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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:** Discovery Charter School  
**Address:** 5070 Parkside Ave  
Philadelphia, PA 19131  
**Phone:** (215) 879-8182  
**Contact Name:** Jacquelyn Kelley

## **SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Organization Description**

Now ending its fourth year of operation **Discovery Charter School (DCS)** is located in 50,000 square feet of leased space within the Philadelphia Business and Technology Center on Parkside Avenue in West Philadelphia. The school successfully opened in September, 2003, with an enrollment of 400 students in grades K-6. Over a period of four years it has reached its present

enrollment of 489 students in grades K-8. It graduated its second class of 48 eighth graders in the spring of 2007, all of whom were successfully placed in a range of high schools throughout the city. In its third phase of construction, the physical plant expanded to include a staff lounge, sound proof music room, library and a combined gymnasium and multi-purpose room. Space has been identified and in its initial preparation stage for further expansion in which to relocate the kindergarten and a proposed pre-school.

## **Core Purpose**

### **Mission**

DCS's mission is to engage students in an educational plan that builds from a prior knowledge base, is connected to discoveries outside the classroom and is supported by values of personal and community responsibility. The "look" of the school reflects its mission- from the breathtaking mosaic on the front facade to the wall murals inside that depict various modes of transportation to the creative street signs in the corridors, "streets" named by the students themselves.

### **Vision**

The founders' vision for how best to engage children in the learning process and to nurture their success was informed by their experience as educators and community activists. Their vision was also informed by the work of educational researchers who contend that successful schools: validate the knowledge and experience students bring with them to the classroom, teach a core of knowledge in early grades, connect classroom instruction with community based, experiential learning, provide children with strong foundational values and opportunities to put them into practice and to empower children to develop the attitudes, skills, knowledge and behaviors that will make them lifelong learners.

### **Shared Values**

The school values and is committed to a "wholistic" approach to teaching. In addition to the core academic program at DCS there are two additional components utilized to reaching the whole child. First, *Discovery Through Exploration* field trips are held approximately every two weeks. This program component takes three forms: actual field trips to important cultural, historic and other sites; service learning activities; and virtual/technological field trips. Students reflect on their field trip and service learning experiences, individually and as a group. Teachers in grade-like teams prepare for these trips by creating a Exploration Learning Outline that includes these components: site description, topic analysis, relationship of topic to the theme, guiding questions, standards based learning goals assessments and extensions.

Secondly, students are exposed to the arts through our Expressive Arts Program facilitated by the staff of DCS. Weekly, children are engaged in activities of dance, drama, music, photography, culinary and art. Students extend and demonstrate their learning by planning and implementing programs such as grade assemblies, debates, skits, performance based presentations, parent and school wide special programs.

Students rotate through speciality areas of music, Spanish, technology, health and physical education and character development classes. Instruction in these specialty areas occur in all grades one day each week.

A rich array of community partnerships supports the instructional program as well as a thriving afterschool program funded under a 21st Century grant.

### **Academic Standards**

All instructional program elements are national standards based and are aligned with the Pennsylvania standards. (PLEASE SEE THE SECTION ON RIGOROUS INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM). Open Court and Saxon Math follow skills-based standards, such as those in Reading, English, Language Arts (RELA) and Math, almost exactly, with only minor variations in time sequence. Standards that are both skills- and content-based, such as those in Science and Social Studies, are accomplished through the Core Knowledge sequence which meets and often

exceeds national, Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia standards. Some modification and adaption of the sequence has been necessary. For example, in order to meet specific elements of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in Pennsylvania and Philadelphia history, additional topics and materials have been added. The same is true in the sciences, where the state includes important curriculum content in the areas of the Environment and Ecology that are not adequately address in the Core Knowledge Sequence.

The curriculum committee, comprised of both teachers and administrators, are responsible for the ongoing monitoring of this alignment, including continuing assessment of the ways in which specific benchmarks are being met by student performance and as a result, what curricular modifications need to be made for better alignment with the standards.

### Assessment

All local and state mandated assessments are administered (PSSA and Terra Nova). All procedures are followed as it relates to students with disabilities. An internal pre and post assessment for all students in the first and last weeks of school in the areas of reading and math is administered each year. This provides a foundation for instruction based on individual needs. On going curricular assessments, student support, child find processes, curricular reviews, teacher collaboration, interim reports, and parent conferences all contribute to our being able to continuously direct the school's educational process and programs.

### **School wide Academic Standards for Student Achievement**

**Language Arts: By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:**

#### **Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

1.1. : Learning to Read Independently

1.1.3 A.: Identify the purposes and types of text (e.g., literature, information) before reading

1.1.3 C. : Use knowledge of Phonics, word analysis (e.g., root words, prefixes and suffixes), syllabication, picture and context clues to decode and understand new words during reading

1.1.5.A: Establish the purpose for reading a type of text (literature, information) before reading.

1.1.5.B: Select texts for a particular purpose using the format of the text as a guide.

1.1.5.D: Identify the basic ideas and fact in text using strategies (e.g., prior knowledge, illustrations and headings) and information from other sources to make predictions about text.

1.1.5.E.: Acquire a reading vocabulary by correctly identifying and using words (e.g., synonyms, homophones, homographs, words with roots, suffixes, prefixes). Use a dictionary or related reference.

1.1.8.A: Locate appropriate texts(literature, information, documents) for an asigned purpose before reading.

1.1.8. C Use knowledge of root words as well as context clues and glossaries to understand specialized vocabulary in the content areas during reading. Use these words accurately in speaking and writing.

#### **Skills**

1. to read independently, confidently and fluently at least 25 grade appropriate fiction and non-fiction texts per year.

2. to select texts appropriate to both assigned and individually developed purposes

3. to understand the meaning of grade-level vocabulary across all disciplines

4. to interpret texts by: making assertions about texts and supporting those asseertions with evidence; comparing and contrasting texts using themes, settings, characters and idea; making extensions to related ideas, topics or information.

5. to distinguish fact from opinion and essential from nonessential information in traditional texts as well as in electronic media

6. to make inferences, draw conclusions, and evaluate text organization and content

7. to produce work in at least one literary genre that follows the conventions of that genre

8. to read and understand works of literature

9. to analyze the use of literary elements including characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone and style

10. to analyze the effect of various literary devices
11. to demonstrate relationships between what one reads and one's own intellectual, spiritual, emotional or social life.
12. to analyze the techniques of particular media and compare one to the other.
13. use, design and develop a media project that expands understanding

**Writing:** By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:

**Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

1.4.: Types of Writing

1.4.3.: Write narrative pieces (e.g., stories, poems, plays)

\*Include detailed descriptions of people, places and things.

\*Use relevant illustrations.

\*Include literary elements (standard 1.3.3.B.)

1.4.5.A.: Write poems, plays and multi-paragraph stories.

\*Utilize dialogue.

\*Apply literary conflict.

\*Include literary elements (standard 1.3.3.B)

\*Use literary devices (standard 1.3.5.C.)

1.4.8.A: Write short stories, poems and play.

\*Apply varying organizational methods.

\*Use relevant illustrations.

\*Utilize dialogue.

\*Apply literary conflict

\*Include literary elements (standard 1.3.8.B.)

\*Use literary devices (standard 1.3.8.C.)

1.4.8.B: Write multi-paragraph informational pieces (e.g. letters, descriptions, reports, instructions, essays, articles, interviews)

\*Include cause and effect

\*Develop a problem and solution when appropriate to the topic

\*Use relevant graphics (maps, charts, graphs, tables, illustrations, photographs)

\*Use primary and secondary sources.

**Skills**

1. maintain a written record of activities, course work, experience, honors and interest
2. to write with a sharp, distinct focus
3. to write well-developed content appropriate for the topic
4. to write with controlled and/or subtle organization
5. to revise writing after rethinking logic of organization and rechecking central ideas, content and paragraph development.
6. to present and/or defend written work for publication where appropriate
7. to understand writing as a process through which one discovers what he/she is thinking

**Speaking and Listening:** By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:

**Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

1.6.3.A: Listen to others.

\* Ask questions as an aid to understanding

\*Distinguish fact from opinion

1.6.5.B: Listen to a selection of literature (fiction and/or nonfiction).

\*Relate it to what is known.

\*Predict the result of the story actions

\*Retell actions of the story in sequence, explain the theme and describe the characters and setting

\*Identify and define new words and concepts.

\*Summarize the selection

1.6.5C: Speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations.

\*Use complete sentences

\*Pronounce words correctly

- \*Use appropriate volume
- \*Pace speech so that it is understandable
- 1.6.8B: Listen to selections of literature (fiction and/or nonfiction)
  - \*Relate them to previous knowledge
  - \*Predict content/events
  - \*Summarize events and identify the significant points
  - \*Identify and define new words and concepts
  - \*Analyze the selections

### **Skills**

1. listen to others by asking probing questions, analyzing information and taking notes when needed
2. listen to selections of fiction and nonfiction literature and relate them to prior knowledge, predict outcomes and analyze the selections
3. speak using skills appropriate to formal speech situations
4. to participate in small and large group discussions and presentations
5. to contribute meaningfully and thoughtfully to discussions
6. to discover a sense of confidence when speaking in discussions or formal presentations

**Math:** By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:

### **Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

- 2.1: Numbers, Number Systems and Number Relationship
  - 2.1.3.A: Count using whole numbers to 10,000 and by 2's, 3's, 5's and 100's
  - 2.1.3B: Use whole numbers and fractions to represent quantities
  - 2.1.3D: Use drawings, diagrams or models to show the concept of fraction as part of a whole
  - 2.1.5A: Use expanded notation to represent whole numbers or decimals
- 2.2.: Computation and Equations
- 2.3.: Measurement Estimation
- 2.4.: Mathematical Reasoning and Connections
- 2.5. Mathematical problem Solving and Communication

### **Skills**

1. to represent and use numbers in equivalent forms
2. to simplify numerical expressions involving exponents, scientific notation and using order of operations
3. to distinguish between and order rational and irrational numbers
4. to apply ratio and proportion to mathematical problem situations involving distance, rate, and time
5. to complete calculations by applying the order of operations
6. to add, subtract, multiply and divide different kinds and forms of rational numbers, including integers, decimal fractions, percents and proper and improper fractions
7. to solve rate problems
8. to create and use scale models
9. to use if...then statements to construct simple, valid arguments
10. to construct use and explain algorithmic procedures for computing and estimating with whole numbers, fractions decimals and integers
11. to verify and interpret results using precise mathematical language, notation and representations, including numerical tables and equations

### **Math Skills Continued**

- to estimate the value of irrational numbers
- to estimate amount of tips and discounts using ratios, proportions and percents
- to determine the appropriateness of overestimating or underestimating in computation
- to identify the difference between exact value and approximation, and determine which is appropriate for a given situation
- to develop formulas and procedures for determining measurements
- to solve rate problems
- to measure angles in degrees and determine the relations of angles

- to describe how a change in linear dimension of an object affects its perimeter, area and volume
- to use scale measurements to interpret maps or drawings
- to create and use scale models
- to make conjectures based on logical reasoning and test conjectures by using counter-examples
- to combine numeric relationships to arrive at a conclusion
- to use statements to construct simple, valid arguments
- to construct, use and explain algorithmic procedures for computing and estimating with numbers, fractions, decimals and integers
- to distinguish between inductive and deductive reasoning
- to use measurements and statistics to quantify issues
- to invent, select, use and justify the appropriate methods, materials and strategies to solve problems
- to verify and interpret results using precise mathematical language, notation and representations, including numerical tables and equations, simple algebraic equations and formulas, charts, graphs and diagrams
- to justify strategies and defend approaches used and conclusions reached
- to determine pertinent information in problem solving situations and whether any further information is needed for solution
- to compare and contrast different plots of data using values of mean, median, mode, and range
- to explain effects of sampling procedures and missing or incorrect information on reliability
- to fit a line to the scatter plot of two quantities and describe any correlation of the variables
- to design and carry out a random sampling procedure
- to analyze and display data in stem-and-leaf and box-and-whisker plots
- to use scientific and graphing calculators and computer spreadsheets to organize and analyze data
- to determine the validity of the sampling method described in studies published in local and national newspapers
- to determine the number of combinations and permutations of an event
- to present the results of an experiment using visual representation
- to analyze predictions

**Science:** By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:

**Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

3.1.4 : Unifying Themes

3.1.4 A. Know that natural and human-made objects are made up of parts.

- \*Identify and describe what parts make up a system.
- \*Identify system parts that are natural and human-made
- \*Describe the purpose of analyzing systems

3.1.4 B. Know models as useful simplifications of objects or processes.

- \*Identify different types of models.
- \*Identify and apply models as tools for prediction and insight
- \*Apply appropriate simple modeling tools and techniques.
- \*Identify theories that serve as models (e.g. molecules)

3.1.4.C. Illustrate patterns that regularly occur and reoccur in nature.

- \*Identify observable patterns
- \*Use knowledge of natural patterns to predict next occurrences

3.1.7 A Explain the parts of a simple system and their relationship to each other.

- \*Describe a system as a group of related parts that work together to achieve a desired

result

- \*Explain the importance of order in a system.
- \*Distinguish between system inputs, system processes and system outputs

3.2. Inquiry and Design (Standards listed in this area)

3.3. Biological Sciences (Standards listed in this area)

**Skills**

to describe concepts of models as a way to predict and understand science and technology  
to apply patterns as repeated processes or recurring elements in science and technology  
to apply scale as a way of relating concepts and ideas to one another by some measure  
to describe patterns of change in nature, physical and man-made systems  
to apply knowledge and understanding about the nature of scientific and technological knowledge  
to apply process knowledge and organize scientific and technological phenomena in varied ways  
to apply the elements of scientific inquiry to solve problems  
to identify and apply the technological design process to solve problems  
to explain the structural and functional similarities and differences found among living things  
to describe and explain the chemical and structural basis of living organisms  
to describe how genetic information is inherited and expressed  
to explain the mechanisms of the theory of evolution  
to explain concepts about the structure and properties of matter  
to analyze energy sources and transfers of heat  
to distinguish among the principles of force and motion  
to explain essential ideas about the composition and structure of the universe  
to relate earth features and processes that change the earth  
to explain sources and uses of earth resources  
to interpret meteorological data  
to assess the value of water as a resource  
to apply biotechnologies that relate to propagating, growing, maintaining, adapting, treating and converting liquids into solids  
to apply knowledge of information technologies of encoding, transmitting, receiving, storing, retrieving and decoding  
to apply physical technologies of structural design, analysis and engineering, personnel relations, financial affairs, structural production, marketing, research and design to real problems  
to identify and safely use a variety of tools, basic machines, materials and techniques to solve problems and answer questions  
to apply appropriate instruments and apparatus to examine a variety of objects and processes

**Scientific Investigation Skills:**

to discriminate among the concepts of systems, subsystems, feedback and control in solving technological problems

to describe concepts of models as a way to predict and understand science and technology

to apply patterns as repeated processes or recurring elements in science and technology

to apply scale as a way of relating concepts and ideas to one another by some measure

to describe patterns of change in nature, physical and man-made systems

to apply knowledge and understanding about the nature of scientific and technological knowledge

to apply process knowledge and organize scientific and technological phenomena in varied ways

to apply the elements of scientific inquiry to solve problems

to identify and apply the technological design process to solve problems

to explain the structural and functional similarities and differences found among living things

to describe and explain the chemical and structural basis of living organisms

to describe how genetic information is inherited and expressed

to explain the mechanisms of the theory of evolution

to explain concepts about the structure and properties of matter

to analyze energy sources and transfers of heat

to distinguish among the principles of force and motion

to explain essential ideas about the composition and structure of the universe

to relate earth features and processes that change the earth

to explain sources and uses of earth resources

to interpret meteorological data

to assess the value of water as a resource

to apply biotechnologies that relate to propagating, growing, maintaining, adapting, treating and converting

to apply knowledge of information technologies of encoding, transmitting, receiving, storing, retrieving and decoding

to apply physical technologies of structural design, analysis and engineering, personnel relations, financial affairs, structural production, marketing, research and design to real problems

to identify and safely use a variety of tools, basic machines, materials and techniques to solve problems and answer questions

**History/Geography: By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:**

**Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

8.1: Historical Analysis and Skills Development

8.1.3 A: Understand chronological thinking and distinguish between past, present and future time

\*Calendar time

\*Time lines

\*Continuity and change

\*Events (time and place)

8.1.3.B: Develop an understanding of historical sources

\*Data in historical maps

\*Visual Data from maps and tables

\*Mathematical data from graphs and tables

\*Author or historical source

8..1.3.C: Understand fundamentals of historical interpretation.

- \*Difference between fact and opinion
- \*The existence of multiple points of view
- \*Illustrations in historical stories
- \*Causes and results

8.1.6.B: Explain and analyze historical sources

- \*Literal meaning of a historical passage
- \*Data in historical and contemporary maps, graphs and tables
- \*Author or historical source
- \*Multiple historical perspectives
- \*Visual evidence
- \*Mathematical data from graphs and tables

### **Skills**

Students are expected to have experienced and demonstrated personal satisfaction . Discoveries made about the world through the study of history and geography. In order to achieve this satisfaction, students must be able:

- to analyze chronological thinking
- to analyze and interpret historical sources
- to analyze the fundamentals of historical interpretation
- to analyze and interpret historical research
- to analyze the political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups to Pennsylvania history
- to identify and analyze primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important in Pennsylvania history
- to identify and analyze how continuity and change have influenced Pennsylvania history
- to identify and analyze conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations in Pennsylvania history
- to identify and analyze the political and cultural contributions of individuals and groups to United States history
- to identify and analyze primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important to United States history
- to analyze how continuity and change have influenced United States history
- to identify and analyze conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations in United States history
- to analyze the significance of individuals and groups who made major political and contributions to world history
- to analyze historical documents, material artifacts and historic sites important to world history
- to analyze how continuity and change throughout history have impacted belief systems and religions, commerce and industry, innovations, settlement patterns, social organization, transportation and roles of women
- to analyze how conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations impacted world history in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe
- " to explain geographic tools and their uses
- to explain and locate places and regions

**Technology/Computer Science:** By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:

**Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

3.1.4 A: Know that natural and human made objects are made up of parts.

- \*Identify and describe what parts make up a system
- \*Identify system parts that are natural and human-made (ball point pen, simple electrical circuits, plant anatomy)

- \*Describe the purpose of analyzing systems
- \*Know that technologies include physical technology systems (Construction, manufacturing, transportation), informational systems and biochemical-related systems

3.1.7A: Explain the parts of a simple system and their relationship to each other.

\*Describe a system as a group of related parts that work together to achieve a desired result

- \*Explain the importance of order in a system.

- \*Distinguish between system inputs, system processes and system outputs.

- \*Distinguish between open loop and closed loop systems.

- \*Apply systems analysis to solve problems.

### **Skills**

Students are expected to have experienced and demonstrated personal satisfaction in discoveries made about technology and the ways in which it can enhance their learning. In order to achieve this satisfaction, students must be able:

- to apply basic computer operations and concepts

- to utilize computer software to solve specific problems in a variety of subject areas

- to operate basic computer communications systems.

**World Language** By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:

**Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

### **Skills**

Students are expected to have experienced and demonstrated personal satisfaction in discoveries made about the Spanish language, Spanish-speaking cultures and individuals, and some important similarities and difference between Spanish and English. In order to achieve this satisfaction, students must be able:

- to carry on a sustained conversation in Spanish

- to write a narrative paragraph and an analytical paragraph in Spanish

- to demonstrate a knowledge of basic Spanish grammar

- to read and comprehend a book written in Spanish that corresponds to 8th grade reading level

- to demonstrate familiarity with the history and essential elements of one Spanish-speaking culture.

**Physical Education/Health:** By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:

**Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

10.4.3A: Identify and engage in physical activities that promote physical fitness and health.

10.4.3B: Know the positive and negative effects of regular participation in moderate to vigorous physical activities.

10.4.3C: Know and recognize changes in body responses during moderate to vigorous physical activity.(heart rate, breathing rate)

10.4.6A: Identify and engage in moderate to vigorous physical activities that contribute to physical fitness and health

10.4.6B: explain the effects of regular participation in moderate to vigorous physical activities on the body systems.

10.4.6C: Identify and apply ways to monitor and assess the body's response to moderate to vigorous physical activity.(heart rate monitoring, checking blood pressure, fitness assessment)

10.4.6.D: Describe factors that affect childhood physical activities preferences

- \*enjoyment

- \*personal interest

- \*social experience

- \*opportunities to learn new activities
- \*environment

### **Skills**

Students are expected to have experienced and demonstrated personal satisfaction in discoveries made about the importance of healthy behavior, physical activity and a sense of responsibility for one's physical well-being . In order to achieve this satisfaction students must be able:

- to describe growth and development changes that occur between childhood and adolescence
- to describe the basic structure and function of the major body systems
- to analyze nutritional concepts that impact health
- to explain factors that influence childhood and adolescent drug use
- to identify and describe health problems that can occur throughout life
- to explain the relationship between personal health practices and individual well-being
- to explain the relationship between health related information and consumer choices
- to explain the media's effect on health and safety issues
- to describe and apply the steps of a decision-making process to health and issues
- to analyze environmental factors that impact health
- to identify and engage in moderate to vigorous physical activities
- to identify and apply ways to monitor and assess the body's response to moderate to vigorous physical activity
- to describe factors that affect childhood physical activity preferences
- to identify and describe positive and negative interactions of group member in physical activities
- to explain and apply the basic movement skills and concepts
- to create and perform movement sequences and advanced skills
- to describe the relationship between practice and skill development
- to describe and apply the principles of exercise to the components of health related and skill related fitness
- to identify and use scientific principles that impact basic movement and skills using appropriate vocabulary
- to identify and apply sport and game strategies to basic games and physical activities
- to explain and apply safe practices in the home, school and community
- to know and apply appropriate emergency responses
- to analyze the role of individual responsibility during physical activity.

**Character Education/Citizenship:** By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:

**Skills correlate with the following Pennsylvania State standards:**

### **Skills**

Students are expected to have experienced and demonstrated personal satisfaction in discoveries made about the importance of making a positive contribution/to the community, treating others with respect and acting in ways that reveal an ethical character. In order to achieve this satisfaction, students must be able:

- to describe and apply strategies to avoid or manage conflict and violence, including effective negotiation and assertive behavior
- to demonstrate empathy towards others
- to describe and apply a code of ethical conduct in one's dealing with others
- to plan and implement service learning projects
- to be able to conduct conversations and write about ethical issues with appropriate ethics based vocabulary
- to articulate and apply citizenship standards at home, in school and in the community.

**Expressive Arts:** By 8th grade, students should be able to perform the following skills:

### **Skills**

Students are expected to have experienced and demonstrated personal satisfaction ~ expressing oneself creatively and effectively in at least one art form and in a meaningful way to other areas of one's life. In order to achieve this satisfaction, students must be able:

- to identify concepts and standards pertaining to the arts as a whole and to individual expressive arts
- to speak about and write about a wide range of culturally important works of art from a variety of traditions
- to explain the role of the arts in the community
- to read and respond to non-fiction and fiction through at least one expressive art
- to be able to articulate a personal vision of the relationship between the expressive arts and other disciplines
- to discover a personal connection between the arts and one's own life .

## **Strengths and Challenges**

A review of the school's program strengths and areas needing improvement for the 2006-2007 school year is as follows:

### **Strengths**

#### **Curriculum:**

The academic curriculum incorporates elements from four nationally validated programs. They include: SRA Open Court Reading Program for grades K to 6, Houghton Mifflin Math Program for grades K to 4, Saxon Math Program for grades 5 to 8 and Core Knowledge Curriculum Sequence for History and Geography and Science. All program elements are national standards-based and are aligned with School District and Pennsylvania standards. Open Court, Saxon and Houghton Mifflin Math follow skills based standards, such as those in Reading, English, Language Arts (ELA) and Math almost exactly, with only minor variations in time sequence. Standards that are both skills and content based, such as those in Science and Social Studies are accomplished through the Core Knowledge sequence which meets and often exceeds national, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Standards.

Students are assessed on a consistent basis to measure their understanding, comprehension and growth in each subject. Pre and post assessments are administered in the fall and spring of each year as well as all local and Pennsylvania state mandated assessments (PSSA and Terra Nova). The school has made AYP three years consecutively.

### **Before and After School Programs (Discoveries Beyond School Program)/Community Connections**

The before and after school program focuses on expressive arts, computer/technology and community-based learning activities. The program begins at 7:00am with breakfast and ends at 8:00am. The afterschool program begins at 4:00pm and ends at 6:00pm in the evening. Students from grades K-8 participate in the program.

Anchored by strong partnerships with business, arts, educational and recreational agencies and organizations, as well as by the integrated use of the latest in research-proven instructional technology, the Discoveries Beyond School Program has lifted adequately performing students to higher levels of achievement and has helped struggling students reach a new platform of academic and personal success.

The DCS Beyond School Program has partnered with several community organizations such as: West Parkside Community Association, Mount Carmel Human Development Corporation, Black Women in Sports Foundation, Creative Kids, Inc., Eboni Strings, Philadelphia Business and Technology Center.

**Parent /SchoolPrograms/Support:**

It is our belief that it takes a village to raise a child. Parents play an important role in the successful education of their child. At DCS our parents are graded on their participation in school events such as trips and parent teacher meetings. Over 85% of our parents attend the Back To School Night and parent/ teacher conferences. Our parent liason has organized "Queen for a Day" and "King for a Day" programs where all mother's were recognized with a gala luncheon and talk show. Mother's had the opportunity to be photographed with their children and visit their classrooms. Over 175 mother's attended this program. The same program was instituted for our fathers. Over 150 fathers attended this affair.

The Family and Friends Day Picnic is held every year in fairmount park. This day has been set aside for our students family and friends to come together with the school for fun and fellowship. Over 200 parents attend this affair each year.

**Teacher Support Programs:**

New teachers are supported on a consistent basis by a support/mentor teacher who meets with them at least twice a month to review school policy and procedures. Academic Coaches are provided to support teachers in their instructional endeavors. Academic coaches provide support in the classroom through observations, meetings and demonstration lessons.

**Expediitary Program:**

Trips are an integral part of the DCS mission. The mission is to engage students in an educational plan that builds from a prior knowledge base and is connected to discoveries outside the classroom. These trips provide students with educational and cultural enrichment that is directly tied to thematic units. Each year, a combination of 75 trips are taken from grades k-8.

**Areas Needing Improvement:**

DCS made AYP through Safe Harbor for Reading and achieving the Pennsylvania Performance Index in Math. It is our goal to make annual yearly progress by reaching the 45% proficient rate in Math and 54% proficiency rate in Reading. The only way this will be accomplished is by reviewing the data and focusing on our instructional techniques in Reading and Math.

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**SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING**

**Strategic Planning Process**

**Strategic Planning Committee**

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
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**Goals, Strategies and Activities**

**SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN**

**Rigorous Instructional Program**

In an effort to embody the central components of the Discovery Charter School's mission, its founders believed it was necessary to develop a curriculum which is comprised of three distinctive yet complimentary components. The components are Academic, Expressive Arts and Discovery through Exploration: Field Trip Program.

The academic curriculum incorporates elements from four nationally validated programs. They include: SRA Open Court Reading Program for grades K to 6, Houghton Mifflin Math Program for grades K to 4, Saxon Math Program for grades 5 to 8 and Core Knowledge Curriculum Sequence for History and Geography and Science. All program elements are national standards-based and are aligned with School District and Pennsylvania standards. Open Court, Saxon and Houghton Mifflin Math follow skills based standards, such as those in Reading, English, Language Arts (ELA) and Math almost exactly, with only minor variations in time sequence. Standards that are both skills and content based, such as those in Science and Social Studies are accomplished through the Core Knowledge sequence which meets and often exceeds national, Pennsylvania and Philadelphia Standards.

Pennsylvania state standards are utilized on a daily basis and are at the core of all curriculum planning. Teachers of all subjects including (Art, Music, Physical Education and Multi-Media), begin with the standards when outlining the expectations for what students at their grade level will master. The English and Language Arts Programs, as well as the Math programs were chosen because of their alignment with the standards, as well as their richness of content, high expectations and developmentally appropriate practices. Field trips must be aligned with the current theme and state standards that will be addressed by the inquiry. Teachers regularly review standards to ensure mastery of concepts taught and revise/modify instructional programs based on that review.

Thematic Units, usually six weeks in length is the core of the academic program. These units are based on themes suggested by Open Court. Readings suggested by Open Court form the basis of the Reading /Language Arts program. Social Studies and Science Components, derived from corresponding concepts and content found in the Core Knowledge sequence are incorporated into each thematic unit. In Mathematics, corresponding concepts and content from Saxon and Houghton Mifflin math programs have been incorporated. Each curriculum element is keyed to the performance outcomes in the Core Knowledge Framework and aligned with Pennsylvania standards.

The academic curriculum meets Chapter 4 content standards and all other requirements as indicated in this chapter. Documentation is presented in various ways through our standardized curriculum, consistent evaluation through pre and post testing as well as successful AYP scores and parental involvement. In addition, when coordinating the curriculum, a committee was formed which reviewed the curriculum to ensure it was aligned with the PA. Standards.

The instructional practices of The Discovery Charter School are influenced by Jerome Bruner's discovery learning or guided discovery model, particularly in the areas of science, social studies and the arts. Discovery learning highlights the learner's interests, self-motivation and self-regulation. It encourages students to make guesses based on incomplete information and stimulates them to find their own means of solving problems. Teachers "set up" the eventual discoveries by offering basic information and some details without giving students too much information. In discovery learning, students do the work. They determine the best ways to organize new and familiar information for efficient future transfer. Teachers provide students with problems and puzzles to stimulate them to discover the underlying structure of the subject matter. Left to "fill in the gaps," they determine ways to organize the information for encoding, storage, and eventual recall in the most personally comfortable and efficient way.

The guided discovery approach is supplemented by more expository and "direct instruction" strategies in the area of reading as prescribed by SRA and in the area of math as prescribed by

Saxon and Houghton Mifflin Programs. The strategies employed in these two programs have been proven effective in preparing students for the kinds of learning experiences required for more student-centered approaches. Both the SRA Open Court, Saxon and Houghton Mifflin approaches include important components of extensive student practice, problem solving and critical thinking, as well as sustained attention to the early development of fundamental literacy or math skills. Without these fundamentals, the kinds of independence required by meta-cognitive and constructivist approaches is impossible. Both programs include opportunities for whole-group, cooperative learning group and individualized instruction.

All students are administered a school-wide reading and math skills pre and post assessment. The pre-test is administered at the beginning of the school year, and the post assessment is administered in June. The results of the assessments are used to determine the level of academic support our students need initially to be academically successful. Teachers meet at least once a week in grade teams to discuss the progress of students and to determine if the curriculum needs to be modified or if homogenous placement is needed to accommodate students needs. Referrals are made for students whose academic needs are deemed too severe for the regular curriculum. These students are referred to the Students Support Team (which includes the parent) who will in turn, make decisions about the academic placement of the child/student. Discovery Charter School offers full-time special education services for those students who qualify as well as resource room support for those students needing part-time academic support.

All teachers are required to utilize the intervention programs which have been incorporated into all of the curriculum programs. The intervention programs are lessons and activities which have been modified to accommodate slow learners. In addition, an adaptive learning environment has been established in each classroom. The A.L.E. is an interactive learning station which is designed to accommodate the needs of slow learners or those who learn differently from the class population. The A.L.E. is equipped with audio and visual tools as well as modified stories with pictures. Calculators, rulers, and counting blocks are also available in the A.L.E.

Core Knowledge concepts and content in the arts serve as the foundation for an extensive Expressive Arts program, which center on Core Knowledge Reading/Language Arts content materials and concepts. Every Friday afternoon the school is transformed into a place where the arts take center stage. Students rotate through a range of expressive arts activities in the areas of visual art, music, dance, drama, media and culinary arts. These activities provide opportunities for the development of creativity and provide direct connections to the formal academic curriculum.

## **Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments**

- Induction Plan
- Professional Education Plan

## **English Language Learners**

To date, we have had no English language learners enrolled in the school. We assess each incoming student in all areas of basic skills and English to make certain our students do not have language needs. The primary goals of our ELL program are to develop students' English language skills, to enable students to meet academic standards, and to provide for their meaningful participation in their regular classroom studies and activities. Recognizing the value of bilingual instruction and retaining mastery of one's native language, the school will aim to integrate children as quickly as possible into the mainstream curriculum in order to make them socially comfortable and enable them to take advantage of all school resources. We envision children progressing through this program in as little a period of time as 6 months to as much as 2 years, depending on the child's level of English proficiency and ability to adapt to new situations. In order to facilitate the transition from ELL instruction to regular classroom instruction and to

ensure that ELL students achieve content mastery, the ELL specialist will meet frequently with classroom teachers. ELL students will be expected to participate in all special subjects, such as art, music and physical education. All teachers will receive training in teaching ELL students and orientation to their cultural norms.

#### Orientation Procedures:

The school staff will meet with parents and students to review:

- Basic school information
- Description of the ELL program
- What content classes the student will attend
- Any special programs available to the student
- Homework and attendance policies
- Assessment procedures

All information will be made available to parents and students in their native language and an interpreter (possibly the ELL specialist) will be available to facilitate communication between parents and school personnel.

#### Identification and Placement

- Screening procedure will include the Home Language Survey, administered to all incoming students.
- The school will use the Language Assessment Battery Test or the Woodcock-Munoz Language Survey to establish language proficiency level.
- The school's child student team in conjunction with the ELL program coordinator and the ELL specialist will advise about placement.

#### Instructional Program

A. This is an ELL pull-out program. When students eligible for the program enter the school, an individualized education plan will be written indicating how much time will be spent in bilingual instruction and how quickly the student is expected to progress toward full inclusion in the regular education program. A specialist will work with small groups of students at approximately the same age or grade level, using age appropriate books and materials in the student's native language at first, always mindful of the need to make a transition into the regular curriculum in English. As students gain language proficiency, they will spend more time in the regular classroom with tutorial support. Staff will include an ELL specialist and trained peer, parent or other volunteer tutors to support students through the process of acquiring proficiency. In addition, regular classroom teachers and the special education teacher may be called upon to provide special instruction to ELL students. Instruction will be correlated with the Pennsylvania standards in order to ensure that students do not miss out on content acquisition as they are learning the language. They will also be prepared for appropriate standardized testing by exposure to sample tests and the ability to practice the types of questions commonly asked.

B. Students will receive daily instruction, the duration determined by their skill level. (Non-English speakers = 2-3 hours/day; beginners = 2 hours/day; intermediates = 1-1.5 hours/day; advanced = 1 hour/day)

C. Students will be included in all extra-curricular and related activities.

D. Students with a possible disability will receive a ER, and an IEP will be created for him/her. The ELL specialist will be trained to distinguish among learning problems that stem from lack of language skills, lack of familiarity and possible special needs. Students will not be referred for special education until the school's child study team determines, as it does with any child in the school. Students in need of counseling or other support services will be referred to appropriate agencies with bilingual staff.

E. The ELL program will be evaluated by an independent ELL educator every year. The school will document student progress in the program quarterly and ensure that students are meeting targets established when they entered the program.

## English Language Learners - Attachment

- ELL Report

## Graduation Requirements

Not Applicable. We are an elementary school.

## Special Education

Various instructional strategies are utilized to educate students who receive special education services. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) determines the type and level of instruction which is presented to these students.

These strategies include but are not limited to the following:

1. Extending the learning time to complete tasks, including test/quizzes.
2. Pre-teach difficult and or new concepts for those students who need to be eased into learning new or different things.
3. Providing students with adequate wait time as a way to increase the quality and depth of responses.
4. Encourage students to use manipulatives during math. Provide students with an assortment of manipulatives.
5. Provide visual support to help students create mental pictures, ie; photos, dioramas, models, maps, charts, symbols, pictures, posters, overheads, graphs, drawing, timelines.
6. Always provide instruction in multi-sensory ways (e.g., auditory, kinesthetic, visual). Immerse the students' senses. Teach to his/her strengths. Teach to two or more modalities.
7. Utilize cooperative, direct and indirect instructional strategies.
8. Group students by skills attainment/need for skills instruction. Use flexible grouping practices.

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Tamika Pitchford	100	Resource Room (Learning Support)	Discovery Charter School	31	n/a
Janine Wells	100	Primary Self Contained (Learning Support)	Discovery Charter School	12	n/a
Alonzo Fulton	100	Intermediate Self	Discovery	15	n/a

		Contained (Mixed Categorical)	Charter School		
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### Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Pediatric Therapeutic Services	25	Speech and Language, Occupational and Physical Therapy	Discovery Charter School	32	n/a

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
Teaching Assistant, Aaron Peterson	Discovery Charter School	100
Teaching Assistant, Tonia Wortham	Discovery Charter School	100
Teaching Assistant, Ronald Wade	Discovery Charter School	100

### Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
Robert Schnaer, Phd.	School Psychologist	50

## SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

### Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA/PASA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Terra Nova	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

### Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Terra Nova	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

### Student Assessment

The results of the 2007 PSSA Test indicate that the school made AYP in Math by demonstrating significant growth through the use of the Pennsylvania Performance Index (PPI) and in Reading through the Safe Harbor requirements. A comparison of the Terra Nova results of October 2006 for grades 3-6 versus the post assessment results of the (GRADE/GMADE) which was taken June'2007 shows a slight improvement in the percentage of students who scored in the advanced and proficient range in reading for grades 4-7 and in math for grades 6 and 8. Testing data is used to monitor individual student progress as well as cohort groups over time.

Local test data along with our in-house pre and post assessments (GRADE/GMADE) is used to track the progress of students who score in the "below proficiency" range and monitor not only their growth over time but the extent of interventions provided each student. State results are used to measure school performance, review strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and gauge progress towards annual goals.

The annual measurable goals which are indicated in this report reflect an alignment with the mission and focus of the school as well as instructional growth along with performance indicators or benchmarks. The focus of the goals is to decrease the number of students who score below the proficient range. This is measured by the results of the state assessment.

The features of our student achievement plan include the mission and vision of DCS charter school as well as the components of the plan which include:

1. **Curriculum and Instruction-** All students have access to high quality instruction in every curricular area focused on increasing student achievement.
  - a. Instruction in core language arts, mathematics and science classes align with the Pennsylvania State Standards to ensure performance mastery.
2. **Assessment-** Developmentally and culturally relevant assessment is used as a tool for improved student learning and instruction.
  - a. An assessment system based on pre and post assessments along with ongoing teacher evaluation of student work informs decisions about curriculum, instruction, and learning in the classroom.
3. **Remediation and Intervention-** Students are supported in performing at proficient levels through interventions and specialized instruction.
  - a. Identification and evaluation of current intervention and remediation efforts support effective programs and eliminate ineffective ones.
4. **Advocacy and Transitions-** Every student feels supported academically and personally throughout the school experience, with emphasis on meeting the needs of students with disabilities, English language learners and students living in poverty.
  - a. Systematic academic and personal support engages students in school and builds resiliency and protective factors.
5. **Choice Initiatives-** Families and students have a variety of school or program choices including neighborhood schools, academies, magnets and optional programs.
  - a. Coordinated policies and procedures for implementing optional programs provide multiple distinctive learning environments that increase parental and student satisfaction, as well as replicable knowledge about teaching and learning.
6. **Family and Community Involvement-** Collaboration of schools with families, community and business supports student learning at home and at school, and is relevant to
7. **Internal Communications and External Relations-**Internal and external communications are clear, accurate, efficient, effective, and relevant.
  - a. A well-known student achievement plan, vision, mission and motto ensure the involvement and commitment of all employees and stakeholders.
8. **Professional Development Training-**Teachers receive on-going training in the latest instructional pedagogy, special education updates, interpretation of data, and personal goal setting.

**Describe the strategies and interventions that are in place to ensure that students who are at-risk of failure, or those not making reasonable progress, are being addressed.**

Pre and post assessments are used as tools to satisfy Child Find and to help us identify students who may be “at risk” or in need of supplemental education support. Child find is a component of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that requires schools to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities, aged birth to 21, who are in need of early intervention or special education services. These services are not limited to underachievers or students who are struggling. It is our obligation to identify those students who excel or exceed standards and provide a rigorous, challenging curriculum which will allow these students to grow as well.

To help our students improve in their academic subjects, we have instituted the following programs/curriculum additions:

- Our curriculum has designated daily, weekly and unit assessments which will provide feedback on students' progress on targeted benchmarks.
- Test preparation skills are taught every Friday morning to prepare students for state mandated tests (PSSA and Terra Nova).
- Our after school tutoring program, serves students who were retained, performing below grade level in math or reading or have scored below proficient on the PSSA. In addition, students who scored a letter grade of “C” or below in math or reading will be required to attend this after school program.
- Fast Forward Lab — The Fast Forward program is a computer based training system that helps students of all ages and learning abilities to rapidly improve their language reading and learning skills. The program provides intense, frequent, and adaptive training. It is geared towards our kindergarten and special needs population. The PSSA testing grades 3 and 5 will participate in this program as well.
- Adaptive Learning Environment — Staff has been provided with ongoing professional development for effective practical strategies and techniques in differentiating instruction. Differentiating instruction will be used to meet the individual learning styles of all students.
- The Leap Frog School House Program has been instituted in the school. This Program utilizes a multi-sensory approach to improve student learning. Students will be provided opportunities to make use of the programs Leap Track assessment and instruction system. It operates according to a four-step process that includes formative assessment, progress reports, targeted differentiated instruction and a feedback book whereby progress is measured and instruction is adjusted.
- Every classroom has at least two personal computers for tutorial and adaptive learning environments.

## **Teacher Evaluation**

a.) List the main features of the school's teacher evaluation plan.

The Discovery Charter School's Teacher Evaluation Plan includes a philosophy which stresses the importance of goal setting, professional development and teacher/administrative collaboration. The plan includes an extensive explanation of our evaluation procedures and supporting documents. The appendix contains samples of the Instructional Performance Criteria,

Informal Observation Guide, Semi-Annual Employee Evaluation Form for Instructional I and Instructional II teachers as well as copies of our Improvement Plan and Instructional Improvement Plan Follow-Up forms.

b.) List entities/individuals who are responsible for teacher and staff evaluation.

Teacher and staff evaluations are conducted by the Principal and Chief Administrative Officer. The instructional administrators (lead teachers) are individuals who support and collaborate with the Principal and CAO when an improvement plan must be implemented. These individuals accompany the Principal or CAO when conducting instructional observations for individuals on the improvement plan. Classroom teachers collaborate with the principal in evaluating their own teaching assistants.

c.) Describe professional development for the evaluators, particularly in the areas of special education and instructional techniques that are unique to the mission of the charter school and support student success.

Our staff as a whole participates in extensive professional development sessions throughout the year. Specifically, evaluators are provided professional development sessions on the following topics: differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, understanding multiple intelligences, effective evaluation techniques. Special education sessions focus on: Modifying the curriculum to meet student learning needs, differentiating instruction, understanding special education terms and labels, understanding the special education process, DCS's child find process and procedures.

Instructional techniques unique to the mission of our charter school include the discovery learning or guided discovery model. Discovery learning highlights the learners' interests, self-motivation and self-regulation. Teachers "set up" the eventual discoveries by offering basic information and some details without giving students too much information. In discovery learning, students do the work. The teacher acts as the facilitator. Students determine the best ways to organize new and familiar information for efficient future transfer. Teachers provide students with problems and puzzles to stimulate them to discover the underlying structure of the subject matter. Left to fill in the gaps, they determine ways to organize the information for encoding, storage, and eventual recall in the most personally comfortable and efficient way.

## **SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Leadership Changes**

In June 2006 three original Board members rotated off the Board after having served for three years. Six new Board members were inducted in August 2006 to begin the 2006/2007 school year. One of the six new Board members had to resign their seat on the board before the end of the school year due to health reasons. Currently, two more original members have rotated off and we are recruiting to nominate three additional members for the start of the 2007/2008 school year, which would bring the total to ten voting members as we move into the next school year. The Administrative Team has been consistent for the past four years with no anticipated changes for this school year.

### **Board of Trustees**

<b>Name of Trustee</b>	<b>Office (if any)</b>
Albert F. Campbell	Ex Officio Member
Wilhelmina Cockroft	Member
Ronald Daniels	Member

Rhoda Fairbanks	Member
Lucinda Hudson	Member
Jacquelyn Y. Kelley	Ex Officio Member
Edward Parker	Secretary
Aaron Preetam	Member
Lauretta H. Rocke Terry	Member
Ellen Scales	Member
Anthony Terrell	Parent Advocate
Coy C. Vickers	Chairperson
Elaine Wideman-Vaughn	Member
Joyce Woodson	Member

### **Professional Development (Governance)**

The Board of Directors participate in an annual full day Board Training Retreat each October. The Board Chairman committed to an entire year of governance training through the Pennsylvania Educational Policy and Leadership Center and successfully completed the Pennsylvania Education Policy Fellowship Program. In August of 2007 he will attend the professional development institute, Charter Schools: Charting a Course for the Next Decade at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Board members also attend the National and State Charter School Conferences each year.

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

The Chairman of the Board meets with the Chief Executive Officer regularly. Prior to each board meeting they set the agenda. The CEO, Principal and CFO have space on the agenda for reports at each monthly board meeting. Meetings are open to parents and staff. A representative of the Board attends all meetings for Charter Schools hosted by the School District of Philadelphia or the State. In addition, the school provides the SDOP and the State with all information and data requested in a timely fashion.

### **Community and Parent Engagement**

Community and parent involvement are high priorities. Members of the Board set the example by being frequent visitors to the school. They are represented and participate in all planned school wide activities and events. They make themselves available to the staff, parents and students.

## **SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

There were no major fund-raising activities performed this year nor are any planned for next year. However, we did host several small-scaled fund-raising events to raise money toward the purchase of playground equipment and to pay for the school's annual Family Day Picnic. The events included student tag days, book fairs, pizza/cookie and candle sales (\$21,287 gross).

### **Fiscal Solvency Policies**

The policy is to maintain a cash reserve equal to a minimum thirty (30) days operating expenses. The schools current financial position is very strong with annual revenues continuing to exceed annual expenses. To date the school has not experienced any financial/cash shortfalls.

## **Accounting System**

The school utilizes a general purpose accounting system which generates monthly balance sheets, revenue and expense statements and cash management reports. The accounting package utilizes a chart of accounts which complies with the PA Public School code requirements, and meets General Accepted Accounting Principles ("GAAP"). An outside payroll company prepares the bi-weekly payroll and pays/remits all employee related taxes.

All school funds are deposited or wired into the schools "Operating Account." The Chief Financial Officer makes all deposits and disbursements. Checks are generated upon completion of a "Check Request Form."

Monthly financial reports are distributed to board members at the monthly board meeting. The reports include the previous month and year-to-date revenues and expenses. These results are compared with the same period the previous year. All financial reports are included in the board minutes.

## **Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment**

- DCS Revenues, Expenditures and Fund Balances

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

The school retained Larson, Allen, Weishair & Co., LLP to perform the annual audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006. The audit which was completed in February 2007 was in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles and produced no audit findings. Larson Allen has been retained to perform the fiscal year 2007 audit which is schedule to be completed in the third quarter.

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

- DCS Auditor's Report

## **Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report**

There are no citations or follow-up actions for any State Audit Report.

## **SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

During the last fiscal year the school did not acquire any new facilities or fixtures. One computer was purchased (\$1,300) plus additional student desks and chairs (\$7,945).

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

During the 2007/2008 fiscal year playground equipment will be purchased and installed on the grounds of the school. In addition, the school has budgeted for the purchase of a sixteen passenger van to be used to transport our various teams to their sports events/competitions. Both items are part of the school's goals to provide a safe play-haven for its students in grades K-3, and to provide transportation for our middle school students who participate in our extended day sports program (basketball, track, step and lacrosse).

The school has also budgeted for the purchase of a 20-unit mobile laptop computer lab. This lab will be the means by which teachers will be able to incorporate technology into the curriculum within the classroom setting where learning is taking place. In addition, the students will also acquire critical 21st-century digital literacy skills. The acquisition of a mobile computer lab is in accordance with the school's technology plan.

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

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

#### **Evacuation Plan 2007**

Discovery Charter School must provide a safe, orderly learning environment for every child. Our School Safety Plan provides protocols for crisis response situations so that our staff can quickly and adequately provide a safe environment for all students. Our plan has procedures for evacuations, fire drills and building emergencies.

All administrators and safety team members will communicate through cell phones and Walkie-talkies.

#### **Danger in the building:**

We have established two types of codes for building emergencies. They are Code Blue and Code Red. Code Blue emergencies are when a teacher is in danger, a teacher is ill or when smoke or gas is smelled. A Code Red emergency is when a stranger is in the building.

All procedures for these emergencies are posted in all classrooms and offices.

#### **If a teacher is in danger:**

First send two students to the nearest adult not in danger.

Call for the Dean of Students if violence has or is occurring.

Then send two students to the nearest administrator.

#### **If a teacher is ill:**

First send two students to the nearest adult.

The adult should then notify the nurse and the nearest administrator.

#### **Smells:**

If smells are present (gas, smoke), notify the nearest administrator.

Administrator will call secretary; pull fire alarm and blow whistle to notify staff to evacuate building.

**Stranger in the building:**

Teachers are to lock their doors and have the students sit on the floor out of the sight of the observation window.

Teachers are not to unlock their doors until they receive a slip of paper under their door to let them know it is now safe.

**Evacuation from the Building:**

Our school has monthly fire drills. Students exit our building from 5 different exits. Students that exit from the rear of the building walk to the back of the parking lot. The students that exit from the front of the building cross 51<sup>st</sup> street and walk half way up the block toward 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. Students remain in these areas until the building is safe.

When we have to evacuate the building because of smells or other reasons, students report to the same areas. If we are unable to reenter the building we have three sites that children and staff will report to. All teachers will carry their Evacuation Bags filled with their Roll books, First Aid Kits, Emergency Contact Forms, Activity Sheets and other materials to make the evacuation comfortable.

Our 6<sup>th</sup> Grade through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students and SC2 will report to Bible Way Baptist Church located at 1323 North 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. The Dean of Students, will be the administrator in charge. Mr. Bey, Mr. Peterson, Mr. Fields and Ms. Morris will accompany the Dean to this site.

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade through 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students and SC1 will report to Raising Horizons Quest Charter School located at 5151 Warren Street. The CEO will be the administrator in charge. Mr. Bradley, Ms. Pitchford, Mr. Wade, Ms. DeJesus, and Ms. Evans will accompany the CEO to this site.

Our Kindergarten through 2<sup>nd</sup> Grades will report to Millennium Baptist Church located at 53<sup>rd</sup> and Jefferson Street. The school Principal will be the administrator in charge. Ms. Hodges, Ms. Brevard, Mr. Austin, Mr. Jackson, and Ms. Woods will accompany the Principal to this site.

The Financial Officer will travel in her car along with the school nurse. The Financial Officer will have a first aid kit in her car for emergencies. The School Safety Administrator and Mr. Garner will travel as the situation dictates.

The Facilities Manager and the Facilities workers will remain at the building unless the situation dictates otherwise.

If we are unable to report back inside the building there are two plans for dismissal. If the area that is used for regular dismissal is safe, our classes will report to that area. If that area is unsafe then our school buses will report to our three evacuation

site to pick up our students. Kindergarten parents will pick their children up at Millennium Baptist Church. Parents of students that do not catch the school bus will be called and notified where they will pick up their child.

The students will be dismissed with a letter informing parents of the purpose and reason for the evacuation. This letter will state the procedures that will follow if we can not return to our original site. Additionally, information will be forwarded to emergency response agencies as to where students will report if the evacuation exists for more than the one school day.

## 2006-07 -- Fire and Evacuation Drill Log

9/27/06	9:30 a.m.	Mild	3 min.	500 students	School Drill	5 exits	None
10/3/06				518 students			
10/25/06	2:00 p.m.	Cool	3 min. 30 sec.	500 students	School Drill	5 exits	None
10/31/06	1:45 p.m.	Mild	3min. 30 sec	500 students	Building Drill	5 exits	None
10/31/06	2:00 p.m.	Mild	3 min.	500 students	Building Drill	4 exits	None
12/15/06	9:00 a.m.	Cold	3 min. 30sec.	500 students	Building Drill	4 exits	None
1/23/07	10:35 a.m.	Cold	4 min.	375 students	Building	4 exits	Smell of Gas
3/29/07	9:04 a.m.	Mild	3 min.	400 students	Building Drill	4 exits	None
3/30/07	9:35 a.m.	Mild	15 min.	400 students	School Drill		None
5/18/07	3:45 p.m.	Mild	2 min.	10 children	School Drill	2 exits	None
6/13/07	9:00 a.m.	Warm	2 min.	500 students	Building Drill	5 exits	None

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

- Immunization/Health Report

- Lunch and Wellness Program

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

Keystone East Health Plan, United Concordia Dental Plan, Davis Vision Plan, Short-Term Disability, Long Term Disability, Accidental Death and Dismemberment, Property Coverage, Crime, Educators Legal Liability, Director and Officers Coverage, Automobile Liability, Umbrella Liability, General Liability, Workers Compensation

## **SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS**

### **Quality of Teaching and Other Staff**

The 2006/2007 school year will begin with an instructional staff of thirty (30) persons. Twenty-two (22) regular education teachers, three (3) special education teachers, and five (5) speciality teachers. The instructional staff is joined by two (2) Academic Coaches, one (1) Special Education Coordinator, ten (10) full time teaching assistants and an Administrative Team (CEO, Principal, CFO, Dean of Students )

Twenty-six of the thirty instructional teachers are returning teachers. The four vacancies are due to expansion ( first grade-1, and special education-2 ) and a second Academic Coach for middle school grades. Seven (7) of our TA's are returning, three (3) are new.

Discovery is known for its collaborative, team based decision making process. It is a strength that has kept the core of staff members with us for these past four, going into our fifth year. New staff members are brought on board with a "new" teacher orientation, followed by a week long Teacher's Academy that involves the entire staff. Continuous support is provided throughout the year in weekly team meetings, bi-weekly "mini" developments, monthly full day staff developments, peer mentoring, off site visitations and participation in national and state conferences.

### **Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachments**

- DCS-ESPP
- DCS- PDE414

### **Student Enrollment**

#### **Enrollment Policy**

Discovery Charter School is a public school with a capped enrollment. Therefore, admission is through application and a lottery process held on **March 30<sup>th</sup>** of each school year. Applications for admission are good up to December 31<sup>st</sup> of each school year and must be submitted prior to the lottery date. Students are admitted based on available grade slots and in the order of the lottery selection.

### **Intent to Return**

Students who are currently enrolled must submit an Intent to Return form by April 30<sup>th</sup> and a signed parental contract must be on file by June 30<sup>th</sup> for the upcoming year.

### **Confidentiality Statement**

Discovery Charter School maintains a firm policy regarding the confidentiality of its students and prohibits the discussion of any student or student matters in any public venue.

### **Transportation**

The School District of Philadelphia provides the transportation for the Discovery Charter School Students. The Yellowbird Bus Company provided this year's transportation.

We have approximately 281 students who travel to school by bus. We have five different buses that service our students. The students live in the Northeast, Mt. Airy, Germantown, Southwest, South, and West Philadelphia areas.

It is very important that students arrive and leave school on time. This year our buses were on time for admission approximately 80%, and they left on time for dismissal approximately 95%. This was a great improvement from last year.

### **Food Service Program**

Discovery Charter School participates in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program provided by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. We currently have 296 students who receive free or reduced lunches. The entire school has the option to participate in the lunch program. .

Discovery Charter School participates in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program provided by the Archdiocese of

Philadelphia. Students who attend our before school program receive breakfast. The entire school has the option to participate in the lunch program. Students who attend our after school program receive snack.

### **Student Conduct**

**A.) Describe your expectations for student behavior and discipline. Explain how your discipline policy complies with Chapters 12 of the Public School Code, particularly with respect to due process.**

Discovery Charter School has adopted its Student Code of Conduct in order to inform students, parents, and school staff of the behavior that is expected from all students to ensure a safe and focused learning environment. (See attached Student Code of Conduct.)

**B.) Provide the number of suspensions and expulsions by student. (Example: 12 students were involved in 21 suspensions incidents and 1 student was expelled.)**

In the 2006-2007 school year, there were a total of 33 suspensions involving 25 students and 1 expulsion.

### **Code of Conduct**

The DCS Code of Conduct will be an essential element of the School's commitment to foundational values. It will comply with all requirements of the Commonwealth's Public School Code and will be consistent with the Code of Conduct recently developed by the School District of Philadelphia. It will lay out a clear process of identification, intervention and remediation in, and guarantee due process to students and families. The Dean of Students, under the supervision of the Principal and the CAO, will bear primary responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Code and for reporting Act 26 violations. Feedback regarding its provisions will be provided through the School Advisory Council, the School Leadership Team and the School's annual self review.

The School's approach to enforcing the Code and for nurturing the social skills that support it will be based on the research-based Second Step program. The program is highly recommended by the US Department of Education, the American Medical Association and many college- and organizations that participated in a national research project on violence prevention.

Second Step includes the following components:

- Component I: Social Skills and Violence Prevention Training

Proactive and preventive, this series of lessons for grades K-12 teaches what have been found to be the three essential skills that foster pro-social behavior: problem solving, anger management and empathy. The program also offers a parent component which supports reinforcement of these behaviors at home. This curricular component will be taught one day per week to all students as part of the Specials rotation.

- Component II: Discipline and Remediation

This component is also proactive and based on the skills students learn through Second Step. As implemented at DCS this component will include the following elements:

- Every step will be taken not only to modify a student's behavior, but to keep the student in the regular academic environment.
- DCS will be staffed with a full-time counselor and full-time special education teacher in order to provide a continuum of behavior management services.
- DCS will network with existing community organizations and agencies in order to provide direct and consultative support to families and staff (including psychological, medical and social services).
- DCS facilities will be designed in such a way as to facilitate the temporary removal of student from the classroom when required and to facilitate access to support services.

Students who must be temporarily removed from the classroom or suspended from school will be provided a supervised In-house Alternative Classroom to ensure instructional Continuity and adult supervision.

- The Code of Conduct and the above steps will constitute an agreement between parents and DCS staff that parents will sign upon enrollment.

A carefully calibrated discipline and remediation program for DCS is outlined below.

#### Level I — Minor Infractions

Teacher and student conference

- a. review of appropriate Second Step skill
- b. student "problem-solves" ways to prevent recurrences of behavior

#### Level II - Repeated Minor Infractions

Parent contact (use of Second Step letter when appropriate) Negative Consequence (loss of minor privilege)

Teacher, student, Dean of Students conference

Level III — Continued Misbehavior or Serious Infraction (such as regular use of offensive language, fighting, destruction of property, theft, explosive anger, endangering self and others, possession of a weapon, possession of a controlled substance for non-medical use, an increase in intensity or frequency of minor infractions)

Team meeting to include teacher, parent, Dean of Students and counselor

- a. Behavior Modification or Behavior Building plan developed
- b. Negative Consequence (loss of major privilege)

#### Level IV — Pattern of Serious Misbehavior

Team meeting - Functional Behavioral Assessment and Plan developed In-school counseling

Outside resources to assist family if needed

Level V — Extreme behaviors or when the above interventions have been unsuccessful

Alternative Learning Center (ALC)

- a. Psycho-educational testing
- b. Temporary removal into an intensive behavior-support environment
- c. Suspension of regular academic program
- d. Obtain Individualized Outside Support Services

Level VI — Expulsion

Policies for expulsion of students with whom the above strategies remain unsuccessful or who pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of themselves or others are included in it By-laws that have been constructed in accordance with provisions of PS 13-1318. Due process requirements will be strictly enforced for all students and families through procedures approved by the Board of Directors in accordance with those provisions. Hearings, suspensions, and expulsions as described in PS 13-1318 will be delegated to an *ad hoc* committee of the Board of Directors.

(DCS Student Code of Conduct attached)

# CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

## Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2007 - 2008

**Name of School:** Discovery Charter School

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** April 16, 2003

**Length of Charter:** Five (5) years    **Opening Date:** September 2003

**Grade Level:** K-8    **Hours of Operation:** 7:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m. w/ extended day

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 64%    **Total Instructional Staff:** 28

**Student/ Teacher Ratio:** 11:1 (grs K-3) w/ TA 25:1 (grs 4-8)    **Student Waiting List:** 100 +

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** 94.66%

**Enrollment:** 489    **Per Pupil Subsidy:** \$7,247.92 (reg. ed) \$15,346.00

### Student Profile

**American Indian/Alaskan Native:** 0  
**Asian/Pacific Islander:** 0  
**Black (Non-Hispanic):** 99%  
**Hispanic:** 1%  
**White (Non-Hispanic):** 0  
**Multicultural:** 0

**Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:** 61%

**Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December:** 58

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
<b>Instructional Days</b>	0	0	180	180	180	0	180
<b>Instructional Hours</b>	0	0	1135	1135	1263	0	3533

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

**School Year: 2007**

The Discovery Charter School within Philadelphia IU 26 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** Jacquelyn Y. Kelley

**Title** CEO

**Phone** 215-879-8182

**Fax** 215-879-9510

**E-mail** jackie\_kelley\_dcs@yahoo.com

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*Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date*

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

**Name** Coy C. Vickers

**Title** Chairman

**Phone** 215-879-8182

**Fax** 215-879-9510

**E-mail** coycvickers@netzero.com

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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** Tamika Pitchford

**Title** Special Ed. Coordinator

**Phone** 215-879-8182

**Fax** 215-879-9510

**E-mail** tamika\_pitchford\_dcs@yahoo.com

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*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*