
Pennsylvania Department of Education



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Charter Annual Report **Tuesday, October 09, 2007**

Charter School: GECAC Community CS
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SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization Description

The GECAC Community Charter School, (now renamed the Robert Benjamin Wiley Community Charter School), was the first Charter School in northwest Pennsylvania and the 6th school in Pennsylvania to receive a charter. Through the vision of Mr. R. Benjamin Wiley, the commitment of the Board of Directors, the hard work and dedication of the staff of the GECAC

agency, and the hopes, needs, and trust of the families of the Erie community, the GECAC Community Charter School came into existence. The mission of the school was to "leave no child behind", articulated by our founder four years prior to "No Child Left Behind" became the mantra for school reform. Our goal has been to provide a quality educational opportunity for "children of promise" who were not experiencing success in other educational settings, giving them a vision that they can become successful, productive, and valued members of the school and community, as well as the world around them.

The Robert Benjamin Wiley Community Charter School is located on the east side of the city of Erie, overlooking Lake Erie. It is located in a parklike setting with a spacious playground. Our one-story building spreads across the campus and is totally handicapped accessible with ramps at all doors and a lift at the loading dock. The building is on the grounds of the former International Paper research facility and was converted into our elementary/middle school when leased seven years ago. The building houses eighteen classrooms (2 each, k-8) with grades 7 and 8 located in a separate section of the building, and functioning as our middle school. Our Board of Directors has made great efforts to insure that the facility includes comprehensive access to technology. There are from four to ten computers in every classroom, a computer lab, a mobile computer lab, six smart boards, three classroom-based computer labs, and three technology units. Additionally, all computers are networked and internet connected.

Due to our ability to maintain a waiting list with students from the city of Erie, all of our families, upon enrollment, are residents of Erie. Our charter allows us to maintain students if they move to outlying districts. Our original mission was to serve children determined to be "at risk". The demographics of our school attest to meeting that mission. Currently 98 percent of our student population are classified as low income, 30 percent are diagnosed as exceptional and in need of special education services. Although the demographic profile is distributed equally across grade levels (with the exception of special education) the students in higher grades typically demonstrate more significant academic and behavioral challenges. Historically, families and students in upper elementary and middle school grades report that they select the Charter School due to problems in other settings and the comprehensive services offered by the school.

Core Purpose

Mission

Mission: "The GECAC community Charter School is designed to develop responsible democratic citizens who are prepared to face the challenges of tomorrow. We seek to develop competent students who can compete with students from any school in the country. It is our mission to instill the twin attributes of responsibility and discipline in our students so that they may succeed in their future endeavors."

Vision

Vision: R B Wiley CCS will provide a quality education, providing the basis for students to become lifelong learners as well as moral, ethical, and compassionate people. A partnership of staff, students, parents, and the community will prepare students to become responsible citizens and productive members of the communities in which they live.

Shared Values

Shared Values: (core Beliefs)

- Every student is capable of learning.
- Every student has the right to a non-threatening, stimulating, positive and supportive educational environment.
- Clearly stated high expectations enhance student outcomes. The students' academic, social, physical and emotional growth is the shared responsibility of the students and their families, the school administration and staff, and the surrounding community.

- Students need to be lifelong, independent and cooperative learners to face the challenges of the 21st century.
- Significant learning occurs when students understand the relevancy of what they are learning and are able to apply this knowledge to their lives.
- Community pride and involvement enhance the quality of student learning.
- Stakeholders should participate in school governance by getting involved in the school's management system. It is essential that the school management system consists of leadership positions, committees, councils and decision-making processes. Shared governance and decision-making provides the opportunity for personnel, parents, community members, and students to collaborate in the Strategic Plan and promote increased school achievement and improvement in the educational process.

Academic Standards

TARGETED GOALS AND PLAN ACTIVITIES/REQUIRED COMPONENTS

Goals were developed for the 2006-2007 school year and included:

Improvement Target: # 1

READING

At least 54% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

Improvement Target: # 2

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Decrease the percent of students that are absent or tardy from school, in an attempt to maintain a daily average of over 93%.

Improvement Target: # 3

MATHEMATICS

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

Improvement Target: # 4

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE ASSESSMENTS

The school will maintain its high participation rate of 100% as in 2005-2006 or at least above 97% for the 2006-2007 assessments.

Improvement Target: # 5

CAPACITY BUILDING

100% of school staff is engaged in learning new practices that are research-based and using benchmarks of success across multiple classrooms.

Strengths and Challenges

SCHOOL STRENGTHS :

- Each of the members of the Board of Directors is an individual with a personal commitment to the mission of the school. Tackling big issues and raising critical questions is an indication of their personal integrity and ability to model what a community of diverse adults can accomplish collaboratively. Board members also

- volunteer their time, not just in committees, but also through involvement in school activities throughout the year.
- Full school contingent of Highly Qualified Instructors
 - The involvement of local colleges and universities is a valuable strength relative to school programming. With interns, homework help clubs, and tutoring programs, our students are exposed to college students who are examples of young adults that value education. The R. B. Wiley Community Charter School has an open door policy in terms of affiliation with outside, reputable organizations.
 - Partnerships with Mental Health providers to insure that the comprehensive mental health needs of student and their families are met in a timely and appropriate manner. Our contract for onsite services, our collaboration for referrals and services through the WRAP offices and cooperative relationship for outpatient and therapeutic support staff in the building has had positive impact on children.
 - Our ongoing partnership with IU # 5 is a strength and allows for consultation and assistance within diverse areas such as special education, federal programs, English Language Learners, assistance with strategic and school improvement planning, staff development assistance, and IU media resources.
 - Academic pep rally and student recognition programs were instituted to provide students with an awareness of the rewards of effort and achievement.
 - Recent special education audits recognized our comprehensive team of professionals meeting our students' needs, our inclusion practice, our mentoring program, and our early intervention services.
 - Charter Reauthorization process provided a systematic opportunity for self study and improvement planning.
 - Community involvement, Steris reading program, Foster Grandparents program, reading programs, and numerous employee opportunities for participation in a vast variety of programmatic options is employed to enhance learning.
 - A host of educational and health professionals, presenting programs of interest and timely issues geared to students and young adults were utilized in staff developments throughout the year.
 - Salary enhancements for faculty are continuing to evolve toward parity with local public school system.
 - Innovations, such as a full day Kindergarten, uniforms, school family coordinators, staffing patterns, graduate assistants, an incentive program of games and prizes (The Blue Room) for students exhibiting appropriate behavior and interest in learning, continue and mark the school as an innovative institution with operations that represent "thinking outside of the box" when necessary to help students and families succeed.
 - Our Building Level Team is an excellent resource for parents as they make referrals and other contacts for parents and children to connect with outside agencies. The school offers in-house mental health services for students and their parents.
 - The Boys and Girls Club is located within 200 yards of the school, providing an excellent after-school care program for our families.
 - The school, through Board members and local community support, provide students with field opportunities and exposure to the Arts that they may not otherwise have the opportunity to experience.

- **CHALLENGES and ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES:**

The challenges faced during the 2006-2007 school year are continually being addressed within the formative School Improvement Plan. Even though progress was made in certain areas during the 2006-2007 school year, making continuing progress across all targeted areas will require all GCCS administration and staff to respond to school-wide, best practice modifications in educational methodology, especially as it relates to PSSA achievement across the GCCS student population. The use of school-wide assessment methodology and data-informed decision-making

is being reviewed for more appropriate implementation in order to meet the academic needs of each student. Goals for the upcoming years Improvement Plan will focus intensely on utilization of administration, staff and the methodology necessary to improve standardized testing scores:

- Curriculum mapping and alignment to state standards
- Administrative Restructuring
- Team focus on continuing school wide effective behavior management with the goal of increasing instructional time.
- Implementation of new math program in grades K-6 incorporating increased focus on PA anchors and standards.
- Additional staff development on the use of available resources in the Trophies Reading Series for instruction and assessment
- Increased collaboration with IU5 consultant staff for improving teaching strategies in reading and math.
- Improved use of child success team to target students who are achieving in Below Basic category.
- Teacher planning methodology
- Dynamic, formative, school-wide assessment (DIBELS, CBM principles; 4-Sight) to inform decision-making
- Data-driven decisions regarding grade-level instructional groupings
- Curriculum layering
- Systematic grade-level committee meetings with administrative, teaching, and parent representation
- Intensive teacher observational and supervision Protocol
- Continued Improvement relative to Staff Development Protocol
- Heightened Parent and Community Involvement
- Development of Individual Learning Plans for every student(ILPs)
- Board restructuring

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process

I. PLANNING PROCESS:

The planning process for 2007-2008 will begin with a notification to parents regarding PSSA test scores during the 2007-2008 school interpretation of corrective action classification. This letter will state why the school is in corrective action and how parents may be involved in the planning process. This notification will be sent via mail in August of 2007.

A school improvement committee has been established with the following membership: Principal / CAO, middle school teacher, elementary teacher, Director of Curriculum, Director of Student Services, Director of Student Management, Community members, and parents. Committee meetings will be scheduled and held. The Board level Curriculum Committee and all School Board Directors are involved in the process through systematic discussions and updates.

Collaboration with the Northwest Intermediate Unit 5 and submission of the PDE "Getting Results" School Improvement and Planning template was complete for years 2006-2008. This intensive process brought together all school-wide, community, parent, and collaborative, expert contingents to organize a cohesive, strategic plan for school improvement, inclusive of mandated achievement goals, in addition to localized, school-specific goals. Data were analyzed to discover root causes for lack of achievement and targeted goals and "action steps" were delineated and included:

1) Increase PSSA Reading and Math Achievement

- 2) Implement and Utilize upgraded Formative Assessment model**
- 3) Demonstrate Instructional Priority**
- 4) Demonstrate Systemic Operations (School-to-Home Connection)**
- 5) Adopt an Upgraded Behavior/Disciplining System based on Positive Guidance**
- 6) Participation on State Assessments -- At least 95% participation in required state-wide assessments**
- 7) Attendance — year-to-year increase in student attendance**
- 8) Capacity-Building - 100% of school staff is engaged in learning new practices that work, based on external evidence and benchmarks of success across multiple classrooms**

Submission, presentation and revision of this plan was followed by receipt of certificate of quality assurance from the IU5 and has been attached within this annual report document.

II. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Two types of Needs Assessments were used to determine what professional development had to be incorporated into the plan for the 2006-2008 school years. Through the Intermediate Unit, an on-line Staff Development Survey was completed and the data analysis report was used in planning. Teachers completed a checklist that highlighted what areas the teaching staff believed required additional professional development. Ten percent of the Title 1 allocation was set-aside for professional development along with funds from the general budget. The state approved Professional Development Plan and Induction Program is followed for the 2005-2008 school years to insure that new teachers are being supported to the level necessary.

III. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

1. Our Board of Trustees is comprised of talented professionals from the community, representing a diverse range of backgrounds, skills and experiences. Board members also assist the school team in recruiting other community members with specific talents to address strategic planning and improvement issues.
2. Edinboro University, Mercyhurst College, and Gannon University are involved in the school and the process of improvement planning. There are representatives from some who act as Board of Directors, others as consultants, and presenters for professional development. College students offer after-school homework help, work as graduate assistants, and student teach in the classrooms.
3. A number of businesses have offered time and money to enrich the lives of our students by being involved in reading programs, reward programs, and donations for needed items.

IV TARGETED GOALS AND PLAN ACTIVITIES/MANDATED COMPONENTS

Goals were developed for the 2005-2006 school year and included:

Improvement Target: # 1

READING

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Improvement Target: # 2

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

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Improvement Target: # 3

MATHEMATICS

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

Improvement Target: # 4

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE ASSESSMENTS

The school will maintain its high participation rate of 100% as in 2004-2005 or at least above 97% for the 2005-2006 assessments.

Improvement Target: # 5

CAPACITY BUILDING

100% of school staff is engaged in learning new practices that are research-based and using benchmarks of success across multiple classrooms.

The core activities addressing these targets for the 2005-2006 plan were constructed for the upcoming year:

- Daily, consistent use of "Morning Boards, Daily Calendar Math, Guided Reading / Literacy Circles" at all grade levels.
- Use standardized testing results, school-based formative assessments, running records, and progress-monitoring tools to assess student progress and design of instructional plans.
- Establish an re-commit to after-school tutoring programs and supplemental services, which focuses on students who are not making sufficient progress in Math and Reading.
- Implement a reward program for students' attendance and behavior.
- Offer monthly professional development programs that focus on the issues that were indicated on the Needs Assessment completed by the teaching staff.
- With the core belief that if parents aren't on the team, then students don't meet with success, all school staff are challenged to "Do Whatever It Takes" to encourage parents to be an active member of the educational team for their child

Based on PSSA data, targets not met and are addressed via corrective action methodology described below.

V. CHALLENGES and ADDRESSING WEAKNESSES

The challenges faced during the 2006-2007 school year will be addressed within the subsequent and necessary Improvement plan. Even though progress was made in certain areas during the school year, making continuing progress across all targeted areas will require all GCCS administration and staff to respond to school-wide, best practice modifications in educational methodology, especially as it relates to PSSA achievement across the GCCS student population. The use of school-wide assessment methodology and data-informed decision-making is being reviewed for more appropriate implementation in order to meet the academic needs of each student. Goals for the upcoming years Improvement Plan will focus intensely on the methodology necessary to improve standardized testing scores

- Curriculum mapping and alignment to state standards

- Team focus on school wide effective behavior management with the goal of increasing instructional time.
- Continued implementation of new math program/curricula in grades K-6 incorporating increased focus on PA anchors and standards.
- Additional staff development on the use of available resources in the Trophies Reading Series for instruction and assessment.
- Increased collaboration with IU5 consultant staff for improving teaching strategies in reading and math.
- Improved use of child success teams and Individual Education Plans to map ALL student progress and achievement.
- Heightened teacher planning methodology
- Full implementation of dynamic, formative, school-wide assessment (DIBELS, CBM principles; 4-Sight) to inform decision-making
- Data-driven decisions regarding grade-level instructional groupings
- Curriculum layering
- Systematic grade-level committee meetings with administrative, teaching, and parent representation
- Intensive teacher observational and supervision Protocol
- Continued Improvement relative to Staff Development Protocol
- Heightened Parent and Community Involvement

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Peter Russo	Charter School	Administrator	Greg Myers
Marc Blount	Charter School	Board Member	Greg Myers
Stephanie Milford	Charter School	Administrator	Greg Myers
Ron Porter	Charter School	Administrator	Greg Myers
Kathryn Olds	Charter School	Administrator	Greg Myers
Anthony Williams	Charter School	Parent	Greg Myers
Benny Simmons	Charter School	Parent	Greg Myers
Annissa Schoolfield	Charter School	Administrator	Greg Myers
Patrick Ploss	Charter School	Ed Specialist - Instructional Technology	Greg Myers
Lisa Berkholder	Charter School	Ed Specialist - Instructional Technology	Greg Myers
Ellen Bane	Charter School	Middle School Teacher	Greg Myers
Leslie Barton	Charter School	Middle School Teacher	Greg Myers
Nancy Pierce	Charter School	Administrator	Greg Myers

kim Adams	Charter School	Ed Specialist - School Nurse	Greg Myers
Carol Ebe	Charter School	Ed Specialist - School Nurse	Greg Myers
Sheela Horton	Charter School	Elementary School Teacher	Greg Myers
Lucy Durkin	Charter School	Elementary School Teacher	Greg Myers
Georgia Bowser	Charter School	Special Education Representative	Greg Myers
Mary Hayes	Charter School	Ed Specialist - School Counselor	Greg Myers

Goals, Strategies and Activities

Goal: Continuous Learning

Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: Continuous learning ethic

Description:

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Expert Development and Consult	Recent Leadership entrance into the IU5 curriculum and Principal's cohort has opened up the door to more opportunity for comprehensive professional development among school staff. GCCS staff is currently operating with all "highly qualified" teaching staff, certified in their specialty areas.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District Improvement Plan Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: Increase PSSA Reading and Math Achievement

Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: Math achievement

Description:

Activities:

Activity	Description
strategies	GCCS "concern" is to understand growth and continue with necessary progress initiatives. In this vein, both Math and Reading curriculum, instructional support, and assessment protocol has been revisited for the 2006-08 school years. GCCS has adopted a new, research-based, standards-aligned Math curriculum and implemented it K-6. (Every Day Math). Extensive staff trainings were conducted during staff orientation and training (2006-07) by product and content experts and will be reinforced and continued 2007-2008. GCCS has adopted Larson Math technologies within the middle school to significantly heighten differentiated instruction, as well as progress-monitoring assessment capabilities. Student groupings have also been arranged in order to best provide instruction to a significantly variable group of middle school students. Special education staff schedules have been modified to best provide support of differentiated instruction, as well as necessary special needs accommodations.

	GCCS has restructured its administrative staff to include 2 curriculum directors (one elementary and one middle school). This restructure allows for significantly more instructional support, supervision, and evaluation. It has also served to help individualize curricula between two empirically variable populations relative to best-practice philosophy, instruction and technique. The Principal, Curriculum Directors, and Special Needs Director meet weekly to bi-weekly after school hours to ensure far-enhanced structured group supervision practices.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District Improvement Plan Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Strategy: Quality Leadership and Structure

Description:

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Administrative Restructuring	Restructuring school administration, as well as redefining critical staff, will allow for a significant increase in teacher support, opportunity for team-teaching, direct instruction, small group differentiation, more effective special needs accommodation, teacher training, evaluation & feedback, as well as strengthened family supports. Structured Group Supervision models are empirically validated, best-practice school reform strategies. The newly formed administration is made of masters and doctoral level educators with a continuing learning ethic.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District Improvement Plan Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: Infrastructure

Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: Artful use of infrastructure

Description:

Activities:

Activity	Description
Utilization of resources and learning opportunities	Restructured accountabilities are fixed to address particular areas of concern. Additional curriculum support via dual curriculum directors offers more intensive protocol for team-teaching, teacher observation and support, as well as a more reliable feedback loop with administration and school-wide resources. The creation of a newly structured pair of school-family coordinators will allow for greater generalization of school efforts into the home environment, as well as increase the ability for our families to receive more informed and timely referral services for any comprehensive family concerns.

	<p>Increased opportunities for learning will be afforded throughout the next 2 programs years with an emphasis and renewed investment in extended-day and — year programming including:</p> <p>1 SES Tutoring: The SES tutoring budget will enable us to increase the number of children serviced via the IU5 contract. The framework for the 2006-2008 year has already been constructed and includes 3 after-school hours per week of small group child tutoring services. A staff survey is implemented at the beginning of each school year in order to afford all teaching staff the opportunity for participation in the program and increased opportunity in child outcomes. Parent letters are sent to the homes of all economic disadvantaged families enrolled for the school year. Child participation will be contingent on the approved criterion for selection</p> <p>2 PSSA Tutoring: School Improvement funds are targeted to be utilized for additional tutoring programs geared directly toward students identified through prior data indicating individual PSSA progress. Eligible content will be at the forefront of PSSA tutoring efforts. Specific sub-groupings and standard accommodations are considered.</p> <p>3 Athletics/Activities: GCCS is currently implementing an intramural sports and activities calendar, both for increased “wellness” and socialization efforts, as well as additional contingency to comprehensive achievement.</p> <p>4 Before-school Programming: This programming will continue in order to afford more comprehensive support services to our families in need</p> <p>5 Dual Summer sessions: GCCS summer sessions will include four weeks of comprehensive Reading, Math, Technology, and Creative Arts education for eligible children, grades K-8. There will be two independent sessions offered summer 2007 separated by a short break. The program is designed to address both an academic review of materials found in a child's exiting grade (session 1), as well as preparation for the grade they will be entering in the fall of 2007 (session 2).</p> <p>6 Parent Involvement Activities:</p> <p>7 Comprehensive Special Needs Programming:</p> <p>Increased opportunities for professional development and investment are being addressed via more thoughtful and objective needs assessment of contemporary instructional trainings whereby best practice and empiricism informs staff surveying. All staff are to be directly invested to training needs via the creation of new grade and content-level curriculum committees. To date for the 2006-08 school years, technology integration has been surveyed and offered, as well as dynamic assessment, PA assessment anchors, and the infusion of eligible content into planning and instruction. Home considerations too have been and are continually being addressed.</p>	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District Improvement Plan Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: Instruction

Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: Demonstrating Instructional Priority

Description:

Activities:

Activity	Description
Instruction & Infrastructure	<p>Quality Teaching: Research indicates that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers with better qualifications are associated with higher achievement. • Teacher autonomy is positively associated with higher achievement. <p>Excessive prescription of teaching practices does not appear to raise standards and may have the converse effect.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student strategic self-management of learning was associated with higher achievement. • Greater instructional resources correlate with higher achievement. • Frequent use of available resources is key. • Classroom libraries are under-used. • High interest exists in using computers for learning activities correlates with higher reading performance. <p>Questions to be examined are: What is the source and effectiveness of benchmarks for grading students? How does the grading system correlate with other assessments? Does the grading system take into account all pertinent assessment issues? What evidence is there that outcomes of assessments are used in ways that enhance literacy learning?</p> <p>We are currently insuring that school-wide protocol follows empiricism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SETTING HIGH STANDARDS. When students' work is monitored in relation to high standards, student effort and achievement increase. Researchers caution, however, that standards must not be set so high that students perceive them as unattainable; if they do, effort and achievement decrease. The definition of "high standards" differs across studies, but generally, researchers indicate that students should be able to experience a high degree of success (on assignments, during classroom questioning, etc.) while continually being challenged with new and more complex material. • HOLDING STUDENTS ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR WORK. We must establish expectations and guidelines for students' seatwork, homework, and other functions and follow through with rewards/sanctions that facilitate learning and enhances achievement. • FREQUENCY AND REGULARITY. Whether the topic is teacher monitoring of seatwork, administration of tests, checking homework, or conducting reviews, researchers cite frequency and regularity in carrying out monitoring activities as a major reason they are effective. • CLARITY. Clarity about expectations, formats, and other aspects of direction-giving bears a positive relationship to the achievement of the students doing the homework, participating in the classroom questioning session, etc., and must be a staple of school methodology. • COLLECTING, SCORING, AND RECORDING RESULTS OF CLASSWORK, HOMEWORK, TESTS, AND SO ON must be uniform and systematic. These activities are positively related to achievement, because they produce useful information to teachers and students and because they communicate to students that teachers are serious about effort and completion of assignments. • FEEDBACK. Providing feedback to students lets them know how they are doing and helps them to correct errors of understanding and fill in gaps in knowledge. Some researchers focus on the ways in which feedback is provided, pointing out that students who are having learning difficulties require support, encouragement, and attention to their success if the feedback is to foster achievement of learning goals.

Effective reading instruction is built on a foundation that recognizes that reading ability is determined by multiple factors: many factors that correlate with reading fail to explain it; many experiences contribute to reading development without being prerequisite to it; and although there are many prerequisites, none by itself is considered sufficient.

Our adequate initial reading instruction requires that children:

- use reading to obtain meaning from print,
- have frequent and intensive opportunities to read,
- are exposed to frequent, regular spelling-sound relationships,
- learn about the nature of the alphabetic writing system, and understand the structure of spoken words.

Adequate progress in learning to read English (or any alphabetic language) beyond the initial level depends on:

- having a working understanding of how sounds are represented alphabetically,
- sufficient practice in reading to achieve fluency with different kinds of texts,
- sufficient background knowledge and vocabulary to render written texts meaningful and interesting,
- control over procedures for monitoring comprehension and repairing misunderstandings, and
- continued interest and motivation to read for a variety of purposes.

Our plan looks to insure that first through third grade curricula include the following components:

• Beginning readers need explicit instruction and practice that lead to an appreciation that spoken words are made up of smaller units of sounds, familiarity with spelling-sound correspondences and common spelling conventions and their use in identifying printed words, "sight" recognition of frequent words, and independent reading, including reading aloud. Fluency should be promoted through practice with a wide variety of well-written and engaging texts at the child's own comfortable reading level.

• Children who have started to read independently, typically second graders and above, should be encouraged to sound out and confirm the identities of visually unfamiliar words they encounter in the course of reading meaningful texts, recognizing words primarily through attention to their letter-sound relationships. Although context and pictures can be used as a tool to monitor word recognition, children should not be taught to use them to substitute for information provided by the letters in the word.

• Because the ability to obtain meaning from print depends so strongly on the development of word recognition accuracy and reading fluency, both of the latter should be regularly assessed in the classroom, permitting timely and effective instructional response when difficulty or delay is apparent.

• Beginning in the earliest grades, instruction should promote comprehension by actively building linguistic and conceptual knowledge in a rich variety of domains, as well as through direct instruction about comprehension strategies such as summarizing the main idea, predicting events and outcomes of upcoming text, drawing inferences, and monitoring for coherence and misunderstandings. This instruction can take place while adults read to students or when students read themselves.

• Once children learn some letters, they should be encouraged to write them, to use them to begin writing words or parts of words, and to use words to begin writing sentences. Instruction should be designed with the understanding that the use of invented spelling is not in conflict with teaching correct spelling. Beginning writing with invented spelling can be helpful for developing

understanding of the identity and segmentation of speech sounds and sound-spelling relationships. Conventionally correct spelling should be developed through focused instruction and practice. Primary-grade children should be expected to spell previously studied words and spelling patterns correctly in their final writing products. Writing should take place regularly and frequently to encourage children to become more comfortable and familiar with it.

• Throughout the early grades, time, materials, and resources should be provided with two goals: (a) to support daily independent reading of texts selected to be of particular interest for the individual student, and beneath the individual student's frustration level, in order to consolidate the student's capacity for independent reading and (b). to support daily assisted or supported reading and rereading of texts that are slightly more difficult in wording or in linguistic, rhetorical, or conceptual structure in order to promote advances in the student's capabilities.

• Throughout the early grades, promotion of independent reading outside school by such means as daily at-home reading assignments and expectations, summer reading lists, encouraging parent involvement, and by working with community groups who share this goal.

Even with excellent instruction in the early grades, some children fail to make satisfactory progress in reading. Such children will require our provision of supplementary services, ideally from a reading specialist who provides individual or small-group intensive instruction that is coordinated with high-quality instruction from the classroom teacher.

Title and specialist positions ensure that well-trained staff are available for intervention with children and for ongoing support to classroom teachers. Specialist roles need to be defined so that two-way communication is required between specialists and classroom teachers about the needs of all children at risk of or experiencing reading difficulties. Coordination is needed at the instructional level so that intervention from specialists continues to coordinate with and supports classroom instruction. All educators engaged in child study or individualized educational program (IEP) meetings for special education placement, early childhood intervention, out-of-classroom interventions, or in-classroom support are well informed about research in reading development and the prevention of reading difficulties and will continue to be.

Instructional Grouping Strategies to employ:

- In-class groupings and individualization for remediation and acceleration,
- Supplemental service groupings for extended-day/year tutoring services,
- Title I groupings,
- Special Services classifications,

Artful Use of Infrastructure requires increased investment:

To be effective, schools such as ours, with large numbers of children at risk for reading difficulties, need rich resources—manageable class sizes and student-teacher ratios, high-quality instructional materials in sufficient quantity, good school libraries, and pleasant physical environments. Achieving this may require extra resources for high-risk children. We are employing strategies for additional grant-realted funds to support our initiatives, as well as always striving toward recruitment, selection, and retention of the highest quality teachers.

A well-designed classroom reading program, delivered by an experienced and competent teacher, may be successful in bringing most students to grade level or above during the primary grades. However, achieving and sustaining radical gains is often difficult when improvements are introduced on a classroom-by-classroom basis. Based on our school-wide performance, school restructuring

was employed and considered a vehicle for both prevention and intervention. Ongoing professional development for teachers is a stringent component of restructuring and development efforts.

Additional Instructional Support via Team-Teaching, Structured Supervision, Training and Evaluation is employed:

Well-documented study indicates that setting systematic objectives, providing corrective, focused, criterion-referenced, and timely feedback is essential in heightening supervisory support to teachers. Additional instructional support via qualified teaching and graduate assistants in the classroom also allows for best practice in direct instruction via increased opportunity for heterogeneous groupings, positive interdependence, interpersonal and small group skill reinforcement, and additional cooperative learning principles. We are currently taking measures to increase the student-to-qualified instructor ratio via these avenues. Additional Instructional Support also accommodates for more opportunity to identify and teach to individual similarity and difference.

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

Our Charter School recognizes its responsibility to provide special education services to those students diagnosed with a disability and in need of special education services. Services are available for students with the following disabilities:

autism, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment (including deafness), mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment (including blindness)

A Continuum of Special Education Services are available through the our Community Charter School.

To support the needs of students with identified need for special education services the Charter School provides a team of professionals:

Six full time certificated special education teachers (learning abilities specialists) who provide consultative, itinerant and resource support.

Five full time graduate assistants (students from Mercyhurst College completing their Master's Degree in Special Education) who provide additional assistance in implementing IEP in both regular and special education classrooms.

Two speech/language therapists.

Services are coordinated and directed by the Director of Special Services in conjunction with supervisory staff from the Northwest Tri County Intermediate Unit.

The following program options are currently provided on site:

• Supportive special education Intervention in an inclusive setting in the Regular Class (Consultative)

• Supplemental special education intervention in an inclusive setting in the Regular Class (Itinerant)

• Special education services provided in a resource classroom, with the amount of time determined by the IEP team.

• After school tutoring provided to all students identified as needing special

	<p>education services. These services are available at no cost to parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> â€¢ Extended school year services based on IEP. â€¢ Counseling services as a related service as part of a student's IEP. â€¢ Individual and small group counseling on as needed basis. <p>Services include collaborative teaching with classroom teachers and assistants, adaptation of materials, lessons, tests, consultation with parents, maintenance of records, reporting to IU, IEP development, progress reporting. Additional services provided through support from classroom teacher assistants, behavior specialists. Two counselors/school family coordinators provide emotional and behavioral support as needed and as required by Individual Educational Plan. Special Education Contracted Services from Intermediate Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> â€¢ Supervision of special education teacher, provided by special education supervisor â€¢ Tracking of students â€¢ Insurance of compliance with federal, state regulations â€¢ Consultation, public awareness â€¢ In-service training of staff â€¢ Psychological services: assessment (intelligence and achievement) writing comprehensive evaluation reports, assistance with IEP as needed, review of IEPs, consultation as needed. â€¢ Occupational and Physical Therapy as needed to access educational program. â€¢ Assistive Technology as needed to access educational program. <p>Contracted Services for Speech/language therapy from ALPHA Speech and Learning Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> â€¢ Screening, *assessment, participation in Evaluation process and IEP team, *IEP development, *therapy”. 	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District Improvement Plan Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: Quality Teaching

Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: Instructional Support

Description:

Activities:

Activity	Description
Instructional planning, cooperative supervision, and evaluation	<p>Quality Teaching and support: GCCS Instructional priority and model programming are in re-alignment. New curricular additions for both Reading and Math , and an investment in heightened Reading and Math instructional practices is informed through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guided Reading Investment 2. “High Support” text 3. Established Literacy Circles & Literacy Centers 4. Freeze and Read Program 5. Running Records 6. Classroom Skills Checklists (pluralistic child assessment to compliment

	4-Sight and DIBELS implementation) 7. Weekly grade-level PSSA Practice Sessions utilizing several resources including PDE probes, PSSA Finish Line Assessment Anchors workbooks, and "Measuring Up" workbooks 8. Academic Performance contingencies for heightened student investment 9. Implementation of Student standards-aligned Assessment Rubrics 10. Use of classroom correlation charts for Numbers. Number systems, Relationships; Measurement and Estimation, Mathematical Reasoning and Connection; Problem-Solving and Communication; Statistics and Data Analyses; Probability and Prediction; Algebra and Functions 11. Technology integration through collaborative planning	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District Improvement Plan Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: System of Behavior/Discipline based on Positive Guidance

Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: School protocol

Description:

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Protocol	Adopt an Upgraded Behavior/Disciplining System based on Positive Guidance: Behavior Management principles and guidelines have been constructed via best-practice methodology. Staff trainings continue to occur. GCCS Code of conduct and staff protocol for managing children and behavior are to be re-distributed and supported.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District Improvement Plan Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: Systematic Capacity-Building

Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: Implement

Description:

Activities:

Activity	Description	
Protocol	Capacity-Building - 100% of school staff is to be engaged in learning new practices that work, based on external evidence and benchmarks of success across multiple classrooms.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District	Start: N/A	\$0.00

Improvement Plan Admin	Finish: N/A	
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Goal: Systemic reform and Support
Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: Generalization
Description:
Activities:

Activity	Description	
School-to-Home Connection	Systemic Operations & Extended day and After-school programming: Systemic Support will be aided by the restructuring of School-Family Coordinators, a newly hired Parent coordinator, and a revitalized resource room for parent materials. Material purchases have also been made to ensure parents have access to best-practice strategies within the home environment. Foster Grandparents are within the school each week to aid in diversified volunteerism in the classroom. An Extended Day model is being developing through leadership to support the efforts necessary for school improvement. The structure includes flexibility for various programming, including SES tutoring services, PSSA Prep tutoring, intramurals, "school-after-school", as well as embracing contractual collaborations with different organizations according to the needs and interests of our individual school community. The Extended Day and after school model will allow for parent decision-making through the school Leadership Team and the Parent Council.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District Improvement Plan Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

Goal: Upgrade student assessment
Description: Add Goal Statement here..

Strategy: implement dynamic, formative assessment models
Description:
Activities:

Activity	Description
Leadership, Instruction, Learning and Infrastructure	Dynamic Assessment: Benchmarking, and data-driven decision-making (CBM) are validated best-practice. DIBELS, Curriculum-embedded assessment, and systematic benchmarking will assist with making data-informed decisions • 4sight Benchmarking (computer-based Reading and Math) has been purchased and is being fully implemented. Baseline benchmarking will allow for more reliable prediction data to be utilized in school-wide formative decision making processes • DIBELS and TECHNOLOGY: GCCS has purchased (fall 2006-2007) and is currently implementing "Wireless Generation" mClass reading and mClass DIBELS. Wireless takes commonly used, paper-based early reading assessments that are used throughout PreK - Grade 6 and makes them

easier to administer and more effective by moving them onto handheld devices that sync to the Web. By putting these paper-based assessments on its mCLASS software platform, we are able to dramatically streamline the dynamic assessment process, especially via the use of push-in and pull-out reading specialists and Title I teachers, as well as via special educators within the special needs population. The mCLASS software eliminates time-consuming paperwork and manual calculations; reduces human error in administration by automating such functions as precise timing requirements and complex branching logic; and makes assessment results available to teachers and administrators immediately for analysis and application to classroom instruction.

Quality Leadership and Structure: Administration will plan, implement and oversee data analyses to aid instructors with forward-thinking, data-driven planning and instruction. Leadership team will take an active and systematic role in overseeing consistent data-driven practices. 4-sight will be implemented systematically (quarterly) the next program year. Staff developments will insure that GCCS staff receive professional development in order to best utilize school-wide testing results.

Quality Teaching: The use of more dynamic assessment models is contemporary best practice in assessment and measurement, allowing for more informed, data-driven decision making for educators and administrators. Combining dynamic models with contemporary technology allows for additional efficiency in practice, and significantly increased the probability that instructional staff will have constant, easy to access data not otherwise available given the traditional school time constraints. Planning and Instruction will be heightened by the informed measurement and technology purchases recently made at GCCS. Teaching practice is also informed by formative assessment in additional ways. Classroom practice subsequent to data analyses can mimic testing format and be

- Administered more regularly and frequently
- An integral part of the instructional approach (i.e., well-aligned with the material being taught)
- Collected, scored, recorded and returned to students promptly so that errors in understanding may be corrected before remediation opportunities are missed

Additional effective monitoring practices : Formative Models lend insight into many additional and practical, teacher-friendly methods of monitoring student learning; examples of approaches to be used by GCCS teachers are:

- Using learning probes and following quick repeated measure each week a question-and-answer
- Asking students to interpret or summarize material presented to them in the lesson at the close of each instructional session (quick reviews)
- LISTENING to students and thinking about the questions they are asking, noting what parts of the lesson don't seem to be understood
- Implementing all various levels of the standards-based taxonomy of learning objectives must be addressed in planning, instruction and assessment
- "Catching" children doing well: Walking around the class and checking worksheets, calling attention to errors and noting good work being done

Continuous Learning Ethic: GCCS incorporation into the "Success for All": members center and Training Institute for Staff developments in conjunction with Wireless Generation DIBELS allows for continued and contemporary

	<p>staff development, as well as evolving utilization of efficient systems via technology</p> <p>Artful Use of Infrastructure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> â€¢ The leadership and support of the administrative team and the GCCS Board of Directors. â€¢ Involvement by key members of staff, Board of Directors, the community, and representatives of as many other stakeholder groups as possible as outlined in the Pennsylvania Department of Education requirements. â€¢ Decisions about the mission, beliefs, and goals based upon careful consideration and study of multiple sources of data and research. â€¢ Ongoing monitoring and adjustment of programs and process as necessary. â€¢ Complete "buy-in" by the staff. â€¢ Coordination of funds to offer structured School Improvement Services to students identified as needing remedial and accelerated reading and math instruction. (professional and contract services cost; supplies and materials; additional payroll costs 	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
District Improvement Plan Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	\$0.00

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

The R.B. Wiley Community Charter School utilizes an integration of curricular principles, elements and materials to realize best practice in curriculum design. Pennsylvania content standards and assessment anchors are utilized to form the conceptual framework of curriculum content, and are integral to local assessment methodology. Curriculum mapping is currently being constructed across the entire grade-level population to ensure proper alignment of classroom instruction to state benchmarks and standards, and facilitating a formative process of critical inquiry for continuous improvement.

Harcourt Trophies, Guided Reading methodology, and a new integration, "Everyday Math" are constructed as central, empirically validated curricular elements. The use of technology across central curricular elements is employed where possible for methodological efficiency. Star Reading is a software program to help determine reading levels for students in grades third through fifth. A student can complete an assessment in approx. 20 minutes and get an accurate and reliable score immediately. Depending on the student's response Star Reading will adjust the questions to increase or decrease the level of difficulty. Teachers get student results and make reading level decisions based on student scores. Compass learning is utilized and correlated to the Pennsylvania standards for instruction and assessment.

The curriculum is organized to meet the developmental and individualized academic needs of students. Assessment methodology is currently employed in reading, math and writing to help teachers identify appropriate child groupings, construct learning centers, and inform guided reading practices. Standardized test scores (PSSA, and district level assessments) are used to design instruction based on student need. Supplemental education services (SES tutoring) are

implemented for students that qualify for additional instructional support and help provide much-needed remediation to those children most struggling within a traditional learning environment. The tutoring program was started as a bi-weekly after-school program and continues as such.

The following essential and effective instructional components are utilized within classrooms.

Grouping: Alternate-grouping formats for differentiated instructional purposes are employed to meet students' needs (e.g., one-on-one, pairs, small group, and whole group). Small, same-ability groups are monitored for student progress, and regrouped to reflect students' knowledge and skills. Flexible groupings provide opportunities for students to be members of more than one group.

Maximizing Student Learning: Presentation and formatting of instructional practices are varied to elicit maximum student interest and participation, as well as to more accurately and comprehensively address student understanding. Professional development on the practice of instructional "layering" is currently being planned to embrace a more prescriptive and informed, work-a-day instructional evaluation model

Pacing: instructional pacing and emphasis of instruction too is adapted for individuals and groups of children, including those having difficulty learning to read.

Teaching Struggling Readers: Data-driven student groupings assure that mediation and additional instruction strategies align with core instruction. Ongoing and systematic corrective feedback to students is provided.

Pennsylvania state board requirements for Chapter 4 have been reviewed by school administration and staff. In Pennsylvania, Chapter 4 outlines the basic curriculum standards that must be met in areas of reading, writing, mathematics, and science. In addition, programs must work towards strengthening PSSA performance for meeting requirements under No Child Left Behind, not only within core curricular elements, but also along the entire curricular continuum, inclusive of alternative programming and experiences.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment are continuously being aligned to PA standards to promote academic achievement in all content areas. An effective alternative education program is being constructed to address individualized curriculum requirements for special populations and IEP academic objectives, including adaptive skills, social skills, and character education. Current curricular modification directly addresses disaggregated performance data and informs decision-making for instructional methodology and curricular delivery. All local district requirements for promotion and graduation are being examined for congruence with local practice and in-line with Chapter 4 guidance. Staff is encouraged to deliver experiential learning opportunities that will enable student to better understand and manage everyday living.

Character Education is included in the local curriculum through grant-supported program development. The "Six-Pillars"/"Character Counts" program was implemented and measured for efficacy throughout the 2005-2006 school year.

Staff has been trained, in-line with Chapter 4 requirements, to employ comprehensive PA curriculum standards for

Reading, Writing, Speaking and
Listening
Mathematics

Geography
History

Science and Technology
Environment and Ecology
Health, Safety and Phys Ed.
Civics and Government

Arts and Humanities
World Languages
Family/Consumer Science
Career Education

Local assessments are designed to include a variety of assessment strategies outlined in Chapter 4, section 4.52 including:

Portfolio work by students.

Scientific experiments conducted by students.

Nationally available achievement tests.

Diagnostic assessments.

Evaluations of portfolios of student work related to achievement of academic standards.

Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Learning Skills (DIBELS), and additional precepts of Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM)

Special education programming is also influenced by Chapter 4, as the school stringently works to comply with IDEA. Provisions are afforded to all children with disabilities enabling them to be involved in, and progress through, the general curriculum in an inclusive environment. Progress monitoring in reading, math and behavior is part of the weekly efforts of the special education team to insure instruction is appropriate and effective with reporting to parents at least quarterly in both narrative and graph form.

R.B. Wiley C.C.S. promotes in-depth and inquiry-based teaching and learning via the use of CEO (Classroom Enrichment Opportunities) classes. The inquiry method is utilized to expose students to specific areas of learning in both a “push-in” and “pull-out” classroom.

The Middle school schedule is designed for more in depth study with longer periods and increased access to technology for research and scholarship.

The following strategies are utilized to *accelerate* academic skill development, content knowledge and learning strategies of students performing significantly below standards in literacy and mathematics skills?

- Title I support — Running Records / Guided Reading Instruction
- Special Education Innovations including the use of 5 full time Graduate Assistants (special education graduate students) to increase individual instruction and accommodations for special education and early intervening students.
- Guided reading program in grades Kindergarten through grade 5
- "Morning boards" (structured daily lessons grades K-8 targeted at direct instruction of specific language arts elements) are incorporated into daily class work.
- "Calendar Math" is in
- Mental health support both inherently within the school and through outside agencies

- Teaching assistants and supportive instructional staff that are involved in small group and learning centers
- Parent training programs
- Compass learning for accelerated Math and Reading instruction
- After school tutoring initiative
- Foster grandparents that academically support individual and small groups of students
- A school wide Accelerate Reader program has been implemented to increase independent reading.

Technology is used to actively engage students, in particular, equipment such as Smart Boards and mobile labs keep students focused on lesson material. Internet access and Compass Learning also actively engage students in the learning process.

Hands on activities, classroom buddies, field trips, peer instruction, cooperative learning and after-school programs are all strategies used to keep students focused and motivated to learn.

The Professional Development Plan is a product of staff, administration, parents and institutions of higher education. Outside consultants are contracted to bring in new and data driven strategies. The plan is based on an organizational needs assessment that is completed annually by the teaching staff to inform the direction and content of the comprehensive experiences necessary to maintain continuous professional alignment to best practices within systemic, elementary education.

The teacher induction program is designed to provide support, encouragement, structure and feedback to new members of our teaching community. Mentors are assigned to new staff. A needs assessment is completed. Mutual observation (mentors and inductees), and systematic, structure meetings are employed to provide feedback and discuss school-wide instructional issues.

English Language Learners

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Charter School board and staff have developed a plan to insure that appropriate and required services are provided to students in need of English Language intervention. The school participates in a consortium with Intermediate Unit 5 to provide assistance with staff development, program planning and compliance. Our contract with the Intermediate Unit provides certificated staff to complete assessments, instruction, and consultation to classroom staff, communication with parents, progress assessment and program review. To date the Charter School has not had any students enrolled who were identified on the Home Language Survey as being in need of further assessment. A copy of our English as a Second Language program is included in Attachment C. A brief overview follows.

Program Goals

Goal 1: Students will use English to communicate in social settings.

Goal 2: Students will use English to achieve academically in all content areas.

Goal 3: Students will use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

Student and Parent Orientation Procedures:

The staff person assigned the task of enrollment procedures will be aware of the need to ensure all enrolling students/families understand the information presented to them in the English language. If informal interactions and/or the review of enrollment forms (i.e. Home Language Survey) indicate a possibility that the student/family is an English Language Learner (ELL), then the staff person will notify the appropriate administrator.

Identification and Placement:

Assessment process:

Upon selection through the lottery, enrolling staff will assist parents in completing a Home Language Survey (HLS) as required by the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). For those students whose primary language is other than English (PHLOTE), the Charter School will also determine the student's English language proficiency. Screen procedures developed in collaboration with the Intermediate Unit will be used. Screening will be completed within 10 days of enrollment. Screening will be completed by designated staff person who has been trained in assessment procedures using appropriate instrument provided by IU # 5, or by referral to IU #5 administrators and completed by IU #5 trained staff.

If assessment indicates a need for ESL Instruction:

ESL instruction at the appropriate level will be provided for the limited English proficient student with local/state funds. ESL instruction will be provided through a contract with IU #5 on site at the Charter School. After it is determined that the student is in need of ESL instruction or bilingual education, the student's English language and native language proficiency will be determined for appropriate instructional placement.

Instructional Program:

Program Type: The Charter School will utilize the following program for ELLs: **English as a Second Language:** this is a program of techniques, methodology, and special curriculum designed to teach ELLs English language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, writing, study skills, vocabulary, and cultural orientation. ESL instruction is usually in English with little use of native language.

Program evaluation will be conducted with the support and oversight of Intermediate Unit Staff with appropriate certification and training in ESL/ELL programming.

Graduation Requirements

The Charter School is chartered to serve students in grades K-8. Graduation requirements are not applicable for our program.

Special Education

The Charter School Board of Directors and staff are committed to providing a full range of quality special education services to those students determined to be eligible for and in need of special education. In keeping with the letter and spirit of IDEA 2004, these special education services to students are delivered in a primarily inclusive model.

From the first year, we have contracted with the Intermediate Unit to provide overall supervision and consultation for the program and have benefited from their expertise in developing polices,

programs and practices. The Board of Directors has made a steady and growing commitment to the provision of services to students with disabilities. The school is staffed and structured to allow students with differing abilities to be successful in the regular classroom. Small class size, teaching assistants at each grade level, 3 counselors and additional support staff provide adequate resources for accommodations and modifications.

The Charter School's original mission and vision and ongoing commitment is to provide skilled and committed staff and identify research based strategies that are designed to improve learning for the specific demographics that we serve: urban, minority, low-income, special needs students.

In the 2005-2006 school years our Board of Directors added another special education teacher and an additional graduate student, bringing our total of staff to 6 certificated special education teachers and 5 masters level special education candidates. Additionally the equivalent of full time speech therapy services is provided by two therapists providing daily support speech language therapy. We continue to contract with the Intermediate Unit for psychological evaluations and special education supervision.

Opportunities presented by IDEA 2004 provided for additions to our special education programming. In the fall of 2005, with the support of our Board of Directors, our staff and our parents, we began an "early intervening" program, using special education staff and resources to provide comprehensive interventions to students. With parent participation and agreement, the Child Success Team planned and implemented strategies to provide academic and behavioral assistance to students with the goal of preventing and/or deferring referrals for special education services. Following our special education audit, we worked with IU staff to refine and revise our early intervening planning and anticipate expanding the program to include students struggling with language, speech and communication concerns. Additionally, to assist with "early intervening, the Board of Directors approved a contract with a local mental health services agency to provide on site counseling and mental health intervening services for students who presented with behaviors that interfered with learning. While parent permission was required for participation, students did not need to wait for county mental health approval and were able to access the services on site. This provided the possibility of services for students whose parents did not have transportation or other availability to access mental health services during the school day. Aggressive outreach to available community services include assistance with referrals for individual and family comprehensive services, and a partnership with server community mental health provider as well as 30 students who receive services through the County WRAP office including mobile therapy and therapeutic staff support.

Our building level team (child success team) provides a forum for teachers and support staff to identify students who may be in need of additional intervention strategies. Our 6 special education teachers and 5 master's degree candidates provide individual assistance for students in the regular classroom as well as in a specialized setting when needed.

The Charter School works collaboratively with Intermediate Unit Staff and professors from local teaching universities to insure that the instructional strategies used by both regular and special education staff to educate eligible students, students at risk for failure and those not making reasonable progress are research based and effective. Ongoing staff development through outside consultants, intermediate unit staff, Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance programs, graduate coursework and school planned in-services trainings are designed to build core capability in meeting the needs of these "at risk" and "eligible students.

Additionally, comprehensive training for special education and regular education staff on functional behavior assessments and behavior improvement plans led to improved documentation and outcomes.

Staff development is provided to all Charter School staff on special education strategies, accommodations, modifications and progress monitoring. Special education staff participates in ongoing trainings through PaTTAN and Intermediate Unit 5. On site staff development is provided on behavior planning and progress monitoring.

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Matatall, Lynn	1.0	Learning Support	GCCS	11	NA
Bowser, Gweorgia	1.0	Learning Support	GCCS	7	NA
Mitchell, Tara	1.0	Learning Support	GCCS	8	NA
Gay, Amanda	1.0	Learning Support	GCCS	10	NA
Feeney, Michelle	1.0	Learning Support	GCCS	11	NA
Lang, Liana	1.0	Learning Support	GCCS	18	NA
Welsh, Brandy	1.0	Learning Support	GCCS	14	NA
Sheppard, Karen	1.0	Speech Language	GCCS	25	NA

Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Sarah Reed Partial Hospitalization	na	na	Sarah Reed Children's Center	2	The Charter School purchases educational services for students in Partial Program

Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
none	NA	NA

Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
Sheppard, Karen, Alpha Speech and Learning	Speech and Language Therapy (School-based)	30 hours
IU # 5	School Psychologist	6.5 hours
IU # 5	Special Education Supervisor	4 hours
Mercyhurst College	Special Education Paraprofessional	25 hours
Mercyhurst College	Special Education Paraprofessional	25 hours
Mercyhurst College	Special Education Paraprofessional	25 hours
Mercyhurst College	Special Education Paraprofessional	25 hours

SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
4-Sight Benchmarking	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Running records	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Harcourt Trophies Assessment	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Leveled Reading (Title)	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
4-Sight Benchmarking	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Larson Math on-line	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Special Needs curriculum probes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

Student Assessment

Note: GCCS participates in all required PSSA testing. This year saw the inclusion of all students in grades 3 through 8 completing the PSSA testing.

Additionally, the Charter School administers locally designed standards based tests that are tied to standards benchmarks/anchors. Ongoing testing for reading in grades K-6 were developed using materials from the school's new reading series: Harcourt Brace Trophies (HBT). At the recommendation of our School Improvement Planning consultants from the Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit, we piloted the 4Sight Benchmark assessments during the school year. Those data means are attached and indicate our current challenges with relatively low standardized achievement across samples and the population.

Test/Grades	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA				x	x	x	x	x	x				
Reading/Math													
PSSA Writing						x			x				
Local Assessment													
	HBT												
4-Sight				x	x	x	x	x	x				

Locally designed tests were utilized to monitor reading and math progression across the year. The most significant indicators of improvement were evidenced localized elementary assessments. From a preventive and early intervention perspective, these data provide us valuable insight into the utility of these assessments for early elementary grades. Upper elementary and middle school performance on 4-Sight benchmarking assessments was in-line with PSSA achievement and informs a more intensive direction is necessary in utilizing dynamic assessment for the coming school year. A commitment to true, dynamic assessment principles (CBM; DIBELS) and more contemporary methodology is central to strategic planning for the ensuing year and the school-wide testing efforts therein. Consultation with key community

partners and the commitment to implementation of more repeated measurement via 4-sight Benchmark testing is in order.

The Charter School's original mission and vision and ongoing commitment is to identify research based strategies that are designed to improve learning for the specific demographics that we serve: urban, minority, low-income, special needs students. The staffing pattern at the school provides for small group instruction, Title I services in both reading and math, Title I teachers provide assistance to teachers in screening and assessing students who may be in need of specialized assistance. They also provide assistance with tracking on going progress through the use of running records. Investment in Compass Learning technology and staff development allows for students to focus on specific skills needing additional instruction or practice. The improvements to our Accelerated Reader program have increased student interest in and access to reading. The counseling staff is able to assist individual students. Aggressive outreach to available community services include an onsite mental health program from a community mental health provider as well as 30 students who receive services through the County WRAP office including mobile therapy and therapeutic staff support.

Our building level team (child success team) provides a forum for teachers and support staff to identify students who may be in need of additional intervention strategies. Our special education teachers provide individual assistance for students in the regular classroom as well as in a specialized setting when needed. Special education staff also provides support to students in the pre-identification process to reduce number of students referred for special education.

Additional student support is provided by our foster grandparents. They provide individual support to students in grades K-5. After school tutoring programs provide additional help for students identified by teachers as needed support in reading and math. Students from grades K-8 are eligible to participate in the SES (Supplemental Education Services) provided as part of our school improvement grant through Intermediate Unit 5. After school tutoring programs were also available two nights each week for all students in grades 3 and 5 and for special education students in grades 5 through 8. An after school program provided through interns from Mercyhurst College also provided homework help and academic coaching for students through grade five.

Best-practice classroom strategies used by our experienced teachers have been successful in accelerating pockets of achievement in reading and math. The use of guided reading has had a significant impact on the emerging reading skills, especially in grades K-2.

Continued staff development on the anchors and benchmarks, and the requirement that teachers identify skills related to the standards shows promise for focusing instruction on the most critical skills which should have a positive impact on those students most in need. The use of retired teachers as consultants provided additional opportunities for professional mentoring.

In simplest terms, this year's (2006-2007) PSSA data indicate that:

- First target was met (Attendance)
- Second Target was met (PSSA Participation Rate)
99.5 — 100% of students across every grouping (All, white, black, IEP, ED) "took the test".
- Third Target WAS NOT MET (Performance: Math / Reading Proficiency)

We did not meet state AYP targets for proficiency (Staterequired threshold of 45% proficiency in Math and 54% proficiency in Reading), nor did we achieve SAFE HARBOR.

This year we DID make improvement from last year in Reading across the tested population, but that improvement was too modest (not a 10% reduction in non- proficiencies from last year). This year we did NOT make improvement from last year in Math. Performance declined relative to the entire tested population. There was a greater percentage of the entire school population below proficiency this year in Math as compared to last (ranging from 6 — 11%). *(Last year data indicated the reverse - “improvement in Math, but not Reading).

Strategies have been adopted in line with No Child Left Behind in order that we may responsibly address a renewed investment in the course ahead.

- A) The school had recently restructured the CAO/Principal position and done so utilizing what is called a “turn-around specialist model” (replacement of a school leader with a Principal trained as a “turn around specialist.” This is considered a “heavy management support strategy”
- B) The school has also employed what is considered a “light management support model” by Partnering with Outside Organizations for primary improvement strategies (we are working through corrective action with the IU5 Leadership and Consultant Cohort as recognized by PDE
- C) The Charter Board has worked, and is yet working, to restructure the organization of the school
- D) The Board of Directors too has been restructured.
- E) The school is continuing to implement several new curricula

Math and Reading Achievement

Our “concern” is to understand growth and lack of growth across data indicators and continue with necessary progress initiatives. In this vein, both Math and Reading curriculum, instructional support, and individual learning plans and assessment protocol has been revisited for the upcoming school year.

The school has recently adopted and will continue its progression with a research-based, standards-aligned Math curriculum, implemented within K-6. (Every Day Math). Extensive staff trainings have been and will continue to be conducted during staff orientation and training by product and content experts. Much-needed complimentary Assessment Anchors and Eligible content trainings will be held in support of all curricular initiatives.

The school has adopted Larson Math technologies within the middle school in an informed attempt to significantly heighten differentiated instruction, as well as progress-monitoring/assessment capabilities. Student groupings are also continually being investigated and arranged in order to best provide instruction to a significantly variable group of middle school students in terms of achievement. Special education staff schedules are under modification to best provide support of differentiated instruction, as well as necessary special needs sub-groupings and accommodation.

The school had restructured administrative staff to include additional curriculum directors (one elementary and one middle school). This restructure proposes to allow for significantly more instructional support, supervision, and evaluation. It may also serve to help individualize curricula between two empirically variable populations relative to best-practice philosophy, instruction and technique.

Both administrative and teacher salaries are being examined in an attempt to achieve to relative equity with traditional school district personnel (primarily teaching staff) to ensure a strengthening of recruitment and selection opportunities, as well as to heighten our retention figures across positions.

New formative methodology will be fully implemented in the coming year and includes the full implementation of 4-Sight Benchmarking as well as “Wireless Technology” DIBELS capabilities to ensure dynamic assessment models that inform data-based decision-making. GCCS expenditure and Staff Development for the 2006-0o school years includes a much greater investment into school-wide understanding and participation in data-driven practices

Instructional priority and model programming are been re-aligned. New curricula and investment in heightened Reading and Math instructional practices is monitored:

1. Guided Reading
2. “High Support” text
3. Literacy Circles & Literacy Centers
4. Freeze and Read Program
5. Running Records
6. Skills Checklists
7. Weekly grade-level PSSA Practice Sessions
8. Academic Performance contingencies
9. Student standards-aligned Assessment Rubrics
10. Use of classroom correlation charts for Numbers. Number systems, Relationships; Measurement and Estimation, Mathematical Reasoning and Connection; Problem-Solving and Communication; Statistics and Data Analyses; Probability and Prediction; Algebra and Functions
11. Technology integration through collaborative planning
12. Recent Leadership entrance into the IU5 curriculum and Principal’s cohort has opened up the door to more opportunity for comprehensive professional development among school staff.
13. Special Education practices: GCCS has high proportion of special needs children. GCCS heightened protocol for collaborative accommodation, early intervening services, progress monitoring and comprehensive support services inclusive of systemic supports within the school at each grade-level,
14. speech/language therapeutic services within the school will now delivered from our own staff as new hire, rather than contract service
15. psychological and counseling services within the school has been renewed (licensed practitioners)
16. Therapeutic support staff within the daily classroom environment for qualifying students too has been renewed (In collaboration with Stairways Behavioral Health Systems)

The new Leadership agenda positively affects instructional Strategies, not only through the aforementioned commitment to intensified instruction, supervision and evaluation, but also through renewed investment by our collaborators. The GECAC Community Charter School continues to work collaboratively with Intermediate Unit Staff and professors from local teaching universities to ensure that the instructional strategies used by both regular and special education staff to educate eligible students are research based and effective. Staff development through outside consultants, intermediate unit staff, Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance programs, graduate coursework and school planned in-services trainings will all be designed to build core capability in meeting the needs of all students.

- Recent participation in the IU-driven Curriculum Director and Principal cohort

- Re-investment in heightened extended-day and —week services including tutoring services (after-school SES, PSSA tutoring, and weekend services), athletics/activities programming
- Continuous leadership ethic — Professional Development Plan, Induction, weekly grade- and content-level meetings are governed and implemented by the administrative leadership team and are a core element of the new, practical infrastructure
- Artful use of infrastructure: daily observational protocol and instructional support, teacher assistant support and training via full inclusion in our development model are occurring. A renewed investment into the continuous improvement of support staff and the “systems approach”, critical position restructuring, and data-driven progress reporting have all been implemented and will be evaluated for success.

PDE Induction Program is employed:

- Intensified weekly support via Curriculum Directors and Principal. Supervision, team-teaching, and formal evaluation is heightened significantly, thus so is teacher support and cooperative feedback
- Monthly professional in-services will be held
- Consult services are being contracted with SIP funds to collaborate with several “expert” agencies (i.e. The Intermediate Unit Cohorts; A National Literacy Consultant via Pacific Learning and in collaboration with the College of William & Mary Graduate School of Education).
- Instruction will be informed by grade-level curriculum mapping, and reinforced with PDE benchmarks and eligible content. All staff have received trainings within the 2006-07 school year to ensure understanding. New supervisory “Leadership” model is being employed for systematic and documented support, monitoring and evaluation.

The highlights of the GECAC Community Charter School Plan for Improvement may be summarized within the essential constructs of best-practice educational systems. GCCS has consciously utilized quantitative and qualitative data from across systems and operations to construct a more comprehensive approach to student achievement and family success.

Quality Leadership:

Meta-analytic research suggests that characteristics of schools with balanced leadership are the result of professionals working toward a collaboratively developed and well-understood mission. The GCCS plan and practice embodies a “high leadership capacity” through restructuring administration and staff for best use of highly qualified and skilled professionals. A renewed investment responsibility through the construction of a “leadership team” is a concept grounded in empiricism and supported by our personnel.

The improvement plan presents strategies that are informed by comprehensive, best-practice research and practices. A systemic approach is apparent within the plan, emphasizing a pluralistic approach to training, data analyses and decision-making across educational, social, and behavioral achievement domains for children, as well as new supportive and intensified resources for families.

- the plan employs construction of a heightened and genuine data-driven, formative system of progress monitoring is proposed
- a broad involvement of administrators, staff, parents, families, consultants, researchers and community collaborators whose collective responsibilities are reflected in their roles and responsibilities.
- reflective, thoughtful practices that consistently lead to innovation for a unique population of children and families is recognized

- the realization that in constructing this framework, steadily improving achievement is strategically well-planned, monitored, and executed.

Quality Teaching:

NCLB requires each state to submit a detailed plan for ensuring all teachers of core academic subjects will be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-06 school year. Improvement plans must include at least two major annual measurable objectives for districts and schools: one for an annual increase in the percentage of highly qualified teachers and the other for an annual increase in the percentage of teachers receiving high-quality professional development. GCCS has currently realized close to 100% highly qualified teachers and this plan recognizes our need to support and develop that accomplishment with an intensive vigor. The GCCS plan recognizes the NCLB provisions to encourage professional development that:

- Increases teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects they teach, and enable teachers to become truly "highly qualified"
- Greatly improves the intensity and frequency of instructional support
- Supports measures to aid in the recruiting, hiring and training of highly qualified teachers
- Advances teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are based on scientifically based research, and improve student academic achievement or substantially increase the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers
- Provides training in, and emphasis on, the effective classroom use of technology
- Provides a commitment to recognizing and supporting methods of teaching that support diversity and individualization
- Strengthens the ability of teachers and administrative leadership to use assessment results and other data to inform and improve classroom practice
- Improves the ability of school personnel to work more effectively with parents.

Continuous Learning Ethic:

The GCCS plan is built on a premise of continuous learning:

- the sharing of common goals
- shared governance via several avenues including the Leadership Team, Grade-Level Curriculum Teams, staff Focus Groups (Parent, SIP)
- multiple measures for learning are valued
- more clearly defined values and supports
- accountability and equity across responsibilities is stressed
- the school is focused on performance and success

Artful Use of Infrastructure:

Lastly, the GECAC Community Charter School believes that continual improvement planning:

- Increases opportunities for learning and access to quality education for all students, families, staff and administrators as outlined.
- Highlights opportunities to demonstrate an understanding of our population based on objective needs assessment and facilitation of an authentic relationship with our GCCS students and families.
- Provides a stringent system of restructured accountability.

- Encourages innovative teaching practices through heightened administrative support, training & evaluation, as well as collaborative relationships with expert consultants, and a commitment to systematic staff development opportunities.
- Offers new professional opportunities for teachers, created through evolving partnerships and contemporary technology.
- Encourages community and parent involvement via intensive supports and specific accountabilities among GCCS staff.

PJ notes - add narrative and attach local data (4-sight)

narrative: evidence of improvement and need for improvement across past two -yr testing cycle

4-sight benchmarking employed

leveled reading

running records

special needs probes for DIBELS

narrative: strategies for at-risk

Teacher Evaluation

In 2006, the board approved the adoption of the PDE forms for teacher evaluations including the use of PDE 426, 427 and 428. During an administrative transition, the Principal continued to use a locally developed form for some staff, but all staff that qualified as candidates for Instructional II certification were evaluated on form 427. Teacher professional development includes structured supervision and observation by peers, mentors and reading and math coaches. "Walk through" observations are tied to specific instructional strategies that are presented at staff development, staff meetings or grade level meetings. Informal observations by the principal or other supervisory staff are part of ongoing staff development. Formal teacher evaluation consists of annual observations for veteran teachers and biannual observations for new staff.

The Principal has overall responsibility for teacher evaluations, but has the authority to delegate observations to the Director of Curriculum (for some teaching staff) and the Director of Special Services (for special education staff). Additionally a special education supervisor from the Intermediate Unit provides formative observations/assessments of special education teachers

Supervisory staff including the Director of Special Services, Director of Curriculum and Director of Student Services attended a variety of trainings across the school year. Additional review of best practices and consultation is provided through the Human Resources professionals from GECAC and the Charter School. The evaluator for the special education teachers is a contracted, experienced special education supervisor from IU #5 . The Intermediate Unit provides extensive ongoing in-service staff development for their special education supervisors. Returning administrative staff at the school has had extensive staff development with national and local consultants on teaching strategies that are effective with urban minority students.

SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

In accordance with the school's bylaws, officers are elected each year by the Board of Trustees at the December meeting during which trustees are elected. Such officers shall serve a one-year term and until their replacements are elected. At the beginning of the 2006 school year, Mrs Gwendolyn White and Dr. Phil Belfiore served as the Board Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. With the election of officers at the 2006 December Board Meeting, the trustees elected Mr. Marc Blount and Dr. Phil Belfiore as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively. Both individuals will serve a one-year term.

Mr. Gregory Myers was selected to continue as the Chief Executive Administrator and Principal at the inception of the 2006 school year. As Mr. Myers was employed with a retired administrator status, A principal search was initiated in accordance with protocol to responsibly examine all qualified candidates for the position. This search yielded interviews and subsequently no candidate was found to meet qualifying criteria for the position. Mr Gregory Myers was retained as the Charter School principal for the 2006-2007 school year.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Marc Blount	Board Chair
Dr. Phillip Belfiore	Vice Chair
John Drew	Secretary
Edward Dawson	Treasurer
Johnie Atkinson	na
Jack Bunja	na
Pamela Forsyth	na
Michael T. Gadson, M.D.	na
Dr. Donna Hixon	na
Nicole Johnson	na
Larry Meredith, Esquire	na

Tyrone Moore	na
Benny Simmons	na
Steve Smith	na
Ronald Steele	na
Adrian Williams	na
Michael T. Williams	na
Rosie Coleman	na

Professional Development (Governance)

The Board of Trustees has been provided professional development during the 2006-2007 school year by the school's solicitor, Attorney Tom Pendleton. Attorney Pendleton has advised the Board on areas of the Sunshine Law, the Public Officials Act, Charter Renewal Procedures and Processes and other legal issues related to education, special education, reporting, contracting, board procedures and human resources. Dr. Timothy Damiels, Chief Executive Officer of the Pennsylvania Coalition of Charter Schools, provided professional development for the Board of Trustees at a Board retreat held in May of 2007.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The Board of trustees coordinates the governance and management of the school through a Committee Structure. In accordance with the school's bylaws, an executive Committee functions on behalf of the Board of Trustees as necessary to the extent permissible by the Charter School Law and Public School Code. The Executive Committee is comprised of the Board Officers and the Chair of each standing committee, one parent of an enrolled student and one or more additional members of the Board as appointed by the Chairman. The **Management Committee**, consisting of the Chair or Vice Chair, one parent of an enrolled student and other members appointed by the Chair, is charged with: developing personnel policies to be adopted by the Board, establishing a code of conduct for staff and students, receiving complaints and request hearings, approving evaluation methods and processes of personnel, evaluating the school's administrator and other related duties as the Board deems appropriate. The **Curriculum Committee**, comprised of the Board Chair or Vice Chair, one parent of an enrolled student, and other members as appointed by the Chair, is charged with: developing the school's curriculum and propose curriculum to the trustees for adoption, developing the board's calendar for Board adoption, reviewing text books and recommending text books to the Board of Trustees for adoption, developing a teaching method for student instruction, creating a program to evaluate school performance and other related duties as the Board deems necessary

Community and Parent Engagement

To promote parent involvement, the bylaws of the school require that three parents of enrolled students serve on the Board of Trustees. A parent sits on each of the standing committees: Executive, Management, Curriculum, and Finance. This insures that parents have a working knowledge of the school and are given an opportunity for input into school design, administration and operation. The Board has also approved the employment of a Parent Involvement Coordinator who is responsible for providing opportunities for parents to participate at various levels of the school.

Board members also volunteer in the school, working with students, assisting with parents whose students are experiencing academic or behavioral challenges and providing supports to teaching and support staff. Board members volunteer to host monthly meetings with parents. The Board of Directors is composed of exceptionally talented and committed individuals who work collectively and individually to insure the success of the school. Board members are frequent visitors to the school. Not only do they share their time, talent and financial resources with the

school, but they enlist the support of their professional colleagues and friends in donating time, energy, and resources.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

Parent activity group sponsored fund-raisers are designated to benefit students with contributions for accelerated reader, family activities, supplies for behavior modification incentive program and registration fees for summer programs. This years fundraisers included a Book Fair and Walkathons for various initiatives. Future fund-raising activities will be based on the analysis of this past year's activities and there will be some new fund raising activities that are not yet determined. Grant writing for future funding is also performed by the Director of Programs and Curriculum at the school. In addition, after-school sports and activities programming was developed and expanded school-wide throughout the 2006-2007 program year, and fundraising events continue to be planned in conjunction with these supplemental activities for the 2007-2008 program year.

Fiscal Solvency Policies

The fund balance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006 is estimated to be \$1,250,093, which includes a \$290,234 deficit from the 2006-2007 school year. A portion of this deficient, \$208,571, was designated for carryover from 2005-2006 to help offset instructional salary increases and bonuses. This fund balance is also used to assist with cash flow as needed to keep the required two months worth of cash on hand. It is the policy of the Board of Trustees to ensure that the fund balance is not touched unless there is an absolute emergency. The budget is monitored on a monthly basis to ensure there is a positive cash flow and that any unexpected expenditures are accounted for from other areas of under expenditures within the budget. In addition, a line of credit was established at the local bank for \$200,000. To date, we have not accessed it as we try to be fiscally prudent and work within our operating monies. There is also a surplus to enable the school to operate for two months

Accounting System

The accounting system is custom designed utilizing a Unisys Series A mainframe database which details a general ledger, payroll ledger system, accounts payable system and accounts receivable system that conforms with the Pennsylvania State Chart of Accounts. Our system allows us to breakout funding source revenue and expenditures, which enables us to complete our PDE reports accurately and on time.

Budgeting and reporting for the general fund is recorded on a modified accrual basis of accounting. Accounting is performed on a cash basis. Reporting is done on an interim and year-end based on the modified accrual system.

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment

- Revenues, Expenditures, Fund Balances

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

Root, Spitznas and Smiley audited our funds after the completion of our eighth year in operation, which ended June 30, 2006. There were no findings or questioned costs. The date of this audit was October 13, 2006. Also, a state audit was completed by the Department of the Auditor General's Office on March 30, 2001 for our first two years of operation. There were no findings

on that audit. The Auditor General's Office was in process of an audit for the years of 2003-2004, 2004-2005, and 2005-2006 at the time of this report.

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

- Audit report

Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report

We had no citations from our State Audit that was completed on March 30, 2001.

In addition, at this time, the current audit is not complete for years of 2003-2004, 2004-2005, and 2005-2006.

SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

When possible, the charter school utilizes the state contract-pricing list (PEPPM and COSTARS) to achieve the best possible prices. When PEPPM or COSTARS were not available, the charter school obtained quotes for items/services or publicly advertised for items/services as required by the Public School Code of 1949.

Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

The school relocated into a newly renovated building as of January 1, 2001, which currently houses grades K-8. In the 2003-2004 school year, the charter school had a storage facility constructed to house its supplies in order to provide more space for educational use. During 2005-2006, the charter school formed a Facilities sub-committee to address the current and future needs of the school. As for future needs, the Facilities sub-committee is exploring issues brought by school administration to find additional space for the 7th and 8th grades.

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

In compliance with the health and safety requirements, the Charter School has recruited and hired a certified nurse, who is full time. The nurse complies with all PDE and Department of Health regulations regarding maintenance of health records, mandatory screenings. Additionally, comprehensive health education programs have been conducted or scheduled by our nurse. We have added a part time health education position to provide additional instruction to students in grades 4-8 on health and wellness. The school additionally has established a School Safety Committee, composed of students, staff, parents, and community members; has undertaken planning for a Wellness Center, sent and collected information from parent and student surveys, has secured the services of a local physician to give a presentation on the mental health needs and concerns of students and their families for both parents and staff, and review procedures, as

appropriate. Attached is evidence of submission for reimbursement and report of school health services, a s 2006-2007 has not been submitted. 2006-2007 submission will be completed in collaboration with the Erie School District and upon receipt of their data. All staff have received training on the school safety plan. Fire, and emergency safety topics have been incorporated into the curriculum. Documentation of required fire drills has been forwarded to PDE.

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

Health, Vision, Dental, Life, Worker's Compensation, General Liability, Officer and Director, Automobile Liability and Excess Liability.

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

The Charter school employs teachers and additional professional staff to support the learning programs for our students. There are two teachers at each grade level, 4 Title I teachers, 7 special education teachers; one class size reduction teacher, 1 counselor, 2 school family coordinators, 1 information literacy skills teacher (technology and library) and a full time school nurse. For purposes of discussing turnover and retention, only staff hired by the charter school are considered. For purposes of computing percentages of staff categorized as highly qualified we did include, as per requirement, contracted professional staff.

K	2	2
1	2	2
2	2	2
3	2	1
4	2	2
5	2	0
6	2	1
7	2	0
8	2	1
Co	1	1
Spec education teachers	7	6
School family coordinators	2	2
Title I teachers	4	3
Administrators	3	3
Class size reduction teacher	1	1
Music teacher	1	1
Art teacher	1	0
Physical education teacher	1	1
Information Literacy Skills Tchr	1	1
Nurse	1	0
	41	30

In order to increase stability of teaching staff, our board of directors collaborated last year to increase teacher salaries to bring them closer to those of surrounding districts. This has reduced salary as a major contributing factor to staff turnover. Based on review by our Human Resources Department, the following are reasons given for professional staff leaving the school.

- Some have elected to go back to College and pursue higher levels of degrees
- Some have sought employment in one of the several School Districts in the Erie and Erie county areas.
- Some have relocated out of town to explore other educational opportunities.
- Some have changed careers and have sought employment in other job markets.

Exit interviews are conducted for employees planning to separate their employment at the RBWCCS. These questions are designed to provide feedback from employee's experiences while employed at RBWCCS.

RBWCCS hiring process conforms to all applicable federal regulations regarding fair hiring practices and employment. RBWCCS is an Equal Opportunity Employer

· A professional staff member is an individual employed by a charter school in positions for which state certification would be required in a non-charter public school, including those who are certificated as teachers, supervisors, supervising principals, principals, assistant principals, vice-principals, directors of vocational education, dental hygienists, visiting teachers, home and school visitors, school counselors, child nutrition program specialists, school librarians, school secretaries the selection of whom is on the basis of merit as determined by eligibility lists and school nurses. (24 P.S. 11-1101).

· The Chief Executive Officer, who is the individual appointed by the Board of Trustees to oversee and manage the operation of the charter school, shall not be deemed a professional staff member.

Student Enrollment

Lottery/Enrollment and Registration

The Charter School is a taxpayer-funded school targeting students residing in the City of Erie. It is open to all eligible students on a space available basis and does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, income, or disability. The School develops policies and procedures in compliance with PA Act 22 and other applicable Federal and State legislation. It is the Policy of the School to enroll students through a lottery entrance procedure. All students will be enrolled through a random selection. Upon selection parents or guardians will have the choice to accept or pass on the opening for their child or children. All students currently enrolled at the Charter School will maintain their enrollment status unless written notification of withdrawal is received. Lottery applications may be obtained at the school on a year round basis. Applications will be accepted in person, through the mail, or over the phone.

A notice will be sent by mail to inform applicants that their application has been received and is on record. Note: Date of application is not a consideration for the lottery drawing. It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform the school of changes with regard to phone number or address so they may be properly contacted regarding enrollment. Applications will be stored at the school and separated by grade levels of entering students. A master list of all applicants' names and grade levels will also be maintained in the school office as a back up to the original applications. Sibling designation will also be noted on the master list.

Siblings (brothers and sisters only) residing in the same household of currently enrolled students will be given first priority with regard to enrollment. Priority will be given to siblings upon initial enrollment only. The purpose of allowing siblings priority is to reduce the incidence of family members having to attend different schools. However, if a parent decides not to enroll a sibling of a current student (when selected in the lottery), or withdraws a sibling of a current student, the sibling priority is forfeited. Sibling priority is not valid upon attempting to re-enroll students who have previously attended the Community Charter School. If a sibling is unable to be enrolled due to over enrollment at a particular grade level, a parent may choose to enroll the student(s) for which an opening is available. Students who are not able to be enrolled, due to over enrollment, will retain sibling priority until registration is offered to them, or a parent chooses to remove them from the registration lottery.

Students residing within the city of Erie will be given first priority with regard to enrollment. However, if there are no other students waiting to be enrolled at a specific grade level, a student may be enrolled from another district within Erie County.

Students who were previously enrolled and moved out of the city will have the opportunity to maintain their enrollment status and remain a student at the Charter School. Lottery drawings will be held the first week of each of the following months to fill any vacancies in all grade levels, May, June, July, and August. If all vacancies are filled in earlier lotteries then subsequent lottery drawings need not be held. Lottery drawings will be held at the school, by school administrators and witnessed by a staff member representing the sponsoring agency, contacted by phone (if available) and by mail to announce their selection. Mail contact will be documented on the school mailing log. Those selected in the lottery must complete registration forms with school personnel within 10 days or the opening will be forfeited. If no response from the applicant is received the opening will be forfeited and application will be returned to lottery and marked with the date selected and deadline for response. Once each grade level is full, lotteries will be frozen until openings occur. At that time, drawings will be held only to fill specific openings and may not necessarily be done for each grade level. Following the first 13 days of the beginning of the school year, any students who have not attended school may have their enrollment position forfeited. Any openings that occur will be filled through the lottery procedures listed above. Students who are enrolled after the start of the school year must attend school within 7 school days following the completion of registration. Those failing to attend may forfeit their enrollment position. A written summary of lottery transactions will be maintained at the Charter School.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

Admission to the Charter School is open to all eligible students on a space available basis and does not discriminate in its admission policy or practices on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a handicapped person, proficiency in English, race, color, or religion. Once a student is offered enrollment after lottery acceptance, parents/guardians must complete the enrollment packet and necessary registration forms. To be eligible the student must provide: 1) proof of residence in the City of Erie; or 2) proof of eligible non-resident status elsewhere for space available consideration; 3) proof of minimum age of five years as of September 1st for Kindergartners (birth certificate required); and 4) completed lottery application form. As a part of the enrollment packet, parents/guardians must complete the following: Pupil Registration form; Student Health History Questionnaire, Release(s) for student information; academic, attendance, discipline, and special education records; Emergency Data cards; Application for Free and Reduced Lunch Program; Parent Agreement; and Home Language Survey. Parents/guardians enrolling Kindergarten students must also provide immunization records for the student to be enrolled. Parents/guardians will also be required to complete the Parental Registration Statement, upon registration.

The Charter School policy mirrors the admission policy of the Erie School District to maintain consistency in the city. Students must be 5 years of age by September 1 for Kindergarten, or 6 years of age by September 1 for 1st grade. Parents who express an interest to enroll a student with a later birthday are directed to the Erie School District for assessment to determine eligibility for early enrollment in either system.

Transportation

The Charter School is pleased to partner with the School District of the City of Erie for transportation for those students who reside within the Erie district. Buses and drivers are contracted through First Student Transportation. Several children who have moved to outlying districts after enrollment have transportation provided through their home districts, but all students, regardless of where they live, are eligible for transportation. All buses and drivers are provided through the same contractor.

Accommodations for Special Education Students: Due to the high number of special education students enrolled in the Charter School, and to insure safety, the Charter School funds the salaries for bus aides on all four Erie City buses on both the a.m. and the p.m. route. Specialized training is provided for bus assistants by the Director of Student Management, with assistance from the Director of Special Services. The Board of Directors and Administration are aware of the need to provide accommodations for special education students, as needed. Transportation for special education students who receive mental health services after school is provided through a contract with a local MH provider and LIFT services. For special education students who have an IEP that determines the need for additional accommodations, special arrangements are made including accessible vans, door-to-door service, and transportation for students who live closer than the transportation policy provides.

Food Service Program

Two daily meals are provided the Charter Schools via the Erie School District. Three food service staff members manage preparation, serving and coordination at the Charter. The program follows federal National School Lunch requirements.

The School participates in the Free and Reduced Lunch program as indicated by the high proportion of economic disadvantaged in our population.

Student Conduct

Preemptive Student management

RBWCCS has developed a behavior modification philosophy that is predicated in identifying potential student behavior (McFarland, 1997). This system is managed by a team of nine individuals who have a variety of skills in the areas of counseling, discipline, social work, and education. One of the strategies employed is the School Wide Effective Behavior Support Program (SWEBS). SWEBS and a philosophic management plan espousing anticipation and prevention rather than discipline, has had a positive effect.

The lead person in the Behavior Modification Team is the Director of Student Services. The Director of Student Services is responsible to minimize academic interruption and maximize teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Assisting the Director of Student Services are two student managers experienced in student de-escalation and para-education. Their responsibilities include working closely with classroom teachers to share information and maintain an academic environment, counseling students who are assigned to the Time Out room and

visiting with students who have had recent misbehaviors and redirect disruptive students. Another team member is the Alternative Education instructor who has Master's Degree in Special Education. The Alternative Education Program serves as an intervention, the focus being on the development of pro-social behaviors. The program staff works with students who have been removed from the regular school classes because of disruptive behavior and other behaviors, which are not conducive to the learning environment. The focus of the educational program is to provide the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful in the school setting. The behavior modification team also works closely with the school's Prevention Specialist. Other team members include two School Family Coordinators. These team members have backgrounds in counseling and psychology. Their expertise is de-escalating children, contacting parents of students before the students escalate to flash and conducting extensive discussion sessions with students as to the expectations of the school and society.

The last two team members include the principal, as well as the Director of Special Education. The roles of these team members are to offer direction when it is necessary. Classroom teachers, special education teachers, teaching assistants, Title I teachers, secretaries, and custodians are other individuals who frequently work closely with the behavior modification team.

Trainings will be afforded to these team members throughout the year to enhance their knowledge and skills.

It is our goal to identify students with chronic discipline problems. Behavior plans and several interventions will then be developed in an effort to decrease disciplinary problems from occurring.

The Charter School policies on discipline and student management were written by a team of staff, board members, and parents with consultation from our solicitor to insure that applicable federal and state regulations including due process for regular and special education students were considered. Ongoing review of policies and practices will continue to insure compliance.

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

CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2007 - 2008

Name of School: GECAC Community CS

Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval: 2/12/1998 (Original)

Length of Charter: 3 Years **Opening Date:** 8/1998

Grade Level: K-8 **Hours of Operation:** 7:30AM-4:00PM

Percentage of Certified Staff: 91% **Total Instructional Staff:** 33

Student/ Teacher Ratio: 10:1 **Student Waiting List:** 0

Attendance Rate/Percentage: 96.40%

Enrollment: 330 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** ESD: \$7,088.19(R), \$15,400.67(E) and MSD: \$6,885.18(R), \$14,147.07(E)

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 0
Asian/Pacific Islander: 1
Black (Non-Hispanic): 218
Hispanic: 16
White (Non-Hispanic): 95
Multicultural: 0

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch: 97.8%

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 80

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	176	176	176	0	NA
Instructional Hours	0	0	997	997	997	0	NA

ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

School Year: 2007

The GECAC Community CS within Northwest Tri-County IU 5 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.

Board President

Date

Chief Executive Officer

Date

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Verify that all DATA reports to PDE are complete

YES _____ **NO** _____

SIGNATURE PAGE

Identify the charter school's Chief Executive Officer.

Name Kathryn Olds

Title Acting CAO/Principal

Phone 814-461-9600 x 221

Fax 814-461-0226

E-mail kolds@rbwileyccs.org

Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date

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

Name Marc Blount

Title Board Chairperson

Phone 814-461-9600

Fax 814-461-0226

E-mail na

Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date

Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.

Name Kathryn Olds

Title Supervisor of Special Services

Phone 814-461-9600 x 221

Fax 814-461-0226

E-mail kolds@rbwileyccs.org

Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date