Pennsylvania Department of Education

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

Charter Annual Report
Tuesday, October 09, 2007

Charter School: Laboratory CS
Address: 124 Bryn Mawr Ave
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004
Phone: (610) 617-9121
Contact Name: D June Hairston-Brown

SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Organization Description
The Laboratory Charter School of Communication and Languages is a K-8 Elementary School with three sites in the City of Philaldephia. Its special mission is to provide its students with a superior academic education that includes a special emphasis on languages other than English; communication skills, including the use of technology; an awareness of the issues that impact

their world; and an appreciation of cultures other than their own. A Board of Directors sets policy, while the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for overall governance. The Site Directors and the staff are responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and the students.

Although most of the school's students reside in the West Philadlephia and Northern Liberties neighborhoods of Philadelphia, the Northeast, Germantown, South Philadlephia, Fishtown, and Kensington sections of the city are also well represented. Approximately 73% of the children come from low-income families and many live in single parent households. Eighty-nine percent of the student population is African-American, five percent is White, five percent is Hispanic, and less than one percent has Asian or Native American ancestry.

Core Purpose

Mission

The mission of The Laboratory Charter School is to provide a comprehensive, cognitively based, program that will prepare students to communicate effectively in more than one language and to see the world from three perspectives: global, international and national. The school promotes: 1) excellence in oral and written communication, 2) mastery of more than one language, 3) familiarity with communication technologies, 4) appreciation of cultural diversity, 5) concern for international and global issues, and 6) commitment to lifelong learning. It is characterized by excellence in teaching, instructional methodologies that connect learning to pragmatic conditions, and close cooperation among communities, parents, and teachers.

Vision

Upon successful completion of the program, graduates of the school have attained a well-rounded elementary education and are able to compete successfully with students from other public, as well as private schools. Graduates are distinguished by their: proficiency in written and oral communication, familiarity with two languages that are not their native tongue and expertise in the use of communication technology. They also exhibit a superior understanding of the diverse cultures that comprise both western and non-western civilizations and they show a commitment to improving conditions in their own community, in their nation, and in the world at large.

Shared Values

At The Laboratory Charter School, we believe that a democratic society and harmonious interaction among nations is founded on the worth of each individual and the value of his/her unique contribution. We further believe that education in the skills of communication and world languages and the fostering of a multi-cultural view of the world will contribute significantly to the development of the individual child, the preservation of democracy, beneficial interaction among nations and the maintenance of world peace. We are, therefore, committed to provide an academic program that will offer our students equal educational opportunities in accordance with their own interests, abilities and needs, and will also help them to develop the skills and inclination to interact productively with people of other cultures.

We believe that a high quality educational program should be based on a clearly stated mission that is understood and supported by all members of the educational community. We hold that education benefits from increased “time on task” and that instruction should be authentic, demanding, and coordinated throughout the curriculum. Further, we feel that teachers and administrators and indirectly students, benefit from professional training and collegial dialogue. We believe that students and teachers perform best when school leaders have high expectations for them and believe that they can perform. We believe that the best teachers are those who have high standards and who love learning. We think that students benefit when their parents are committed to their education and when there is meaningful communication between

parents and the school. Finally, we are committed to a school culture that is characterized by mutual respect, collegial sharing, high standards, and a continual quest for excellence.

Academic Standards

The Laboratory Charter School's curriculum is designed to provide students with the instruction that is needed for them to attain Pennsylvania's academic standards for each subject. Based on their effectiveness in meeting the state standards, The Laboratory Charter School has chosen several courses of study. Reading/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies follow the Silver Burdett Ginn series in grades K — 6. Holt, Rinehart and Winston's Elements of Literature and Science Plus series are used in grades 7 and 8 along with Prentice Hall's Middle Grades Math. Everyday Math is currently used in grades K — 6 and will be expanded to grade 7 next year. The publishers of the materials we use have documentation to show that their materials meet state standards. The success our students have achieved on the PSSA would also indicate that the materials effectively meet the state's requirements.

In Kindergarten and the lower elementary grades, the children meet in self-contained classrooms. Two hours and twenty-five minutes per day are devoted to reading and writing, while approximately one hour is spent studying mathematics. An additional hour is given to instruction in French and Spanish. During the remainder of the day the children study science, social studies, language arts, computer science, phonics, Junior Great Books, and handwriting, each for approximately thirty minutes. The upper grades are departmentalized with students meeting for approximately one hour per course to study reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, French and Spanish. The "special" subjects — art, music, and physical education — meet for approximately two hours every ten days.

A number of the students who enroll in The Laboratory Charter School are one to two years below grade level. The school addresses the needs of students who are performing significantly below standards in literacy and mathematics skills within the inclusion classroom. Teachers are especially attentive to the initial placement of newly admitted students. Teachers assess the children's skills and monitor their progress to determine appropriate placement (with input from the child's parents). They also attempt to quickly identify students who may need additional help because they are not making reasonable progress and those who are at risk of academic failure. Some strategies that are used with these students are:

· Remedial Packages: These are developed and implemented at each grade level.
· Multi-Sensory Techniques (VATK): These techniques are introduced in Kindergarten and used throughout the program to meet the special needs of all students.
· Computer Programs: CCC, Compass Learning, and the Academy of Reading programs have been implemented to foster individual student growth and improvement.
· Parent Involvement: The "Academic Partners" program was introduced to enable parents to support their children by enriching and supplementing the academic programs.
· The Targeted Assistance Program (TAP) was implemented during 2005 — 2006 to provide students who are at risk with an additional hour and a half of skill development after school, two days a week.

In addition, Title I teachers are provided to deliver a program combining in-class support and pull out instruction for students needing additional support.

Strengths and Challenges

The Laboratory Charter School has received accreditation from the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and is recognized as a NCLB Blue Ribbon School. Its academic success is demonstrated by: its PSSA and Terra Nova test scores, the acceptance of its graduates into selective high schools, the comments made by the parents of its students, and the number of students seeking admission. It has also made commendable progress in establishing and refining

its curriculum, in developing a universal assessment program, and in purchasing a wide variety of materials that children and teachers use in support of instruction. Parents are becoming increasingly involved in their children's education through the Parent Partners initiative which brings parents to school once a month to learn what their children will be studying in the coming weeks and to receive materials and suggestions for supporting the children's learning. A new program, the Targeted Assistance Program (TAP), involves parents of struggling students in school life by bringing them to school once a month to learn how to support their child's efforts to learn basic skills. Students in danger of failing strengthen their basic skills by attending school sponsored Saturday classes. Teachers receive a great deal of support through in-service training. Numerous days were devoted to in-service work during 2006 — 2007. In addition to members of our own staff, experts associated with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, with county IUs and with text book publishers are invited to lead workshops. The school also offers teachers two complementary graduate level courses taught by instructors from Arcadia University. The program that is offered in conjunction with Arcadia is designed to assist our teachers to obtain Level II certification and/or graduate degrees.

The staff of The Laboratory Charter School has become increasingly aware of the poor speech patterns used by some of its students. These children are not able to make the transition from the informal language they use with their contemporaries to the more formal speech that should be used in the classroom or that will be expected of them when they enter college, or accept a position in the work force. During 2006 — 2007, the staff continued a program, initiated in 2004 — 2005, designed to improve the students' oral communication skills. This program has resulted in some improvement as measured by teacher observation; however, further strides need to be made. One of our objectives for next year, therefore, is to continue giving students additional opportunities to practice more formal speech. We plan to do this by continuing to apply a rubric for appropriate language developed by our staff and by continuing to provide a specific amount of time for students to participate in structured oral language activities such as: speaking in front of groups, participating in dramatic readings and performances, and reading their own written work into a tape recorder and having their performance critiqued by their classmates.

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process

The Laboratory Charter School remains committed to its initial mission and vision; however, the administration and staff constantly search for ways to improve upon the curriculum and methodology that are employed. While the school has experienced success in many areas, it is our belief that there is always room for improvement. A committee of teachers and administrators periodically reviews the curriculum and assessment results in light of the school's mission, "best practices" in education, the needs of our students, and the changing requirements of state and federal statutes. It determines what changes, if any, are needed to assure that students master the concepts, skills, and knowledge that have been outlined at each grade level by state and national standards, and by assessments mandated by state and local agencies. It reviews mastery level resources for teaching the required skills, paying particular attention to achieving compatibility between the resources and assessment tools and the standards and course content. It examines the teaching/learning methodologies that are used to assure that they actively engage students in their own learning and that they integrate knowledge and skills to the degree practicable. Finally, they review the assessments that are used within the school in order to measure learning to assure that they include appropriate measures that employ such strategies as problem-solving, portfolios, projects requiring complex thinking, etc.

If, in the course of this review, the committee identifies areas that need improvement, it devises a plan for remedying the situation and presents it to the Chief Executive Officer, who then determines what further action is needed. If the proposed improvements require significant

change, or unusual expenditures, they will be presented to the school's Board of Directors for their approval. Once approved, knowledgeable staff members will be chosen to write curriculum, to select materials, to train staff, and to execute other needed functions. Should the plan achieve only a portion of its goals during its first year, it will be reviewed, revised as necessary, and then carried over into another year. This process has been followed in the implementation of Everyday Mathematics which is currently being phased into use one grade at a time, beginning with Kindergarten and in the effort that the staff is making to improve students' oral language skills.

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Dr. Brown	CEO	Administrator	School Board
Dr. Chalker	Office Manager	Administrator	School Board
Mr. Goulding	Principal	Administrator	School Board
Mr. Knight	Title I Coordinator	Middle School Teacher	School Board
Mr. Parker	Police Officer	Community Representative	School Board
Mrs. Brown	Secretary	Parent	School Board
Mrs. Dixon	School Nurse	Ed Specialist - School Nurse	School Board
Mrs. Evans-White	School Counselor	Ed Specialist - School Counselor	School Board
Ms. Makar	Technology Teacher	Elementary School Teacher	School Board

Goals, Strategies and Activities

***Goal:* Foreign Language Skills**
Description: 2% increase in the number of students making satisfactory growth in speaking, reading, and writing a language other than English as measured by a checklist generated by the language department.

***Strategy:* Strategy**
Description: Increased attention to speaking, writing, and reading in Spanish and French.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	Children will read from a given excerpt in French or Spanish, record the readings and replay.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

***Goal:* Health**
Description: 2% increase in the number of students demonstrating improved knowledge of basic health, safety, and fitness rules by scoring 70% or higher on yearly tests prepared by the school nurse.

***Strategy:* Strategy**
Description: Enhancement of health lessons and introduction of guest speakers.
Activities:

Activity	Description
Activity	Discuss current health issues in the classroom. Invite a guest speaker to speak

	to the children on the same issue. Afterwards, the teacher will give the students a test that will determine their knowledge of the topic.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Mathematics**
Description: Reach or exceed the state AYP goal of 45% of 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students, including those in reportable disaggregated groups, scoring proficient or advanced in mathematics

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Increased instructional time devoted to mathematics. Provided extensive inservice training.
Activities:

Activity	**Description**	
Activity	The mathematics teachers will develop and distribute to homeroom teachers various math lessons and activities that will be utilized during additional math instructional.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Oral Communication Skills**
Description: Students will develop clear and effective oral communication skills using standard English as evidenced by at least 50% of all students scoring "Satisfactory" on teacher made evaluations.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Increased instructional time devoted to oral communicaiton skills. Provided extensive inservice training.
Activities:

Activity	**Description**	
Activity	Students will be required to complete oral presentations on a monthly basis. Students will also use a tape recorder to record selected reading passagesand replay.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Parent Participation**
Description: As recorded on meting attendance sheets, 65% of parents will participate in at least

half of the monthly "Academic Partners"sessions at which teachers offer parents methods of supporting their children's learning.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Parents are encouraged to attend "Parent Partnership" meetings through letters and personal phone calls from teachers.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	During "Parent Partnership" Meetings, parents will participate with their children in a teacher directed activity.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Reading**
Description: Reach or exceed the state AYP goal of 54% of 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students, including those in all reportable disaggregated gropups, scoring proficient or advanced in reading.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Increased instructional time devoted to reading. Provided extensive inservice training.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	The reading teachers will provide professional development for the staff. The reading teachers will also develop and distribute to homeroom teachers various reading lessons and activities to be utilized during additional reading instructional time.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **School Incidents**
Description: Respect for oneself and others and command of such social skills as conflict resolution and peer mediation will be demonstrated through a 15% lower level of violent incidents and school suspensions than experienced by the School District of Philaldephia and reported on the annual report on School Violence and Weapons Possession.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: School wide emphasis on conflict resolution and peer mediation skills along with emphasis on monthly ethical concepts such as respect, honest, perseverance, etc.
Activities:

Activity	Description
Activity	A school-wide focus on character education will be implemented. A different character trait (respect, honesty, etc.) will be focused on each month. Each month, one student from each grade who best displays that month's trait will be

	awarded.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Science**
Description: 2% increase in the number of students who achieve at or above the national average on a standardized science test such as the Terra Nova.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Increased instructional time. Addition of science oriented books to reading list.
Activities:

Activity	**Description**	
Activity	An after school science club will allow students to research science topics and complete activities.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Social Studies**
Description: 2% increase in the number of students who display knowledge of international and global issues through their informed participation in weekly social studies discussions, as monitored on a teacher checklist.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Additional emphasis on current events.
Activities:

Activity	**Description**	
Activity	Students will cut out current event articles from various magazines and newspapers. Students will research news related topics, write about them, and discuss them in class.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Student Attendance Rate**
Description: High self-esteem, a positive regard for the school's educational environment and a commitment to life long learning will be demonstrated by an attendance rate of at least 90% (the state target) as demonstrated in the CAD.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Familiarize parents and students with school policy regarding regular attendance. Also, maintenance of a positive school climate that applauds academic acheivement, the worth of

the individual student, and the joy of learning.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	The school will distribute monthly awards for perfect attendance.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Student Participation in State Testing**
Description: Reach or exceed state AYP goal of 95% participation in PSSA testing.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Discuss the importance of testing with students and parents.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	Counselors from local high schools and colleges will talk with students regarding the importance of performance on standardized test.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Student Promotion**
Description: Students will receive the help they need to succeed in school as indicated by a 2% reduction in the retention rate.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Students in danger of failing a course will receive remediation packets, Title I, and will be tutored after school when possible.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	Low performing students will be involved in the "Targeted Assistance Program".	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Technology**
Description: A grade appropriate ability to select and apply the tools of technology as they relate to communication will be demonstrated by attainment od a score of 80 out of 100-or higher- by 85% of the students on a rubric guided evaluation of a year-end technology project.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Assignment of a year long technology project and instruction in the use of various

technology needed to produce a book on the topic "Inventors and Inventions."
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	Each student will write a book focusing on a selected topic. The book will be created using various computer programs and bound.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Visual Arts**
Description: 2% increase in the number of students seriously participating in the visual arts program and demonstrating a growing understanding of art principles, as measured on yearly tests administered by the teachers.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Students required to complete additional assignments outside of the classroom.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	Students will be encouraged to participate in school-wide art shows as well as art shows sponsored by the community.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **World Cultures**
Description: 2% increase in the number of students expanding their knowledge of their own culture and those of other nations as measured on teacher generated tests.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Continuation of virtual tours of other nations/cultures by foreign language and social studies teachers in collaboration with the technology teacher.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	Students will participate in and create virtual field trips.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

Goal: **Writing**
Description: 2% increase in number of students scoring at the highest level on state rubric for writing between pre and post tests administered by staff.

Strategy: **Strategy**
Description: Increased time on task and additional in-service training for teachers.
Activities:

Activity	Description	
Activity	Professional development focusing on writing in the content area will be provided for all teachers. Teachers will require students to write in each subject. Students will also be invited to participate in various writing contests throughout the year.	
Person Responsible	**Timeline for Implementation**	**Resources**
Charter Annual Report Admin	Start: N/A Finish: N/A	$0.00

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

What curriculum does your charter school utilize?

Based on their effectiveness in meeting the state standards, The Laboratory Charter School has chosen several courses of study. Reading/Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies follow the Silver Burdett Ginn series in grades K — 6. Holt, Rinehart and Winston's Elements of Literature and Science Plus series are used in grades 7 and 8 along with Prentice Hall's Middle Grades Math. Everyday Math is currently used in grades K — 5 and will be expanded to grade 6 next year.

Do you have documentation that shows that your curriculum meets the Chapter 4 content standards and all requirements?

The publishers of the materials we use have documentation to show that their materials meet state standards. The success our students have achieved on the PSSA would also indicate that the materials effectively meet the state's requirements.

How is the curriculum organized to meet the developmental and academic needs of students?

In Kindergarten and the lower elementary grades, the children meet in self-contained classrooms. Two hours and twenty-five minutes per day are devoted to reading and writing, while approximately one hour is spent studying mathematics. An additional hour is given to instruction in French and Spanish. During the remainder of the day the children study science, social studies, language arts, computer science, phonics, Junior Great Books, and handwriting, each for approximately thirty minutes. The upper grades are departmentalized with students meeting for approximately one hour per course to study reading, language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, French and Spanish. The "special" subjects — art, music, and physical education — meet for approximately two hours every ten days.

How does the charter school promote in-depth and inquiry-based teaching and learning?

The Laboratory Charter School believes that inquiry is part of the natural process of learning. It recognizes that inquiry learning requires an emphasis on the development of inquiry skills and the nurturing of inquiring habits of mind that will enable students to continue their search for

knowledge beyond their school years. To encourage inquiry, The Laboratory Charter School provides extensive in-service training to prepare its teachers to lead inquiry lessons. Teachers are taught to model the inquiry approach, and to stimulate inquiry among their students by encouraging them to identify problems to solve, or by helping them to resolve discrepancies. From the earliest grades students learn: to use the steps in the inquiry process, to see themselves as participants in the process of learning, to engage in the exploration process, to raise questions, to propose explanations, to use observations, to plan and to carry out learning activities, to communicate using a variety of methods, and to critique their learning practices.

What strategies does the school use to accelerate academic skill development, content knowledge and learning strategies of students performing significantly below standards in literacy and mathematics skills?

A number of the students who enroll in The Laboratory Charter School are one to two years below grade level. The school addresses the needs of students who are performing significantly below standards in literacy and mathematics skills within the inclusion classroom. Teachers are especially attentive to the initial placement of newly admitted students. Teachers assess the children's skills and monitor their progress to determine appropriate placement (with input from the child's parents). They also attempt to quickly identify students who may need additional help because they are not making reasonable progress and those who are at risk of academic failure. Some strategies that are used with these students are:

Remedial Packages: These are developed and implemented at each grade level.

Multi-Sensory Techniques (VATK): These techniques are introduced in Kindergarten and used throughout the program to meet the special needs of all students.

Computer Programs: CCC, Compass Learning, and the Academy of Reading programs have been implemented to foster individual student growth and improvement.

Parent Involvement: The "Academic Partners" program was introduced to enable parents to support their children by enriching and supplementing the academic programs.

The Targeted Assistance Program (TAP) was implemented during 2005 — 2006 to provide students who are at risk with an additional hour and a half of skill development after school, two days a week.

In addition, Title I teachers are provided to deliver a program combining in-class support and pull out instruction for students needing additional support.

What types of teaching strategies are used to actively engage students in the learning process?

The teachers at The Laboratory Charter School employ teaching methods that are based on the best research on how students learn, as well as on proven, tested pedagogues demonstrated to be effective in an urban environment. Just as no two children grow alike, no two children learn alike. Similarly, no two topics lend themselves to exactly the same form of presentation. The teachers at the school are facilitators of learning and are adept at a variety of teaching strategies, ranging from direct instruction through modeling and scaffolding, to inquiry and cooperative learning. They choose from among these strategies to suit the needs of their students. Characteristically, they regard their students as active learners, rather than passive recipients of knowledge. Thus, they engage the students in the learning process.

English Language Learners

Although a Home Language Survey is completed by the parents/guardians of all enrollees and the teachers watch carefully for students who may have a limited command of English, no English Language Learners are currently enrolled at The Laboratory Charter School. A plan for teaching ELL has been developed.

Statement of Program Goals and Objectives:

The English as a Second Language (ESL) Curriculum for grades -K — 8 builds and develops linguistic proficiency for non-native English speakers. All students are assured an English linguistic learning experience based on the six language skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, critical thinking/learning strategies, and culture.

The goal of the curriculum is to provide students with the skills necessary to transition successfully into the mainstream classroom.

The program is built upon national TESOL Standards and Pennsylvania's Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening.

Students who complete the program will:

· Use English to participate in social interactions.

· Interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment.

· Use learning strategies to extend their communicative competence in the English language when engaged in social interaction.

· Use strategies to extend their communicative competence in order to achieve in academic content areas.

· Use English to obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form.

· Use appropriate learning strategies to construct and apply academic knowledge in the English language.

· Use the appropriate English language variety, register and genre according to audience, purpose and setting.

· Use nonverbal communication appropriate to audience, purpose, and setting.

· Use appropriate learning strategies to extend their sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence.

Graduation Requirements

The Laboratory Charter School is a K — 8 program. However, its close attention to achieving the state standards in a timely manner provides a strong background in academic skills that support its graduates in their high school studies.

Special Education

While the school does not currently have students on its roll who are diagnosed as having "special needs," it does have many children who are a year or more behind the expectations for their grade and age. These children are studied carefully using methods similar to those recommended in the "child find" procedures outlined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education in their Model Policies and Procedures paper. This document has been adopted by The Laboratory Charter School as its official Special Education policy because it is current and because it addresses most legal eventualities in the education of special needs students. In dealing with children who are not diagnosed with a special need but who are less academically skilled than they might be, teachers at The Laboratory Charter School use methods that are also seen in special education classrooms. For example, teachers use a multi-model approach to instruction (VATK). Visual, auditory, kinesthetic and tactile methods are employed in all subjects. Distractions are avoided, children are taught to organize their supplies and their work. If necessary, some students are allowed frequent breaks. Those who need it, are given additional time to finish homework and/or tests. Work is presented in small segments that will not overwhelm children who find learning difficult. Highlighters are used to alert students to important aspects of reading assignments or of written problems. Please see above for additional strategies used with students who are not performing at grade level when they enroll in The Laboratory Charter School. The Targeted Assistance Program and Title I services also provide a substantial number of remedial instruction for children whose performance is below expectations.

Although approximately 10% of The Laboratory Charter School's entry level students function below grade level, during the 2006 — 2007 school year no children were enrolled who are classified as having special needs. Through the use of Title I teachers, the Targeted Assistance Program, VATK methodology, the remediation of basic skills through the use of computer technology and the Parent Partners Program, we have been able to work with our low performing students without applying a special education label to any of them.

During the 2006 — 2007 school year, the school did not contract with any other agency for special education services.

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
NA	0	NA	Na	0	NA

Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

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

Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
N/A	N/A	0

Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
N/A	N/A	0

SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA/PASA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Terra Nova (Local Assessment)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA/PASA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Terra Nova (Local Assessment)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No

Student Assessment

How these results influence development of new or revised annual measurable goals and targets.

Test results indicate areas of strength and weakness and give curriculum planners an opportunity to focus on those aspects of the curriculum that need improvement. For example, when the 2002 Terra Nova showed a relative weakness in science with only 56.3% of The Laboratory Charter School's students scoring at or above the fiftieth percentile, the staff determined that they would enhance the science program through projects, field trips, and reading assignments. This determination was reflected in the annual goals. As a result, the 2003 Terra Nova scores showed 67.4 % of students scoring at of above the fiftieth percentile. The practice of enriching the program with science related reading, field trips, and projects continued into 2003 — 2004 and 2004 — 2005 and the scores on the 2004 Terra Nova showed that 81.3 % of the children scored at or above the fiftieth percentile in science while 88.9% exceeded it in 2005. Most recently, the school's effort to improve the students' knowledge of science, which began with a review of the 2002 Terra Nova science scores, led to the adoption of a new science curriculum in 2006-2007.

If locally developed tests are used, discuss how they are used and what impact they have on the curriculum, student improvement, and decision making.

While standardized tests are used to measure annual progress in major subject areas such as mathematics, reading, language arts, and science, locally developed tests assess developing skills in foreign language, visual arts, music, physical education, etc. These tests, checklists, and teacher observations are used to determine which skills the children have mastered and which teaching methods have been the most successful. By providing this information, the locally developed tests contribute to decisions concerning the measurable goals that are set for subsequent years. They also help to determine if the goals thus set are achieved. Further, locally developed tests are used on a weekly and monthly basis to assure that skill development in the major subjects is progressing in a timely manner.

Please describe features of the student achievement plan and note the usage of teacher observations, surveys, portfolios or other local instruments to measure student progress.

The staff of The Laboratory Charter School is aware of the limitations of standardized testing and has implemented alternative methods that provide teachers and students with maximum feedback and opportunities to demonstrate that students are learning and using higher level

thinking and problem solving skills. In addition to the use of standardized tests, students' progress is monitored by curriculum based assessment techniques and such devices as work portfolios, open ended questions, extended reading and writing experiences, individual and group projects, teacher observations, student conferences, academic competitions, student performances, participation in activities and exhibitions.

b.) Describe the strategies and interventions that are in place to ensure that students who are at-risk of failure, or those not making reasonable progress, are being addressed. What opportunities are they afforded in order to help them succeed? Provide clear evidence that demonstrates how those strategies are proving to be effective in terms of improved academic performance.

Students who are at risk of failure, or who are not making reasonable progress are identified as quickly as possible upon admission to the school. Once identified, the staff determines suitable placement for the child and identifies appropriate goals and strategies to help the child to succeed. These strategies include:

Remedial Packages: These are developed and implemented at each grade level

Multi-Sensory Techniques (VATK): These techniques are introduced in Kindergarten and used throughout the program to meet the special needs of all students.

Computer Programs: CCC, Compass Learning, Odyssey Computer Program and the Auto Skill programs have been implemented to foster individual student growth and improvement

Parent Involvement: the “Parent Partners” program was introduced to enable parents to support their children by enriching and supplementing the academic program.

Targeted Assistance Program: Introduced during 2005 — 2006, this program provides children who need additional skill development with three hours of after school tutoring each week

In addition, Title I teachers are provided to deliver a program combining in-class support and pull out instruction for students needing additional assistance.

The clear evidence of our success is reflected in the standardized state and district test results. Throughout all grade levels the students demonstrated a commendable grasp of the standards taught.

Student Assessment - Attachment

- Aggregate Scores from Local Test Data

Teacher Evaluation

List the main features of the school’s teacher evaluation plan.

The evaluation of teachers is both summative and formative. Summative evaluation of each staff member is based on a multiplicity of factors, including (but not limited to), an assessment of accomplishment in accordance with a Charter generated “Duties of a Teacher” list, based on the work of Michael Scriven, the review of a teacher maintained portfolio, formal classroom observations, informal observations, notes, and records maintained by administration, and (to a lesser degree) by peer, parent, and student evaluative surveys. Most critical is an assessment of the teacher in relation to the achievement level of his or her students. This achievement is judged in terms of the standards set for each course and grade level. Additionally, the administration

prepares an evaluation of each teacher based on the state evaluation form.

List entities/individuals that are responsible for teacher and staff evaluation.

The Chief Executive Officer, the Site Directors, and outside consultants, who are specialists in teacher preparation, evaluate the staff. The evaluators hold administrative certificates from the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

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

Three of the evaluators are trained and certified school administrators who have both academic training and practical experience in the evaluation of professional staff members. Three of the evaluators hold certification in special education and two are also certified reading specialists. All have received in-service training from both the local IU and from PDE. Additionally, they meet periodically with the Chief Executive Officer to identify instructional goals, teaching methodologies and activities that staff members must have in place in order to meet the demands of the mission.

SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

No significant leadership changes were made during 2006-2007.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Harold B. Hairston	President
Howard Lebofsky	Vice President
Henry Dolberry Sr.	Second Vice President
Gladys Williams Lassiter	Secretary
John D. Iskrant	Treasurer

Professional Development (Governance)

The Board of Trustees receives periodic instruction on legal issues and governance issues from the law firm of Schneider, Harrison, Segal and Lewis. This firm has agreed to work for the Charter School on a pro bono basis.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The Board is responsible for long range planning, establishing policies and procedures and for approving the annual budget. Its members approve senior administrative staff positions and the negotiation and management of contracts. While the final authority and responsibility for the school resides with the Board, their appointed Chief Executive Officer is responsible for maintaining school property, assigning administrators and staff, devising academic and non-academic programs, and supervising all aspects of the school's operation.

The school's Board of Trustees recognizes and respects the time consuming nature of the School Directors' position and that of the Charter School Office's staff. Therefore, it encourages charter school personnel to comply in a timely manner with School District deadlines and requests for reports to preclude placing an undue burden on members of the SRC or their staff.

Further, appropriate personnel from the Charter School attend School District training sessions several times a year.

Community and Parent Engagement

The Board of Trustees supports parent and community involvement in the life of the Charter School. Monthly workshops called, " Parent Partners" meetings, give teachers and parents an opportunity to collaborate on improving and supporting the students' education. The goal of these workshops is to help parents acquire sufficient teaching methodology and academic skills, as well as foreign language and technology skills, to assist their children in all subjects, particularly the mission courses (French, Spanish, Computer Skills, and Writing). The Board of Trustees also encourages assembly programs through which the children can demonstrate to their parents the skills they are acquiring in both the mission courses and the traditional academic subjects. Parents are further involved in the life of the school through grade level meetings at which they receive further instruction on how best to support their children's learning goals. Materials are frequently distributed to parents to guide their efforts to enhance their children's education.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

During its first eight years in operation, the school limited its fund raising efforts to grant writing. This has proven to be a productive means of raising money and is more lucrative than more traditional fund raising activities. The 21st Century Grant is currently funding an extensive After School Program.

Fiscal Solvency Policies

To maintain solvency, the school sets aside at least $500,000.00 to cover monthly expenses. The projected unreserved balance for 2006-2007 is estimated to be around $2,742M.

Accounting System

The school has implemented GASB 34 using full accrual accounting. Currently, the school is using the For Fund Accounting program with the accounts set up based on a required chart of accounts, which conforms to PDE reporting. Budgeting, accounting and reporting are based on a governmental accounting model using GASB 34.

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment

- Revenues, Expenditures and Fund Balances

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

The Laboratory Charter School engaged the firm of Maulo and Company, Ltd. to conduct an external audit of its affairs. The audit was completed for fiscal year 2005 — 2006 in June of 2006. The firm issued an unqualified opinion. Another audit is scheduled for December of 2007.

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

- Audit Firm, Date of Last Audit, Auditor's Opinion, and Any Findings Resulting from the Audit: Auditor's Annual Report Summary

Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report

The state conducted an audit of the school during the spring of 2002. All the findings have been corrected. The 2005-2006 state audit was completed in December of 2005. No significant findings were made.

SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The charter school did not make any significant purchases in these areas during 2006-2007.

Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

Although the Charter's Board of Trustees is seeking an aditional facility to enable the school to serve a larger student body, the school will probably remain at the sites it currently inhabits for the foreseeable future.

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The Laboratory Charter School complies with all state and local standards concerning health and safety. Site Directors conduct and maintain a log of monthly fire drills. Additionally, the sites are equipped with modern fire alarm systems which are checked annually by a private contractor. Each year city representatives inspect the buildings and, when necessary, adjustments are made in accordance with the inspector's suggestions. The school nurse checks immunization records and contacts the parents of children who have not provided the school with proof of immunization. Further she sees that appropriate health screenings are conducted each year. These, along with information regarding immunizations, purchases related to health care equipment and salaries of health care personnel are recorded on the Report of Health Services that is sent to the Pennsylvania Department of Health each year. Copies of the report are kept at the Laboratory Charter School office and are available upon request.

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

- Compliance With Health and Safety Requirements and Maintenance of Health and Immunization Records for Students:Wellness Policy
- Compliance With Health and Safety Requirements and Maintenance of Health and Immunization Records for Students: Request for Reimbursement and Report of School Health Services

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

The following insurance coverage plans are contracted through Edward R. Caruso of Caruso and Associates, King of Prussia, PA 19406, agents for Markel Insurance Company, A+ rated, of Glen Allen Virginia. The coverage provided includes: General Liability, Educators Liability, Employee Benefits Liability, Corporal Punishment Liability, Sexual Abuse and Molestation Liability, Teachers Professional Liability, Crime, Property Systems Breakdowns, and Umbrella Liability.

Group Life, Accidental Death, Short and Long-term Disability, and Dental coverage are provided by Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Group Medical benefits are provided by Aetna Life Insurance Company. A Surety Bond for all employees and Board members is provided through TRA Insurance and Financial Services.

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

The Laboratory Charter School employed forty professional staff members, all of whom are certified. The CEO and one staff member have doctorates and five staff members have master's degrees. The remainder have earned bachelors degrees. Only one professional staff member left during the 2006 — 2007 school year while school was actually in session. Those who leave us generally do so at the end of the school year. Thirteen teachers left at the end of 2005 — 2006, for example. According to the information in our files, and the notes taken during exit interviews, our teachers leave for a variety of reasons including: family matters, (most often husbands are transferred by their employer to another city), the need to relocate because of marriage, and the unavailability of affordable quality day care. A few leave because they do not find teaching to be compatible with their personalities. We also find that some of the youngest, unmarried, teachers are more inclined to be transient, because they are less encumbered than more experienced teachers and thus are not restricted to a specific location or life style.

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachments

- Quality of Teaching and Other Staff: Professional Staff Certification
- Quality of Teaching and Other Staff: Professional Development and Teacher Induction Letter

Student Enrollment

a.) Describe the charter school's student enrollment procedures and policies, including the admissions policy. Describe how all policies and procedures comply with state law. Describe if a lottery was used, how students were placed on a waiting list and how those students were enrolled from the list.

All enrollment procedures comply with state law and the requirements of the chartering school district. Students are admitted to The Laboratory Charter School without prejudice of any kind. To be eligible for admission, a student must provide: 1) proof of appropriate residency, 2) proof of age, 3) a completed application form, and 4) proof of immunization. Whenever there are more eligible applicants than there are available seats, the school conducts a lottery. Lotteries are conducted by grade. The names of all available applicants for a grade are placed in an appropriate receptacle and enough names are drawn to fill the number of vacant seats in that grade. Names of unsuccessful applicants are stored and the lottery process is repeated as needed.

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

<u>Enrollment of Kindergarten and First Grade Students:</u>

The admission policy described above applies to Kindergarten and First Grade. A child must have celebrated his/her fifth birthday by October 1 in order to be admitted to Kindergarten and must have passed his/her sixth birthday by October 1 in order to be admitted to First Grade.

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

<u>Enrollment History:</u>

An enrollment history is provided in the chart below. Children who leave the school generally go to another public school, either to a traditional public school or to a charter school.

Grade	Initial Enrollment	Dropped During School Year	Added	End of Year
K	66	3	10	73
1	74	5	8	77
2	69	4	8	73
3	69	3	6	72
4	53	6	9	56
5	45	0	0	44
6	43	4	7	46
7	33	0	1	34
8	29	3	4	30
Totals				

Provide the number of students who completed the 2005-2006 year who are currently enrolled to return in September

Parents are asked to complete re-registration forms at the end of each school year and mail them in to the school. At this writing some re-registration forms are outstanding. However, most of the students who attended The Laboratory Charter School last year will be returning.

Provide numbers of students who were required to leave the school (expulsions, other), and the numbers who left voluntarily

No children were required to leave the school. The number that left voluntarily is displayed on the chart above.

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

Many of our students move to other states or to other sections of the metropolitan area either during the course of the school year or at the end of the school year. There are some whose families find the requirements of the school, like homework, too demanding for their family schedule. Therefore, they transfer to a school that is more compatible with their needs. Many of the students who enroll in the school travel long distances (sometimes this travel requires the student transferring to 3 or more busses) to attend. Parents often tire of the transportation problems and return the child to the neighborhood school. Those who return to The Laboratory School, after sampling another school, generally state that they did not find the alternative school sufficiently demanding.

Many more students seek admission to The Laboratory Charter School than the school is able to enroll because the facilities that we are leasing at the present time are filled to capacity.

Transportation

Where a school district is not legally bound to transport The Laboratory Charter School's students, their parents are responsible for getting the children to school. Tokens are available for eligible students who travel by bus.

Food Service Program

The school's lunch program is provided by the Nutritional Development Services of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. This service provides a nutritionally balanced lunch for all children who wish to avail themselves of it. The program also provides for federally funded free and reduced lunches for those who are eligible.

Student Conduct

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

The goal of the school's discipline plan is to establish an atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure, and happy and have a maximum opportunity to learn. The plan was developed by teachers, parents, and students and was approved by the Board of The Laboratory Charter School. It specifies the rules that cover the behavior expected of The Laboratory Charter School's students and states the negative consequences that come from breaking the rules and the positive consequences that follow from obeying them. Parents are expected to take an active role in maintaining their children's good behavior and are involved in making and enforcing rules. The policy is based on the premise that collaboration between parents, children, teachers and administrators will result in a positive learning environment.

The school's discipline policy complies with Chapters 12 and 13 of the Public School Code. In the case of suspensions and expulsions and other matters that prove difficult to resolve, the following procedure is followed**:**

If, after a sincere effort, the complainant cannot resolve the issue with the individual with whom he/she has a dispute, the matter should be brought to the attention of that person's supervisor (generally the Site Director), and then to a representative of the CEO, the CEO herself, and finally to the Board of Directors.

If, for example, the matter concerns a member of the teaching staff and the parent and teacher cannot resolve the issue that is in dispute, the parent or teacher may bring the matter to the attention of the Site Director. If that individual cannot propose a satisfactory solution, he/she will schedule a conference with the CEO's representative. The Site Director will also furnish the representative with a written report that will include the nature of the original complaint, a statement of the facts giving rise to it, the manner in which the complainant allegedly has been affected adversely, the action the complainant wants taken, and the reasons why it is felt that such action should not be taken. Should the CEO's representative not resolve the matter, the CEO will take it under consideration. If the CEO determines that the issue requires the attention of the school's Board of Directors, she will furnish the Board with a complete report.

At this juncture, the complainant is free to present the Board with an account of his/her grievances. All complaints to the Board must be made in writing and should be addressed to the Secretary of the Board of Directors, The Laboratory Charter School of Communication and Languages, 124 Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004. Should the complainant wish to address the Board in person, he or she must follow the procedures that may be obtained from the Administrative Office.

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

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

Student Conduct - Attachment

- Student Conduct: Discipline Policy

CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Charter School Annual Report
Summary Data
2007 - 2008

Name of School: Laboratory CS

Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval: August 10, 1998

Length of Charter: 4 years; Renewed 4/18/07 for 5 years **Opening Date:** September 1998

Grade Level: K-8 **Hours of Operation:** 8:00am - 4:00pm

Percentage of Certified Staff: 100% **Total Instructional Staff:** 40

Student/ Teacher Ratio: 12:1 **Student Waiting List:** N/A

Attendance Rate/Percentage: 96%
Enrollment: 481 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** $7,247.92

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native:	0
Asian/Pacific Islander:	6
Black (Non-Hispanic):	433
Hispanic:	28
White (Non-Hispanic):	14
Multicultural:	0

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch: 73%

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

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	181	181	181	0	543
Instructional Hours	0	0	1270	1270	1176	0	3716

ASSURANCE FOR THE OPERATION OF CHARTER SCHOOL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

School Year: 2007

The Laboratory CS within Philadelphia IU 26 assures that the charter school will comply with the requirements of 22 PA Code Chapter 711 and with the policies and procedures of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). PDE will specify, in writing, policies and procedures to be followed. Requests for any deviations from these regulations, policies, and procedures must be made in writing to PDE. The charter school assures:

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

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

_____ _____

Board President **Date**

_____ _____

Chief Executive Officer **Date**

Verify that all DATA reports to PDE are complete **YES** _____ **NO** _____

SIGNATURE PAGE

Identify the charter school's Chief Executive Officer.
Name June Brown
Title Dr.
Phone 610-617-9121 **Fax** 610-660-8416
E-mail thelabsch@aol.com

_____ _____
Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date

Identify the charter school's President of the Board of Trustees.
Name Harold Hairston
Title Mr.
Phone 610-617-9121 **Fax** 610-660-8416
E-mail thelabsch@aol.com

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

Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.
Name June Brown
Title Dr.
Phone 610-617-9121 **Fax** 610-660-8416
E-mail thelabsch@aol.com

_____ _____
Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date