
Pennsylvania Department of Education



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

Charter Annual Report
Thursday, February 10, 2011
(Last Accepted: Thursday, February 10, 2011)

Entity: Independence CS
Address: 1600 Lombard Street
Philadelphia, PA 19146
Phone: (215) 238-8000
Contact Name: Jurate Krokys

CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

Summary Data Part I

Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2009 - 2010

Name of School: Independence CS

Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval: July 2000/April 2005 renewal/June 2010 renewal

Length of Charter: 5 years **Opening Date:** September 2001

Grade Level: K-8 **Hours of Operation:** 8:30- 3:15

Percentage of Certified Staff: 93% **Total Instructional Staff:** 59

Student/Teacher Ratio: 22/1 **Student Waiting List:** 700

Attendance Rate/Percentage: 96.02%

Second Site Address, Phone Number and Site Director:

We have moved to 1600 Lombard Street, Philadelphia. This is not a second site but rather our new location as of September 1, 2008. 215-238-8000 , Jurate Krokys, CEO

Summary Data Part II

Enrollment: 747 Per Pupil Subsidy: \$ 8,087.88/17,658.17

Student Profile

American Indian/Alaskan Native:	0
Asian/Pacific Islander:	28
Black (Non-Hispanic):	406
Hispanic:	96
White (Non-Hispanic):	183
Multicultural:	33

Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:
54

Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December: 94

Instructional Days and Hours

Number of:	K (AM)	K (PM)	K (F.Time)	Elem.	Middle.	Sec.	Total
Instructional Days	0	0	175	177	177	0	529
Instructional Hours	0	0	1050	1062	1062	0	5296

SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Educational Community

Independence Charter School (ICS) is a K-8 school located in Center City Philadelphia. ICS is completing its ninth year of operation. The school is located in the historic district of Philadelphia. The school began as a K-3 school in September 2001 and graduated its first 8th grade in the 2006-2007 school year. Ninety-five percent of our graduating eighth graders are accepted to select admissions high schools.

ICS was founded by parents who were committed to the city of Philadelphia and wanted to provide a challenging world class program (including second language acquisition and global studies) for their children and the children of Philadelphia. There were 747 students enrolled in 2009-2010. With the exception of a handful of ICS students whose families have moved to the suburbs of Philadelphia, the rest of the students are from Philadelphia. We employ a lottery system in which submitted applications are chosen randomly by a staff team during a public event that is publicized. This selection is for the number of openings in Kindergarten. All others are also "pulled" and placed on a waiting list. Sibling preference is also given to existing ICS families as long as the student is of the correct age of admittance and if there is an opening in that grade. In every year since our opening, our waiting list has continued to grow such that the waiting list for the coming school year number over 700 with approximately 350 on the Kindergarten wait list.

Our school has gone through one renewal phase in 2004-2005. We have gone through a second renewal this past year and have received a new five year charter in June 2010.

In 2007, the school purchased a new building, the historic Durham school building at 16th Street and Lombard Street. The school began the 2008-2009 academic year in the new building on September 15th. To date, we have been in our new building for two full years.

Our points of pride include

- a strong faculty who are committed to working in an urban school,
- a strong integrated curriculum that includes our own authored curricular frameworks together with published, research based curriculum,
- strong parent involvement
- teacher participation in curricular writing and recommendations
- a unique global studies program
- an exceptional second language studies program with a developing third language program added in middle school
- quality special education service
- growing utilization of community-based resources
- solid test scores with six years of AYP in the six years we have been eligible
- ICS was awarded the Goldman Sachs 2008 Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education, the only elementary school public or private to receive this award.

ICS has an administrative model that focuses on providing expert service to the needs of the students. There is a CEO who has been a teacher for many years. In 2008-2009, we introduced the position of Principal to focus on the immediate needs of curriculum and teacher development the school. We have two Deans of Students (upper and lower), a Special Education coordinator, one curriculum specialist, a language coach, and teacher leaders who also serve as coordinators for special projects such as service learning, math coaches, etc. Beyond that we have counselors, nurses, special education staff, reading specialists, and the like. In addition, recognizing that students come with varied levels of skills, we provide a part time classroom assistant in each classroom in grades K-5 to help with flex grouping and to support the teacher. An average classroom size is 22.

Mission

The Independence Charter School (ICS) is a community-oriented educational institution for elementary school-age children (K-8). The primary mission of ICS is to provide an intellectually stimulating curriculum with an international focus, emphasizing the arts, languages, ideas, and histories from an array of cultures from around the world. To meet its goals, the school draws heavily on the resources available in Philadelphia- the museums, historic landmarks, businesses, schools, parks, communities, and families. ICS emphasizes multi-lingualism starting in Kindergarten, incorporates modern communications and computer technology to facilitate dialogues with, and learning from, children around the world. ICS emphasizes an active, hands-on, multi-dimensional approach to learning and development. While the focus is squarely on an international approach, the school does not lose sight of two of the key traditional goals of public education: teaching young children the fundamental values of our pluralistic democracy, and the acquisition of basic language, literacy, and computational skills necessary to function productively. It is never too early to begin the process of teaching children to become competent, thinking citizens.

Vision

The global studies component of our curriculum is the defining feature of our school. The curriculum encompasses second language instruction, international music, arts, history, geography, and cultures, with an integrated study of countries in grades K-5, and an integration of global studies through history and technology classes in grades 6-8. Teachers at ICS work to incorporate the global studies component across the curriculum to give students an appreciation for a wide range of world cultures, histories, and languages. Exposure to and involvement with

other cultures at an early age will contribute to an increasingly important intercultural competence.

A key commitment is also to second language acquisition. Spanish is the language upon which we focus in grades K-8. We also provide Swahili language instruction in the sixth grade, Arabic in 7th grade, and Mandarin Chinese in eighth grade. Each child in the school receives Spanish language instruction. As the students progress through the grades, an increasing amount of this instruction is content-based, giving our students a proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing in Spanish. Not only does this give them competency in Spanish, but it underscores daily the reality that they live in a world comprised of languages other than English. Parents have the option to place their children in a total immersion or a language intensive program. The immersion program features total instruction in Spanish with English being introduced starting in third grade. Spanish intensive classes focus on the development of conversational Spanish. The recent awarding of a FLAP (Foreign Language Assistance Program) federal grant for the teaching of Arabic will provide substantial support in expanding Arabic to grades 6-8 in addition to the Spanish program.

We actively invite parents to participate in the life of the school with plentiful opportunities for volunteering. We seek and establish relationships with community organizations and resources. After school and summer programs provide students with further opportunities for growth and for remediation when necessary. We also approach each ICS student as an individual and understand that students will need varying levels of support academically, socially, and emotionally.

Shared Values

These Shared Values or core values were developed by a diverse strategic planning committee:

1. We have high academic standards which apply to all students.
2. We are committed to graduating bilingual and multilingual students.
3. We value small class sizes. Teaching and learning should be personalized.
4. We value diversity, and that is reflected in our students, staff, families, Board, and global curriculum.
5. We respect one another and practice honest, open, and direct communication, assuming positive intent.
6. We teach critical thinking and problem-solving skills so that our students become life-long learners who really "understand" rather than merely "know" things.
7. We have high behavioral expectations for our students and believe that, given a nurturing environment, children can succeed.

Academic Standards

Independence Charter School's (ICS) academic standards complement the PA academic standards. In addition, we have recently begun the process of aligning curriculum goals to the newly-adopted Common Core Standards. During 2010-2011, teachers will continue aligning units and lessons to these standards. We have chosen curriculum which is research based, supports student learning and teacher preparation, and allows for differentiation to meet the varied needs of our students. For example, our K-5 Math curriculum, which is Scott Foresman Addison Wesley, is aligned to the PA Standards. Teachers will review their current academic goals and timeline for their grade levels and make adjustments to accommodate the new Common Core Standards under the guidance of administration. Our curriculum specialists regularly utilize the PA standards and assessment anchors (in appropriate subjects) to align curriculum goals with classroom experiences as well as to inform teacher training and guidance in those areas. Teachers meet in August and during the school year for professional development sessions that guide them through curriculum mapping and standards alignment. We have implemented "backward design" in our curriculum writing process. Teachers and supervisors

have been developing courses and units of study around unifying essential questions and enduring understandings that support our mission and vision as well as target the specific goals of each subject. In addition, our staff has reviewed and modified our assessment process and aligned it to our global education goals as well as our overall mission and vision statements. We review and evaluate our curriculum implementation yearly to assess the efficacy of our products.

ICS has met all of the measured targets since the inception of AYP reporting.

Strengths and Challenges

STRENGTHS: Independence Charter School demonstrates the following strengths:

1. Quality second language teaching (Spanish) for all students K-8 in two language programs. In the Spanish Enhanced (FLES) program, students have 30-45 minutes sessions daily in Spanish to develop conversational Spanish language skills. In the Spanish Total Immersion program, students have all major subjects taught in the Spanish language in K-2, then in grades 3-8 there is an increasing amount of English language instruction. In addition, all of our students receive additional language instruction in grades 6 through 8. In 2009-2010, students were instructed in Swahili in grade 6, Arabic in grade 7 and Chinese in grade 8. Moving forward, we are modifying our World Language program to focus only on Arabic as a second acquired language (after Spanish) in the middle school.
2. Exceptional and unique country studies program for grades K-5 and integrated global studies through history for grades 6-8. These programs are integrated across all subject areas.
3. Success in providing supports for the whole child in academics as well as social skills.
4. Solid teaching utilizing best practices that include use of manipulatives, experiential learning, learning at centers, flex grouping for skill levels, differentiation and heterogeneous grouping as well.
5. Strong teacher support in the areas of professional development, collaboration, teacher involvement in planning, support in substantial access to materials and resources.
6. Strong family involvement including a strong PTA. Parent turnout for Back to School Nights and report card conferences ranges 85%-100% in classrooms.
7. Highly qualified staff that is engaged and reflective.
8. Full inclusion of special education students in all aspects of programming.
9. Very strong arts program including the fine arts, music, and dance/movement.
10. Attendance continues to remain strong.
11. Strong and effective Code of Conduct.
12. Strong PSSA scores, particularly in math. On the 2010 math PSSA, there is virtually no gap (3 percentage points) between the students who are identified as "economically disadvantaged" and those who are not identified as such. In addition, the achievement gap between Black students and other ethnic subgroups is the lowest in math.

AREAS IN NEED OF IMPROVEMENT:

1. Technology: Although we have moved ahead considerably with the integration of a computer science teacher, and our kids Gr.1-8 have learned considerable skills in the use of computer resources and tools, and although some of our teachers have embraced this initiative, we still strive to have more of our teachers use technology more extensively by integrating it more regularly into their curriculum. We will continue to develop our knowledge base to guide that integration, but are always in need of increased funding for technology. With such funding, we would add another mobile lab, more LCD projectors, and a SMART board to our current equipment.
2. Attendance for at-risk students: because we are not a neighborhood school but rather attract students from all over the city, and although our attendance is enviable, the problem of late arrivals and absences are nonetheless greater for our at-risk students. In addition, students in grades that do not receive school bus service have lower rates of attendance than in other grades.

3. Academics: Although ICS has met AYP every year, and has been consistently recognized for our unique programming, nonetheless, we continue to experience an achievement gap between some of our measured subgroups. On the math assessment, in both 2009 and 2010, the number of African American students who performed proficient and advanced was about 5 percentage points below our Latino/Hispanic students and about 20 percentage points below our White students. On the reading assessment, however, the gap is larger, though shrinking. The number of African American students who scored proficient and advanced was about 36 percent below our White students in 2009. In 2010, the preliminary analysis reveals that the percentage has shrunk to about 29%. In both reading and math, our Special Education students PSSA scores remain significantly lower than those of the overall population (about 30 percentage points below in both subjects). Also, on the 2010 reading PSSA, students who are identified as "economically disadvantaged" scored about 13 percentage points below those who are not identified as "economically disadvantaged." Finally, we continue to investigate student performance in reading in general, and have implemented some major changes to our reading curriculum across the grade groups. We are looking forward to analyzing PVAAS to determine the growth of these students relative to their standardized scores. To date, PVAAS does indicate healthy year to year growth.

4. Curriculum: As we regularly evaluate and improve our curricular and instructional decisions, we have identified some areas in which we will target improvement efforts. For example, we implemented new reading curriculum in grades K and 1 in 2009, and after further analysis, are expanding that curriculum to grade 2. The same is true in the middle school, with the expansion of a new curriculum from grades 6 and 7 to grade 8. In math, we are implementing a supplementary curriculum, which emphasizes problem solving, in lower grades as well, as a similar curriculum has proven quite successful in the middle school. We continue to improve writing instruction in all grades, particularly focusing on the construction of rubrics to help guide teacher expectations and assessment of writing. In addition, we have recently defined assessment guidelines to help guide our growth in the area of using student data (such as grades) to inform our instruction. We are also currently in the process of refining report cards and interim reports to reflect this philosophy of assessment. Finally, we continue to further structure the Spanish language arts curriculum (both FLES and Immersion) with more materials, and improve foreign language instruction particularly in grades K-4. As a result, we have adopted some new curricular materials for the 2010-2011 school year (all of which are outlined in section III).

4. Certification requirements from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are a complicated challenge for ICS. This is because of the native speakers whom we must have to provide the intensive language program that is unique to ICS and part of the mission of our school as stated in our charter. Because we have a Total Spanish Immersion Program, our teachers must be entirely fluent (usually) native speakers. Currently, students receive instruction from more than 15 fully fluent teachers. Many of those teachers hail from more than 10 Spanish-speaking countries. Many were teachers in their native countries but are having difficulties obtaining certification in Pennsylvania due to regulations prohibiting them from obtaining permanent certification. All have plans to become highly qualified and are working on taking PRAXIS tests and college courses to qualify, however, citizenship regulations prohibit them from obtaining the final certification. However, our school maintains a certification rate above the required 75%, and a highly qualified rate of 100% as required by NCLB.

SECTION II. STRATEGIC IMPROVEMENT PLANNING

Strategic Planning Process

The ICS Board of Trustees (BOT), ICS administration, teachers and staff undergo ongoing reflective review of the academic year with fidelity to Mission and Vision. This is executed through staff and parent surveys done yearly. In addition, subcommittees to the BOT which are peopled by BOT members, ICS staff and administration and parents meet monthly or as needed on various topics. Subcommittees such as the Curriculum Committee and the Human Resources

committee meet regularly and report out to the monthly public BOT meeting. ICS did undergo a comprehensive and formal Strategic Planning process in 2006-2007. In this process, the Board formed a committee which invited individuals representing families, teachers and community members as well as board members. The "layers" of strategic planning included:

1. forming a core committee that would be the receiver of information from many sources
2. the core committee facilitated the selecting of two other layers of interviewees:
 - A. - focus groups of parents
- focus groups of teachers
both of these groups being interviewed by the professional facilitator
 - B. single interviewees made up of administration, teachers, parents and community members.
3. The facilitator met with focus groups and individuals.
4. The core organizational group met in a retreat for two days reviewing the results of the focus groups, single interviews and worked on shared values, etc.
5. Goals emerged from this strategic planning process.
6. The results of the strategic planning process were posted on the website.

In order to renew strategic planning, ICS has entered into Middle States Accreditation process. In 2008-2009 we were accepted as candidates for Middle State Accreditation. This process began the summer of 2009 as we formed the structure and finalized the timeline for this evaluation. The Steering Committee has formed subcommittees that are exploring and executing self-study questions in all areas of school performance from Governance, Leadership and Finances to Student Services, Health and Safety and the Educational Program. The subcommittees have followed in great detail the requirements of the Middle States Accreditation "Designing Futures" program. As such this means that each subcommittee spends approximately 3-6 months gathering information regarding the questions posed which are about strengths of the program, shortcomings, and which delve in to every area including materials, environment, proof of success, and the like. The participants of the subcommittee utilize surveys, small and large group interviews, and meet as a group to write a self-study report that produces short and long term goals. These goals from all of the committees are then forwarded again to the steering committee. The steering committee then forms a strategic planning subcommittee which reviews all of the short and long term goals and formulates 4 to 5 overarching goals for the next 3 to 5 years, with the intention of revisiting in year three (called a mid-year review) their progress in working toward those goals. At the conclusion of the self-evaluation and the formation of the strategic goals, outside evaluators from Middle States Accreditation in the Spring of 2011 will observe, review and comment on our written strategic plan based on our gained information. This is accomplished through a 4 full day visit to the school. During this time the accreditation team of experienced educators review the plan, interview stakeholders, observe classes and review artifacts and documents. The public as well as the school family of parents, guardians, and students are included in this process along the way. This steering committee is headed by Jurate Krokys, the CEO. The Steering committee is populated by teachers, and other staff as well as some board members. The focus groups are coordinated by various committee members and target parents/guardians, community members, and students. The Board of Trustees passes a resolution to accept the strategic plan.

In addition to the Middle States Accreditation strategic plan, the school always has Institutional goals for the given school year. For 2010-2011, the Institutional Goals are to

1. Improve communication with parents reaching 90-100% of the stated initiative goals(including parent training).
2. Closing the achievement gap by 10%
3. COmpleting the Middle States Accreditation process.

In addition, the administration of the school focuses on increasing the scores of students taking PSSAs so that there is a continued increase in achievement. A reflective stance is taken in regard to reducing suspensions, reducing absences and latenesses, and increasing successful entrance into high schools.

The final Middle States Accreditation report is published for the school community and will be available on line. Meetings for the process of strategic planning take place as needed but have been weekly in the months of November through February, with monthly meetings at other times. Summer planning meetings by administrative staff occur in late June through late July and resume in mid August. All such planning meetings are reported to the Board of Trustees. Meetings take place in the school building.

Strategic Planning Committee

Name	Affiliation	Membership Category	Appointed By
Amy Leigh	ICS	Middle School Teacher	teachers
Andrea Soelter	ICS	Other	education specialists
Anne Hall	ICS	Ed Specialist - School Counselor	teachers
Barbara Kay	ICS	Middle School Teacher	teachers
Barbara Zisk	ICS	Special Education Teacher	education specialists
Curren-Preis, Martha	teacher	Middle School Teacher	CEO
Dr. Larry Taylor	ICS	Ed Specialist - School Psychologist	administrators
Gerald Santilli		Other	
Janet McGrath	ICS	Middle School Teacher	teachers
Jimenez, Leonor	Language Coach Independence Charter	Administrator	Jurate Krokys/CEO
Jurate Krokys	ICS	Administrator	administrators
Kristen Denahan	ICS	Ed Specialist - School Counselor	teachers
Kristen Long	ICS	Other	teachers
Leslie Burton	ICS	Ed Specialist - School Nurse	administrators
Megan Steelman	ICS	Community Representative	board of trustees
Nancy Hionides	Community	Community Representative	board of trustees
Pamela Prell	ICS Board of Trustees	Board Member	strategic planning committee
Rona Buchalter	Board of Trustees, president, parent	Board Member	Board of Trustees
Rosina Miller	Independence Charter School Board of Trustees	Board Member	board of trustees
Stephanie Bungard	ICS	Administrator	administrators

Steven Gendler	business	Business Representative	board of trustees
Susan Burrows	PTA	Parent	board of trustees
Thomas, Kareem	Dean	Other	CEO
Tracey Hill	PTA	Parent	board of trustees

Goals, Strategies and Activities

Goal: MATHEMATICS

Description: At least 67% of every subgroup of students will be proficient in Mathematics, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

Strategy: Improve performance of underperforming subgroups

Description: We continue to analyze PSSA and local assessment data to identify gaps in lower-performing students' skill and knowledge base. We apply the new data to our instructional practices. In particular, our research into the need for differentiating instruction to meet individual needs has led us to incorporate more proactive strategies to engage students in their instruction. In 2010-2011, all teachers will receive ongoing, formal training in differentiating instruction and assessment to meet individual needs. Our continued expansion of the Responsive Classroom/Developmental Designs model is aimed at supporting students from varied cultural backgrounds as they navigate different communities. Curricularly, in 2010-2011, we have modified our World Language program at the middle school level to focus on one language (Arabic) after reflection on our program led us to realize that students' knowledge of languages and cultures outside of Spanish required more depth. Our choice to introduce a third language in grade 6 reflects our desire to teach languages and cultures from around the world; and, as our mission and vision are focused on global education, all ICS students continue learning about language and culture across our globe throughout their tenure at ICS. We also believe that our students will achieve more as they develop their global citizenship and knowledge skills. As a result of our research of the most progressive and relevant resources, in February 2009, our Curriculum Committee recommended that our Board of Trustees adopt the Oxfam Curriculum for Global Citizenship as "a foundational and guiding philosophy (though not a limiting one) for the school" (From the Curriculum Committee Report to the Board of Trustees, February 2009). The Board approved the adoption of these guidelines, which outline the Knowledge and Understandings; Skills; and Values and Dispositions students need so that they are enabled to develop into global citizens. Based on our research, which included various documents from the Asia Society, Oxfam, the national Network of Global Studies High Schools, the International Review of Education, Theory into Practice, the World Studies Journal, and various other education news and practice sources, we have developed the following proposal for the ICS Board to consider. Students at all grade levels are also exploring many cultures through our social studies curriculum, which focuses on the application of the Oxfam beginning in 2009-2010. Current educational research indicates that teaching such skills helps improve student engagement and therefore achievement. We believe that this approach to educating our students to participate in a global society will help them become more engaged in their learning as they will be able to connect it to their own experiences. As we reflect on and revise our current practices, we expect our achievement gap to continue to decrease.

Activity: Analyze Data

Description: Analyze PSSA and local assessment data to identify gaps in lower-performing students' skill and knowledge base. Apply new information to instruction.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 7/15/2010	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

Status: In Progress — Upcoming

Date Comment

7/31/2009 we are working with teachers on best practices for students at risk.

Activity: Identify lower-performing subgroups and students

Description: Identify lower-performing subgroups and students. Enroll them in during- and after-school math support. Enlist help from families.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 7/15/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

Status: In Progress — Upcoming

Date Comment

7/31/2009 this is a regular part of our service to at risk students

Strategy: Maintain and support growth of current math model

Description: Students are currently achieving beyond the required the proficiency percentage rates. Teachers are continuing to implement the "Connected Math" model in the middle school. After a successful pilot of a similar "Investigations" curriculum in the lower school, we have decided to fully implement said curriculum in all grade 3-5 classes. This is all in our effort to better align the two math programs. We will now continue to pilot this curriculum in grades lower than 3 (this year in grade 1) to further analyze the efficacy of the Investigations supplement to our "Scott Foresman" math materials. The middle school division of math into "procedures" and "problem solving" classes have helped us group students both heterogenously and homogenously to most effectively meet student needs. As we continue to research the math skills needed to succeed in a global economy, we continue to revisit and revise our curriculum to best prepare our students for high school and beyond.

Activity: Performance Analysis

Description: Analyze performance of students who participated in Study Island and other reading support programs. Use data to inform future use of such programs.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 7/15/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

Status: In Progress — Upcoming

<u>Date</u>	<u>Comment</u>
7/31/2009	this is helpful to some degree

Activity: Review and reflect on current curriculum

Description: Teachers attend and then turnaround train on information/activities learned at Connected Math workshop. Math teachers will apply new knowledge to current curriculum, therefore further enriching students' understanding and skill base. Fully implement "Investigations" into grades 3-5 and expand pilot to grade 1.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 7/15/2010	\$750.00
	Finish: Ongoing	

Status: In Progress — Upcoming

<u>Date</u>	<u>Comment</u>
7/31/2009	Highly successful and we maintain this practice.

Goal: Narrow Achievement Gap

Description: Narrow the reading achievement gap between ethnic and economic groups

Strategy: Identify Barriers

Description: Educate staff and parents on at-home academic support and resources and their connection to achievement in school. This year we have also added the position of a family/volunteer liaison to assist parents with navigating the many resources they have available to them as members of the ICS community.

Activity: Parent Education

Description: Conduct workshops and provide materials guiding parents in how to best support school success with at-home routines. Connect parents to community-based organizations that can help bring stability to struggling homes. Beginning in 2009-2010, employ a family liaison to support building strong family connections.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 7/15/2010 Finish: Ongoing	\$1,000.00
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Status: In Progress — Upcoming

Date Comment

7/31/2009 we are working with the PTA to provide this, more work needed.

Goal: READING

Description: At least 72% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual state-wide PSSA assessments.

Strategy: Improve performance of underperforming subgroups

Description: We continue to analyze the achievement of our under performing subgroups and implement supports for those groups. For example, we recognize that, particularly in reading, consistency of exposure to a literate-rich environment is important to maintain skills. Students with identified reading challenges and who also do not have access to much print material at home were given "summer backpacks" to take home. These backpacks included a variety of resources for the students and their parents to utilize during the summer. In addition, we implemented a number of summer reading activities for our students to use throughout the summer, including reading logs, a summer reading challenge, and website and library resources.

Activity: Analyze Data

Description: Analyze PSSA and local assessment data to identify gaps in lower-performing students' skill and knowledge base. Apply new information to instruction.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 7/15/2010 Finish: Ongoing	-
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Status: In Progress — Upcoming

Date Comment

7/31/2009 We continue to use the PSSA and local information to provide additional services for students at risk.

Activity: Identify lower-performing subgroups and students

Description: Identify lower-performing subgroups and students. Enroll them in during- and after-school reading support. Enlist help from families.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 1/1/2008 Finish: Ongoing	\$1,000.00
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Status: In Progress — Upcoming

Date Comment

7/31/2009 this is a regular part of how we provide service

Strategy: Review and modify current reading curriculum

Description: Teachers are continuing to connect reading/language arts curriculum with other curriculum areas. Our 2009 performance results in reading led us to continue our research into best methods for engaging students in language arts instruction. Our curriculum writing efforts focused on aligning global education principles with language arts goals, therefore connecting students reading instruction with their individual experiences. In addition, in 2009-2010 we continued to implemented more leveled reading across our classrooms. We successfully introduced the 100-Book Challenge in grades 6 and 7 and in 2010-2011 will expand the program to grades 5 and 8.

Activity: Performance Analysis

Description: Analyze performance of students who participated in Study Island, after-school tutoring, and other reading support programs. Use data to inform future use of such programs.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 7/15/2009 Finish: Ongoing	-
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Status: In Progress — Upcoming

Date Comment

7/31/2009 this is helpful to some degree.

Goal: STUDENT ATTENDANCE (any school that does not graduate seniors)

Description: Student attendance will meet a 95% threshold and/or show growth.

Strategy: Identify Concerns

Description: Because we draw students from every area code in the city, a small percentage of them sometimes find it difficult to come to school in a timely and regular fashion. We plan to continue to identify those students who are having problems and arrange meetings with the students and the families to support them in more regular, timely arrival to school. We include teachers, parents, deans, counselors, and, when appropriate, the student, in these meetings. We have found this approach to be successful and plan to continue our current practice.

Activity: Family Meetings

Description: The principal and/or deans will meet with students and families to better understand the impediment to timely, regular school arrival. Together, we will create a plan to ensure improvement of students' attendance.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 1/1/2008 Finish: Ongoing	\$500.00
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Status: In Progress — Upcoming

Date Comment

7/31/2009 This is a function of the Deans and the Counselors and we have been doing that.

Strategy: Improve Daily Attendance in middle school grades

Description: Although our attendance rate is strong, we have identified some grade groups in need of improvement. These grade groups are predominantly those who do not receive school bus service.

Activity: Connect Families Through Improved Communication Devices

Description: In 2010-2011, we have added the new position of family communication/volunteer coordinator who will, as one of her duties, support communication among families within classrooms and grades. In the past, the level of communication among families within the same class or grade varied. This new responsibility will help ensure that parents can better connect to one another, and therefore support each other with carpools, organizing groups to take public

school. In 2010-2011 we will add to this orientation a workshop focusing on understanding the revised assessment policy and applying it to one's individual school experience.

Person Responsible	Timeline for Implementation	Resources
Stephanie Bungard	Start: 1/4/2010 Finish: 6/29/2011	\$500.00

Professional Development Activity Information

Number of Hours Per Session	Total Number of Sessions Per School Year	Estimated Number of Participants Per Year
5.00	5	55

Organization or Institution Name	Type of Provider	Provider's Department of Education Approval Status
Independence Charter School	• School Entity	Approved

Knowledge and Skills	Research and Best Practices	Designed to Accomplish
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Teachers will be trained on the staff-developed Assessment Policy at ICS as well as differentiating instruction from staff members who attended a "train the trainer" week-long workshop on implementing effective differentiated instruction in schools.	Current research is clear on the need to differentiate and to assess in order to promote growth.	<p><i>For classroom teachers, school counselors and education specialists:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases the educator's <u>teaching skills</u> based on research on effective practice, with attention given to interventions for struggling students. Provides educators with a variety of classroom-based <u>assessment skills</u> and the skills needed to <u>analyze and use data</u> in instructional decision-making. <p><i>For school and district administrators, and other educators seeking leadership roles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empowers leaders to create a <u>culture of teaching and learning</u>, with an emphasis on learning.
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Educator Groups Which Will Participate in this Activity

Role	Grade Level	Subject Area
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- Classroom teachers
- Other educational specialists
- Early childhood (preK-grade 3)
- Middle (grades 6-8)
- Elementary (grades 2-5)
- Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening
- Science and Technology
- Arts & Humanities
- Civics and Government
- Health, Safety and Physical Education
- World Languages
- Kindergarten Early Learning Standards
- Mathematics
- History

Follow-up Activities

Evaluation Methods

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team development and sharing of content-area lesson implementation outcomes, with involvement of administrator and/or peers • Analysis of student work, with administrator and/or peers • Creating lessons to meet varied student learning styles • Peer-to-peer lesson discussions • Lesson modeling with mentoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom observation focusing on factors such as planning and preparation, knowledge of content, pedagogy and standards, classroom environment, instructional delivery and professionalism. • Student PSSA data • Standardized student assessment data other than the PSSA • Classroom student assessment data • Participant survey • Review of participant lesson plans |
|--|--|

Status: In Progress — Upcoming

Date	Comment
7/31/2009	successful in this effort

Goal: TECHNOLOGY proficiency

Description: All students will utilize stationary and mobile computer labs for use across all subjects

Strategy: All students will be proficient in use of technology by the time they graduate 8th grade.

Description: Ensure technology skills are taught throughout years at ICS

Activity: Access to Technology

Description: All students are instructed in technology skills beginning in the early grades. In the older grades, students continue to develop their skills by using technology for research, analysis and presentation. In addition, students are taught appropriate on-line behavior skills (cyber citizenship) through their technology lessons. Students use computers in the classroom both as a group and individually. Teachers are instructed in Internet and technological applications available to them at ICS, as well as how to access computer time for students. Finally, we continue to add useful technology to our classrooms, such as document cameras and projectors.

Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources

Stephanie Bungard	Start: 7/15/2010 Finish: Ongoing	\$2,000.00
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Status: Complete

Date Comment

7/31/2009 We have been successful in this goal and continue to support this year to year.

Statement of Quality Assurance

Charter school has met AYP.

There are currently no supporting documents selected for this section.

SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN

Rigorous Instructional Program

ICS utilizes curriculum and materials that are research based and that provide the opportunity for successful learning for the various kinds of learners that populate each classroom. Wherever possible, ICS strives to utilize curriculum that allows for experiential learning to help ensure full student participation. However, we also seek curriculum and materials that help balance the need for project-based learning with that for direct instruction. Using the Pennsylvania standards as our guide, our curriculum reflects the content and processes necessary to prepare students for success as developing learners and global citizens. Below please see an outline of our curriculum:

Independence Charter School (ICS) has developed a world-class curriculum. The Board of Trustees and staff have selected rigorous educational standards that complement those provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education while supporting the global studies Mission and Vision of Independence Charter School.

Charter Schools, by law, have the freedom to determine the philosophical and curricular framework that will guide teaching and learning at their school. Charter School Boards of Trustees are responsible for making decisions regarding this framework, selecting curriculum which compliments the Mission and Vision of the School as written in the charter school application.

Independence Charter School recognizes that students come to school with varying levels of experience and readiness. Furthermore, ICS understands that students need a rich and varied learning environment that recognizes the multiple learning modalities of students. The curriculum

and curricular approaches adopted by ICS address learners diversity while promoting a high level of excellence.

Global Citizenship:

“Education for Global Citizenship gives children and young people the opportunity to develop critical thinking about complex global issues in the safe space of the classroom... (It) encourages children and young people to explore, develop and express their own values and opinions whilst listening to and respecting other people’s points of view. (It aims to teach them how to make)... informed choices as to how they exercise their own rights and their responsibilities to others...(and) learn how decisions made by people in other parts of the world affect our lives, just as our decisions affect the lives of others.

“Education for Global Citizenship uses a multitude of participatory teaching and learning methodologies...and is relevant to all areas of the curriculum, all abilities and all ages. Ideally it encompasses the whole school, and is explicit not only in what is taught and learned in the classroom, but in the school’s ethos. It would be apparent, for example, in decision-making processes, estate management, purchasing policies, and in relationships between pupils, teachers, parents and the wider community.” (*Education for Global Citizenship: A Guide for Schools*, p.2 Oxfam, 2006)

During the 2008-2009 academic year, ICS staff, parents and Board members met to research and discuss the future of global education at our school. This initiative grew out of *the Independence Charter School Strategic Plan: 2007-2009* which reiterated our commitment to continually reevaluating, revising and strengthening our curriculum. In addition, the plan outlines the importance of teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills so that our students become life-long learners. Finally, the plan requires that we “revise, develop, and improve our international/world cultures curriculum so that it is a model program.” The Global Education Task Force (initially the World Cultures and Languages Task Force), a subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee, embarked on its work by investigating broader trends in the field, and quickly agreed that our goals should be focused on formally integrating global education principles into our current design.

As a result of our research of the most progressive and relevant resources, in February 2009, the ICS Board of Trustees, upon the committee’s recommendation, approved the adoption of the *Oxfam Curriculum for Global Citizenship* as “a foundational and guiding philosophy (though not a limiting one) for the school” (from the *Curriculum Committee Report to the Board of Trustees*, February 2009). These guidelines outline the Knowledge and Understandings; Skills; and Values and Dispositions students need so that they are enabled to develop into global citizens. To learn more about the Oxfam principles, please logon to Oxfam.org or, for a specific explanation of the Oxfam principles, go directly to

http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/gc/files/education_for_global_citizenship_a_guide_for_schools.pdf

Beginning with the 2009-2010 academic year, all school planning considers these guidelines when planning units of study and student experiences at ICS.

Fine Arts

ICS students emerge as sophisticated, critical consumers and producers of art. Grades K-8 students attend weekly art classes where they begin to understand art through the artist and his or her work.

Students learn the language of art and the techniques for producing various styles of art. Students also discuss the influence of culture and historical events on the artist. Where possible, possible, the fine arts program integrates aspects of ongoing global studies, thereby reinforcing the study of global diversity. In the past, students have studied the Impressionists, Frida Kahlo, Peter Sibanda, and many others. Students spend an average of six weeks studying one artist. Students in Grade 7, who plan to apply to high schools which require art portfolios, meet with the art teacher to prepare such portfolios.

Music

Grades K-5 students attend weekly music classes where music instruction is coordinated to integrate with global studies. Students learn songs in the original language of the countries they're studying. In the earliest grades, students actively participate in music as a continuum of movement and expression. First graders begin to learn through solfege—the “do-re-mi” acquaintance with notes and their own singing voices. By grade 4, students are able to read notes and are introduced to the recorder. By grade 5, students begin to study guitar. Students in grades 6-8 participate in special short-term seminars that feature music and music making from various cultures. In all grades, students learn songs from many countries in the original language. The PTA supports bringing guest musicians to ICS, and student attendance of concerts in the community.

Dance/Movement and Fitness

Our dance and movement program allows students in grades K-5 to develop aerobic and muscular strength, expand their cultural studies with ethnic and period dances, and develop a better kinesthetic awareness of their bodies. Research shows that about 85% of school-aged children are predominantly kinesthetic, or physical, learners. Using movement in the learning process helps many students retain and retrieve information more efficiently. Students in grades 6-8 participate in fitness programming which includes introductions to various team sports and individual health education.

The Spanish Enhanced Program

The Spanish Enhanced program at ICS includes all classes where English is the primary language of instruction. Typically, parents have chosen this program for their children with the knowledge that their children will also receive an intense daily infusion of Spanish instruction. These daily Spanish FLES classes are taught by teachers who have a native or near native fluency. Primary instruction goals are to build conversational Spanish utilizing TPR (total physical response) including singing, dancing, acting and the like. Students also learn to read and write in Spanish using the *Nuevo Bravo! Bravo!* program. In the upper grades, they begin to use middle-school-oriented textbooks and focus more intensely on grammar. Students graduating from ICS in the FL ES program should take entrance exams for Spanish in high school because many may qualify for mid-level entry in Spanish II or Spanish III. Lower grade FLES students will receive daily Spanish instruction of 30 minutes per day for a total of 150 minutes weekly. Upper grade student schedules include four 50-minute Spanish classes for a total of 200 minutes per week of Spanish instruction. Research has shown that second language acquisition is beneficial for elementary and middle school students affecting all subject areas including math, science, and language arts.

Spanish Immersion Program

Students enrolled in the Spanish Immersion program usually enter Immersion in K or first grades. Most students do not speak any Spanish upon entry. The goal of the program is to facilitate successful learning using Spanish as the medium of instruction. This immediate and intense immersion into the language produces students who are fully bilingual (speaking) and biliterate (reading and writing). Homework, outdoor walks, celebrations, discussions, mathematics: all are conducted in Spanish. Parents are sometimes concerned regarding the development of reading skills in English. Parents are expected to read to their children in English at home for 15 to 30

minutes daily, sitting side-by-side. Most students in Immersion absorb English from the dominant culture and media and are reading in English by second grade without any direct instruction. This is in large part due to the ease of transition from a Spanish alphabet/sound system to English. English is formally introduced in Kindergarten as a bi-weekly 30-minute class. By fifth grade, about 50% of an Immersion student's classes are in English. Spanish immersion is maintained through eighth grade. K-4 studies ALL subjects in Spanish. In grade 5, students study social studies and language arts in English, and math and science in Spanish (along with a 45-minute daily Spanish language arts class), and students in grades 6-8 have social studies, computer (World Through Technology), and Spanish language arts in Spanish, with math and science in English (along with an English language arts class).

Other World Languages

Starting in grade 6, students are introduced to another language in addition to Spanish. Students in grades 6-8 will all learn Arabic language and culture. This study allows them to compare and contrast linguistic similarities and differences, further understand linguistic details, and appreciate cultural traditions in great depth. Arabic is considered a critical language today as it is spoken by about 250 million people around the world. It is expected that in the short-term, students will build a strong foundation for the language as well as develop a deep understanding of the cultural and historical background of its speakers; in the mid-term, graduates will be able to continue their Arabic studies in the area high schools offering Arabic in Philadelphia; and in the long-term, graduates will be able to complete their pursuit of Arabic fluency in college and use this skill to succeed in a globalized world.

English and Spanish Language Arts

Reading - English, K-2 - Independence Charter's K-2 teachers in the Spanish Enhanced program will use the *Treasures* Program from Macmillan/McGraw-Hill. The *Treasures* program uses high-quality literature, coupled with explicit instruction to arm students with the tools necessary to become lifelong readers and writers. Students read and write in leveled small groups, as a whole group, and independently to reinforce reading and writing skills.

Reading -English 3-8

The English language arts program in grades 2-8 employs authentic literature to reinforce those reading skills and habits learned in grades K-1. We do this by exposing our students to a variety of genres. In addition, in order to reach the variety of skill levels present in each classroom, students in grades 3-5 are assigned to reading groups at their appropriate reading levels thereby allowing students to progress at their own pace. Students in grades 6 -8 read books at their reading levels independently through the *100 Book Challenge* program. Students must read, read, read to reach their reading goals! Students in 8th become playwrights by participating in the *Young Playwrights* program. In grades 3-8, the curriculum has been coordinated in such a way such that, wherever possible, a theme or country being studied in social studies is paired with a language arts reading book. For example, the fifth grade study of Afghanistan is enhanced by their reading of *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis. In addition, teachers in grade 3 use supplemental phonics resources to enhance their guided reading program (grade 2 uses *SIPPS* from the *Developmental Studies Center* and grade 3 uses *Open Court* from Macmillan/McGraw-Hill). Another component of the grades 3-8 reading curriculum is the reading of core books, which are books to which we believe all children in grades 3-8 should be exposed. These books provoke discussion, provide a vehicle through which a life lesson or a fundamental/foundational skill can be taught, are of high interest—those that almost all kids of this age love, and serve as an experience that unifies a class and contributes to class culture. Students read between three and five core books per grade level. At least one book ties into that grade's country studies to offer an additional way of learning. K-2 Students in the Spanish Immersion program are exposed to English literature and basic English reading fundamentals through a 30-minute English class two times per week. The main purpose of this class is to introduce students to English reading and writing principles. Students more formally engage in English language arts instruction in grade 3 with a 60-minute daily English class. Grade 4 students have a daily 75-minute English class, grade 5 students have a 90-120 minute daily English class, grade 6 students have a 50-minute English class three times per week, and grades 7 and 8 students have a 50-minute English class 4 times per week.

Reading - Spanish K-3 - The main K-3 language arts program in the Spanish Immersion classroom is *Lectura*. The learning plan includes skills and strategies that provide a literacy foundation in Spanish through reading, comprehension, vocabulary, phonics, word study, spelling, oral language, writing, grammar, literary basics, research, and study skills. This program is aligned with national and state requirements. We complement this program with reading and writing activities from different resources and literature published for native speakers.

Reading - Spanish 4-8 - Grades 4-8 Immersion students continue the Spanish language arts program using a variety of Spanish language resources. Some of the resources used by teachers are Santillana's *Nuevo Siglo*, chapter books, and, in grade 4, the *Junior Greats Books* program. Students practice Spanish through writing, reading, and oral communication in literature and across the curriculum.

Writing - K-8 - We believe that writing is an integral part of learning in all content areas. Therefore, ICS teachers support their students' writing efforts across the curriculum. From free writing in journals, to writing explanations in math, to structured essays that undergo revision and editing, students are constantly developing their writing skills. Students compile writing folders that follow them from one grade to the next. The writing program is primarily guided by the belief that all children can learn to write, that teachers can help students become better writers by creating a supportive, risk-taking environment in the classroom, and that frequent writing is the key to writing development. Teachers use a variety of resources to guide their teaching of writing, including, but not limited to, *Being a Writer*, *Step-Up-To-Writing*, and the *6 + 1 Traits of Writing*.

Mathematics

K-5 - ICS has chosen a grades K-5 curriculum that provides a spiraling approach (the material builds upon previously learned skills and concepts) to mathematics learning. Hands-on manipulatives, along with opportunities for drill, complement "problem of the day" and other kid-friendly practices. The primary resource for the K-5 math curriculum is the Scott Foresman elementary series. The *Investigations* curriculum in 3rd-5th grade classrooms (and planned pilot in select grade 1 classrooms) allows students to apply math skills to word problems. It encourages student use of those skills to explore and solve problems.

6-8 - The middle school math program at ICS includes two rigorous courses for students: Math Problem Solving and Math Procedures. The Math Problem Solving class uses the *Connected Mathematics 2* program, among other supplemental problem-solving materials, with a heterogeneous group of students. *Connected Mathematics 2* is a problem-centered curriculum in which important mathematical concepts are embedded in engaging problems. Students develop understanding as they explore the problems individually, in a small group, or with the class. Students hone their problem-solving ability, conceptual understanding, and proportional reasoning.

In order to meet the diverse needs of our students, the Math Procedures class is used with the instructional approach of flexible-ability grouping. This class uses the *Prentice Hall Mathematics* curriculum (courses 1, 2, 3 and algebra); the grades 6-12 companion to the Scott Foresman elementary series used in our K-5 program. This allows for continuity in programming for ICS students. The *Prentice Hall Mathematics* program is organized around the major strands and specific objectives in the *National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2005 Assessment Specifications* and the *NCTM Principles and Standards for School Mathematics 2000*. It teaches these standards through real-world connections, ongoing assessment, constant review within instruction, support for reading and writing in math, and test prep for high-stakes testing.

Science

ICS has a dedicated science teacher for grades K-5, and science/math subject teachers for grades 6-8. Because the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has an extensive list of goals in science set for public school students, we have adopted an approach that combines text-based learning with hands-on experimentation. ICS uses *Delta Science Modules* and *Pearson* textbooks to form the foundation. *Scott Foresman* textbooks provide additional curriculum for content based learning.

Grades K-5 - Our K-5 science curriculum uses an exploratory based curriculum to cover earth, life, physical, and space sciences. To achieve this goal, ICS implements the Delta Science program. Students not only learn scientific concepts and theories, but experience them through exciting, hands-on, age-appropriate experiments and activities. As students mature, the program employs traditional textbook materials as well to stress the scientific concept being instructed, while also providing additional information not included in the experiments. Students in grade 5 also participate in the Science Fair (read paragraph below).

Grades 6-8 The Pennsylvania State Standards and PSSA Assessment Anchors provide the foundation for the scope and sequence of the ICS Middle School science curriculum. ICS Middle School science teachers primarily use the *Prentice Hall Science Explorer* program to teach this content. This program offers labs and activity options that provide inquiry opportunities throughout the study of earth, life, and physical sciences. Through these opportunities, students think like scientists, constantly asking why and searching for answers. Other activities focus on content acquisition. ICS's focus on student scientific inquiry is manifested in its Science Fair. During the Science Fair, students begin with a question, design an investigation, gather evidence, formulate an answer to the original question, and communicate the investigative process and results.

Social Studies

Grades K-5 - We believe students are ready for studying the world—locally and globally—at a much earlier age than is typical in most public elementary schools. Our grades K-5 social studies curriculum is divided into three units: one which is locally or US-based and two in-depth country studies. The foci of the country studies are determined according to our global education goals. Students in grades K-5 study the local or US based unit from September through December, and then embark on their country studies beginning in January and running through June. Students are required to examine all areas of our world with the initial goal of becoming aware of the wider world and gaining a sense of their own roles as world citizens. The table on the next page outlines the major global citizenship understandings we expect each student to have at the end of each year of study.

Kindergarten — All About Me, Mexico, China
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The students will understand that they are part of a wider world.</i> ▪ <i>The students will gain a greater awareness of the similarities and differences between people.</i> ▪ <i>The students will understand the connections between different places.</i> ▪ <i>The students will understand how individuals are unique.</i>
First Grade (Families and Neighborhoods, Japan, France)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The students will understand that we can have a positive impact in our community and in our world.</i> ▪ <i>The students will understand that there are links and connections among different communities in the world</i>
Second Grade (Democracy in Action - Philadelphia, India, Chile)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Through the study of trade, students will understand the interdependence of countries.</i> ▪ <i>The students will understand the relationship between people and their environment.</i> ▪ <i>The students will understand their potential to change things.</i>
Third Grade (State Studies - Pennsylvania, Russia, Kenya)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The students will understand that things can be better and that individuals can make a difference.</i> ▪ <i>The students will understand the relationship between people and their environment.</i> ▪ <i>The students will understand that many resources are finite.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>The students will understand their potential to change things.</i>
Fourth Grade (US Unit - Native Americans,13 Colonies, Independence), Ghana, Australia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The students will understand how power contributes to conflict.</i> • <i>The students will learn strategies for tackling conflict and for conflict prevention.</i> • <i>The students will understand what Independence means for a country.</i>
Fifth Grade (US Unit - Slavery, Civil War, Civil Rights), Afghanistan, South Africa

- *The students will develop a concern for civil rights.*
- *The students will identify minority and majority groups and recognize how this might lead to inequalities.*
- *Students will identify strategies for tackling conflict and for conflict prevention.*

Grades 6-8 - Our middle school curriculum engages students in developing social studies and literacy skills, as well as understanding the big ideas of the past and the present. Students see themselves as decision makers and actors in the curriculum and in history. Students publicly demonstrate their ideas and skills through participation in the National History Day competition. This competition enables students to hone their research, reading, writing, and speaking skills while engaging in primary source-based research.

All grades use components of the *History Alive!* program; however, this program is supplemented by the curriculum written by ICS staff and professionals in the field. The curriculum is largely focused on global citizenship objectives. For example, each grade focuses on a different theme which will be integrated throughout all subject areas in those grades. The themes are as follows:

Grade 6 — *How do peace and conflict lead to change?*

role does diversity play in the story of our world?

understandings of justice affect our world?

Grade 7 — *What*

Grade 8 — *How do different*

Courses —The course titles have been changed to reflect our continued modification of the program to align with global education principles as well as examine history through a modern lens.

Gr. 6: *Classical History, Cultures, and Geography* (formerly titled *The Ancient World*)

Gr. 7: *History, Culture and Geography of the Common Era from 1000 — 1600* (formerly titled *The Medieval World and Beyond*)

Gr. 8: *U.S. and Western Hemisphere History and Geography* (formerly titled *The U.S. and the Americas*)

Through the study of history, there is an ongoing integration of the study of people and cultures around the world that have impacted and influenced the world. For example, when studying the American Revolution, our students will study other revolutions past and present to compare and contrast the ideas and events that precipitate revolt.

The grade 6 and 7 multicultural curricula are chronological and global. They introduce students to the **GREATS** of civilizations—**government, religion, economics, the arts, architecture, technology, society**—as well as ethical decision making. Students have to grapple with the rise and fall of civilizations and consider the legacy of civilizations and their influence on current values and understandings. The 8th grade course, *U.S. and Western Hemisphere History and Geography*, consists of a multicultural curriculum that is thematic while maintaining a chronology. It is unique because it places the study of U.S. history within the context of the western hemisphere. Each unit's theme includes a *U.S. Connection, Americas (North, Central and South) Connection*, and a *Philadelphia/Pennsylvania Connection*. It focuses on social and political movements and how all people may bring about change. Each unit in the three curricula ends with *Real World Connection* ideas to help students relate what they've studied with current issues/ideas.

Technology

Through grants from the Brook J. Lenfest Foundation and a donation from SmithKline, ICS has two mobile computer labs that may be used for math tutoring, second language acquisition practice, and reserved by teachers for in-class research. We also have a stationary computer lab with 28 desktops where students receive weekly computer instruction. In 2009-2010, there will be up to 4 computers in every classroom in grades 3-5 and 4 computers in each middle school *World Through Technology* classroom. Computer instruction begins in Kindergarten and continues through grade 8. Our computer instruction follows guidelines from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In keeping with the mission of our school, the computer science curriculum incorporates the lessons that students are learning in their social studies classes. Our computer science teacher

works closely with classroom teachers to create lessons that build on the instruction these teachers are providing, as well as to help students make real-world connections to their social studies content. In addition to the technology lessons conducted by their classroom teachers, students in grades K-2 and grade 5 participate in a weekly computer class taught by the computer science teacher. Classroom teachers in grades 3-4 conduct at least one weekly computer class with the mobile lab. Older students learn to use the Internet responsibly and for effective research. Teachers integrate the use of LCD projectors, document cameras, and utilize a host of educational websites to support the curricula. Students in grades 3-8 have access to their own accounts with Study Island to help them prepare for PSSA testing.

Special Education

Our team of special education teachers works closely with grade-level teachers and specialists to provide identified students with specialized instruction in the classroom (push-in) or in a resource room setting (pull-out). ICS practices full inclusion and provides support within that model to benefit the individual student. ICS special education students participate in all classes and school events. Parents who are wondering if their child may need special education services should contact the Special Education Coordinator, Barb Zisk. Parents may also speak with the classroom teacher about such concerns.

Gifted Education

ICS does not run a separate, pull-out program for students identified as "gifted." Students may be tested and identified as gifted, an identification that remains with the student throughout his or her even after leaving ICS for high school. The ICS curriculum is already an enriched one, providing arts education and second language acquisition for all students. We have transitioned from a more traditional pull-out program, to one that focuses on providing more enrichment activities for all ICS students. We suggest that students seeking enrichment outside of the classroom join clubs such as *Odyssey of the Mind* and *Drexel Physics*, which encourage critical thinking and problem solving. In addition, we will hold regular "Enrichment Challenges" for all ICS students in the form of challenge questions and activities at all grade levels. Finally, and most importantly, the most current research in education promotes the idea of differentiating instruction to meet all students' individual needs, a skill which we are developing in all of our teachers. While there will no specific program or teacher dedicated specifically to students who are identified as "gifted," all teachers will be trained on meeting the enrichment needs (as well as other individual learning needs) of each student. Special education teachers, who are specifically trained in modifying instruction, will support classroom teachers in modifying assignments and creating appropriate challenge/enrichment exercises for students as necessary.

Experiential Learning

Students at ICS, from Kindergarten through eighth grade, are provided with various opportunities to enrich learning experientially. ICS partners with various community members such as the International Visitors Council, The South Asian, African, and Middle East Centers at the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, The Science and Clay Mobile, Outward Bound, Need in Deed, Odyssey of the Mind and similar other programs. All students at ICS attend at least one theatre production.

Tutoring

Sometimes students need extra support outside of the classroom to best meet their learning objectives. Students may be recommended for after-school tutoring in reading, math, or Spanish language. Tutoring runs throughout the year based on student need.

Clubs and Special Projects

Please pay attention to **Wednesday Communication** for a specific announcement regarding club opportunities. Clubs will begin the first week in October and run through the last week of May. Clubs will be designated for certain grade levels, and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments

- Professional Development Approval Letter
- Teacher Induction Approval Letter

English Language Learners

All English Language Learners (ELLs) are fully immersed in our program. ICS' program begins with small group instruction of ELL students led by a certified ESL teacher. In these groups, students enhance their oral language and reading and writing skills. In addition, the ESL teacher conducts push-in instruction for students who are newcomers. The teacher serves as a resource for classroom teachers of ESL students by providing background information, professional literature, teaching "tips" and ideas for accommodating lessons to suit the needs of ESL students. The teacher also serves as a resource for parents of ESL students by encouraging participation in school activities, by providing advice about possible enrichment or after school programs, and by ensuring that classroom teachers reach out to these parents and involve them in their children's education. Finally, one main goal of ICS' program is to ensure that all ESL students feel comfortable and welcome at ICS by providing both emotional and social support and encouragement. Our school has engaged the services of a translation agency for the purposes of providing written and oral translation that may be necessary during report card conferences, for other meetings and for important written documents.

English Language Learners - Attachments

- ELL Report
- ICS LEP report

Graduation Requirements

This does not apply to ICS as we are a K-8 school.

Special Education

ICS practices full inclusion for all special education students and students who qualify for a 504 plan. In addition, those students who are thought to be in possible need of specialized instruction are managed as students who need accommodations for testing, seating preference, and all other areas where special needs students are also provided special consideration. Five special education teachers provide "pull-out" and "push-in" instruction in small groups or individually for students based on their needs and the IEP. Push-in services occur in the regular classroom setting. The intensity of the specially designed program is appropriate to the special needs of each student. For example, a student who needs most of his/her help in reading but is functioning very well in Mathematics, will get help in Reading as well as support for strategies in the reading portions of mathematics. Students who are cognitively lower functioning may need

more intensive time in a resource type setting while other students perform better when the special education teacher sits side by side in the general classroom. Special Education teachers provide special support to teachers in the form of advice regarding testing, grading, accommodations.

Special Education teachers work with parents to write IEPs. Additional supports such as speech and language, occupational, physical therapies are provided for by an outside consultant Pediatric Therapeutic Services. Our School Psychologist performs cognitive testing and consults with parents.

Special Education teachers attend in-services providing by PATTan. Our Special Education coordinator oversees the timely completion of IEP's, 504 plans, scheduling for testing, requests for hearings and the like. Students enter the Special Education program at ICS either by entering as students with IEPs/504 plans, or are identified through a process within the school system. In some cases, parents request testing for special needs. In other cases, students are brought to the attention of the SST (Student Success Team) which meets weekly. Teachers or other staff who work with students may fill out a SST form which is a checklist of already completed interventions on the part of the teacher. The school counselors schedule the SST presentation of the student case to a team of specialists including the Principal and the teacher. Following other interventions, a student may be recommended for testing by the school Psychologist. ICS has recently completed its State audit in Special Education with commendations in January 2010.

Special Education - Attachment

- Notice of Adoption of Policies and Procedures and Use of Funds/Special Education

Special Education Program Profile - Chart I

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Barbara Zisk	.75	Learning Support	Independence Charter	16	Special Education Chairperson and K-2 itinerant teacher
Janet Josephson	1.00	Learning Support	Independence Charter	20	Works mostly with gr.3-4 children
Michael Farrell	1.00	Learning Support	Independence Charter	13	works mostly with gr.5-6 children
Elaine Gildein	1.00	Learning Support	Independence Charter	17	works mostly with gr.7-8 students
Yerodin Lucas	.50	Learning Support	Independence Charter	10	works with gr.5-6 students

Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

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

Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
School Psychologist	Independence Charter	.25

School Social Worker	Independence Charter .75
School Counselor	Independence Charter 1.00
Special Education Coordinator	Independence Charter 1.00
Paraprofessional	Independence Charter 1.00

Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
Pediatric Therapeutic Services	Speech and Language	.50
Pediatric Therapeutic Services	Occupational	.20
Pediatric Therapeutic Services	Physical	.20
School Psychologist	Formal testing for Spec. Ed.	.10

SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
PSSA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PASA	No	No	No	No	No	No
Terranova	No	No	No	No	No	No
Acuity Assessment	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
PSSA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
PASA	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Terranova	No	No	No	No	No	No	No

Student Assessment

ICS has shown continued academic growth, meeting AYP performance threshold standards for seven successive years (since AYP measurement began). PSSA test scores indicate that our greater strength for all groups is mathematics, but our reading scores have shown significant growth. The analysis of the 2010 raw scores indicates that our overall percent proficient and/or advanced for grades 3-8 was 83.2% in math and 73.7% in reading. This represents growth over last year's scores. We continue to decrease the number of students who score below basic, and have also developed cohort studies comparing our students' performance as they move from year to year. PVAAS data indicates that our students are progressing equal to or greater than the growth standards in all all grades in both reading and math. We believe that this is the most important data, as it shows our students' growth as they remain with us at ICS. The PSSA and Acuity results provide information in specific learning areas, and we train our teachers to

use that data to help guide their assessment of student needs and growth throughout the year. The use of such assessment data (PSSA, Accuity, WIDA, and in-house assessments) is a focus of ours for 2010-2011, as we have identified a need to use more data in our effort to further differentiate instruction to meet our students' learning needs.

ICS pays close attention to participation standards on all standardized tests, and has maintained a 99.8%-100% participation rate on all PSSA exams since participation measurement began in 2005. Graduation standards do not apply to our school, as we are a K-8 school. However, it is a primary concern for us to "graduate" our students from elementary/middle to high school in a timely fashion. Regular student attendance is a priority at ICS, and we have maintained an attendance rate average of 95% or above since attendance measurement began in 2003.

In our effort to provide an adequate testing environment for each student, we have decreased the size of individual testing groups and prepared students throughout the year with test-taking skills and techniques to guide them through the actual process. A larger question of curriculum, comprehension and content is reviewed yearly by the curriculum committee. We continue to experience an achievement gap for African American students, specifically on the reading assessment (details outlined in Section I), and consistently review our practice in an effort to decrease and eventually eliminate that gap. Our reading specialists focus on the needs of our struggling readers. We also supplement reading instruction with the aforementioned academic support programs (listed in Section III: Rigorous Instructional Program). Finally, we fund targeted after-school tutoring in math and reading as well as an after-school support program for students most at risk.

At ICS, we measure student progress at regular intervals throughout the school year. This is integral to the process of creating teaching and learning goals for each student. We use the following assessments: DIBELS, Voyager testing GRADE (for older students), EDL (Spanish version of the DRA — for Spanish Immersion students), DRA, Easy CBM. In addition, QRI's, and Wilson reading are available for testing individual students. Teacher observations note the use of flexible grouping for student instruction, opportunities to practice and apply skills, the relevance of homework assignments, and teacher's progress through the curriculum so that all standards are addressed. Report cards are disseminated for each trimester and reflect the curriculum taught. The following list provides evidence of a student support framework:

After-school - *Math* tutoring, reading tutoring, *Study Island*, *Spanish Plus*.

During School day — reading specialist small group work, counselor small group and individual student work, full inclusion of special education students, ESL pull-out and push-in, behavioral support in the form of behavioral plans and charts, *Responsive Classroom and Developmental Design support*.

Students are first supported in the classroom with whole and small flexible-group instruction. The classroom assistant's main role is to support this grouping. Students who continue to struggle are referred to tutoring after school, or work with the reading specialist. The student success team (SST) reviews and may indicate eventual testing for learning needs. Parent support is elicited where outside support may be needed.

Student Assessment - Attachment

- 2010 PSSA Scores Analysis - pre-AYP Report - 2008-2010

Teacher Evaluation

In 2009-2010, we began to implement a more supervision-focused method of administrative teacher support. Teachers and administrators worked together on a teacher evaluation task force to create a model that better suited the needs of teachers who are seeking more in-depth feedback regarding their practice. This team continues to meet and further refine our system to best meet the supervisory needs of the teachers and the accountability needs of the administration.

Teachers receive a year-end evaluation each spring. The year-end evaluation is comprised of formal and informal feedback. It is based on walk-through evidence, at least one formal observation, teacher input, and the professional demeanor you are exhibiting throughout the school year.

Our defined process in 2009-2010:

Informal observations can happen at any time. They focus on the domains of the year-end evaluation —planning and preparation, classroom practice, student management and professional responsibilities. Informal and classroom walk-through observations occur daily. The principal and/or CEO will document walk-through/informal observations each trimester.

? A formal observation is an observation of a full lesson. Teachers are informed of the week the principal or CEO will be observing. The observer uses the Classroom Observation Form to document the lesson observed.

? After the observation, the teacher receives a Post-Observation Reflection Form to explain the lesson goals and planned strategies, as well as assess the lesson him/herself. The teacher brings a completed copy of this form to the post-observation meeting. The principal or CEO brings the completed Classroom Observation Form. Both forms will inform the discussion and become part of the teacher's file at ICS.

? The end-of-year evaluation is completed collaboratively by the teacher and the principal/CEO. The principal/CEO also has a completed form. Together, they discuss the components and the principal/CEO completes a final evaluation copy of this form. The final copy (with teacher comments) becomes part of the teacher's file at ICS.

? Formal observations are conducted by the principal and/or CEO. Informal observations and classroom visits, designed to support teachers, are also done by the curriculum specialist, language coach and other coordinators/specialists as applicable. This team works closely with the principal and provides valuable feedback.

Individuals responsible for teacher and staff evaluation:

Teacher formal evaluations are given by the Principal. Informal evaluations are done by the Curriculum Specialist, Special Education Chair, Language Coach and the Math Coach. Non-teaching staff evaluations such as for cafeteria staff are done by the Operations Manager. Administrative staff evaluations are done by the Principal and the CEO. The Principal's evaluation is done by the Chief Executive Officer (who is an experienced Principal). Included in the overall 360 degree evaluation of the Principal and CEO is feedback from surveys of teachers, Trustees, and parents regarding their performance.

The Teacher Evaluation Task Force is an ongoing committee that is continuing to revise this process. Our goal is to increase our focus on meaningful supervision as we revise our system.

Description of professional development related to teacher evaluation:

At ICS, professional development begins in August. Teachers new to ICS and returning teachers are trained in the ICS Mission and Vision, basic information about code of conduct, special education law, classroom management, best practices and induction procedures (new teachers and mentors only). In addition, the new staff is taken on a tour of the local community and community resources. August inservice training also focuses on school procedures and curriculum work. During the school year, we have several professional development days. In addition, we have weekly early dismissals on Wednesdays for teacher and staff meetings and group work. We utilize much of the skill on hand for turn-around training. These included workshops on accommodating for special education needs, student support, spelling, using math manipulatives, etc.. Our Special Education coordinator presents

best practices for inclusion. For the past two years, we have invited parents to speak to teachers about students in the mainstream. Time is also set aside to provide grade level meeting time to establish working relationships as well as cross-grade projects. Our evaluators continue their professional development through involvement in challenging seminars and workshops.

Instructional techniques unique to our mission include

? TPR: Total Physical Response used in the Conversational Spanish and other World Languages, which is a language-teaching technique that focuses on using all modalities to teach (and therefore learn) language.

? Total Immersion for the Spanish program which means having teachers speak only Spanish to English-based kids. The students quickly absorb Spanish by being immersed in it.

? Project-based and experiential learning as possible including meeting and working with people from all over the world.

Teachers regularly attend professional development in the form of national and local conferences to support their learning of such techniques to support their instruction.

Teacher Evaluation - Attachments

- Formal Observation Form 2009-2010
- Informal Observation Form - all categories
- Teacher Evaluation at ICS 2009-2010

SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS

Leadership Changes

Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, the Board of Trustees created a new administrative position of Principal to complement the work of the CEO. The CEO who had been the Principal and CEO since the school's inception retained the role of CEO. The new Principal was able to focus on curriculum and teacher evaluations and support while the CEO was able to focus more on community development, grant writing and the general management of the school and the requirements of the state and local school district. At that time, the Board also created the role of Language Coach which is a very necessary role given the unique emphasis on second and third language development at ICS.

The Board of Trustees in 2009-2010 filled a vacancy for a community position in early Fall. In the course of the year, two original Founders and members since the school's inception announced that they would retire with the conclusion of the school year. In addition, one of the two parent seats term ended as well. An election for that seat occurred among the parents at the school and of the three candidates one candidate collected the most votes and will begin serving in September. The two Board vacancies created by the retiring Founders have been filled in July 2010 following an extensive year long search. And in September 2010 we will be joined by two more board members who have also been selected following a year long search. This will complete an 11 member Board. Our by-laws allow a 9 to 11 Board composition. Although the Board undergoes periodic training during the school year, given this influx of new members, there will be a special training in August 2010 for the new members. For continuity, the Board President has retained her seat with a new executive committee composition.

There continue to be two ex-officio seats for teacher representatives at the Board Meetings. These teachers elected by the staff participate in various committee meetings and make reports to the Board and public at the meetings.

Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee Office (if any)

Rona Buchalter Board President

Elsie Stern Vice President

Eli Lesser Secretary

John Eagen Treasurer

Derrick Johnson officer

Dana Twyman officer

Naomi Wyatt officer

Fran Melmed officer

Pedro Rodriguez officer

Pam Prell officer

Mary Fitzpatrick officer

Professional Development (Governance)

All members of the Board of Trustees underwent training in both the legal responsibilities as public officials and Board Trustees of a charter school in Pennsylvania and in the financial responsibilities in regard the budget and finances of the school. The legal training was provided by Terry Henry our legal counsel from Cozen O'Conner and the financial training was given by G. Santilli of Santilli/Thomson. Several members also attended workshops at the state Charter Schools conference on the topics of being effective Board members. The internal workshops occur quarterly or more often.

This Board of Trustees operates faithfully following the Sunshine Law and the Public Officials Act. Board Meetings are open to the public, posted in advance. Board Meetings include a time on the agenda for public comment.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

The ICS BOT meets once a month as a whole Board with the exception of one month (usually August) when they are in summer recess. In addition, the Board supports active committees in all major areas pertaining to the governing and administering of the school; these committees are Curriculum, Finance, Human Resources, Community Relations, Development, Discipline, Facilities, and Policy. All committees meet monthly or bimonthly and provide reports to the full board at the monthly BOT meetings. The committees may bring resolutions to the whole board and the board votes on these resolutions but only when they meet as a whole. The Executive Committee is always available to the CEO should there be any questions or concerns pertaining to governance and direction of the school. In addition, each Board meeting is preceeded by a written CEO report that details current areas of interest to the Board. Board committees also provide written minutes prior to the monthly board meetings so that board members may read up on current committee work. In this manner, BOT members are informed and involved in all areas. The CEO maintains a regular dialogue and good relationship with the School District of Philadelphia and informs the Board of all current events. The CEO attends meetings called by the Associate Superintendent for Charter Schools and EMOs.

Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School - Attachments

- Independence Charter School BOT meeting schedule

- Schedule of Board of Trustees Meetings

Community and Parent Engagement

ICS was founded by parents and the BOT remains committed to the principle and implementation of parent involvement. In addition to the 7 seats of the Board filled by members with children enrolled at ICS, the Board also supports two additional parent seats that are elected by parents for two-year terms (for 2010-2011 this will now be 9 seats for community and founder seats and two for parent elected seats). Parents are solicited to be candidates for the other open Board seats and to join BOT committees through postings on the website and through letters sent home and through the listserv. ICS also partners with community organizations in many different capacities (for example, for programming and instruction) such as attending theatre productions, cultural presentations, inviting cultural speakers and performers. ICS also participates and supports local community efforts. We are members of the Center City Residents Association and participate in their Center City Tour providing our school as a location for a rest stop. We belong to the Chamber of Commerce. Our students participate in helping to green and clean up the neighborhood.

Parents participate on all of the subcommittees to the Board of Trustees. Community members are invited to assist in committees where applicable. The Development Committee of ICS invites guests from the community to visit our school during special events. ICS has also recently joined some neighborhood community groups. In addition, the BOT supports programs within the general budget that provide additional support for at-risk students, such as tutoring without cost to the family.

A representative of the PTA presents to the monthly public meeting of the Board of Trustees and there is a healthy relationship that is productive between these two groups.

SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Major fund-raising activities

Since the 2008-2009 school year, ICS has had a Director of Development for the purposes of managing grants, fundraising and community outreach. The following is a list of the activities we undertake to fundraise to support our summer school, after school tutoring, after school clubs, theatre trips, and other outings for students.

1. We have an annual Calendar event wherein we celebrate the calendar art work that our kids have produced. This allows for us to do a small fundraiser as well collecting advertisement in the calendar.
2. We do a yearly letter writing fundraiser to all of our families.
3. Our PTA does a yearly silent auction that raises money for our arts program. Their fundraising is separate from ours however.
4. The PTA also does various promotions such as Scholastic book selling or pizza and cookie dough selling to earn more money to support our programs.

New:

1. We have increased the number of grants we are writing. We have been successful in getting a YET grant for after school reading literacy for two years. We received an HP grant in previous years. We received a Discovery grant for \$ 5000 and a Best Buy grant for \$ 2000 in the previous year. Our teachers have written Donors Choose grant requests successfully. We have received a KABOOM grant for our playground. We have received a Mural Arts Grant as well.

2. We have received two large grants from the Brook Lenfest Foundation in previous years which we have used to support technology innovations in our school.
3. We have most recently received a large federal FLAP (Foreign Language Assistance Program) grant.
4. We received the Goldman Sachs Foundation Prize for Excellence in International Education in 2008 which came with a monetary prize as well.

All grants are approved by the Board of Trustees by resolution.

Fiscal Solvency Policies

The Board of Trustees has adopted financial policies and procedures which include the topics - budgeting, accounting practices, procurement, contracts, internal control, cash management, grants management, time and attendance, contracted services, etc.

The school's budget, adopted in accordance with the timetable prescribed by the Commonwealth, serves as a blue print for financial decision making during the fiscal year. The budget provides for the educational, building and administrative needs of the school community and also includes a reserve for contingencies. All purchases and personnel decisions are reviewed for budgetary funds available prior to the issuance of a contract or purchase order.

The business office provides interim financial reporting for the board of trustees and CEO on a monthly basis. The Controller meets with the school administrative team regularly and attends all board and finance committee meetings. Through careful monitoring of expenditures and revenues the school is able to assure that all expenditure and revenue categories remain within budget.

Accounting System

The accounting system is Quickbooks and is loaded with the State Chart of Accounts. Transactions are posted by the Controller's Office staffed by experienced school business administrators. A trial balance, statement of revenue and expenditures and a statement of disbursements are prepared monthly. Reports are generated in compliance with State requirements

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances

Preliminary Statements of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances - Attachment

- Statement of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balance

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

The school's auditing firm is Citrin Copperman. The last audit is dated December 9, 2009 for fiscal year 2008-2009 and has a clean unqualified opinion. There are no material findings or questioned costs. The 2009-2010 audit will be completed in November and will be submitted under separately cover.

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

- ICS Annual Audit 2008-2009

Citations and follow-up actions for any State Audit Report

The school has not been audited by the State Comptrollers Office.

SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

The school currently leases a facility at 1600 Lombard Street. from an affiliated non profit, Worlds of Opportunity Foundation. It was purchased and renovated with funds derived from tax exempt financing.

The school purchased furniture and equipment costing \$85,000 after obtaining quotations from various vendors during Fiscal Year 2010. These purchases were funded from the operating budget

Future Facility Plans and Other Capital Needs

In accordance with the school's strategic plan, the School's Board of Trustees (through its affiliate, Worlds of Opportunity Foundation) purchased a former public school building located at 1600 Lombard Street in Philadelphia. The school/foundation has renovated the existing structure and constructed a three story addition. Financing for the project was provided through the issuance of tax exempt bonds. The project was completed on September 1, 2008.

The school has no formal capital plans for additional space at this time.

SECTION VIII. HEALTH AND SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES

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

ICS has complied with all health and safety requirements including fire prevention, fire drills, shelter in place, evacuation, intruder drills. The records for this are available in the front office. In addition, these records are inspected by Licensing and Inspection and the fire marshall yearly.

A safety team comprised of the CEO, the Principal, the Deans, the Operations Director meet to review and revise as necessary the safety plan. The drills are coordinated by the Operations Director in cooperation with the CEO and the Deans.

The health records are reviewed at the end of the school year for returning students and letters are sent to all grades and students whose records are out of compliance. Current students who are not fully immunized may not return to school in September until their parents have provided documentation. New incoming students are not fully accepted as students fully registered until all immunization records are complete. The registered practical nurse, our school nurse who is employed directly by ICS, is the caretaker of health and immunization records for students.

The SHARRS report was completed, submitted on 8/2/2010 and I expect to receive confirmation in via email on 8/3/2010.

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

- medical reimbursement proof
- Wellness Policy with Amendment

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs

In fiscal year 2009-2010 for medical Insurance the school offered the following plans in accordance with Act22 to employees:

- Personal Choice,
- Keystone Health Plan,
- United Concordia Dental Plan
- Wage Continuation
- Life Insurance

Please see attached certificate for other liability insurances:

- Worker's Compensation
- General Liability
- Corporate Officers Error and Omissions
- Contents Insurance

Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs - Attachment

- Insurance Certificate 2010

SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff

There are 59 instructional staff. Of these 89% were returning staff. We had several short term substitutes due to maternity leaves. A couple of teachers left for other teaching positions. A couple left to become stay at home moms. We were able to create a couple of new positions through stimulus funding. Other than for the maternity leaves and one health related leave, we were very consistent among instructional and support staff. Consistency of staff is due in part to the working conditions at the school which are positive. We have been able to revamp the salary scale for teachers (with teacher input) for the coming 2010-2011 school year.

We have a total of 112 personnel including administrative, support, part time classroom assistants, and clerical staff.

Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachments

- PDE 414 2008-2009
- PDE 414 2009-2010

Student Enrollment

Independence Charter School's enrollment policy is as follows: an open lottery system that does not select students is held every year in December for the following school year. Applications are accepted starting in September. These applications are available in the front office and online at our website. Preference is given to Philadelphia residents and that is why we ask for proof of residency. This is because we always have more applicants than openings, with rare exceptions in our upper Total Spanish Immersion classes. The blind lottery is conducted by the CEO, the CEO's Assistant, and at least two impartial staff and PTA members with an audience of parents who attend if they wish to. We use a very traditional system of pulling applications from a bag specific to the grade level to which the student's family has applied. The name of the selected student is read aloud and it is entered into the pile of accepted students for that grade. This is recorded on paper. After all of the slots that are empty are filled, we pull names to create a waiting list. Sibling preference is also given to families who have students currently at ICS as long as those parents have indicated an interest by submitting an application in September through November. Three notices are sent to parents in that regard. Kindergarten spaces are filled first as they are the only true openings. All other openings are dependent on student enrollment, retention due to failure, and the like. Therefore, all applications for gr. 2-8 are selected randomly and placed in that order on a wait list. ICS currently has over 700 students on their wait list with well over 350 of those for the Kindergarten spots. Students on wait lists are admitted as openings occur, whether during the summer or during the school year. Parents are notified of openings by mail or telephone and are given an appointment to present all necessary paperwork. If a parent does not respond, one more attempt is made to contact the family. If there is no response to our phone and mail inquiries, we move on to the next person on the wait list and the aforementioned is removed from the wait list.

Kindergartners must be age 5 by September 1st to be eligible for enrollment at ICS. First graders who are not yet 6 and are coming from a Kindergarten experience must show proof of completion of a Kindergarten program successfully and/or may be required to pass a simple proficiency test to gauge skill levels and readiness for first grade.

Grade	September 2009 enrolled	Dropped, transferred	Students added	June 2010 final count
K	90	3	0	87
1	93	1	0	92
2	91	0	0	91

3	93	3	0	90
4	89	2	0	87
5	82	0	1	83
6	65	2	0	63
7	77	5	0	72
8	85	4	0	81

ICS retains approximately 95% of its students and families from year to year. We have a high return percentage because of the quality of the program that we provide for students and because of the support available for families. One of our biggest challenges is distance and transportation. Our students commute from 46 zip codes in the city of Philadelphia. Because Kindergarten parents must provide their own transportation, it is often the source of withdrawal due to the frustration of traffic. We also have some families leave because they do not like our Code of Conduct. We work hard to inform all new families of this code of conduct but some families do not agree with the consequences to unacceptable behaviors which disrupt learning for all.

In terms of retention for academic reasons, we use multiple teams to assess the need for retention. We avoid that in most cases for upper grades, but use it judiciously in the lower grades.

There are currently no supporting documents selected for this section.

Transportation

All students in grades 1 to 6 are eligible for yellow school bus transportation if they live 1.5 or more miles from school. Approximately 280 ICS students ride yellow school buses. There are nine such busses. Our special education students ride these busses if their parents choose to do so. In some cases, some special education students require an assistant for the bus and we acquire such assistance by petitioning the School District of Philadelphia for such a bus and for attendants if indicated.

The School District of Philadelphia obtains a bus company that services our school through a bidding process. Typically, bus companies are assigned a lease to serve a school for three years.

Because we do not directly select the bus company that provides our service, and because they are granted a lengthy contract, there are problems with the quality of drivers, the response of the company. We work as closely as possible with those individuals and with the School District of Philadelphia which has granted the contracts. We have assigned our own transportation coordinator who works with the school district and the bus company management. This coordinator also manages complaints and requests from parents. We take significant care in providing each bus line (i.e. each bus cohort) with a bus coordinator which is one of the staff of our school. Attendance is taken daily and children are checked twice as they enter the bus. The Deans provide training to students about safe bus behavior. We have a strict bus behavior code of conduct as designated in our student handbook.

Food Service Program

With the move into the new building, we were presented with the possibility of providing a full service lunch for our kids. A parent committee with Board participation researched the possibilities of costs and associated paperwork to run our own lunch program. Members of the

committee participated in trainings given by the state, and after considerable research, we posted requests for bids for our full service lunch program. This full program was provided to all students with a free and reduced lunch status as well as any students whose parents had to pay full price lunch (which is \$ 2.30). The number of students eating increased considerably. We managed all of our own applications to the state for the eligibility for lunches and for the commodities that we were eligible for. At present, over 60% of our students use this lunch program while the others bring bagged lunches. We also participated in a Farm to School pilot program for a few weeks. We also provide breakfast for our students. We have this past school year undergone the required re-bidding for a lunch provider as required by the state. We have undergone the federal lunch program audit successfully.

Student Conduct

Our expectations for student behavior are spelled out in our Mission and Vision statements as well as in our discipline policy. We recognize that students come from various environments and may or may not have the tools to negotiate, to share, to accept criticism, to be constructive in their comments, to be able to focus for long periods of time, to demonstrate respect for peers and supervising adults. We consider it our goal to help students learn those skills if they do not already possess them. We consider it our obligation to involve parents in that same process of teaching, learning, and supporting. We also believe that all students have the right to an environment conducive to learning. Therefore, students who are highly disruptive and not amenable to the complex supports that we attempt to put in place may be brought up for expulsion. This happens only after exhaustive efforts are put in place to support the student including resources inside and outside the school such as outside agencies (inpatient, outpatient services, etc). The supports that we put in to place are:

1. Parent consultation
2. Teacher consultation to help target behaviors and to give behavioral support as well as ongoing teacher training in classroom management.
3. Possible classroom switching.
4. Behavior charts with rewards and consequences
5. Progressive discipline as per our code of conduct
6. Referral to outside sources including: Crisis Centers, Partial Hospitalization, Wrap-around services, family and child counseling.
7. Testing by our school psychologist when indicated
8. SST process/RTI

Student cases which may be brought up for expulsion are reviewed by a team comprised of the Principal and the CEO, Deans of Students, Counselors, teachers, and any other support staff that are relevant. Cases may also be dropped if evidence for expulsion is not indicated. When students receive suspensions in excess of two days, parents are informed of due process to contest the suspensions and may request a hearing.

In respect to expulsion hearings, the parents are informed of all of their due process rights to representation and the like in a letter provided to each parent. Students who are failing academically are never considered eligible for expulsion as a single

criteria.

For the 2009-2010 school year: there were no expulsions although we are still in legal action regarding an Act 26 case. In regard to suspensions: Sixty-nine students were involved in 86 incidents.

Student Conduct - Attachment

- 2008-2009 Student and Parent ICS Handbook

Signature Page

Assurance for the Operation of Charter School Services and Programs

School Year: 2010

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

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

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

Board President

Date

Chief Executive Officer
2009 - 2010 Annual Report for Pennsylvania Charter Schools

Date

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 Independence 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.

Identify the charter school's Chief Executive Officer.

Name: Jurate Krokys **Title:** CEO
Phone: 215-238-8000 ext.2223 **Fax:** 215-545-2924
E-mail: administration@independencecharter.org

Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date

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

Name: Rona Buchalter **Title:** President
Phone: 215-238-8000 **Fax:** 215-545-2924
E-mail: administration@independencecharter.org

Signature of the President of the Board of Trustees and Date

Identify the charter school's Special Education Contact Person.

Name: Barbara Zisk **Title:** Spec.Ed. Coordinator
Phone: 215-238-8000 ext.2313 **Fax:** 215-545-2924
E-mail: barbaraz@indepencecharter.org

Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date

Signature Page - Attachments

- Signature Page: Assurance for Compliance
- Signature Page: Assurance for Operations
- Signature Pages: Assurance for Operations and Public Officials Acts