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# Pennsylvania Department of Education

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
333 MARKET STREET  
HARRISBURG, PA 17126-0333

## **Charter Annual Report** Tuesday, October 09, 2007

**Charter School:** Avon Grove CS  
**Address:** 110 E State St  
West Grove, PA 19390  
**Phone:** (484) 667-5000  
**Contact Name:** Kevin Brady

### **SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Organization Description**

## **Core Purpose**

### **Mission**

The mission of the Avon Grove Charter School is to “educate each student through a constructivist approach in a cooperative environment which honors differences and fosters acceptance.

### **Vision**

–The vision of the Avon Grove Charter School is: "to transition each student into the world with the capability to discover where and how they can effectively engage with and contribute to global cultures."

### **Shared Values**

- Students learn best when expectations are high and instruction is engaging.
- Parents must take an active role in their child's education.
- All students are capable of success and should be actively encouraged to reach their potentials.
- The school must be intimately connected to the local community and should serve as a resource for community organizations and partners.

## Academic Standards

The Avon Grove Charter School is committed to making certain that all students meet or exceed PA state standards in all of the major content areas. As a means to this end, AGCS has implemented a "curriculum mapping" initiative to make certain that all students at all grades are receiving targeted and effective instruction. AGCS has also established a system of ongoing progress monitoring supported by the use of the "study island" on-line resource and sharply-focused systems of lesson planning a differentiated instruction to make certain that all students regardless of their academic strengths or learning challenges are being met at an appropriate instructional level.

AGCS also has a strong system of on-going assessment in place consistent with the PDE requirement for a local assessment plan mandated under § 4.52 (relating to local assessment system). AGCS student progress is carefully and consistently monitored throughout the year with ongoing curricular, reference-based, informal and normed assessments.

## Strengths and Challenges

### Strengths:

**Special Education** — The Special Education Department at AGCS has done extraordinary work over the course of the last five years, leading to praise from impartial observers, the PDE, the local media, and the state's Bureau of Autism Affairs. We have also hosted seminars in topics as diverse as "dual exceptionalities" and "an Introduction to Autism" which have drawn audiences from AGCS, the local community, and even neighboring districts. AGCS (as you will see in the challenges section) is looking forward to meeting and surpassing the guidelines set by the PDE with regard to RTI. AGCS has become, and will continue to be, a model of best practices in special education as we move into the future.

**Parental / Community Involvement** -- AGCS has partnered with a number of local organizations which address the needs of students and adults with special needs over the course of the last school year, and now works hand-in-glove with organizations such as ASCEND (autism issues) and CHADD (attention deficit issues) to meet the needs of our increasingly diverse student body. Both of these groups meet in the school building and an "exception child committee" formed last year, regularly interfaces with staff and administration on issues in special education.

**Academically Accelerated / Gifted Enrichment** — As a charter school, AGCS receives no Chapter 16 funding. However, due to a significant percentage of the AGCS population entering with the GIEP or similar documentation, it became immediately apparent that AGCS would need to develop a program for academically accelerated students. This program would need to address the unique needs of our gifted and talented population as well as high achieving students who might not receive gifted services in a traditional IQ-based gifted enrichment setting.

At AGCS, the gifted program is known as CAAP (Cooperative Academically Accelerated Program) and includes students who may have entered the school with a GIEP as well as high-ability students who have been identified through the AGCS CAAP screening process. The CAAP program includes a number of high-level middle school seminars, partnerships with Colleges and Universities, as well as intensive small group and individualized projects designed to challenge and motivate. Children in the CAAP program receive pull-out and inclusion based enrichment each day.

**Therapeutic Support Services** — Therapeutic support services: Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech Therapy are currently provided by Pediatric Therapeutic Services, Inc (PTS). The PTS team is currently quite large, and provides excellent support for students in need of PT, OT or Speech services. The presence of PTS enables AGCS to keep its Special Education teacher/student ratio low, and makes it possible for students to meet with therapists as often as three times per week (depending on the student's level of need). Through its Occupational Therapist, AGCS also provides extensive support for students struggling with Sensory Integration Disorder, and a school-wide program to increase teacher and parent awareness of SI issues was initiated at the beginning of the 2003-2004 school year.

**AGCS High School Program** — The AGCS High School received Middle States Accreditation this year. This is a tremendous milestone for the school, and provides independent support of the claims the school makes about program quality. This achievement is also important because it enables AGCS to use the Middle States logo on its diploma and promotional materials.

***MIST (Monitored Independent Study Tutorial)*** — High School students of extraordinary ability, discipline and dedication to a particular subject or content area are eligible for a course of study in the MIST initiative. This program is designed to supplement instruction for students who have mastered content within the scope of a particular AP seminar or who possess the ability to undertake projects which require a level of sophistication and dedication more typical of university-level study.

The MIST program contains two components:

- 1) **Advanced Seminars:** Advanced seminars in all subject areas are available to students who qualify by meeting the following criteria: formal teacher

recommendation, mastery of material in a particular content area, and (in certain cases) completion of a series of prerequisite courses. Students in advanced seminars will work independently under the guidance of a scholar-mentor from the AGCS staff who will structure and guide the student's efforts. Students in Advanced Seminars may meet with mentors as frequently as twice each week.

- 2) **University Instruction at AGCS (Fall 2005):** High School students at AGCS are eligible for coursework sponsored by the *University of Delaware* and delivered on-line at AGCS. These sessions will be monitored by AGCS Learning Laboratory staff in a new classroom specifically designed for independent work and research. These courses are genuine college offerings and students will receive college credit.

### **Supports for MIST:**

**Research Library/Media Center** —In the spring of 2005, AGCS began planning a formal research library designed to meet the needs of students in the High School. AGCS is primarily a college preparatory environment. Graduates from AGCS will possess sophisticated research and data gathering skills as a result of exposure to a strong research center. Faculty at AGCS will emphasize the importance of well-honed research techniques and will assist students in developing an understanding of the world of scholarship.

**University Teaching Partnerships**— Over the course of the last year, AGCS has cultivated partnerships with a number of universities, most notably, the University of Delaware. This year, University of Delaware “methods” students and students from Immaculata University will spend a significant portion of their year working with AGCS teachers, staff and students. AGCS has received significant support from University of Delaware professors and education department's staff, who are routinely stationed at the school to assist students and work with staff.

Challenges:

**Special Education** -- The number of students at AGCS with special education diagnoses continues to grow. The excellent name AGCS has gained in the community for serving students in this category has resulted in many families making the choice to send their children to the charter school in the hopes of receiving improved service and increased

responsiveness. Many of the student who have been joining us over the course of the last two years are in the “sever needs” category. Theses students often require intensive one-on-one supervision and guidance. This year, AGCS set a medical-access billing system to address the need for personal care assistants and therapeutic support staff. Unfortunately, reimbursement on these expenses hovers around, 50% and AGCS continues to incur significant expenses in this area. One of the challenges facing the school in the next year will be to control these costs while making certain that all students are receiving the appropriate kinds of care and support. AGCS is optimistic that the PDE, state, and federal entities will take steps to address these issues in the light of the increasingly large number of students being diagnosed with autism (and other PDD disorders) who require additional resources.

### **Transition Programming --**

Students with special needs require services and supports which often extend past their high school years. Special educators are required to work with these students to develop “transition plans” to enable students to smoothly transition into the world of work, higher education, vocational training, or a variety of other adult roles. The number of students at AGCS requiring transition planning is on the increase. This is specifically true when it comes to students identified with autism. Therefore, the RTI implementation team at AGCS has been working to increase the sophistication and effectiveness of transition planning. This is a major goal for the coming year. As a preliminary step toward this goal, AGCS formed a “Transition Task Force” in the winter of 2007 to plan staff alignments and resource allocation to facilitate better transition planning for the coming school year.

As a example of how such a system would function, I am including a transition planning diagram developed by our staff this year. The example represents the possible transition trajectories for students with autism (of varying degrees of severity). -- I have attached this document in .pdf format, but cannot attach it directly to this section. -- Please open the file marked "ATOM" included in the attachments section of the report.

## **SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

### **Strategic Planning Process**

The Avon Grove Charter School was established by a group of parents and community members dedicated to providing an educational alternative which would meet the needs of a diverse group of families and which would serve as a community resource, rooted within the local neighborhood. From the school's inception, grassroots organizing and consensus building has characterized the way in which all of the stakeholders have been actively brought into the decision making process. Our school is, in may ways, naturally oriented toward inclusive dialog and response.

The strategic planning process is, therefore, a natural fit for a community-engineered charter school like AGCS, which through the process of grassroots organizing has put into place many of

the processes and structures that enable real strategic planning to take place in an effective and meaningful manner.

### **Bi-Annual Retreat**

Throughout the course of the year, the AGCS Board of Trustees commits to schedule retreats. These meetings bring together members of the AGCS community, outside consultants, board members, administration and other stakeholders. The objective of these retreats is to engage in goal-centered planning in an atmosphere in which the daily distractions of the school day do not hinder meaningful and in-depth discussion about critical issues. Students are also invited to these retreats, and their input becomes part of the strategic planning process.

### **Committees**

At any one time, at least a dozen committees are in operation and meeting regularly at AGCS. Some of these committees grow directly out of needs identified at the AGCS retreats. Each one of these committees contributes to the overall strategic planning process. Reports of each of these committees are shared publicly at AGCS board meetings, and their goals are identified and honed both during the course of the year and during the bi-annual retreats. Committees are designed to include as many community stakeholders as possible, and committee heads actively recruit to ensure a diversity of opinions within these groups.

### **Data Collection**

At every stage of the AGCS strategic planning process, data plays an important role. Throughout the course of the year, concrete data is used to address pressing issues in a meaningful way. Sometimes meaningful data is not yet available and the strategic planning team (or appropriate committee) will need to engage in active research. For example, the Future Growth Committee (a subset of the strategic planning group) recently contracted with an architectural firm to collect and interpret staff and community opinions about the future allocation and usage of space. The result was an extremely detailed report which will guide the school growth plans moving forward. In this case, the assembling of high-quality data made it possible for the school to move forward with facilities improvement with the maximum amount of community buy-in.

### **Strategic Planning Committee**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
Adrienne Malchione	Assistant to CAO	Administrator	Kevin Brady
Beth Skalish	Parent / Community Member	Parent	Kevin Brady / AGCS Board
Carin Herman	6th Grade Teacher - AGCS	Middle School Teacher	Kevin Brady
Cheryl Hickman	4th Grade Teacher	Elementary School Teacher	Kevin Brady
David Conner	Special Education Director	Special Education Representative	Kevin Brady
Donna Archer	Business Manager	Administrator	Kevin Brady
Donna Archer	AGCS Business Manager	Administrator	AGCS Board
Donna Kaiser	Parent Rep -AGCS	Parent	AGCS Parent
Edward Delfin	Dean of Students		Kevin Brady
Gail Townsend	Planning Consultant		AGCS Board

Gwen Galligan	Parent	Parent	Kevin Brady
Jenifer MacFarland	K-5 Director	Administrator	Kevin Brady
Joe DiGiacomo	Board President	Board Member	AGCS Board
Julius Tilley	Technology Coordinator	Ed Specialist - Instructional Technology	Kevin Brady
Kathy Irving	Behavioral Specialist	Special Education Representative	Kevin Brady
Laura MacKelcan	Teacher - CAAP -- AGCS	Elementary School Teacher	Kevin Brady
Mark Cirino	Board Vice President	Board Member	AGCS Board
Matt Heckendorn	Consultant - Hooper Shiles		AGCS Board
Olivia Brinton	High School Student		Kevin Brady
Steven Strang	High School Student - AGCS		Kevin Brady
Tosha Brooks	Human Resources Coordinator	Administrator	Kevin Brady

## Goals, Strategies and Activities

### Goal: MATHEMATICS

*Description:* At least 45% of all students will be proficient in Mathematics, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

### Strategy: Increased Afterschool Support

*Description:* AGCS will work with teachers to increase the rigor of afterschool tutoring in mathematics. The school will require this kind of tutoring for students scoring in the bottom 20% of the school in the math section of standardized assessments. The school will work to secure volunteer tutors for this purpose. - The school will use classroom spaces at times when they would otherwise lay vacant.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Recruit Additional Volunteers to work with teachers and students	Parents will play a role in the after school mathematics tutoring program. This initiative will take the same form as the previous boosting of the Reading Assist program which has a healthy parents support base.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Dave Conner	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Tutoring Afterschool Each Tuesday		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Dave Conner	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

**Strategy: Study Island***Description:**Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Assign Study Island at School and Home	Increase exposure to "Study Island" resources through home assignments and continuous progress monitoring. Increase use of study island in school through more intensive (an cost free) use of school technology resource.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Kevin Brady	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

**Goal: READING***Description:* At least 54% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.**Strategy: Fluency Intervention***Description:* As a part of its system of targeted intervention for students who struggle with basic literacy, AGCS will offer intensive one-on-one and small group tutoring sessions designed to increase reading fluency and accuracy. This step is meant to round-out reading interventions and will be used in conjunction with the school's existing "Reading Assist" program which places most of its emphasis on decoding through multi-sensory phonemic methodologies.*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Teachers, tutors and students will work with "Read Naturally" curriculum and associated resource to develop fluency.	Teachers and tutors will use "Read Naturally" to increase student reading fluency.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Kevin Brady	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$6,000.00

**Strategy: Reading Assist Intervention***Description:* Continue to fund, staff and support the Reading Assist Intervention Program and increase the number of students served each week by at least one dozen. Use alterations in physical space to provide more tutoring space for the program and purchase more multi-sensory phonics support materials.*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Create a working space for the program for the coming school year.		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Kevin Brady	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Hire full and part-time staff		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Kevin Brady	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$40,000.00

**Goal: TRANSITION PLANNING**

*Description:* this is a very comprehensive undertaking, as clarified by the performance indicators. AGCS plans to launch, staff, and organize the most an intensive and meaningful battery of transition strategies aimed a special needs student who will be moving into the world of work, higher education, or other placements. AGCS will create a physical space for the program, hire staff, and establish community connections

**Strategy: Establish, staff and organize new program**

*Description:* The school will establish a new and comprehensive approach to transition planning using material, staff and community resources.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
build transition center by subdividing existing "common space"		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Kevin Brady	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$5,000.00

Activity	Description	
construct comprehensive plans for all transitioning students		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Kevin Brady	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Hire full and part-time staff		
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Kevin Brady	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$60,000.00

### SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

#### Rigorous Instructional Program

The Avon Grove Charter School is currently a K-12 institution. Therefore, the school draws upon a variety of curricular resources (aligned to ability and grade level) which are regularly reviewed and assessed by key instructional and administrative staff. Below is a chart designed to address the use of specific curricular resources in specific chapter 4 content areas. While it provides a relatively detailed picture of instruction at AGCS, it includes only the major content areas and not the sub-categories identified in Chapter 4. In the interest of space, AGCS has avoided inserting a full scope and sequence in favor of this summary. However, more comprehensive information including specific content alignment strategies and curriculum mapping products are available upon request. Please note, that most of the curricular resources chosen by the AGCS leadership team, have been "crosswalked" to the PA standards by their publishers, others have been specifically designed to address the state standards in the subject area.

<b>Chapter 4 Content Area</b>	<b>Lower School</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>Upper School</b>
Mathematics	<p>Combined use of the <i>Investigations</i> mathematics series (experiential mathematics) and a number of more algorithmically oriented resources including the <i>Saxon</i> mathematics series. — The use of both products was necessary to ensure mastery of all mathematics standards at all levels.</p>	<p>Holt Mathematics is the primary curricular resource for general mathematics instruction in the Middle School. The series has been extensively cross-walked with the PA state standards. — The school also makes limited use of Connected Mathematics (CMP) at this level.</p>	<p>Holt Mathematics is the main resource used for students at this level. The series covers all of the competencies outlined in the PA standards, and provides excellent subject specific resources in: Algebra, Algebra II, Trigonometry, Geometry, Pre-Calculus and Calculus.</p>
Language Arts	<p>The lower school uses the Harcourt Brace reading series in conjunction with the Reading A-Z series for intensive work on literacy skills. The school also uses the Reading Assist</p>	<p>The Middle School uses the Holt Reading series as its primary language arts resource. However, students often examine content aligned to the PA standards through guided</p>	<p>The content for High School literature classes is drawn from anthologized works of literature as well as complete novels selected by the Language Arts task force. — The</p>

	system for targeted reading interventions.	reading of whole works of literature.	content at this level was carefully aligned to the PA standards during the AGCS petition for Middle States Candidacy.
Social Studies / History	The Lower School uses the <i>Core Knowledge Sequence</i> . — Unfortunately, this series did not contain units on Pennsylvania history identified in the PA state standards. As a result AGCS teacher have developed local history units to fill the gap.	The Middle School Uses the <i>History Alive</i> curriculum. Students also do a significant amount of targeted reading in areas identified in the PA state standards.	World History, European History, and other targeted history subject matter is delivered mainly through the use of textbooks provided by McGraw-Hill. These texts have been cross walked with the PA state standards. In many cases, students will also read full texts and original sources, especially in preparation for the Advanced Placement examination.
World Language (Chinese, Spanish, Latin, French)	In the lower school, language instruction takes place through a total physical response methodology which included games, songs, stories, and role play. Teacher draw upon a number of curricular resources by students are not assigned a text.	Middle School Students use language specific curricular resource provided by major publishers (including Holt). Language teacher also begin introducing students to world language literature and periodicals.	Texts from a number of educational publishers are provided to students in addition to novels, periodicals, and anthologized literature in the targeted language,

Arts and Humanities	All lower school students have art and music “specials” once each week. The AGCS music program is based on the Orf systems which employs simple instruments for teaching musical concepts. — This curriculum is well aligned to the state standards for music. Art classes for lower school students were designed by the art department with activities and projects specifically aligned to the state standards.	Students in the middle school have the ability to take core courses in visual and performing arts; however, student with a particularly well-developed interest in this area may explore visual and/or performing arts through electives and individualized projects. Dance is also available to Middle School students.	AGCS offers Visual and Performing arts courses and electives closely aligned with the PA state standards. Dramatic performances are usually drawn from whole literature content, although anthologized theatre pieces may be employed periodically. Art History and Art production delivered through both textual and audio visual resources. Dance clinics are adjusted to the ability of the individual performer.
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Documentation documenting the school compliance with chapter 4 is available in a variety of forms. 1) Crosswalk documents created by the educational publishers supplying the AGCS curriculum; 2) Scope and sequence documents developed by instruction teams a various grade levels. 3) Curriculum mapping documents (in production) created through the school-wide curriculum mapping initiative; 4) within the core sections of the Middle States document produced by AGCS as part of its Middle States application.

AGCS is deeply committed to making certain that all students, regardless of their strengths and challenges are able to experience academic success. Therefore, we employ a system of intensive differentiation at every grade level. In the lower school, instruction in all of the major subjects takes place at five levels of differentiation (within each grade). In the middle school, subjects such as Mathematics and Language Arts are offered at as many as six levels of differentiation. As a result, many core-subject classes in the middle and high school may have class sizes as small as ten or twelve. The individualized attention students receive as a result is invaluable. Special educators are also integrated into regular education classes and routinely work with individual students or small groups on specific assignments. These special educators will also “team teach” with their colleagues to make certain that all student are being reached.

Academically talented students are able to take advantage of the AGCS CAAP program (Cooperative Academically Accelerated Program). These students are exposed to challenging

academic content every day, for all of their core subjects.

AGCS has a five-year long history of promoting inquiry and discovery-based learning. The roots of the Avon Grove Charter School are solidly constructivist. AGCS has been careful to respond to the increasing state and federal emphasis on outcomes by “embedding” state provided standards and anchors within its existing educational methodologies. Project-based activities which require inquiry and promote discovery are encouraged at AGCS, and the school has formed a curriculum committee to ensure the survival of this educational approach into the future. AGCS students routinely apply grade-level mathematics to design community gardens, or emergent literacy skills to describe life inside of medieval castles. Our students are encouraged to employ creativity and ingenuity to solve problems. From a curricular standpoint, AGCS teacher meet regularly in small groups to design new ways to showcase the ingenuity of their students through the medium of “Curriculum Nights” evenings devoted to celebrating the power of inquiry and discovery based leaning.

AGCS provides targeted interventions for students struggling in core academic areas through the Reading Assist program. This program provides students with an opportunity to achieve greater phonemic awareness and fluency through small group and individualized instruction. At present, AGCS hosts the largest Reading Assist intervention program in Pennsylvania. Teachers, aides and parents have all received training in the program. The school makes extensive use of aides and parent volunteers to provide one-on-one tutoring. Students also receive assistance in reading and mathematics through the AGCS Title I program. Title I students meet with the Title I teacher every day of the week.

Teachers at the Avon Grove Charter School engage students in a variety of ways; however, few are more effective than project-based learning. The school makes extensive use of project-based learning across all grade levels. Project-based units enable students to work as members of a larger group and draw upon "hidden" skills and talents that are not always stimulated through the medium of "paper and pencil" activities. AGCS students are also encouraged to explore content across the curriculum through the vehicle of the visual and performing arts. Students routinely explore literature and history by integrating music and drama into their work, and the results can be very impressive. Many students "process" classroom content more effectively when they have the ability to act or sing their way through the material. Anecdotally speaking, content retention and comprehension seem to increase as a result of this approach.

### **Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments**

- induction plan approval letter
- Professional Development Approval
- Signature Page Approval Pro. Dev Plan

### **English Language Learners**

AGCS provides a comprehensive program for each student whose dominant language is not English. The vast majority of English Language Learners at AGCS are Spanish speakers. AGCS ESL staff work with students one-on-one and in an inclusion settings to facilitate achievement of English proficiency and the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. There is a strong emphasis on inclusive practices wherever possible: ESL staff “push-in” much more frequently than they “pull out.” Students are identified for the ESL program through a Home Language Survey. The survey is used identify students with a primary or

home language other than English. AGCS maintains a list of students with a foreign language in their background.

The amount of ESL support is dependent on the student's English proficiency level and the level of mastery of the English language as well as the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. English Language Learners are instructed in the same content areas as other students at AGCS. Instruction is modified and adapted to meet the needs of English Language Learners.

In 2005, AGCS contracted with the Chester County Intermediate Unit to provide additional ESL support in the form of additional instructional staff (AGCS already had one, full-time, certified, ESL instructor on staff). The number of students requiring ESL services (although small) is increasing significantly each year, and AGCS is committed to providing high-quality and comprehensive services for each of these students.

## **Graduation Requirements**

### **Graduation Requirements**

The Board of Trustees of the AGCS has adopted requirements for graduation that are aligned to Pennsylvania Department of Education standards and consistent with the admission requirements of challenging post-secondary institutions. AGCS has developed a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum designed to equip all of our students to succeed not only in high school, but throughout their lives as life-long learners.

Our graduation requirements are as follows:

English	4 credits	Visual & Performing Arts	2 credits
Social Sciences	3 credits	Physical Education	1 credit
Math	3 credits	Health	.5 credit
Science	3 credits	Technology	.5 credit
World Language	2 credits (same language)	Electives	3 credits

TOTAL 22 credits

Also:

Completion of approved community service requirement of 15 hours/year

Completion of approved culminating Graduation Project

### **Credit Accumulation**

During the 2004-05 academic year, core instructional periods were 47 minutes in length, and each class met daily (180 days of instruction) for a total of 141 hours of instruction per class. Beginning in the 2005-06 academic year, instructional periods will be 42 minutes in length, and each class will meet for 9 instructional periods each 8-day cycle, for a total of 141.75 hours of instruction during the 180-day academic year.

AGCS awards one credit for a full-year class that meets daily (141.75 hours). A full-year class that meets 4 days per 8-day cycle will be awarded  $\frac{1}{2}$  credit (70.875 hours). Trimester-long (12-week) classes will be awarded either  $\frac{1}{3}$  credit for a class that meets daily (47.25 hours) or  $\frac{1}{6}$  credit for a class that meets 4 days per cycle (23.625 hours).

In order to receive graduation credit for a course, a student must receive a minimum grade of D- (D-minus), using the following grade distribution:

A+ = 98-100      A = 93-97      A- = 90-92

B+ = 88-89      B = 83-87      B- = 80-82

C+ = 78-79      C = 73-77      C- = 70-72

D+ = 68-69      D = 63-67      D- = 60-62

F = 59 or below

## **Additional Requirements**

In addition, each student must complete approved community service hours amounting to not less than 15 hrs for each year of enrollment in AGCS. Finally, each student must complete an approved culminating graduation project involving a research, a written, and a presentation component as approved by the high school committee. Upon the successful conclusion of the project, the student must have demonstrated his/her ability to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and to communicate significant knowledge and understanding.

## **Assessments**

Each year, high school students in grade 11 will take the PSSA examination to determine proficiency in math, reading, and writing. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency in one or more tested area during the 11<sup>th</sup> grade will be provided additional instruction in preparation to retake the PSSA in grade 12.

In addition, students in grades 9 and 10 are given the Terra Nova test in math and reading/language arts to provide benchmark data of their progress toward mastering state standards in math, reading, and writing. This data will be used to inform both classroom and individual instruction to assist these students in attaining greater levels of mastery.

As AGCS has just completed its first year with a high school program, PSSA and Terra Nova testing during the 2004-2005 academic year will be used to establish a base-line to guide instruction and curricular decisions. Test results for the 2004-2005 academic year have not yet been made available.

## **Curriculum**

The AGCS curriculum is college-preparatory in focus and designed to ready every student for post-secondary education and life-long learning. In major subjects, students must complete a minimum four years of English, three years each of math, social science and science, and two successive years of the same world language. Students must also complete health, physical education, technology, and visual/performing arts requirements.

In addition, students applying to competitive colleges are encouraged to complete up to four years in all major subjects, including world language. Students also have the option of contracting for honors or AP level instruction in each of our high school courses. Currently, AGCS offers AP instruction in English Literature and Composition, English Language and Composition, World History, American Government, United States History, European History, Biology, and Chemistry. Additional AP courses will be added as the high school population continues to grow. Finally, truly advanced students have the opportunity to take courses through the MIST (Monitored Independent Study Tutorial) program or to complete college courses online as offered through the University of Delaware. Successful completion of these course options will count toward the student's graduation requirements.

All high school students are required to complete a mandatory technology requirement involving the use of microcomputers and software. Students are expected to demonstrate competency in keyboarding, word processing, and basic computer applications.

In addition, high school students must complete physical education and health requirements, including instruction in concepts and skills which affect personal family and community health and safety, nutrition, physical fitness, movement concepts, and motor skill development, safety in physical activity settings, and the prevention of alcohol, chemical, and tobacco abuse. Physical education classes are adapted for students with disabilities as required.

## **Special Education**

Avon Grove Charter School provides Special Education services and supports in an inclusion setting. Inclusion has been an integral part of the AGCS philosophy since the school was chartered in 2002. As AGCS has grown, so has the population of students with special needs. There are currently 212 students at AGCS who are served by Special Education. AGCS serves all of these students in the regular education environment with the exception of two students: one student is placed at the Child and Career Development Center of the CCIU #24, and a second student receives a technical education program at the Center for Arts and Technology of the CCIU #24.

AGCS offers a full continuum of Special Education Services. AGCS has had success in serving students of all exceptionalities in an inclusion environment, with particular success in serving students with Autism Spectrum Disorders, (ASD). Consequently, the school has drawn an increasing number of students with ASD. In 2006-07 AGCS hired a

teacher to develop programs, deliver services and to offer training and support to teachers teaching students with ASD in the regular education environment. With a relatively large number of students, (8/125), entering kindergarten having received Early Intervention services, AGCS added a classroom for students with pervasive needs in kindergarten and first grade. Learning Support teachers at the k-1 level served 9 students with Pervasive Developmental Delay (PDD), ASD, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), Multiple Disabilities and other Health Impairments (OHI).

Also in 2006-07, AGCS initiated plans for Transition Planning and programming for special needs students. In addition to placements with the CCIU Child and Career Development School and the Center for Arts and Technology, AGCS entered into an agreement with the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center to allow AGCS students to serve extended internships beginning in the bovine department, and extending into other departments within the UP New Bolton College of Veterinary Medicine. AGCS plans to initiate internship opportunities with other local institutions and businesses, including the Southern Chester County YMCA and the Chester County Historical Society. AGCS entered into an agreement with Delaware County Community College (DCCC) to allow AGCS students to take courses at the DCCC campuses. In 2006-07, AGCS placed a special needs student at the Chester County Historical Society for a two trimester internship focusing on archiving historic photographs. AGCS also provided the same student a Latin tutor to allow for independent study in a language not offered in the curriculum.

AGCS graduated five special needs students in a class of 22 in June. Each of these students was accepted into a post-secondary training program or college: one student received a full scholarship to an upper-tier private college, the second student will attend another private university, a third will attend DCCC, a fourth student will attend a technical school, and the fifth student was accepted to Indiana University of PA, but will attend DCCC and receive support from the AGCS learning support staff by agreement of the student's IEP team.

AGCS began to participate in the Pennsylvania School Based ACCESS Program (SBAP) in the 2006-07 school year. By year's end, AGCS was actively billing for services provided within the school for students with MA cards. These services included Personal Care Assistants (PCA), Speech and Language Therapy, Physical and Occupational Therapy, and Psychological Counseling services eligible under the SBAP guidelines.

Plans are in place to improve Special Education Services for the 2007-08 school year. AGCS will improve the pre-referral process to incorporate Response to Intervention (RTI) data collection and progress monitoring elements. AGCS has had the Reading Assist Institute as a primary intervention for struggling readers for the past five years. Reading Assist includes Orton-Gillingham based direct instruction in reading, with DIBELS assessments, and progress monitoring. AGCS will expand assessment in reading by using a normed reading assessment that will provide specific skill levels and

description of skill deficits to allow for differentiated instruction in the classroom. AGCS will utilize Excel templates created by the PDE for progress monitoring. AGCS piloted the GMADE assessment in Mathematics for placement of students in middle to high school mathematics classes. The GMADE assessment will be used to identify skill levels and deficit areas in math to ensure that all AGCS students will be proficient in Math according to PA Standards for graduation. AGCS plans to be in total compliance with NCLB/IDEA initiatives for RTi and progress monitoring in the 07-08 year.

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Kathryn Irving	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	14	Autistic Support grade K-12
Rebecca Smith	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	10	Learning Support grade 1
Carrie Paul-Stein	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	13	Learning Support grade 2
Holly Vischer	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	13	Learning Support grade 3
Colleen Tellez	.50	Learning Support	AGCS	13	Learning Support grade 6
Donna Fox	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	12	Learning Support grade 7
Sara LaBarca	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	17	Learning Support grade 8
Deborah Leever	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	9	Learning Support grade 9
Kristy Cameron	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	18	Learning Support grades 4-5
Rosemary Gwynn	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	18	Learning Support grades 4-5
Joan Gravatt	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	20	Learning Support High School
Sarah Milner	1.0	Learning Support	AGCS	13	Learning Support; Support for students w/pervasive needs K-1

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	N/A

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
David E. Conner- Special Education Supervisor	AGCS	1.0
Dr. Christine Loveland- School Psychologist	AGCS	1.0
Kathleen Loose- Paraprofessional	AGCS	1.0
Michele Tyndall- School Psychologist	AGCS	1.0

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
CCIU #24 Cindy Zeigler	Hearing Impaired Teacher	.05FTE
Ann Campbell-Pediatric Therapeutic Service (PTS)	Speech and Language Therapist	.80FTE
Julie Guerin-Pediatric Therapeutic Service (PTS)	Speech and Language Therapist	.60FTE
Helen Thompson (PTS)	Occupational Therapist	.60FTE
Deb Christini (PTS)	Physical Therapist	.20FTE
Dr. Suzann Steadman- Chester County Respite Network (CCRN)	Cinical Psychologist; BSC Services	.10FTE

## SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

### Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
Terra Nova Complete Battery	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Terra Nova Plus	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
PSSA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PASA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Terra Nova	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### Student Assessment

The Avon Grove Charter School has not yet received group testing results from the 2006-2007 PSSA. At the beginning of July, DRC posted data on individual students by grade and subject area. The assessment team at AGCS has been looking at this data very closely; however, in the absence of official scores, it would be premature to make observations about perceived trends or fluctuations in the testing data. The testing data attached to this report from the PSSAs from

previous years shows a history of very steady progress across grade levels, and some very strong performance in specific areas.

### PSSA Results Analysis — 2006

During the fall of the 2006-2007 school year the AGCS assessment team produced the PSSA data summary below. The fluctuations at each grade level indicated that test scores had increased in some areas, and stagnated in others. This chart formed one of the key tools the assessment team used in making curricular decisions for the 2006-2007 school year. For example, many of the students who enrolled in the AGCS High School program were completely new to the charter school and came to the school with very marginal mathematics skills. The assessment team decided that the best way to address this problem was to increase the amount of direct support special education students receive in mathematics, and to implement a developmental mathematics course for students who entered the program with a history of poor performance in this subject area. The assessment team also determined that some minor instructional changes should take place in grades 5 and 8 which would enable students to experience even greater levels of success in the slightly stagnant areas of 5th grade Reading and 8th Grade Mathematics.

Grade Level	3 <sup>rd</sup> Math	3 <sup>rd</sup> Reading	5 <sup>th</sup> Math	5 <sup>th</sup> Reading	8 <sup>th</sup> Math	8 <sup>th</sup> Reading	11 <sup>th</sup> Math	11 <sup>th</sup> Reading
Avon Grove Charter '06	86 %	76%	76 %	73 %	69 %	64 %	53.6 %	75 %
Avon Grove Charter '05	80 %	70 %	73 %	74.7 %	71.7 %	52.5 %	71.4 %	52.5 %
Increase	+6	+6	+3	-1.7	- 2.7	+12.5	-17.8%	+23.5
Decrease								
AGSD '05	77 %	71 %	83 %	75.9 %	78.5 %	77.3 %	59.4 %	66.%

Overall, however, student performance during this testing cycle were impressive. The double-digit performance spikes in grades 8 and 11 supported the assessment team's anecdotal belief that the Holt Language Arts series was having a very positive impact on student performance. In the past, AGCS has relied heavily on language-experience methodologies to implement language instruction. The significant performance jump in 2005-2006 scores indicate that a greater degree of **explicit instruction** aligned carefully to the standards can have almost immediate positive results. The massive jump in the performance of special education students (who make up over 19 percent of the AGCS population) indicates that strong interventions like the Reading Assist program are making a significant difference in the achievement of the most at-risk portion of the AGCS population. Reading Assist and the other literacy interventions developed at AGCS over the course of the last 5 years will form a central component of the school's RTI plan in 2007-2008. The interventions we are providing are clearly effective. Additional interventions, specifically in the area of lower-school mathematics, are an

important part of next year's plan.

A sampling of non-PSSA grades (assessed at AGCS with the Terra Nova) yielded equally impressive results. Kindergarten scores were particularly strong, indicating that the strong emphasis on Orton-Gillingham methods of multi-sensory phonics instruction are working well. While the Second grade scores seem to indicate a degree of stagnation, they are actually quite strong considering the disproportionately high number of students at this grade level with significant learning challenges. The fact that there was no material decline in scores at this level is encouraging.

#### Terra-Nova, Local Testing Data — 2005-2006

Grade Level	Reading	Language	Math
Kindergarten — 2006	94 %	79 %	87 %
Kindergarten — 2005	73.34 %	78.2 %	62.2 %
<b>Increase / Decrease</b>	<b>+20.7 %</b>	<b>+8 %</b>	<b>+ 24.8 %</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade — 2006	79.5 %	72.5 %	83 %
1 <sup>st</sup> Grade — 2005	63 %	69 %	69 %
<b>Increase / Decrease</b>	<b>+16.5 %</b>	<b>+3.5 %</b>	<b>+14 %</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade — 2006	65.3 %	71.3 %	80.5 %
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade — 2005	63 %	71.3 %	80.4 %
<b>Increase / Decrease</b>	<b>+2.3 %</b>	<b>+ 0 %</b>	<b>+1 %</b>

In the charts attached to this report by the PDE, writing scores are also presented in a longitudinal chart. Writing performance across grade levels, but particularly in the High School have been absolutely stellar. Preliminary results for the 2006-2007 school year would indicate that this trend is continuing. It appears that only one 11th grade student did not achieve proficiency during the most recent testing cycle. This very strong performance is a testament to the skills of our teachers at all levels, and the effectiveness of the "Step Up to Writing" curriculum, published by Sopris West, which has been in use schoolwide since 2003. The latest test results indicate the the "Step Up" Systems is working beautifully. In both Middle and High School AGCS students are well on the way to making the 100% proficiency goals set under NCLB!

At present, AGCS does not have an ethnic subgroup of measurable size. Nor is its ELL population large enough to be broken out as a subgroup. The special education subgroup, however, is significant and measurable. The very impressive growth shown in the PSSA files attached to this report are a testament to the very hard work of the AGCS special education team, and to the logic of maintaining realistic special educator to student ratios schoolwide. - Individualized attention can make a tremendous difference for special education students and the steady climb of test scores among this subgroup prove that securing the additional support is worth the investment.

Local testing is done through the medium of the Terra-Nova. It has been important for AGCS to collect concrete data on students in grades not covered by the PSSA. From the school's inception

it has used the data from this nationally-normed instrument to make placement decisions, round-out assessment portfolios, and trigger MDT and Title I interventions.

Avon Grove Charter School has worked assiduously over the course of the last 5 years to improve its service to students who do not perform well on assessments, and may require targeted assistance. Through on-going assessment, IST interventions, classroom modifications, Reading Assist, and afterschool tutoring, AGCS has made a commitment to addressing student needs in a targeted, systematic manner. Test scores over the course of the last five years indicate that we are, overall, making very steady progress. However, one of the key goals for the coming year will be examining our complete targeted intervention arsenal in the light of the state's RTI requirements. It is our goal to use assessment data from a variety of sources to ensure that all students are receiving precise and effective interventions, at all grade levels.

NOTE: Local Scores for grades K-2 are embedded in this document and NOT linked as an attachment. -- It was more logical to include framing commentary with the data embedded in this section.

## **Teacher Evaluation**

Teachers at AGCS are formally and informally observed every two months. These evaluations may take three forms. 1) The teacher may be evaluated with the school's internally produced instrument. 2) The teacher may be reviewed using a "short form" providing short but useful feedback on an informal observation. 3) Finally, teacher may be evaluated using PA State evaluation forms 426-428A. Teacher at AGCS are observed formally and informally, by peers from within their grade groups, teacher-mentors, and members of the AGCS Administration.

The Avon Grove Charter School Teacher Evaluation Plan is designed to cultivate excellence in the AGCS teaching staff. In order for teachers to understand the criteria by which their work is being evaluated and their responsibilities to connect classroom instruction to state standards and school-wide initiatives, AGCS has created a simple evaluation plan which is made available to teachers at the beginning of each school year. Effective evaluation is one of the keys to ensuring continuous improvement in teacher performance and to promote overall program quality.

Teacher evaluations are conducted by grade-level directors. Jennifer McFarland (K-5 Director), Terry Idelson (Middle School Director), Dave Conner (Special Education Director), and Scott Zimmerman (High School Director). Each of these evaluators have served in leadership roles at AGCS in the past and have received training in evaluation through graduate study, principal certification, local training sponsored by the Intermediate Unit or PATTAN, or training at professional conferences. During the course of the summer and the coming academic year, AGCS plans to provide each of the area directors with both general managerial/leadership training, and professional development relating to best practices in their areas of responsibility.

## **Teacher Evaluation - Attachment**

- HARTER ANNUAL REPORT: REPORT SECTION - TEACHER EVALUATION

## SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

### Leadership Changes

There were no major changes in the Board of Trustees over the course of the 2006-2007 school year. During the summer, however, the terms of three trustees expired (David Galligan, Mary Ann Kim, and Gene Steger). One of these individuals (Gene Steger) was reappointed for another term. The remaining two seats were filled by newly appointed trustees (Mary Tilley and Kenneth Thurston). From an administrative standpoint, AGCS added a Human Resources Coordinator at the beginning of the school year (Tosha Brooks). Staffing at AGCS now exceeds 150, and the presence of a full-time Human Resource professional was necessary.

### Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Joseph DiGiacomo	President
Mark Cirino	Vice President
Fran Lutz	Treasurer
Mary Ann Kim	Secretary
Deborah Harper	None
Glenn Hamilton	None
David MacKelcan	None
Gene Steger	None
Dave Galligan	None

### Professional Development (Governance)

The Avon Grove Charter School Board of Trustees is committed to on-going professional development and training. Currently, the school's solicitor, Latsha, Davis, Yohe and McKenna provides the Board of Trustees with ongoing training in the areas of the Public Official Act and the Sunshine Law. The Board of Trustees also conducts bi-annual retreats to address pressing issues and receive updates on charter school law and effective governance.

### Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The AGCS Board of Trustees works closely with administration to ensure the effective governance and oversight of the school. The Board operates a number of committees which meet on a regular basis to address issues as the effectiveness of curricular resources or the overall morale of AGCS staff. Each Board Member is expected to play a meaningful role on a major committee and by doing so, to contribute to the overall success of the school. The Board of Trustees also requires regular reports and updates from the CAO and other key staff on issues identified throughout the course of the year. Board members also regularly review the schools assessment data and other measures of performance to judge program effectiveness. The Board of Trustees does, however, understand the importance of avoiding micro-management. While Board members demand that school administration effectively manage the school they are careful not to interfere with daily operations.

Both the administration and Board of the Avon Grove Charter School are in regular contact with the Avon Grove School District's Board of Directors. The relationship between these two entities has been very positive from the school's inception. The Board of the authorizing district has

always shown a willingness to work toward common goals with Charter School Leadership. To facilitate communication, the AGCS Board of trustees regularly appoints a "district liaison" -- this individual is responsible for discussing critical issues with the Avon Grove School District Board. This system has worked extremely well throughout the years. Further testament to the health of this relationship is the unanimous approval of the charter school's petition for renewal by the AGSD Board. The Avon Grove Charter School is also in the process of negotiating with the School District for the purchase of a currently inactive school building. This site would provide the AGCS community with significant additional instructional space. The on-going talks to secure the property have required continuous communication between the two school boards.

### **Community and Parent Engagement**

Throughout the course of the year, the AGCS Board of Trustees interacts with members the leadership of the AGCS PTO (Parent and Teacher Organization) to brainstorm strategies for increasing parental and community involvement in the school. There are also bi-annual retreats, to which AGCS parents and community members are invited. One of the objectives of these retreats is to thoroughly discuss the way in which community support is most effectively garnered and how such support might be maintained in the future. The majority of the Avon Grove Charter School Board of Trustees are parents with children attending the school and as such have a unique connection with the local community.

## **SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Major fund-raising activities**

There were no major fundraising campaigns conducted in the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

The Avon Grove Charter School Administration is currently researching and exploring the possibility of hiring a Developmental Director.

This employee or independent consultant would be solely responsible for developing, advertising, monitoring and bringing to completion all fundraising and capital campaigns designed for the school..

### **Fiscal Solvency Policies**

#### **The Avon Grove Charter School**

#### **Fiscal Solvency Policy**

##### **1. Introduction**

The Budgetary process at the Avon Grove Charter School is an integral part of carrying out the mission of the school. The budget is prepared prior to the beginning of the fiscal year and is approved by the Board of Trustees in advance of its implementation.

## **2. Accountability**

The school has a fiduciary responsibility to effectively manage and use its financial resources. The Board of Trustees and Administration are ultimately responsible for the fiscal solvency of the school.

The school is committed to effective resource management and accountability. Ongoing budget oversight is provided to ensure that resources and expenditures are occurring in general conformity with the approved budget. Throughout the fiscal year, the Accounting/Business Office, Principal, Directors and Department Managers shall monitor and oversee operating budgets ensuring that:

Year-to-date resources and expenditures are occurring in a manner consistent with the departmental budget.

Resource shortfalls and expenditure overages are identified and resolved.

Deficit spending at the department level does not occur.

## **3. Employee Hiring and Compensation**

Salaries and benefits represent the largest expenditure for the academic entity. It is important to manage this expense effectively. A staff list is provided to each department in their budget packet. The staff list is an effective tool used to provide each Academic Director and Administration with the necessary information required to make decisions on whether to recruit and /or refill a position vacancy.

## **4. Fiscal Year End Purchase Requisitions**

Generally accepted accounting principles for the Not-for-Profit Organization require the school to record the expense at the time it was received or the service was rendered. Expense items

incurred prior to June 30<sup>th</sup> will be expensed to the current fiscal year and not held and expensed against the following fiscal year.

Outstanding purchase orders on which delivery is not received before June 30<sup>th</sup> will be expensed against the following fiscal year.

## **5. Capital Expenditures**

A capital expenditure is the purchase of furniture, equipment, vehicles, facilities, etc., with a price (or fair market value in the case of a gift) of \$ 5000 or more and a useful life of two or more years.

Capital Expenditures over \$ 5000.00 or more required the approval of the Board of Trustees and are expensed to the departmental budget and charged to object codes

700 — Computers

710 — Furniture & Equipment

## **6. Budget Reallocations**

The Board of Trustees approves the budget for each Department based on the initial allocations submitted; therefore, it is imperative that adherence to these budget allocations be maintained. During the course of the academic year, adjustments to allocations may need to be made due to unforeseen circumstances and changes. All budget reallocations must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

## **7. Departmental Account Deficits**

Deficits in a school department budget account are not permitted. The budget is approved by the Board of Trustees and departments should not deviate from their budget. In all cases, Academic

Directors and Department Managers are ultimately responsible for the financial management of their accounts and should take immediate action to prevent or correct any deficit problems.

Certain circumstances may require a written explanation explaining a current deficit or the necessity of deficit for an unforeseen event or situation at the budget was created and approved. Any deficit or planned deficit due to unforeseen circumstances requires the approval of the Board of Trustees.

### **Accounting System**

The Avon Grove Charter School uses the Quickbooks Premier Nonprofit Edition 2006 Accountig Software. This version integrates the Pennsylvania State Chart of Accounts for Pennsylvania Public Schools and the Annual Financial Report utilizing the Generally Accepted Accounting principals for the school's budgeting, accounting and reporting practices.

### **Audit Firm, Date of Last Audit, Auditor's Opinion, and Any Findings Resulting From the Audit**

Avon Grove Charter School has engaged Umbriecht and Associates as its auditing firm. The last school audit was completed in August of 2006. The auditor's annual report summary for 2005-2006 fiscal year has been forwarded to the PDE. The 2006-2007 audit is scheduled to begin in early September of this year. There were no significant findings identified by the auditor for the 2005-2006 school year. AGCS has been in the process of scheduling this year's audit for the last few months and was only able to schedule the audit for the 2006-2007 school year very recently. AGCS has traditionally conducted its annual audit during the month of August, following the close of the fiscal year. Therefore the data attached to this report represent the late Attached please find the summary observations from the last audit.

### **Audit Firm, Date of Last Audit, Auditor's Opinion, and Any Findings Resulting From the Audit - Attachments**

- CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT: REPORT SECTION - AUDIT FIRM, DATE OF LAST AUDIT, AUDITOR'S OPINION, AND ANY FINDINGS RESULTING FROM THE AUDIT
- CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT: REPORT SECTION - AUDIT FIRM, DATE OF LAST AUDIT, AUDITOR'S OPINION, AND ANY FINDINGS RESULTING FROM THE AUDIT
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## **Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report**

The Department of the Auditor General conducted an audit of the Avon Grove Charter School throughout the months of September and October of 2006. During this time, staff members from the office of the Auditor General's office were present at the charter school every day, sorting through records from previous years. Although a number of charter schools were similarly audited during this time period, the results of the audit of AGCS have not yet been made public. Initially, the office of the Auditor General indicated that all charter school audit results would be released on June 19, 2007. The Avon Grove Charter School Board and Administration met with representatives from the Auditor General's office in late November, at which time the preliminary data from the audit were reviewed. At this point, AGCS has received no further information from the office of the Auditor General. AGCS would be more than happy to provide information related to the findings of the Auditor General's office when they become available.

## **SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Acquisition of Facilities, Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment During the Last Fiscal Year**

The Avon Grove Charter School projects a total student population of 1167 for the 2007-2008 school year. This population will require additional space. AGCS has, therefore, successfully bid on a property located in Kemblesville, PA, which it intends to operate as a second site. AGCS is currently negotiating with the Avon Grove School District (the owner) and moving toward a final settlement on this property. This proposed facilities acquisition will solve many of the space-related problems AGCS has been experiencing during the last year. AGCS expects to be in permanent possession of the Kemblesville site by October 2007, at the very latest.

No other major purchases of property or major equipment took place during the 2006-2007 school year, with the exception of server and computer equipment for the school's technology centers. AGCS acquired more than 20 new machines and a variety of server and networking equipment throughout the course of the 2006-2007 school year.

### **Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs**

AGCS plans on acquiring a second site to accommodate its space needs. At present, AGCS owns the main campus property at 110 East State Road, West Grove, PA. AGCS is currently in negotiations with the Avon Grove School District to purchase the former Kemblesville Elementary School building. The addition of the new site will increase the amount of instructional space at the main AGCS site, and will provide the opportunity for AGCS to continue to grow to a total population of 1315, as outlined in the school's charter. -- The Future Growth Committee, a central component of the school's strategic planning process, has been working to broadcast the ways in which facilities growth fits into the school's overall strategic plan. The Future Growth task force has gone so far as to contract with the architectural firm, Hooper, Shiles, and Associates, to host a number of "focus sessions" to gather input from as many school and community stakeholders as possible with the goal of ensuring that the improvements in facilities are informed by the real needs of the school community.

## **SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Compliance With Health and Safety Requirements and Maintenance of Health and Immunizations Records for Students**

AGCS does a monthly review of the facility to ensure that exits, safety lights, alarms, fire extinguishers, and first aid equipment are functioning properly. Monthly fire drills are conducted by the Director or Building Services, and a calendar of drills is kept on record in his office. Health and immunization records are kept by Ingrid Wertz, AGCS's registered school nurse. These records are kept in a locked cabinet and their accuracy is reviewed each year by the Offices of Latsha Davis & Yohe, P.C. and again at the end of the year by Larson Allen Weishair & Co., LLP. Health and Safety-Since the June 2005 Board of Trustees Meeting, an interim health and safety handbook has been adopted. There is a Health and Safety Committee/Task Force assigned to complete a "Safety Planning Response Check list". This list is in compliance with PDE and Homeland Security Standards.

### **Compliance With Health and Safety Requirements and Maintenance of Health and Immunizations Records for Students - Attachments**

- CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT: REPORT SECTION - COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND MAINTENANCE OF HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATIONS RECORDS FOR STUDENTS
- CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT: REPORT SECTION - COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND MAINTENANCE OF HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATIONS RECORDS FOR STUDENTS

### **Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs**

#### **Insurance Coverage**

MEDICAL (100% paid by the employer)

- **Keystone Health Plan East** - This is a health maintenance organization (HMO). This is a managed care program. Coverage is available when you seek a physician within the network. **(Employee - \$473.20; Employee + Spouse -\$1,088.94; Employee + Child(ren) - \$843.76; Family - \$1,388.52)**
- **Personal Choice** — This is a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO), which allows you the choice of seeking a physician in the network or out of the network. An employee can choose their own doctor or hospital. **Employee - \$564.05; Employee + Spouse -\$1,298.50; Employee + Child - \$854.71; Employee + Children - \$1,225.52; Family - \$1,655.72)**

\*The above plans are provided by Independence Blue Cross and offer a **standard prescription drug** and **vision program**.

DENTAL (100% Paid by the Employer)

- **United Concordia** — is a traditional fee-for-service dental plan. This program gives the freedom to choose any dentist to provide care; however, member savings are maximized when selecting a participating dentist. **(Employee - \$25.70; Employee + Spouse -\$73.35; Employee + Child(ren) - \$73.35; Family - \$73.35)**

#### **Voluntary Elective Insurance Plans**

## INSURANCE

**DISABILITY INCOME PROTECTION INSURANCE** — This is disability insurance that pays benefits if you cannot work because of illness or injury. Avon Grove Charter School has made it possible for an employee to obtain this type of insurance with lower cost group rates, no physical examination, and convenient payroll deduction. The employee chooses the amount of coverage they need and can afford.

• **Short Term Disability (VIP 530230)** — An employee can elect an amount of \$100.00 to \$1,250.00 per week in \$25.00 units, as long as their selected amount doesn't exceed 60% of covered earnings.

• **Long Term Disability (VIP 530231)** — An employee can elect an amount from \$500.00 to \$5,000.00 per month in \$100 units, as long as their selected amount doesn't exceed 60% of covered earnings.

## SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

### Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

Number of Teachers (including all staff) — 173

Grades K — 2 (teachers) — 35

Grades 3 — 5 (teachers) — 20

Middle school (teachers) — 26

High school (teachers) — 24

Special Education (teachers) — 17

Guidance Counselors — 6

Librarians — 2

Administration Staff (Managers) — 14

- Principal
- Dean of Discipline
- Business Manager
- Human Resources Director
- 
- Executive Assistant
- Office Manager
- Facilities Manager
- Cafeteria Manager
- Special Education Director
- High School Director

- Middle School Director
- Elementary School Director
- Information Technology Manager

Support Staff - 8

Heath Services (Nurses) — 2

Facilities (janitorial) — 11

Food Services (Cafeteria) — 7

Student Activities — 1

**How many are returning staff from the previous school year, and how many were with the school for this entire school year.** 90 teachers returned from the 04/05 school year to 05 06 and 73 of them stayed all year. Total staff numbers are 148 started 05/06 school year and 95 stayed all term.

**Discuss staff turnover and retention patterns and possible reasons for each.**

**Reasons:**

The turnover of teaching staff contributed to teachers leaving due to our salary scale. Teachers felt that they were not being paid at a competitive salary compared to that of the surrounding school districts. Therefore, teachers left to teach and the higher pay scaled districts.

### **Student Enrollment**

AGCS selects students by lottery when spaces are available in the appropriate grades AGCS maintains a database of student applicants from all of the surrounding districts — names on this database make up the pool for the AGCS lottery. Initially students were drawn exclusively from the Avon Grove District. After AGCS exhausted the pool of Avon Grove students interested in applying to the school, first preference was given to Avon Grove students in accordance with state law: “Nonresident students may also be enrolled with first preference given to resident students.” Dean of Students, Ed Delfin, is responsible for hand-drawing names from the lottery, the date of these drawings is made known to parents and they may attend the drawing if they wish. All drawings take place in the AGCS main office.

**If Kindergarten or First Grade is offered, provide a description of the admission policy with age requirements.**

Students must be 5 years old by September 3<sup>rd</sup> of the year of entrance to be admitted to the AGCS Kindergarten. Students must be 6 years old by September 3<sup>rd</sup> of year of entrance to be admitted to the AGCS First Grade

**Provide an enrollment history for the past year, by grade level, including the number of students initially enrolled, number dropped, and number added. For students who transferred out, indicate the school(s) to which they transferred, if known.**

Below please find a chart detailing the fluctuations in enrollment during the course of the 2006 - 2007 academic year. Schools dis-enrolling students selected: Avon Grove Intermediate School, Fred S. Engle Middle School, Avon Grove High School, Oxford Area High School, Ursuline Academy, Saint Mark’s (Delaware), Wilmington Friends, and Kennett Middle School.

### **ENROLLMENT HISTORY 2006-2007**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Enrolled on</b>	<b>Added by End of</b>	<b>Dis-enrolled</b>	<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>	<b>Enrolled Last</b>
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	First Day of School	Year	by end of year		Day of School
<b>K</b>	125	2	4	-2	123
<b>Pre-1<sup>st</sup></b>	15	3	0	3	18
<b>1</b>	100	22	1	21	121
<b>2</b>	125	4	3	-1	124
<b>3</b>	125	3	2	1	126
<b>4</b>	120	1	6	-5	115
<b>5</b>	90	2	4	-2	88
<b>6</b>	92	8	15	-7	85
<b>7</b>	80	1	22	-21	59
<b>8</b>	75	1	10	-9	66
<b>9</b>	50	1	9	-8	42
<b>10</b>	35	7	0	1	41
<b>11</b>	40	0	3	-3	37
<b>12</b>	18	6	0	6	24
<b>Total</b>	1090	61	79	-21	1069

**Discuss any trends in enrollment including student turnover and retention data. Drawing upon exit interviews and other sources, explain why students choose to return to the school or not. If the school is under-or over-enrolled based on the charter, provide an explanation.**

A clear trend each year is a drop-off in enrollment at the very beginning of the year. Since the opening of the school it has been the practice of some parents to enroll their students at AGCS while waiting for another placement (often in a private setting). This practice tends to artificially inflate our numbers at the beginning of the year. The Administration has recommended that the Board over enroll by 3-5 percent to lessen the impact of this problem. In parent surveys and through informal discussions, we have learned that many Middle School students leave AGCS because of the school's small size \ and lack of a PIAA sports program. AGCS currently does not conduct exit interviews. We are currently on target with the number projected in the school's charter.

At this point, Approximately 1051 total students will return. However, that number may fluctuate slightly during the summer. We are planning on enrolling an additional 121 students before September bringing our total number to 1172.

### **Transportation**

The Avon Grove Charter School (AGCS) contracts and utilizes the local school districts' transportation services. AGCS transports students from the Avon Grove, Kennett Consolidated, Oxford, Coatesville, Octorara, Unionville Chadsford school districts.

At present, AGCS relies on its local "feeder" districts to provide transportation for students who attend the school. No major transportation problems have arisen since the school's inception. The individual school districts offer a variety of accommodations that are but not limited to an individual bus, van or adjusting a bus route and stop for the special education students.

### **Food Service Program**

Food services at AGCS are currently contracted through the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Archdiocese provides ready-to-heat lunches for all AGCS students who pay \$1.50 per entrée. New and existing students who are eligible to receive assistance through the Free and Reduced Lunch Program are identified at the beginning of each year.

### **Student Conduct**

The AGCS school discipline code was developed in conjunction with the school's legal counsel to ensure that each of the subsections of chapters 12 and 13 of the Pennsylvania School Code were addressed directly and completely. The Avon Grove Charter School Discipline Policy specifically addressed the right of families to due process including hearing before the charter school's Board of Trustees.

A total of 38 individual students were suspended last year for a variety of offenses. Some of these individuals, we suspended more than once.

No AGCS students were expelled during the 2006-2007 school year.

# CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

## Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2007 - 2008

**Name of School:** Avon Grove CS

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** July 27, 2006

**Length of Charter:** Renewed to 2011    **Opening Date:** August 28, 2005

**Grade Level:** Kindergarten- 12th    **Hours of Operation:** 7:00am- 4:00pm

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 99%    **Total Instructional Staff:** 134

**Student/ Teacher Ratio:** 14 to 1    **Student Waiting List:** 660

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** 94%

**Enrollment:** 1069    **Per Pupil Subsidy:** \$10,809.00

### Student Profile

**American Indian/Alaskan Native:** 0

**Asian/Pacific Islander:** 44

**Black (Non-Hispanic):** 45

**Hispanic:** 52

**White (Non-Hispanic):** 928

**Multicultural:** 0

**Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:** 6%

**Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December:** 19%

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	181	181	181	181	181
Instructional Hours	0	0	1020	1020	1110	1075	4224

## **ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS**

**School Year: 2007**

The Avon Grove CS within Chester County IU 24 assures that the charter school will comply with the requirements of 22 PA Code Chapter 711 and with the policies and procedures of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). PDE will specify, in writing, policies and procedures to be followed. Requests for any deviations from these regulations, policies, and procedures must be made in writing to PDE. The charter school assures:

1. There are a full range of services, programs and alternative placements available for placement and implementation of the special education programs in the charter school.
2. The charter school has adopted a "child find" system to locate, identify and evaluate children who are thought to be a child with a disability eligible for special education residing within the charter school's jurisdiction. "Child find" data is collected, maintained, and used in decision-making. Child find process and procedures are evaluated for effectiveness. The charter school implements mechanisms to disseminate child find information to the public, organizations, agencies, and individuals on at least an annual basis.
3. The charter school has adopted policies and procedures that assure that students with disabilities are included in general education programs and extracurricular and non-academic programs and activities to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with an Individualized Education Program.
4. The charter school will comply with the PA Department of Education annual report requirements including special education information.
5. The charter school follows the state and federal guidelines for participation of students with disabilities in state and charter school-wide assessments including the determination of participation, the need for accommodations, and the methods of assessing students for whom regular assessment is not appropriate.
6. The charter school assures the Pennsylvania Department of Education that funds received through participation in the medical assistance reimbursement program, ACCESS, will be used to enhance or expand the current level of services and programs provided to students with disabilities in this local education agency.

**This assurance must be signed by the Board President and the Chief Executive Officer for the charter school to operate services and programs.**

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**Board President**

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**Date**

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**Chief Executive Officer**

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**Date**

**2007 - 2008 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools**

**Verify that all DATA reports to PDE are complete**

**YES** \_\_\_\_\_ **NO** \_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

*Identify the charter school's Chief Executive Officer.*

**Name** Kevin Brady

**Title** Dr.

**Phone** 484-667-5000

**Fax** 610-869-5892

**E-mail** kbrady@agcharter.org

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*Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date*

*Identify the charter school's President of the Board of Trustees.*

**Name** Joseph DiGiacomo

**Title** Mr.

**Phone** 610-932-7367

**Fax** 610-869-5892

**E-mail** joesandy@zoominternet.net

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*Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date*

*Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.*

**Name** David Conner

**Title** Mr.

**Phone** 484-667-5000

**Fax** 610-869-5892

**E-mail** dconner@agcharter.org

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*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*