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# Pennsylvania Department of Education

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

## **Charter Annual Report** **Monday, November 10, 2008**

**Charter School:** Pennsylvania Virtual CS  
**Address:** 1 West Main St  
Suite 400  
Norristown, PA 19401  
**Phone:**  
**Contact Name:**

## CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

### Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2008 - 2009

**Name of School:** Pennsylvania Virtual CS

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** Original: February 12, 2001  
Renewal: July 1, 2006

**Length of Charter:** 5 Years **Opening Date:** September 1, 2001

**Grade Level:** K-11 **Hours of Operation:** 8:00 am - 5:00 pm

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 95% **Total Instructional Staff:** 157

**Student/ Teacher Ratio:** 40:1 Regular Education, 26:1 Special Education **Student Waiting List:** none

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** est. 90%

**Enrollment:** 3740 - All data as of October 1, 2007 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** Varies by School District

#### Student Profile

**American Indian/Alaskan Native:** 28  
**Asian/Pacific Islander:** 34  
**Black (Non-Hispanic):** 444  
**Hispanic:** 116  
**White (Non-Hispanic):** 2914  
**Multicultural:** 204

**Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:** 30%

**Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December:** 389

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
Instructional Days	0	0	182	182	182	182	182
Instructional Hours	0	0	900	900	990	990	900/990

## SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Organization Description

Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School is a pioneering choice in public education, empowering families through a rich, research-based curriculum, to meet the educational needs of students,

thereby creating life-long learners. After completion of their studies our goal is for students to master the basics in all core subjects. We build on basic skills and proficiencies to develop their analytical and communications skills as well as a solid base of knowledge. Additionally, since our course objectives are aligned to Pennsylvania content standards our goal is for our students to attain proficiency in prescribed state standards in each subject. In addition, students will develop the competencies and skills necessary for responsible citizenship as a result of their participation in and completion of the non academic goals and corresponding objectives.

The Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School (PAVCS), a public school in Pennsylvania, opened its doors on September 4, 2001. Our original charter was granted by the Norristown Area School District. The school's charter was renewed in May 2006 for another five years covering the period from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2011. Thus, this Annual Report covers the seventh year of operation for PAVCS.

In SY 07-08, its seventh year of operation, PAVCS provided personalized education for 3740 students (as of Oct 1) in Kindergarten through eleventh grades. These students emanate from diverse ethnic, racial, socio-economic backgrounds. This school year, PAVCS had students enrolled from 456 of the 501 school districts in the Commonwealth. The schools FTE for this year totalled 3302.86 for regular education and 357.95 for special education.

At the heart of our educational program is a four component educational partnership, called the "Diamond Model of Partnership". This partnership is a dynamic intertwined relationship between a parent (learning coach), a certified teacher, a family support coordinator and K12, Inc., the school's primary curriculum provider. The Learning Coach (parent or another adult) makes a commitment to ensure the child is logging onto the computer, entering daily attendance, participating in online direction instruction sessions, and completing assignments as given. The certified teacher develops a student's Personal Learning Plan, shares these instructional goals with the parent ensures the implementation of the goals and objectives of a students PLP, develops and directs synchronous and asynchronous instruction, authenticates learning and monitors and assess a student's academic performance and achievement. Every student is assigned a family support coordinator whose primary focus is to develop programs which foster social development, record and monitor attendance, assist the family with non-academic issues and implement programs to achieve the school's non academic goals as specified in the charter.

A key component of the educational partnership is the excellent curriculum developed by K12, Inc.. K12 serves as the primary curriculum provider but other curricula are used when the K12 curriculum does not meet the educational and instructional needs of a student. The K12 curriculum uses a mastery based and spiral approach to knowledge acquisition and learning. Students explore and learn the "big ideas." They encounter key concepts at greater depth throughout the curriculum. The design and delivery of curriculum, scope and sequence for each subject, and each lesson promote and ensure student mastery and retention of the concepts encountered and learned. Students and parents (or other caring adults) connect to the school, the lessons, assessments, their teachers and each other via the Internet. We use technology as a powerful tool that can support an effective education. Each student who enrolls in Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School receives a computer system from the school—including a computer, printer, ink and other necessary hardware—and an reimbursement for Internet connection. While technology and the internet are an integral component of our instructional model, our program is about more than computers. Students read great books and great stories; use phonics tiles; draw, paint, and create art projects; perform science experiments; and use manipulatives as well as workbooks to accomplish mastery in their academic subjects. All the components of the program—whether online or offline—are integrated into a comprehensive instructional package.

## **Core Purpose**

### **Mission**

The mission of the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School (PAVCS) is to provide Pennsylvania students with an excellent education, grounded in high academic standards, which will help them, achieve their full academic and social potential.

### **Vision**

PAVCS will serve as an example of how a school's parents, students and teachers can reach their goal of achieving an excellent education through the effective use of technology. In concept, design, and delivery, the school will be a national model of innovation and excellence.

## **Shared Values**

The core philosophy of the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School is that all young people can achieve academic excellence if they are provided rigorous instruction, high standards, informed guidance, and individual attention. Our school community values shared mission and vision, open communications, conversation, consistency, and keeping children first. PAVCS cherishes honesty and openness, group contributions and shared recognition.

Four guiding principles govern the core philosophy of the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School.

(1) At the heart of the core philosophy is the belief that all young people can achieve academic success, if they are provided rigorous instruction, high standards, informed guidance and individual attention. (2) Numerous studies have demonstrated that when parents become active and informed partners in their children's education, test scores rise, drop-out rates and apathy decline, and the active pursuit of learning becomes a compelling focus for each family. Therefore, the absolute necessity of parental engagement and partnership in the education of their children is another essential kernel of the core philosophy of PAVCS. (3) The PAVCS community believes the content and the quality and rigor of the curriculum matters and these directly effects students' academic performance and achievement. Consequently, PAVCS utilizes the K12, Inc. curriculum to ensure continuity and consistency in the curriculum content. (4) Technology can be leveraged to be a powerful tool to support an effective education. Although we use the computer as a learning tool, we believe that education is primarily a human endeavor that relies on caring individuals, involved parents and committed teachers. The ultimate purpose of PAVCS is to be a caring, collaborative and connected learning community where students will master the basics in all core subjects and develop the skills to become responsible, participatory and productive members of their communities.

## **Academic Standards**

The academic standards for the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School are consistent with and mirror the academic standards as contained section 4.12 of the Public School Code. The Senior Academic Administrator and Master Teacher of Curriculum and Instruction are responsible for reviewing each standard, the implementation of each standard and then measuring students' attainment of the standard at grades 3, 5, and 8 (we do not have 12<sup>th</sup> grade). Some of the ways we have accomplished the standards are Reader's Theater for high school and middle school students. Educational trips to see and then review plays and concerts. Student participated in the Stock Market Game. This year our school offered several career exploration opportunities for students at various grades.

## **Strengths and Challenges**

PAVCS' strengths are found in the diamond model of partnership, the continuity of instruction through the use of one primary curriculum and the personalized learning plan to drive differentiated instruction. These strengths help PAVCS achieve parity in education and level the

instructional field in ways that are unparalleled in the traditional face to face instructional environment.

Parental involvement and engagement is another major strength of our school. At PAVCS, parents are not an item on the school's agenda. In partnership with the Board of Trustees and school leadership, PAVCS parents help formulate, direct and carry out the schools priorities. Our model of instruction and educational partnership could not be implemented without our dedicated and committed parents. The school keeps parents informed through announcements and calendars on Blackboard, the school's learning management system, weekly, electronic news briefs and periodic town hall meetings. In addition to serving as academic coaches, our parents participate in school committees, school wide planning and serve on the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees commitment to keeping all stakeholders informed and providing stakeholders with on-going opportunities to have voice is another strength of the school. Every member of the school community and the public are able to attend and participate in Board meetings via the electronic conferencing tool Elluminate.

An additional strength of PAVCS is the school's comprehensive family and student support department. The programs and services of this department ensure the school's compliance with and implementation of Chapter 12 regulations. The Family and Student Support Services Department provides the following programs and services: supplemental programs for at-risk students and advanced learners; guidance and character education; student assistance programs; Title I; pupil health services; attendance and truancy; student records; and community and co-curricular learning initiatives.

A Dean of Family Support Services provides leadership and coordination for the department. She is assisted by a full time staff which includes: 3 Guidance Counselors; Family Support Coordinators; Director of Community Relations; School Psychologist; Title I Director; Director of Pupil Health, 2 School Nurses; Step Up Director; SOAR Director; 2 Registrars; Master Teacher of Co-Curricular Learning and the Director of Operations. The implementation of the Family and Student Support Department is one of the major factors responsible for an increase in the school's retention from 68% to 85% during the past two years. A detailed description of the Family Support Program is contained in the Student Support Services Strategic Plan, which can be found on the PDE eStrategic Planning website.

Improving student performance and achievement, the school's final noteworthy strength is its greatest accomplishment. Data from both internal and external assessments strongly documents PAVCS' ability to improve the academic achievement of its students. According to the data, the school is having tremendous success with closing the academic deficiencies of students. The data shows that the longer most students are enrolled in the school, their achievement gaps decrease and their performance on external assessment increases.

The school faces three major constant and persistent challenges. Significant student attrition each year makes any comparative year to year analysis of student data very difficult. Even when such a study is conducted it is almost impossible to identify any trends due to the volatility and variability of the composition of the student body from year to year.

The second challenge the school faces is trying to ensure testing environments for the PSSA which foster maximum student performance. The PSSA testing administration guidelines were created without any thoughts to the logistical challenges for cyber schools. Since cyber charter schools do not have "school buildings," they must require testing facilities from across the state. In the case of our school, this requires renting 38 facilities to administer the PSSA math and reading assessments and acquiring additional facilities for the writing and science assessments. Due to the distances our students must travel to take the assessments, we usually give the entire assessment over two days, rather than spreading the assessment over a week as most traditional school districts do. The consequences and impact of the less than optimal testing environment on

student performance may be significant. Our students are forced to take the PSSA in strange surroundings, in a shorter span of time with unfamiliar people and expected to perform at maximum levels. The data suggests the environment may be having some impact on cyber charter schools students performance. Further study of the effects of the environment and how to account for the environment when assessing cyber charter school students on PSSA is warranted.

The third challenge is providing continuity and consistency of instruction for students whose parents are abusing and misusing the system. These are parents who "school" hop from the district of residence to the cyber charter school and between cyber school to cyber school. An examination of the records of these students reveals a pattern of two or three schools within one year. Students in this category often possess significant academic deficiencies. It is almost impossible to address and eradicate the gaps, because the child is never in one school long enough for any real progress to be made.

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

### **Strategic Planning Process**

Peter Drucker states, "the primary tasks of strategic management are to understand the environment, define organizational goals, identify options, make decisions and evaluate actual performance." The strategic planning process consists of six identifiable stages: environmental scanning, evaluation of issues, forecasting, goal setting, implementation and monitoring. (Renfro and Morrison, 1984). During SY 2007 — 2008, stakeholders of the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School engaged in the process of devising a three-year strategic plan. What follows in this report are the results of this of this process.

The planning process began December 4, 2007. The CEO met with members of the SLT to outline the objectives, calendar, planning and budgeting model. Below are the seven questions which the strategic planning discussions were to address and answer:

1. What do you want PAVCS/program to be in three years?
2. Where is PAVCS/program now?
3. What is the delta between here and there?
4. What will it take to get from here to there?
5. What resources are required?
6. What are the priorities and timeline for implementation?
7. How will performance be assessed?

In order to incorporate the voices and perspectives of as many stakeholder groups as a possible, a school wide day of planning was held January 2, 2008. Each major program area of the school convened a committee comprised of staff, parents and teachers. The groups discussed and crafted responses to the seven strategic planning questions. Each group then submitted their preliminary program strategic plan.

The program strategic plans were reviewed in a two day face to face meeting of school leaders. Below are the five three year strategic foci which emerged from these discussions.

1. Demonstrate excellence in education in a K-12 comprehensive school providing online learning
2. Ensure student achievement, quality and success
3. Improve Community-School Engagement and Partnerships
4. Value People and Create a Supportive Work Environment
5. Improve Core Processes, and Develop and Managing Resources

Once the foci were established, the leaders were given the task to develop a goal/action sheet for each priority and assign the priority to its appropriate foci. The goal/actions were submitted and distributed to the group. The group met again in February to establish funding priorities for the next three years. These priorities will provide the basis for funding decisions for the next three years. From the funding priorities the actual budget for SY 08-09 was developed. The budget has been presented to teachers and staff, posted for public review, and approved by the PAVCS Board of Trustees.

While the strategic planning process was time consuming and tedious, the end result was well worth the effort. PAVCS has a tool for organizing our present on the basis of our projections of our desired future. Our community has a road map to lead us from where we are now to where we would like to be in three years. The outcome is that we now have an instrument which sets the parameters for reflective, purposeful and data driven strategic thinking. The ability to think and manage strategically during the next three years will allow PAVCS to weigh its possibilities and decide from a range of alternatives the choice between the institution, its resources and its ever changing environment.

**Strategic Planning Committee**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
Adrienne Scurry	Dean of Family Support	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Bonnie Schaefer	President, PAVCS BOT and PAVCS Parent	Board Member	President of the Board of Trustees
Catherine Greenstein	Director of Special Education	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Chris Gilligan	Middle School Principal	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Darla Posney	Senior Academic Administrator, PAVCS	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Diana Perney	High School Principal	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Eileen Cannistraci	Elementary School Principal	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Joanne Barnett	CEO	Administrator	President of the Board of Trustees
Joe Lyons	Executive Director of Communications	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
John McElvenny	Vice President, PAVCS BOT	Board Member	President of the Board of Trustees
Jose Parrilla	CFO	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Mark Graham	Secretary/Treasurer, PAVCS BOT	Board Member	President of the Board of Trustees
Michael Rublesky	Director of Technology	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Mike Kello	PAVCS Parent and Trustee	Parent	President of the Board of Trustees
Sheldon Thorpe	PAVCS Parent and Trustee	Parent	President of the Board of Trustees

Colleen Nelson	Executive Director of Student Development and Enrollment Services	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Melinda Morrison	PAVCS Trustee	Board Member	President of the Board of Trustees
Bridget Kozar	Assistant Principal, 5th/6th Grade	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Jennifer Eastman	Director of Title 1	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Jill Szafranski	Assistant Principal, Elementary School	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Richard Verga	Assistant Principal, 7th/8th Grade	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Joanne Novak	LEA Administrator	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Sue Delling	Assistant Principal, High School	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Kelli Houser	Master Teacher, Testing	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Christine Petrozza	Director of SOAR	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Julie Jaszcar	Special Education Supervisor	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Ginger Ragland	Director of Step-Up	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer
Maureen Weinberger	Middle School Lead Teacher	Middle School Teacher	Chief Executive Officer
Michelle Verga	Master Teacher - Co-curricular Learning	Administrator	Chief Executive Officer

**Goals, Strategies and Activities**

**Goal: Math**

*Description:* Add Goal Statement here..

**Strategy: PSSA Math Achievement**

*Description:* Analyze both aggregate and disaggregate results of students PSSA scores --- drill down to the individual student and individual teacher level. Provide professional development for teachers based on the results of the analysis. Have teachers turn in Study Island benchmark test analysis which will identify students' gaps and deficiencies. Teacher will conduct weekly review of students' weekly performance on Study Island to assess students progress in meeting the state performance standards.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Study Island	All students will take Study Island Benchmark Math assessment and then spend 30 minutes a day completing Study Island math lessons.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Darla Posney	Ongoing	\$0.00

## Statement of Quality Assurance

Charter school has met AYP.

## SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

### Rigorous Instructional Program

**Under the Pennsylvania Accountability System, all schools will need a rigorous instructional program to meet the academic targets. Describe the charter school's curriculum and instructional practices and how they are being used to meet academic standards and goals. For example:**

#### ***What curriculum does your charter school utilize?***

The Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School (PAVCS) utilizes the K<sup>12</sup>, Inc. curriculum for the K to 8 program. For the high school program, which for the 2007-2008 school year is 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> grade and 11th grade, PAVCS uses K12, Inc, Holt, and Power Glide International. When the K12, Inc curriculum does not meet the academic needs of a student or allow the school to provide FAPE, PAVCS uses an alternate curriculum. The curriculum is selected on the basis of the student's educational needs. All curricula whether primary or supplemental are reviewed to ensure they are aligned with state content standards.

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

See attached for examples of HS curriculum alignment.

K12, Inc., the school's curriculum supplier for PAVCS, has created a matrix that matches the curriculum to the Pennsylvania content standards. All state content standards are presented at or before the state mandated grade level. The matrix course overviews and side-by-side charts by grade and content areas of the identification of K12 curriculum course objectives with Pennsylvania content standards are available from PAVCS upon request. A detailed grade and subject analysis was provided as a part the PASCCR.

#### ***How is your school using the Pennsylvania content standards to form curriculum?***

The curriculum of the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School (PAVCS) meets and often exceeds the Pennsylvania state standards. K12, Inc. is the curriculum provider for PAVCS and experts in their field have provided guidance in curriculum development. Overseeing the development of all K12, Inc. curriculum is John Holdren, K12 Senior Vice President of Content and Curriculum. John Holdren was the former Vice President and Director of Research and Publications at the Core Knowledge Foundation, and a co-editor of the Core Knowledge Series (*What Your First [Second, etc.] Grader Needs to Know*). Bror Saxburg, an expert in cognitive studies and the Chief Learning Officer at K12, Inc., oversees the development of the curriculum and monitors the effectiveness of the curriculum in relationship to student performance on PSSA and local tests. Along with providing K12, Inc. created courses, K12, Inc. provides approved third party vendors for the high school program. These vendors are Class.com, Virtual Sage and Power Glide International. The high school curriculum providers provide an alignment document which teachers utilize when planning instruction.

The school employs many mechanisms for the purposes of self-assessment and evaluation to ensure that students are meeting and mastering state standards. The online and offline assessments are mastery-based for students in the K to 4 program. Twice a year, these elementary students receive narrative progress reports and standards based checklists. Students in grades 5 through 11 receive letter grades. The curriculum's cognitive approach is to build a foundation of knowledge and skills from which students can develop higher order thinking, reasoning and analytical skills. It is a "building blocks" approach.

Middle School teachers provide daily synchronous standards-based lessons via the web-based learning tool, Elluminate. Teachers create and present lessons through the "Adopt an Anchor" approach, thus ensuring that Reading and Math standards and assessment anchors are addressed often and across the curriculum. In addition, all students in grades 2 through 8 and 11 participate in standards-based math and reading practice using Study Island, a web-based PSSA practice program. Data regarding student growth in the various standards are used to target instruction to individual students.

PAVCS participates in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessments (PSSA). This assessment provides the school with objective data on individual student's strengths and weaknesses relative to the state content standards. This data, collected longitudinally, provides the school with the ability to identify and examine patterns of improvement or decline in students' achievement and performance levels on PSSA.

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

At PAVCS, a student's learning journey begins with a placement test. The placement test is derived from and intrinsically tied to the curriculum. Students take an initial placement test when they enroll in the school. The results of the placement test provide the basis for subject and grade level placement of the student. The nature and flexibility of the K12, Inc. curriculum and the Online School allows us to place students according to their academic needs and skill level. In our school, students do not progress to more challenging material until they have achieved a level of mastery of current material.

Detailed accountability and assessment systems are included as an integral component of the curriculum. Online and offline assessments are designed to evaluate student comprehension of each lesson and unit. Along with the online and offline assessments, real time classes in the virtual classroom also provide opportunities for accountability and assessment. Data from our regular testing program is available immediately to students, parents, teachers, and administrators. Results from external standardized testing are an integral aspect of the school's accountability procedures. Data from the assessments are collected and regularly analyzed and reported to parents, teachers, the school administration, and the Board of Trustees. The data from online and offline assessments as well as external assessments are used to develop a Personalized Learning Plan which defines the instructional and learning goals for each student. Only after demonstrating mastery of material does a student proceed with more advanced work. With this kind of accountability and built-in transparency, there are no surprises about student work as well as achievement, and we have "early warning signals" when a child is beginning to fall behind so our teachers can intervene proactively.

**Lesson Assessments**

In the Elementary and Middle School Program, math, science, art, music and history lessons are followed by a brief assessment. In language arts, there are assessments after every grammar, usage, mechanics and composition lesson. Guided reading has lesson assessments for every unit. Spelling and phonics offer assessments after every fifth lesson. These assessments show

whether the student has achieved the objectives for that lesson, or whether a review of some, or all, of the lesson is advised. In the High School Program, teachers provide synchronous (real time) instruction on a daily basis. In these classes, teachers build in activities to assess student learning during each class. Teachers also provide off line graded assignments to gauge learning.

### **Unit and Semester Assessments**

In many subjects, the student takes an assessment at the end of a unit. These assessments show whether or not the student has retained key learning objectives for the unit. There are similar semester assessments, with equivalent purposes, in the middle and at the end of a year's worth of content for many subjects. Teachers and parents use the results of the unit and semester assessments to guide review or additional practice.

### **Study Island**

Students in grades 2 through 8 and grade 11 participate in Study Island, a web-based, interactive, independent site where students practice their mathematics and reading skills and prepare for state testing (PSSA). The tool provides teachers with detailed and ongoing reports regarding individual and group levels of proficiency with regard to Math and Reading standards. Such data enables teachers and parents to target instruction according to identified needs of individual students or groups of students.

### **Portfolio Assessments/Work Samples**

Teachers develop, collect, and evaluate curriculum-based assessments in Math, Language Arts, History, and Science in order to determine to what degree students are mastering concepts and skills and attaining academic standards. In the elementary program, grade K-4 students provide work samples to the teacher. These work samples are developed from the curriculum. The work samples provide the teacher with an opportunity to see if the student has mastered and can apply the concepts which were taught in the lesson. By the time the child reaches fifth grade the number of portfolio assignments and the frequency which they are due increases. In fifth grade students receive letter grades and detailed teacher feedback on portfolio assignments. Portfolio assignments in fifth grade are designed to help students transition to middle school. Middle school and high school require graded portfolio assignments for every subject. The assignments are completed and submitted electronically to the teacher. The teacher reviews the assignment and provides the student with written and verbal feedback.

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

Our curriculum encompasses much more than computer lessons. Students read books; do hands-on work; perform science experiments; use manipulatives and workbooks to master mathematics; draw, paint, create art projects; and participate in hands-on music lessons. Inquiry, experience, discovery and higher order thinking are at the center of our curriculum. Additionally, educational outings supplement day-to-day instruction. Student portfolio work and Socratic conversations with teachers also promote in-depth and inquiry-based teaching and learning.

The Language Arts program helps students develop important reading and writing skills, while also inspiring a love of literature. Combining Phonics, Literature, Language Skills, and Spelling lessons, the Language Arts/English program emphasizes classic works, teaches writing as a process, and prepares students for standardized tests in the areas of language skills and reading comprehension. Younger children learn the basics of phonics and grammar and prepare for reading through systematic, multi-sensory activities; while older students develop literary analysis and comprehension skills by reading novels and nonfiction works. In addition, teachers design and present inquiry-based synchronous lessons based on Lexile-ranged novels. These lessons

are presented to small groups of learners throughout the school year and focus on the teacher as facilitator to small student-group, inquiry-based discussions of texts. Teachers also design and present synchronous lessons targeting instruction to composition and the writing process.

The math program balances mastery of fundamental skills with critical thinking and problem solving. The elementary math program emphasizes an active, multi-sensory approach to ensure that children understand the concrete realities that underline mathematical concepts. Regular practice and review ensures mastery of basic skills. Online games and animations motivate children and help illustrate concepts, while challenge problems help develop critical-thinking skills. The middle school math program transitions students from elementary to high school by honing in on a complete understanding and mastery of algebraic functions and concepts. Teachers design instruction around the data provided from assessments and standardized test scores. This data informs instruction while teachers design individual learning objectives for students in their class. The high school math program builds on the middle school program and provides the students with the necessary tools to meet their post secondary goals.

The science program balances hands-on experience with systematic study of scientific terms and concepts. At all levels students perform many experiments to help them understand scientific principles and receive guided instruction in important scientific concepts. Exploration of the life, earth and physical sciences in each grade nurtures curiosity, analytical skills and an appreciation of how the world is shaped by ongoing scientific and technological advances.

The history program, with integrated topics in Geography and Civics, opens students' minds and imaginations to far off lands, distant times, and diverse people. The program emphasizes the story in history—a story that includes not only great men and women, but also everyday people. In kindergarten, children go on a world tour of the seven continents and are provided an overview of American history through a series of biographies of famous Americans. The history program in grades 1-4 tells the story of civilization from the Stone Age to the Space Age. In 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> grades students explore major themes and an in-depth study of American History from the arrival of the first people in America through the Civil War on toward recent times. Eighth graders began a journey through World History with a focus on the development of civilization across a twelve-thousand year span, from the Ice Age to the Middle Ages. The High School history program continues the journey began in middle school. It goes deeper into the story of civilization and provides opportunities to study American government and enter into a debate of current issues.

Following the time lines in the history lessons, art lessons introduce students to great works of art from different cultures and eras, while engaging them in creative activity, such as painting, drawing and molding with clay, through self-directed projects. The music program is set up as a successive series of programs. The lessons help students learn about and appreciate music, from singing and dancing, to learning about rhythm and playing the recorder.

PAVCS embraces promising new approaches which emphasize the use of media in innovative ways. In many places, our approach is a combination of tried-and-true lessons fused to a technologically innovative delivery system, fully aligned to the state's expectations.

***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?***

While PAVCS allows students to move at a pace appropriate for their academic need, teachers carefully monitor progress daily and develop academic plans for students who are behind in the core curriculum. The identification of At-Risk students begins in the placement process and the development of the student's initial PLP by the placement teacher. Once the student is identified as at-risk the teacher is notified. At Risk students are identified through indicators of daily

performance, academic achievement on state mandated and standardized tests, and teacher observation. Academic learning plans are developed to assist the student to attain academic excellence. Teachers employ alternative strategies to supplement instruction when needed. A math specialist offers additional support for all math students. In addition, as necessary, students are referred to the instructional support team to begin Response to Intervention. Teachers began to utilize the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills benchmarks for students in kindergarten and first grade to further monitor literacy skills. All students in grades kindergarten to 4th grade are assessed quarterly on the necessary skills to promote success at the elementary level. The High School program provides a unique blended model of synchronous and asynchronous instruction. For struggling students daily synchronous instruction provides the structure necessary to promote academic success. These classes enable the teachers to provide differentiated instruction. Accelerated students have the option to work asynchronously. This gives these students the opportunity to delve deeper into their interest areas. However, accelerated students are not limited to the asynchronous program, they can attend the synchronous classes. The High School program also offers Learning Support classes taught by Special Education teachers for students with IEPs. The Elementary program offers an inclusion model for students with IEPs. Both regular education and special education teachers work with the students twice a month through conferencing. The Elementary and Middle School programs offer the SOAR program for accelerated learners which provides this students with enrichment activities and events.

PAVCS offers Title I services to lower-performing students. The Title I program is a federally funded supplemental education program that provides financial assistance to PAVCS to improve educational opportunities for our educationally deprived students. Title I programs are designed to help PAVCS' lowest performing students meet the state content and performance standards in reading, language arts and mathematics.

PAVCS offers Step-Up, a school-funded program to support the needs of lower-performing students. The purpose of the Step-Up program is to identify students who are academically disadvantaged and provide intensive academic intervention. Additionally, Step-Up inspires students through providing hands-on learning experiences and increased opportunities for student success. We believe that the involvement of parents and guardians in the daily educational process increases success in all areas of assessment, such as the Online School and PA standardized testing.

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

A unique partnership between the parent (or responsible adult), teacher and student, in conjunction with a comprehensive curriculum and detailed instructional system ensures attainment of standards. Internet-based curricula and various communication tools help teachers, parents and other responsible adults provide a rigorous, individualized educational program. Students also learn through time-tested tools of education: textbooks, workbooks, projects and other activities. The unique ability to meet the individual needs of students is a positive aspect of the school. Teachers with the support of parents or other caring adults work closely in the delivery of instruction. Additionally, lessons are developed with each learning style in mind. All lessons have activities that meet the needs of visual, auditory and tactile learners. Multi-sensory and multi-media activities enrich the program and motivate student learning. A variety of materials accompany the lessons; such as a phonics tile system; math workbook and manipulatives; maps; science supplies; art prints; music cds; and numerous classic reading books and stories. Students are actively engaged throughout each lesson and unit of study. The virtual classrooms also promote this unique partnership between the responsible adult, teacher, and student. Teachers conduct lessons in their virtual classrooms. These lessons are created by using the PA state standards. In the Elementary Program, some virtual lessons are conducted one on one with teacher and student or through monthly synchronous instruction with a group of peers and one teacher. Teachers use various teaching strategies to engage the students in the lesson, and tap

into critical thinking skills through effective questioning. In the High School program, the subject certified teachers provide daily synchronous instruction in the virtual classroom. During class the teachers utilize best practices to actively engage students. These practices include, but are not limited to group discussions, group projects, discussion boards, Socratic discussions, and journaling (English and math).

### **Teacher Induction**

As prescribed in "Induction Plan Guidelines" public charter schools are required to submit an Induction Plan Summary to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Division of Professional Education and Planning, 333 Market Street, 8th Floor, Harrisburg, PA. 17126 for review and approval.

The Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School has developed a model Induction Plan that provides newly-hired professionals with the information and skills needed for teaching and student-success in the virtual classroom. The Induction Plan promotes the mission of the school, while at the same time provides practical experiences related to virtual classroom management, student support services, the K12, Inc curriculum, state mandated testing, assessment, and managing a new role in the education of children enrolled in a virtual school setting. The year-long plan shares the history of the school, the individuals that comprise the student population, and the philosophy upon which the school's curriculum was founded. Additionally, the induction program emphasizes what makes Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School and its students unique. Upon completion of the induction program, new teachers receive a certificate of completion that enables them to pursue permanent professional certification. This induction program strengthens the instructional practices of the teachers and ensures that all teachers provide students with an environment conducive to sound learning practices.

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

- Professional Development Approval Letter
- Professional Development Plan
- Induction Plan
- PAVCS English Alignment with PA Standards
- PAVCS Math Alignment with PA Standards
- PAVCS Science Alignment with PA Standards
- PAVCS Social Studies Alignment with PA Standards

### **English Language Learners**

In accordance with the Board of Trustee's philosophy to provide a quality educational program for all students, the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School provides an appropriately planned quality instructional program for all identified students whose dominant language is not English. The purpose of this program is to increase the English language proficiency of eligible students. At present Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School has no ELL/ESL students but are prepared to facilitate and provide a quality program to any students enrolled and found to be in need of such programming.

The Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School will utilize the guidelines set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The plan includes the following action items which will be implemented by the ELL/ESL coordinator.

1. Develop a board approved policy concerning the educational program for the ELL/ESL students

2. Continue to monitor the Home Language Survey which has been disseminated to all students and continues to be disseminated upon enrollment to new students
3. Continue professional development in accordance with the professional development plan to all teachers and staff
4. Select a survey assessment instrument and train appropriate staff in assessment procedures to determine English language proficiency levels
5. Provide ongoing training for principals, enrollment team members, and placement team members on the proper procedures for enrolling ELL/ESL students
6. Complete the PDE 3044 program narrative in conjunction with the Board approved policy.

The attachment outlines in detail the components of the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School ELL/ESL plan and the necessary action steps that Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School will take to create an exemplary program.

### **English Language Learners - Attachment**

- PAVCS ESL/ELL Program

### **Graduation Requirements**

*Describe (where applicable) how the charter school's curriculum and instruction practices are being offered to prepare students to meet high school graduation requirements, as set forth by the school Board of Trustees. Reference Chapter 4 under Section 4.24 of 22 Pa.Code (relating to high school graduation requirements). See web page <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/stateboard>., select Regulations to see Chapter 4 under Section 4.24 of 22 Pa. Code.*

Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School launched its high school program with the implementation of ninth grade in September of 2005. Although the original charter application indicated the high school program would begin in September, 2004 with the addition of grades 9-12, after careful consideration of recommendations from K12 Inc, the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School Board of Trustees voted to delay the start of the high school program for one year in order to fully evaluate the best way to implement the program. The Board of Trustees determined that high school program should begin with ninth grade and add an additional grade each subsequent year. Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School offered grades K-11 in school year 2007-2008. Twelfth grade will be added in school year 2008-2009. Below are the high school promotion and graduation requirements adopted by the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School Board of Trustees.

Each high school student is required to complete a minimum of 990 instructional hours. Additionally, students must make satisfactory progress in each course by obtaining a passing grade.

**Grade 10:** In order for a student to be classified as a tenth grade student, a student must have earned at least four (4) credits including one (1) credit in English and one (1) credit in Math

**Grade 11:** In order for a student to be classified as an eleventh grade student, a student must have earned at least ten (10) credits including two (2) credits in English and two (2) credits in Math

**Grade 12:** In order for a student to be classified as a twelfth grade student, a student must earn at least fourteen (14) standard units of credit which include three (3) credits in English and three (3) credits in Math and must be able to complete the requirements listed below for graduation the following June.

### **Minimum High School Graduation Requirements:**

<b>Course of Study</b>	<b>Number of Units/Credits</b>
English	4
Math	4
History/Social Studies	3
Science	3
Foreign Language	2 of the same language
Humanities/Fine Arts	1
Physical Education	1
Health	.5
School Approved Electives	2
Internship	.5
<b>TOTAL UNITS/CREDITS</b>	<b>21</b>
A Graduation Project is Required of ALL Students	

### Special Education

During the 2007-2008 school year, Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School (PAVCS) continued to use the K12 curriculum for Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in a mastery-based program, and a combination of Holt, K12, and other curricula with a traditional grading system for 9<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade. In 2008-2009, we will have our first graduating class. Inherent in the K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade mastery-based program is self-paced instruction based on the student's instructional levels in math and language arts as determined by a placement test taken upon enrolling in the school. Daily lessons and frequent assessments of material recently taught are built into the curriculum. Mastery is the goal. Students with special needs may have the curriculum modified or adapted as necessary, but students work in an inclusion model and students in special education receive services from both a regular education teacher and a special education teacher. The curriculum meets or exceeds Pennsylvania standards and is aligned with PA standards. PAVCS meets the needs of individual students with a continuum of services, adaptations and modifications of the regular education curriculum, and when appropriate, supplemental and/or alternative curriculum. PAVCS has utilized SRA Corrective Reading, Susan Barton Reading Remediation, Compass Learning, Study Island, Edmark, Touch Math, and other alternative and supplemental curriculum as needed. The continuum of services includes Itinerant Support, Learning Support Classes, and Life Skills Support Classes. In addition, PAVCS special education and regular education teachers provide live (synchronous) classes, virtual tutoring, and virtual office hours.

Teachers are actively involved in student achievement, developing individual learning plans and adapting and modifying the curriculum when necessary. Unidentified students who appear to be at risk for any reason are referred to the Response to Intervention program (RTI). PAVCS has implemented RTI for the past two years and is strengthening its support for students in regular education to prevent unnecessary identification of students for special education programming. Students who do not respond to strategies provided by the team are referred for evaluation. See attached Policies and Procedures for Child Find and RTI. Each August, regular education teachers receive intensive training and professional development that includes Child Find responsibilities, Instructional Support, and Special Education Procedures. PAVCS is building upon and improving our Response to Intervention Program. Layers of support are available prior to referral, including RTI strategies, the Step Up Program for at-risk learners, Title I services, 504

Plans, and individualized Personal Learning Plans developed by certified teachers for each student.

The following specially designed instruction list represents some of the strategies that may be incorporated into the IEP of a student with special needs:

Advance organizers

Self-paced instruction

Oral responses

Behavior charts

Behavior modification plan

Picture schedule

Books on tape

Chunking information

Communication board

Edible incentives

Extended time

Flash cards

Frequent breaks

Graphic organizers

Kinesthetic techniques

Modeling of desired behaviors

Multi-sensory approach

Hand-over-hand instruction

Pocket card with personal information

Positive feedback

Posted schedule

Re-state instructions

Repetition of instructions

Read aloud to student

Reduce the assignment requirements

Schedule cards

Sensory Integration Techniques

Modified spelling lists

Sign language communication

Substitution stories

Social stories

Supplemental resources

Support with note-taking

Tangible rewards

Tape recorder

Test modifications

Use of a timer

Use of an outline

Use of a calculator

Use of dictation

Use of dictionary

Use of spellchecker

Use of familiar names across curriculum

Use of highlighter

Use of manipulatives

Use of number line

Use of mnemonic strategies

Use of keyboard/computer for writing

Visual aids

Visual cue cards

Visual schedule

Written instructions

Oral instructions

Review and repetition

Hands-on assignments

Re-word lesson assessments

Rate and fluency charts

Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School provides its special education students with many unique ways to progress that are simply not available in a typical brick and mortar setting. In a sense, every Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School child's education is an individualized education plan. The unique parent-student-teacher partnership and technology allow this to happen. Technology replaces outdated methods for delivering individualized instruction while freeing up the teachers to provide personalized support for students who need one on one attention or additional time and support. Each student receives the individualized support of the responsible adult (usually a parent), as well.

Inherent in the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School program are a multitude of adaptations and modifications. A student who needs support in reading can receive extra support and extra time without missing any of his other classes. There are a variety of ways the student accesses extra support: his or her academic coach, teacher conferences, teacher office hours, interactive software, and assistive technology are just a few.

Multi-modal instruction becomes the norm in a Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School classroom. When students research subjects, they are not limited to the school library, but can use field trip experiences, museum visits, Internet sites, and a multitude of other resources. With advance planning, students can get credit for a variety of real-world enrichment and educational experiences that were not necessarily designed into the curriculum.

Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School's program works for students with medical disabilities that require frequent hospital stays or rehabilitation at home. With a laptop computer (standard issue for high school students, and available to younger students who demonstrate need), these children can take their school to the hospital. Although Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School's program is self-paced, students must meet the required total of 990 hours for secondary students and 900 for elementary students. If a student missed a week of school due to illness, he or she could easily make it up on weekends or an hour at a time by adding on to the length of the school day. Some students require, instead, a reduction in expectations due to physical or psychological factors that interfere with the amount of time they can function academically. With an IEP, it is a simple matter to adjust the workload to modify or accommodate in these situations.

Students with ADHD benefit in a number of ways from Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School's unique design. First, these students are removed from environments that are frequently over-stimulating and fraught with perils for the impulsive natures exhibited by many students with ADHD. This reduces the number of times students are reprimanded or disciplined for behaviors that are often beyond their control. The benefits for these students' self esteem are clear. Additionally, while their new classrooms usually have greatly reduced stimuli in the environment, they enjoy the exciting and attention-grabbing experiences in the interactive classrooms, and the individualized attention of a parent or other responsible adult to keep them on track and focused.

Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School's special education teachers work closely with families to monitor the behaviors and progress of students. Special education and regular education teachers visit homes, and stay in touch constantly through email, Elluminate teaching sessions and office hours, and telephone calls. They provide support with behavioral issues, academic issues, compliance issues, and curricular issues. They confer with each other and suggest curriculum laddering techniques and accommodations for special needs. They create specially designed instruction, and recommend and order assistive technology and stimulating educational software to supplement the curriculum. Quarterly reports are prepared by the special education teachers indicating progress toward annual goals and objectives. If progress is unsatisfactory, an IEP meeting is held and other interventions are attempted.

PAVCS provides related services on an as-needed basis through contractors based all over the state (see chart of providers). The school has a Related Services Coordinator who contracts and oversees the large base of providers, making referrals as the need arises. Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Speech and Language Therapy are some of the services provided regularly. At the current time, many of these providers are individual contractors for private providers, but the school has built relationships with many Intermediate Units and some School Districts across Pennsylvania.

In addition to all of the above, the school administration provides frequent professional development to update special education teachers on changes in the law and to review policies and procedures. The school administration has placed an emphasis on Progress Monitoring and trained all newly hired teachers in Progress Monitoring in August 2005. The goal of the administration is to maintain a team of highly professional, experienced special educators of the highest caliber. All of our Special Education Teachers are PA certified in Special Education and Highly Qualified in the subject area they teach.

**Special Education - Attachments**

- Special Educations Policies
- 2007-2008 Penn Data Report

**Special Education Program Profile - Chart I**

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Denise Johnson	1.00	Itin. Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	31	-
Diane Eversmeyer	1.00	Itin. Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	29	-
JoAnn Pistorius	1.00	Itin. Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	31	-
John Zenefski	1.00	Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	19	High School
Johnna Kinney	1.0	Learning	PAVCS	20	-

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		Support/Other			
Karla Mulrine	1.0	Itin. Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	33	-
Karyn Bruno	1.00	Speech & Language Support	PAVCS	63	-
Kathy Puentes	1.0	Itin. Learning support/Other	PAVCS	30	-
Katie Daily	0.5	Life Skills	PAVCS	13	Started in Feb 2008. High School
Meg Dorbolo	1.00	Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	20	-
Mitz Zook	1.00	Itin. Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	28	-
Nina Cimino	0.5	Itin. Learning support/Other	PAVCS	31	Started in Nov. 2007
Shannon Webb	1.0	Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	20	High School
Stacy DeStefano	0.3	Itin. Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	25	Part-time, left in March
Stacy McGowan	1.00	Life Skills	PAVCS	12	-
Tracey Vioral	1.00	Itin. Learning Support/Other	PAVCS	33	-

**Special Education Program Profile - Chart II**

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Central PA Autistic Spectrum Disorder Academy	1	Autistic Support	1374 Shawville Hwy, Ste#2, Woodland, PA 16001	1	Student attended in April and is attending ESY
Carbon Lehigh IU #21	1	Emotional Support	Palmerton Area MS, 3529 Fireline Rd, Palmerton, PA 18071	1	Withdrew in March 2008

**Special Education Program Profile - Chart III**

Title	Location	FTE
Director of Special Education	PAVCS - Norristown	1.00
LEA Administrator	PAVCS - Offsite	1.00
Supervisor	PAVCS - Offsite	0.5
Supervisor	PAVCS - Offsite	0.5
School Psychologist	PAVCS - Offsite	1.00
Transitions Coordinator	PAVCS - Offsite	0.5
Related Services Coordinator	PAVCS - Norristown	1.00
Case Manager	PAVCS - Norristown	1.00

Case Manager	PAVCS - Norristown	1.00
Project Manager	PAVCS - Norristown	1.00

**Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV**

<b>IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual</b>	<b>Title/Service</b>	<b>Amount of Time Per Week</b>
Achieve Rehab Services	SLP	0.57
Achieve Rehab Services	Social Skills	1.14
Allegheny IU #3	Hearing	1.14
Allegheny IU #3	Social Skills	1.14
Amy Germick	Music	0.57
AOT, Inc.	OT	3.13
Appalachia IU #8	Hearing	1.71
Bedford Memorial Hospital	SLP	1.14
Blast IU #17	PT	0.28
Blast IU #17	Social Skills	1.14
Bucks County IU #22	SLP	1.71
CAMCO Physical & Occupational Therapy, LLC	OT	1.42
CAMCO Physical & Occupational Therapy, LLC	PT	0.15
Capital Area IU #15	SLP	2.28
Capital Area IU #15	Social Skills	0.85
Carbon-Lehigh IU #21	OT	0.57
Carbon-Lehigh IU #21	Vision	1.14
Carol Anderson	SLP	1.14
Carol Walck & Associates, Ltd.	SLP	36.4
Carol Walck & Associates, Ltd.	Social Skills	1.14
Center for Pediatric Therapy	OT	3.13
Center for Pediatric Therapy	PT	1.71
Center for Pediatric Therapy	SLP	1.71
Center for Pediatric Therapy	Social Skills	1.14
Charles Cole Memorial Hospital	OT	0.15
Chester County IU #24	O&M	1.71
Chester County IU #24	Vision	0.85
Children's Institute Of Pittsburgh	SLP	3.41
Children's Therapy Ctr of The Washington Hosp.	OT	0.57
Clearfield Community Nurses	OT	2.28
Clearfield Community Nurses	SLP	1.71
Crossroads Speech & Hearing	SLP	3.28
Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of Lancaster	Interpreter	7.68

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Deborah O. Kachmar	OT	0.57
Easter Seals of Eastern PA, Berks Division	PT	0.57
Easter Seals of Southeastern PA	AT	0.57
Easter Seals of Southeastern PA	OT	12.96
Easter Seals of Southeastern PA	PT	0.26
Easter Seals of Southeastern PA	SLP	12.51
Easter Seals Society of Western PA	OT	1.14
Easter Seals Society of Western PA	SLP	7.39
Ellingsen & Associates, Inc.	SLP	56.03
Ellingsen & Associates, Inc.	Social Skills	1.14
Emily S. van Eeden , OTR/L	OT	2.28
Empire Speech Therapy Services, P.C.	SLP	6.17
Expressive Therapy Concepts	Music	1.14
Grace Dawgert	SLP	1.71
Healthsouth Rehab - Altoona	OT	1.14
Healthsouth Rehab - Altoona	SLP	1.14
Invo Health Care Associates	SLP	1.71
Kids Work	OT	0.28
Kids Work	SLP	2.28
Lancaster Lebanon IU #13	OT	1.29
Lancaster Lebanon IU #13	SLP	1.14
Lancaster Lebanon IU #13	Teacher of the Deaf	1.14
Lifesteps, Inc.	SLP	2.28
Margaret Orth	OT	2.28
Medley & Mesaric Therapy Associates	SLP	3.41
Memorial Hospital Pediatric Clinic	SLP	1.71
Michelina McAnulty	SLP	1.71
Midwestern IU #4	Hearing	1.71
Montgomery County IU #23	Hearing	0.15
Neurological Therapy Specialists	OT	2.42
Neurological Therapy Specialists	PT	0.57
Neurological Therapy Specialists	SLP	6.26
Northwestern Human Services of PA, Inc.	Social Skills	7.11
Oxford Consulting Services, Inc.	SLP	39.72
Oxford Consulting Services, Inc.	OT	25.01
Oxford Consulting Service, Inc.	Hearing	1.71
Oxford Consulting Service, Inc.	PT	1.15
Pediatric Therapy Assoc. of the Lehigh Valley, PC	OT	12.38

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Pediatric Therapy Assoc. of the Lehigh Valley, PC	Phys Ed.	1.14
Pediatric Therapy Assoc. of the Lehigh Valley, PC	PT	3.41
Pediatric Therapy Assoc. of the Lehigh Valley, PC	SLP	3.98
Pediatric Therapy Assoc., York	OT	3.98
Pediatric Therapy Assoc., York	SLP	4.27
Pediatric Therapy Assoc., York	Social Skills	1.71
Physical Therapy, etc.	OT	0.28
Pocono Speech Center	SLP	2.28
R Plus, LLC	Social Skills	1.14
Rehabilitation Specialists	SLP	2.84
Riegler Shievold & Associates	Social Skills	1.14
Sandra Tommarello	SLP	6.17
Schreiber Pediatric Rehab	PT	3.70
Schreiber Pediatric Rehab	PT	1.35
Schreiber Pediatric Rehab	SLP	5.12
Stepping Stone Speech Language and Learning	AT	0.57
Stepping Stone Speech Language and Learning	SLP	3.73
Strawberry Fields	OT	1.99
Strawberry Fields	SLP	1.71
Suzanne Elbin	SLP	.057
The Davis Center	Bio Acoustic	5.69
The Davis Center	Hearing	5.69
Therapeutic Specialist, Inc.	OT	1.42
TheraPlay, Inc.	SLP	2.84
Therapy Solutions	SLP	0.57
Therapy Source	OT	9.85
Therapy Source	SLP	50.33
Therapy Works for Kids, LLC	OT	0.85
Vision Therapy Associates of York	Vision	3.41
Wesley Spectrum Family & Child Development Center	Social Skills	6.26
Contracted Providers - AT	Evaluations/Reviews	0.23
Contracted Providers - Audiology/Hearing	Evaluations/Reviews	0.30
Contracted Providers - OT	Evaluations/Reviews	3.68
Contracted Providers - Psychology/Review of records	Evaluations/Reviews	10.05
Contracted Providers - PT	Evaluations/Reviews	0.23
Contracted Providers - Speech &	Evaluations/Reviews	5.03

language		
Contracted Providers - Vision	Evaluations/Reviews	0.08

**SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Student Assessment - Primary**

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA Reading and Math/Standardized test/Summative	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
DIBELS/benchmark testing/Formative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Study Island Reading and Math/Formative	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Curriculum-based Assessments Reading and Math/Formative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
PSSA Writing/Summative	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
PSSA Science field test/Summative	No	No	No	No	Yes	No

**Student Assessment - Secondary**

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA Reading/Summative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
PSSA Math/Summative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Curriculum-Based Assessments Math/Formative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Curriculum-Based Assessments Reading/Formative	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Study Island Math/Formative	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Study Island Reading/Formative	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

**Student Assessment**

**a.) Using the most recent PSSA/PASA data, any locally developed tests and other data that reflects improved academic performance, describe how the evidence indicates significant improvement or continued strong student performance. Include in the discussion:**

- **How these results influence development of new or revised annual measurable goals and targets.**
- **If locally developed tests are used, discuss how they are used and what impact they have on the curriculum, student improvement and decision making.**

- **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.**

In order to monitor continuous progress and growth, Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School utilizes many forms of assessment to assure that student achievement and attainment are being met. These multifaceted assessments are used to develop annual achievement goals. These assessments impact the instruction and assist in the development of the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) utilized to guide and monitor instruction for each student enrolled at PAVCS. Teachers and administrators analyze data to develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP), which guides the instructional program for the school year. The results from all assessments provide benchmark information for measurement of the annual measurable goals and targets.

#### The Annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

PAVCS, as required by law, participates in the state testing system, which uses standards-based, criterion-referenced assessments to measure a student's attainment of the Pennsylvania academic standards while also determining the degree to which the school programs enable students to attain proficiency of the standards. PAVCS students participate in the PSSA Writing, Reading, Math and Science and other assessments as mandated by state law and outlined in the PSSA Assessment Calendar provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Individual student scores are used to assist teachers in identifying students who may need additional educational opportunities, and school scores provide information for curriculum and instruction improvement discussions and planning. PAVCS utilizes disaggregated scores to modify and target instruction to specific demographic groups participating in the academic program.

#### Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)

The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills are a set of standardized, individually administered measures of early literacy development. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills. Research indicates that the development of pre-reading and early reading skills is critical in the early grade and increases the likelihood of academic achievement in later years. Currently, students in grades K-5 are regularly screened with the DIBELS assessment.

#### Placement Assessments

Initial placement assessments in reading and math are required to determine the child's current level of competence so he/she can begin the curriculum at the

appropriate place. A team of teachers trained in placement procedures evaluate the scores on the placement exam. To determine appropriate academic placement in math and language arts, an initial screening test developed by PAVCS is used for grades K-2 and benchmark scores utilizing the Study Island assessment program is used in grades 3-8. Also included in this process is an extensive placement interview with reference to previous school work, previous report cards and any other additional records available from the student. This process is designed to ascertain the student's instructional level for math and language arts. If a student scores two or more grade levels below their age-appropriate grade in math or language arts, the student is marked as "at-risk". This allows the teacher assigned to the student to immediately address the weaknesses and develop a remediation plan which may include referral to one of the school's programs for "at-risk" students: Step-Up or Title One. Students found to be at risk are also immediately referred to the school's comprehensive Response to Intervention program.

### Lesson Assessments

In the areas of math, science, art, music and history, nearly every lesson is followed by a brief assessment. In language arts, assessments follow every Grammar, Usage and Mechanics (GUM) and composition lesson. Guided readings have lesson assessments after every unit while spelling and phonics offer assessments after every fifth lesson. These assessments show whether the student has achieved the objectives for that lesson or whether review is necessary. These formative assessments provide immediate feedback to the parents, teachers and students allowing the ability to address the academically advanced as well as the academically challenged student.

### Unit and Semester Assessments

In many subjects, the student is presented with an assessment at the end of a unit. These assessments show whether or not the student has retained key learning objectives from the unit. There are similar semester assessments, with equivalent purposes, at first semester's end and at the end of the year. Teachers, students, and learning partners use the results of the semester and unit assessments to guide review and additional practice.

### Portfolio Assignments

In the core content areas (Math, Language Arts, Science and History) students submit work assignments to their assigned PAVCS teacher throughout the school year. In all grades, PAVCS teachers evaluate the quality of work submitted and provide feedback for improvement to the student. In fifth through tenth grade, teachers assign letter grades based on a point scale developed for each submitted assignment. The assignments are designed to allow teachers to determine academic growth, mastery of concepts and skills, and achievement of

state academic standards. The assignments also provide opportunities for further teacher-student interaction, discussion and instruction. Students are permitted opportunities to improve the work to demonstrate mastery and resubmit for further evaluation.

Study Island Benchmark Testing

Students participate in four intermittent Study Island benchmark tests in order to provide teachers with a snapshot of a student’s progress in relation to the Pennsylvania Assessment Anchors at a given point in time, thus giving an accurate predictor of PSSA scores if taken today. Teachers use the diagnostic information provided by Study Island reporting features to identify standards in which students are not meeting proficiency standards and to direct the instruction to the areas of need.

Surveys of Students, Parents and Teachers

As an additional level of accountability, students, parents and teachers are asked to provide feedback on the school's program, its operation, co-curricular activities, policies and general feedback about their educational experience. PAVCS continually strives to improve and to ensure student achievement and attainment so comments from our families and staff are valued and respected. It is through this partnership and open communication that PAVCS improves its programming.

Analysis of 2007 PSSA Results

In 2007, PAVCS’ Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) was determined by the performance of our third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade students who took the PSSA. In order to meet AYP thresholds, 45% of our 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders had to score proficient or advanced in math, and 54% had to score proficient or advanced in reading. As the charts below indicate, as a group, PAVCS’ 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> graders who took the PSSA met the required thresholds. This data was obtained from the Pennsylvania School Report. The report indicates that percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

**2007 PSSA Math**

Grade	% Below Basic	% Basic	% Proficient	% Advanced	% at or above Proficient	State % at or above Proficient
3	11% (43)	19% (74)	44% (168)	25% (95)	69%  (263/380)	78%

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4	17% (63)	12% (45)	31% (113)	40% (148)	71% (261/369)	78%
5	20% (66)	22% (72)	32% (105)	26% (84)	58% (189/327)	71%
6	22% (66)	20% (61)	30% (91)	27% (82)	58% (173/300)	70%
7	25% (78)	20% (63)	22% (67)	33% (101)	54% (168/309)	67%
8	32% (85)	21% (56)	23% (60)	24% (63)	47% (123/264)	68%

**2007 PSSA Reading**

Grade	% Below Basic	% Basic	% Proficient	% Advanced	% at or above Proficient	State % at or above Proficient
3	15% (57)	11% (42)	49% (187)	25% (94)	74% (281/380)	73%
4	16% (60)	15% (56)	38% (141)	31% (113)	69% (254/370)	70%
5	24% (78)	18% (59)	41% (133)	17% (57)	58% (190/327)	60%
6	17% (52)	18% (55)	33% (98)	32% (95)	64% (193/300)	63%
7	15% (48)	20% (62)	30% (92)	35% (108)	65% (200/310)	67%
8	13% (35)	14% (37)	26% (69)	47% (123)	73% (123/264)	75%

**This was the first year that 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> grade scores were used to determine AYP. 370 fourth graders took the PSSA and met the performance thresholds. 254 of these fourth graders (69%) scored at the proficient or above level in reading and 261 of these fourth graders (71%) performed at the proficient or advanced levels in mathematics. Likewise, PAVCS sixth and seventh graders also met the thresholds for AYP. 300 sixth graders and 310 seventh graders participated in the PSSA. In 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 193 students (64%) met the reading performance levels while 173 of these students (58%) met the threshold in mathematics. In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 200 students**

**(65%) scored at or above proficient in reading, and 168 students (54%) performed at the proficient or advanced levels in mathematics.**

**As a school, PAVCS' overall student performance on the PSSA improved in both math and reading. NCLB requires students in all subgroups to meet the 45% performance threshold in math and the 54% performance threshold in reading. Two of PAVCS' subgroups did not meet the required threshold levels (African-American students and students with IEP's.) However, using Safe Harbor and Confidence Interval measurements as well as the Pennsylvania Performance Index, those groups did meet AYP for 2007. Those two groups, although not meeting the AYP thresholds, have been making solid gains each year. For the students in the African-American subgroup, the number of students performing below proficient in math was decreased by over 8% and the number of students performing below proficient in reading decreased by 4%. For those students in the IEP subgroup, the number of students performing below proficient in math decreased by over 7% and the decrease was over 6% in reading. PAVCS will continue to identify students requiring more targeted assistance using our Title I program and Step-Up program and couple this with the implementation of the strategies identified in the Student Achievement Improvement Plan to improve student performance. We should continue to see more improved results on the 2008 PSSA.**

**Historical Comparative Analysis of Scores**

**Percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient on the PSSA**

<b>Reading</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	55%	56%	69%	68%	74%
<b>Grade 4</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	71%	69%
<b>Grade 5</b>	59%	51%	62%	55%	58%
<b>Grade 6</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	67%	64%
<b>Grade 7</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	76%	65%
<b>Grade 8</b>	n/a	n/a	60%	67%	73%

<b>Math</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	51%	35%	69%	73%	69%
<b>Grade 4</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	71%	71%
<b>Grade 5</b>	41%	40%	50%	47%	58%
<b>Grade 6</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	62%	58%
<b>Grade 7</b>	n/a	n/a	n/a	58%	54%
<b>Grade 8</b>	n/a	n/a	49%	46%	47%

**The chart above represents the historical data concerning PAVCS' scores over the course of the past five years. It reveals that overall for the most part PAVCS scores have remained consistent at all grade levels.**

**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.**

An analysis of the various assessment scores and a plan to adjust instruction based on the scores has been developed to address the overall weaknesses within the school. The School Improvement Plan is a comprehensive plan to ensure student achievement and attainment. This comprehensive plan addresses specific goals that will enable the school to meet the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as detailed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This plan not only addresses student achievement and attainment but also professional development for teachers and parent involvement to ensure annual growth.

The curriculum utilized at Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School is a mastery program that offers frequent assessment. The assessments referenced in this report are built into the curriculum parallel to the instruction provided either by asynchronous or synchronous instruction. Emphasis is placed on distributed review and spiral instruction. This ensures that the instructional objectives are not only being met but retained by the student.

Students who are at-risk for failure are identified by evaluating course placement levels, standardized assessment scores, additional data from previous school placements and other means as described in this report. Once identified, these students are monitored closely. The teachers develop academic goals to address the at-risk areas and modify the instructional plan for these students. This plan becomes a part of the student's personalized learning plan. (PLP) Strategies utilized can include increased time spent on core courses, frequent conferences with teachers, mandatory Illuminate sessions, referral to the math specialist or various other techniques. Documentation of these strategies in the student's PLP allows for close progress monitoring.

In addition, students who are identified as "at-risk" are offered instructional services via two PAVCS programs, Title I and Step Up. PAVCS offers Title I services to lower-performing students. The Title I program is a federally funded, supplemental education program that provides financial assistance to PAVCS to

improve educational opportunities for our educationally deprived students. Title I programs are designed to help PAVCS' lowest performing students meet the state content and performance standards in reading, language arts and mathematics.

PAVCS offers Step-Up, a school-funded program to support the needs of lower-performing students. The purpose of the Step-Up program is to identify students who are academically disadvantaged and provide intensive academic intervention. Additionally, Step-Up inspires students through providing hands-on learning experiences and increased opportunities for student success. We believe that the involvement of parents and guardians in the daily educational process increases success in all areas of assessment, such as the Online School and PA standardized testing.

### **Student Assessment - Attachments**

- Terra Nova Test Results
- 1st Grade DIBELS
- 2nd Grade DIBELS
- 3rd Grade DIBELS
- 4th Grade DIBELS
- 5th Grade DIBELS

### **Teacher Evaluation**

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

Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School's teacher evaluation is based on the Charlotte Danielson Model of Evaluation which encourages continuous improvement of the teaching staff. Teachers are evaluated in four specific domains:

1. *Knowledge of the Curriculum:* This domain includes state standards, testing blueprints, state standard anchors and knowledge of the Pennsylvania State System of Assessment
2. *Instruction and Achievement:* This domain includes communication with students and parents, feedback to students and parents, flexibility in instruction, student achievement, student progress, test preparation, monitoring of personal learning plan goals, clarity and balance
3. *Virtual Classroom Environment:* This domain includes creation of an environment of respect and rapport, administrative duties, management of student compliance and truancy, management of student/parent conferences, general classroom organization, illuminate(virtual classroom skills) and technology skills.
4. *Professional Responsibilities:* This domain includes teacher certification, highly qualified teacher status, contributions to the virtual environment, growth and development professionally, professionalism and reflections on teaching.

New teachers receive formative evaluations three times per year and experienced teachers are evaluated twice per year to provide constructive feedback on instructional goals and practices. In addition to the formative evaluations teachers participate in summative face to face evaluations at the end of each school year.

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

Principals, Assistant Principals, Special Education Director, Assistant Special Education Director and the Senior Academic Administrator are directly responsible for the observations and the formative and summative evaluations of the staff.

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

The Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School Senior Leadership Team meets weekly to review best practices in virtual education. Quarterly face to face leadership meetings are also held to update and continue looking at the school and the best practices to maintain student achievement and attainment. Members keep abreast of new reforms through professional organizations and research. Members are offered the opportunity to attend conferences and seminars through PaTTan, the PA Coalition of Charter Schools and other PA sponsored workshops recommended by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

**Teacher Evaluation - Attachments**

- Teacher Evaluation Rubric - Elementary School
- Teacher Evaluation Rubric - Middle School
- Teacher Evaluation Rubric - High School
- Teacher Evaluation Rubric - Special Education

**SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS**

**Leadership Changes**

There were very few changes in Leadership of the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School during the 2007-2008 School Year. Melinda Morrison was elected to the board of Trustees on June 2, 2008.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Date Elected to Board</u>	<u>Expiration of Term</u>
Bonnie Schaefer	President	04-10-02	5 yrs — 04-10-2012
John McElvenny	Treasurer	11-24-03	5 yrs — 11-24-2008
Mark Graham	Secretary	09-19-05	5 yrs — 09-19-2010
Sheldon Thorpe	Vice-President	11-21-05	5 yrs — 11-21-2010
Mike Kello	Trustee	11-20-06	5 yrs — 11-20-2006
Melinda Morrison	Trustee	06-02-08	5 yrs - 06-02-2013

**Board of Trustees**

<b>Name of Trustee</b>	<b>Office (if any)</b>
Bonnie Schaefer	President
John McElvenny	Treasurer
Mark Graham	Secretary
Mike Kello	none
Sheldon Thorpe	Vice-President
Melinda Morrison	none

## **Professional Development (Governance)**

The Board is knowledgeable of and adheres to the Sunshine Law requirements for public notification of meetings, parameter of Executive Sessions, public meetings, quorum rules, and posting of minutes. The dates, times and place of the Board Meetings are listed on the school calendar which every parent receives and they are advertised in the newspaper of general circulation for the Norristown Area School District. Reminders of upcoming Board meeting are posted on the PAVCS website ([www.pavcsk12.org](http://www.pavcsk12.org)) and for the internal school community on Blackboard, ([pavcs.blackboard.com](http://pavcs.blackboard.com)). In July 2008, The PAVCS Board and Senior Administrative staff participated in a three day Board of Trustees' Retreat.

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

The PAVCS Board of Trustees operates in accordance with the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporations Law, 15 Pa. C.S. §§ 5101 et. seq. and the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, 65 Pa. C.S. §§ 701 et. seq. The PAVCS Board of Trustees meets regularly to receive reports from the school's administrative staff, approve policies, take action on personnel matters, financial reports contracts, approve invoices for payment, take action on requests for educational leave and take action on other items which require the approval of the Board.

The Board utilizes a committee structure. Items for Board action are presented to the appropriate committee utilizing an Executive Summary. The Executive Summary identifies the item for action; gives an overview of the issues, provides the background information and supporting documentation. Once the appropriate committee has reviewed, the item is referred to the full Board with a recommendation to approve or not approve the action.

The entire Board receives a Board packet prior to the meeting. The packet contains the Meeting Agenda, Minutes of the prior meeting, all reports, and Executive Summaries of action items. The Board is fully knowledgeable of the day to day operations of the school through the reports submitted by the senior administrative leadership team which includes the CEO, CFO, Principals, Director of High School, Director of Special Education, Operations Administrator, and Director of Communications.

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

- 2007-08 BOT Meeting Calendar

## **Community and Parent Engagement**

Parents serve on the Board of Trustees. The Board uses the synchronous tool Elluminate to encourage and facilitate parent participation at Board meetings. The Board committee structure provides an opportunity for parents to serve on Board committees. There is an email address where members of the community are able to contact the board. They also review annual parent satisfaction surveys.

## **SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

We continue to research various philanthropies and foundations to solicit. Specifically, we seek funds for technology and to support this innovative education model.

### **Fiscal Solvency Policies**

The annual budget, as required by state regulation and approved by the Board of Trustees, is the vehicle used to maintain fiscal solvency. The budget is prepared in accordance with GAAP and contains a reserve provision in order to maintain fiscal solvency. In addition the school has secured a line of credit for operating cash flow, until subsidies are paid by either the Pennsylvania Department of Education or directly by the Resident School District.

### **Accounting System**

The PAVCS accounting system is formulated using the accrual basis and is in compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. Moreover, the Chart of Accounts was designed to ensure compliance with the Pennsylvania Chart of Accounts where each account number is made up of a combination of dimensions and each dimension describes one way of classifying financial activity.

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

- 2008 Preliminary Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Fund Balance

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

PAVCS' independent external auditor is:

Barbacane Thornton & Company

3411 Silverside Road

Wilmington, DE 19810

There were no audit findings with respect to the school's operation.

There was one audit finding with respect to federal programs. The finding was the result on not completing cash on hand reports for the Title I program.

### **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

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

The school has undergone an audit by the PA State Auditor General. The audit conference review was held on August 25, 2008. However, as of this writing, the audit report has not yet been issued.

## **SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

The virtual nature of the charter school negates the acquisition of facilities, furniture, (except office furniture), and fixtures. Computers are secured through K12, Inc. to take advantage of the discounts that are provided.

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

Currently, the school does not have any facility or capital plans. The school currently rents its administrative office space.

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

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

Information regarding health and safety requirements as well as the responsibility of parents to provide health and immunization records are contained in the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School Parent Handbook.

Learning about healthy habits and staying safe are an important learning experience for all students. Health Education Resources are offered to parents via Blackboard postings, the Pupil Health Brochure and mini-health fairs at PAVCS Health Screening sites. Students are invited to school wide Elluminate sessions offering health information such as Red Ribbon Week- Tobacco Awareness, Wellness-Nutrition & Physical activity and Summer Safety. Parents are also encouraged to provide health and safety lessons for their child. At their request, teachers assist parents with the development of these lessons.

An important part of health and safety education is instruction in fire safety. The Pennsylvania public school code requires all students to receive fire safety instruction and participate in monthly fire drills; this regulation applies to the date and time of each month's fire drill. In addition, parents also provide fire safety information to their child. If parents need help with fire safety instruction or with how to run a fire drill, teachers provide lesson suggestions and general assistance. This past year, Philadelphia students were invited to a PAVCS Red Cross Day where the American Red Cross presented Water & Fire Safety lessons.

PAVCS teachers check student health and safety activities and hours during biweekly conference calls. A maximum of 25 health and safety education hours may be counted towards a child's total hours of instruction for the year.

PAVCS maintains health records for all students. Proof of immunizations as well as current physical and dental examinations are mandated for the enrollment process. Health histories with emergency information are collected from parents annually so that complete health information is on file. Original medical records are requested for transferring students and released per PA Dept of Health guidelines. All medical records are maintained by Certified School Nurses at the Norristown Office.

In addition to enrollment requirements, grade level mandates continue annually. Physical examinations are requested from grades K or 1, 6 and 11. Dental examinations are requested from grades K or 1, 3 and 7. Immunization records are reviewed and parents are notified of new immunization mandates as students' grade levels change.

Mandated Health screenings are performed statewide at PAVCS mass screening sites or if preferred, parents may submit mandated screening results from the student's private physician. During the 2007-2008 school year, 53 screening sites were offered to parents for mandated screenings. Each site was staffed with at least one PAVCS Certified School Nurse and most also

have an administrative assistant, or RN/LPN with school screening experience. All students who attended are offered free screenings for height, weight, BMI, hearing, vision and scoliosis. Referrals are made for students not passing per PA Department of Health regulations with followup information for enrollment to health care insurance and/or local healthcare providers. Students who do not pass their vision screening and do not have vision insurance coverage, are referred to the National Association of School Nurses Sight For Student Program. This past year 15 students did receive a free eye exam and glasses. Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School plans to continue and expand these annual mass screening sites. In addition, each PAVCS Health Screen site offers a variety of health education materials for parents and students to take home with them.

PAVCS' Pupil Health Department has become involved with varied health resources during the 2007-2008 school year. Mobile Dentist/Smile Pennsylvania and Sight For Students Programs have been accessed and offered to families in need. Involvement with PA Health Alert Network (PAHAN), Pa Statewide Immunization Information System and Phila.gov Kids Registry has provided valuable information to our Pupil Health Director.

This past school year, PAVCS' Pupil Health Department was audited by Montgomery County's Department of Health for school immunization compliancy. The results were less than 1% noncompliance (worksheet attached). PA Department of Health's Request for Reimbursement and Report of School Health Services is presently being completed for this school year. It will be submitted to the PA Dept.of Health's School Health Services Department by the deadline, September 30, 2008. Last year's report and PA Department of Health correspondence re: 2006-2007 reimbursement is available upon request. Proof of its submission is attached.

PAVCS has not developed a Wellness Policy since it does not participate in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs. The school does support the HealthierUS initiative from which the Chapter 12 requirements arose. PAVCS Health Screening sites provide free preventative screenings, as well as mini health fairs offering educational information that encourages students and families to be physically activity, eat a nutritious diet and make healthy choices.

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

- PA Dept. of Health Immunization Audit
- PA Dept. of Health Report Submission

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

The school's insurance coverage is as follows:

Commercial Property

General Liability

Professional Liability

Hired & Non-Owned Auto Liability

Workers' Compensation

Commercial Umbrella

Employee Dishonesty

Student Accident

**Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs - Attachment**

- Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

**SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS**

**Quality of Teaching and Other Staff**

Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School ended the 07-08 school year with 125 teachers. Of the 139 teachers, 120 are returning for the 08-09 school year. PAVCS had 32 certified administrators in the 07-08 School Year, we will be beginning the 07-08 school year with 33 certified administrators, as one teacher moved into the certified administrator category. PAVCS ended the 07-08 school year with 45 non-certified administrative staff, with one staff member not returning for the 08-09 school year.

Personnel Numbers	End of 07-08	Returning for 08-09
Teaching Staff	125	120
Certified Administrative Staff	32	33
Non-Certified Administrative Staff (Support)	45	44

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

- PDE 414 - PAVCS 2007-08
- Verification of PIMS Staff Submission - ESPP report was not required this year.

**Student Enrollment**

a) PAVCS has open enrollment and does not have any specific admission requirements. As a public school we accept students without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, religion, family income, national origin, or disability. Students are enrolled after they have completed the required enrollment forms and provided proof of age, immunization, residency, and parents certify that either the parent or another adult will be available to support the student in daily instruction. Enrollment notification utilizing the Department of Education Charter School Student Enrollment Notification Form is provided to the resident district in a timely manner and in accordance with all requirements of the charter school legislation and any applicable state regulations. As a public school, PAVCS complies with all laws establishing minimum age for public school attendance. PAVCS admits all eligible students who choose to attend, space permitting. Students 5 years of age before September 1 are eligible for the kindergarten program, and students 6 years of age before September 1 are eligible for first grade. Enrollment forms and instructions are available on our website at [www.pavcsk12.org](http://www.pavcsk12.org).

**As of October 1, 2007, PAVCS had 3,740 enrolled students. The initial enrollments, by grade, are as follows:**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Enrolled Students</b>
K	227
1	325
2	346
3	364
4	369
5	374
6	338
7	341
8	348
9	328
10	216
11	164
<b>Total</b>	<b>3740</b>

**At the conclusion of the 2007-2008 school year PAVCS had 3,554 enrolled students.**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Enrolled Students</b>
K	206
1	309
2	339
3	345
4	364
5	359
6	324
7	336
8	316
9	305
10	218
11	133
<b>Total</b>	<b>3554</b>

PAVCS had 1,528 withdrawals and 1071 new enrollments, 406 of which withdrew, during the 07-08 school year. There were 90 students who were withdrawn for non-compliance/truancy issues. There are currently 3,026 students who completed the 2007-2008 school year who are enrolled to return to PAVCS in the fall.

b) There are a variety of reasons as to why students withdrew during the 07-08 school year. Some families moved out of state because the parent's job caused them to relocate and some students moved so they could live with another parent or relative. PAVCS wasn't a good fit for some families or students because the student wouldn't cooperate with the academic coach, the student wanted to return to a brick and mortar school to be with friends, the family traveled too

much, the parent didn't have enough time to teach, or because the parent did not want to comply with school policies. Some withdrawals occurred because the parent had to return to work leaving no choice but to send the student back to a brick and mortar school. A few families withdrew because the student, parent or a relative had health issues.

### **Transportation**

As a virtual charter school, students have no need for daily transportation to a building. Therefore, PAVCS does not maintain a transportation program. Upon application for enrollment, parents are informed that if they choose to enroll, they will be responsible for any transportation to PSSA regional testing sites and to optional outings and events.

Parents of special education students have the same requirements as parents of regular education students (to provide transportation to the PSSA regional testing sites and to optional outings and events). However, when special needs arise and transportation is required as per the student's IEP, PAVCS makes arrangements with the appropriate IU or other agency in that student's area. Given the virtual nature of the school and the fact that PAVCS has students in every county from nearly every school district in the state, it is not feasible to have advance arrangements in anticipation of all transportation needs. Each situation, therefore, is arranged individually.

### **Food Service Program**

Since PAVCS is a virtual school, we do not participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program.

### **Student Conduct**

a.) As stated in the Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School's Student Code of Conduct, "Pennsylvania Virtual Charter School has high expectations for all students. In order for a student to reach his/her potential, the school environment, the On Line School, on-line school sponsored discussion groups, outings, test sites, other school related activities, should be safe, orderly, and encourage the fullest possible educational development of each student. PAVCS will not tolerate any actions from the student that in any way interferes with the delivery of educational services, jeopardizes the health, safety, and well-being of any member of the school family, or threaten the integrity and stability of the school itself." Any violations of the School Policy are handled in accordance with the prescribed procedures as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct.

b.) PAVCS had no suspensions or expulsions in the 2007-2008 School Year.

### **Student Conduct - Attachment**

- Student Code of Conduct

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

**School Year: 2008**

The Pennsylvania Virtual CS within Montgomery County IU 23 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**  
**2008 - 2009 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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

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

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

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

**Name** Joanne A. Jones Barnett

**Title** Chief Executive Officer

**Phone** 610-275-8500, Ext. 107

**Fax** 610-275-1719

**E-mail** jbarnett@pavcsk12.org

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*Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date*

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

**Name** Bonnie Schaefer

**Title** President of the Board of Trustees

**Phone** 610-275-8500

**Fax** 610-275-1719

**E-mail** Bonnie-bot-schaefer@pavcsk12.org

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

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

**Name** Catherine Greenstein

**Title** Director of Special Education

**Phone** 610-275-8500, Ext 103

**Fax** 610-275-1719

**E-mail** cgreenstein@pavcsk12.org

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*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*

**Signature Page**

**Signature Page - Attachment**

- PAVCS Annual Report Signature Page 2007-08