled
Cookies	Must be enabled
Pop-up Blockers	Must be disabled or set to allow pop-ups from the course and online curriculum resources.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Statement of Need:

A. *Why is there a need for this type of school?*

As a proven, practical method to enhance the critical learning experience, K-12 online learning is growing rapidly, 30% annually. Online learning levels the playing field for all students to access high quality courses and teachers. There are an estimated 3 million enrollments in online and blended courses in K-12 education. Of these, there are 437,000 course enrollments in state virtual schools³ and 200,000 full-time students in full-time online schools in the U.S.⁴ The families of the Harrisburg, Pittsburg, and Philadelphia Areas and State of Pennsylvania appear to be following the same trend. There are currently 13 approved online schools and programs available throughout the state of Pennsylvania. There are currently close to 170 different support organizations for homeschooling in the state of Pennsylvania. While many parents chose to follow their own curriculum, many are looking for alternatives to the traditional public schools and homeschooling programs. Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will provide parents with the option of a 100% online at home model or a 4-1 hybrid (4 home days + 1 center day) model. Mercury will improve upon this trend by providing a teacher-led program. And at the same time it will dramatically create new opportunities for students whose parents work outside the home.

B. Explain why the cyber charter school model is an appropriate vehicle to address this need.

Mercury Online Charter School’s vision is to develop an online program that will provide new and dynamic educational options for students.

Mercury’s team includes online instructional and administrative leaders with over 50 years of combined experience in launching and operating successful district level and statewide online programs throughout the country.

Personalized: Effective learning is not limited to a “one size fits all” model. Students participating in Mercury Online programs quickly realize the unique learning advantages it offers through the one-on-one connection with and access to, each online instructor. Each student enrolled in Mercury courses has a Personalized Student Achievement Plan (PSAP). This plan contains a student’s academic history as well as immediate and long term goals to work on. The PSAP is reviewed with the student and family on a quarterly basis and updated throughout the year to reflect current progress and adjusted goals with strategies for accomplishing them.

Dynamic: Mercury Online integrates online instruction into everyday practice. The program features both “synchronous” – live instruction as well as “asynchronous” recorded lessons. As an independent education provider, Mercury uses the best, standards-based content and leading online delivery methods to assure a top flight learning experience. High school students receive one live session per week per course of synchronous instruction.

Teacher-led: While other programs have focused only on content or delivering “education in a box” to the student, Mercury has championed teacher-led online instruction provided by highly

³ *Keeping Pace with K-12 Online Learning 2010*, Evergreen Consulting; www.KPK12.com

⁴ *A National Primer on K-12 Online Learning (2010)*

qualified professionals. Whether teachers are provided by Mercury or are district instructors trained by the Mercury team, our online teachers are professional, experienced, content specialists who provide both individualized attention as well as “live” webinar-style instruction. A hallmark of this model is that Mercury teachers are actively leading instruction -- not just "on call" if a student needs assistance.

Each student in every grade level participates in frequent, "live" synchronous classes with Mercury instructors. This provides for dynamic classroom interaction, direct teacher instruction and at the same time enables students to communicate one-on-one with teachers. All of these live webinar style sessions are also recorded, which provides the student with an additional option for review; something not available in a traditional classroom.

Effective: The achievement results for this program have been exciting. In California’s most recent statewide API assessment program, Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Southern California scored in the top 5% of all online and independent study programs in the state.

Mercury Online Charter School’s full-time and individual coursework virtual solutions offers grade-level, standards-based instruction aligned with Pennsylvania Department of Education Curriculum Standards for students in grades K-12. College-preparatory in nature, the program is rigorous, relevant, and focused on bringing out the best in each student. It is designed with the flexibility to deliver individualized assessment and instruction.

The Mercury Online program not only aligns with the Pennsylvania Curriculum Standards and Common Core, but is fully aligned to the ASCD National Content Standards as well as the accreditation standards of Advanced Ed. Alignment documentation can be provided upon request.

Broad Range of Content Based on Student Needs

Students will engage in an engaging, interactive, online curricula designed to meet their academic needs. With the exception of its proprietary Paragon© Curriculum, Mercury offers a broad range of content leveraging the expertise of trusted online partners in education such as *Compass Learning Odyssey*, *Explore Learning Gizmos*, *Brain Pop*, *Rosetta Stone*, and *Learn 360* just to name a few.

Paragon® Curriculum: Paragon® is an innovative interdisciplinary humanities curriculum that follows a student-centered, personalized approach to learning. It offers rigor, relevance, and rich content. Paragon® has made a significant impact in student achievement for more than a decade. Today it is used at dozens of schools across the United States, many of which have been cited for excellence in academic improvement.

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

2. School Demographics:

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania

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?*

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will enroll students in grades K-12. Students must be 5 by September 1st to enroll in kindergarten. The entry age for beginners is 5 years 7 months.

Year	K	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	Total
1	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	650
2	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	60	780
3	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	910
4	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	85	1105
5	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1300

B. *Describe the community or region where the school, particularly the administrative office, will be located.*

Our target student profile is not limited to any particular demographic. Instead, the Mercury Model is designed and organized to serve students and families who have chosen an online program for any of the following reasons, or other reasons relevant to the individual:

- Individuals who are self-directed and choose a wider range of academic options.
- Students of all ability levels seeking additional academic and learning opportunities.
- Families seeking a setting that supports their family relationships and/or personal beliefs and values, and families who prefer to home school.
- Students in need of alternative scheduling (i.e. sports, drama, extracurricular activities).
- Individuals who are high-risk/at-risk for successfully achieving high school graduation or equivalency.
- Health reasons prohibit them from attending normal classroom programs.

In education, one size does not fit all and Mercury is dedicated to providing students and families with an online learning environment that can meet individual students’ unique needs. The goal of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania is to create a school that enables all of its students in becoming self motivated, competent, lifelong learners. The Main office will be located in Harrisburg.

C. *Why was this location selected? Are there other locations suitable to the needs and focus of the school?*

Students across the state of Pennsylvania will be able to enroll in the online only version of Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania. Students in Harrisburg, Pittsburg, and Philadelphia will have the opportunity to enroll in the 4+1 Hybrid model at one of

three centers. Additional centers will be opened at a later date to include the additional large cities as well as rural areas.

D. Describe any unique demographic characteristics of the student population to be served including primary languages spoken.

The student group targeted for Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will be ethnically diverse. English will be the dominant language but is not required for enrollment. A specific EL component will be included in the curriculum offered by Mercury. This highly interactive, multi-media coursework is designed to incorporate learning in mathematics and science even as it assists students in developing fluency in English. The school will target low-income students from urban areas, although we will be open to serving all K-12 students across the State. The main school building will be located in Harrisburg.

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.

The founders have begun to generate sustainable support to operate through partnerships with a variety of charter schools (Birney Preparatory Academy and Fell Charter School) and Institutes of Higher Education (Carnegie Mellon University) as well as supporting districts. Additional partnerships will be formed over the coming months. Carnegie Mellon University is interested in partnering with MOCS and host a center on their campus.

B. What efforts have you made to notify the district(s) from which your charter school would draw students?

The founders have notified the School District of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh Public Schools, and Harrisburg School District of the possibility of creating a cyber charter school.

C. What efforts will be implemented to maintain a collaborative relationship with school districts?

Through the letters submitted to the district, we have initiated the open dialogue with the neighboring school districts. We will continue to work with the districts to provide students with the best possible education.

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.

D. 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.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania is developing support through planned community meetings as well as through an online cyber petition. The results of these efforts will be available within the next month.

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

1. Profile of Founding Coalition:

A. Describe the makeup 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.

The founding group continues to form with Thomas Fitzpatrick as the organizing board member. To round out founders, MOCS is currently in discussions with individuals from Carnegie Mellon University as well as parents with a prior experience sending their students to cyber and charter schools in Pennsylvania. Additional information on the board will be provided during the interview phase.

B. 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 Founding Coalition is composed of members lawyers, parents and members of the Institute of Higher Education community. MOCS has partnerships with charter schools including Birney Preparatory and Fell Charter School as well as the Institution of Higher Education, Carnegie Mellon University. Letters of support can be provided upon request.

C. Include any plans for further recruitment of founders or organizers of the school.

MOCS founding members will continue recruiting an appropriately balanced board to reflect the community that is being served. Based on the Mercury Online Charter School's mission, the organizational needs will be clearly articulated in terms of member experience, skills, influence, demographic profile and other considerations and new board members will be recruited as needed to fill vacancies. Entrepreneurs, educators, lawyers, accountants, and business people with personnel, management, and marketing experience will be actively sought out from the

local business community, colleges/universities, our pool of potential parents, and other key community members.

At minimum, any prospective Board member will be required to submit a resume and criminal background check for review. All credentials of prospective nominees will be reviewed thoroughly, including any information pertaining to their performance on other boards, as well as formally interviewing prospective members and obtaining their endorsement of the school's educational and business model. Background checks and resumes for board members will be submitted upon request.

Explanation: Describe a group that is composed of people with a range of professional skills capable of the organizational, financial, pedagogical, legal and other skills required to operate a functioning public 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 Charter School is governed by a corporate Board of Directors who shall be selected, and serve, and govern the Charter School in accordance with their adopted corporate bylaws, which shall be maintained to align with the terms of this charter and applicable law.

The Board of Directors will be responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of the Charter School, including but not limited to:

- Approval of the annual school budget, calendar, salary schedules, major fundraising events, and grant writing;
- Negotiation and approval of a MOU or other contracts with the District;
- Approval of all contracts, contract renewals, and personnel actions (e.g., hiring, discipline, dismissal);
- Approval of bylaws, resolutions, policies, and procedures of school operation;
- Approval of all changes to the charter to be submitted to the District as necessary in accordance with applicable law;
- Long-term strategic planning for the Charter School;
- Participation as necessary in dispute resolution;
- Monitoring overall student performance;
- Reviewing and approving the selection of the Chief Administrative Officer, as necessary;
- Reviewing and approving the evaluation of the Chief Administrative Officer;
- Monitoring the performance of the Charter School and taking necessary action to ensure that the school remains true to its mission and charter;
- Monitoring the fiscal solvency of the Charter School;
- Participation in the Charter School's annual independent fiscal audit, including, but not limited to, selection of auditor, receipt and review of audit, and authorization of audit submittal to appropriate agencies;
- Participation in the Charter School's performance report to the District;
- Participation as necessary in student expulsion matters;
- Increasing public awareness of the Charter School; and
- Fundraising efforts.

The Charter School will update the District of changes to the Charter School Board of Directors.

The Charter School's Board of Directors may initiate and carry out any program or activity that is not in conflict with or inconsistent with any law and which is not in conflict with the purposes for which charter schools are established.

The Board may execute any powers delegated by law to it and shall discharge any duty imposed by law upon it and may delegate to an employee or contractor of the Charter School any of those duties with the exception of dismissal of employees, approval of Board policies, approval of the budget or budget revisions or purchases over **\$5,000**. The Board however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated. Such delegation will:

- Be in writing;
- Specify the entity designated;
- Describe in specific terms the authority of the Board being delegated, any conditions on the delegated authority or its exercise and the beginning and ending dates of the delegation; and
- Require an affirmative vote of a majority of present Board members.

B. How will the Board of Trustees be selected?

The governing board will consist of individuals who are committed to the mission of MOCS. Members of the governing board will encompass expertise in the following areas:

- Curriculum and instruction
- Community relations and marketing
- Finance and fundraising
- Governance and management
- Legal issues / educational law
- Real estate
- Student assessment
- Writing charter school documents

The Board shall consist of not less than three trustees. Trustees shall be elected at the annual meeting of the Trustees, and each Trustee shall serve until the next succeeding annual meeting of the Trustees or special meeting in lieu thereof, and until his or her successor has been selected and qualified or until his or her earlier death, resignation or removal. Trustees shall be nominated by a nominating committee or from the floor. No member of a local board of school Trustees of a school entity shall serve on the board, if the charter school organized by the Corporation is located in that member's district.

C. What steps will be taken to maintain continuity between the founding coalition's vision and the Board of Trustees?

The founding coalition will remain on the board for a minimum of one year to ensure continuity.

D. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the board.

The Charter School will be operated by Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania a Pennsylvania Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation.

Board of Directors

The Charter School is governed by a corporate Board of Directors who shall be selected, and serve, and govern the Charter School in accordance with their adopted corporate bylaws, which shall be maintained to align with the terms of this charter and applicable law.

Board Duties

The Board of Directors will be responsible for the operation and fiscal affairs of the Charter School, including but not limited to:

- Approval of the annual school budget, calendar, salary schedules, major fundraising events, and grant writing;
- Negotiation and approval of a MOU or other contracts with the District;
- Approval of all contracts, contract renewals, and personnel actions (e.g., hiring, discipline, dismissal);
- Approval of bylaws, resolutions, policies, and procedures of school operation;
- Approval of all changes to the charter to be submitted to the District as necessary in accordance with applicable law;
- Long-term strategic planning for the Charter School;
- Participation as necessary in dispute resolution;
- Monitoring overall student performance;
- Reviewing and approving the selection of the Chief Administrative Officer, as necessary;
- Reviewing and approving the evaluation of the Chief Administrative Officer;
- Monitoring the performance of the Charter School and taking necessary action to ensure that the school remains true to its mission and charter;

- Monitoring the fiscal solvency of the Charter School;
- Participation in the Charter School’s annual independent fiscal audit, including, but not limited to, selection of auditor, receipt and review of audit, and authorization of audit submittal to appropriate agencies;
- Participation in the Charter School’s performance report to the District;
- Participation as necessary in student expulsion matters;
- Increasing public awareness of the Charter School; and
- Fundraising efforts.

The Charter School will update the District of changes to the Charter School Board of Directors.

The Charter School’s Board of Directors may initiate and carry out any program or activity that is not in conflict with or inconsistent with any law and which is not in conflict with the purposes for which charter schools are established.

Board Meetings

The Board of Directors will meet at least monthly (except for summer months) to review and act on its responsibilities. All meetings shall be held in accordance with the Brown Act.

The Charter School shall adopt a conflicts code, which shall comply with the Political Reform Act, Government Code Section 87100, and applicable conflict restrictions required by the Corporations Code and any conflicts restrictions that may be adopted in the future as applicable to the Charter School.

The Board of Directors meetings will be headed by a Board President, who will be elected annually amongst the Board at the concluding meeting of the school year.

As long as quorum exists as defined by the corporate bylaws, measures voted on by the Board of Directors may be passed with a simple majority of present members.

Board Training

The Board of Directors shall participate annually in training regarding board governance, the Brown Act, and conflicts of interest rules.

Board Delegation of Duties

The Board may execute any powers delegated by law to it and shall discharge any duty imposed by law upon it and may delegate to an employee or contractor of the Charter School any of those

duties with the exception of dismissal of employees, approval of Board policies, approval of the budget or budget revisions or purchases over **\$5,000**. The Board however, retains ultimate responsibility over the performance of those powers or duties so delegated. Such delegation will:

- Be in writing;
- Specify the entity designated;
- Describe in specific terms the authority of the Board being delegated, any conditions on the delegated authority or its exercise and the beginning and ending dates of the delegation; and
- Require an affirmative vote of a majority of present Board members.

E. What steps will be taken to facilitate a productive relationship between administrators and teachers?

The Board of Directors, Administration and Teachers will maintain an open dialogue

F. Discuss the nature of parental and student involvement in decision-making matters where appropriate.

The founding board members of MOCS shares common goals towards the involvement of parents in their students' education. As stated earlier, research has clearly demonstrated that increased parental involvement in a child's education directly impacts student achievement ratesⁱⁱⁱ. At the Charter School we are interested in increasing opportunities for whole families by empowering parents with confidence and trust in the educational setting. Therefore, school leaders, teachers and board members will personally invite and encourage parent participation in all facets of the Charter School's operation. The very nature of the hybrid program allows for parental involvement on a daily basis through access to the Learning Management System and all teacher/student communications. Parents are encouraged to support students in their academic pursuits and to participate in synchronous online events with students and staff. In addition, parents are also very valuable to the one classroom day per week experience for the students.

G. 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

H. Submit board members' names, addresses, phone numbers and resumes.

Thomas O. Fitzpatrick

Mr. Fitzpatrick began his career as a prosecutor in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office. Mr. Fitzpatrick also has experience working as an extern on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals and a law clerk with the United States Attorney's Office (Eastern District of Michigan).

As an Assistant District Attorney in the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office, he advanced through the office trying numerous jury trials relating to drug offenses, attempted murder and rape. Mr. Fitzpatrick completed his appointment as an Assistant District Attorney as a member of the elite Family Violence and Sexual Assault Unit.

In the courtroom, Mr. Fitzpatrick is an aggressive trial attorney. He takes pride in the fact that he has succeeded in numerous jury trials where previous attorneys were unable to secure verdicts. His practice focuses on criminal defense, personal injury and business disputes.

Mr. Fitzpatrick prevailed in a five-week, four co-defendant trial involving charges of Murder and Witness Intimidation. At the conclusion of the trial, only Mr. Fitzpatrick's client was found Not Guilty by the jury. Mr. Fitzpatrick has been retained in a number of high profile matters with extensive press coverage including bank robberies and police shootings and the most serious federal indictments.

Professional Affiliations

President of the Barristers' Association of Philadelphia (A Premier Black Lawyers Association)

J. Willard O'Brien Inn of Court (Villanova University)

Philadelphia Bar Association, Criminal Law Section, Co-Chair

Villanova University School of Law Alumni Board of Directors

Education

B.S. Villanova University School of Business

J.D. Villanova University School of Law

M.B.A. Villanova University School of Business

See attached resume.

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

Not Applicable at this time.

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 projected sources of revenue, both public and private, and planned expenditures.*

See Attached

B. *Develop a purchasing procedure that addresses a competitive way to purchase goods and services.*

Vendor Bids

Any goods or services that require competitive bidding from contractors or vendors (i.e., items to be procured in excess of \$5,000) will be initiated by forwarding a request thru the CAO and Board.

- The Manager of Purchasing will put together the necessary information for the advertisement. This information will be sent back to the CAO for proofing.
- Once the ad has been proofed, the Manager of Purchasing will have it posted in the newspaper and online for the legally requisite number of times and/or publication period.
- The bids that are received will be reviewed by the Purchasing Manager and then forwarded to the CAO with a recommendation as to which represents the lowest responsive bid, and any form of contract that may be required.
- The CAO forwards the bids to the Board of Directors for review and approval.
- Where required, bids requiring authorizer or other approvals or review will be forwarded by the CAO to the appropriate office or agency.

- The name of the legal entity, address, and social security number of all “contractors” must be on file before work begins or services provided.

Purchase of Goods or Services

Purchase Orders

Purchase Orders are prepared at the School

- Teachers / Staff members must fill out a Purchase Order (Attachment E) with a complete description of the item or service.
- Completed Purchase Orders will then be transmitted to the CAO, who will verify the availability of budgeted funds. This information may be ascertained from the School Accountant or from online access to the school’s accounting records.
- Additional approvals, if any, which are prescribed in the following table shall then be verified by a signature affixed to the Purchase Order either by hand or electronically:

Amount of Purchase	CAO	Board
< \$1,000	No	No
\$1,000 - \$9999.99	Yes	No
≥ \$10,000	Yes	Yes

- The School submits the approved purchase order to the Manager of Purchasing and the School Accountant at the accounting office by e-mail or fax.
 - The Manager of Purchasing is responsible for:
 - Insuring compliance with bid laws
 - Identifying lowest price meeting specifications for goods requested.
 - The School Accountant is responsible for:
 - Verifying availability of budgeted funds;
 - If budgeted funds are not available or if the Purchase Order exceeds the budgeted amount, the Purchase Order is returned to the CAO and the Board Treasurer and VP of School Finance are advised. Based on the type a purchase requested, these individuals may determined that a revised budget will be presented to the Board for consideration and possible approval
 - Coding and entering the Purchase Order into the Accounting System;
 - Forwarding the approved and processed Purchase Order to the Vendor;
 - Returning a copy of the approved and processed Purchase Order to the school;
 - Filing a copy of the Purchase Order in the Vendor Files in the Accounting Office

Receipt of goods or services by the school

The Building Secretary (or other designated school employee) is responsible for verifying conformity of delivery to the Purchase Order and to the invoice. Any discrepancies are to be reported directly to the vendor immediately.

- The Building Secretary (or other designated school employee) shall affix (or obtain) the signature of the employee verifying receipt and the date of such signature, and then forward the invoice to the CAO for a signature authorizing payment.
- If the purchase was made pursuant to a Purchase Order, it shall be sufficient to attach a copy of the approved and processed Purchase Order to the invoice bearing the signature of the receiving employee and the CAO.
- If the purchase was not made pursuant to Purchase Order, the invoice shall be circulated to obtain the appropriate approval signatures in accordance with the signature table set forth.
- The verified copy of the invoice, request for payment and packing slip is sent to the Accounting office via fax or e-mail within 24 hours of receipt and verification of goods.
- Verification of receipt of services from all independent contractors must include an itemized invoice of services provided, which invoice must be verified and approved by the CAO.

The AP department at the Accounting Office codes the Payment Voucher and issues a check to the vendor.

C. What fund raising efforts have occurred and/or are planned to generate capital or to supplement the per pupil allocations?

A public school, like any organization, can only succeed if it has adequate resources to meet its needs. Many foundations and businesses that contribute to traditional public schools are now eager and willing to support charter schools as well. Mercury has a full-time development officer on staff and will assist the Board in its fundraising efforts as appropriate and will train Board members in effective fundraising strategies and techniques as needed.

D. Describe the implementation of the following required financial procedures:

The treasurer of the Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania 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 Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania 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 or 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 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:

A. Provide descriptions of and addresses for the physical facilities, including the administrative office, and the ownership of the facilities and any lease arrangements.

Facility will be leased from EFA Company LLC at the rate of \$12/sq.ft. Landlord will furnish all improvements.

B. 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.

The facility will be renovated by the landlord and will provide to the Academy in “turn-key” condition, requiring no renovation from the Academy’s funds. There are several vacant offices adjacent to our office, which can be leased if we were to expand. There is also a building with classrooms a short walk from the office, which could be used for a learning center

C. Discuss the plan for maintaining the facility on a daily basis (custodial) and extended basis (facility maintenance).

Mercury Online Academy of Pennsylvania will contract with custodial and maintenance services as needed.

D. Discuss any progress, partnership developments or other future steps towards acquisition of a facility/land.

MOCS does not plan to acquire any facilities at this time

E. Describe facility financing plans.

None will be required

Explanation: Describe progress toward identifying and acquiring a school facility, with a back-up plan considering alternative facilities.

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).

The Charter School shall acquire and finance general liability, workers compensation, and other necessary insurance of the types and in the amounts required for an enterprise of similar purpose and circumstance and based on State recommendations. Prior to opening, the Charter School shall provide evidence of the above insurance coverage. All full time employees will have access to health care benefits.

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

4. Child Accounting

1. Describe the proposed cyber charter school's enrollment and attendance procedures.

Note: State child accounting procedures must be followed. (24 PS 13-1332)

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will comply with all State child accounting procedures. See below for further child accounting details.

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.*

Based on the level of home school interest and participation, Mercury will target the Philadelphia, Pittsburg, and Harrisburg areas for its initial Mercury centers with a goal of having at least one center per each of these school districts. In accordance with Pennsylvania Statute, these school districts will be notified regarding our intent to locate centers within their district boundaries.

Each center will meet or exceed all building requirements required for the safety of students.

Because Mercury will have learning centers for daily student attendance and support as needed, this negates the challenge many virtual schools must face with regards to administrative space and testing facilities. The facility will also have room for Parent/Guardian and community events such as our Paragon Night, which occurs every 5 weeks.

Based on enrollment patterns in other areas, we anticipate that 50% of our students will attend a 4+1 center and 50% of our students will be schooled at home.

B. *What type of outreach will be made to potential students and their families?*

Marketing Strategy

Online programs are appealing to individuals for a number of reasons, many of which are personal in nature. The students who attend this school will be a self-selected group, and our marketing plan will be designed to get the information out to the general public. We will market the schools both locally and regionally.

Locally, we will rely on Parent/Guardian meetings, fliers, geographically targeted online media and direct mail and signage (billboards) that will be focused on a 5-10 mile radius around the local learning center.

Regionally, we will use TV and internet/SEO strategies for maximum reach with younger families. In addition we will be networking with community and non-profit organizations that provide services to underserved populations

The variety of marketing methods used will reach students of diverse backgrounds and income groups; media ads will be delivered in multiple languages. By its very nature, an online learning environment provides the opportunity to differentiate instruction and target the underserved populations such as special needs, second language, minorities, etc. An effective outreach plan will impact the community by effectively marketing the program in multiple languages and being sure that these populations are made aware of the unique advantages that Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania offers.

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.*

Student admission policy and procedures for the charter school:

Nondiscriminatory Admissions Criteria

All charter schools shall comply fully with the state's Charter School Law regarding admission policies and procedures, as well as all other applicable state and federal provisions. The charter school will be nonsectarian in all respects. The school shall not discriminate against any student, employee, or other person on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability. Admission criteria will not consider intellectual or athletic ability, aptitude, disability, race, creed, national origin, religion, or ancestry.

Mercury Online Charter School's admission policies and procedures recognize IDEA 2004 and civil rights protections and will be consistent with federal guidelines on lotteries as outlined in 53A-1a-502(2)(b)(I and ii).

Generally, the charter school will give preference to these categories of students:

- Returning Students
- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Children of founding members and teachers less than 3% of total enrollment

Admissions Procedures

Application Process

Any child who is qualified under state law for admission to a public school is qualified for admission to the charter school. The application will include a general description of Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania and more particularly, describe the *Paragon Curriculum* and highlight the school's Parent/Guardian involvement components

- ✓ Admission packets include: name, address, emergency contact, relevant health and safety information/forms, and all other information/forms required by the state charter school law and local school districts
- ✓ A deadline for submission of the application is clearly stated
- ✓ Applications are closely monitored to ensure that the applicant pool reflects the demographic makeup of the community served
- ✓ All applicants are asked to review and sign the participation agreement, which outlines expectations for the online program..

Office Procedures for Student Records

Student Files

The school will need to develop an electronic and/or paper record keeping system, policies and procedures for when student information is gathered, how it is stored (including back-ups if necessary), and who may have access to it and when. This latter issue is important to ensure that

confidential information is carefully protected and made available for official use only. The school may want to consult forms used by the local school districts and consult with district staff to ensure that, in the event a student returns to the district, the information file associated with that student contains information helpful to district staff.

Student files contain the following documents with a checklist of forms:

- ✓ Application (with name, address, emergency contact, relevant health/safety information, and all other information/forms required by the state charter school law and local school districts)
- ✓ Birth Certificate
- ✓ Copy of Immunization Records
- ✓ Proof of Residency (Utility Bill, Tax Record, Lease, Drivers License)
- ✓ Most recent report card
- ✓ Educational Testing
- ✓ Documentation of IEP (If applicable; complete special education records are kept separately)
- ✓ Parent/Guardian request for file transfer of student records
- ✓ Volunteer forms
- ✓ Signed Home/School Compact and participation agreement

All records will have the student's name on each document in the upper right hand corner. The date of enrollment and any withdrawal dates will be clearly marked on the application.

Student files are maintained in a neat and orderly fashion. Forms and documents are stored in a consistent manner in every file. In addition to the student information listed above, there will be a section in the student's file for all correspondence with the Parent/Guardian, as well as a section for any discipline records.

Student files will be kept up-to-date with current emergency contact information at all times.

(iii) Documentation

Any contact with a Parent/Guardian for any reason will be documented and a brief summary of the contact put in the appropriate section in the student's file. These records will be initialed and dated by the person who made the contact. Likewise, when an attempt at contact is initiated and contact is *not* made, a record will be made indicating the date and time of the attempt and a brief description of the reason for the attempted contact then initialed and dated by the person making the attempt.

Injury reports and Incident reports and any follow-up due process documentation that are determined by the CAO to become part of a student's permanent record, are kept in the student's file. Additionally, the school's administrative staff will maintain a separate injury and incident file.

Student Records File Maintenance

Maintaining the student records is the responsibility of the administrative assistant. The administrative staff will set up a regularly scheduled internal audit of student records to check for any missing documents and to ensure that all information contained in the file is in the proper order.

Student Record Audits

Student records are audited by the state and an outside auditing firm on a yearly basis for verification of student funding for the charter school. Proper student file maintenance is a crucial component for the financing for the charter school.

Freedom of Information Law

Students have the right to accurate and complete school records, maintained in accordance with applicable federal and state law. Accurate and complete individual records shall be maintained for each student enrolled in the charter school. Such records will be kept in a safe and secure manner to ensure student confidentiality.

Parent/Guardians have the right to inspect any and all records relating to their dependent. Students with written Parent/Guardian permission may inspect their own records. All inspections shall be conducted in the presence of a school representative. Information may be released to others only with written Parent/Guardian consent. Nominal fees may be charged for duplication of records. Parent/Guardians may not remove the record or its contents.

The charter school will ensure compliance with state laws as well as the confidentiality provisions of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Upon receipt of a written request for information, the charter school will:

- Within five days of receipt of the written request, make the information available, deny the request in writing, or provide a written acknowledgement of the receipt of the request and note the approximate period of time in which the request will be denied or granted
- The school will deny a request only on legally proper grounds, including reasonably protecting personal privacy from unwarranted intrusions

If a person appeals the denial of a request, the school will fully explain the reasons for further denial or make the information available within ten business days of the receipt of the notice of the appeal. The school will forward a copy of the appeal and ultimate determination to the appropriate agency.

(iv) Student Attendance

Student attendance will be monitored closely to ensure the 180 school day – 990 hour requirement is met or exceeded. Attendance can be monitored through the Learning Management System.

B. Explain administrative procedures to ensure compliance with laws pertaining to special education.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will admit all pupils who wish to attend the Charter School, and who submit a timely application, unless the Charter School receives a greater number of applications than there are spaces for students, in which case each application will be given equal chance of admission through a public random drawing process. Admission to the Charter School shall not be determined according to the place of residence of the student or his or her parents within the State.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will adhere to all provisions of federal law related to students with disabilities including, but not limited to the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Improvement Act of 2004 (“IDEIA”), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (“Section 504”), and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”).

2. *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.*

Lotteries

If the number of applications exceeds the number of seats available in a grade, the school will accept students by a random selection process. The school will grant enrollment preference to returning students, to siblings of students already enrolled in the school, to children of staff members, and to children of founding members. The school will maintain a prioritized lottery list of the remaining applicants. The school will notify applicant families by the end of April whether their children have been accepted.

- ✓ If applications exceed the school’s capacity a lottery is held
- ✓ The admissions lottery policies and processes will be written to reflect federal and state laws regarding random selection and no preference
- ✓ Admission lotteries are witnessed and will occur in a public setting with a notice distributed in advance of the lottery through the school website and other communications to the public and Parent/Guardians.
- ✓ A neutral party will conduct the lottery on behalf of the school

Prioritized Lottery List

After all available spaces are filled a prioritized lottery list will be maintained for each grade. There will be complete student files for each student on the waiting list. When a space becomes available in a grade, the Parent/Guardian of the first student on the waiting list will be contacted and given a set period of time in which they can accept the position (usually one week). If the space is declined the next person on the list will be contacted.

Once the Parent/Guardian has accepted the position for their child:

- ✓ The appropriate *Request for Transfer* form will be immediately sent to the school of origin.
- ✓ The Parent/Guardian is given a copy of the school’s code of conduct and asked to return their signed verification and agreement before the student enters the school.

- ✓ Emergency cards are completed prior to the student's attendance.
- ✓ The Parent/Guardian is given a copy of the absentee/tardy policies of the school as well as any other office procedures (i.e. Visiting the school, drop off and pick up sites, classroom protocol, etc.).

Full Enrollment

Every effort will be made by the office administrative staff to maintain full enrollment of the charter school.

The administrative assistant is to generate a weekly report that lists the current enrollment by class. The data will include current attendance information to assure that the figures include only students that are regularly attending and eliminate the "no-shows" from the numbers.

If a school is under-enrolled, efforts to increase enrollment will be made by working the waiting list, planning marketing events, open houses, Parent/Guardian orientations and enrollment meetings.

3. Explain how these policies further the mission of the school in a non-discriminatory fashion.

The Charter School will prize diversity in its workforce as a diverse staff brings a valuable breadth of perspectives to tasks and decisions faced in any given day. Discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, marital status, or veteran status will not be tolerated. All reasonable accommodations will be made for those covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The charter school will maintain the highest standards for equal employment opportunity and affirmative action including complying with applicable federal, state, local laws and regulations, and initiating and supporting programs and practices designed to create and sustain a diverse faculty and staff.

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.

Please Note: These descriptions are intended to indicate the kinds of tasks and levels of work difficulty that will be required of these positions. They are not intended to limit, or in any way to modify the right of any supervisor to assign, direct or reassign duties and responsibilities of this

job at any time. The use of a particular illustration shall not be used to exclude non-listed duties of similar kind or level of difficulty.

Position: Principal/Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

Employment Type: Administration/At-Will/Exempt

*Reports to: Mercury
Director of Operations*

Accountable To: MERCURY ONLINE EDUCATION and School Board of Trustees

Supervisory Responsibilities: Responsible for the supervision and training of all school staff. Responsible for performing all supervisory responsibilities in accordance with applicable laws and the school's charter and outlined policies and procedures.

(i)

Position Summary: To serve as the Principal/Chief Administrative Officer of the Charter School. Provide school leadership that ensures excellence in teaching and student learning while promoting community support and maintaining efficiency in operation. To insure compliance with all aspects of: state and federal law; board policies and procedures; and compliance requirements of the authorizer.

Primary Tasks⁵:

1. Create a school culture that focuses on student and adult learning.
2. Set high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of all students and the performance of adults.
3. Demand content and instruction that ensures student achievement of academic standards as outlined in the charter agreement.
4. Create a school philosophy that values continuous learning for adults tied into student learning and other school goals.
5. Use multiple sources of data collection to analyze barriers to achievement and to access, identify and apply instructional improvement.
6. Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for student and school success.

Characteristic Duties and Performance Standards: (Essential)

4. Articulate a clear vision of the goals, objectives and commitment of the charter school to all stakeholders. Communicate effectively with parents, students, faculty, the board, state authorizer, MEI and community. Communicate board actions to faculty, staff, students, and parents.

⁵ NAESP in partnership with Collaborative Communications Group, Leading Learning Communities: Standards for What Principals Should Know and Be Able to Do

5. Recruit, interview and select qualified teachers and other staff. Insure that all new hire documentation is submitted to the appropriate parties in a timely manner.
6. Provide instructional and learning leadership that focuses on the four basic elements of: curriculum, instruction, performance and evaluation.
7. Share responsibility for the development and implementation of the school's strategic plan to insure that educational goals, assessment standards and benchmarks are met according to the charter agreement.
8. Insure and oversee the accurate maintenance of administrative records meeting all state and regulatory requirements.
9. Set job performance standards, and evaluate faculty and staff.
10. Institute a mentoring program for teachers within the school.
11. Oversee and insure meaningful parental involvement in the school and their child's learning.

1. Generate public support for the school's program and education in general as the public information officer of the school and supervisor of the overall public relations program.

1. Oversee the development and implementation of marketing plans to attract students to the charter school.
2. Monitor the school curriculum and the Paragon Curriculum to insure proper implementation and assessment and to insure that it is updated annually.
3. Develop and implement a school budget, analyze and control expenditures with an understanding of the relationship between the instructional program and the budgeting process. Supervise and insure that financial reports are completed and submitted to the board in a timely manner.
4. Write proposals for grants and/or oversee grant writing.
5. Supervise and insure the accuracy and completion of the School Improvement Plan, Annual Report, and annual school calendar and submit them to the board in a timely manner. File all required reports with local, state and federal education agencies, Board of Trustees and authorizer.
6. Work with the appropriate staff to develop schedules and staff assignments and to insure the effective and efficient use of time to protect academic subject blocks from disruptions.
7. Communicate policy recommendations for the Board's consideration and action.
8. Serve as chairperson for faculty meetings, academic committees, school improvement committees and administrative committees and attend other committees as needed.
9. Direct and serve as a model to insure the safety, security and attractiveness of the school building and grounds. Oversee the development of a Code of Student Conduct that

defines the responsibilities of administrators, teachers, parents, and students in supporting a safe, secure learning environment.

10. Develop, with the school leadership team, the Emergency Response Plan and insure its effective implementation by all staff and students.
11. Provide effective staff and professional development programs that are tied to student learning and match school goals to model continuous professional growth and improved student and teacher performance.
12. Use multiple sources of data collection including standardized tests, portfolios, observations, conferences and grades to assess student performance and to plan instruction.
13. Use technology effectively for administrative, instructional and communications functions.
14. Attend local, state, and national events as much as possible and participate in local and state CAO/principals' associations and the California Charter Schools Association.
15. Be familiar with school law, including the implications on the educational program and on liability. Keep abreast of developments and consult with the board members in times of uncertainty.
16. Adhere to all procedures and policies as outlined in the Employee Manual.

Performance Standards:(Marginal)

1. Perform various assigned responsibilities, as allowed by state and federal law; of other employees in their absence to the extent other responsibilities permit.

Required Education/Skills: Master's Degree in education, management or related field. A minimum of three years demonstrated work experience as a CAO/principal, assistant CAO/assistant principal or related professional field. (State law does not require administrator's certificate.)

- Needs to demonstrate the ability to:
- Communicate through superior written and oral communications skills.
 - Work on multiple projects and adhere to deadlines.
 - Respond to requests by the board, authorizer and parents in a positive and timely manner.
 - Make sound decisions within the parameters of authority.
 - Be courteous, professional and tactful at all times.
 - Maintain a positive working relationship with faculty, staff, board members, parents, students, authorizer and community.
 - Motivate and create a shared vision within the school community.
 - Serve as a role model who acknowledges through actions and behaviors the critical value of human relationships in achieving personal and professional goals and organizational purpose.

Required Qualifications: To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed in this position description are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Position: *Curriculum Implementation Specialist*

Employment Type: *Professional/Exempt/At-Will* **Reports To:** *Chief Administrative Officer*

Accountable To: *Chief Administrative Officer; MEI Regional Vice President of Curriculum and Operations; and MEI Regional Curriculum Implementation Specialist*

Supervisory Responsibilities: The CIS is responsible for supervising and providing expertise in instructional program implementation of all curriculum areas and providing professional development.

Position Summary: To serve as the Instructional Specialist for all areas of the curriculum and facilitator for all academic programs for the Charter School. Monitor curriculum implementation and instruction to ensure excellence in teaching that supports student achievement. Provide teachers with an exemplary ongoing professional development program that contributes to their development as knowledgeable, informed, responsible and accountable educators and as leaders. Ensure that students receive a first class learning experience that maximizes their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development, including the continuous development of their intellect and problem solving skills.

Primary Tasks:

1. Share a commitment to the success of the mission, goals, and objectives of the charter school.
2. Provide leadership and fully participate in a school culture that focuses on student and adult learning.
3. Set high expectations and standards for the achievement of instructional staff, students and own personal performance.
4. Offer continuous and targeted professional development that directly supports the school curriculum and instruction that ensures continuous student achievement of the school's academic standards.
5. Model effective instructional practices, including delivery of instruction using effective teaching strategies, and provide effective feedback, professional development and coaching for teachers in mastering these practices.
6. Provide support through modeling, team teaching or observing each teacher at least twice per month.
7. Exhibit leadership and support for a school philosophy that values continuous learning for adults tied into student learning and other school goals.

8. Use multiple sources of data collection to analyze barriers to student achievement and to access, identify and apply to instructional improvement.
9. Provide opportunities for the community to be involved in student and school success.
10. Work collaboratively with the Regional Curriculum Implementation Specialist (RCIS) to provide curriculum and instructional support and professional development for staff.

Characteristic Duties and Performance Standards: (Essential)

Curriculum and Instruction

1. Accept responsibility for the successful implementation of the Charter School's academic programs and for the achievement of students.
2. Provide leadership in curriculum mapping and lesson planning, in alignment with state standards and grade level expectations.
3. Monitor curriculum implementation and effective instruction, providing feedback, coaching, and training in targeted areas of need.
4. Lead grade level and/or content area meetings on topics of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; and provide leadership in curriculum and instruction during staff meetings, and on an individual basis.
5. Monitor the use of student achievement data from multiple sources (including standardized tests, ILS data, curriculum-based assessments, other assessments and other data) to inform instruction.
6. Provide support for intervention programs based on Personalized Student Achievement Plans and monitor program effectiveness based on data.
7. Assume responsibility for coordinating and reporting monthly teacher feedback surveys on Paragon Curriculum to the Regional Curriculum Implementation Specialist.
8. Serve as resource specialist for the Paragon multimedia materials.
9. Guide and support teachers in the creation of multimedia displays for each Paragon Unit, including but not limited to ensuring that all applicable multi-media pieces for each unit are on display in the Paragon Out of the Box suitcase.
10. Provide leadership for Paragon Nights held at the end of each Paragon Unit in order to maximize parent, staff, student, and community participation.
11. Select appropriate, approved materials for implementation of the Paragon Curriculum and guide teachers in the effective use of multimedia resources and technology for full Paragon implementation.
12. Guide teachers in the effective use of instructional and support materials for full implementation of all areas of the curriculum.

13. Guide teachers in adapting materials and methods across the curriculum to the learning styles and instructional levels of individual students, using multiple appropriate differentiation strategies, including but not limited to instructional grouping.

Professional Development

1. Guide teachers' learning process towards achievement of curriculum and instruction goals to maximize student achievement.
2. Guide teachers' learning process towards the creation and updating of Personalized Student Achievement Plans and their use to maximize student achievement.
3. Guide teachers' learning process in the use of student achievement data from multiple sources (including standardized tests, ILS data, curriculum-based assessments, other assessments and other data) to inform instruction.
4. Lead teachers in effective planning, curriculum mapping and organization for instruction, in alignment with state standards.
5. Motivate teachers to achieve their highest level of ability and potential through activities, assignments, relationships, participation and feedback; hold high expectations and demonstrate sensitivity to different learning styles.
6. Demonstrate exceptional educational techniques which include: the art of questioning, clarity of assignments, communication in large and small groups and with individual students, an atmosphere of mutual respect, independent thought and expression, and student and teacher experiences.
7. Use Mercury Leadership Tool Kit observation tools effectively to monitor effective instruction and provide feedback, support, and coaching for improvement of instruction.
8. Monitor individual progress toward the achievement of goals via the Individualized Professional Development Plan (IPDP) and provide professional development and support/coaching/mentoring as appropriate.
9. Support teachers in the creation of a Paragon portfolio that chronicles their journey as teachers and provides reflection on professional practice.

Leadership

1. Assume responsibility for Parent Education at Paragon Programs. Provide the script for transitions between student performances to include the narrative historical context and a review of what the students have learned during the time period studied.
2. Model creative instructional methods and procedures that adapt effectively to unusual situations.

3. Organize resources effectively to support learning activities online, in the classroom, the school, and the community.
4. Work cooperatively with parents to generate parents' confidence in the teacher and instructional program.
5. Demonstrate genuine concern for students in a climate characterized by high personal and student expectations.
6. Promote good citizenship through actions as role model. Display personal qualities that reflect favorably upon the individual, the group, and the school.
7. Provide a school culture based on the principles of firm, fair, and consistent practices, respect for individual children, and development of responsible citizenship.
8. Participate in the development of policies and regulations that affect instruction and conditions for success.
9. Provide leadership and expertise as a member of the School Improvement Team, including but not limited to compilation and analysis of needs assessment data and use of the data to set goals, develop plans, and monitor progress toward goals throughout the school improvement process.
10. Identify and participate in professional development opportunities.
11. Use technology effectively for instruction, record keeping and other administrative tasks, and communications.
12. Share responsibility for professional, cooperative staff relations and for other activities important to operation of school.
13. Conduct one's self according to professional, ethical principles. Continually strive to improve methods, teaching techniques, and interpersonal relationships. Adhere to all school policies for both students and personnel.
14. Share responsibility for marketing the Charter School in the community.
15. Display pride in being a member of the Charter School Leadership Team.
16. Adhere to all procedures and policies as outlined in the Employee Manual.

Performance Standards: (Marginal)

1. Perform various assigned responsibilities, as allowed by state and federal law, of other employees in their absence to the extent other responsibilities permit.

(b) Required Education/Skills: *Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences or Humanities,*
Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania

Masters Degree in Curriculum and Instruction or comparable educational attainment; valid teacher certificate (as appropriate, per state requirements) , meeting federal guidelines for highly qualified teacher in at least one content area; demonstrated competence with a minimum of 4 years of classroom teaching experience as a Reading and Language Arts teacher, Social Science and Humanities teacher, and/or media resource specialist and teacher trainer; demonstrated experience as a leader in Curriculum and Instruction or related field. Experience with oral history or the performing arts preferred. Must demonstrate competency in all areas of content responsibility and be computer literate.

Needs to demonstrate the ability to:

- Communicate through superior written and oral communications skills.
- Demonstrate superior facilitation and expert presentation skills
- Exhibit a high caliber of expertise in core subject areas.
- Work on multiple projects and respond to requests and deadlines in an accurate, timely manner.
- Research effectively, including Internet research proficiency, working knowledge of MS Word and educational software.
- Map and implement curriculum, in alignment with state standards and grade level expectations.
- Analyze achievement data, communicate results, and develop plans for improvement based on the data.
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of adult learning theories and the practice of coaching teachers in the area of instruction.
- Make sound decisions within the parameters of authority.
- Be courteous, professional and tactful at all times.
- Maintain a positive working relationship with faculty, staff, board members, parents, students, authorizer and community.
- Work collaboratively with members of the school leadership team, teachers, MEI regional team members, and others to support the Mercury Educational Model.
- Motivate and create a shared vision within the school community.
- *Be respected as an adult learner and as an individual.*
- Serve as a role model who acknowledges through actions and behaviors the critical value of human relationships in achieving personal and professional goals and organizational purpose.

Required Qualifications: To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed in this position description are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Position: *Teacher*

Employment Type: *Professional/Exempt/At-Will* ***Reports To:*** *Chief Administrative Officer*

Accountable To: *The Board of Trustees*

Supervisory Responsibilities: *Students, Volunteers, and Assigned Staff.*

Position Summary: To serve as a teacher for the Charter School. To provide students with a first class learning experience that maximizes their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development, including the development of their ability to apply their intellect to solving problems and contribute to their communities as enlightened and responsible citizens.

Primary Tasks:

1. Share a commitment to the success of the mission, goals, and objectives of the charter school.
2. Support and fully participate in a school culture that focuses on student and adult learning.
3. Set high expectations and standards for the achievement of students and own personal performance.
4. Offer content and instruction that ensures student achievement of school's academic standards.
5. Support a school philosophy that values continuous learning for adults tied into student learning and other school goals.
6. Use multiple sources of data collection to analyze barriers to student achievement and to access, identify and apply to instructional improvement.
7. Provide opportunities for the community to be involved in student and school success.

Characteristic Duties and Performance Standards: (Essential)

1. Accept responsibility for the achievement of students.
2. Guide the learning process toward achievement of curriculum goals and implementation of personal learning plans of students.
3. Demonstrate effective planning and organization for instruction by: having lesson plans available at least one week in advance to assist in case of absence; taking attendance as required; tracking and submitting grades accurately and on time.
4. Motivate students to achieve at their highest level of ability and potential through activities, assignments, relationships, participation and feedback; set high expectations; and demonstrate sensitivity to different learning styles.
5. Use creative instructional methods and procedures and adapt effectively to unusual situations.
6. Select appropriate materials for implementation of the Paragon Curriculum and adapts materials and methods to learning styles and abilities of students.
7. Use resources effectively to support learning activities.
8. Demonstrate exceptional techniques which include: the art of questioning, clarity of assignments, communication in large and small groups and with individual students, an

atmosphere of mutual respect, independent thought and expression, and student and teacher experiences.

9. Work cooperatively with parents and generate parents' confidence in the teacher.
10. Demonstrate genuine concern for students in a climate characterized by high personal and student expectations.
11. Promote good citizenship through actions as role model.
12. Provide an atmosphere based on the principles of firm, fair, and consistent practices, respect for individual children, and development of responsible citizenship.
13. Participate in the development of policies and regulations that affect instruction and conditions for success.
14. Use technology effectively for instruction, record keeping and other administrative tasks, and communications
15. Share responsibility for professional, cooperative staff relations and for other activities important to operation of school. Serve, when asked, as a teacher mentor.
16. Adhere to professional, ethical principles. Continually strive to improve classroom methods, teaching techniques, and interpersonal relationships. Adhere to all school policies for both students and personnel.
17. Share responsibility for marketing the Charter School in the community.
18. Display personal qualities that reflect favorably upon the individual, the group, and the school.
19. Display pride in being a teacher and a member of the charter school team by displaying positive behavior and fully participating in the school culture. Attend faculty meetings and participate on committees.
20. Identify and participate in professional development opportunities.
21. Conduct and document parent conferences.
22. Adhere to all procedures and policies as outlined in the Employee Manual.

Performance Standards: (Marginal)

- Perform various assigned responsibilities, as allowed by state and federal law, of other employees in their absence to the extent other responsibilities permit.

(c) **Required Education/Skills:** *Bachelor Degree in Education or related discipline (i.e., social science, humanities). Must have appropriate credentials and be highly qualified as designated by the State Department of Education. Must demonstrate competency in all areas of*

content responsibility and be computer literate.

Needs to demonstrate the ability to:

- Communicate through superior written and oral communications skills.
- Exhibit a high caliber of expertise in subject matter.
- Work on multiple projects and respond to requests and deadlines in an accurate, timely manner.
- Make sound decisions within the parameters of authority.
- Be courteous, professional and tactful at all times.
- Maintain a positive working relationship with faculty, staff, board members, parents, students, authorizer and community.
- Motivate and create a shared vision within the school community.
- *Be respected as an adult learner and as an individual.*
- Serve as a role model who acknowledges through actions and behaviors the critical value of human relationships in achieving personal and professional goals and organizational purpose.

Required Qualifications: To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The requirements listed in this position description are representative of the knowledge, skill, and/or ability required. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

B. What is the targeted staff size and teacher/student ratio?

The instructional staff that work with the students in all the models will be licensed in Pennsylvania as well as certified highly qualified teachers in the content area for which they provide instruction. Teachers teach content for Kindergarten thru 5th grade instruction with a 25:1 or lower student to teacher ratio. Each teacher covers all content for his or her students. In grades 6 and higher, content instruction is provided by subject matter specialists, and student – teacher ratio vary by program type.

C. What professional development opportunities will be available to teachers and other staff?

A Rand (Critical Technologies Institute, March 1995) study found that new teaching strategies can require as much as 50 hours of instruction, practice, and coaching before teachers can effectively use them. Mercury schools provide teachers with ongoing training and devote at least 20 days the first year and 15 days each additional year towards professional development. Teachers new to Mercury schools receive and participate in two weeks of pre-service training. This proprietary training gives teachers a solid set of tools, strategies and resources to help them implement the curricula successfully—and bring success to students. Week 1 of pre-service training is presented by Mercury staff in a style that models the effective teaching strategies teachers are to use in their classrooms. Not only do participants learn about effective teaching strategies, they experience them. During each day of the five-day training, teachers explore, practice, and apply pedagogical philosophies, and strategies in community building, classroom management, informal and formal assessment, and effective teaching. Teachers also create an Interactive Training Binder—an organizational tool modeled after a similar binder used by

Mercury students in Paragon Humanities. In this binder, they organize their research, handouts, reflections, questions, and answers. By the end of week 1, they have a useful reference tool that they will refer to throughout the next week of training, the first week of school, and beyond.

During Week 2 of pre-service training, new teachers are joined by returning teachers. During this week, teachers apply their new knowledge--gained during Week 1--even more specifically. Teachers work together to become familiar with their curricula, identify and apply effective teaching strategies, and connect with standards. Teachers then write lesson plans to reflect these goals. They also practice implementing lessons for their peers and supervisors—gaining valuable feedback to ensure that their first days in the classroom are confident and successful.

During training, teachers also receive brief checklists outlining the essential elements that will be evident as they teach language arts, math, science, and Paragon. They understand that these checklists can and will be used by their Curriculum Implementation Specialist and CAO for informal visits to their classrooms. These checklists serve as excellent tools for discussion, feedback and tracking of teacher growth. Teachers are encouraged to keep their checklists in a prominent or easily accessible place so that they have an on-going reminder of key aspects of an effective classroom.

Teachers receive on-going support from their Curriculum Implementation Specialists during weekly grade group meetings and an additional 5 in-service days throughout the year. During these meetings Curriculum Implementation Specialists address teachers concerns and provide additional information, resources, and strategies to ensure that teachers continue to create classrooms that foster student achievement. A Mercury newsletter is also sent out to educational staff on a regular basis, providing them with updates, hints, reminders, and other information that will support them in meeting the needs of their students.

In-service education at the Charter School will be tailored to the student population and to instructional strategies. Several strategies will support ongoing teacher training. One or more in-house curriculum specialists provide regular in-classroom teacher training and curriculum support. These Curriculum Implementation Specialists provide ongoing professional development, pedagogical training and classroom support. In weekly grade group meetings for Paragon, teachers will engage in collaborative planning with colleagues which tailors the curriculum to the specific needs of students and that draws effectively on the talents, passions and resources of teachers, Parent/Guardians, and community members. Workshops provided for teaching staff will include, but are not limited to, reclaiming youth at risk, resiliency training, the Paragon Curriculum, the application of technology in instructional settings, standards, assessment, and the development of instructional learning work plans.

To reward excellence in teaching and mentoring, Mercury has a professional track including a variety of seminars and conferences teachers may attend based on their individual professional development plan. The Charter School will allocate resources to professional development opportunities as part of our efforts to attract and maintain highly qualified staff. MOCS will also work with the Charter School to implement strategies to ensure that we do not lose our most valuable resource—trained, committed teachers—to the competition, be it charter, district, or private. New charter schools tend to attract risk takers who are excited by the possibility of

starting from scratch and creating a new school of choice in communities that have had few or no educational options. Such staff members energize the school and contribute to the vitality and flexibility that will undoubtedly become a defining tenet of the Charter School's school culture.

D. Describe your human resource policies governing salaries, contracts, hiring and dismissal, and benefits.

As stated previously, all employees will be given a copy of the following policies.

Compensation Reviews

Salary reviews are conducted annually. Increases will be based on, but not limited to, job performance, continued training and education, leadership abilities, positive attitude, willingness to accept additional responsibilities, record of attendance and overall professionalism.

Other Compensation Programs and Policies

Payment for July Pay Periods

To be eligible to receive pay for the two pay periods in July the teaching staff must have successfully completed the full school year up to and including the last day of school.

Promotion and Transfer Policy

MOCS has a policy of providing our employees with every opportunity for advancing to other positions within the organization. To qualify for a promotion or transfer, you must have held your current position for a minimum of six (6) months, and be in good standing. Approval of promotions or transfers depends largely upon training, experience, and work record. Promotions and transfers are made without regard to race, color, citizenship status, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, creed, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, or any other factor protected by law.

It is our policy to advise all employees about advancement opportunities. Please submit your request for consideration for a specific position directly to your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor. You are encouraged to discuss any contemplated transfer with your current supervisor.

(ii) Corrective Action

Because of our mission to provide a world-class education through teaching and example, MOCS maintains the highest standards of conduct and job performance for all its employees. We value and acknowledge every employee's effort to meet those standards.

We also recognize that on occasion there will be individual lapses in conduct and/or performance. The principle purpose of the corrective action process is corrective, not punitive. When appropriate, employees are provided a reasonable opportunity to improve if appropriate. Corrective action may be initiated at any time during an employee's service with the school.

- ⇒ **Performance** is how an employee performs his or her job
- ⇒ **Conduct** is how an employee behaves on the job

The corrective action process generally consists of four steps:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Written Warning
3. Final Warning
4. Termination of Employment

In some situations circumstances may warrant skipping one or more steps in the process. The Vice President and the Human Resources Department will be consulted prior to this occurring. Corrective action is an ongoing process taking prior infractions into account. The process does not start over each time a different problem arises.

Every effort will be made to investigate completely the circumstances prior to taking corrective action.

All corrective action will remain in effect for the period of the warning. If there are no further infractions during the warning period, the corrective action will be considered inactive for the purposes of this procedure. Documentation will not be discarded, but will be retained in the confidential section of the employee's personnel file.

An employee with a current corrective action on file is not eligible for promotions or transfers during the warning period. An employee with a current Written or Final Warning is ineligible for a salary increase.

All employees will be treated in a fair and consistent manner with regard to any corrective action taken.

Separation of Employment

Termination of Employment

MOCS operates under the principle of at-will employment. This means that neither you nor MOCS has entered into a contract regarding the duration of your employment. You are free to terminate your employment with MOCS at any time, with or without reason. Likewise, MOCS has the right to terminate your employment, or otherwise discipline, transfer, or demote you at any time, with or without reason, at the discretion of MOCS.

If you find it necessary to resign, you will provide at least two weeks (instructional staff and leadership staff must provide three weeks) advance notice in writing to your supervisor indicating the last day of work. This date will be considered the effective date of your resignation.

Organization property such as keys, computers, credit cards, forms, money, etc., must be returned by each employee and access codes and passwords disclosed to the Chief Administrative Officer/designee prior to the last day of work.

If you have Direct Deposit your final pay will be issued as a live check. If you are not able to pick up your final paycheck in person, then your check will be mailed to your last known address. It is your responsibility to notify the school of any address, telephone or other changes in contact information. Please note that your failure to submit changes in a timely manner may lead to a delay in you receiving your final paycheck, tax (W-2), and benefits information.

Insurance Conversion Privileges

According to the Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Recalculated Act (COBRA) of 1985, in the event of your termination of employment with MOCS, except for gross misconduct or loss of eligibility to remain covered under our group health insurance program, you and your eligible dependents may have the right to continued coverage under our health insurance program for a limited period of time at your own expense.

At your exit interview or upon termination, you will learn how you can continue your insurance coverage and any other benefits you currently have as an employee who is eligible for continuation. Consult your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor for additional details.

Exit Interview

In the event of your resignation, MOCS management will conduct an exit interview to discuss your reasons for leaving and any other impressions that you may have about the school. During the exit interview, you can provide insights into areas for improvement that MOCS can make.

In the event you would like to submit this information confidentially you may request an Exit Survey Form. Once you have completed the form it will be forwarded to the Human Resources Department.

Return of Organization Property

All MOCS/charter school property issued to you, including all documents, records, data, notebooks, notes, reports, proposals, lists, correspondence, specifications, drawings, blueprints, sketches, materials, other documents or property, or reproductions of any aforementioned items, computer equipment, passwords, keys, petty cash and all other property belonging to Mercury Charter School must be returned to the Chief Administrative Officer/supervisor at the time of your termination of employment. You will be asked to sign an Exit Certification Form upon termination stating that you have returned all property. You may be held responsible for any lost or damaged items.

Former Employees

Depending on the circumstances, MOCS may consider a former employee for re-employment. Such applicants are subject to MOCS's usual pre-employment procedures. To be considered, an applicant must have been in good standing at the time of their previous termination of employment with MOCS.

Post-Employment Inquiries

The school will not respond to oral requests for references. In the event your employment with the school is terminated, either voluntarily or involuntarily, your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor, may be able to provide a reference to potential employers only if you have completed and signed a release form.

As an employee of MOCS, do not under any circumstances respond to any requests for information regarding another employee unless it is part of your assigned job responsibilities. If it is not, please forward the information request to your Chief Administrative Officer / supervisor or designee.

E. Identify the proposed faculty.

The school staff at the local level will include the Chief Administrative Officer, IT Technician, Curriculum Implementation Specialist, Teachers, office support personnel, and a part-time Speech and Language Therapist and Title I Teacher. Additional staff positions will be allocated according to need. In addition, the school will receive support from Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania in areas of fiscal oversight, program development, technology, professional development, facilities, curriculum and instruction and administrative support.

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is the administrator at the school level. S/he will oversee improvement of instruction, interpretation of student and school progress and performance, community relations, staff professional development, counseling, employment issues, discipline, student placement, operation and maintenance of the school plant, management of school equipment and supplies, preparation and completion of federal and state reports, and assistance and support to teachers.

The Curriculum Implementation Specialist (CIS), working under the supervision of the CAO, serves as the instructional leader and curriculum consultant. S/he works with teachers to improve instruction and interpret student and school progress.

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.

All individuals having direct contact with students will pass background checks required by the state. All paperwork will be available upon request.

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.

All individuals having direct contact with students will pass background checks required by the state. All paperwork will be available upon request.

H. What procedures have been developed, through research of NCLB guidelines, that ensure the hiring of certified, highly qualified teachers and other professional staff?

Charter School Board members and the CAO will oversee the recruitment and staffing of MOCS. Once hired, the Chief Administrative Officer will interview, recommend for hiring, assign, manage, review, and recommend staff dismissals as necessary.

MOCS will advertise locally, regionally and nationally to attract the best staff, using Internet resources as well as local and newspaper forums and national periodicals. We will also host local job fairs and attend area college/university job fairs. Teachers will also demonstrate competence in all areas of content responsibility, demonstrate advanced computer literacy and technology skills, be respected as a professional educator and as an individual, and exhibit excellent verbal and written expression as well as strong interpersonal skills. All teachers must be highly qualified, in that teachers will hold a minimum Bachelor's degree, an educator license with the appropriate area of concentration (early childhood or elementary for grades k-8, area concentration and endorsement for grades 8-12), and a passing score on an approved subject area test (if applicable). Paraprofessionals supported by Title I funds must have appropriate qualifications, including holding a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent, receive and completion of at least two years (48) semester hours at an accredited higher education institution, or hold an associates (or higher) degree from an accredited higher education institution, or have satisfied a rigorous state assessment about the individual's knowledge of State standards. Additionally, thorough background screenings will be performed on all staff and any Parent/Guardian volunteers or other individuals who will have significant unsupervised time with students. A record of these background checks will be kept on file in the school's business office. Additional qualifications for staff positions are available upon request.

The school will develop a Highly Qualified Plan describing strategies for progressing towards and maintaining the Highly Qualified status, to include Professional Development opportunities and ongoing training for teachers and staff. Upon opening, all staff will meet the guidelines of Highly Qualified. The charter school will continue to seek and retain these highly qualified individuals as the school grows.

Based on discussions with schools using a similar blended learning model in Arizona and California, we are confident that the school will be able to attract a qualified, enthusiastic staff that embraces the school's mission. The charter school mechanism allows for schools that are schools of choice for teachers as well as for students and Parent/Guardians. We believe that the likelihood of employee satisfaction is higher when teachers affirmatively decide to teach at schools with specific curricular models or teaching methodologies. The Charter School will offer teachers opportunities for professional growth and bonuses for outstanding job performance.

The Charter School's teaching staff will be provided the tools necessary to succeed: extensive

professional development; the freedom to focus on helping children learn; and access to state-of-the-art educational resources, including multimedia technology, and personal and web-based resources. Because student learning will be interpreted as a direct reflection on how well they are taught, teachers and administrators will be personally and professionally invested in children's success and singularly focused on accelerating achievement.

The Charter School will prize diversity in its workforce as a diverse staff brings a valuable breadth of perspectives to tasks and decisions faced in any given day. Discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, medical condition, marital status, or veteran status will not be tolerated. All reasonable accommodations will be made for those covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The charter school will maintain the highest standards for equal employment opportunity and affirmative action including complying with applicable federal, state, local laws and regulations, and initiating and supporting programs and practices designed to create and sustain a diverse faculty and staff.

Explanation: Establish high professional standards for teachers and other staff; commitment to professional development of staff; and working conditions and compensation packages that will attract and retain quality staff as per compliance with labor laws.

4. Code of Conduct:

A. *Discuss any rules or guidelines governing student behavior.*

Code of Conduct

Behavior standards that ensure a safe and secure school setting and delineates the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community including the students, Parent/Guardians, trustees, employees, volunteers and visitors to the school are included in the Code of Conduct. The charter school's philosophy regarding discipline will stress the joint responsibility of all school members, particularly that of students, to focus on root causes of behavioral problems and devise problem-solving strategies for preventing and minimizing disruptive and otherwise unacceptable conduct. In addition, the Code makes clear that the school, while respecting students' civil rights, will nonetheless maintain the highest standards with regard to deportment and conduct towards others.

The Code of Student Conduct will be distributed to Parent/Guardians and students at the beginning of each school year, prior to admission, to ensure that expectations and issues are clearly understood. The Parent/Guardian, student and teacher will be required to sign the acknowledgement page, stating that the Parent/Guardian understands the Code, including the consequences of unacceptable behavior by the student. The acknowledgement page also states that the Parent/Guardian has explained and reviewed the Code with their child, and that the teacher shares responsibility with the Parent/Guardian to ensure a safe, secure school for learning. ***The Code will comply with all applicable laws.*** The Code of Student Conduct will include guidelines on such topics as:

- School Rules Regarding:
- For classroom days: Hall passes, restrooms, hallways, disruptive items, detentions, backpacks, assembly conduct, eligibility for after school activities and clubs
- For online days: Appropriate forms of communication and student code of ethics
- Attendance for face to face days as well as requirements for online participation
- Tardiness for face to face days and synchronous class meetings online
- Homework
- Vandalism
- Student dress code for face to face days
- Student deportment
- Violence, weapon violations, Search and Seizure Policy
- Sexual harassment both face to face and online
- Drugs and alcohol
- Consequences of a breach of the Code of Student Conduct
- Suspension and Expulsion From School
- Re-admittance Guidelines
- Suspension or Expulsion for Prior Misconduct in Another School District or Charter School.

Definition of Discipline

Discipline is the positive direction of behavior toward established standards of conduct, fully understood and based upon reason, judgment, and consideration of the rights of others. Ideal discipline is self-directed and self-controlled. Schools, community, and Parent/Guardians share the responsibility for helping students develop self-discipline. When self-control falters and self-discipline fails, disciplinary forces from outside the individual must be imposed to protect the rights of others and to ensure uninterrupted instruction by teachers for students.

The charter school, as in the community at large, will establish rules and procedures to guide students through constructive growth and into mature adulthood. Parent/Guardian, teachers, and others responsible for the welfare and education of these students cooperate to interpret and enforce these rules.

Behaviors Warranting Disciplinary Action

Below are listed suggested behaviors and offenses that would warrant appropriate disciplinary action, including suspension and expulsion (in alphabetical order). Please note that some of these behaviors are specific to online and some are specific to classroom activities:

- Absenteeism, unexcused or excessive
- Aggressive behaviors, including but not limited to hitting, pushing and shoving
- Alcoholic beverages, possession, delivery, use or being under the influence of
- Arson or attempted arson
- Assault or attempted assault
- Beeper and/or other telecommunications devices, possession of, except as considered necessary by the CAO
- Cheating and/or plagiarism
- Dangerous articles, firearms, knives, metal pipes, sharpened implements, clubs, look-alike weapons, ammunition, etc., possession of

- Defacing or destruction of school property or property of another (includes writing walls, etc.)
- Detention, failure to report to
- Detention, refusal of
- Dice shooting (whether or not gambling)
- Disobedience to teacher or other staff member
- Disrespectful behavior toward teacher or other staff member, either visually, verbally or written
- Disruption of class, study or instruction
- Dress guidelines, violation of
- Drugs and controlled substances, possession, use, distribution or being under the influence of
- Extortion or attempted extortion, harassment, or intimidation
- Failure to report to office as directed
- Fighting
- Fireworks, stink bombs, or other explosives, possession distribution, use, or lighting of
- Forgery of notes or passes, etc.
- Gambling or present at scene of gambling
- Inappropriate communication within the Learning Management System
- Leaving class without teacher's permission
- Leaving school grounds without proper authorization
- Loitering on school property, including halls and classrooms
- Loitering in vehicles, in parking lots, or on streets
- Lying/falsehood
- Misuse of school property or property of others
- Misuse of electronic communications devices
- Molesting others
- Obscene language or gestures, use of
- Obscene writing, pictures or articles, or possession of
- Participating in and/or instigating a riot
- Presentation of forged notes or passes
- Profane language, use of
- Refusal to follow directions of teacher or other staff member
- Refusal to identify self properly
- Rude behavior to others
- Sexual harassment
- Sleeping in class
- Tardiness, unexcused or excessive
- Tobacco product, possession or use of
- Trespassing while suspended
- Theft or attempted theft
- Threatening bodily harm or property damage
- Threatening language or gestures, use of
- Truancy from school
- Unauthorized entry into restricted areas
- Violence, acts of

- Walkouts
- Any violation of this code, policies of the Board of Trustees, or local, state or federal law
- Any other conduct considered by the CAO to be disruptive, disrespectful or disobedient

It is recommended that the following six cases result in immediate discipline referrals to the CAO (this list is not exhaustive of behaviors that may result in disciplinary action):

- Fighting
- Abusive language directed toward a teacher or another student
- Student actions that disrupt the class to the extent that a teacher's authority is being challenged
- Student actions which indicate the use of drugs, alcoholic beverages, or other behavior altering substances
- Student actions that present a danger to the safety and well-being of themselves or others
- Other criminal acts in violation of local, state, or federal laws

The CAO is expected to recommend expulsion and prosecution for the following first-time offenses occurring on school property, at school-sponsored activities, or for school-related reason:

- Arson or attempted arson
- Assault and/or battery of an employee or student
- Possession, use, or sale of a firearm or dangerous weapon
- Manufacturing, growing, distribution, and/or sale of drugs and/or paraphernalia
- Extortion, attempted extortion, robbery, and/or larceny
- Immoral conduct
- Hazing
- Unlawful assembly and/or riot
- Possession, use, distribution, sale, lighting, or discharge of explosive devices
- Student found guilty of a crime which resulted in or could have resulted in injuries to others, regardless of where and when the crime occurred

B. Describe your school's policies regarding student expulsion and suspension, including students with disabilities.

Discipline Procedures

The community judges a school by the actions of its students in and out of school. At all times when students are under school jurisdiction, they are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly, courteous, dignified, and respectable manner. In an effort to maintain an orderly atmosphere in the school and on the school grounds, any teacher's authority extends to all students, whether or not the student is in that teacher's class.

In-School Disciplinary Actions

Disruptive student behavior is subject to disciplinary action by the teacher and/or CAO. Action taken by teachers toward students who are disruptive may include but is not limited to:

- Time out in the classroom or other secure, supervised area
- A conference with the student

- A reprimand
- Detention
- A conference with the Parent/Guardian

A discipline referral will be sent to the CAO when the teacher feels that the student's improper behavior cannot be corrected through the teacher's classroom management practices. After consultation with the student and the teacher (if needed), the administrator will determine the course of action required to provide a safe, secure school. Action taken by an administrator toward students who are disruptive may include but is not limited to:

- A conference with the student and/or Parent/Guardian
- A reprimand
- Entering into a behavioral contract between student, Parent/Guardian and administrator
- In-school suspension (ISS); this could mean that the student will attend the building facility and work online in a setting supervised by Mercury staff members. Alternatives to this option will be used if the student does not have transportation to a learning center site.
- Out-of-school suspension (OSS) (up to ten days)
- Recommendation for long-term suspension (more than ten days)
- Recommendation for expulsion

For a student who has been suspended for three or more days, the CAO will require the Parent/Guardian to meet with him/her to develop a corrective action plan that is signed by the Parent/Guardian, child, teacher, and CAO.

Definitions

Out-of-school suspensions are classified as:

Short-term: The CAO can suspend a student for up to ten days

Long-term: A student can be suspended for more than ten days following approval of the CAO's recommendation by the Board of Trustees or its appointed representative

Expulsion: A student can be expelled only by action by the Board of Trustees based upon recommendation of the CAO or designee. Expulsion excludes the student from regular school attendance until re-admitted by the Board.

Notification

A letter from the CAO or his/her designee will be sent to the student's Parent/Guardians/guardians when the student is assigned in-school suspension or out-of-school suspension or is recommended for long-term suspension or expulsion.

The suspension notice for in-school suspension shall include at least the following information:

- Reason(s) for the suspension and date(s) of suspension are to be clearly stated
- A Parent/Guardian is expected to participate in a conference with the CAO in order for the student to be readmitted to the regular classroom

- The student will not be allowed to participate in classroom and school activities during the suspension period
- Appeal procedures shall be clearly stated in detail

If the student is assigned in-school suspension, a Parent/Guardian will be expected to enter an agreement with the CAO that outlines the guidelines of the in-school suspension program.

The suspension notice for out-of-school suspension (fewer than ten days) shall include at least the following information:

- Reason(s) for the suspension and the date(s) of suspension are to be clearly stated
- A Parent/Guardian must come to school for a conference with the CAO in order for the student to be readmitted to school
- The student will not be allowed to participate in classroom and school activities during the suspension period; however, the student may continue to work on assignments available online.
- The student is not to go on school property
- Appeal procedures shall be clearly stated in detail

The suspension notice for long-term suspension/expulsion (greater than ten days) shall include at least the following information:

- First Notice
 - The reason(s) for a suspension are to be clearly stated
 - A Parent/Guardian will be told that an investigation is being conducted by the administrators and what the most severe recommendation might be
 - A date and time for a conference is given when a Parent/Guardian, accompanied by the student, must come to school for a conference with the CAO or designee to present and hear information
 - The student will not be allowed to participate in classroom and school activities during the suspension; however, the student may continue to work on assignments available online.
 - The student is not permitted on school property

Following the conference, the CAO will make a decision to move forward with a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for long-term suspension or expulsion and inform the Parent/Guardian and student. If the CAO moves forward with the recommendation, the CAO will write to the Chairperson of the Board and send a copy of the notice to the Parent/Guardian including at least the following information:

- Second Notice
 - The proposed action and reason(s) for the recommendation are to be clearly stated
 - The right of the student and his/her Parent/Guardian to a hearing before the Board of Trustees or its designee(s) for long-term suspension and for expulsion recommendations
 - The right to inspect the student's school records

Subsequently, the CAO will notify the student and his/her Parent/Guardian of the time and place of the hearing with the Board of Trustees or its designee and the rights Parent/Guardians have in

the process.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may be suspended, in accordance with Federal legislation, for inappropriate behavior.

- The CAO will follow regular procedures for suspension or expulsion as described above
- Once the CAO has made a recommendation for suspension or expulsion of a student with disabilities, he or she will convene members of the Student Support Team who will determine: if the student is eligible for special education services; if the student is appropriately placed in a special education program; and if there is a causal relationship between the student's disabling condition and the conduct for which he or she is to be disciplined. Please see specific guidelines for IDEA disciplinary requirements outlined later in this document.
- The Parent/Guardian will be notified in writing of the time and place of the committee meeting and its purpose

(i) Appeal Procedures

In-school Disciplinary Actions:

Will a Parent/Guardian disagree with disciplinary action of the school other than out-of-school suspensions or expulsions, the Parent/Guardian may appeal as follows:

- Appeals will be made by the Parent/Guardian to the CAO by arranging an appointment or by writing the CAO
- If the Parent/Guardian is dissatisfied with the result of the appeal to the CAO, the Parent/Guardian may appeal to the designee of the Board of Trustees. Appeals must be filed in writing, within three school days of receipt by the Parent/Guardian of the CAO's notice of disciplinary action and the appeal will be responded to within 3 business days.

Out-of-School Suspension (10 days or fewer)

Will the Parent/Guardian disagree with a suspension of ten days or fewer, the Parent/Guardian may appeal the decision of the CAO as follows:

- Appeal requests must be made in writing by the Parent/Guardian to the designee of the Board of Trustees
- Written appeal requests must be filed with the CAO within three school days of the notice of suspension, or the right to review and appeal is waived

In the case of immediate appeal, if the CAO determines that the student's presence at school does not create a continuing danger to persons or property or an ongoing threat of disruption, the student may be allowed to continue in school on a regular basis until the appeal is considered. A favorable decision will allow the student to continue in school, whereas a decision supporting the CAO will require the student to serve the full suspension beginning the next school day after receiving notice of the decision. In situations where the student is excluded during the appeal process and the appeal is ultimately favorable to the student, opportunity will be provided for the completion of makeup assignments.

Long-Term Suspension (more than 10 days)

Following a hearing, will the Parent/Guardian disagree with the Board of Trustees designee's decision to suspend a student for more than ten school days, the Parent/Guardian may appeal the decision to the Board of Trustees as follows:

- Appeal requests must be made in writing by the Parent/Guardian to the CAO within five calendar days of the suspension decision, or the right of appeal is waived
- If the Parent/Guardian is dissatisfied with the decision of the Board's designee, he or she may appeal the decision to the full Board
- The appeal must be in writing and must be filed with the CAO within five calendar days of the designee's decision or receipt of the decision by the Parent/Guardian of a student or the right to further appeal is forfeited

Discipline Procedures for Special Education Students

Change of placement occurs of a child with a disability from the child's current educational placement if:

- The removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days; or
- The child is subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because they cumulate to more than 10 school days in a school year, and because of factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another.

School personnel may order:

➤ Removal

- To the extent removal would be applied to children without disabilities, the removal of a child with a disability from the child's current placement for not more than 10 consecutive school days for any violation of school rules, and additional removals of not more than 10 consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct (provided these removals do not exceed 10 cumulative days and constitute a pattern because of factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another).

- After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for more than 10 school days in the same school year, during any subsequent days of removal the public agency must provide services to the extent required to provide a free and appropriate education.

- Review of Programming - Either before or not later than 10 business days after either first removing the child for more than 10 school days in a school year or commencing a removal that constitutes a change of placement:

- If the LEA did not conduct a functional behavioral assessment and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the child before the behavior that resulted in the removal, the agency shall convene an IEP meeting to develop an assessment plan.

- If the child already has a behavioral intervention plan, the IEP team shall meet to review the plan and its implementation, and, modify the plan and its implementation as necessary, to address the behavior.

- As soon as practicable after developing the plan and completing the assessments required by the plan, the LEA shall convene an IEP meeting to develop appropriate behavioral interventions to address that behavior and shall implement those interventions.
 - Not a Pattern - If a child with a disability who has a behavioral intervention plan and who has been removed from the child's current educational placement for more than 10 school days in a school year is subjected to a removal that does not constitute a change of placement (as described above), the IEP team members shall review the behavioral intervention plan and its implementation to determine if modifications are necessary. If one or more of the team members believe that modifications are needed, the team shall meet to modify the plan and its implementation, to the extent the team determines necessary.
- Manifestation Determination Review - If disciplinary action is contemplated that involves a removal that constitutes a change of placement (as described above) for a child with a disability who has engaged in other behavior that violated any rule or code of conduct of the LEA that applies to all children, then:
 - Not later than the date on which the decision to take that action is made, the Parent/Guardians must be notified of that decision and provided the procedural safeguards notice described in this manual.
 - Immediately, if possible, but in no case later than 10 school days after the date on which the decision to take that action is made, a review must be conducted of the relationship between the child's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action.
 - Individuals to carry out review. A Manifestation Determination Review must be conducted by the IEP team and other qualified personnel in a meeting.
 - Conduct of review. In carrying out such a review, the IEP team and other qualified personnel may determine that the behavior of the child was not a manifestation of the child's disability only if the IEP team and other qualified personnel:
 - First consider, in terms of the behavior subject to disciplinary action, all relevant information, including
 - Evaluation and diagnostic results, including the results or other relevant information supplied by the Parent/Guardians of the child;
 - Observations of the child; and
 - The child's IEP and placement; and
 - Then determine that
 - In relationship to the behavior subject to disciplinary action, the child's IEP and placement were appropriate and the special education services, supplementary aids and services, and behavior intervention strategies were provided consistent with the child's IEP and placement;
 - The child's disability did not impair the ability of the child to understand the impact and consequences of the behavior subject to disciplinary action; and
 - The child's disability did not impair the ability of the child to control the behavior subject to disciplinary action.

- **Decision:** If the IEP team and other qualified personnel determine that any of the standards listed above in conducting the review were not met, the behavior must be considered a manifestation of the child's disability.
- **Meeting:** The Manifestation Determination Review may be conducted at the same IEP meeting that is convened to review or develop a behavior plan to address the behavior that resulted in the removal (as described above).
- **Deficiencies in IEP or placement:** If, in the Manifestation Determination Review, a public agency identifies deficiencies in the child's IEP or placement or in their implementation, it must take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies.

Not a Manifestation of the student's disability

General: If the result of the Manifestation Determination review is that the behavior of the child with a disability was not a manifestation of the child's disability, the relevant disciplinary procedures applicable to children without disabilities may be applied to the child in the same manner in which they would be applied to children without disabilities, except:

- In the case of a child with a disability who has been removed from his or her current placement for more than 10 school days in that school year, the public agency, for the remainder of the removals, must provide services to the extent necessary to enable the child to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and appropriately advance toward achieving the goals set out in the child's IEP. This may include placement in an Interim Alternative Placement as described above.

Additional requirement

If the public agency initiates disciplinary procedures applicable to all children, the agency shall ensure that the special education and disciplinary records of the child with a disability are transmitted for consideration by the person or persons making the final determination regarding the disciplinary action.

Child's status during due process proceedings

During the pendency of any administrative or judicial proceeding regarding a complaint under §300.507, unless the State or local agency and the Parent/Guardians of the child agree otherwise, the child involved in the complaint must remain in his or her current educational placement.

Interim Alternative Placement

A change in placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for the same amount of time that a child without a disability would be subject to discipline, but for not more than 45 days, if:

- The child carries a weapon to school or to a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or a local educational agency; or
- The child knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance while at school or a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency.
- The student has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school or at a school function. IDEA utilizes the definition of "serious bodily injury" under Section

1365 of Title 18 of the United States Code. This definition states that “the term serious bodily injury means bodily injury which involves – (A) a substantial risk of death; (B) extreme physical pain; (C) protracted and obvious disfigurement; or (D) protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.”

Parent/Guardian Appeal

General: If the child's Parent/Guardian disagrees with a determination that the child's behavior was not a manifestation of the child's disability or with any decision regarding placement resulting from the change of placement due to removals from school, the Parent/Guardian may request a hearing. The State or local educational agency shall arrange for an expedited hearing in any case of this nature if a hearing is requested by a Parent/Guardian.

Review of Decision

In reviewing a decision with respect to the manifestation determination, the hearing officer shall determine whether the public agency has demonstrated that the child's behavior was not a manifestation of the child's disability consistent with the requirements described earlier in this section.

Hearing Officer - A hearing officer under section 615 of the Act may order a change in the placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 days if the hearing officer, in an expedited due process hearing:

- Determines that the public agency has demonstrated by substantial evidence that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others
- Considers the appropriateness of the child's current placement
- Considers whether the public agency has made reasonable efforts to minimize the risk of harm in the child's current placement, including the use of supplementary aids and services; and
- Determines that the interim alternative educational setting that is proposed by school personnel who have consulted with the child's special education teacher, meets the requirements:
 - Be selected so as to enable the child to continue to progress in the general curriculum, although in another setting, and to continue to receive those services and modifications, including those described in the child's current IEP, that will enable the child to meet the goals set out in that IEP; and
 - Include services and modifications to address the behavior that resulted in removal and that are designed to prevent the behavior from recurring.

Placement during Appeal

General: If a Parent/Guardian requests a hearing or an appeal regarding a disciplinary action resulting in a change of placement to challenge the interim alternative educational setting or the manifestation determination, the child must remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period (usually 45 days) or a new IEP meeting is held, whichever occurs first, unless the Parent/Guardian and the State agency or local educational agency agree otherwise.

Current placement - If a child is placed in an interim alternative educational setting and school personnel propose to change the child's placement after expiration of the interim alternative placement, during the pendency of any proceeding to challenge the proposed change in placement the child must remain in the current placement (the child's placement prior to the interim alternative educational setting), except as described below (Expedited hearing).

Expedited Hearing

If school personnel maintain that it is dangerous for the child to be in the current placement (placement prior to removal to the interim alternative education setting) during the pendency of the due process proceedings, the LEA may request an expedited due process hearing.

In determining whether the child may be placed in the alternative educational setting or in another appropriate placement ordered by the hearing officer, the hearing officer shall apply the standards as outlined above in "Interim Alternative Setting."

- Such a placement ordered may not be longer than 45 days.
- The placement to an interim alternative placement may be repeated.

Protections for children not yet eligible for special education and related services

General: A child who has not been determined to be eligible for special education and related services under this part and who has engaged in behavior that violated any rule or code of conduct of the local educational agency, may assert any of the protections described above if the LEA had knowledge (meeting the criteria described in the next paragraph) that the child was a child with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

Basis of knowledge: The LEA must be deemed to have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability if:

- The Parent/Guardian of the child has expressed concern in writing (or orally if the Parent/Guardian does not know how to write or has a disability that prevents a written statement) to personnel of the appropriate educational agency that the child is in need of special education and related services
- The behavior or performance of the child demonstrates the need for these services
- The Parent/Guardian of the child has requested an evaluation of the child
- The teacher of the child, or other personnel of the local educational agency, has expressed concern about the behavior or performance of the child to the director of special education of the agency or to other personnel in accordance with the agency's established child find or special education referral system.

Exception: A public agency would not be deemed to have if, as a result of receiving the information specified in that paragraph, the agency:

- Either:
 - Conducted an evaluation and determined that the child was not a child with a disability under this part; or
 - Determined that an evaluation was not necessary; and
 - Provided notice to the child's Parent/Guardians of its determination; or

- A Parent/Guardian has formally revoked initial consent for special education programs and services and the LEA has stopped providing programs and services as a result of this revocation.

Conditions that apply if no basis of knowledge:

General: If an LEA does not have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the child, the child may be subjected to the same disciplinary measures as measures applied to children without disabilities who engaged in comparable behaviors.

Limitations:

- If a request is made for an evaluation of a child during the time period in which the child is subjected to disciplinary, the evaluation must be conducted in an expedited manner.
- Until the evaluation is completed, the child remains in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services.
- If the child is determined to be a child with a disability, taking into consideration information from the evaluation conducted by the agency and information provided by the Parent/Guardians, the agency shall provide special education and related services.

Expedited Due Process Hearings

Expedited due process hearings must:

- Meet the requirements the Due Process sections of the law (as described in the Due Process section of this manual) and are not less than two business days; and
- Be conducted by a due process hearing officer who may not be:
- By a person who is an employee of the State agency or the LEA that is involved in the education or care of the child; or by any person having a personal or professional interest that would conflict with his or her objectivity in the hearing.
- A person who otherwise qualifies to conduct a hearing under the above paragraph is not an employee of the agency solely because he or she is paid by the agency to serve as a hearing officer.
- Each public agency shall keep a list of the persons who serve as hearing officers. The list must include a statement of the qualifications of each of those persons.

Timeline

- Each State shall establish a timeline for expedited due process hearings that results in a written decision being mailed to the parties within 45 days of the public agency's receipt of the request for the hearing, without exceptions or extensions.
- The timeline established must be the same for hearings requested by Parent/Guardians or public agencies.
- A State may establish different procedural rules for expedited hearings than it has established for due process hearing.
- The decisions on expedited due process hearings can be appealed

Referral to and action by law enforcement and judicial authorities

Nothing in this part prohibits an agency from reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities or to prevent State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a child with a disability.

- An agency reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability shall ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the child are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to which it reports the crime.
- An agency reporting a crime under this section may transmit copies of the child's special education and disciplinary records only to the extent that the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act permit the transmission.

C. Describe your school's mandatory student attendance plan and its fit with the code of conduct.

The minimum standards for school days are 990 instructional hours and 180 school days each year. MOCS will offer 1170 instructional hours each year. This will be accomplished by providing an additional hour of instruction each day. This expectation is for all Mercury students, regardless of their attendance location (home or learning center).

Attendance is a crucial component for success in an online program. Regardless of the program model a student is participating in, attendance is carefully monitored through the use of data reporting tools provided in the Learning Management System (LMS). Attendance records will be maintained using a combination data reporting features of the LMS as well as additional records for physical attendance for those students attending the weekly, on site Paragon Day.

The attendance policy is reviewed with students and parents as a part of the participation agreement signed when a student enrolls. The guidelines for monitoring student attendance are as follows:

- Students are expected to communicate daily with teachers. Students are also expected to login and complete work daily.
- If a student is absent (not complying with expectation above) for 2 consecutive days, then initial parent contact is made regarding attendance.
- On the third occurrence, student is referred to administration for further monitoring of attendance and progress.

Teachers and staff use the above guidelines to make sure they stay current on student attendance. In addition to the three-step process above, attendance and participation are easily viewed as in the snapshot below.

LA Extensions Level 4	Number of Completions	Completed Date	Completed Time	Time on Task(hh:mm:ss)
Listening Skills	1	03/24/2010	10:08:14 AM	00:03:31
Learning by Listening - 335	1	03/24/2010	10:04:41 AM	00:00:08
Speaking and Listening Skills: Painting a Picture with Words - 376	1	03/24/2010	10:04:24 AM	00:00:07
Speaking and Listening Skills: Directions - 377	1	03/24/2010	10:04:31 AM	00:00:05
Total Time spent in LA Extensions Level 4				00:03:49
Language Arts Level 4	Number of Completions	Completed Date	Completed Time	Time on Task(hh:mm:ss)
Plot: Interactive Guided Instruction - R4105	1	03/22/2010	10:53:51 AM	00:07:19
Plot: Quiz 1 - R4106	1	03/24/2010	9:58:08 AM	00:08:38
Plot: Quiz 2 - R4107	1	03/24/2010	10:03:59 AM	00:05:41
Total Time spent in Language Arts Level 4				00:21:38

By utilizing the tools available, attendance can be tracked and the required number of hours can be verified and documented.

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.

Marketing immediately following approval

CAO recruiting is already underway

CAO hired no later than May 1

Leases for classroom space would be completed by June

Equipment and furnishing purchased July 1

Staff hired by July 15 to allow for training — start interviewing immediately after charter approval

SPED contracts finalized by July 15

PD – August 1 (two weeks prior to school opening)

Student and parent orientation sessions begin July 1

Student initial assessments start July 15

First day of school Aug. 15

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.

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.

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will comply with all applicable safety requirements listed above.

7. School Health Services

A. *Describe your plan for providing school health services as required under Article XIV of the Public School Code.*

The Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will adopt a plan for providing school health services that complies with Article XIV of the Public School Code. Nursing services will be contracted to be available when students are on school sites.

B. *Describe how school nursing services, including administration of medication, will be delivered.*

Mercury Online Charter School of Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania will contract with an agency to provide nursing services to students on school sites.
