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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:** Commonwealth Connections Academy CS  
**Address:** 5010 Trindle Rd Suite 200  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050-3631  
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**Contact Name:** Susan Shubert

## CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

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

**Name of School:** Commonwealth Connections Academy CS

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** May 2003 and renewed June 2006

**Length of Charter:** 5 years    **Opening Date:** Sept 2003

**Grade Level:** K-11 in 2007-08, K-12 in 2008-09    **Hours of Operation:** 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 98%    **Total Instructional Staff:** 42

**Student/ Teacher Ratio:** 30 to 1    **Student Waiting List:** none

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** 98%

**Second Site Address, Phone Number and Site Director:**

2085 N. 63rd Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19151  
Susan Shubert

Grant Professional Plaza, #203  
613 Blakeslee Boulevard Drive East  
Lehigh, PA 18235  
Jim Alex

Penn Center Monroeville, #400  
201 Penn center Boulevard  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235  
David Potts

**Enrollment:** 2092    **Per Pupil Subsidy:** Cyber schools are paid by districts/No direct state subsidy

#### Student Profile

<b>American Indian/Alaskan Native:</b>	10
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander:</b>	12
<b>Black (Non-Hispanic):</b>	367
<b>Hispanic:</b>	61
<b>White (Non-Hispanic):</b>	1471
<b>Multicultural:</b>	107

**Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:** 57

**Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December:** 344

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (FTIME)	ELEM	MIDDLE	SEC.	TOTAL
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<b>Instructional Days</b>	180	180	180	180	180	180	180
<b>Instructional Hours</b>	450	450	450	900	990	990	n/a

## SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Organization Description

Commonwealth Connections Academy Charter School (CCA) provides a unique form of free public school that students attend from home. This is a program that combines strong parental involvement, the expertise, the expertise of certified educators, the accountability of public funded education, and the flexibility of online classes. The mission of CCA is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards. Connections Academy is a high-quality, high-tech, high-touch “school without walls” that brings out the best in every student.

With CCA, parents or other “Learning Coaches” facilitate the day-to-day instruction using our proven curriculum that incorporates comprehensive daily lesson plans, textbooks from leading educational publications, and exciting online lessons. Our experienced certified teachers grade all assessments, monitor progress, deliver online instruction, and support the Learning Coaches by creating a Personalized Learning Plan that is customized for each child. Teachers communicate regularly with parents and students to review assignments and discuss student work.

Who has already chosen Commonwealth Connections Academy? Parents from across the state who have students with a broad range of academic and personal strengths and concerns have chosen CCA. These include:

- Parents with exceptional children who are far ahead or far behind their peers
- Parents whose children are at risk of academic failure
- Parents with homebound children with medical issues
- Parents who live in isolated rural areas
- Parents whose children are pursuing artistic or athletic careers that require flexible schedules
- Basically, parents who think their children would benefit from one-on-one personalized instruction in the home, with a challenging curriculum and support from certified school teachers

### Core Purpose

#### Mission

*The mission of Commonwealth Connections Academy is to leverage virtual school technology to help each of its students maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards.* This mission is accomplished through a uniquely individualized learning program that combines the best in virtual education with unique technology-based teacher productivity tools and very real connections among students, family, teachers, and the community. Every student has a Personalized Learning Plan and an entire team of adults (including a parent or other learning coach and a Pennsylvania certified teacher) committed to the student’s successful fulfillment of that plan. Commonwealth Connections Academy is a high-quality, high-tech, high-touch virtual “school without walls” that brings out the best in every student through Personalized Learning. At CCA, experienced certified teachers support parents or other “learning coaches” in delivering day-to-day instruction using the school’s proven curriculum that

incorporates comprehensive daily lesson plans, textbooks and related materials from leading educational publications, and exciting online lessons

### **Vision**

Studies show that greater parent participation in education can lead to higher student grades and test scores, higher graduation rates and greater enrollment in post secondary education. At Commonwealth Connections Academy, parents generally serve as personal, face to face learning coaches facilitating the delivery of their children's instructional program. Parents may also get involved as local community coordinators who create opportunities for special projects, field trips, and group meetings with other students and parents. CCA also provides an orientation program along with access to discussion groups and counselors to help learning coaches who are new to the challenges and responsibilities of this important role.

Studies have shown that in conventional classrooms, many tasks are mismatched to students' skill levels. At Commonwealth Connections Academy, each student receives individualized instruction, including lessons tailored to that student's academic strengths and weaknesses. Our school year begins with the development of a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) — blueprint for the student's lessons that year. Throughout the year the teacher can adjust the lessons to emphasize areas where the student is deficient or step up instruction in a subject where a student has a particular strength or interest.

While there are other cyber schools in Pennsylvania, CCA is unique. The school uses a proprietary curriculum accredited by CITA and Middle States that combines online synchronous and asynchronous instruction, multimedia and traditional printed textbooks and supplementary materials, including science supplies. CCA also emphasizes the direct involvement and responsibility of the instructional staff in assuring that students have mastered required skills and uses an innovative assessment engine to increase teacher productivity by auto-grading objective answers to permit teachers to devote their expertise to subjective measures. The school's learning management system also provides innovative tools to deliver instruction, measure progress, enhance teacher productivity and meet regulatory requirements.

### **Shared Values**

The CCA Board of Trustees and school staff fervently believe that:

- Greater parent participation in education can lead to higher student grades and test scores, higher graduation rates and greater enrollment in post secondary education.
- Technology and innovations to the traditional classroom-based teaching model combined with dedicated educators and rigorous curriculum can provide a solution for currently unmet student needs.
- Students learn best when lessons match their interests and abilities.
- There is a need to provide a more flexible and personalized form of public school education.

Designed with these beliefs in mind, CCA is a high-quality, high-tech, high-touch "school without walls" that brings out the best in every student

We are committed to measuring our success through evaluations of our parent and student satisfaction; academic performance and fiscal responsibility. We are also committed to providing opportunities for our students and parents to be active in their communities.

## Academic Standards

The CCA curriculum combines proven and rigorous print-based materials with the best in technology-enhanced learning such that a significant portion of the curriculum is delivered through the Internet and other electronic means. The entire CCA curriculum has been carefully aligned with Pennsylvania Academic Standards. The Connections Academy curriculum staff has developed a core database of the thousands of standards-based learning objectives represented in the CCA curriculum. The learning objectives are organized into area, standard, level, and benchmark, correlated with Pennsylvania Academic Standards and supplemented with additional online and other curriculum to ensure that all of the requirements are covered and that complete alignment is achieved.

The Connections Academy curriculum has been CITA-accredited. The accreditation process included a review of the curriculum and how it meets content standards and requirements. CCA staff has worked with Connections Academy curriculum specialists to ensure alignment of the curriculum Pennsylvania Academic Standards, adding content and materials as needed.

The CCA curriculum provides a developmentally appropriate combination of technology with print and hands-on materials for each grade level.

- The K-8 curriculum integrates textbooks, lesson plans and other content from a variety of leading publishers and school programs including Houghton Mifflin, Zaner-Bloser, Prentice Hall, the Calvert school and others. The curriculum also features technology-based content from “best of breed” providers such as Hooked on Phonics®, BrainPop®, Compass, and United Streaming®. CCA teachers use the LiveLesson™ tool, which provides for real-time web conferencing with small groups of students using voice over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing.
- The curriculum for grades 9 and 10 provides more online experience, as appropriate for secondary school learners. The Pennsylvania standards-aligned high school curriculum integrates digital versions of textbooks from major publishers (primarily Prentice Hall and McGraw-Hill) enhanced by multimedia, interactive material, communication/conferencing tools, and team projects. Top-quality third-party courseware elements from providers such as United Streaming® (digital video on demand), Groliers (reference databases) and Eureka Labs® (interactive online science labs) are also licensed as part of the 9-12 curriculum.
- CCA utilizes online, interactive instructional movies that incorporate graphics, video, and audio to explain the concepts and ideas the student needs to complete a lesson. These interactive, online “Teachlets™” are significantly more effective and entertaining than text alone. Interactive online instruction known as “LiveLesson™” is also used to enhance instruction and communications. With this tool, teachers can conduct live teaching sessions over the Internet to either a single student or a group. This new technology is ideal for explaining difficult concepts, conducting review sessions or promoting discussion. Individual tutorial sessions can also be arranged to assist students with specific needs.
- CCA utilized Study Island®, a leading provider of **web-based state assessment preparation programs** and **standards based learning programs**, to obtain more accurate bench marks and provide students practice and instruction in the targeted areas.
- CCA used “Math 24 — First in Math” to provide students with on line interactive challenges to develop and improve critical math skills. This is highly motivating program and has been proven to increase achievement in mathematics.

## Strengths and Challenges

CCA's strengths have been:

- Its ability to satisfy parents and students (as evidenced by satisfaction ratings above 96% on annual surveys);
- Its responsiveness to stakeholder needs, as evidenced by the expanding community coordinator program, addition of high school grades, and establishment of the Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Pocono - Lehigh locations;
- Its ability to attract and retain high-quality teachers;
- Its success in increasing PSSA test participation and scores despite a mobile student population and higher percentage of FARM students than the state as a whole; and
- Its ability to accommodate individual learning styles and improve achievement of all students through the use of each student's Personalized Learning Plan (PLP).

CCA implements evidence based instructional techniques and strategies; provides on-line tutorial and instructional sessions for students and learning coaches; provides students identified as basic or below basic with remedial programs directed towards mastery of eligible content; implements programs to support learning coaches and parents.

CCA's weaknesses are clustered around PSSA performance in specific subgroups. In particular, based on data from 2007-2008, the CCA subgroup of Economically disadvantaged students across all grade levels need more support and focus on the eligible content and anchors in both reading and math. The economically disadvantaged subgroup did make AYP in math and reading because of the Pennsylvania Performance Index. The General Student body made AYP in Math with a score of 55.3% and in Reading with a score of 61.5%.

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

### **Strategic Planning Process**

Commonwealth Connections Academy (CCA) is a Public Cyber Charter School. As such, Commonwealth Connections Academy is not required to complete a Strategic Plan that is developed every six years and reviewed every third year. Instead, Commonwealth Connections Academy submits, every 5 years, a Charter Renewal Document, and, every year, an Annual Report.

Although CCA does not complete the state defined Strategic Plan, every year CCA does engage in documented strategic planning .

Every year a planning committee comprised of all the Board of Directors members, the C.E.O., principals, assistant principals, and teachers, reviews and analyzes data pertaining to student achievement and parent surveys. Using this data and teacher input, the curriculum is modified or revised and new programs and curriculum are recommended for review and possible adoption to the Cyber School setting. Procedures for delivery of curriculum and policies pertaining to student accountability are also reviewed. Based upon an analysis of internal and external needs, the board then approves a plan for the school specifying priorities for actions and action plans developed by the committee to achieve long range and short range goals.

There are seven members of the Board of Directors for CCA. The Board members are parents of CCA students, professional business people, and community advocates. The members of the Board reside in 6 different counties in Pennsylvania. Three of the Board members have children attending CCA.

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The template provided by PDE for the section on Goals, Strategies and Activities does not permit

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entry of 2008 - 2009 dates. Therefore, the data charts appear incomplete. In order to provide more clarity of the 08-09 Goals, we have included a Goal, Strategy, and Activities chart in this section of the report.

#	Goals	Strategies	Activities
1	CCA students will improve overall academic performance.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CCA will increase direct instructional opportunities for all students.</li> <li>2. CCA students will demonstrate at least one year's academic growth in grades 3-8.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers will average 2 LiveLessons each week.</li> <li>2. Teachers will archive LiveLessons so they are accessible for review and for students who missed a session.</li> <li>3. CCA will use a technology based standardized pre-test and post-test commercially prepared to gauge yearly progress. The test is administered at the beginning and end of the year.</li> </ol>
2	CCA will develop stronger student/teacher and student/student interactions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CCA teachers will attend at least two community activities or field trips during each school year.</li> <li>2. CCA students will engage in community activities that will also promote student interaction and provide opportunities for face to face meetings with their teachers.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CCA will secure 14 Community Coordinators for individual regions. The Community Coordinator will survey all households to solicit appropriate ideas for enrichment activities.</li> <li>2. CCA will provide increased opportunities for students to develop social skills by offering opportunities to attend field trips which are educational and recreational. Each student will have access to at least 2 activities each month.</li> <li>3. CCA will provide enrichment activities in music, art, and sports for all students. CCA will utilize their Community Involvement Coordinator to develop relationships with vendors around the state to create and implement Community Classes and programs for students around the state. In 2007-2008, provided 105 students with Community Classes around the state.</li> <li>4. CCA will sponsor science field trips/demonstrations planned by Science teachers.</li> <li>5. CCA will inaugurate a Robotics Club and activities.</li> <li>6. CCA will inaugurate a Spelling Bee for select elementary grades.</li> <li>7. CCA will organize a science fair for all students.</li> </ol>
3	CCA will maintain and improve overall parent satisfaction with the program. On the Parent Satisfaction Survey,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers will maintain regular contacts with parents and respond to all communications</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers with students in grades K-6 will maintain biweekly phone contacts with students and will perform curriculum based assessments while conversing with students to ensure mastery of previously learned skills.</li> </ol>

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<p>the overall satisfaction rate will be above 90%, and the participation rate must be above 60%.</p>	<p>within 2 days. 2. Teachers will encourage parents to participate in the parent survey.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Teachers with students in grades K-6 will communicate with the learning coaches at least once per month.</li> <li>3. Students in grades 7-11 will communicate with their subject area teachers or homeroom teachers at least biweekly through the use of LiveLessons and the telephone. Content mastery will be checked through these communications.</li> <li>4. Teachers will provide in-person and/or LiveLesson tutoring whenever appropriate (through office hours and by appointment).</li> </ol>
<p>4 At least 56% of all students will be proficient in Mathematics, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.</p>	<p>CCA will use multiple resources, as described, to improve performance for all students in Math skills by using various technology-based programs.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CCA will provide access to Math 24, an interactive website used to increase student performance in Math skills using games and skills activities.</li> <li>2. CCA will implement PACE which provides individualized lessons and practice to students performing below proficient on state testing directly related to state standards and areas of weakness as seen on PSSA results. Students are provided weekly pre and post tests to assess mastery of each skill presented.</li> <li>3. CCA will utilize Skills Tutor, a technologically-based, online program aimed at building basic skills in order to improve performance in Math and Language Arts.</li> <li>4. CCA will provide students with Study Island, an interactive web-site directly linked to Pennsylvania State Standards used to improve performance for all students.</li> <li>5. CCA will provide students with access to the Stock Market Game for added practice dealing with math in every day life.</li> <li>6. CCA will implement a school-wide Title I program providing added support to all students performing below proficient on the PSSA, local assessments (DIBELS and LEAP), Study Island Benchmarks, or the Terra Nova test.</li> </ol>
<p>5 At least 63% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide</p>	<p>CCA will utilize a variety of programs in order to improve performance of students in the area of reading.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CCA will implement PACE which provides individualized lessons and practice to students performing below proficient on state testing directly related to state standards and areas of weakness as seen on PSSA results.</li> </ol>

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<p>PSSA assessments.</p>		<p>Students are provided weekly pre and post tests to assess mastery of each skill presented.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. CCA will utilize Skills Tutor, a technologically-based, online program aimed at building basic skills in order to improve performance in Math and Language Arts.</li> <li>3. CCA will provide students with Study Island, an interactive web-site directly linked to Pennsylvania State Standards used to improve performance for all students.</li> <li>4. CCA will implement a school-wide Title I program providing added support to all students performing below proficient on the PSSA, local assessments (DIBELS and LEAP), Study Island Benchmarks, or the Terra Nova test.</li> </ol>
<p>6 At least 95% of eligible students will participate in required state-wide assessments.</p>	<p>CCA will make access to test sites more convenient.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. CCA will have at least 20 sites around the state for students to attend state testing.</li> <li>2. CCA will form relationships with Intermediate Units around the state to administer the PSSA.</li> </ol>
<p>7 Further the mission of leveraging technology for personalized performance learning by reaching a broader audience with additional supports and an ever-improving curriculum and instructional program.</p>	<p>CCA will analyze a variety of data to make decisions for expansion of facilities, curriculum, and assessments.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expansion to grade 12 in 2008-09 with curriculum aligned to PA Academic Standards.</li> <li>2. Use data to determine the need for additional satellite office to benefit concentrated areas where families might benefit from a place to gather and interact in person with teachers. In 2008-2009, CCA will open offices in Pittsburgh and in the Lehigh-Pocono area.</li> <li>3. Improve and expand the curriculum with focus on the PSSA in term of coverage, sequencing, and emphasis. In 2008-2009, grades 3-6 will have a newly revised and technologically enhanced Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies Curriculum and grades 3-5 will also have a newly revised and technologically enhanced Math curriculum. The Kindergarten curriculum will also be revised to provide a more rigorous standards based product.</li> <li>4. Focus on refinement of the formative assessment tools used to identify students in need of academic instructional intervention and support.</li> </ol>

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		<p>5. Each student will have a profile of academic strengths and weaknesses at the beginning of the school year. Internal assessments (formal and informal) will track progress on addressing individual areas of weakness.</p>
<p>8 Focus professional development on research—based and evidenced-based strategies for students’ instruction and teaching practices.</p>	<p>Teachers will receive training in skills of cyber teaching.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers will receive training in implementing Math 24.</li> <li>2. Teachers will receive training in implementing and manipulating Study Island to address individual learning needs of students.</li> <li>3. All new teachers will participate in two "Teacher Orientation" courses developed by Connections.</li> <li>4. Staff will participate in professional development the first Tuesday of every month on the following topics:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <u>September</u>: Anchors/Standards: Staff development on implementing anchors and standards into live lessons. The importance of using anchors/standards in teaching will also be addressed.</li> <li>2. <u>October</u>: Progress monitoring: IU 15 Oct 7 Patti Bixler: Why progress monitoring is done, strategies and tips on how to effectively and efficiently progress monitor as well as different techniques will be presented.</li> <li>3. <u>November</u>: Differentiated Instruction: IU 15 Nov 4 Susan Kutz: Presentation on what differentiated instruction entails and how to incorporate it into daily teaching.</li> <li>4. <u>December</u>: Writing (Anchors) IU 15 Dec 2 Susan Kutz: Information and strategies will be presented on improving students writing scores. Special consideration will be given to the online environment.</li> <li>5. <u>January</u>: Reading Interventions strategies: IU 15 Jan 6. Karen Ruddle: Information will be presented on how to recognize if a student should receive intervention strategies as well as what type of strategies work</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

		<p>best. Time will be provided for teacher collaboration.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. <u>February</u>: Best practices in online teaching: Tips and techniques for delivering online instruction will be presented. We are looking at using outside as well as inside sources to tailor the training specifically to our needs.</li> <li>7. <u>March</u>: Science Anchors: Information and strategies will be presented on improving students Science scores. Special consideration will be given to the online environment.</li> <li>8. <u>April</u>: Best Practices in Math IU 15 April 7 Nancy Neusbaum: Training will revolve around improving math PSSA scores as well as providing enriching, high interest, effective lessons in Math through the use of best practices.</li> <li>9. <u>May</u>: No training due to PSSA Science testing</li> <li>10. <u>June</u>: End of year data analysis, re-cap: We want to analyze the school year, look at data, ask for suggestions for next year and lead discussion on areas of improvement, strength and weakness.</li> </ol> <p>5. Teachers will participate in yearly training of Special Education updates (laws, processes).</p>
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**Strategic Planning Committee**

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Amy Boyd	Connections Academy	Other	Board of Directors
Cheryl Lozier	Parent	Board Member	Board of Directors
David Taylor	Business Community	Board Member	Board of Directors
Dennis Tulli	Connections Academy	Administrator	Connections Academy
Frank August	Connections Academy	Other	Connections Academy
Gail A. Hawkins Bush	Community Member	Board Member	Board of Directors

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Gary Madden	Connections Academy	Administrator	Connections Academy
Gregory Gettle	Connections Academy	Administrator	Connections Academy
Holly Bryzcki	Connections Academy	Other	Connections Academy
Jackie Dattisman	Commonwealth Connections Academy	Middle School Teacher	Board of Directors
Jan Rutt	Commonwealth Connections Academy	Special Education Representative	Board of Directors
Janna Conway	Commonwealth Connections Academy	Elementary School Teacher	Board of Directors
Jerry Birmelin	Business Community	Board Member	Board of Directors
Joanna Shelley	Commonwealth Connections Academy	Elementary School Teacher	Board of Directors
John Dormer	Commonwealth Connections Academy	Middle School Teacher	Board of Directors
Judith Miller	Community Member	Board Member	Board of Directors
Laurie Hamilton	Commonwealth Connections Academy	Secondary School Teacher	Board of Directors
Marjorie Rofel	Connections Academy	Special Education Representative	Connections Academy
Pamela Espinosa	Parent	Board Member	Board of Directors
Rachel Bailey	Commonwealth Connections Academy	Elementary School Teacher	Board of Directors
Rachel Bailey	Commonwealth Connections Academy	Middle School Teacher	Board of Directors
Susan Shubert	Connections Academy	Administrator	Connections Academy
Ted Ochs	Connections Academy	Other	Connections Academy

**Goals, Strategies and Activities**

**Goal: Demonstrate Student Academic Growth**

*Description:* CCA students will improve overall academic performance.

**Strategy: Demonstrating One Year Academic Growth**

*Description:* CCA students will demonstrate at least one year's academic growth in grades K-8.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
LEAP test	CCA will use a technology based standardized pre-test and post-test commercially prepared to gauge yearly progress. The test is administered at the beginning and end of the year.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$20,600.00

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**Strategy: Direct Instruction**

*Description:* CCA will provide direct instructional opportunities for all students.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
LiveLessons	1. Teachers will average 2 LiveLessons each week. 2. Teachers will archive LiveLessons by use of message boards. 3. CCA teachers in grades K-8 will use LiveLessons at least once a month to work with students or parents.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$215,900.00

**Strategy: Technology**

*Description:*

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Provide prompt technical assistance to students and field sites	Technology Managers (2 part-time positions) will be hired for the 2008-2009 SY Laptops for Staff (\$700 per unit x 35 units) Student printer cartridges Internet, dial up Internet, broad band	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$1,650,000.00

Activity	Description	
Upgrade Telecommunications	Replacing Telecommunications System Copiers/Fax Machine maintenance Tech Support and Reparis High Speed Internet Telephone and additional conference line	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$520,256.00

Activity	Description	
Upgrading Instructional Technology	85 flat screen monitors 75 additional Starboards Wireless headsets for teachers Education Resource Center Curriculum Software	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$6,177,697.00

**Strategy: Upgrading online instructional delivery method**

*Description:*

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Professional Development on new technology	Teachers will be trained on the use of wireless headsets, starboards, web cams, and other new technology. Professional development will be presented by vendors and our in-house technology managers.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$45,700.00

**Goal: Ensure Student Participation in State Assessments**

*Description:* At least 95% of eligible students will participate in required state-wide assessments.

**Strategy: Test Site Placement**

*Description:* CCA recognizes the importance of site location and availability for PSSA testing. CCA will improve access to test sites.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Test Sites Available	CCA will have at least 20 sites around the state for students to attend state testing.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$150,000.00

**Goal: Improve Student Academic Achievement in Mathematics**

*Description:* At least 56% of all students will be proficient in Mathematics, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

**Strategy: Supplemental Resources**

*Description:* CCA used multiple resources as described below to improve performance for all students in Math skills by using various technology-based programs.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Math 24	Math 24 is an interactive website used to increase student performance in Math skills using games and skills activities	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$3,200.00

Activity	Description	
PACE (Program for ALL Children to Excel)	PACE provides individualized lessons and practice to students performing below proficient on state testing directly related to state standards and areas of weakness as seen on PSSA results. Students are provided weekly pre and	

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	post tests to assess mastery of each skill presented.	
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$156,000.00

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	
Skills Tutor	Skills Tutor is a technologically-based, online program aimed at building basic skills in order to improve performance in Math and Language Arts.	
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$26,800.00

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	
Study Island	Study Island is an interactive web-site directly linked to Pennsylvania State Standards used to improve performance for all students.	
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Holly Bryzcki	Ongoing	\$18,800.00

**Goal: Improve Student Academic Achievement in Reading**

*Description:* At least 63% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

**Strategy: Supplemental Programs**

*Description:* CCA will utilize a variety of programs in order to improve performance of students in the area of reading.

*Activities:*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	
PACE (Program for ALL Children to Excel)	PACE provides individualized lessons and practice to students performing below proficient on state testing directly related to state standards and areas of weakness as seen on PSSA results. Students are provided weekly pre and post tests to assess mastery of each skill presented.	
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$156,000.00

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	
Skills Tutor	Skills Tutor is a technologically-based, online program aimed at building basic skills in order to improve performance in Math and Language Arts.	
<b>Person</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>

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<b>Responsible</b>		
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$26,800.00

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	
Study Island	Study Island is an interactive web-site directly linked to Pennsylvania State Standards used to improve performance for all students.	
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Holly Bryzcki	Ongoing	\$18,800.00

**Goal: Parent Satisfaction**

*Description:* CCA will maintain and improve overall parent satisfaction with the program. On the Parent Satisfaction Survey, the Parent Perception of Overall Program Quality will be above 3.4, and the participation rate must be above 60%.

**Strategy: Communications with families**

*Description:* Teachers will maintain regular contacts with parents and respond to all communications within 2 days.

*Activities:*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	
Instructional Contacts (7-11)	Students in grades 7-11 will communicate with their subject area teachers or homeroom teachers at least biweekly through the use of LiveLessons and the telephone. Content mastery will be checked through these communications and through curriculum based assessments.	
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$12,000.00

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	
Instructional Contacts (K-6)	CCA teachers of students in grades K-6 will make contacts via telephone and LiveLesson. During these contacts, teachers will perform instructional activities while conversing with students to ensure mastery of previously learned skills.	
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$12,000.00

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	
Learning Coach Contacts (K-6)	Teachers with students in grades K-6 will communicate with the learning coaches at least once per month.	
<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeline for Implementation</b>	<b>Resources</b>

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Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$13,800.00
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Activity	Description	
Tutoring	Teachers will provide in-person and/or LiveLesson tutoring whenever appropriate (through office hours and by appointment).	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$47,000.00

**Strategy: Provide technology support to families**

*Description:*

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Upgrade student technology	Laptops for 7th and 8th graders Technical Assistance for Elementary Students (\$500 per student) Technical Assistance for Secondary Students (\$777 per student) K-6 Student Computers 7-12 Student Computers	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$10,968,062.00

**Goal: Support Community Involvement and Promote Student Interaction**

*Description:* CCA will develop stronger student/teacher and student/student interactions.

**Strategy: Educational/Social Opportunities**

*Description:* CCA students will engage in community activities that will also promote student interaction and provide opportunities for face to face meetings with their teachers.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Community Classes	CCA will provide enrichment activities in music, art and sports for all students. In 2007-2008, 105 students took advantage of community classes.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$47,679.00

Activity	Description	
Community Coordinators	CCA will secure 14 (anticipated for 2008-2009) Community Coordinators for individual regions. The Community Coordinator will survey all households to solicit ideas for appropriate enrichment activities.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources

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Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$27,188.00
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Activity	Description	
Field Trips/Activities	CCA will provide increased opportunities for students to develop social skills by offering opportunities to attend field trips which are educational and recreational. Each student will have access to at least 2 activities each month.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$60,000.00

Activity	Description	
Robotics Club	CCA will inaugurate a Robotics Club and activities.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Greg Gettle	Ongoing	\$10,200.00

Activity	Description	
Science Fair	CCA will organize and implement a Science Faire for all students.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$500.00

Activity	Description	
Science Field Trips/Demonstrations	CCA will sponsor science field trips/demonstrations planned by Science teachers	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Gregory Gettle	Ongoing	\$500.00

**Strategy: Teacher Attendance on Field Trips/Community Activities**

*Description:* CCA teachers will attend at least two community activities or field trips during each school year.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Community Coordinators	CCA will secure 14 (anticipated for 2008-2009) Community Coordinators for individual regions. The Community Coordinator will survey all households to solicit ideas for appropriate enrichment activities.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$27,188.00

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Activity	Description	
Increase in number of field trips and community classes	CCA will provide increased opportunities for students to develop social skills by offering opportunities to attend field trips which are educational and recreational. Each student will have access to at least 2 activities each month.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$107,679.00

Activity	Description	
Teacher and Community Coordinator Partnership	Teachers will be required to attend at least two field trips assisting the Community Coordinator as necessary.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Amy Boyd	Ongoing	\$25,000.00

**Goal: Use of Technology to Improve Performance**

*Description:* Further the mission of leveraging technology for personalized performance learning by reaching a broader audience with additional supports and an ever-improving curriculum and instructional program.

**Strategy: Data Analysis**

*Description:* CCA will analyze a variety of data to make decisions for expansion of facilities, curriculum, and assessments.

*Activities:*

Activity	Description	
Curriculum Expansion	Improve and expand the curriculum with focus on the PSSA in term of coverage, sequencing, and emphasis.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Dennis Tulli	Ongoing	\$1,247,400.00

Activity	Description	
Grade Level Expansion	1. Expansion to grade 12 in 2008-09 with curriculum aligned to PA Academic Standards. 2. Expansion to grade 11 in 2007-08 with curriculum aligned to PA Academic Standards.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Dennis Tulli	Ongoing	\$0.00

Activity	Description	
Satellite Offices	Use data to determine the need for additional satellite office to benefit concentrated areas where families might benefit from a place to gather and interact in person with teachers. In 2008-2009 offices will be opened in Pittsburgh and Leighton.	
Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Susan Shubert	Ongoing	\$65,000.00

### Statement of Quality Assurance

Charter school has not met AYP.

Charter school has created a School Improvement Plan.

Charter school has submitted and reviewed its School Improvement Plan with the Intermediate Unit designee.

**Intermediate Unit designee met with and when meeting occurred:**

September 2007, November 2007

Brian Griffith: IU 15

### Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment

- Assurance of Quality and Accountability

## SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

### Rigorous Instructional Program

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

CCA has adopted the Connections Academy curriculum, which combines proven and rigorous print-based materials with the best in technology-enhanced learning such that a significant portion of the curriculum is delivered through the Internet and other electronic means. The Connections Academy curriculum has been CITA-accredited.

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

The entire CCA curriculum has been carefully aligned with Pennsylvania Academic Standards. Curriculum staff has developed a core database of the thousands of standards-based learning objectives represented in the Connections Academy curriculum. The learning objectives are organized into areas, standard, level, and benchmark, correlated with Pennsylvania Academic Standards and supplemented with additional online and other curriculum to ensure that all of the requirements are covered and that complete alignment is achieved. CCA is also CITA and Middle States accredited. The accreditation process included a review of the curriculum and how it meets content standards and requirements.

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

The K-8 curriculum integrates textbooks, lesson plans and other content from a variety of leading publishers and school programs including Houghton Mifflin, Zaner-Bloser, the Calvert school and

others. The curriculum also features technology-based content from “best of breed” providers such as Hooked on Phonics, BrainPop, Compass, and United Streaming. The 7th and 8th grade curriculum integrates extensive use of Teachlets™ -- online animated tutorials developed by Connections Academy to introduce math topics and provide interactive practice. In 2007-2008, CCA teachers also extensively used the new LiveLesson™ tool, which provides for real-time web conferencing with small groups of students using voice over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, webcams, and shared web surfing.

The curriculum for grades 9, 10, and 11 provide more online experience, as appropriate for secondary school learners. The Pennsylvania standards-aligned high school curriculum integrates digital versions of textbooks from major publishers (primarily Prentice Hall) enhanced by multimedia, interactive material, communication/ conferencing tools, and team projects. Top-quality third-party courseware elements are also included, including Aventa.

Students identified as needing additional instructional support are referred to our Student Support Team. The Student Support Team may recommend additional instructional support programs, such as Hooked on Phonics, Hooked on Math, HeadSprout, etc.

CCA employs a multitiered intervention model so that every student has access to the resources they need to be successful: Tier 1 — Core Instructional Program; Tier 2 — Supplemental Programs and Supports; Tier 3 — Alternative Programs; The school’s Student Support Team meets on a regular basis to discuss students who are struggling academically to develop an intervention plan and strategies for improvement.

Connections Academy’s curriculum is designed so that students in each progressive grade will work more independently with technology integrated more at each level as well. In Kindergarten students can expect to work with technology approximately 15% of their time while students in 12<sup>th</sup> grade may expect nearly 75%. The integration of the curriculum and the technology is accomplished through the numerous programs available, listed above, especially direct instruction through LiveLesson™.

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

CCA utilizes online, interactive instructional movies that incorporate graphics, video, and audio to explain the concepts and ideas the student needs to complete a lesson. These interactive, online “Teachlets™” are significantly more effective and entertaining than text alone. Interactive online instruction known as “LiveLesson™” is also used to enhance instruction and communications. With this tool, teachers can conduct live teaching sessions over the Internet to either a single student or a group. Additionally, courses utilize online asynchronous discussions where students are required to answer open-ended questions and respond to their peers and the teacher. This new technology is ideal for explaining difficult concepts, conducting review sessions or promoting discussion. Individual tutorial sessions can also be arranged to assist students with specific needs.

***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?***

The CCA placement test, pre-/post-testing program (LEAP), and PSSA tracking helps identify students who are at risk of academic failure. Students identified as working below grade level are provided with personalized instructional and curriculum interventions to bring them up to grade level, to ensure at least a year’s worth of academic growth over the course of each year, facilitate successful completion of core courses, and prepare them for success on the PS. Some of the interventions include:

- Implementing the PACE (Program for All Children to Excel) program providing small group tutorials for students scoring below proficient on PSSA Reading and/or Math
- Providing Hooked on Phonics  $\phi'$  to struggling readers in levels K-2 because CCA recognizes the importance of phonics education;
- Providing Hooked on Math  $\phi'$  to students struggling in basic mathematics skills in levels K-2 because CCA recognizes the importance of early math intervention
- Providing Skills Tutor to students as supplemental lessons for language arts, math, science, and social studies;
- Providing a computer-aided skills-based "Fast Track" programs to students significantly below grade level;
- The individualized, self-paced nature of the program allows students to attain mastery prior to moving on to the next lesson; and
- On line and in person live tutoring sessions are provided for students struggling with curriculum content.

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

Teachers are as important in a virtual school as they are in a conventional bricks-and-mortar school but since students and teachers are physically apart, it is very important to develop teaching strategies that bridge that gap. CCA teachers receive special instruction in using online communication tools such as email, message boards and interactive online classes to involve their students along with regular contact via telephone where teachers and students discuss their progress and lesson content. CCA's use of Teachlets and LiveLesson have been particularly effective in engaging the students. Older students are also required to participate in discussion groups and research projects where they interact extensively with other students and with their teacher.

**Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments**

- CCA Induction Plan
- CCA Act 48 Professional Development Plan

**English Language Learners**

**English Language Learners**

Several aspects of the CCA program prove beneficial for LEP students. The individualized pace of the program allows students to move more quickly through subjects where language is not a factor and spend more time on reading and writing activities; in fact, a teacher might re-prioritize the curriculum for an individual student to enable sustained concentration in a particular area. A CCA Curriculum Specialist and Teacher with ESL/LEP/ELL training and certification collaborate with teachers, learning coaches and students. ELL students receive appropriate supplemental resources and adaptations to curriculum. Additionally, CCA has expertise in various technologies that can facilitate language acquisition. The ESL teacher facilitates synchronous lessons using the internet for identified ELL students. A student's level of language acquisition dictates the frequency of LiveLessons as detailed in the English Language Learner Handbook for 2007-2008 and Pennsylvania Department of Education. CCA does recognize that the virtual environment may not be the best place for students with little or no English speaking proficiency, particularly if that student would be working in a home

environment where English is not spoken. CCA had eleven English Language Learners in 2007-08.

### **ELL Screening and Program**

An ELL Screening is conducted based upon the responses provided on the student's Home Language Survey. The ELL Coordinator contacts the family to determine if an error was made on the Home Language Survey and/or if the student participated in an ESL program at the previous school. If no error was made in completing the Home Language Survey and the family acknowledges a language other than English is spoken in the home the potential ELL students are administered the WAP-T test (WIDA- Access Placement Test) to determine their fluency level. Based on their test results they are placed into the appropriate ELL level (non English, beginner, intermediate, high intermediate, advanced). The WAP-T is a PA state approved screening program that is part of the WIDA testing program. The WAP-T does not require a certified ESL teacher for administration.

CCA uses multiple measures for determining placement and progress. Measures are informal and formal and include the WAP-T, curriculum-based assessments, teacher observations, portfolios, and standardized tests. Consideration is given to listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in addition to academic progress. CCA uses the state mandated ACCESS (Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners) to measure English language learner yearly progress. In order to meet PA's required exit criteria for English language instructional programs for ELLs, students must obtain:

1. A score of Basic on the PSSA assessment
2. Score of 5.0 on a Tier C ACCESS for ELLs assessment

In addition, one of the following criteria must be met:

3. Final grades of C or better in core subject areas
4. Scores on district-wide assessments that are comparable to the BASIC performance level on the PSSA.

For students in grades not assessed by the PSSA, CCA must use each of the remaining criteria listed to exit students...

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

- CA\_ELL\_Program\_Handbook

### **Graduation Requirements**

Graduation requirements were not applicable to CCA for the 2007-2008 school year.

### **Special Education**

In accordance with Chapter 711, CCA is committed to serving children with disabilities whether such children are currently or newly identified as disabled. Through a combination of appropriate certifications among our teaching staff, contracts with local school districts and private providers, and expertise in our centralized Education Resource Center, CCA will be able to meet the needs of special learners. In addition, CCA will consult with resources like Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN) and Pennsylvania's Initiative on Assistive Technology (PIAT) at Temple University in planning for and acquiring necessary technology to serve students with disabilities.

Since CCA is a program focused on individualization, flexibility and personalization it is often a very good fit for students with special needs. In addition to the regular placement test, CCA's special education placement specialist reviews each IEP analyzing the level of functioning, educational needs, and suggested accommodations/modifications to determine how CCA can meet the student's needs in the least restrictive environment. Thus, CCA can be an appropriate setting for students with special needs by providing:

- 1:1 individualized instruction
- A team of adults focused on student success
- Ongoing consultation with special educators, certified teachers, and curriculum specialists to assist with adapting and modifying assignments to meet specific student needs
- Personalized Learning Plans
- A safe and directed environment
- Reduced environmental distractions
- Frequent progress checks, evaluations and reports
- Technology to facilitate communication, organization and skill development
- Technology to address special needs (e.g., keyboarding or speech recognition software can address fine motor skills issues)
- Flexible schedule that allows for students to move at their own pace
- Ability to separate academics from socialization.

These factors, along with the presence of a caring and a committed adult (the learning coach) enable CCA to address the large majority of special needs students (approximately 75%) through the implementation of specific instructional approaches and learning strategies via a consultative service model. Included in this group would be mild to moderate disabilities in the following categories:

- Vision acuity difficulties
- Auditory deficiencies
- Health concerns
- Developmental articulation
- Developmental expressive language
- Developmental receptive language
- Gross motor skills
- Fine motor skills
- Developmental reading (dyslexia)
- Developmental writing
- Oral expression
- Written language
- Spelling
- Memory
- Handwriting

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- Developmental arithmetic
- Reasoning
- Emotional/Behavior
- Social communication
- Attention disorder

More serious and profound cases of the above, as well as specific physical and pervasive developmental disorders (e.g., autism, Asperger's, Rett's Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder), neurological disorders (e.g., Multiple Sclerosis), and physical disabilities will require direct service. If it is determined that CCA is a good educational fit for these students, these additional services can be provided through contracts with local school district, hospitals, non-profits, and private providers.

**Students entering CCA with an IEP:** During the enrollment phase, Connections and CCA staff will review each IEP and determine the level of each student's need and consider the types of services that are required. In most cases, CCA teachers can modify the student's program to provide the necessary accommodations. When possible, CCA will also contract with local service agencies to provide additional related services listed on the IEP that cannot be met directly by staff.

To support students with existing IEPs, CCA will:

- Conduct annual reviews of the IEP including a review of student progress with existing IEP, creation of new IEP goals, and obtaining parent consent for and approval of new IEP.
- Conduct Tri-annual reviews in which students are formally reassessed every 3 years.
- Conduct Bi-annual reviews of students identified as MR.

**Referring students for Special Education services:** If CCA suspects that a student requires special educational services, the following procedures will be initiated:

- The program teacher consults with the school's Special Education Supervisor and implements suggested modifications, lesson adaptations, and alternative instructional strategies. The program teacher documents all modifications and the student's level of success with each.
- The program teacher completes official Student Support Team referral. The parent is notified of this referral.
- The Student Support Team meets to review referral. If deemed appropriate by the team and a disability is suspected, the mandatory Special Education referral/evaluation process is begun. If not, the regular education program remains in place with further suggested program modifications.
- Parental consent for the student evaluation is obtained and the appropriate evaluations are arranged. Parents are sent a copy of *Procedural Safeguards*.
- Parent is invited to the multidisciplinary team meeting to review the assessment results. The team determines if the student has a disability and which special education services are required.
- IEP meeting is scheduled, and the parents are invited to attend. IEP goals are formulated and parent signs IEP.
- IEP is implemented.

As a public school CCA shall, through its policies and procedures, comply with all of the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. Seq. (IDEA, 2004), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 (sec. 504). CCA will provide a free

appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities, including, but not limited to, identifying, evaluating, planning educational programs, providing related services and implementing placements in accordance with those Acts.

**Special Education - Attachment**

- Handbook: including Special Education information

**Special Education Program Profile - Chart I**

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Schmick, Paige	1.00	Learning Support	CCA	46	N/A
Eckel, Amy	1.00	Learning Support	CCA	43	N/A
Schneider, Janet	1.00	Learning Support	CCA	47	N/A
Broderic, Jessica	1.00	Learning Support	CCA	42	N/A
Young, Casie	1.00	Learning Support	CCA	51	N/A
Sentz, Mary	1.00	Learning Support	CCA	50	N/A
Knaub, Regina	1.00	Learning Support	CCA	42	N/A
Reist, Jim	1.00	Learning Support	CCA	51	N/A
Klemen, Kristi	1.00	Learning Support	CCA	49	N/A

**Special Education Program Profile - Chart II**

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
NONE	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	N/A

**Special Education Program Profile - Chart III**

Title	Location	FTE
Rutt, Jan - Supervisor of Special Education	CCA Main Campus, 5010 Trindle Road, Mechanicsburg, PA	1.00

**Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV**

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
Therapy Source	SP/L, OT, PT, Psch	As Needed
Lincoln IU #12	OT, PT	As Needed
Dianne Henna, Ph.D.	Behavior Therapy	As Needed
The Children's Institute	SP/L, OT, PT, Asst. Tech.	As Needed
Crossroads Speech & Hearing	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Easter Seals, Western PA	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Pediatric Therapy Specialists	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Community Psychiatric Centers	Psych/Ed evals	As needed
Barbara McMillen	Psych/Ed evals	As needed
Linda J. Zimmerman, Psy. D.	Psych/Ed evals	As needed
David Swisher, Ph. D.	Psych/Ed evals, PT	As needed
Vocational and Psychological	Psych/Ed Evals	As needed

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Services		
Intermediate Unit #8	Psych/Ed evals	As needed
The Center for Pediatric Therapy, Inc.	SP/L, OT, PT, social skills groups	As needed
Dr. Constance Dent	Psych/ED evals	As needed
Ferrulli Speech Services	SP/L	As needed
Memorial Hospital	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
BLAST IU #17	Psych/Ed evals, Sp/l	As Needed
Theraplay	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Dr. Mitchell Scheiman	Vision Therapy	As Needed
CAMCO	OT, PT	As Needed
Glendale SD	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed
Elk Regional Health Center	SP/L, OT	As Needed
Mt. Nittany Medical Center	OT, SP/L, Audiology	As Needed
Strawberry Fields, Inc.	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
CEDAR School Psych Clinic	Psych/Ed evals	As needed
The Institute for Behavior Change	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed
Omni Speech Services	SP/L	As Needed
Bloomsburg Psych Center	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed
Intermediate Unit #5	Psych/Ed,SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Capital Area IU #15	Psych/Ed, OT, PT, SP/L	As Needed
Health South	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Byron Schreck, SLP, CCC	SP/L	As Needed
United Cerebral Palsy	OT, SP/L	As Needed
Cygnnet Pro Staffing, Inc,	Psych/Ed, SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Margaret Myers	OT	As Needed
Aaron Center	Psych/Ed, OT, PT, SP/L	As Needed
Allied Services/ John Heinz Institute	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Schreiber Pediatric Rehab Center	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Speech Care	SP/L, LiPS	As Needed
Melanie Bennetch	OT	As Needed
Cynthia Mlles and Assoc.	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Carol Walck Assoc.	SP/L, LiPS	As Needed
Pediatric Therapy Assoc. of Lehigh Valley	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Good Shepherd Rahb Hospital	Asst. Tech	As Needed
James Truscott, Ph. D.	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed
Family Rehab Services, Inc.	SP/L	As Needed
Counseling & Consulting Specialists	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed
Gillum Psych and Counseling Services	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed
Interim Health Care Home Care	PT	As Needed
Port Psych Services	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed

Laurel Assoc.	SP/L	As Needed
Pocono Speech Center	SP/L	As Needed
Geisinger Medical Center	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Easter Seals of S.E. PA	Psych/Ed, OT, SP/L, PT	As Needed
Charles Cole Memorial Hospital	SP_/L, OT, PT	As Needed
The Pottsville Hospital	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Psychological Assoc. of Schuylkill County	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed
G & E Therapies	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Wayne Memorial Hospital	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Dr. Mary Griffin	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed
Dr. William Hahn	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed
Cherry Tree Rehab Center	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Pediatric Therapy Assoc.	SP/L, OT, PT	As Needed
Brownstone Psych Services	Psych/Ed evals	As Needed

## SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

### Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA/PASA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local Assessment: LEAP (Math)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local Assessment: (DIBELS)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Local Assessment: LEAP (Reading)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

### Student Assessment - Secondary

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

### Student Assessment

Of the 767 students that took both the pre and post assessment in reading 94.9% made satisfactory progress on the LEAP Reading assessments. Of the 1106 students that took both the pre and post assessment in math 85.6% made satisfactory progress on the LEAP Math assessments.

CCA uses benchmarks and a pretest to place students at appropriate levels of instruction. Of course, the goal is to have all students obtain at least a year's growth in an academic term. With continued increase of on-line live lessons and tutoring sessions for students and learning coaches, CCA will continue to improve the results of the LEAP assessments.

The results of the PSSA assessments indicate that CCA is making AYP in all areas. CCA will continue to identify struggling students and offer more support in their areas of weakness. Examples of such support will include having students participate in PACE (Program for ALL

Children to Excel) which offers small group instruction targeting areas of difficulty determined by weekly pre and post tests. CCA teachers will also continue to implement accommodations and modifications to daily lessons to fit their learning styles and needs of each child. Learning Coaches will be invited to participate in Learning Coach Outreach Sessions around the state to improve their effectiveness. Currently there are many students achieving at a level below their grade of "official" record. The goal is to have students below grade level achieve more than a year's growth in one school term, in order to eventually be prepared to achieve proficiency or above on the state assessments.

The PSSA results show an increase in performance for all tested students from 60.0 to 61.5 in Reading and a consistency in Math at 55.3% proficient. In addition, CCA tested 221 more students in 2008 than in 2007 and still maintained the participation rate of more than 95%.

In 2008-2009 CCA is also going to continue use of Study Island, a leading provider of web-based state assessment preparation programs and standards based learning programs, to obtain more accurate bench marks and provide students practice and instruction in the targeted areas. CCA will also be using "Math 24 — First in Math" to provide students with on-line interactive challenges to develop and improve critical math skills. This is highly motivating program and has been proven to increase achievement in mathematics. CCA used this program in 2007-2008 and has seen its effects as PSSA Math scores increased as stated above. In addition, in 2007-2008, CCA used the Stock Market Game to improve math skills.

Teachers use CCA's Learning Management System to log all student successes and areas in need of improvement. On-line assessments as well as submitted portfolio materials are used to measure academic achievement and to identify areas in need of remediation.

Teachers use data collected from all assessments to determine individual tutoring needs. Teachers offer these tutoring sessions to students daily, Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

Head Sprout, Hooked on Phonics, Hooked on Math, Skills Tutor, Teachlets, Brain Pop, and United Streaming are all on line sources available for students to use.

## **Student Assessment - Attachments**

- PART I: Local Assessment Data
- Part II: Local Assessment Data

## **Teacher Evaluation**

The individuals responsible for conducting evaluations were the CEO, Dennis Tulli; Secondary Principal, Gregory Gettle; Secondary Assistant Principal, Gary Madden; Special Education Director, Jan Rutt; and Elementary Principal, Susan Shubert.

Gregory Gettle completed his administrative certification at Temple University. He has 35 years experience in public education including experience as a teacher, athletic director, assistant principal, and principal. Additionally he has conducted workshops, directed teacher in-services, participated in the development of teacher evaluation plans and evaluated teachers at the high school level.

Gary Madden received his Bachelor of Science from Shippensburg University as well as a Principal's Certificate and Superintendent Letter of Eligibility. He also holds a Masters Degree from Millersville University. He has over 36 years experience in education holding a variety of

positions in teaching and administration. Gary has had the opportunity to present professional development workshops and serve on many educational boards.

Jan Rutt acquired his instructional and supervisory certification in special education through Millersville University. He has 41 years experience in public and approved private school education, including experience as a teacher, work-study coordinator, director of education, CEO and supervisor of special education. He has conducted workshops and in-service programs, presented at various PDE and CEC conferences, and supervised and evaluated teachers and administrative staff K through 12.

Susan Shubert has five years of teaching experience and has a Masters Degree in Educational Administration with a Principal's Certification from Gwynedd-Mercy College. She has been with Commonwealth Connections Academy for 3 years. Susan has presented professional development workshops for teachers and administrators.

Dennis Tulli has been in education for over 35 years in various capacities including, classroom teacher, guidance counselor, assistant principal, principal, and superintendent. He has a Bachelors degree from Lebanon Valley College, a Masters Degree from Shippensburg University and a Doctorate in Educational Administration from Temple University. Dr. Tulli has been a member of several education organizations in the last 30 years.

All administrators receive ongoing training on management, supervision and employee relations.

The Board has instituted the following fair and objective process for teacher evaluations, following PDE requirements. All CCA professional employees are evaluated semiannually. The CCA instructional staff is observed on a regular basis and evaluated using a comprehensive, multi-layered evaluation system. To assure the highest quality teaching, CCA has set as its goal that the average teacher rating will be at least a 2 on scale of 0 to 3, where 3 = Exceeded Goal, 2 = Met Goal, 1 = Partially Met Goal and 0 = Did Not Meet Goal. Instructional I employees are evaluated using the Form PDE 426; Form PDE 428 is utilized for Instructional II employees; when a transition from level I to level II is indicated, Form PDE 427 is used.

### **Teacher Evaluation - Attachment**

- Professional Development Plan.doc

## **SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Leadership Changes**

In July of 2007, Susan Shubert was appointed Elementary Principal. In 2007-2008, David Carr resigned as Assistant Principal.

During 2007-2008, upon receiving Marcie Mulligan's resignation from the Board of Trustess, CCA sought a new member. Michelle Ciora was nominated as a trustee to the board.

### **Board of Trustees**

<b>Name of Trustee</b>	<b>Office (if any)</b>
David Taylor	President
Judith Miller	Treasurer and Secretary
Pamela Espinosa	
Gail Hawkins Bush	

Cheryl Lozier	
Michelle Ciora	
Jerry Bremelin	

**Professional Development (Governance)**

**Professional Training for the Board of Trustees**

Connections Academy hosted three separate Board Academies in Baltimore during the 2007-8 school year for training its Board members on effective Board governance. The Board Training was provided by Mark Cannon of the Greater Capacity Consortium to train Board members in Governance. Included were the following topics on Effective Board Governance: The Fundamentals, Non-Profit Responsibilities, Efficient Meeting Management and Quality Board Leadership. The training did touch on the Open Meeting Law. A majority of the Board: Judith Miller, Jerry Birmelin, Dave Taylor and Gail Hawkins Bush attended.

Board members were also provided the opportunity, and the budget provided for reimbursement to Board members for attending at both the Pennsylvania State Charter School Conference as well as the National Charter School Conference in New Orleans. Gail Hawkins Bush attended as the representative for the CCA Board at the National Charter School Conference. At this Conference, Ms. Hawkins Bush was also able to meet and learn from other Board members from Connections Schools across the country.

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

*Management organization of the school:*

Commonwealth Connections Academy Board of Trustees governs the school. The CCA Board has engaged Connections Academy, LLC. (Connections) to manage the school under the terms of the Professional Management Services Agreement it has entered into with Connections. The operating structure of the school is similar to a traditional educational environment with school principals who supervise an administrative staff and teachers. The school CEO manages the school day-to-day in accordance with the policies and procedures as approved by the Board. All personnel decisions concerning the CEO and the teachers as well as all financial decisions are the responsibility of the Board. The Board is a policy making Board and responsible for the oversight of the school and for ensuring the performance of Connections, or its successor, in accordance with its obligations under its agreement with the Board. The Board will continue to utilize its accounting and legal advisors, with their significant experience in charter school matters, to assist them in the performance of its duties. The Board ensures it is compliant with the requirements of the PDE as set out in the Charter and also keeps regular communication with the PDE.

**Attached: Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule:**

- A) CCA Board meeting Schedule 2007-2008
- B) CCA Board Meeting Schedule 2008-2009

**Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachments**

- CCA Board meeting Schedule 2007-2008

- CCA Board Meeting Schedule 2008-2009

## **Community and Parent Engagement**

### **School Community**

Commonwealth Connections Academy students are members of a variety of communities: the community of their extended family, the geographic community in which they live, the community of CCA, and the broader world to which we are all connected. With the help of technology, the CCA instructional program integrates these communities into students' learning through team projects with family members and local CCA peers, and through local community service activities that allow students to apply their academic skills in a real-world context while interacting with other CCA students in their immediate geographic areas. Some of the community connection initiatives used in other Connections Academy schools that will also be a part of CCA are numerous field trips to educational and entertainment centers, interactive educational initiatives, newsletters, student newspapers, and yearbook. Ultimately, CCA will provide some of the building blocks for each student's sense of community, fostering a very real sense of citizenship.

**Relationship of school with the surrounding community:** The 12 CCA community coordinators draw upon local community resources for information about events, lessons, activities, services, performance and other opportunities that might benefit CCA students and families, and use the technology to make this information easily accessible to all CCA families.

**Parent involvement:** Parent involvement is a centerpiece of the Commonwealth Connections Academy concept. As learning coaches (or those who oversee a designated learning coach), parents/guardians are intimately familiar with their child's progress on a day-to-day basis at CCA. The school offers ongoing training and support to help learning coaches carry out their important role while making optimum use of the available technology tools and professional teacher support to do so. In addition, teachers employ Personalized Learning Plan-based electronic progress reports to formally communicate students' academic achievement to students and their learning coaches.

**Parental and student involvement in decision-making:** In addition to the important role they play in their own children's day-to-day learning, parents/guardians are also integrally involved in shaping CCA and making certain that it fulfills its overall mission. Parents play an active role on the Board of Trustees (see above). In addition, both parents and staff serve in ad hoc work groups and committees as needed to advise the Board or the school administration on specific matters of interest and concern.

**The parent or other learning coach.** The parent/learning coach, under the direction of a certified teacher, uses the CCA online daily lesson plans, technology-based curriculum and print learning materials to fulfill the student's detailed electronic Personalized Learning Plan. Learning coaches meet regularly via webmail, phone, or instant message with their CCA teacher to facilitate instruction and review the student's progress. Learning coaches sign a learning coach agreement with CCA, which helps ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear. In addition, the parent/learning coach (and the student) is provided a complete Handbook of information regarding the curriculum, attendance procedures, assessments, technology, etc.

**The community coordinators.** These individuals are parents of students in the school who receive a stipend from Connections in order to create opportunities for community projects, field trips and group meetings with other students and parents. The community coordinators use technology to post upcoming events to special online forums dedicated to such events, and make extensive use of webmail to mobilize families to participate. Through the technology, community coordinators serve as information clearinghouses for local extra-curricular activities and events.

Some of the events planned by community coordinators schools included field trips to science museums, art museums, and zoos; factory tours; and ice skating and pool parties.

## **SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

No activities were held this year, and none are planned for next year.

### **Fiscal Solvency Policies**

In order to maintain fiscal solvency, CCA Charter School reviews all incoming expenses at the school's public board meetings on a monthly basis. A detailed cash flow is projected on a monthly basis for the fiscal year and is also reviewed at each board meeting. All projections are made on the basis of conservative assumptions in order to ensure that the school maintains a positive fund balance. The school also manages its finances to ensure that it builds up a fund balance sufficient to ensure that it can meet payroll and other obligations even if there is a delay in payment from school districts or the PDE. CCA plans to continue to build on that balance each year with a goal of having at least several months of operating capital available. Any current cash shortfalls are covered through an arrangement with its management partner to defer payment until the school receives its funding. Due to its continued growth and conservative fiscal management, the school has reserved a portion of its fund balance for future expansion and technology needs.

### **Accounting System**

The school currently uses Quickbooks accounting software which utilizes the PDE Chart of Accounts.

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

- Revenues-Expenditures-FundBalances for FY08 prepared 07212008

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

The independent accounting firm engaged by CCA Charter School is Siegal and Drossner, PC which issued an unqualified opinion on November 14, 2007 for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007. The board has engaged this same firm for the fifth year to conduct its audit for the year ended June 30, 2008, which is scheduled to occur by the end of September.

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

- Auditor's Annual Report

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

In 2007-2008, CCA was audited by the State Auditor General's office. CCA is still awaiting feedback from the review.

## **SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

The location of the Mechanicsburg office is: 5010 Trindle Road, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050.  
The location of the Philadelphia office is: 2085 N. 63rd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19151.  
The future location of the Pittsburgh office is: Penn Center Monroeville, #400, 201 Penn Center Boulevard, Pittsburgh, PA 15235.  
The future location of the Pocono - Lehigh office is: Grant Professional Plaza, #203, 613 Blakeslee Boulevard Drive East, Lehigh, PA 18235.

As a virtual charter school, CCA was not required to have a physical facility for day to day learning. Students worked from the setting of their family's choice. Sufficient office furniture, computers, duplicating equipment and other related office equipment was purchased to have the two offices fully operational. The school spent approximately \$117,423 on furniture and equipment for its two school locations in 2007-08.

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

Due to expected enrollment growth for 2008-09, the school is pursuing expansion opportunities in both of its existing locations, as well as the addition of two new office locations. The office locations are listed above. \$307,125 has been budgeted for capital expenditures to support this expansion. These expenditures would be primarily for employee workstations (cubicles), furniture (chairs, conference tables, etc.), copiers, printers, computer equipment, and fax machines.

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

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

#### School Health Services

CCA follows all applicable local and state health regulations and requires parents and guardians of all students to present certificates of PA required immunization upon enrollment. A request for school records (including health records) is made with all districts of residence upon enrollment.

When necessary, school officials work with families to arrange immunizations with local health practitioners. The school communicates with and files all required reports with the Department of Health of the Commonwealth within the prescribed time. The school also maintains health records and has them open for inspection. The school has also contracted with a physician, dentist, and nurse to provide services to students as required. The report for 07-08 has not been submitted and is due in October 2008. The information for 06-07 has been loaded on a file. This includes a check received in 2008 and documents for 06-07.

#### Safety

CCA does not have an instructional facility, but instead, operates offices in the Mechanicsburg and Philadelphia areas for its administrative staff and teaching staff. CCA complies with all required federal, state, and local health and safety laws and regulations regarding these offices. CCA also has a comprehensive Safe School / Emergency Plan.

#### **Commonwealth Connections Academy Comprehensive Safe School / Emergency Plan Procedures that should be implemented in case of an emergency at all CCA offices:**

- All visitors need to sign in/out every visit.
- During an evacuation of the building the principal/designee must remove the sign in register from the building.
- All visitors should receive a name tag.
- An exterior sign should be displayed indicating the main entrance to the school.

## Commonwealth Connections Academy CS - Charter Annual Report

- All office entrance doors should have a sign stating the school's name.
- The staff should be made aware when a visitor is in the office.
- Any fire extinguisher cabinets/alarms in a CCA office should be marked.
- All fire exits should be visible and in working order.
- Fire plans/emergency evacuation maps should be posted and practiced. Emergency Red Cross First Aid Kit should be available.
- Schools should use the National Weather Service Web Site for monitoring weather in case of an emergency <http://www.noaa.gov/>
- There should be ongoing training of all staff members in expectations during emergency situations.
- Fire/emergency drills should be held once a month. Date of drill should be recorded with evacuation time.
- The following local and state emergency management agencies' phone numbers should be available at each facility.
  - Fire department
  - Law enforcement
  - Medical emergency services
  - Local and state mental health and medical health officials

### **Specific Emergency Plans for CCA Schools**

In the event of a fire:

- The fire alarm should be pulled if it has not already been done.
- The principal/designee should contact the fire department.
- The visitor sign in/out sheet should (if possible) be taken by the principal/designee. The principal/designee should verify that all visitors have exited the building.
- All staff members should have a designated buddy. The role of the buddy is to verify that their buddy has exited the building.
- All staff and visitors should evacuate and follow the fire drill route whenever possible. If primary route is blocked or dangerous then the alternate route should be followed. These routes should be posted in the office.
- If an individual is trapped then he/she should go to the designated area in which they can seek shelter. This will assist the fire department when searching for individuals.
- The principal/designee should meet with the emergency officials as soon as possible.
- No one should reenter the building until they are declared safe. The principal/designee will notify everyone when and if this occurs.

In the event of a lockdown:

- The principal/designee should announce "lockdown" to all staff and visitors.
- Call 911.
- Everyone should be inside the building with all exterior doors closed.
- All interior doors should also be closed/locked in case an intruder gets inside the building.
- Make sure that a head count is taken of all staff and visitors.
- Keep clear of all windows.

In the event of a medical emergency:

## Commonwealth Connections Academy CS - Charter Annual Report

- Call 911.
- Do not attempt to move the victim. This may cause more harm to the victim (unless she/he is in danger).
- Make sure the victim is breathing. Initiate CPR, only staff member who is trained should perform CPR.
- Initiate first aid if needed, only if staff member is trained.
- When emergency staff has arrived provide them with information about the incident.
- The principal/designee will notify the Vice President of Operations of the emergency.

In the event of an evacuation:

- The principal/designee initiates evacuation procedures.
- Based on what type of emergency will determine what evacuation plans should be followed.
  - In an event of a fire, follow the fire emergency plans.
  - In all other events, all staff and visitors should evacuate following the designated route that has been determined in the building.
    - The principal/designee should call 911.
    - The visitor sign in/out sheet should (if possible) be taken with a designee. The designee can verify that all visitors have exited the building.
    - All staff members should have a designated buddy. The role of the buddy is to verify that their buddy has exited the building.
    - All staff and visitors should evacuate and follow the emergency route whenever possible. If primary route is blocked or dangerous then the alternate route should be followed. These plans should be posted in the office.
    - If an individual is trapped then he/she should go to the designated area in which they can seek shelter (if possible). This will assist the emergency staff when searching for individuals.
    - The principal/designee should meet with the emergency officials as soon as possible.
    - No one should reenter the building until they are declared safe. The principal/designee will notify everyone when and if this occurs.
- CCA schools should have an area that can be used as a shelter in case someone is trapped when an emergency occurs or in case all staff and visitors need to retreat to the shelter for safety because they are unable to evacuate the building. Procedures are as follows:
  - Each Connections school should identify an area that is safe within their office.
  - Principal/designee should announce that everyone must go to the shelter.
  - All windows and doors should be closed.
  - Everyone remains in shelter until principal/designee or emergency person declares that it is safe.
  - The principal/designee will notify the Vice President of Operations of the emergency.

## Commonwealth Connections Academy CS - Charter Annual Report

- All CCA schools should have a shelter away from the school off school property that can be used if evacuation is required and returning to the school is delayed.

\* In all of these scenarios the principal/designee should gather and record pertinent information (when appropriate) in order to decide if everyone should be evacuated or try to provide shelter within the building.

\* Regular drills of different emergencies should be conducted throughout the school year. This will assure that staff members are trained in case one of these emergencies should occur.

\* If students are at any CCA school without their parent then they can only be released to those known parents or guardians that the school has been made aware of.

\* Parents/guardians/Learning Coaches should be familiar with the emergency plans in order to ensure the safety of their children.

### **Resources for Families**

-

[http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0\\_256\\_00.html](http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_256_00.html) (Evacuation Plan-This is a good resource for families to use to prepare for an emergency within their home.)

[http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0\\_78\\_00.html](http://www.redcross.org/services/prepare/0,1082,0_78_00.html) (Emergency Contact Card-Families can download an American Red Cross Emergency Contact Card.)

<http://www.ready.gov/kids/index.html> (This is a web site in which students can learn how to prepare for an emergency.)

<http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/terrorism.pdf> (This is a good resource for parents. This gives suggestions of what families should think about before an emergency should occur.)

### **Wellness Program**

The law requires each LEA participating in the NSLP and/or the SBP to develop a local wellness policy. CCA does not provide breakfast or lunch to students and does not participate in the NSLP or the SBP. Therefore, CCA is not required to have a wellness program.

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

- Health Report 2007

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

#### **Current School Insurance**

CCA has obtained property and casualty insurance coverage from OneBeacon Insurance through Diversified Insurance Industries. It has obtained D&O/EPL insurance from Westchester Fire Insurance Company through Arthur J. Gallagher & Co. Insurance Brokers of California, Inc.

The following limits are in effect:

General Liability;

- \$1,000,000 each occurrence;
- \$500,000 damage to rented premises each occurrence
- \$10,000 MED EXP (Any one person)
- \$1,000,000 personal & adv injury
- \$2,000,000 general aggregate

Automobile Liability

- \$1,000,000 combined single limit (ea accident)

Excess/Umbrella Liability

- \$20,000,000 each occurrence
- \$20,000,000 aggregate

Workers Compensation

- \$1,000,000 E.L. each accident
- \$1,000,000 E.L. each disease
- \$1,000,000 E.L. Disease - policy limit

Blanket EDP of \$2,650,000

D&O/EPL

- \$1,000,000 aggregate

Health insurance is provided to teachers through Capital Blue Cross.

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

- Certificate of Insurance

## **SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS**

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

The 2007-08 school year ended with sixty eight highly qualified teachers (two teachers working towards highly qualified status), one School Counselor, two Curriculum Coordinators, one Community Involvement Coordinator, one Special Education Supervisor, one Assistant Principal, two Principals, and one CEO. Of the sixty eight highly qualified teachers, forty returned to CCA from 2006-2007. Because of increased enrollment at the start of 2007-2008, additional highly qualified teachers were recruited. During the year four teachers resigned. All were replaced with highly qualified teachers. Also, due to increasing enrollment fifteen additional teachers were deemed and hired during the year (included in the seventy one present at the end of the year).

At the end of 2007-2008 year two teachers resigned. One of the two who resigned, did so to seek employment in a bricks and mortar setting. The second teacher resigned for personal reasons.

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

- Evidence of Submission for Elementary and Secondary Professional Personnel Report
- PDE-414 Verification 2007-2008

### **Student Enrollment**

### **Enrollment Procedures**

Commonwealth Connections Academy abides by all PDE policies and guidelines for pupil admission and will not impose admission requirements that are inconsistent with PDE policies and guidelines. CCA does not discriminate against pupils on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability or handicap in its education programs or activities. Through its recruitment/marketing and application guidance activities, CCA discloses full details about its program and encourages families to carefully consider its academic and parental involvement demands before applying. CCA also provides tools (such as an online self-quiz and contact with a Connections Academy education counselor if desired) to help parents decide whether CCA is truly the right fit for their children and themselves.

Upon expressing interest in Commonwealth Connections Academy materials are sent to each family at the home address provided with explicit instructions for completion of the process so that the parent is aware of what to expect. Commonwealth Connections Academy families receive a complete set of enrollment documents and instructions for completion of the enrollment process via the mail and through the web site and upon submission of a complete set of documents to the Enrollment staff an enrollment counselor will verify all required documents within the Learning Management System and determine each student's eligibility. The information collected and verified during the enrollment process are the following:

- family and student information,
- proof of age,
- proof of residency,
- charter school notification form,
- parent/legal guardian (caretaker) acknowledgment,
- a copy of the most recent report card if applicable,
- immunization records,
- statement of disciplinary history,
- family income form,
- and IEP/504 plan if applicable.

An enrollment counselor will contact the family throughout the process via mail, webmail, email and/or by phone to discuss incomplete or missing information that may delay completion of the process. Families also have online access to their accounts and can view the progress they are making with the enrollment process (ie. Whether faxes were received, when they were received, and if any or all of their documents have been verified for eligibility).

During the eligibility verification process the enrollment staff will acknowledge the receipt of the enrollment form with an update to the family's online account and along with the web access to view missing information enrollment staff will contact the family by mail, webmail, email and/or phone to let the parent know if there are any missing documents. When families need assistance they are directed to contact enrollment staff via a toll-free number or to send an internal webmail or to send requests via email. As soon as these documents are completed by the family and sent back, the student is ready for the next step. At this time, the family will receive a call from the enrollment counselor finally confirming the family's intention to enroll into the program and confirm their address and grade placement are accurate. Neither materials nor curriculum will be shipped until the parent verifies shipping address and final intentions for the upcoming school year.

No lottery was necessary for the 2007-2008 school year and no students were placed on a waiting list.

**In that CCA was a K-11 program (K-12 in 2008-2009), the entry requirements are the same for each grade. However, in order for students to enroll in kindergarten, they must be five years old by September 1 or not less than 4 by September 1 and complete a kindergarten readiness assessment.**

	9/6/07	5/31/08
<b>Enrollment</b>		
Kindergarten	88	121
First	116	141
Second	99	126
Third	121	141
Fourth	131	165
Fifth	125	149
Sixth	134	169
Seventh	128	196
Eighth	144	190
Ninth	158	314
Tenth	115	243
Eleventh	86	139
<b>Total</b>	<b>1445</b>	<b>2092</b>

The majority of enrollment takes place from the middle of July through August, though the students continue to enroll during the entire school year.. The actual number of students returning for the 2008-2009 school year is not yet available. CCA expects that at least 70% of the 2007-2008 students will return based on the fact that 81% of students enrolled at the end of 2007-2008 indicated a preliminary intent to return.

Due to CCA's virtual format, a higher number of students withdraw from the school than in a traditional bricks and mortar school. Reasons for leaving CCA are documented in the chart above. When any student leaves the school, the resident school district is informed immediately. CCA did not expel or suspend any students in 2006-2007. CCA expects to continue to have the enrollment increase. The areas of most growth are in the Bethlehem, Stroudsburg, Philadelphia, and Pittsburg areas. The projected enrollment for CCA's K-12 program in 2008-2009 is 3,000 students. As CCA's enrollment grows, highly qualified teachers will be added to the staff.

**Transportation**

CCA does not provide transportation.

**Food Service Program**

CCA does not have a Food Service Program.

**Student Conduct**

a) Appropriate conduct is expected of all students at the school. School students are guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment to the Constitution. The student's code of conduct will be explained in the school's handbook and includes steps to be followed in the event of misbehavior. All of Chapter 12 regulations are followed in the discipline policy.

## Commonwealth Connections Academy CS - Charter Annual Report

b) For 2007-2008, CCA did not have any suspensions or expulsions.

Attachments: Discipline Policies: See attachments A) 2007-2008 School Handbook (General Portion)

B) 2007-2008 School Handbook (CCA)

### **Student Conduct - Attachments**

- 2007 2008 School Handbook (CCA)
- 2007 2008 School Handbook (General Portion)

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

**School Year: 2008**

The Commonwealth Connections Academy CS within Capital Area IU 15 assures that the charter school will comply with the requirements of 22 PA Code Chapter 711 and with the policies and procedures of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). PDE will specify, in writing, policies and procedures to be followed. Requests for any deviations from these regulations, policies, and procedures must be made in writing to PDE. The charter school assures:

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Board President** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Chief Executive Officer** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**  
**2008 - 2009 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools**

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

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

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

**Name** Dennis Tulli

**Title** C.E.O.

**Phone** 717-605-8900 Ext 318

**Fax** 717-796-9019

**E-mail** dtulli@connectionsacademy.com

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*Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date*

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

**Name** David Taylor

**Title** Board President

**Phone** 717-605-8900

**Fax** 717-796-9019

**E-mail** dtaylor@connectionsacademy.com

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

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

**Name** Jan Rutt

**Title** Supervisor Of Special Education

**Phone** 717-605-8900 Ext 328

**Fax** 717-796-9214

**E-mail** jrutt@connectionsacademy.com

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*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*

**Signature Page**

**Signature Page - Attachment**

- Signature Page