# Pennsylvania Department of Education

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
**Department of Education**
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

# Charter Annual Report

**Monday, December 28, 2009**
**(Last Accepted: Monday, December 28, 2009)**

**Entity:** Achievement House CS
**Address:** 1021 W Lancaster Ave
Suite 207
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-2635

# CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

## Summary Data Part I

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

**Name of School:** Achievement House CS

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** 07/02/04 initial 07/05/07 renewal

**Length of Charter:** intial charter 3 years/renewal 5 years **Opening Date:** 09/13/04

**Grade Level:** 9 - 12 **Hours of Operation:** 8:00am - 4:00pm

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 88.33% **Total Instructional Staff:** 20

**Student/Teacher Ratio:** 19.5:1 **Student Waiting List:** 0

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** 100%

## Summary Data Part II

**Enrollment:** 301 **Per Pupil Subsidy:** $8700.00

**Student Profile**

| | |
|---|---|
| **American Indian/Alaskan Native:** | 1 |
| **Asian/Pacific Islander:** | 2 |
| **Black (Non-Hispanic):** | 33 |
| **Hispanic:** | 19 |
| **White (Non-Hispanic):** | 229 |
| **Multicultural:** | 15 |

**Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:** 51.76%

**Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December:** 69

## Instructional Days and Hours

| Number of: | K (AM) | K (PM) | K (F.Time) | Elem. | Middle. | Sec. | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Instructional Days | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 180 | 180 |
| Instructional Hours | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 990 | 990 |

## SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Educational Community

Achievement House Charter School is a cyber charter school that is committed to serving students in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Grades 9 — 12. Our enrollment ranged between 301 to 199 after 2009 graduation. Our enrollment goal for the 2009-2010 school -year is 450. For the 2009-2010 school year, we intend to add Grades 7 and 8 if there is sufficient enrollment in each of those grade levels. Many of our students are at the extreme ends of the spectrum with respect to learning abilities. Some of them are exceptionally bright and energetic to the point that their performance is adversely affected when held back by curriculum paced at the average student's ability. Others struggle with concepts and need learning support to maintain pace with the average rate of student learning. We also have a very high percentage of special education students. At the close of this year, our special education population was approximately 30%. Additionally, we have many students who have non-educational challenges that make it more difficult to attend school in a brick and mortar environment. Examples often cited include pregnancy, young children, their own physical illness or the physical illness of family members, or the need for outside employment. Our environment enables these students to continue their education while being able to address their other responsibilities. Most of our students seek an environment that can be adjusted to their learning pace and which is free of social pressures. Our current program has

proven to be rigorous, yet offers sufficient flexibility, to meet the educational needs of students across the learning spectrum.

## Mission

The mission of Achievement House Charter School is dedicated to providing a comprehensive high school curriculum, individually designed to meet each student's needs. Achievement House Charter School integrates quality services and educational programs, state-of-the-art technology, research-based curriculum development and instructional practices into a dynamic, non-traditional learning community. Achievement House Charter School is committed to providing to all students continual opportunities to achieve individual excellence, appreciate human value, contribute positively to a changing world, and become a contributing, life-long learner and a globally responsible citizen. The school will combine:

Intensive student/teacher and mentor contact
A schedule with more time on task
Additional parental involvement
Increased advanced technological tools plus online curriculum
A curriculum that meets state standardds plus special supplementary internet materials and project-based learning
Extracurricular instruction in life skills;social skills;study skills, and resilence
Stimulating lesson assignment
Daily monitoring of the student's progress and tutoring as needed to provide a very supportive environment.

Achievement House Charter School will continue to implement the current mission statement.

## Vision

Achievement House Charter School is comprised of a cohesive, supportive group of dedicated staff, students, parents, and community members united in our commitment to pursue excellence in education. We intend to realize our highest potential as an educational community by setting clear, measurable goals, employing best practices, engaging in effective communication, and utilizing resources wisely. We will use our successes as a catalyst for future growth, change, and improvement. In the future, Achievement House Charter School plans to utilize advanced technology for lesson planning and recording student achievement; modifying online curriculum, and developing additional project-based learning.

## Shared Values

- We believe that our school community must be an emotionally and intellectually safe environment in which to learn and lead.

- We believe that student learning is our first responsibility. Each student is an individual to be treated with dignity and respect. This begins with self-respect.

- We believe all individuals can be successful learners. Learning styles are celebrated and respected.

- We believe that the school, family, and community have a shared responsibility to help students develop critical qualities such as integrity, perseverance, and resiliency.

- We believe that excellence is a journey and demands conscientious effort.

- We believe that all individuals have gifts, talents, and intrinsic worth. We respect and recognize the unique contribution of the staff in creating a positive learning environment.

- We believe that all students and their families have a personal responsibility to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by Achievement House Charter School.

- We believe the responsibility for a life-long education is shared by the student, school, family, and community.

- We believe that active communication and participation between and among parents, community members, and Achievement House Charter School is essential at all times in order to ensure the success of all the goals.

- We believe that parents and community members have the responsibility of being actively involved in the student's successful education accomplishments and development of life-long learning skills.

- We believe that high standards encourage high achievement.

- We believe that open and honest communication promote mutual understanding and trust.

Achievement House Charter School continues to believe that each of these values will be the focus of our educational program.

## Academic Standards

Achievement House Charter School accepts and uses the academic standards as they appear in Chapter 4, 4.12 of the School Code. Achievement House Charter School also accepts any additional standards as approved by the state as they appear in an amended Chapter 4. All curriculum will be aligned to the state standards focusing on the assessment of the current standards. All teachers will receive professional development during the 2009-10 on each of the standards for their certified areas.

## Strengths and Challenges

Strengths and Challenges

The Achievement House Charter School staff consistently seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of its educational program and its ability to meet the needs of its students. Examples of the self-evaluation process includes the following: (1)analysis of performance data; (2)analysis of parent, student and staff surveys; (3) frequent communication with parents, students, and staff in a variety of formats, (i.e. informal, individual conversation, monthly chats, and staff meetings); (4) meetings of the Student Success Team; (5) exit interviews with parents and/or students; (6) Faculty Advisory Committee meetings; (7) Best Practices meetings for staff; and (8) regularly scheduled meetings of the management team. Open communication between staff and administration, through the expression of concerns or suggestions, is encouraged and valued. Results from surveys continue to be a challenge. Information from chat rooms and one to one interviews proved more successful in 2008-09. The staff will continue to review survey results during the 2009-10 school year.

Recognizing that improvement is an active, ongoing, and synergistic process, Achievement House Charter School is focusing on improving the following areas:

**Increasing student retention —** Achievement House Charter School will be more thorough in evaluating and analyzing data relative to student withdrawals/disenrollments. Increased contact by mentors, responsiveness to attendance irregularities and decreased academic performance, exit interviews with all withdrawing students and responding to student or parents questions, or concerns, within a twenty-four hour period should all serve to increase student retention. In the 2009-2010 school year, Achievement House Charter School staff will focus on decreasing 10-day withdraw rates through the methods referenced above. We will also increase our efforts to get exit interviews with all withdrawing students, voluntary and involuntary.

**Increasing student motivation —** Achievement House Charter School is working to increase the student's sense of community and expected levels of academic performance and communication. Students who feel part of a positive learning community will be more motivated and committed to succeed. Examples of strategies to be utilized to achieve this goal will include, but not be limited to, the following: (1) public recognition of student accomplishment, both within the school and in the students' communities; (2) two live 90 minute virtual classes each week in each subject area to increase interactive learning; (3) recording of live virtual chats enabling 24 hour access for skill recovery; (4)continued development of stimulating and challenging lessons utilizing the UDB template and curriculum mapping; (5) student participation in one-on-one and small group tutoring sessions; (6) increased analysis formative and summative and other disaggregated data to make informed instructional decisions; and (7) increasing formal and informal contact between staff and students. There is ongoing discussion related to increasing successful methods to encourage appropriate informal interaction between students and between students and staff.

**Increasing performance on PSSA Math and Reading tests —** Achievement House Charter School has implemented many programs to support and encourage students who are struggling in Math and Reading. One-on-one and small group tutoring sessions have continued to be provided for all students. The number of live virtual classes taught has doubled. The live virtual classes are recorded to enable students to review key concepts as often as necessary. We will continue to offer the PSSA Power Prep Program. The Power Prep Program offers extra opportunities to increase scores by providing diagnostic and remedial instruction in math and reading and instruction in test-taking skills. Study Island is also used to support reading and math proficiency.

**Increasing parental involvement —** Achievement House Charter School will continue to offer additional opportunities for parent involvement with the school. Specific examples will include increased participation in Career Week presentations, volunteering for school activities, and helping to plan and coordinate regional visitations. Increased parent communications through school-wide announcements have also been planned.

**Increasing student interest in college attendance —** Achievement House Charter School has and will continue to encourage graduates to pursue post-secondary schooling. There is a full-time guidance counselor on staff to assist students in assessing and planning important life and post-high school opportunities, such as applying to colleges, technical schools, and other types of post-secondary education/career choices. The guidance counselor also offers a required course, Transitions, to offer information and direction to students in post high school graduation possibilities. This year, Achievement House has received more communication from students about their post-high school plans and has seen an increase in students sharing information about their post-secondary education plans. Congratulatory announcements were posted on the school site to acknowledge student acceptances to post-secondary institutions and to encourage other students to share their information and to pursue these opportunities. Additionally, the guidance counselor offers a career week for the students that includes live discussions with

professionals from a variety of careers. Achievement House plans to continue their emphasis on disseminating information relating to post-secondary choices and to continue to offer support for students in accessing these options. The faculty will continue to model positive learning behavior and emphasize the importance of students furthering their education upon graduation from high school.

While it is always necessary to be vigilant of the school's weaknesses and areas of needed improvement, it is equally significant to acknowledge the school's accomplishments. Achievement House Charter School feels that we have excelled in the following areas:

**PSSA Participation** — In the 2008-2009 school year, Achievement House succeeded in attaining 100% participation in all PSSA testing for the third consecutive year. We feel that this is a major accomplishment recognizing the geographic challenges specific to PSSA testing in a cyber school environment. We attribute this success to our PSSA Power Prep and consistent communication with students and parents regarding PSSA testing.

**PSSA Writing Test Proficiency —** In the 2008-2009 school year, our students successfully completed the Writing PSSA with 100% participation and had no students scoring below basic. Over 50% of the total number of students who tested scored in the proficient or advanced. Success for this accomplishment is credited to the staff's persistence in requiring writing across the curriculum for all students. Additional opportunities for writing prowess are also emphasized in the PSSA Power Prep Program.

**PSSA Math and Reading Test Proficiency —** In the 2008-2009 school year, our students showed improvement in both Reading and Math PSSA performance.

**A Successful Special Education Program —** In the recently received AHCS charter renewal from the PDE, the document states that relative to the special education program, "there were no issues pending related to the school" and that our "policies meet the requirement of both state and federal law." It further elaborates "the current advisor reports that over the past 18 months the school has demonstrated compliance consistently…" The success of the Special Education Program, and its department, can be directly attributed to the special education staff's attention to the needs of its students and to keeping apprised of changes in special education requirements and law. Success can also be attributed to the positive collaboration between special education and regular education staff in meeting students' needs.

**Excellent Mentor Support —** Since the inception of AHCS, the mentoring program has distinguished itself as a key component of the school's success. Data analysis from parent and student communications, school exit interviews, and other feedback opportunities have noted consistent feedback regarding the positive effect that our mentors have had on student academic and personal successes. We again received a number of letters from our students and families indicating the large role the mentors played in assisting the student to have a successful learning experience. We attribute this feedback to the hard work and dedication of our mentors in reaching out to and developing positive relationships with their individual students.

# SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

## Strategic Planning Process

Dr. Alexander Grande attended workshops previewing the development of the Annual Report prior to our initial submission through E-Strat. Dr. Dale Baker again served as a

consultant in the development of the Annual Report. Dr. Baker has conferenced with IU15 which runs the PDE workshops and updated information for completing the 2009 report. Dr. Baker is listed as a resource for charter schools in preparing the Annual Report with the Pennsylvania Coalition of Charter Schools.
A committee of classroom teachers, special education staff, mentors, technology staff, student services, and administrative personnel provide information for the updated Annual Report. The Board of Trustees approved the final draft of the Annual Report which was submitted August 1, 2008 and will review and approve the 2008-2009 report prior to submission. The Teacher Induction Plan was approved on June 17, 2008 through September 30, 2013. The Professional Education Plan was approved on June 17, 2008 for a period of three years. The Technology Plan was approved on June 30, 2008 through June 30, 2011. The Student Services Plan was approved on April 2, 2008. The review of all E-Strategic Reports provided information and direction for the development of the Annual Report.

## Strategic Planning Committee

| Name | Affiliation | Membership Category | Appointed By |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ann Marie Daly | AHCS | | Management Team |
| Cheryl VanBuskirk | Community | Community Representative | Board of Trustees |
| Constance Frownfelter-Brooks | AHCS | Special Education Representative | Management Team |
| Dave Sutter | AHCS | | Management Team |
| Dr. Alexander Grande III | AHCS | Administrator | Management Team |
| Dr. Dale Baker | CES | | Management Team |
| Jennifer Archibald | AHCS | Secondary School Teacher | Management Team |
| Jill Boisvert | AHCS | Secondary School Teacher | Management Team |
| Julie Ambrose | Parent | Parent | Board of Trustees |
| Ruth Wallace | AHCS | Ed Specialist - School Nurse | Management Team |
| Ryan Schumm | CSC | Business Representative | Management Team |
| Sharry Wanner | AHCS | | Management Team |
| Sue Stiver | AHCS | Secondary School Teacher | Management Team |

## Goals, Strategies and Activities

# *Goal:* FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATE (for districts and schools that graduate seniors)

**Description:** Graduate rate will meet an 80% threshold and/or show growth.

## *Strategy:* Continued mentoring program

**Description:** Continued close interaction with students to determine wants, needs, concerns, problems, and suggestions.

### *Activity:* Current mentoring program will be continued with increased focus on mentor/student/family communication

**Description:** Funding will continue in budget for mentoring positions.

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Ann Marie Daly | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### *Activity:* Exit interviews with withdrawing students

**Description:** Exit interviews are conducted by phone on an as needed basis.

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Ann Marie Daly | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

## *Goal:* IMPROVE TOTAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

**Description:** To design an assessment program which will offer diagnostic results to assist in revision of curriculum.

### *Strategy:* Contact with students and parents to inform and encourage participation

**Description:**

### *Activity:* School wide communication, individual e-mails, and phone contact to inform students and parents regarding local assessments and encourage participation

**Description:** All school wide communication will be updated and distributed to students

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Ann Marie Daly | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### *Strategy:* Evaluate new assessment tools.

**Description:** New assessment tools will be researched and evaluated.

### *Activity:* Evaluation of new assessment tools

**Description:** New assessment tools will be researched and evaluated for content, diagnostic reliability, application in an online environment, ease of use by students and staff.

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Alexander Grande III | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### *Activity:* Selection of a more user friendly, data driven, assessment tool.

**Description:** Evaluation of available assessment tools for use in cyber environment. Contract with most suitable vendor.

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Ann Marie Daly | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

## *Goal:* INCREASE RECRUITING AND RETENTION.

**Description:** Achievement House Charter School plans to reach our potential enrollment goal through additional recruiting methods. In addition, Achievement House Charter School will design stronger communication methods for retention.

### *Strategy:* Develop strong marketing plan and increase communication to better address needs of student population.

**Description:**

### *Activity:* Development of marketing plan

**Description:** A marketing plan will be developed within the scope of budgeted funds in order to increase enrollment.

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| None Selected | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### *Activity:* Various formats of increased advertising and increase school-wide and individual communication with student population.

**Description:**

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Ann Marie Daly | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

## *Goal:* INCREASE STUDENT MOTIVATION

**Description:** Achievement House Charter School will design and promote a program for all students aimed at increasing a sense of community and interest to increase student performance.

### *Strategy:* Increase sense of community.

**Description:**

### *Activity:* Achievement House Charter School staff will increase individual communication and class activities in order to develop a stronger sense of community.

**Description:**

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Alexander Grande III | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### *Activity:* Increase opportunities for student involvement

**Description:**

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Ann Marie Daly | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

## *Goal:* MATHEMATICS

**Description:** At least 56% of all students will be proficient in Mathematics, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments. Achievement House Charter School will show a 10% decrease in the number of students performing in categories below proficient.

### *Strategy:* Revised Math Curriculum

**Description:** Dr. Grande, in conjunction with the Math Department, will review and provide direction for the revised Math curriculum.

### *Activity:* Research and evaluate additional resources for use with the Math curriculum

**Description:**

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| None Selected | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### *Activity:* Students will be engaged in intervention strategies based on diagnostic assessment.

**Description:**

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Alexander Grande III | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

## *Goal:* READING

**Description:** At least 63% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments. Achievement House Charter School will show a 10% decrease in students scoring below proficient.

### *Strategy:* Revised English Curriculum

**Description:** Dr. Grande, in conjunction with the English Department, will review and provide direction for the revised Math curriculum.

### *Activity:* Research and evaluate new resources for the English curriculum

**Description:**

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Alexander Grande III | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

### *Activity:* Students will be engaged in intervention strategies based on diagnostic assessments

**Description:**

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Alexander Grande III | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

# *Goal:* STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE ASSESSMENTS

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

## *Strategy:* Contact with students and parents to inform about scheduling and encourage attendance

**Description:** Students and parents will be kept informed of expectations and encouraged about the importance of attending.

### *Activity:* School wide mail, individual e-mails, and phone contact will be made with students and parents to encourage attendance.

**Description:**

| Person Responsible | Timeline for Implementation | Resources |
|---|---|---|
| Ann Marie Daly | Start: 1/1/2008<br>Finish: Ongoing | - |

**Status:** Not Started — Overdue

## Statement of Quality Assurance

There is currently no data saved for this section.

## Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment

- Quality Assurance 2008 signed

# SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

## Rigorous Instructional Program

### Rigorous Instructional Program

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

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

Achievement House Charter School has developed and implemented a rigorous curriculum which is correlated to the Pennsylvania anchors and standards. The school's curriculum and instructional practices were developed to increase student learning and meet the school's and the state's academic standards and goals.

The Pennsylvania content standards and assessment anchors are core components of all curriculum development at Achievement House Charter School.

A representative sampling of supplemental sites utilized includes:

Holt Rinehart Winston collateral course materials

Discovery Education

Digital History (http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/)

Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History (http://www.gilderlehrman.org/teachers/index.html)

National Geographic (www.nationalgeographic.com)

Education World (www.educationworld.com)

C-SPAN (www.cspan.org)

Discovery School (http://school.discovery.com/)

History Channel (www.historychannel.com) which includes A&E, Biography, History International

Teacher Planet (www.teacherplanet.com or www.globeteacher.com)

PBS (www.pbs.org)

You Tube (www.youtube.com)

PHSchools (www.phschools.com)

Prentice Hall (collateral course materials)

Glencoe (collateral course materials)

ING Direct (http://www.orangekids.com/) A friendly web site to provide a simple and fun way for kids to learn about the importance of saving. Tackle topics that range from the value of money, to setting a budget, understanding credit, and building savings goals for the future.

Educere provides independent complete courses of both a vocational and academic nature at both the High school and College Levels.

A number of WebQuest sites among them being the originator at San Diego State University.

POWER Access, Pennsylvania's extensive collection of reference materials, newspapers, Encyclopedias, etc available online through local libraries.

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

Selection and implementation of Achievement House Charter School's standards-based curriculum continues to be primarily based upon the research and specific action plans/steps developed by:

1. Wiggins and McTighe, "Understanding by Design" ("UBD")

2. Curriculum mapping developed by Heidi Hayes Jacobs

3. Articulating scope and sequence in a standards-based curriculum by Alan Glatthorn

4. Differentiating instruction by Carol Tomlinson

5. Standardized, performance-based and authentic assessments by Doug Reeves

All staff is required to be familiar with the national and the PA State Curriculum and content standards and assessment anchors in initiating the process. Articulated scope and sequence for concepts, content, essential skills and performance-based assessments is the linchpin for the teaching, assessing, and curriculum development triad. An instructional plan/lesson design template consistent with the Danielson and McGreal models ensures consistency with the above and, most importantly, with the PA content standards and assessment anchors for each subject area curriculum. Designated content, recommended strategies for effective instruction and assessment, student differences in understanding, learning rates and demonstration of mastery are key criteria to determining the degree of student learning, student content/skill mastery and lesson effectiveness.

A school-wide curriculum committee consisting of all teachers, mentors, teacher aides and administrative staff consistently monitors existing curriculum efficacy and new curricula. This ongoing, multi-stage process ensures that students are learning best when they can make a connection between curriculum, their interest and their life experiences. Formative and summative assessment data is utilized to evaluate curriculum relevancy to student performance.

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

A key component of Achievement House Charter School's mission is "to provide enhanced educational opportunities and a more personalized environment." With the collaboration between teacher, mentor, and student/parent, we continue to be able to better prepare lessons for various interests and needs. The Achievement House Charter School staff continues to receive training in curriculum and lesson development, implementation and assessment. The Achievement House Charter School curriculum is organized to meet the developmental and academic needs of its students. Each content curriculum area is articulated from grade nine through twelve consistent with the PA content standards and assessment benchmarks.

Scantron placement tests are given to each student upon admission to the school. Lesson plans are developed using the "UBD" process which supports learning by:

1. Identifying desired results

2. Determining acceptable evidence

3. Planning learning experiences and instruction

The core curriculum continues to be presented in a number of ways, including online and in print form. Teachers prepare their lessons with authentic and multi-disciplinary tasks. Activities and assignments accentuate many levels of learning in one lesson. More specifically, the design tool template assists lesson planning which contains questions, prompts and idea starters and assessment options. This expansion of "UBD" is shown below:

**Identifying Desired Results**

1. Desired, overarching understandings, essential and unit questions

2. Relevant goals

3. Essential questions

4. Expected student understandings

5. Essential unit questions

**Determine Acceptable Evidence**

1. Performance tasks, projects

2. Rubrics

3. Quizzes, tests, academic prompts

4. Student self-assessment

5. Observations, work samples, dialogues

6. Authentic performance tasks

**Planned Learning Experiences and Instruction**

1. What students will need to know, knowledge and skill

2. What teaching and learning experiences will equip students to demonstrate targeted understandings

3. Explicit instruction

4. Student opportunities to rehearse, revise and define work based on feedback

5. Student self-assessment and goal setting

Cyber learning encourages and requires students to learn through exploration. Achievement House Charter School teachers continue to strive to "facilitate interaction between students' existing knowledge and new experiences or ideas they encounter." Ninety minute, bi-weekly virtual instructional chats, recorded virtual instructional chats, extended office hours and help sessions, tutoring centers, specialized courses, parent contacts, working closely with grade level mentors, etc. are specific examples of facilitating and encouraging teacher-student interactions.

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

Achievement House Charter School promotes in-depth and inquiry-based teaching and learning through many different facets of instruction, assessment and instructional delivery. The staff is gaining awareness on how to implement the differentiated instruction model to enable students to work at their own pace, in addition to whole group instruction focusing on concepts, skills, and basic understandings needed for the success of the lesson and improved student learning. Where correlated to the nature of the task/skill/assignment, activities focus on analyzing primary and secondary sources, reading original documents and literary pieces, and sources that require transferring and evaluating previous concepts, understandings and essential skills. For proficiency in writing skills, and writing skills across the curriculum, assignments, projects and assessment and are used to demonstrate mastery of the writing process.

The Achievement House Charter School curriculum, and pedagogy, is also well-grounded in de Bono's "eight levels of creative thought": fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, curiosity, imagination, complexity, and risk taking.

Achievement House Charter School continues to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge, and interact with their peers and teachers, through virtual instructional chats in each course. While promoting participation in school and fostering responsibility for work, virtual instructional chats offer the chance to promote an active learning experience through real time instruction, modeling and support from the teacher. This virtual classroom enables students to share what has been learned in various ways, including group collaborations, use of the whiteboard, and presentations. Supplemental resources and extra time for tutoring to support student learning continue to be critical components of the Achievement House Charter School curriculum. Integrated into the virtual instructional chats, resources, and extra time provide additional learning opportunities for students to transfer knowledge and facilitate further independent exploration of concepts, skills, and understandings.

Further, the criteria stipulated in the PDE-advocated "Getting Results — A Framework for School Development Planning" serves as the foundation for Achievement House Charter School's curriculum instructional and assessment practices. This framework is especially significant relative to promoting in-depth and inquiry based instruction and assessment, and is also highly compatible with "UBD". The criteria listed for quality teaching as part of the Achievement House Charter School instructional design is listed below:

1. **Multiple data-sources —** Analysis and interpretation of current state of the school based on multiple sources of data (including PSSA) that show trends and provide robust insight into improvement target; Scantron Performance Series Testing; Study Island; PSSA Testing

2. **Outcome and process data —** Assessment of current state of student performance (i.e. in reading, math, attendance, etc.) and educational practices (i.e. instructional program, professional development, staff attendance, etc.)

3. **Subgroup specificity —** Data analysis and interpretation for all subgroups, especially data provided by PSSA results, provides adequate insight into conditions and needs of subgroups (as appropriate).

4. **Coherent instructional/programmatic roadmap —** The Achievement House Charter School curricular and instructional design flows logically from the data analysis and interpretation; reflects a coherent "theory of action" and consists of high-leveraged, aligned strategies, i.e. Guskey, Jacobs.

5. **Evidence-based strategies —** Achievement House Charter School's instructional design, and best-practices approach, is research-based and has been adapted from other successful models or derived from promising practices that show some early evidence of efficacy., i.e. Danielson, Marzano, Brophy, Darling-Hammond, Dufour and Eaker, Schmoker, etc.

6. **Standard-aligned —** Curriculum, assessments and instructional strategies are clearly aligned with PA content, performance standards and the anchors, (with

particular attention to the needs of subgroups as applicable), reading, writing, math and science/health.

7. **Rigor and relevance —** The Achievement House Charter School curriculum continues to reflect high expectations and access to challenging learning opportunities for all students, with particular attention to the needs of subgroups (as applicable)

8. **Differentiated instructional and intervention strategies —** Instructional design, which includes co-teaching and differentiated instruction, in addition to daily practices, establish clear linkages to the Achievement House Charter School improvement goals, especially in the reading and math areas. These strategies are responsive to the specific needs of individual students.

9. **Safe, disciplined learning environment —** Clear expectations for student and staff behavior/conduct are defined in Achievement House Charter School policy and written manuals. The policies and regulations are fairly and consistently reinforced.

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

Given the design and structure of Achievement House's curriculum and staff, students who are performing below standards are monitored and worked with very closely to help them improve their skills. Our customized curriculum ensures that necessary supports are available for students who are struggling in the areas of literacy and math. We are able to "custom-tailor our school wide program to our students' unique skills and interests." The introduction of the Student Success Team (SST) during the 2006-2007 school year and continuation of SST since that point, provided additional assistance, closer monitoring, and interventions for students performing significantly below standard and requiring more support than is available outside the SST program. A Student Assistance Program (SAP) was also put into place in the 2007-2008 school year, as scheduled, to provide an additional level of support for students as required. The SAP program has continued through the 2008-2009 school year and will remain in effect in the upcoming 2009-2010 school year.

Additionally, Achievement House Charter School has been designated a school-wide Title I school. This has enabled us to offer our students additional reading and math tutoring services with Title I funds.

Where applicable, and in accordance with Chapter 711, Achievement House Charter School ensured that each child had an individualized learning plan that was developed by the student/parent, special education teacher, mentor, regular education teacher, doctor's recommendations, and/or paraprofessional's suggestions. Where the identified areas of need were in literacy and/or math, a plan was designed for specific areas of need; goals were established, both short and long range; and "progress towards immediate and long-term improvement in student performance" was charted.

Achievement House Charter School has established systematic policies and procedures for early detection and early intervention of special needs. Each child's

education is a collaborative effort. This feature is carried out primarily by the child's mentor. The mentor monitors the success and challenges of the students and intervenes immediately to provide support in helping the student resolve the problem.

The student's teachers are informed of the student's challenges immediately and are consulted on appropriate strategies/interventions that allow that student to experience mastery and success in that area. The role of the mentor is to encourage, support, and motivate the student.

In addition to the mentor's role, diagnostic assessments are given to students when they first enroll at Achievement House Charter School. These assessments provide data to ensure accurate course placement, as well as to identify strengths and weakness in the student's educational progress to date. Consultation with the school counselor is also utilized to ensure accurate course placement.

The *DORA (Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment)* Series and (Diagnostic Online Math Assessment) are the main assessments used for Reading and Mathematics. The DORA provides objective, individualized assessment data across eight reading measures to profile each student's reading abilities and prescribe individual learning paths. The *DOMA (Diagnostic Online Math Assessment)* Series: Basic Math Skills, Pre-Algebra, and Algebra I, is aligned with NCTM standards and state expectations to provide meaningful assessment data.

DORA and DOMA assessments are given to students once every grading period. The data is used to measure progress and drive instruction.

Study Island is another assessment used for mathematics. Study Island testing and reporting is correlated to PSSA testing, the PA state content standards and the assessment anchors. The assessment is divided into specific sections with each sub-section correlating to a particular anchor. Individual data also reports time-on-task and student mastery of a particular anchor. Achievement House Charter School continues to utilize Study Island as listed below:

provide ongoing data for realigning math and reading instruction to appropriate standards/anchors

to help prepare students for achieving success on the PSSA's

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

Achievement House Charter School actively uses all available technology to engage students in the learning process. The school's rich, integrated use of

technology enables the staff to custom-tailor our school-wide program to our students' unique skills and interests. The continuing use of the multi-media classroom concept has enabled greater student participation and collaboration with the staff, and other students, during the virtual instructional chats.

As previously mentioned, the framework for teaching strategies used to actively engage students in the learning process is based upon the PDE "Getting Results, Quality Review Criteria, Quality Teaching" and the "Understanding by Design" process developed by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe. Both processes have been described in detail in earlier sections of this narrative.

Our lessons/activities engage the students beyond the textbook and make our students active learners, rather than passive ones. The use of streaming videos allows our students to visualize what the Battle of Waterloo may have looked like, safely view scientific experiments for a lab, gain a better understanding of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* by seeing it performed and watch equations being balanced. Mathematics uses interactive PowerPoints and Webinars to help explain reducing polynomials, tutorial programs are also utilized to provide extra assistance without the teacher's presence. During the 2006-2007 school year, the English and Social Studies departments collaborated on selected integrated topics, allowing students to learn about a particular person, place, or event and then read and analyze a literary piece written during or about that event. Using those literary works, students gained proficiency in grammar, vocabulary, and writing skills.

The Achievement House Charter School academic program is designed to facilitate numerous learning strategies while accommodating various needs in numerous ways. Instructional staff is being offered professional development in differentiated instruction to ensure that all students needs are being addressed. The different web sites and programs used by the students open the door for the various methods of assessment that are aligned with the instructional approaches and individual learning activities in a given discipline.

Third party curriculum vendors (i.e. Educere) continue to be utilized to meet individualized needs consistent with procedures stipulated in the Achievement House Charter School Charter. Courses selected from third party vendors must align with the PA state standards and assessment anchors. Selected third party vendor courses are being offered in an effort to help our students explore areas of interest that might not be included in the scope of the Achievement House Charter School curriculum. This attention to individual interest serves to aid in actively engaging students.

## Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments

- Professional Education Plan Acceptance
- Teacher Induction Acceptance

## English Language Learners

On March 15, 2005, Achievement House Charter School adopted an ELL/ESL Policy which has guided the development of the English Language Learners. The PDE publication, "A Guidebook for Planning Programs for English Language Learners" (May 2002), ESL Professional

Development Video Conferences, and NCLB position papers have been utilized to formulate, maintain, and improve the Policy. Achievement House Charter School is also using the services of MCIU to ensure compliance with the PDE/NCLB regulations.

Upon registering for school at Achievement House Charter School, each family/student must complete the Board approved Home Language Survey and assess eligibility for ELL services. The results of the Home Language Survey are filed and placed in each student's permanent record. The following will then occur:

If the student's first language is not English but the student speaks English and English is spoken at home, then an informal assessment will be conducted by the ELL team. A survey, with a narrative from the content area teacher and ELL Support Teacher and a writing sample from the student, will be used to assess English language proficiency. A formal assessment will be conducted if the informal assessment does not indicate English language proficiency.

Any other combination of non-English responses to the survey questions will have the ELL team conducting a formal assessment of the student for a level of English language proficiency.

The ELL team will use the IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT), or the WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT), for assessing the level of English language proficiency of the students identified by the Home Language Survey. Skills in reading, writing, and oral English language are assessed by both tests. Students will be placed in the ELL program as beginning, intermediate, or advanced English language learners according to the scores achieved in the assessment. Students will be tested again at the year's end to show growth in English language proficiency, or sooner if deemed necessary by the ELL Support Teacher. To exit the program, the student will need to show that they have attained English language proficiency by scoring accordingly on test[EO1] and show evidence of meeting the goals of the ELL program as documented by the ELL Support Teacher.

Upon identification of a student for the ELL program, parents will be notified by letter of the need for support and instruction in English language learning. The letter will include a description of the program, program goals, grading procedures, and name of the ELL Support Teacher assigned to their child. In addition to the letter, a separate form will be sent in the student's native language asking if communications with parents need to be written in a language other than English. This information will be noted in student's file for future reference. Additional information regarding the ELL program, goals and objectives, exit criteria, content area classes for ELL students, participation in extra-curricular activities, homework, attendance and behavioral policies will be explained to parents at the ELL orientation meeting.

The goals of the Achievement House Charter School ELL program are to assist the English language learner in using English:

to communicate in social settings

to achieve academically in all content areas

in socially and culturally appropriate ways

ELL students will be placed in appropriate grade level classes. They will receive instruction in all content areas as do other students in the class. The ELL student will receive additional supplemental support and instruction from the ELL Support Teacher during English courses and during necessary content area classes. The ELL Support Teacher will assist the content-area teacher in identifying and implementing teaching strategies that will help the ELL student achieve academic success in the content-area classes. While students are in the ELL program, grades will be given on a pass/fail basis with a narrative from the homeroom and ELL Support Teacher describing academic and English language proficiency progress.

The ELL program will come under the direction of the Principal. He will be responsible for the assurance of the implementation of the program and that proper procedures are being followed. The Principal will hold a meeting with Student Services to explain the procedures for the distribution of the Home Language Survey to parents and then to the ELL team. He will also be responsible for sharing information regarding the informal teacher survey, working with the ELL Support Teacher and providing cultural information about ELL to staff to prevent culture clashes between school and students. ELL teaching resource materials will be obtained by the Principal and kept in his/her office for reference for both program and non-program teachers. The Principal will be responsible for providing information regarding professional development relative to the needs of ELL learners.

The English language learner will have equal access to participate in all academic and extracurricular activities offered by Achievement House Charter School. No student will be denied acceptance into a club, group, or activity due to enrollment in the ELL program. The English language learner has a unique opportunity to offer first hand knowledge of a different culture. They can become the teachers in the classroom. Their participation is not only welcomed, but necessary, for the betterment of our students, school, and community.

**Program Goals and Objectives**

Achievement House Charter School has developed the following goals and objectives for the ELL program.

Goal 1: To use English to communicate in social setting

v Objective: By the end of the school year, students will increase their ability to use English to participate in social interactions. This will be evidenced by observation of students in cooperative learning activities and personal conversation.

v Objective: By the end of the school year, students will increase their ability to interact in, through, and with spoken and written English for personal expression and enjoyment. This will be evidenced by personal writing

journals and book choice with reading log.

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

- Objective: By the end of the school year, students will increase their use of English to interact in the virtual classroom; evidenced by conversations with the teacher, observations of student in cooperative group settings and monitoring of students in social interactions.
- Objective: By the end of the school year, students will increase their ability to use English to obtain, process, construct, and provide subject matter information in spoken and written form. This will be evidenced by an increase in standardized testing content area scores, a portfolio of student work, and the teacher's evaluation of the student's ability to pose questions and have discussions in content area classes.

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

- Objective: By the end of the school year, students will increase their ability to the appropriate language variety, register, and genre according to the audience, purpose and setting. This will be evidenced by student academic presentations, student's social conversations with peers, and student's conversation with the teacher.

These goals and objectives were developed from the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Standards and align with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7)

Achievement House Charter School bases its curriculum on the inclusion model. English language learners will be part of the regular classroom for all content area classes including English and Reading classes. The ELL will be provided services in accordance with an approved ELL school policy. Continuous contact between the ELL Support Teacher and classroom teacher will provide close monitoring of the ELL student. Immediate action will take place for any students who are falling behind or who are not progressing academically.

The success of the ELL program will be measured by: student's increasing scores within their level of the program; student's testing to the next level of the program; and student's testing out of the program as evidenced by end of the year English proficiency testing. Success will also be measured by an increase in academic scores on a content area standardized test. We will also look at student portfolios and teacher narratives to demonstrate progress of the ELL.

ELL's will not be excluded from any curricular or extra-curricular activities at Achievement House Charter School.

Students will be placed in a classroom and receive instruction in all curricular content area. ELL's will be expected to participate in the PSSA and school wide standardized assessments.

Achievement House Charter School will assess the ELL program on a yearly basis. During the 2008-2009 school year, no students met the requirements to be enrolled in the ELL program. Program success, for students identified in the future, will be shown by ELLs meeting the goals of the ELL program; to use English to communicate in social setting, to use English to achieve academically in all content areas and to use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways. We will specifically look at ELL student progress through the levels of the program, number of students who test out of the program, academic achievement of each student and participation in school activities by ELL students.

Achievement House Charter School will provide an orientation to parents as well as to ELLs upon entering the school. The orientation will include basic school information, a description of the ELL education program, a listing of content classes the student will attend, a listing of available special programs, homework and attendance policies and district-wide assessment practices and procedures.

The philosophy of "inclusion" at Achievement House Charter School is extended to the ELL students. Classroom instruction and activities will be made available to all students, including English language learners. Achievement House will request contracting services from IU 23 and 25, in lieu of maintaining certified ELL teacher. Through the assessment process, the ELL Support Teacher will determine the proficiency level of each ELL student. Designated English and Reading instruction will then be supplemented for each ELL student by an ELL Support Teacher in the virtual classroom. Support for other subjects will also be made available to each ELL student as needed. Other information about the components of the ELL program will be addressed in the brochure, "Educating Students with Limited English Proficiency", which students and parents will receive as part of their orientation packet.

Achievement House Charter School has instituted policies and procedures that are linguistically and culturally sensitive to the needs of ELL students and their communities. Special programs available to ELL students will include the following:

Assigning homework buddies

Creating web pages where class assignments and student produced work are posted

One-on-one tutoring or mentoring

Planning group/cooperative learning activities that encourage student discussions in English

Providing students with choices of spoken activities, such as oral presentations, choral readings, and recorded presentations to demonstrate mastery of a learning objective

Incorporating writing activities with peer process

Incorporating opportunities for ungraded writing, such as journals for students to write about topics of their own interest

Parents will be notified of these opportunities during orientation.

The school's policy regarding homework for ELLs will be the same as for other students. Each teacher will have their own guidelines for completing assignments. Parents will also be informed of the policy procedures for homework through the student handbook.

Attendance policies will be the same for ELLs as for English-speaking students.

The Student Handbook will clearly state the school's policy and expectations.

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[EO1]Which test? IPT?

## English Language Learners - Attachment

- ELL Report

## Graduation Requirements

b) Graduation Requirements

Achievement House Charter School has developed a multi-faceted, standards-based, interactive curriculum which meets, and often exceeds, the Pennsylvania Standards. Achievement House Charter School's curriculum and instructional practices have been developed to maximize student learning and achievement. Through the use of materials from multiple curriculum providers, teacher-developed scoped and sequenced lesson plans and assessments based on Understanding by Design, and curriculum mapping, Achievement House Charter School prepares its students to meet high school graduation requirements.

In continuing to enable our students to meet the high school graduation requirements, Achievement House Charter School continues to use Section 4.24 of the Pa. School Code as its framework. Key components of that plan have been maintained and are listed below:

1. Graduation requirements are specified.

2. Graduation requirements include course completion, grades, graduation project completion and results of local assessments aligned with academic standards and assessment anchors.

3. Students must demonstrate at least proficiency in reading, writing and mathematics in state and/or locally aligned assessments.

4. The graduation project must enable students to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and be proficient in communicating significant knowledge and understanding.

5. Students with disabilities who meet the required proficiency levels will be granted and issued a high school diploma.

As of July 12, 2006, the Board of Trustees has resolved that the following credits and courses would be required in order to graduate:

| | |
|---|---|
| Language Arts | 4 credits |
| Social Studies | 3 credits |
| Math | 3 credits |
| Science | 3 credits |
| Electives/Foreign Language*/Transitions** | 5 credits |
| Health/Safety/PE | 2 credits |
| Total | 20 credits |

The Foreign Language and/or Transition requirements vary by enrollment grade level. Please see below:

*Foreign Language requires 2 credits for current 9th and 10th graders and any new enrollees in 9th or 10th grade level; 1 credit for current 11th graders and any new enrollees at the 11th grade level. No credit requirement for current 12th graders or any new enrollees at the 12th grade level.

Although these are the foreign language requirements, Achievement House continues to recommend that students would benefit greatly from three years of foreign language.

| | |
|---|---|
| Transitions | 1 credit |

Transitions is a course designed to offer students direction and insight into entering the job market and/or college. The intent of this course is to meet the newly designed Career standards. At the May 16, 2006 Board Meeting, the Board of Trustees' voted to waive the Transitions requirement for 12th graders entering the school in their 12th grade year.

Transitions and Foreign Languages courses are considered to be part of the five (5) Electives credits referenced in the graduation requirements.

Prior to graduation, our students must successfully complete a Graduation Project.

Grade 11 students are afforded the opportunity to begin their Graduation Project during the 11th grade. Some of our students actually complete their Graduation Projects while still in 11th grade. This practice began in the 2006-2007 school year and has continued successfully.

Our students are given standards-based assessments in a variety of formats on a regular basis to assure that they are proficient in the material being presented. Additionally, our students are given the PSSA exams in 11th grade as required by the State of Pa. PSSA retesting is made available, and highly recommended, for 12th graders who have not achieved at least proficient levels in PSSA testing areas. We have achieved 100% attendance for 12th grade retesting for four consecutive years.

## Special Education

Special Education Instructional Strategies

**The IEP Team Meeting**

The IEP team meeting is held for annual review and for students newly enrolled at Achievement House Charter School. The team includes, but is not limited to, the following: student, parents, special education director, special education teacher, special education mentor and a regular education teacher. The IEP team reviews information from evaluation reports and gathers information from the parent and student to determine strengths and needs. Special education students at Achievement House Charter School are instructed within the general education curriculum and given appropriate modifications and accommodations as stated in their IEP. If the IEP team determines that appropriate modifications and accommodations were provided and the student's needs cannot be met within the general education curriculum, alternative curriculum and additional support will be provided. At each IEP meeting, the IEP team stresses to the parents that they can request to meet and review the IEP at any time during the course of the school year.

Extended school year is also discussed during the IEP team meeting. If the IEP team determines that an identified student qualifies for extended school year, appropriate support and curriculum are provided to ensure implementation of the IEP.

If related services are indicated by the student's needs, Achievement House Charter School contracts with a local service provider, such as an intermediate unit or Therapy Source.

The IEP team discusses transition planning with the parents and students. Achievement House Charter School contacts the Office of Vocation Rehabilitation and invites them to the IEP. Achievement House Charter School provides the following transition services: career assessments; transition resources, online and in hard copy; a Virtual Job Shadow website; and a Transitions class.

**Assessment**

Special education students are assessed upon enrollment with standard based assessments in the areas of math, reading, and language arts. Students are assessed throughout the school year as deemed necessary. Additional assessments, evaluations or subject-based probes are used to assess or track progress. Students are also assessed at the end of the school year to track progress. This assessment also generates suggested learning objectives that may be used to direct instruction by all teachers assigned to the student. The suggested learning objectives are generated based upon the students' areas of need within the Pennsylvania standards of that particular subject area. This data may be used to track the progress of students' IEP goals; the data is then documented to an established IEP progress-monitoring program. These student assessments are used in conjunction with information provided in the students' Evaluation Reports. This information is then used by the IEP team to determine appropriate curriculum, as well as accommodations and modifications.

Incoming students' records are reviewed and if the IEP team, including parent determines more assessments are needed to insure complete servies AHCS will complete the evaluations.

**Special Education Teachers**

Special education teachers at Achievement House Charter School provide specially designed instruction to the identified students. All students are contacted at least weekly by Achievement House Charter School's Special Education Support Staff. This time is used to review with the students such things as: progress; attendance; accommodations and modifications; instructional strategies; organization; technical issues; and to provide motivation and encouragement. If the student has an emotional disability, the weekly call time may be used to review coping strategies. This is also an opportunity for the staff to review the student's progress with the parent. AHCS special education staff will also complete home visits with students when recommended by the IEP team. Special education teachers follow up with parents regarding academic progress and attendance concerns via email and phone calls, and send academic progress letters. Special education teachers are available to their students and student's parents by email, phone and instant messaging each school day. The teacher and/or student may schedule to meet additional times during the week for tutoring or other academic assistance, as well as for assistance with transition plans or graduation projects.

**Special Education Mentors**

Each student at Achievement House Charter School is assigned a mentor who also provides support to students, in addition to monitoring student attendance and progress. Mentors are a source of support for students, addressing a variety of issues, such as: school site orientation; technical issues; books; organization; as well as assisting the special education teachers. Mentors also oversee the daily tracking and documentation of assignment completion and attendance, and track technical support issues. Mentors maintain records on truancy issues and send notices to educational facilitators and/or parents when students' academic progress and attendance are not compliant with school policy. Parents are given opportunity to schedule a meeting with the IEP team upon receipt of each notice.

**Collaboration and Progress Monitoring**

Special education teachers monitor IEP goals and review academic progress for students on a weekly basis. Regular education teachers document academic progress in bi-weekly reports. Collaboration with special education teachers and regular education teachers is ongoing. Teachers meet and discuss modifications and accommodations to curriculum, and specially designed instruction and goals of individual students. Achievement House Charter School regular education and special education staff also collaborate to provide curriculum mapping in all subject areas. Special education and regular education teachers meet at the end of each quarter to review all students. Special education teachers are available to the regular education teachers for support and collaboration on a daily basis to review individual student goals and needs.

**Training**

The special education and regular education staff receive training at least once a month. Training may be done in-house through best practices sessions, researched and developed by staff. Training is also provided by PATTAN, AHCS special education solicitor, and intermediate units. Intermediate unit staff has provided training on topics such as progress monitoring, transition plans and Behavior Intervention Plans. Contracted service providers have also provided training for an online remedial reading program; Study Island; Scantron Assessments; DORA and DOMA training, and the Virtual Job Shadow Website. Trainings by PATTAN on Standards based IEPs. Each faculty member is required to complete 30 ACT 48 hours each school year.

Annual Public Notice of Special Education Policy

Annual Public Notice of Special Education Services and Programs and Rights for Students with Disabilities And Notifications of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Achievement House Charter School

1021 West Lancaster Av. Suite 207

Bryn Mawr, Pa 19010

It is the responsibility of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located, and evaluated. This responsibility is required by a federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. seq. ("IDEA 2004"). IDEA 2004 requires the publication of a notice to parents, in newspapers or other media, before any major identification, location, or evaluation activity. IDEA 2004 requires this notice to contain certain information.

In addition, the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), which protects confidentiality, requires educational agencies to notify parents annually of their confidentiality rights.

The Charter School fulfills its duties with this annual notice. The Charter School also directs parents to the procedural safeguards notice available through the school.

The purpose of this notice is to describe: (1) the types of disabilities that might qualify the child for such programs and services, (2) the special education programs and related services that are available, (3) the process by which the public schools screen and evaluate such students to determine eligibility, (4) the special rights that pertain to such children and their parents or legal guardians and (5) the confidentiality rights that pertain to student information.

How a child might qualify for special education and related services

Under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, or “IDEA 2004,” children qualify for special education and related services if they have one or more of the following disabilities and, as a result, need such services:

(1) mental retardation;

(2) hearing impairments, including deafness;

(3) speech or language impairments;

(4) visual impairments, including blindness;

(5) serious emotional disturbance;

(6) orthopedic impairments, or physical disabilities;

(7) autism,

(8) traumatic brain injury, or neurological impairment;

(9) other health impairment; and

(10) specific learning disabilities.

Children with more than one of the foregoing disabilities could qualify for special education and related services as having multiple disabilities.

The legal definitions of the above-listed disabilities, which the public schools are required to apply under the IDEA 2004, may differ from those used in medical or clinical practice. The legal definitions, moreover, could apply to children with disabilities that have very different medical or clinical disorders. A child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, for example, might qualify for special education and related services as a child with “other health impairments,” “serious emotional disturbance,” or “specific learning disabilities” if the child meets the eligibility criteria under one or more of these disability categories and if the child needs special education and related services as a result.

Under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and under the federal Americans with Disabilities Act, some school age children with disabilities who do not meet the eligibility criteria outlined above might nevertheless be eligible for special protections and for adaptations and accommodations in instruction, facilities, and activities. Children are entitled to such protections, adaptations, and accommodations if they have a mental or physical disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

AHCS, as stated in their charter admits students from grade nine through twelfth. If a Charter School admits children below school age, the Commonwealth provides early intervention services to eligible children with special needs who are at least 3 years of age but younger than the age of beginners through agencies which hold Mutually Agreed Upon Written Agreements (MAWAs).

Available Programs and Services for Children with Disabilities

Public schools must ensure that children with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent possible in the regular education environment, and that the instruction they receive conforms as much as possible to the instruction that non-disabled students receive. Programs and services available to students with disabilities, in descending order of preference, may include: (1) regular class placement with supplementary aides and services provided as needed in that environment; (2) regular class placement for most of the school day with itinerant service by a special education teacher either in or out of the regular classroom; (3) regular class placement for most of the school day with instruction provided by a special education teacher in a resource classroom; (4) part time special education class placement in a regular public school or alternative setting; and (5) special education class placement or special education services provided outside the regular class for most or all of the school day, either in a regular public school or alternative setting.

Depending on the nature and severity of the disability, the public school can provide special education programs and services in areas such as (1) the public school the child would attend if not disabled, (2) an alternative regular public school either in or outside the school district of residence, (3) a special education center operated by a public school entity, (4) an approved private school or other private facility licensed to serve children with disabilities, (5) a residential school, (6) approved out-of-state program, or (7) the home.

Special education services are provided according to the primary educational needs of the child, not the category of disability. The types of service available include: (1) learning support, for students who primarily need assistance with the acquisition of academic skills; (2) life skills support, for students who primarily need assistance with development of skills for independent living; (3) emotional support, for students who primarily need assistance with social or emotional development; (4) deaf or hearing impaired support, for students who primarily need assistance with deafness; (5) blind or visually impaired support, for students who primarily need assistance with blindness; (6) physical support, for students who primarily require physical assistance in the learning environment; (7) autistic support, for students who primarily need assistance in the areas affected by autism spectrum disorders; and (8) multiple disabilities support, for students who primarily need assistance in multiple areas affected by their disabilities.

Related services are designed to enable the child to participate in or access his or her program of special education. Examples of related services include but are not limited to, speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, nursing services, audiologist services, counseling, and family training.

The public school, in conjunction with the parents, determines the type and intensity of special education and related services that a particular child needs based exclusively on the unique program of special education and related services that the school develops for that child. The child's program is described in writing in an individualized education program, or "IEP," which is developed by an IEP team consisting of educators, parents, and other persons with special expertise or familiarity with the child. The parents of the child have the right to be notified of and to participate in all meetings of their child's IEP team. The IEP is revised as often as circumstances warrant but reviewed at least annually. The law requires that the program and placement of the child, as described in the IEP, be reasonably calculated to ensure meaningful educational progress to the student at all times. IEPs contain, at a minimum, a statement of present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, an enumeration of the annual goals established for the child, and a statement of the special education and related services that the child needs to make meaningful educational progress. For children aged sixteen and older, the IEP must also include an appropriate transition plan to assist in the attainment of post-secondary objectives. The Charter School must invite the child to the IEP team meeting at which the transition plan is developed.

Screening and Evaluation Process for Children to Determine Eligibility for Special Education and Related Services

Screening

Each educational agency must establish and implement procedures to locate, identify and evaluate children suspected of being eligible for special education. These procedures involve screening activities which include but are not limited to: review of group-based data (cumulative records, enrollment records, health records, and report cards); hearing screening (at kindergarten, first, second and third grades); vision screening (every grade level); motor screening; and speech and language screening.

Except as indicated above or otherwise announced publicly, screening activities take place in an on-going fashion throughout the school year. Screening is conducted at the Charter School unless other arrangements are necessary.

If parents need additional information regarding the purpose, time, and location of screening activities, they should call or write the CEO of Charter School at:

Achievement House Charter School

1021 West Lancaster Av. Suite 207

Bryn Mawr, Pa 19010

Screening activities are often undertaken before the Charter School refers most children for a multidisciplinary team evaluation. When concerns raised either by school staff or parents warrant screening, the child is referred to an “instruction support team” (“IST”), sometimes called the “child study team.” The IST is responsible for assessing the current achievement and performance of the child, for designing school-based interventions to address concerns raised, and for assessing the effectiveness of those school-based interventions. If the concern that resulted in the referral can be addressed without special education services, or is the result of the lack of English proficiency or appropriate instruction, the IST will recommend interventions other than multidisciplinary team evaluation. Parents nevertheless have the right to request a multidisciplinary team evaluation at any time, regardless of the outcome of the screening process.

Evaluation

When screening indicates that a student may be eligible for special education, the Charter School will seek parental consent to conduct an evaluation. Evaluation means procedures used in the determination of whether a child has a disability and the nature and extent of the special education and related services needed by the child. The term evaluation refers to procedures used selectively with an individual child and does not indicate basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children. Before the public school can proceed with an evaluation, it must notify the parents in writing of the specific types of testing and assessment it proposes to conduct, of the date and time of the evaluation, and of the parents’ rights. The evaluation cannot begin until the parent has signed the written notice indicating that he or she consents to the proposed testing and assessments and has returned the notice to the public school. Once parental consent for evaluation is obtained, the school has timelines and procedures specified by law that it must follow. The law contains additional provisions and due process protections regarding situations in which parental consent for an initial evaluation is absent or refused discussed more fully below and in the Procedural Safeguards Notice.

This evaluation is conducted by a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) which includes a teacher, other qualified professionals who work with the child, and the parents. The MDE process must be conducted in accordance with specific timelines and must include protection-in-evaluation procedures. For example, tests and procedures used as part of the Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation may not be racially or culturally biased.

The MDE process results in a written evaluation report called an Evaluation Report (ER). This report makes recommendations about a student's eligibility for special education based on the presence of a disability and the need for specially designed instruction.

Parents who think their child is eligible for special education may request, at any time, that the Charter School conduct a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation. Requests for a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation must be made in writing to the CEO of the Charter School at 1021 West Lancaster Av, Bryn Mawr, Pa 19010

If a parent makes an oral request for a Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation, the Charter School shall provide the parent with a form for that purpose. If the public school denies the parents' request for an evaluation, the parents have the right to challenge the denial through an impartial hearing or through voluntary alternative dispute resolution such as mediation.

Educational Placement

The determination of whether a student is eligible for special education is made by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team. A single test or procedure may not be the sole factor in determining that a child is exceptional. The IEP team includes: the parents of a child with a disability; not less than one regular education teacher, if the child is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment; not less than one special education teacher, or when appropriate, not less than one special education provider; a representative of the school who is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of children with disabilities, is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the School; an individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results, who may be a member of the team described above; other individuals, at the discretion of the parent or the agency, who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel as appropriate; and whenever appropriate, a child with a disability. If the student is determined to be eligible for special education, the IEP team develops a written education plan called an IEP. The IEP shall be based in part on the results of the Multi-Disciplinary Evaluation. The IEP team may decide that a student is not eligible for special education. In that instance, recommendations for educational programming in regular education may be developed from the ER.

An IEP describes a student's current levels, goals, and the individualized programs and services, which the student will receive. IEPs are reviewed on an at least an annual basis. The IEP team will make decisions about the type of services, the level of intervention, and the location of intervention.

Placement must be made in the least restrictive environment in which the student's needs can be met with special education and related services. All students with disabilities must be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are not disabled.

Services for Protected Handicapped Students

Students who are not eligible to receive special education programs and services may qualify as handicapped students and therefore be protected under federal statutes and regulations intended to prevent discrimination (in particular, 34 CFR Part 104 and 28 CFR Part 35). The Charter

School must ensure that qualified handicapped students have equal opportunity to participate in the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate for each individual student. In compliance with federal law, the Charter School will provide to each protected handicapped student without discrimination or cost to the student or family, those related aids, services or accommodations which are needed to provide equal opportunity to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the student's abilities. In order to qualify as a protected handicapped student, the child must be of school age with a physical or mental disability that substantially limits or prohibits participation in or access to an aspect of the school program.

These services and protections for "protected handicapped students" may be distinct from those applicable to children with disabilities served under IDEA. The Charter School or the parent may initiate an evaluation if they believe a student is a protected handicapped student. For further information on the evaluation procedures and provision of services to protected handicapped students, parents should contact the school CEO.

Protections for Eligible Students

State and federal law grant many rights, protections and procedural safeguards to children with disabilities and their parents, including mediation and due process hearing request rights. A written summary of those procedural safeguards and protections is available to parents and students upon request to the CEO of the Charter School.

Rights and Protection

The Charter School must notify parents in writing whenever it: (1) Proposes to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child; (2) Refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child; (3) Proposes or refuses to make changes regarding the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the child; and (4) No later than the date on which the decision to take disciplinary action is made, a Charter School must notify the parent of that decision and of all available procedural safeguards. Such notice must be accompanied by a full written description of the parents' rights.

What prior written notice must contain:

Prior written notices must be written in the native language of the parent, unless it clearly is not feasible to do so. Prior written notice must contain:

A description of the action proposed or refused by the school;

An explanation of why the Charter School proposes or refuses to take the action and a description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the Charter School used as a basis for the proposed or refused action;

A description of other options considered by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team and the reasons why those options were rejected;

A description of the factors that are relevant to the Charter School's proposal or refusal;

A statement that the parent of a child with a disability has procedural safeguards protection and, if the notice is not an initial referral for evaluation, the means by which a copy of a description of the procedural safeguards can be obtained;

Sources the parent may contact to obtain assistance in understanding these provisions;

A statement informing the parent about the state complaint procedures, including a description of how to file a complaint and the timelines under those procedures.

*In Pennsylvania, prior written notice is provided on the form “Notice of Recommended Educational Placement” (NOREP).

PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS NOTICE

When a Procedural Safeguards Notice must be provided:

A copy of the Procedural Safeguards Notice must be given to the parent one (1) time a year, except that a copy must also be given to the parent:

Upon initial referral for evaluation;

Upon the parent’s request for evaluation;

Upon receipt of the first occurrence of the filing of a request for due process; and

Upon request by the parent

The Procedural Safeguards Notice must include a full explanation of available procedural safeguards, written in the native language of the parent, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. It must be written in an easily understandable manner, describing the procedural safeguards available relating to:

Independent educational evaluation;

Prior written notice;

Parental consent;

Access to educational records;

Opportunity to present and resolve complaints, including the time period in which to file a Due Process Hearing Request;

The opportunity for the Charter School to resolve the Due Process Hearing Request;

The availability of mediation;

The child’s placement while due process proceedings are pending;

Procedures for children who are subject to placement in an interim alternative educational setting;

Requirements for unilateral placement by the parent of a child in private school at public expense;

Due process hearings, including requirements for disclosure of evaluation results and recommendations;

State level appeals;

Civil actions, including the time period in which to file such actions;

Attorneys' fees; and

State complaint procedures, including applicable time periods.

When Prior Parental Consent Must Be Obtained

Parental consent must be obtained by the Charter School prior to conducting an initial evaluation to determine if the child qualifies as a child with a disability, and before providing special education and related services to the child, for the first time. Parental consent for an evaluation shall not be construed as consent for their child to receive special education and related services. The screening of a child by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation is not considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services; therefore, parental consent is not required in this instance.

Consent for Wards of State.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 contains language about seeking parental permission for initial evaluations when a child is a ward of the State. In Pennsylvania, however, if a child is designated a ward of the State, the whereabouts of the parent is not known or the rights of the parent have been terminated in accordance with State law; someone other than the parent has been designated to make educational decisions for the child. Consent for an initial evaluation should therefore be obtained from the individual designated to represent the interests of the child.

Absence of Parental Initial Consent

If the parent does not provide consent for an initial evaluation, or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide consent, the Charter School may pursue an initial evaluation of the child through mediation or due process procedures. If the parent does not provide consent for the child to receive special education and related services, the Charter School will not provide special education and related services, nor will the Charter School use mediation or due process procedures.

If the parent refuses to consent to the receipt of special education and related services, or the parent fails to respond to a request to provide consent, and therefore the child does not receive special education and related services, the Charter School will not be in violation of its requirement to make a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to the child for its failure to provide special education and related services to the child; and the Charter School does not have to convene an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting or develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for the child regarding special education and related services.

Independent Educational Evaluation

The parent has the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation of their child at public expense if the parent disagrees with an evaluation obtained by the Charter School. An independent evaluation is an evaluation by a qualified professional who is not an employee of the Charter School responsible for the child.

Once the parent requests an independent evaluation at public expense, the Charter School must, without unnecessary delay, either request a due process hearing to demonstrate that its evaluation is appropriate, or ensure that an independent evaluation is conducted. If a due process hearing is requested by the school, and the final decision is that the Charter School's evaluation is appropriate, the parent still has the right to an independent evaluation, but not at public expense.

If the parent asks for an independent evaluation, the Charter School may ask for the parent's reason why he or she objects to the evaluation. However, the parent is not required to give this explanation and the Charter School may not unreasonably delay either providing the independent evaluation at public expense or requesting a due process hearing.

If the parent obtains an independent evaluation at private expense, the results of the evaluation must be considered by the Charter School if the evaluation meets Charter School criteria, in any decision made with respect to the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the child; and may be presented as evidence at a due process hearing.

If a Hearing Officer requests an independent evaluation as part of a hearing, the cost of the evaluation must be at public expense. The Charter School will provide, on request, information about where an independent evaluation may be obtained.

Whenever an independent evaluation is conducted at public expense, the criteria under which the evaluation is obtained, including the location of the evaluation and the qualifications of the examiner, must be the same as the criteria which the Charter School uses when it initiates an evaluation, to the extent those criteria are consistent with the parent's right to an independent evaluation.

Dispute Resolution Systems

When disputes arise between the parent and the Charter School, the following formal systems are available to assist in resolving the dispute:

1. Mediation

Mediation is a voluntary process in which the parent and Charter School involved in a dispute regarding special education both agree to obtain the assistance of an impartial mediator to resolve the conflict. Mediation is available for parties to special education disputes involving any special education matter, including matters arising prior to the filing of a Due Process Hearing Request. Mediation can be requested alone, or in conjunction with due process. Mediation cannot be used to deny or delay the parent's right to a due process hearing or to deny any other rights of the parent.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education's Bureau of Special Education, through the Office for Dispute Resolution, maintains a list of individuals who are qualified mediators and knowledgeable in laws and regulations regarding the provision of special education and related services. Mediators are not employed by any local or state agency providing direct services to the child, and the mediator must not have a personal conflict of interest. The mediator's services are paid for by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Mediations are scheduled in a timely manner and are held in a location that is convenient for the parties to the dispute. Discussions that occur during the mediation process are confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or court proceeding. The mediator may not be called as a witness in future proceedings.

In the event the parties resolve the dispute through mediation, they are required to execute a legally-binding agreement that sets forth the resolution terms; states that all discussions that occurred during the mediation process must be confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceedings; and is signed by both the parent and a representative of the Charter School who has the authority to bind the school. This agreement is enforceable by a court.

2. Due Process Hearings

The parent or Charter School may request a due process hearing with respect to any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) by filing a “Due Process Hearing Request”. A due process hearing will not proceed until all required information is provided and procedures followed.

Timeline for requesting Due Process.

The parent or Charter School must request a due process hearing through the filing of a Due Process Hearing Request within two (2) years of the date the parent or the Charter School knew or should have known about the alleged action that forms the basis of the Due Process Hearing Request.

There are limited exceptions to this timeline. This timeline will not apply to the parent if the parent was prevented from requesting the due process hearing due to the specific misrepresentations by the Charter School that it had resolved the problem forming the basis of the Due Process Hearing Request; or if the Charter School withheld information from the parent which was required to be provided to the parent.

Service of Due Process Hearing Request.

A copy of the Due Process Hearing Request must be sent to the other party and, at the same time, to the Office for Dispute Resolution.

Contents of Due Process Hearing Request.

The Due Process Hearing Request must contain the following information:

The name of the child; the address where the child lives, and the name of the school the child is attending;

If the child or youth is homeless, available contact information for the child and the name of the school the child is attending;

A description of the nature of the problem, including facts relating to such problem; and

A proposed resolution of the problem to the extent known and available to the party filing the Request.

Challenging Sufficiency of the Due Process Hearing Request.

The Due Process Hearing Request will be considered to be sufficient unless the party receiving it notifies the Hearing Officer and the other party in writing

within fifteen (15) days of receipt that the receiving party believes the Request does not meet the requirements listed above.

Response to Request.

If the Charter School has not sent a prior written notice (NOREP) to the parent regarding the subject matter contained in the parent's Due Process Hearing Request, the Charter School must send to the parent, within ten (10) days of receiving the Due Process Hearing Request, a response including the following information:

An explanation of why the Charter School proposed or refused to take the action raised in the parent's Due Process Hearing Request;

A description of other options the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team considered and the reasons why those options were rejected;

A description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the Charter School used as the basis for the proposed or refused action; and

A description of the factors that are relevant to the Charter School's proposal or refusal

Filing this response to the parent's Due Process Hearing Request does not prevent the Charter School from challenging the sufficiency of the Due Process Hearing Request. If the Charter School has already sent prior notice (NOREP) to the parent, or it is the parent receiving the Due Process Hearing Request, then a response to the Due Process Hearing Request must be sent to the other side within ten (10) days of receipt of the request. The response should specifically address the issues raised in the Due Process Hearing Request.

Hearing Officer Determination of Sufficiency of Due Process Hearing Request.

Within five (5) days of receiving a party's challenge to the sufficiency of the Due Process Hearing Request, the Hearing Officer must make a determination based solely on the information contained within the Request, whether the Request meets requirements. The Hearing Officer must immediately notify both parties in writing of his or her determination.

Amended Due Process Hearing Request.

Either the parent or a Charter School may amend its Due Process Hearing Request only if:

The other party consents in writing to the amendment and is given the opportunity to resolve the issues raised in the Due Process Hearing Request through a preliminary meeting/resolution session; or The Hearing Officer grants permission for the party to amend the Due Process Hearing Request. However, the Hearing Officer may grant this permission not later than five (5) days before a due process hearing occurs

Subject Matter of the Hearing.

The party requesting the due process hearing is not permitted to raise issues at the due process hearing that were not raised in the Due Process Hearing Request (or Amended Due Process Hearing Request) unless the other party agrees otherwise.

Preliminary Meeting/Resolution Session.

Before a due process hearing will take place, the Charter School must convene a preliminary meeting with the parent and the relevant member or members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team who have specific knowledge of the facts identified in the Due Process Hearing Request in an attempt to resolve those issues without the need to proceed to a due process hearing. This preliminary meeting must be convened within fifteen (15) days of the Charter School's receiving the parent's Due Process Hearing Request. A representative of the Charter School who has decision-making authority must be present at this meeting. The Charter School may not have an attorney attend the meeting unless the parent is also accompanied by an attorney. At the meeting, the parent will discuss the Due Process Hearing Request, and the Charter School will be provided the opportunity to resolve the Due Process Hearing Request, unless the parent and the Charter School agree, in writing, to waive this meeting, or agree to use the mediation process.

If the parent and Charter School resolve the issues in the Due Process Hearing Request at the preliminary meeting, they must put the agreement terms in writing, and both the parent and a representative of the Charter School who has the authority to bind the Charter School must sign the agreement. The agreement is a legally-binding document and may be enforced by a court.

Either the parent or Charter School may void the agreement within three (3) business days of the date of the agreement. After three (3) days, the agreement is binding on both parties.

Administrative Matters at Preliminary Meetings, Mediation and Due Process.

When carrying out administrative matters such as scheduling, exchange of witness lists, and status conferences, the parent and Charter School may agree to use alternative means of meeting participation, such as videoconferences and conference calls.

Timeline for Completion of Due Process Hearing.

If the Charter School has not resolved the Due Process Hearing Request within thirty (30) days of receiving it, or within thirty (30) days of receiving the Amended Due Process Hearing Request, the due process hearing may proceed and applicable timelines commence. The timeline for completion of due process hearings is forty-five (45) days, unless the Hearing Officer grants specific extensions of time at the request of either party.

Disclosure of Evaluations and Recommendations.

Not less than five (5) business days prior to a due process hearing, each party must disclose to all other parties all evaluations completed by that date, and recommendations based on the offering party's evaluations that the party intends to use at the due process hearing. Failure to disclose this information may result in a Hearing Officer prohibiting the party from introducing the information at the hearing unless the other party consents to its introduction.

Due Process Hearing Rights.

The hearing for a child with a disability or thought to be a child with a disability must be conducted and held in the Charter School at a place and time reasonably convenient to the parent and child involved.

The hearing must be an oral, personal hearing and must be closed to the public unless the parent requests an open hearing. If the hearing is open, the decision issued in the case, and only the decision, will be available to the public. If the hearing is closed, the decision will be treated as a record of the child and may not be available to the public.

The decision of the Hearing Officer must include findings of fact, discussion and conclusions of law. Although technical rules of evidence will not be followed, the decision must be based upon the substantial evidence presented at the hearing.

A written, or at the option of the parent, electronic verbatim record of the hearing will be provided to the parent at no cost to the parent.

Parent may be represented by legal counsel and accompanied and advised by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of children with disabilities.

Parent or parent representative must be given access to educational records, including any tests or reports upon which the proposed action is based.

A party has the right to compel the attendance of and question witnesses who may have evidence upon which the proposed action might be based.

A party has the right to present evidence and confront and cross-exam witnesses.

A party has the right to present evidence and testimony, including expert medical, psychological or educational testimony.

Decision of Hearing Officer.

A decision made by a Hearing Officer must be made on substantive grounds, based upon a determination of whether the child received a free appropriate

public education (FAPE). In disputes alleging a procedural violation, a Hearing Officer may find that a child did not receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) only if the procedural inadequacies impeded the child's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE); significantly impeded the parent's opportunity to participate in the decision-making process regarding the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the parent's child; or caused a deprivation of educational benefits.

A Hearing Officer may still order a Charter School to comply with procedural requirements even if the Hearing Officer determines that the child received a free appropriate public education (FAPE). The parent may still file a Complaint with the Bureau of Special Education regarding procedural violations.

Administrative Appeal - Impartial Review.

In most cases, a party dissatisfied by the findings and decision of a Hearing Officer in a due process hearing may appeal to a panel appointed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (called "the Appellate Panel Officers" or "Appeals Panel"). For a school-aged child, the only exception to the right to appeal to the Appeals Panel is when the due process hearing addresses Section 504/Chapter 15 issues only. In that case, any appeal from a Hearing Officer order goes directly to court, not the Appeals Panel. If the due process hearing addresses both Section 504/Chapter 15 cases and other matters, that portion of the case dealing with non-Section 504 issues may be appealed to the Appeals Panel.

For early intervention preschool special education cases, the Appeals Panel review is not available and, therefore, any appeal from a Hearing Officer's order should go directly to court. In addition, it must be noted that Section 504/Chapter 15 issues do not apply to early intervention preschool cases.

On appeal, the Appeals Panel will do the following:

Examine the entire due process hearing record.

Ensure that the procedures at the hearing were consistent with the requirements of due process.

Seek additional evidence if necessary, at the discretion of the Appeals

Panel. If a hearing is held by the Appeals Panel to receive additional evidence, any party to such a hearing generally has the right to:

â€¢ Be accompanied and advised by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of children with disabilities;

â€¢ Present evidence and confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses;

â€¢ Prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed to that party at least five (5) business days before the hearing;

â€¢ Obtain a written or, at the option of the parent, electronic, verbatim record of the hearing at no cost to the parent;

â€¢ The parent's representative shall be given access, if such was not already provided prior to or at the due process hearing, to educational records, including any tests or reports upon which the proposed action, or decision not to act, is based.

â€¢ Each hearing must be conducted at a time and manner that is reasonably convenient to the parent and child.

Afford the parties an opportunity for oral or written argument, or both, at the discretion of the Appeals Panel. Oral arguments must be conducted at a time and place that is reasonably convenient to the parent and child.

Make an independent decision upon completion of the record review.

Provide the parent a written, or, at their option, an electronic copy of the findings of fact and decision.

Appeals Panel decisions are completed within thirty (30) days after request for review, unless at the request of either party the Appeals Panel grants a specific extension to file Exceptions or Answers to them. Requests for a specific extension of time in which to file appeal documents with the Appeals Panel must be directed to the particular Appeals Panel assigned to the matter. Contact information can be obtained from the Office for Dispute Resolution.

The decision by the Appeals Panel is final, unless a party brings a civil action under the procedures described below.

Disclosure of Appeals Panel Decisions.

A copy of the Appeals Panel Decision, with the child's name removed from the Decision, is made available to the public, as required by law, through posting on the Office for Dispute Resolution

webpage, and through dissemination to the State Special Education Advisory Panel. Questions regarding documents posted on the webpage should be directed to the Office for Dispute Resolution.

Civil Action.

Either the parent or Charter School who disagrees with the findings and decision of the Hearing Officer (in the case of Section 504/Chapter 15 cases and early intervention cases) or the Appeals Panel (for all other cases) has the right to file an appeal in state or federal court. Sometimes the issues in a due process case deal not only with special education issues, but also regarding a child's status and/or claim as a gifted child. In that instance, the final order of the Appeals Panel -- to the extent it deals with issues of giftedness -- can only be appealed to Commonwealth Court. For all other appeals, the party filing an appeal is encouraged to seek legal counsel to determine the appropriate court with which to file an appeal. A party filing an appeal to state or federal court has ninety (90) days from the date of the Hearing Officer decision in the case of Section 504/Chapter 15 and early intervention cases to do so, and for all other cases, 90 days from the date of the appeals panel decision in which to file an appeal to state or federal court.

Attorneys' Fees.

A court, in its discretion, may award reasonable attorneys' fees as part of the costs:

1. To a prevailing party who is the parent of a child with a disability;

2. To a prevailing party who is a State Educational Agency or Charter School against the attorney of the parent who files a Due Process Hearing request or subsequent cause of action that is frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation, or against the attorney of the parent who continued to litigate after the litigation clearly became frivolous, unreasonable or without foundation; or

3. To a prevailing State Educational Agency or Charter School against the attorney of the parent, or against the parent, if the parent's Due Process hearing Request or subsequent cause of action was presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass, to cause unnecessary delay, or to needlessly increase the cost of litigation. Fees awarded will be based on rates prevailing in the community in which the action or proceeding arose for the kind and quantity of attorney services furnished. The federal law imposes certain requirements upon the parent and Charter School and in some circumstances may limit attorney fee awards. Parents should consult with their legal counsel regarding these matters. The following rules apply:

*Attorneys' fees may not be awarded and related costs may not be reimbursed in any action or proceeding for services performed subsequent to the time of a written offer of settlement to the parent if the offer is made within the time prescribed by Rule 68 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedures, or, in the case of an administrative hearing, at any time more than ten (10) days before the proceeding begins; the offer is not accepted within ten (10) days; and the court finds that the relief finally obtained by the parent is not more favorable to the parent than the offer of settlement.

*An award of attorneys' fees and related costs may be made to the parent who is the prevailing party and who was substantially justified in rejecting the settlement offer.

*Attorneys' fees may not be awarded relating to any meeting of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team unless the meeting is convened as a result of an administrative proceeding or judicial action.

*A due process resolution session is not considered to be a meeting convened as a result of an administrative hearing or judicial action, nor an administrative hearing or judicial action for purposes of reimbursing attorneys' fees.

The Court may reduce the amount of any attorneys' fee award when:

a. The parent, or the parent's attorney, during the course of the action or proceeding unreasonably protracted the final resolution of the controversy;

b. The amount of the attorneys' fees otherwise authorized to be awarded unreasonably exceeds the hourly rate prevailing in the community for similar services by attorneys of reasonably comparable skill, reputation and experience;

c. The time spent and legal services furnished were excessive considering the nature of the action or proceeding; or

d. The attorney representing the parent did not provide to the local educational agency the appropriate information in the Due Process Hearing Request.

These reductions do not apply in any action or proceeding if the court finds that the State or Charter School reasonably protracted the final resolution of the action or proceeding.

Child's Status during Administrative Proceedings.

Except for discipline cases, which have specific rules, while the due process case (including an appeal to the Appeals Panel) or appeal in court is occurring, the child must remain in his or her present educational placement unless the parent and Charter School agree otherwise. If the decision of the Appeals Panel agrees with the child's parent that a change of placement is appropriate, that placement must be treated as an agreement between the Charter School and the parent. If the due process hearing involves an application for initial admission to public school, the child, with the parental consent, must be placed in the public school program until completion of all the proceedings, unless the parent and Charter School agree otherwise.

Parental Claims For Tuition Reimbursement

If the parent of a child with a disability, who previously received special education and related services under the authority of a Charter School, enroll the child in a private school without the consent of or referral by the Charter School, a court or a Hearing Officer may require the Charter School to reimburse the parent for the cost of that enrollment if the court or Hearing Officer finds that the Charter School had not made free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to the child in a timely manner prior to that enrollment. However, the cost of reimbursement may be reduced or denied if:

*At the most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting that the parent attended prior to removal of the child from the public school, the parent was rejecting the placement proposed by the charter school to provide free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the child, including stating the parent's concerns and intent to enroll the child in a private school at public expense; or Ten (10) business days (including any holidays that occur on a business day) prior to the removal of the child from the public school, the parent did not give written notice to the Charter School of the information listed above;

*Reimbursement may also be reduced or denied if prior to the parental removal of the child from the public school, the Charter School informed the parent, through prior written notice, of its intent

to evaluate the child (including a statement of the purpose of the evaluation that was appropriate and reasonable), but the parent did not make the child available for such evaluation; or

*Upon a judicial finding of unreasonableness with respect to actions taken by the parent.

Despite the requirement that the Charter School provide prior written notice, the cost of reimbursement will not be reduced or denied for failure to provide such notice if:

The Charter School prevented the parent from providing such notice; or The parent had not received prior written notice explaining the notice requirement; or Complying with the provision to give notice at the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting of the intent to remove the child or complying with the provision to give ten (10) day written notice of the intent to remove the child, would likely result in physical harm to the child; and Reimbursement may not be reduced or denied for failure to provide notice, in the discretion of the Hearing Officer or court, if:

a. The parent is illiterate and cannot write in English; or

b. Compliance with the notice provisions would likely result in serious emotional harm to the child.

Rights Regarding Discipline And Suspension

School personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether to order a change in placement for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct.

According to federal law, school personnel may remove a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from their current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension, for not more than 10 school days (to the extent such alternatives are applied to children without disabilities). The determination of an interim alternative educational setting is made by the IEP team.

A change in placement requires a prior written notice (a Notice of Recommended Educational Placement or “NOREP”). The exclusion of a child with mental retardation who attends a Charter School, for any amount of time is considered to be a change in placement and requires prior written notice (assuming the disciplinary event does not involve drugs, weapons and/or serious bodily injury). If the parent does not agree with the change in placement on the Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP), the child remains in the existing placement until due process is completed, unless school officials take further action and go to court. A removal from school is not a change in placement for a child who is identified with mental retardation when the disciplinary event involves weapons, drugs and/or serious bodily injury.

If school personnel seek to order a change in placement that would exceed 10 school days and the behavior that gave rise to the violation of the school code is determined not to be a manifestation of the child’s disability, the relevant disciplinary procedures applicable to children without disabilities may be applied to the child in the same manner and for the same duration in which the procedures would be applied to children without disabilities although it may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

A child with a disability who is removed from the child’s current placement (irrespective of whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child’s disability) shall: (i) continue to receive educational services, as provided, so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child’s IEP; and (ii) receive, as appropriate, a functional

behavioral assessment, behavioral intervention services and modifications, that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

In general, within 10 school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct, the school, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team (as determined by the parent and the School) shall review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine

(I) if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or

(II) if the conduct in question was the direct result of the School's failure to implement the IEP.

If the School, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team determine that either subclause (I) or (II) is applicable for the child, the conduct shall be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If the school, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team make the determination that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP Team shall (i) conduct a functional behavioral assessment, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for such child, provided that the School had not conducted such assessment prior to such determination before the behavior that resulted in a change in placement described above; (ii) in the situation where a behavioral intervention plan has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan if the child already has such a behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior; and (iii) return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the School agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

School personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability, in cases where a child— (i) carries or possesses a weapon to or at school, on school premises, or to or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or School; (ii) knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency; or (iii) has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of a State or local educational agency.

Not later than the date on which the decision to take disciplinary action is made, the School shall notify the parents of that decision, and of all procedural safeguards accorded. The interim alternative educational setting shall be determined by the IEP Team.

The parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with any decision regarding placement, or the manifestation determination, or a School that believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others, may request a hearing.

A hearing officer shall hear, and make a determination regarding, an appeal requested.

In making the determination, the hearing officer may order a change in placement of a child with a disability. In such situations, the hearing officer may— (I) return a child with a disability to the placement from which the child was removed; or (II) order a change in placement of a child with a

disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of such child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

When an appeal has been requested by either the parent or the School— (A) the child shall remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the time period provided, whichever occurs first, unless the parent and the School agree otherwise; and (B) the School shall arrange for an expedited hearing, which shall occur within 20 school days of the date the hearing is requested and shall result in a determination within 10 school days after the hearing.

A child who has not been determined to be eligible for special education and related services and who has engaged in behavior that violates a code of student conduct, may assert any of the protections provided for eligible students if the School had knowledge that the child was a child with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred.

A School shall be deemed to have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability if, before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred— (i) the parent of the child has expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the School, or a teacher of the child, that the child is in need of special education and related services; (ii) the parent of the child has requested an evaluation of the child; or (iii) the teacher of the child, or other personnel of the School, has expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child, directly to the director of special education of such agency or to other supervisory personnel of the agency.

A School shall not be deemed to have knowledge that the child is a child with a disability if the parent of the child has not allowed an evaluation of the child or has refused services or the child has been evaluated and it was determined that the child was not a child with a disability.

If a School does not have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability prior to taking disciplinary measures against the child, the child may be subjected to disciplinary measures applied to children without disabilities who engaged in comparable behaviors.

If a request is made for an evaluation of a child during the time period in which the child is subjected to disciplinary measures; the evaluation shall be conducted in an expedited manner. If the child is determined to be a child with a disability, taking into consideration information from the evaluation conducted by the school and information provided by the parents, the school shall provide special education and related services except that, pending the results of the evaluation, the child shall remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities.

Nothing shall be construed to prohibit the school from reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities or to prevent State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a child with a disability.

A school reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability shall ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the child are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to whom the School reports the crime.

The term ‘controlled substance’ above means a drug or other substance identified under schedule I, II, III, IV, or V in section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812(c)).

The term ‘illegal drug’ above means a controlled substance but does not include a controlled substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health-care

professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under that Act or under any other provision of Federal law.

The term ‘weapon’ above has the meaning given the term ‘dangerous weapon’ under section 930(g)(2) of title 18, United States Code.

The term ‘serious bodily injury’ above has the meaning given the term ‘serious bodily injury’ under paragraph (3) of subsection (h) of section 1365 of title 18, United States Code.

Surrogate Parents

Each Charter School must ensure that an individual is assigned to act as a surrogate of a child when no parent or person acting as the parent can be identified, or the school, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate the parent. The Charter School must have a method of determining whether or not a child needs a surrogate parent, and for assigning a surrogate parent to the child.

The Charter School may select a surrogate parent in any way permitted under State law, but must ensure that a person selected as a surrogate is not an employee of the State Educational Agency, the Charter School or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the child. For a child who is a ward of the State, a surrogate may be appointed by a judge overseeing the child’s care or by the school.

For a homeless youth, not in the physical custody of the parent or guardian, the Charter School must appoint a surrogate. The State Educational Agency must make reasonable efforts to ensure the assignment of a surrogate not more than thirty (30) days after there is a determination by the Charter School that the child needs a surrogate.

Rights Pertaining To Educational Records

The Charter School must permit the parent to inspect and review all educational records relating to their child with respect to the identification, evaluation and educational placement of the child, as well as the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the child, which are collected, maintained, or used by the Charter School. The Charter School must comply with a request without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an individual education program or hearing relating to the identification, evaluation, or placement of the child, and in no case more than forty-five (45) days after the request has been made.

The parent’s right to inspect and review education records under this section include the right to a response from the participating agency to a reasonable request for explanations and interpretations of the records; the right to have a representative inspect and review the records; and the right to request that the Charter School provide copies of the records containing the information if failure to provide these copies would effectively prevent the parent from exercising their right to inspect and review the records.

The Charter School may presume that the parent has authority to inspect and review records relating to their child unless the Charter School has been advised that the parent does not have the authority under applicable State law governing such matters as guardianship, separation and divorce.

If any educational record includes information on more than one child, the parent has the right to inspect and review only the information relating to their child or to be informed of that specific information.

The Charter School must provide the parent, on request, a list of the types and locations of educational records collected, maintained, or used by the Charter School.

The Charter School may not charge a fee to search for or to retrieve information, but may charge a fee for copies of records which are made for the parent if the fee does not effectively prevent the parent from exercising their right to inspect and review those records.

The Charter School must keep a record of parties obtaining access to educational records collected, maintained, or used (except access by the parent and authorized employees of the participating school), including the name of the party, the date access was given, and the purpose for which the party is authorized to use the records.

If the parent believes that information in educational records collected, maintained, or used under this part is inaccurate or misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of their child, they may request the Charter School that maintains the information to amend this information. The Charter School must decide whether to amend the information in accordance with the request within a reasonable period of time of receipt of the request. If the Charter School decides to refuse to amend the information in accordance with the request, it must inform the parent of the refusal and of their right to a hearing as set forth below. The Charter School must, on request, provide an opportunity for a hearing to challenge information in educational records to ensure that it is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child.

The hearing is conducted by the school, not a due process Hearing Officer. If, as a result of the hearing, the Charter School decides that information is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, it must amend the information accordingly and so inform the parent in writing. If, as a result of the hearing, the Charter School decides that the information is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, it must inform the parent of the right to place in the records it maintains on their child a statement commenting on the information or setting forth any reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the Charter School. An explanation placed in a child's records under this section must be maintained by the Charter School as part of the records of the child as long as the record or contested portion is maintained by the Charter School; if the records of the child or the contested portion is disclosed by the Charter School to any party, the explanation must also be disclosed to the party.

Complaint Procedures

Parents who believe that the educational rights of their child are being violated may file a Consumer Request Intake Form with the Bureau of Special Education, Pennsylvania Department of Education, requesting that this agency investigate the alleged violation. Requests for complaint investigation must be in writing, and should be sent to:

Chief, Division of Compliance, Monitoring and Planning Bureau of Special Education
Pennsylvania Department of Education 333 Market Street, 7th Floor Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333

Parents may request a Consumer Request Intake Form by calling the Bureau of Special Education's Consult Line, a parent helpline, at 800-879-2301.

The Bureau of Special Education's Compliance Advisor assigned to the region where the Charter School is located will investigate the complaint in a timely manner to determine whether the Charter School has failed to comply with State and/or federal laws and regulations. The investigation may include obtaining written or oral information and an on-site visit. Except in extenuating circumstances, the Bureau of Special Education's Compliance Advisor will complete the complaint investigation and issue a report of findings within sixty (60) calendar days.

If a written complaint is received that is also the subject of a due process hearing, or the written complaint contains multiple issues, of which one or more are part of that due process hearing, the State must set aside any part of the complaint that is being addressed in the due process hearing, until the conclusion of the hearing. However, any issue in the Consumer Request Intake Form that is not part of the due process action must be resolved using the time limit and procedures.

If an issue is raised in a Consumer Request Intake Form filed under this section that has previously been decided in a due process hearing involving the same parties, the hearing decision is binding and the Bureau of Special Education must inform the person filing the Consumer Request Intake Form of this fact.

A Consumer Request Intake Form Alleging a Charter School Failure to Implement a Due Process Decision must be Resolved by the Bureau of Special Education, not a Due Process Hearing Officer.

Either an organization or an individual may file a signed written Consumer Request Intake Form. The Consumer Request Intake Form must include a statement that a public agency has violated a requirement of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) or applicable State regulations, and the facts on which the statement is based. The Consumer Request Intake Form must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the Consumer Request Intake Form is received, unless a longer period of time is reasonable because the violation is continuing, or the person filing the Consumer Request Intake Form is requesting compensatory education for a violation that occurred not more than three (3) years prior to the date the Consumer Request Intake Form is received.

This Annual Notice has been written in accordance with The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004).

THE CONTENT OF THIS NOTICE HAS BEEN WRITTEN IN STRAIGHTFORWARD, SIMPLE LANGUAGE. IF A PERSON DOES NOT UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS NOTICE, HE OR SHE SHOULD ASK THE CEO OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL FOR AN EXPLANATION. THE CHARTER SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR AN INTERPRETER FOR PARENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. IF A PARENT IS DEAF OR BLIND OR HAS NO WRITTEN LANGUAGE, THE SCHOOL WILL ARRANGE FOR COMMUNICATION OF THIS NOTICE IN THE MODE NORMALLY USED BY THE PARENT (E.G., SIGN LANGUAGE, BRAILLE, OR ORAL COMMUNICATION).

THIS NOTICE IS ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES, EVALUATION AND SCREENING ACTIVITIES, AND RIGHTS AND PROTECTIONS PERTAINING TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, CHILDREN THOUGHT TO BE DISABLED, AND THEIR PARENTS AND IS ONLY A SUMMARY OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY RIGHTS REGARDING STUDENT INFORMATION.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REQUEST EVALUATION OR SCREENING OF A CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENT CONTACT THE CEO OF THE CHARTER SCHOOL AT THE CHARTER SCHOOL,1021 West Lancaster Av. Bryn Mawr, Pa 19010

NOTHING IN THIS NOTICE IS INTENDED TO CONFLICT WITH OR SUPPLANT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S CURRENT "PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS NOTICE" WHICH IS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE SCHOOL FOR YOUR REVIEW OR WITH APPLICABLE STATE AND/OR FEDERAL LAWS.

For more information you may contact the AHCS Special Education Department or visit the PDE Special Education website.

## Special Education - Attachments

- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Special Education
- Specific Learning Disabilities Policy

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

| Teacher | FTE | Type of class or support | Location | # of Students | Other Information |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lynne Moyer | 1 | Learning Support/Emotional Support | Achievement House Charter School | 26 | no unique circumstances |
| Deb Bender | 1 | Emotional/Learning Support/Autistic Support | Achievement House Charter School | 24 | no unique circumstances |
| Kathy Puentas | 1 | Learning Support/Emotional Support | Achievement House Charter School | 37 | no unique circumstances |

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

| **Organization** | **FTE** | **Type of class or support** | **Location** | **# of Students** | **Other Information** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leader Services | n/a | Learning/Emotional/Autistic Support | Achievement House Charter School | 125 | no unique circumstances |
| HEC Reading Horizons | n/a | Learning Support | Achievement House Charter School | 11 | no unique circumstances |
| Educere | n/a | Learning Support | Achievement House Charter School | 2 | no unique circumstances |

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

| Title | Location | FTE |
|---|---|---|
| Special Education Director | Achievement House Charter School | 1 |
| Special Education Assistant | Achievement House Charter School | 1 |
| Special Education Mentor | Achievement House Charter School | 1 |

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

| IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual | Title/Service | Amount of Time Per Week |
|---|---|---|
| Office of Vocational Rehabilitation | Vocational Assessments | as needed |
| Therapy Source | School Psychologists | as needed |

## SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

## Student Assessment - Primary

| Test/Classification | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| n/a | No | No | No | No | No | No |

## Student Assessment - Secondary

| Test/Classification | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PSSA | No | No | No | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Scantron | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Study Island | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment (DORA) | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Diagnostic Online Math Assessment (DOMA) | No | No | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |

## Student Assessment

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

***How these results influence development of annual measurable goals and targets***

This is Achievement House Charter School's fifth year in operation. We are comparing our fifth year's PSSA and Scantron data to the data from the 07-08 school year to determine if we have met annual measurable goals and targets, to evaluate the effectiveness of current strategies, develop new strategies to improve scores, and to develop annual measurable goals and targets for next year. We will also be including baseline data from the Diagnostic Online Reading Assessment (DORA) and the Diagnostic Online Math Assessment (DOMA). Achievement House Charter School began utilizing these two assessment tools in the 2008-2009 school year as local assessment tools

**The 2007-2008 PSSA data is as follows:**

**Mathematics**

| School Year | Advanced +Proficient | Advanced | Proficient | Basic | Below Basic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2007-08 | 18.75 | 6.25 | 12.5 | 27.5 | 52.5 |

**Reading**

| School Year | Advanced +Proficient | Advanced | Proficient | Basic | Below Basic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2007-08 | 38.75 | 12.5 | 26.25 | 25 | 35 |

**The 2008-2009 PSSA data is as follows:**

**Mathematics**

| School Year | Advanced +Proficient | Basic+ Below Basic |
|---|---|---|
| 2008-09 | 22.9 | 77.1 |

**Reading**

| School Year | Advanced +Proficient | Basic+ Below Basic |
|---|---|---|
| 2008-09 | 41.7 | 51.3 |

***If locally developed tests are used, discuss how they are used and what impact they have on the curriculum and any measurable goal decisions***

Achievement House Charter School uses DORA and DOMA, Scantron and Study Island as other assessment sources to determine student achievement levels and progress in math, reading, and writing.

Scantron and Study Island are both online assessment tools. Students take reading, writing, and math tests on the web, and results are immediately available for viewing. Results of these tests from each testing period can be compared to determine individual and collective student progress. The Scantron test also serves as a method to determine student progress. In addition, the Scantron test is also utilized in determining course placement for new students enrolling in Achievement House Charter School.

Using the Scantron test, students are assessed for academic gains in reading, math, and writing. In 2009-2010, we plan to test students three times during the year. We will be using DORA, DOMA, and Scantron for all three testings.

Study Island, a web-based state assessment preparation program, is utilized for instructional and diagnostic purposes. The program is organized with topics covering all the PA assessment anchors which contain a lesson and assessment questions with explanations.

In turn, the Achievement House Charter School staff can view usage statistics for each student, student sub-group, and the entire school. This data helps teachers measure progress and identify deficiencies as they relate to the specific anchor.

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

Achievement House Charter School's Student Achievement Plan outlines measures the school takes to improve and/or maintain the achievement of all students. These measures reflect a focus on the student. A summary of initiatives is listed below:

Developmentally and culturally relevant assessment is used as a tool for improved student learning and instruction.

An assessment system based on ongoing teacher evaluation of student work results in informed decisions about curriculum, instruction, and learning.

Multiple evaluation formats provide information about student learning. The use of Study Island for Math and Language Arts, and future testing for Social Sciences and Science, aid in appropriate placement and continuous evaluation of standards acquisition.

Analysis of multiple sources of data about student performance is accessible to teachers in a timely manner

Multiple strategies and interventions will assist students in performing proficiently on local and statewide tests. Frequent use of testing such as Scantron, Study Island, and PSSA and SAT practice tests aid the student in becoming accustomed to a variety of testing formats.

All students have access to high quality instruction in every curricular area focused on increasing student achievement.

In addition to standards-based, anchor-driven, teacher-developed courses, third party courses are offered to increase the variety of elective curriculum options for all students. Course offerings are based on surveys of students' interests. These courses enable students to pursue areas of interest with an expected increase in the interest in learning and achievement at Achievement House Charter School.

A strong and continuous cycle of assessment and instruction including technologies such as online testing, web-based curriculum and online chats with audio capability for discussion and presentations, is utilized in conjunction with certified teachers, mentors, to ensure that student strengths and weaknesses are addressed.

Bloom's Taxonomy will be used to increase the level of questions and discussion

Assessments will be based on standards acquisition, and correlated to the assessment anchors, to aid in directing individual student learning.

The cyber school setting provides more individualized, focused instruction. The mentoring program allows for the development of strong relationships between students and school personnel for all years the student attends Achievement House Charter School.

Students are supported in performing at proficient levels through interventions and specialized instruction. Achievement House offers both Student Success Team and Student Assistance Programs.

Identification and evaluation of current intervention and remediation efforts support effective programs and eliminate ineffective ones.

Coordinated opportunities for students assure that interventions and/or remediation are connected to, and not isolated from, the curriculum

Every student feels supported academically and personally throughout the school experience

Academic and personal support from the teachers and mentors engage students in courses and build resiliency and a sense of personal accomplishment.

Database available for the student's teachers and mentors to ensure continuity of support and awareness of student's needs.

Collaboration between the staff and students, student to student and between school and family increases student motivation and interest in learning process.

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

For the 2008-2009 school year, students were assessed upon enrollment with a standards-based assessment in the areas of reading and math. Special educations students, or at risk students, are also assessed in the area of Language Arts. Students are also assessed at the end of the school year to track progress. This assessment also generates suggested learning objectives that maybe used to direct instruction by all teachers instructing that student. The suggested learning objectives generated are based upon the student's area of need within the PA standards and assessment anchors for that particular subject area. Any student who may be at risk academically, or with attendance issues, will be assessed and possibly evaluated for needed modifications to ensure success.

For the 2008-2009 school year, students were placed on their instructional level, in the area of math, according to entrance assessments. If needed, modifications were provided as deemed necessary by the staff. If greater intervention appeared to be needed, beyond modifications which had already been provided, students were referred to the Student Success Team for further discussion and possible intervention strategies. If more interventions were required, those students were referred for further evaluations and possible special education services.

The regular education teachers and the special education teachers collaborate on an ongoing basis to help meet the needs of students who may be at risk or struggling.

Additional Math courses and class sections were added to provide instruction at the student's mathematical instructional level as determined by Scantron and locally developed formative assessments.

Achievement House Charter School is classified as a Title I school. A Reading Tutor and Math Tutor have been assigned to the charter school to assist students in these areas to increase performance.

All of the above programs will continue in the 2009-2010 school year.

## Student Assessment - Attachment

- DORA Testing 2008-2009

## Teacher Evaluation

**Teacher Evaluation**

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

**The process for evaluating teachers at Achievement House Charter School continues to be based upon processes as defined in the Teacher Induction Plan and use of the appropriate PDE forms 426, 427, and 428 as specified by the Pa Department of Education Performance and Assessment Process as in Chapter 49. The particular form is matched with the certification level of each professional employee at Achievement House Charter School. Non-certified staff is held to the same criteria to establish internal instructional consistency throughout the organization.**

**The foundation of the supervision, observation, evaluation, and rating process at Achievement House Charter School follows the professional development model authored by Charlotte Danielson "The Frameworks Model" and the work on teacher evaluation by Danielson and McGreal" As more staff members achieve Level II Certification and tenure, Achievement House Charter School professional staff will also be given the option of participating in a differentiated supervisory model as advocated by Glatthorn, Duke, Glickman, and DuFour and Eaker.**

**During the 2007-2008 school year, all teachers, whether PDE certified or not, were observed using the structure of PDE form 427/428. A pre-observation and post-observation conference was held prior to a formal observation and all lesson requirements were expected to be reflected in the following rubrics:**

1. **planning and preparation**
2. **classroom environment**
3. **instructional delivery**
4. **professionalism**

**Lesson development must also have conformed to the UBD template based on the work of Wiggins and McTighe.**

**During the pre-observation conference, the principal discussed the following artifacts prior to the meeting:**

1. **Unit and lesson plans which have been correlated to Pa standards and assessment anchors**
2. **Resources, materials, and technology utilized to impact student learning and achievement**
3. **Assessment materials and processes to be used**
4. **Essential information about class and individual students**

**At the post-observation conference, teachers were required to self-assess their performance on the twenty rubrics pertaining to instructional and classroom environment and planning and preparation. A professional colloquium between the teacher and the staff member principal was then conducted in relationship to the success of the lesson.**

**A systemic schedule of informal and formal observations was conducted throughout the 2007-2008 school year. Mid year and year end ratings were performed with each professional employee. Artifacts were required for each teacher observation and rating conference. A greater emphasis continues to be placed on teachers submitting electronic portfolios accentuating key achievements during the year.**

**In addition to actual classroom observations, professional employees were evaluated on their contributions to the school utilizing the four rubrics as specified in PDE-426, 427 and 428 — Category I — Planning and Preparation, Category II — Classroom Environment, Category III — Instructional Deliveries, Category IV - Professionalism.**

**These procedures will remain in effect in the future.**

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

**b. The school principal is certified and qualified to evaluate teaching staff.**

**c. Describe professional development for the evaluators, particularly in the areas of Special Education and instructional techniques, that is unique to the mission of the charter school.**

**c. The professional development of the principal of Achievement House Charter School is unique not only to the mission and vision of the school's charter but perhaps in the state of Pennsylvania. His past professional credits have included chairman of the Educational Leadership Program at Gwynedd-Mercy College, Superintendent of School, and Adjunct Professor at local colleges, as well as active involvement in ASCD, PASCD, PDK , the PAESSP, and PCCS organizations.**

**The principal has also taken advantage of PDE and Pattan workshops, brain-based learning conferences, curriculum and assessment workshops and charter school conferences. More recently, the principal was chosen by the National Staff Development Council ("NSDC") to participate in the NSDC Academy of 2010. This prestigious opportunity will make it possible to enhance staff development and evaluation practices. The principal is advised on a daily basis by the Coordinator of Special Education for the school. When necessary, the school's solicitor is also consulted for information related to professional development and special education training.**

## Teacher Evaluation - Attachments

- Teacher Evaluation
- Teacher Evaluation
- Teacher Evaluation
- Teacher Evaluation
- Teacher Evaluation
- Teacher Evaluation

## SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

## Leadership Changes

Dr. Elizabeth Revell joined the Board of Achievement House Charter School on July 15, 2008.

There was only one administrative change during the 2008-2009 school year. Dr. Alexander Grande III resigned effective June 30, 2009. This change had no effect on the 2008-2009 school year.

## Board of Trustees

| Name of Trustee | Office (if any) |
|---|---|
| Richard Brickley | President |
| Alyssa Heeneke | Vice President |
| Cheryl VanBuskirk | Secretary/Acting Treasurer |

| | |
|---|---|
| Alixe Jo Cobin | Member |
| Vince Bowers | Member |
| Elizabeth Revell | Member |

## Professional Development (Governance)

Professional development for the Board of Trustees has been informal. Our solicitor, Kevin McKenna, Esq., and his associates have advised the Board members on inclusion of and sequencing of topics, appropriateness of topics for executive session, participation rights of the public, board and staff ethics, policy development, and conflict of interest. One staff member, a former trustee of a charter school, has specialized in insuring adherence to the Bylaws in matters such as election of Board members, members' terms, etc. Information developed by the NSBA regarding responsibilities of Board members has been disseminated to the Board of Trustees. Additional professional development will be presented by the Achievement House Charter School Management Team, the school solicitor, and other consultants or governance standards such as:

Engaging and promoting community support

Allocating resources to facilitate student achievement

Maintaining legislative awareness and communicating with local, state, and federal legislative bodies

Staying current with changing needs and requirements by reviewing educational literature, attending professional development, opportunities and preparing to make informed decision

Operating as a collective board in making decisions

Setting annual goals that are aligned with the annual plan

Adopting a master facilities plan conducive to teaching and learning

In the future, a Board retreat is planned to update the Board on current legal, procedural and governance issues.

Achievement House Charter School will continue to add professional development activities for the Board of Trustees in accordance with state and federal guidelines for the governance of charter schools.

## Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The Board of Trustees' has been informed of interaction between the school and the PDE by the CEO and the Principal, as discussed in the charter. The Board has made every effort to address all recommendations by the PDE regarding policies. The Board has also been openly cooperative to all compliance visits and site reviews that the PDE has conducted. The President of the Board and other Board members have made themselves available for interview by the PDE or site evaluator/compliance reviewer.

Achievement House Charter School will complete follow-up items recommended by PDE

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

- Board Calendar 2009-2010

## Community and Parent Engagement

The Board of Trustees' strives at all times to promote opportunities for community and parent engagement at Achievement House Charter school activities by:

- ☐ Distributing relevant information about the school
- ☐ Productive methods of communication to the board and appropriate staff
- ☐ Seeking input through a variety of sources
- ☐ Including stakeholders in all communication

Specific examples of engaging the parents and community in school activities during the 2008 - 2009 school year include:

- ☐ Involvement of parents in middle school planning sessions
- ☐ Monthly parent-student/staff virtual chats

Implementation of Parent/Teacher conferences

- ☐ A twenty-four hour response time to parent questions, comments, concerns
- ☐ Board of Trustees adherence to Sunshine Laws
- ☐ Public comment section available at all Board of Trustees meetings
- ☐ Solicitation of parent volunteers at various school events i.e. graduation, prom, career development days, etc.

# SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

## Major fund-raising activities

There were no major fund raising activities during this year and none are planned for the upcoming year.

## Fiscal Solvency Policies

The school board adopts an annual budget in June prior to the upcoming fiscal year. All purchasing and expense allocation throughout the fiscal year must align with the budget. The administration and board monitors fiscal activity, as related to the annual budget, on a monthly

basis. Monthly reviews also include accounts receivable and accounts payable. Achievement House Charter School conducts an annual audit in compliance with PDE guidelines.

## Accounting System

“Achievement House maintains its books on a fund accounting basis in accordance with GAAP. It maintains a chart of accounts based on the Pennsylvania State Chart of Accounts for PA Public Schools, and all PDE reports are filed in this format. Quick Books Accounting Software is used to classify, capture and report income and expenditures.” Achievement House Charter School continues to comply with all state funding mandates.

## Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances

## Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachments

- Preliminary statement of revenues (expenditures)
- Preliminary statement of revenues (revenue)

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

Achievement House Charter School selected Siegal and Drossner to perform the 2007-2008 audit report. They have been engaged to conduct the 2008-2009 audit, with an anticipated completion date before October 2009. The 2007-2008 audit is attached and has a completion date of March 24, 2009. The audit report identified 2 findings. These findings have been addressed by the school's administration and board of directors.

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

- Final audit 6/30/08

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

None.

## SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The capital expenditures for the year were computer equipment leases in the amount of $175,000.

## Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

The school has identified the need for further computer purchases for the upcoming year. These computers will be used to replace expiring hardware and to supply new students with computers. The school anticipates needing between 150 - 250 new computers during the upcoming year.

Approximately 175 computers, monitors, and printers were ordered to address growth and troubleshooting issues experienced throughout the 2008-2009 year.

# SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

Achievement House Charter School's Board of Trustees has approved policies, developed by our solicitor, relating to Crisis Management and Fire Drills which comply with health and safety requirements.

Achievement House Charter School also requires enrolling students to provide their immunization records and health records.

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

- COMPLIANCE WITH HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND MAINTENANCE OF HEALTH AND IMMUNIZATIONS RECORDS FOR STUDENTS
- Compliance with Health and Safety - Health Reimbursement

## Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

The school currently holds the following policies:

Property, General Liability, and Auto — The Hartford:

1,000,000 — each occurrence

1,000,000 — personal/advertising injury limit

2,000,000 — general aggregate

2,000,000 — products-complete operations

300,000 - fire\ damage to rented premises

10,000 - medical payments

1,000,000 — Hired & Non-Owned Auto

Commerical Inland Marine — The Hartford:

708,439 Computer and electronic equipment

Workers Compensation — The Hartford:

Bodily Injury — accident — 500,000 each, disease — 500,000 policy limit

Umbrella — The Hartford:

Policy Limit — 1,000,000

Errors and Omissions — Diamond State:

Policy Limit — 1,000,000

Sexual Molestation — Lexington:

1,000,000 each victim limit

Dishonesty Bond — CNA Surety:

25,000 policy limit

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS:

Independence Blue Cross — Keystone Health Plan East and Personal Choice

Delta Dental — Gettysburg Health Administrators

North American Benefits Corp. — Life and Disability

## Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs - Attachment

- Accord page

## SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

## Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

During the 2008-2009 school year, Achievement House Charter School employed _16_ teachers. Of the _19_ staff members, 17__ have either Level I or Level II PA certifications status.

Achievement House Charter School has 89% certified staff which is 14% higher than the 75% cap for charter schools. Both of the uncertified teachers were hired prior to the NCLB guidelines for highly qualified teachers.

We are privileged to have the majority of staff returning to teach at Achievement House Charter School for the 2009-2010 school year.

The high percentage of staff returning each year can be partially explained as follows:

1. Favorable working conditions

2. Salary and fringe benefits package

3. Staff working as a professional learning community

4. Staff collaboration and other best practices professional development opportunities

5. Faculty input into the decision-making process via a personal response and internal committees

6. Trust, respect, and ethos of caring.

## Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachment

- Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

## Student Enrollment

**2. Student Enrollment**

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

Any student residing in the state of Pennsylvania, and having completed sufficient credit to enter 9th through 12th grade, is eligible for admission to Achievement House Charter School. All applicants who completed the enrollment process were entered in the school. Enrollment remained open throughout this school year.

Achievement House Charter School is committed to treating all individuals, without regard to unlawful considerations of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation or disability as those terms are defined by law or any other legally protected basis in all aspects including, but not limited to its activities, program or employment practices, as required by State and Federal Law.

Achievement House Charter School will provide each enrolled student with a disability, as established in an IEP, without cost to the student or family, those related accommodations which are needed to participate in and obtain the benefits of the school program and extracurricular activities without discrimination and to the maximum extent of the student's ability.

Below are the procedures for enrolling at Achievement House Charter School:

1. Parent/Guardian completes the enrollment forms using the enclosed checklist as a guideline.

2. Completed forms may be mailed or faxed to Achievement House Charter School along with the following required items:

    1. Proof of residence
    2. Copy of student's birth certificate
    3. Student's immunization records (original or copy)

3. Upon receipt of completed forms and required documents, an informational enrollment meeting, in person or by phone, will be scheduled. This meeting will include the Educational Facilitator (parent/legal guardian supervising the educational process of student), the student, and a member of the Achievement House Charter School staff.

Listed below is additional detailed information to assist parents/guardians to finalize the enrollment process:

**Step 1. Completing forms.**

Enclosed is a package that contains essential forms for enrolling your student at Achievement House Charter School. The accompanying checklist indicates which forms are required immediately. Please track your submission of required documents on the enclosed checklist.

**Step 2. Submitting enrollment forms to Achievement House Charter School**

Upon completion of the forms in the enrollment packet, please mail or fax the packet, along with the required additional documentation (proof of residence, student's birth certificate, student's immunization record) to Achievement House Charter School. We cannot complete your enrollment request without these items. Should you wish to submit a copy of the student's transcript with your enrollment packet, or at the informational enrollment meeting, it will serve to expedite the placement process for your student once they are enrolled. Once the completed forms are received at Achievement House Charter School, you will be contacted to schedule the informational enrollment meeting.

**Step 3: Informational enrollment meeting**

An informational enrollment meeting will be conducted, in person or by phone. This meeting will include the Educational Facilitator (parent or legal guardian supervising educational process of student), the student, and a member of the Achievement House Charter School staff. The purpose of this meeting is the exchange of information between school, student, and family about Achievement House Charter School and its program. This is also an opportunity to present any additional reports or records pertaining to your student's progress in their previous school, such as your student's transcripts, to better inform the Achievement House Charter School staff about your student and expedite the placement process once they are enrolled.

Providing Achievement House Charter School with as much information about your student's prior educational records will serve to expedite and ensure accuracy in the academic placement of your student. It is advised that, during the enrollment process, the Educational Facilitator should obtain internet service if they do not currently have service. Achievement House Charter School recommends that students use a cable internet provider or DSL provider whenever possible to ensure optimal performance of features on our webportal. Additionally, Educational Facilitators should be aware that an internet filtering system has been installed on all Achievement House Charter School computers to protect students from exposure to inappropriate material.

In the 2008-2009 school year, there was no need to conduct a lottery for admission.

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

Achievement House Charter School serves students in the ninth to twelfth grades only. In the 2009-2010 school year, Achievement House has been approved by the PDE to offer a 7$^{th}$ and 8$^{th}$ grade.

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

**ENROLLED AT BEGINNING 2008-2009: 268**

09TH 61

10TH 63

11TH 69

12TH 75

**ENROLLED DURING 2008-2009: 264**

09TH 82

10TH 64

11TH 56

12TH 62

**WITHDRAWN DURING 2008-2009: 331**

09TH 80

10TH 67

11TH 73

12TH 111

**NET ENROLLMENT AT END OF 2008-2009: 201**

Students required to leave the school: 107

Students who voluntarily withdrew: 157

Students that graduated June 2009: 65

Students that graduated January 2009: 2

**Provide the number of students who completed the 2008-2009 year who are currently enrolled to return in September.**

The number of students enrolled last year that will be returning in September is approximately 201.

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

Students required to leave during 08-09: 107

Students that voluntarily withdrew during 08-09: 157

Students that graduated during 08-09: 67

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

b. Based on exit interviews conducted by mentors, administrative staff, and the manager of student services, the reasons most cited for students returning to their home districts included the following:

* Lack of traditional socialization patterns

* Students needed a more structured environment.

ℜ• Students lacked organizational and study skills to be successful in a cyber environment.

ℜ• Students failed to comply with Achievement House Charter School and state mandated attendance regulations

## Student Enrollment - Attachment

- Student Enrollment

## Transportation

Achievement House Charter School is a cyber charter school. Students attend school from their homes via the internet. We do not provide any transportation.

## Food Service Program

Achievement House Charter School is a cyber charter school.Â  Students attend school from their homes via the internet.Â  Since the students are not in a school building we do not offer any food services program.

## Student Conduct

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

Achievement House Charter School's current Board and administrative policies and

procedures related to discipline are in compliance with Chapter 12 of the Public School Code, particularly with respect to due process.

The conceptual framework for the Achievement House Charter School Chapter 12 Plan is based on Chapter 12 regulations of the PA State Board of Education, Section 17.41. It also reflects key suggestions advocated by the PA Association of Pupil Service Adminstrators. The concept framework is described below:

**I. Developmental Services**

Developmental services include counseling, psychological services, health services, home and school visitor services, and social work services that support students in addressing their academic, behavioral, health, personal, and social development issues.

**II. Diagnostic Intervention and Referral Services**

Pupil services staff use diagnostic services to identify barriers that limit a student's success in school. Intervention services actively engage pupil services staff in activities planned to eliminate specific barriers to student success. Pupil services staff may arrange for referrals to other school-based or school-linked professionals or may refer parents and guardians to appropriate community-based services for assistance.The school also provides a Student Success Team and Student Assistance Program to further assist students in experiencing school success based on their individual needs.

**III. Consultation and Coordination Services**

Consultation services are used by pupil services staff, in partnership with parents or guardians, to obtain assistance to address barriers and issues that are outside the scope of the student services professional. Consultation and coordination services may be used to assist in the diagnosis, intervention, or referral of students who face barriers to success. Coordination services connect school resources with other available resources to assist students in meeting their educational objectives.

**IV. Other Services**

Pupil Services personnel fulfill a variety of other functions in the school which contributes to the overall effectiveness of the school.

As per PDE direction, Achievement House's Chapter 12 Student Services Plan has been submitted and approved by the Department of Education.

In conjunction with the Chapter 12 requirements, Achievement House Charter School's expectation for student behavior is that students should behave in a safe, orderly manner that will encourage the maximum educational development of each student. Behavior that interferes with the delivery of educational services or jeopardizes the health, safety, and well-being of any member of the school community, or the integrity and stability of the school itself, will not be tolerated.

The Achievement House Charter School Student Code of Conduct has been aligned and is in compliance with the Public School Code and due process requirements, as they apply to student discipline, as the guideline. It has also been reviewed by the school solicitor. All behavioral requirements and disciplinary actions were developed with an understanding of the students' right to a free, appropriate, public education.

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

There were no students suspended or expelled from Achievement House Charter School in the 2008-2009 school year.

## Student Conduct - Attachment

- Student Conduct

## Signature Page

## Assurance for the Operation of Charter School Services and Programs

**School Year: 2008**

The Achievement House CS within Montgomery County IU 23 assures that the charter school will comply with the requirements of 22 Pa. Code Chapter 711 and with the policies and procedures of Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). PDE will specify, in writing, policies and procedures to be followed. Requests for any deviations from these regulations, policies, and procedures must be made in writing to PDE. The charter school assures:

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

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

_____ _____

**Board President** **Date**

_____ _____

**Chief Executive Officer** **Date**

**2008 - 2009 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools**

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

# Assurance for Compliance with the Public Official & Employee Ethics Act

The original Public Official and Employee Ethics Act (the “Ethics Act”) was amended and reenacted in 1989 by Act 9 of 1989 and in 1998 by Act 93 of 1998. (See Act 9 of 1989, 65 P.S. §401, et seq. and Act 93 of 1998, Chapter 11, 65 Pa.c.s. §1101 et seq.) The Act provides that public office is a public trust and that any effort to realize personal financial gain through public office is a violation of that trust. The Act was passed to strengthen the faith and confidence of the people of the Commonwealth in their government. The Act established the State Ethics Commission to administer and enforce the provisions of the Act and to provide guidance regarding the standards established by the Act.

The Achievement House CS assures that it will comply with the requirements of the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act (the “Ethics Act”) and with the policies, regulations and procedures of the Pennsylvania State Ethics Commission. Additional information about the “Ethics Act” is available on the Ethics Commission's website at: http://www.ethics.state.pa.us/ethics/site/

**The assurance must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer and Board of Trustees President of the charter school.**

There is currently no contact information saved.

## Signature Page - Attachment

- Signature pages