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# Pennsylvania Department of Education

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

**Charter Annual Report**  
**Monday, February 14, 2011**  
**(Last Accepted: Monday, February 14, 2011)**

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# CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY DATA

## Summary Data Part I

### Charter School Annual Report Summary Data 2009 - 2010

**Name of School:** Infinity CS

**Date of Local Chartering School Board/PDE Approval:** Original 1/22/2003; Renewal 6/11/2007

**Length of Charter:** Original 4 years; Renewal 5 years   **Opening Date:** 8/26/2003

**Grade Level:** K through 8   **Hours of Operation:** 8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

**Percentage of Certified Staff:** 96%   **Total Instructional Staff:** 12

**Student/Teacher Ratio:** 9.5 to 1   **Student Waiting List:** 21 students (10/1/09)

**Attendance Rate/Percentage:** K: 98, Elem: 97, MS: 95

## Summary Data Part II

**Enrollment:** 115 ADM    **Per Pupil Subsidy:** Regular \$8,349, Special Ed \$17,403 (average across all districts)

### Student Profile

<b>American Indian/Alaskan Native:</b>	0
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander:</b>	7
<b>Black (Non-Hispanic):</b>	12
<b>Hispanic:</b>	5
<b>White (Non-Hispanic):</b>	79
<b>Multicultural:</b>	12

**Percentage of Students from Low Income Families Eligible for a Free or Reduced Lunch:**  
14.8 % (from Title I Survey)

**Provide the Total Unduplicated Number of Students Receiving Special Services (Excluding Gifted) as of Previous December:** 2 (as of 12/09)

## Instructional Days and Hours

<b>Number of:</b>	<b>K (AM)</b>	<b>K (PM)</b>	<b>K (F.Time)</b>	<b>Elem.</b>	<b>Middle.</b>	<b>Sec.</b>	<b>Total</b>
Instructional Days	0	0	170	170	170	0	170
Instructional Hours	0	0	1020	1020	1020	0	1020

## SECTION I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Educational Community

Infinity Charter School is a small K-8 school located in the Central Dauphin School District. The 2009-2010 school year was Infinity's seventh year of operation. Over the course of the year, we served an average of 114 students in grades K-8. Students were divided into six classes: Kindergarten-First, First-Second, Second-Third, Fourth-Fifth, Sixth-Seventh, and Seventh-Eighth. In addition to the core subjects, we also offered Art, Foreign Language, Music, Physical Education, and Guidance at all grade levels. We had a diverse student body, in terms of racial/ethnic groups, socio-economic levels, and academic performance levels. Although most of our students were residents of the Central Dauphin School District, we attracted students from eleven other area school districts.

### Mission

**INFINITY MISSION STATEMENT—***Our mission is the creation, operation and maintenance of a world-class charter school in the Central Dauphin School District that addresses the*

***intellectual, academic and social-emotional needs of mentally gifted children in grades K-12.***

Infinity was created because we believe intellectually and academically gifted students are under-identified and underserved in the regular public school. Because we believe each and every child is entitled to an education commensurate with her ability to learn, we have designed a school that is more responsive to the individual needs of students, rather than requiring the children to adapt to the administrative convenience of the school.

## **Vision**

Infinity's overarching vision is to inspire, challenge and engage the hearts, minds and spirits of our students. We are committed to serving the whole child, and to finding ways to nurture in these individuals, as Carl Sandburg wrote, "...the deepest possible roots and the highest possible flowering..."

By providing appropriate learning opportunities for each child through full-time instruction tailored to their special needs and abilities, we will strive to ensure that every child meets or exceeds state and national academic standards.

## **Shared Values**

The following Core Values have been published in our Charter Application and are shared, annually, with our parent body in the Parent Handbook and at Back-to-School Night.

### **Infinity's Core Values**

Education First	Respect
Quality	Personal Responsibility
Hard Work	Responsibility to Others
Life-long Learning	Role Models
Love of Learning	Diversity Continual Improvement
Self-esteem	Continual Improvement

### **Education First**

At Infinity, education is our primary business. Activities that seek and support educational excellence shall be given priority over those which do not. The basic role of teachers is to help children learn.

### **Quality**

Beginning in Kindergarten and continuing through their school experience, the subject of quality, and how it relates to school work, is discussed with students. Students, parents and teachers challenge students to do their very best. It is not our goal to have students

merely completing assignments without attempting to produce a quality product.

### **Hard Work**

Creating high quality work is not always easy. We are committed to making learning interesting, exciting and fun, as much as possible. However, we recognize, and want parents and students to recognize, while learning is not always easy, it is fundamental.

### **Life-long Learning**

We recognize learning does not begin or end with school. We want students to learn skills that will allow them to direct their own learning. The essence of this is independence and self-reliance.

### **Love of Learning**

Children need to learn to love learning as its own reward. We encourage students to focus on internal rewards and motivations, rather than being dependent on external rewards.

### **Self-esteem**

We believe self-esteem is built upon competence. We can, and do, praise children appropriately, but we do not engage in false praise. We actively assist and encourage children in their journey towards competency. We want them to take pride in what they do well. We also want our students to believe they can make a difference in the world.

### **Respect**

We strive to create a climate of mutual respect among students, parents, staff and community members. Students are expected to show respect to others, and can, in turn, expect to be treated with respect by others.

### **Personal Responsibility**

We expect students to take personal responsibility for their own learning. We cannot teach them anything if they are determined not to learn. We also expect them to take personal responsibility for their actions and to be willing to accept the consequences.

### **Responsibility to Others**

Any member of a community has some responsibilities to his neighbor. Our students have some special abilities that carry with them greater opportunities to serve. We want students to understand the contributions they can make to society and to act *responsively*.

### **Role Models**

We have high expectations for our students. We, as parents and staff, are committed to serving as appropriate role models for our students. We need to demonstrate our values to our students on a daily basis in our own behavior. We cannot reasonably expect from them that which we are not willing to do ourselves.

### **Diversity**

We live in a diverse society. Students need to understand and respect differences, while

seeking to find common ground. Students also need to understand and evaluate different opinions and intellectual perspectives. All of this is an integral part of our curriculum.

### **Continual Improvement**

We have adopted the Japanese philosophy of *Kaizen* or continuous improvement. We acknowledge and recognize effort; celebrate the achievement of benchmarks and milestones; and strive to get better each and every day.

## **Academic Standards**

Infinity Charter School incorporates state and national content area standards in our curriculum and instruction. It is our goal to ensure that every student meets or exceeds these standards.

The aspects that make Infinity unique and innovative are described below.

The Infinity Charter School incorporates a **combination** of innovative program elements that make the school unique. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

### **Broad-based Themes:**

Helping students to understand how various subject areas are interconnected is beneficial at all grade levels. At the elementary level, year-long interdisciplinary themes (incorporating smaller sub-themes) are implemented. The primary integration is with history, geography, civics, economics, science, environment and ecology, but efforts will also be made to bring in math, language arts, music, art, physical education and foreign language. Integration of disciplines is more reflective of the real world, reinforces concepts and skills, and is perceived as more relevant by students.

### **Interdisciplinary Multi-age Grouping:**

Children are grouped in classes that encompass what would normally be a two-grade level span. These will not be treated as combination classes, in which a clear demarcation is made between students at each grade level and the delivery of instruction is based on the child's grade level, rather than performance level.

- Personalized Learning Plans
- Acceleration
- Foreign Language for all children
- Problem-finding/Problem-solving
- Experiential learning
- Metacognition skills
- Futures orientation
- Alternative staffing patterns

## **Strengths and Challenges**

Based on data from the past year, Infinity's program strengths for 2009-2010 were:

- Strong academic student performance in math, reading, science, and writing
- Extensive parent communication, involvement and support
- Dedicated, competent staff
- Staff awareness of Pennsylvania content standards, particularly in language arts and math
- Increase in availability of appropriate technology resources
- Diverse student body
- High attendance rates

During the next school year, we would like to continue to improve:

- Students' expository writing skills
- Students' science knowledge and skills

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

## Strategic Planning Process

This is not part of the Charter School Annual Report.

## Strategic Planning Committee

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Membership Category</b>	<b>Appointed By</b>
Cindy Walker	Learning Specialist	Special Education Representative	Teachers
Erin Doyle	Teacher	Middle School Teacher	Middle School Teachers
Katie Lambrino	2-3 Teacher	Elementary School Teacher	Elementary School Teachers
Nancy J. Hall	CEO/Director	Administrator	Board of Trustees
Shelly Fredericks	Business Manager	Business Representative	Board of Trustees

## Goals, Strategies and Activities

### **Goal: MATHEMATICS**

**Description:** At least 56% of all students will be proficient in Mathematics, as measured by the annual statewide PSSA assessments. This applies to students in third through eighth grades.

### **Strategy: Diagnostic testing, tailored instruction, Learning Specialist, as needed**

**Description:** Teachers will conduct periodic diagnostic testing to place students in flexible ability groups. The Learning Specialist will provide additional help to students who need it.

### **Activity: Differentiated Instruction training**

**Description:** Teachers will learn how to differentiate instruction to better meet the educational needs of all students in the classroom.

### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Nancy J. Hall	Start: 8/24/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

### **Strategy: Pre- and post-testing math units using PSSA items**

**Description:** Teachers will use released PSSA or PSSA-type items to construct pre- and post-tests for math.

**Activity: Training in CompassLearning Odyssey to help create pre- and post-tests in math**

**Description:** Teachers will learn how to use CompassLearning Odyssey software to better diagnose and prescribe learning activities to differentiate appropriately.

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Nancy J. Hall	Start: 8/28/2009 Finish: 8/28/2009	\$2,856.00
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**Status:** Complete

**Date Comment**

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8/3/2009	Training was completed as scheduled. Additional training dates will be added as needed.
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**Goal: READING**

**Description:** At least 63% of all students will be proficient in Reading, as measured by the annual statewide PSSA assessments. This applies to students in third through eighth grade.

**Strategy: Diagnostic testing, tailored instruction, Learning Specialist, as needed**

**Description:** Teachers will conduct periodic diagnostic testing to place students in flexible ability groups. The Learning Specialist will provide additional help to students, who need it.

**Activity: Differentiated Instruction Training**

**Description:** Teachers will learn how to differentiate instruction to better meet the educational needs of all students in the classroom.

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Nancy J. Hall	Start: 8/24/2009 Finish: Ongoing	-
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**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

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

**Description:** Student attendance will meet a 90% threshold and/or show growth in Kindergarten, Elementary and Secondary grades.

### **Strategy: Emphasize importance of attendance with students and parents**

**Description:** Teachers and administration will emphasize the importance of attendance with students and parents.

### **Activity: Teachers talk with students about the importance of attendance.**

**Description:** Teachers will discuss the importance of attendance with students.

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Nancy J. Hall	Start: 9/2/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

### **Strategy: Make school interesting, so students want to attend.**

**Description:** Teachers will use instructional strategies and content integration to make school interesting to students, so they will want to attend.

### **Activity: Train teachers in differentiated instruction**

**Description:** If teachers are providing appropriate differentiated instruction, students will be more interested in attending school.

#### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Nancy J. Hall	Start: 8/24/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

## **Goal: STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN STATE ASSESSMENTS**

**Description:** At least 95% of eligible students will participate in required state-wide assessments. This applies to students in third through eighth grade.

**Strategy: Emphasize importance of participation with students and parents**

**Description:** Teachers and administration will emphasize the importance of participation in the PSSA in written and oral communications.

**Activity: Notify parents of the importance of student participation in written communication vehicles used by the school.**

**Description:** Notify parents of the importance of student participation in available written communications, such as the Parent Handbook, Monday letters, etc.

### **Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Nancy J. Hall	Start: 8/24/2009	-
	Finish: Ongoing	

**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

## **Goal: WRITING**

**Description:** At least 55% of fifth and eighth grade students will be proficient in writing, as measured by the annual statewide PSSA assessments.

**Strategy: Provide training to improve writing strategies**

**Description:** Infinity student performance on PSSA writing assessments has been inconsistent. We will provide training for staff to improve their writing instruction, which should be reflected in an improvement in student performance.

**Activity: Train teachers in use of MyAccess! writing software.**

**Description:** Although Infinity students performed well on last year's writing assessment, this has

not been a consistent performance from year to year. We would also like to increase the number of students who score in the advanced category.

Infinity is researching which resources would be most productive for meeting this goal. Our 4-5, 5-6, and 7-8 teachers are now utilizing the MyAccess! writing program to improve student achievement in this area.

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Nancy J. Hall	Start: 8/24/2009 Finish: Ongoing	\$1,833.00
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**Status:** Complete

**Strategy: Uniform use of Structures for Reading, Writing and Thinking and Writing Across the Curr.**

**Description:** Teachers will use Structures for Reading, Writing and Thinking and Writing Across the Curriculum as a base for writing instruction, which will provide consistency across all grade levels.

**Activity: Provide copies of these books to all teachers.**

**Description:** Infinity will distribute the Structures for Reading, Writing and Thinking to all classroom teachers.

**Person Responsible Timeline for Implementation Resources**

Nancy J. Hall	Start: 8/2/2009 Finish: Ongoing	-
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**Status:** In Progress — Upcoming

**Statement of Quality Assurance**

Charter school has met AYP.

**Statement of Quality Assurance - Attachment**

- Attachment A: 2009-10 Statement of Quality Assurance

**SECTION III. QUALITY OF SCHOOL DESIGN**

**Rigorous Instructional Program**

**RIGOROUS INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM: What curriculum does your charter school utilize? Do you have documentation that shows that your curriculum meets the Chapter 4 content standards and all requirements?**

Infinity Charter School defines curriculum as the scope and sequence of skills and concepts that are to be learned by the students. While textbooks may be based on a scope and sequence, they are not the curriculum; they are the materials that are sometimes used to teach the curriculum in some schools.

Infinity is not a textbook-based school. We believe this allows us to be more flexible and creative in working with the scope and sequence. The scope and sequences that we use are based on the Pennsylvania content standards. We use a variety of materials, both commercially produced and teacher-developed, to teach the curriculum.

In Language Arts, Infinity has revised its K-8 checklist of concepts and skills based on the revised Pennsylvania standards. These checklists are updated quarterly by teachers for each student to show when a concept or skill was introduced and when the child became proficient with this skill or concept. These checklists become part of the child's portfolio. Starting in second grade, teachers often use PSSA sample tests or questions for the pre- and post-testing, which again, helps us to ensure we are teaching in alignment with the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards. Furthermore, during the 2009-2010 school year, we piloted Study Island software and expanded our use of CompassLearning Odyssey, both of which are based on Pennsylvania state standards.

In Mathematics, Infinity has revised its K-8 checklist of concepts and skills based on the revised Pennsylvania standards. These checklists are updated quarterly by teachers for each student to show when a concept or skill was introduced and when the child became proficient with this skill or concept. These checklists become part of the child's portfolio. Starting in second grade, teachers often use PSSA sample tests or questions for the pre- and post-testing, which again, helps us to ensure that we are teaching in alignment with the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards. Furthermore, during the 2009-2010 school year, we piloted Study Island software and expanded our use of CompassLearning Odyssey, both of which are based on Pennsylvania state standards.

Infinity implements year-long interdisciplinary themes that integrate Science and Technology, Environment and Ecology, History, Civics and Government, Economics, and Geography standards. In addition to relying on curriculum frameworks developed by Pennsylvania Intermediate Units or other public school districts, Infinity staff review the standards prior to designing these themes.

During the 2009-2010 school year, Infinity used the Science Curriculum Framework developed by the Math & Science Collaborative of the Allegheny Intermediate Unit, which includes the Pennsylvania academic standards for Science, Technology, Environment and Ecology, and the National Science Standards. This has been revised, and we are in the process of incorporating the revisions. We will also be utilizing the information on the Standards Aligned System (SAS) related to big ideas, concepts, competencies, and essential questions.

Originally, Infinity had used an Expanding Horizons approach to the Social Studies Curriculum. In addition to teachers referring to the standards directly, Infinity has been

reviewing the Social Studies Curriculum developed by the Central Dauphin School District, as well as the Social Studies Framework (that includes Civics and Government, Economics, Geography, and History) that was developed by the Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 and the Chester County Intermediate Unit 24, to determine how we will be refining our curriculum in this area. We will also be utilizing the information on the Standards Aligned System (SAS) related to big ideas, concepts, competencies, and essential questions.

<b>RIGOROUS INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM: How is the curriculum organized to meet the developmental and academic needs of students?</b>
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At the most basic level, the curriculum (scope and sequence) builds from easier to harder as students progress through the grades. Concrete objects, such as math manipulatives, are used more at lower grade levels or in initial instruction of concepts, before moving on to greater abstraction. Skills, that need to be taught in a particular sequence, are taught in that sequence. The reading levels of instructional materials increase in difficulty, length of reading selections increases, length of assignments increase, and types of products required increase in levels of difficulty, as students apply what they've learned.

While keeping the standards at the core, Infinity teachers are encouraged to make modifications to the curriculum to meet the developmental and academic needs of students. Our philosophy is "standards, not standardization." This may involve adjusting the complexity and/or level of abstraction of the material, the length of assignments, the type of product the student completes to demonstrate mastery, the pace of instruction, the amount of repetitions of content, and/or the amount of individual help provided to a student. In many cases, it is not so much how the curriculum is organized, but more about which instructional strategies are employed, that help us to meet the developmental and academic needs of students.

At the beginning of the school year, diagnostic testing in reading and math is completed with each student to determine their present levels of performance. Then, students are placed in flexible ability groups for instruction designed for their level and rate of learning. Teachers help students progress through the curriculum as quickly as they are ready. Often pre-testing is employed at the beginning of a unit, so groups may be adjusted, as necessary. Post-testing is done after the unit is completed (usually not immediately after) to measure student learning and retention. Starting in second grade, teachers often use PSSA sample tests or questions for the pre- and post-testing, which again, helps us to ensure that we are teaching in alignment with the Pennsylvania state standards.

The Math and Language Arts checklists also enable teachers to know the skills and concepts at other grade levels, so they can move students through these at an appropriate pace. Furthermore, these checklists allow the school to document student progress.

Even though themes include more whole group instruction, teachers make whatever adjustments are necessary for individual student developmental and academic needs.

Infinity's Learning Specialist, as well as CAIU learning support staff, work closely with the classroom teachers to meet the needs of all children.

At the middle school level, students can obtain extra help from their teachers during study hall or after school sessions.

Infinity's Learning Specialist works with students who need additional help in academic skill development, content knowledge and/or learning strategies, through push-in and/or pull-out strategies. Parents are also enlisted to help reinforce what is being done at school.

If students have more severe difficulties, Infinity may utilize the resources of experts at the Capital Area Intermediate Unit.

<b>RIGOROUS INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM: How does the charter school promote in-depth and inquiry-based teaching and learning?</b>
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According to Ronald D. Anderson of the ENC Science Advisory Board, inquiry-based teaching and learning generally involves close attention to the role of the teacher, the role of the students, and the nature of student work. In traditional pedagogy, the teacher is viewed as the dispenser of knowledge, the student is the passive receiver, and the students complete teacher-directed activities. In inquiry-based teaching and learning, the teacher is seen more as a coach and facilitator, the student is a self-directed learner, and the students are involved in student-directed learning.

By not being a textbook-based school, Infinity, by its very nature, tends to have a more nontraditional approach to teaching and learning. Teachers and students use a variety of resources to obtain information. Students are asked not just to memorize information, but to interpret and apply it. Students are involved in analyzing situations and designing solutions. They test their ideas, evaluate the results, and redesign.

At Infinity, we believe it is critically important for students and teachers to actively engage with the curriculum. ("Engagement is an essential ingredient of learning and achievement." Farber and Finn. 2000. Classroom organization and student behavior.) We believe this is best done by hands-on and inquiry instruction, in which students:

- act as scientist in the process of learning,
- engage in the exploration process,
- plan and conduct investigations,
- use a variety of methods,
- ask questions, and
- propose explanations and solutions.

By using year-long interdisciplinary themes, students are able to see the connections among various disciplines, how skills are applied, and are able to have the opportunity to explore concepts in-depth.

Infinity provides staff development to help teachers to provide in-depth and inquiry-based teaching and learning. For example, the teaching staff has participated in professional development on Richard Paul's Elements of Reasoning Model, and in Problem-Based Learning and are starting to integrate these into their instruction. Staff observations/conferences/ evaluations also include discussions in these areas. The majority of the Infinity staff have been trained in inquiry-based instruction through participation in the Science: It's Elementary grant.

The majority of the Infinity staff have been trained in inquiry-based instruction through participation in the Science: It's Elementary grant.

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

By utilizing a combination of standardized and non-standardized, direct and indirect assessments, we use assessment measures to guide and improve student learning, as well as to provide documentation for accountability purposes.

Initially, diagnostic testing/pre-testing in both reading and math enables Infinity's staff to form flexible ability groups for instructional purposes. By working with small groups with similar performance levels, the teacher can tailor instruction to more effectively meet their learning needs.

Once a classroom teacher identifies (either through test results or through observations) students who demonstrate difficulties with concepts and/or skills, s/he may regroup these students with other peers, who are having similar difficulties. In this way, the teacher has the ability to gear instruction to these students' needs. This may include a change in pace, level of complexity, amount of review and practice, and so on.

When a student requires further assistance, the teacher/s and parent/s (and usually, the Learning Specialist) meet to discuss and create an individualized learning plan targeting the specific areas of weakness. Using data collected through direct observation of the student, formal and informal assessments of the student and anecdotal information provided by the teacher and the parent, the Learning Specialist makes recommendations for strategies and adaptations to be used by the teacher and the student within the regular classroom. Parents are also given ideas and strategies to use at home to help build skills and to reinforce the school's interventions. The teacher may make arrangements for the student to receive additional one-on-one or small group instruction.

If the student is making insufficient progress, the Learning Specialist may provide additional help to him/her in the classroom. This "push-in" approach is scheduled during the normal classroom instructional time for that subject, and lessons are developed in coordination with the regular education teacher's instructional goals. These lessons provide additional direct instruction, as well as extra review and practice. The Learning

Specialist may also provide individualized direct instruction outside of the classroom one to three times per week, as needed. In addition, the Learning Specialist may address time management and/or organization management strategies with the student.

Parents and teachers meet quarterly to discuss strategies and student progress. They may meet more often, as needed. Progress is monitored through reviewing student assignments, post-tests, and observations.

If there continue to be concerns about a student's learning difficulties or rate of progress, that child may be referred for a special education evaluation. Infinity contracts with the Capital Area Intermediate Unit for such assessments and services, as needed.

Infinity is developing a more detailed process for meeting the needs of students who are at-risk of failure or not making reasonable progress. We expect this plan will include more specifics, delineate timelines and meetings, as well as document student progress.

<b>RIGOROUS INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM: What types of teaching strategies are used to actively engage students in the learning process?</b>
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*“Engagement happens when a lesson captures students’ imaginations, snares their curiosity, ignites their opinions, or taps into their souls. Engagement is the magnet that attracts learners’ meandering attention and holds it so that enduring learning can occur.”* Carol Ann Tomlinson

Infinity uses a variety of teaching strategies to actively engage students in the learning process. These include:

- Competency-based Progress
- Flexible Ability Grouping for Skills Instruction
- Broad-based Interdisciplinary Themes
- Personal Learning Plans
- Curriculum Compacting
- Acceleration
- Creative and Critical Thinking Skills
- Self-directed Learning
- Independent Study/Projects
- Utilization of Community Resources
- Experiential Learning
- Outdoor Education/Extended Field trips
- Use of Appropriate Technology
- Varied Pace of Instruction
- Simulations, Role-playing, Case Studies
- Group Discussions
- Use of Inquiry
- Experiments
- Problem-Based Learning

- Authentic Products/Projects
- Higher-Order Thinking Activities

## Rigorous Instructional Program - Attachments

- Attachment B: Professional Education Approval Letter
- Attachment C: Teacher Induction Approval Letter

## English Language Learners

**HELPING ALL STUDENTS: English Language Learners: Describe the charter school’s program for English Language Learners (ELL) and a brief narrative of how it functions. Provide a copy of the report from the LEP System used to submit ELL data to PDE Bureau of Teaching and Learning Support as Attachment D.**

### ELL/ESL/Bilingual Program Outline

#### State of Program Goals and Objectives

In accordance with the Infinity Charter School's Board of Trustees' goal to provide a quality educational program for all students, the school provides appropriate planned instruction in ESL and content classes for identified students whose dominant language is not English. The objectives of the program include:

- developing English language skills, leading to English proficiency,
- providing for meaningful participation in subject area content,
- providing for the attainment of the PA academic standards.

#### Student and Parent Orientation Procedures

Every effort will be made to orient students and parents to the practices and procedures of the school. Guidance will be given, if needed, for completing registration forms. Forms may be translated into the native language when necessary.

#### Identification and Placement

##### Screening Procedures/Entry and Exit Criteria

As part of Infinity's student registration process, the Home Language Survey is completed for all new students and filed in their permanent record. When one of the three required questions is answered, "not English," the student's English language proficiency is assessed.

##### Assessment Process

Identified English Language Learners are assessed for their achievement levels and native language proficiency using multiple measures, such as standardized tests, PSSA results, portfolio assessments, teacher observations, interviews with parents, and so

on. Consideration is given to listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills as well as academic progress.

### **Instructional Program**

**Describe Type of Program**  
Identified students are placed in the appropriate level of the ESL instructional program. The ESL instruction will be based on sound educational and language learning theory and staffed by an appropriately prepared instructor. The program will be evaluated at least twice yearly.

**Planned Instructions/Standards**  
The planned instruction in ESL will include Language Arts areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

**Indicate the Amount of Time in ESL Classes**  
The amount of time allotted for instruction will be based on the proficiency of the student. Approximate times are two-three hours for non-English speaking students; two hours daily for beginners; 1.5 hours daily for intermediate learners; and one hour daily for advanced students. Student performance will be monitored for at least one year after they have graduated from these classes.

**Indicate the Amount of time in Content Classes**  
Students will receive content instruction aligned with the Pennsylvania standards of instruction. Teachers will accommodate the individual learning needs of the student when the student experiences difficulty in comprehending instruction.

### **Student Participation in Related and Extracurricular Activities including Gifted Education**

English Language Learners will have the opportunities to participate in all the federal or other programs available within the school for which they qualify. Students will have access to, and will be encouraged to participate in all aspects of the academic and extracurricular opportunities available through the school or home district.

ELL students are eligible for gifted education, or any other program that is available to all students in the school, and for which they qualify. However, Infinity does not currently comply with Chapter 16 guidelines, since charter schools are not required to do so.

### **Pupil Personnel Services Counseling**

Infinity has a part-time guidance counselor position. ELL students have equal access to the counselor and to any programming s/he provides.

### **Special Education**

An IEP will be developed for students who have a disability that is not due to a lack of proficiency in the English language. In developing an IEP, interpreting services will be

available for parents, if necessary.

**Other Related Services**

Any service offered to other Infinity students will be made available to ELL students.

**Staff Development Related to Program**

All staff will receive applicable inservice opportunities if the school enrolls students who have limited English proficiency. Infinity's Act 48 Professional Development Plan will be adjusted, as necessary. Inservice will focus on cultural information, second language acquisition, adapting/modifying classroom instruction, and appropriate assessment practices. The goals of such inservice will be to assure that programs offered to the students are based on sound educational theory; are effectively implemented; and result in successfully removing language barriers.

**Community Involvement Program Planning**

Funds will be allocated to implement the ESL program in proportion to amounts spent for the general population and basic programs.

**Communication with Students' Homes**

As necessary, information disseminated to students and their parents will be provided in a language preferred by parents, including student assessment information, what special programs are available, and policy handbooks. Infinity will provide translation and/or interpretation services, as needed.

**Program Advisory Committee**

The ESL teacher, special education teacher, CEO, or administrative designee, and community resource agencies will collaborate to plan the school program, to develop processes to communicate with parents of ELL students, to refine the complaint resolution process and to plan inservice activities.

**Complaint Resolution Process**

Complaints will be directed to the CEO/Director. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, then the issue will be addressed by the Board of Trustees. If a satisfactory resolution is not achieved, advice will be sought from the ESL Regional Monitoring Center and/or Program Advisory Committee.

**Program Evaluation Procedures**

The program will be evaluated at least twice annually to assess whether it is producing positive results. Revisions will be made to address any deficiencies and to increase effectiveness.

During the 2009-2010 school year, Infinity had no identified ELL students enrolled.

**ATTACHMENT D - ELL REPORT**

A copy of the 2009-2010 ELL is attached. The data and Accuracy Certification

Statement for the LEP System was submitted April 29, 2010.

## **English Language Learners - Attachment**

- 2009-2010 ELL Report

## **Graduation Requirements**

This is not applicable because Infinity Charter School only had students enrolled in grades K-8 during the 2009-2010 school year.

## **Special Education**

As indicated in the Assurance for the Operation of Special Education Services and Programs, Infinity is complying with the requirements of 22 PA Code Chapter 711.

### **Identification of special needs students**

Infinity's child find policy was advertised as an annual notice in the September 11, 2009 Patriot-News, as part of the CAIU notice. The written notice includes information on identification activities, educational records/confidentiality, early intervention identification, and services for protected handicapped students.

Infinity also includes information about special education in our parent handbook that is distributed to all families.

### **Provision of Services**

During the 2009-2010 school year, Infinity employed a full-time Learning Support Teacher/Learning Specialist to work with identified special education students. This individual was also responsible for referral and identification of special needs students, scheduling and conducting initial and reevaluation IEP and 504 meetings, maintaining the appropriate paperwork, notifying parents of meetings and of their rights, and ensuring that appropriate services were provided to students.

Infinity also contracted for services from the Capital Area Intermediate Unit to provide some special education coaching to the school, as well as other special education services to students, such as speech and language, occupational therapy, and so on.

Infinity's IEP students worked with trained special education professionals in the areas indicated on their IEPs. Infinity's professional staff made accommodations in the classroom, as indicated in the IEPs or 504 plans, to assist students in making the maximum progress.

## **Instructional**

## **Strategies**

In general, instructional strategies for educating both special education and gifted students at Infinity start with assessing present levels of educational performance. Once these levels are established, classroom teachers provide direct instruction to students in flexible ability groups. This enables the student to receive instruction geared to his/her performance levels. This also allows for competency-based progress, in which students are able to advance based on achieving mastery of content or skills, rather than submitting to an arbitrary amount of seat time.

In addition, classroom teachers utilize differentiated instruction strategies with all students.

General instructional strategies might include adjustments in:

- seating arrangements
- modality or learning style in which the lesson is presented
- pace of instruction
- complexity, depth, and levels of abstraction of instruction and assignments
- length of assignments
- time allowed to complete assignments
- amount of assistance from others

Students may also receive additional instruction from the Learning Specialist that is even more specifically tailored to their learning needs. This instruction is provided within the regular education classroom, and/or outside of the classroom, as specified in the IEP.

Further specific instructional strategies are implemented by professional staff as prescribed in the IEP, or 504 plan, or are utilized by trained specialists contracted by Infinity through the Capital Area Intermediate Unit.

Ultimately, the instructional strategies used with special education and/or gifted students need to be tailored to their individual needs. That's why Individualized Education Plans are written.

## **Special Education - Attachments**

- Attachment E(1) - Special Education Policies & Procedures (Policy #201)
- Attachment E(2) - Special Education Policies & Procedures (Policy #206)

## **Special Education Program Profile - Chart I**

Teacher	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
Cindy Walker	1.0	Learning Support	Infinity Charter School	5	Infinity employed one full-time special education-certified staff member during the 2009-2010 school year. This individual provided services to

identified students based on their IEPs or 504 plans, coordinated IEP meetings, and compiled and filed all necessary paperwork.

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart II

Organization	FTE	Type of class or support	Location	# of Students	Other Information
CAIU	0	Speech/Language	Infinity Charter School	4	None
CAIU	0	Occupational Therapy	Infinity Charter School	0	None
CAIU	0	Psychological Evaluation	Infinity Charter School	4	None
CAIU	0	Autism Support	Infinity Charter School	1	None
CAIU	0	Special Ed. Coaching	Infinity Charter School	1	For Staff
CAIU	0	Other	Infinity Charter School	1	None

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart III

Title	Location	FTE
Learning Specialist/Support	Infinity Charter School	1.0

## Special Education Program Profile - Chart IV

IU, Public Agency, Organization, or Individual	Title/Service	Amount of Time Per Week
CAIU	Autism Support	3.5 hours total
CAIU	Occupational Therapy	50 hours total
CAIU	Positive Behavioral Support	3 hours total
CAIU	Psychological	56 hours total
CAIU	Psychological Counseling	1.75 hours total
CAIU	Special Ed Coaching	1 hour total
CAIU	Speech and Language	224.5 hours total

## SECTION IV. ACCOUNTABILITY

### Student Assessment - Primary

Test/Classification	K	1	2	3	4	5
Local Tests	No	No	No	No	No	No

PSSA/PASA	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
PSSA Writing	No	No	No	No	No	Yes

## Student Assessment - Secondary

Test/Classification	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Local Tests	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
PSSA/PASA	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
PSSA Writing	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No

## Student Assessment

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

The 2003-2004 school year was Infinity's first year of operation, so the **Spring 2004 PSSA scores** were the first set of PSSA data we had. Infinity's fifth graders' performance on the 2004 PSSA reading and math were both strong. Eighty-nine percent of our students scored proficient or advanced in reading compared to sixty-three percent of students throughout the state. Eighty-nine percent of our students scored proficient or advanced in math compared to sixty-two percent of students throughout the state.

Infinity third graders did well on the 2004 PSSA reading assessment, but not as well on the math assessment. Seventy-eight percent of our students scored proficient or advanced in reading compared to fifty-one percent of students throughout the state. Forty-four percent of our students scored proficient or advanced in math compared to fifty-one percent of students throughout the state. We took steps to try to improve student performance on the math section, which were apparently successful, based on the results of the 2005 PSSA tests.

In 2004-2005, our students improved in both math and reading on the **Spring 2005 PSSA tests**. One hundred percent of Infinity's fifth graders scored proficient or advanced in reading compared to eighty-nine percent the previous year. Sixty-four percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on this same test. Ninety-two percent of our students scored proficient or advanced in math, compared to eighty-nine percent the previous year. Sixty-nine percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on this same test.

Our third graders also improved in both math and reading on the Spring 2005 PSSA tests. Ninety-two percent of third graders scored at proficient or advanced in reading, compared to seventy-eight percent the previous year. Sixty-eight percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test. One hundred percent of our students scored proficient or advanced in math, compared to forty-four percent the previous year.

Eighty percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test.

**On the Spring 2006 PSSA tests**, our third graders maintained their strong performance in reading, with 100% scoring at proficient or advanced, as they had the previous year. Sixty-nine percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test. In math, 100% percent of our students scored proficient or advanced, compared to ninety-two the previous year. Eighty-three percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test.

Infinity's fifth graders did not fare as well in the Spring of 2006. Seventy-one percent of the students scored proficient or advanced in reading, compared with one hundred percent the previous year. Sixty percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test. In math, only twenty-nine percent of our students scored proficient or advanced, compared to ninety-two percent the previous year. Sixty-seven percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test.

Spring 2006 provided our baseline data for fourth, sixth, and seventh grades in reading and math. Our fourth graders performed well, with 93% of students scoring proficient or advanced in both reading and math. Sixty-eight percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced in reading, and seventy-seven percent scored proficient or advanced in math.

Seventy-nine percent of Infinity's sixth graders scored proficient or advanced in reading, while seventy-two scored proficient or advanced in math. Across the state, sixty-five percent of students scored proficient or advanced in reading, and sixty-eight percent scored proficient or advanced in math.

Our seventh graders performed well, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, while 91% scored proficient or advanced in math. Across the state, sixty-eight percent of students scored proficient or advanced in reading, and sixty-seven percent scored proficient or advanced in math.

The 2005-2006 school year was the first time Infinity had eighth graders. Seventy-six percent of our students scored proficient or advanced in reading, compared to 71% across the state. They performed better in math, with 88% scoring proficient or advanced, compared to 62% across the state.

**On the Spring 2007 PSSA tests**, our third graders maintained a strong performance in reading, with 94% scoring at proficient or advanced, a little below the previous year. Seventy-three percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test. As in reading, our students maintained a strong performance in math performance with 94% of our students scored proficient or advanced, dipping a little compared to 100% the previous year. Seventy-eight percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test.

Our fourth graders performed very well, with 100% of students scoring proficient or advanced in both reading and math, compared with 92% on both tests the previous year. Seventy percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced in reading, and seventy-eight percent scored proficient or advanced in math.

Infinity's fifth graders also performed very well, with 100% of students scoring proficient or advanced in both reading and math. This was a much stronger performance than shown by the fifth graders the previous year when seventy-one percent scored proficient or advanced in reading and only twenty-nine percent scored proficient or advanced in math. Sixty percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test in reading. Seventy-one percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test in math.

Infinity's sixth graders made a slight improvement in 2007, with 85% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, compared with seventy-nine percent the previous year, while across the state, sixty-three percent scored proficient or advanced in reading. There was a significant decrease for our sixth graders in math, with only fifty-four of our sixth grade students scoring proficient or advanced in math compared with seventy-two percent the previous year. However, this was an improvement, if you consider the same cohort of students had scored twenty-nine percent while in fifth grade. Across the state, seventy percent of students scored proficient or advanced in math.

Our seventh graders maintained a strong performance in reading, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, as they did the previous year. Across the state, sixty-seven percent of students scored proficient or advanced in reading. They also maintained a strong performance in math, with 90% scoring proficient or advanced in math, compared to 91% the previous year. Across the state, sixty-seven percent scored proficient or advanced in math.

Our eighth graders made significant improvement in reading, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, compared with 76% the previous year. Seventy-five percent of students across the state scored proficient or advanced on this test. They also maintained their performance in math, with 89% scoring proficient or advanced in math, compared to 88% the previous year. Across the state, sixty-eight percent scored proficient or advanced in math.

**On the Spring 2008 PSSA tests**, our third graders improved their performance in reading, with 100% scoring at proficient or advanced. Seventy-seven percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test. In reading, our students also improved their performance in math with 100% percent of our students scoring proficient or advanced. Eighty-one percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test.

Our fourth graders performed very well, with 94% of students scoring proficient or advanced in reading, a slight dip from the previous year. Seventy percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test. On the math test, our students improved slightly with 100% scoring proficient or advanced, compared with seventy-eight percent of students across the state, who scored proficient or advanced on the same test.

Infinity's fifth graders also turned in a strong performance, with 100% of students scoring proficient or advanced in both reading and math. Sixty-two percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced in reading, while seventy-three percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test in math.

Infinity's sixth graders improved significantly in 2008, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, compared with eighty-five percent the previous year, while across the state, sixty-seven percent scored proficient or advanced in reading. We also had a significant increase for our sixth graders in math, with 93% of our sixth grade students scoring proficient or advanced in math, compared with fifty-four percent the previous year. Across the state, seventy-two percent of sixth graders scored proficient or advanced in math.

Our seventh graders maintained a strong performance in reading, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, as they did the previous year. Across the state, sixty-seven percent of students scored proficient or advanced in reading. They didn't do as well in math, with 73% scoring proficient or advanced in math. However, when one considers that this cohort scored 29% in math in 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 54% in math in sixth grade, they continued to make progress. Across the state, seventy-one percent scored proficient or advanced in math.

Our eighth graders made a strong showing in reading, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, as they did the previous year. Seventy-eight percent of students across the state scored proficient or advanced on this test. They also maintained their performance in math from the previous year, with 89% scoring proficient or advanced in math. Across the state, seventy percent scored proficient or advanced in math.

**On the Spring 2009 PSSA tests**, our third graders maintained their performance in reading, with 100% scoring at proficient or advanced. However, fewer students scored at the advanced level. Eighty-seven percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test. Our students also maintained their performance in math with 100% percent of our students scoring proficient or advanced. Nearly eighty-two percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test.

Our fourth graders improved their performance, with 100% of students scoring proficient or advanced in reading. A little over seventy-seven percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test. On the math test, our students maintained a strong performance with 100% scoring proficient or advanced, compared with nearly eighty-four percent of students across the state, who scored proficient or advanced on the same test.

Infinity's fifth graders exceeded AYP, but decreased their performance, with 85.8% of students scoring proficient or advanced in reading. Sixty-eight percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced in reading on the same test. Our fifth graders also exceeded AYP in math, but slipped down to 92.9 % in math, while nearly eighty percent of students throughout the state scored proficient or advanced on the same test in math.

Infinity's sixth graders maintained their strong performance, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, while across the state, nearly sixty-six percent scored proficient or advanced in reading. We also had an increase for our sixth graders in math, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in math (up from 93%), compared with slightly more than seventy-three percent the previous year.

Our seventh graders maintained a strong performance in reading, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, as they did the previous two years. Across the state, slightly more than 71 percent of students scored proficient or advanced in reading. They made a significant increase in math from 73% to 100% scoring proficient or advanced, compared with more than seventy-eight percent scoring proficient or advanced across the state.

Our eighth graders made another strong showing in reading, with 100% scoring proficient or advanced in reading, as they did the previous two years. Slightly more than eighty percent of students across the state scored proficient or advanced on this test. They improved their their performance in math from the previous year, from 89% scoring proficient or advanced in math to 100%. Across the state, nearly seventy-two percent scored proficient or advanced in math.

At the time of this report, the complete results of the Spring 2010 PSSA tests had not been officially released, so we cannot share these.

**Describe how these results influence development of annual measurable goals and targets.**

Although Infinity does not consider the PSSA tests to be the only measure of our success as an educational institution, the PSSA results are central in developing annual measurable goals and targets. It is our intention to meet or exceed the AYP targets each year. If our students are not meeting these targets, we take steps to adjust instruction to improve student performance.

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

Infinity teachers use standardized diagnostic testing at the beginning of the year to assess current levels of performance for students. This information is used to tailor initial instruction. These teachers continue to pre- and post-test throughout the year to measure student achievement, as well as assess instructional success. While this information is generally not used to change the curriculum, it may affect how quickly a student may move through the curriculum and how far s/he may advance through the curriculum. However, if the results of these diagnostic tests reveal any negative trends in student performance in reading or math, we take steps to adjust the curriculum and/or instruction to address any gaps or weaknesses.

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

Infinity has a comprehensive student progress plan, which is described below.

Evaluation is generally described as either formative or summative. Formative can be defined as “along the way” assessment. Summative can be defined as “at the end” assessment. Infinity uses both, with the primary goal of improving student learning and performance. However, we also recognize the auditing function that summative evaluation often plays, in terms of student and school accountability.

Student evaluation at Infinity is primarily for the purpose of individual improvement. Assessment measures are used to diagnose student strengths and weaknesses, and are then utilized in tailoring instruction and developing an appropriate plan to make progress on specific goals. Evaluation measures are also utilized in assessing the extent of the student’s progress in relationship to those goals. These measures are designed to teach, as well as test. We are not primarily interested in how students compare to each other.

The following assumptions guide our student assessment practices. (Excerpted and adapted from the work of Grant Wiggins, *The Center for Learning, Assessment, and School Structure*, 1996)

- There should be an alignment among the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, and the assessed curriculum.
- The aim of assessment is to improve performance, not merely audit it.
- Assessment should be a part of the teaching-learning process, not something that takes place after teaching and learning are over.
- A variety of assessment measures should be used.
- Assessment should be on-going, not limited to fixed tests and testing times.
- Assessment measures should include authentic challenges (What are realistic tasks and contexts worth mastering? What challenges do experts and citizens actually face? What does it mean to "do" science, history, etc.?)
- Learning to self-assess and self-adjust is the key to mastery, therefore, self-assessment should be taught, learned, and assessed as part of the curriculum.
- Learning requires feedback. (Feedback is descriptive, not evaluative.)
- Assessment tasks should evoke and require sophisticated and deep understandings of key ideas, technical competence of central skills, performance/production skills in authentic contexts, and mature habits of mind, attitude, judgment, and action.
- Teachers should be encouraged to experiment with, and improve the assessment of student performance.

Assessments should be:

- Honest, yet fair
- Credible
- Useful
- Feasible
- Balanced
- Intellectually Rigorous

In general, the following practices help us to demonstrate student learning and progress:

Students participate in diagnostic pre-assessment.

Each student has a portfolio of work.

Student progress is monitored through subject area checklists in math and language arts.

Rubrics are developed and used to evaluate projects.

Letter grades are not used as indicators of student performance/progress.

Each student has a personalized learning plan developed with parents and teachers.

Students engage in self-evaluations.

More specifically, Infinity implements the following procedures.

### **Reading**

Teachers begin the year with a diagnostic reading test to assess the reading level of each child and then set up flexible ability groups to work with the children on those levels.

Infinity is firmly committed to continuous progress, which means that each child will start working at the assessed level and progress at his or her own pace.

### **Math**

As in reading, diagnostic measures are used at the beginning of the year to assess skills and concepts. Then flexible ability groups are formed for instructional purposes. Children are often uneven in their mastery of math skills from one standard to another, and so it is not unusual to assess children as teachers begin each standard. Of course, teachers also assess progress after teaching a particular unit.

### **Themes**

For themes, in which we combine history, geography, civics, economics, science, technology, environment, ecology, and more, we also follow the state content standards. Assessment in these areas is not always as cut and dried. Often, the focus is on particular projects students are doing related to the theme, and these projects are evaluated. Teachers have a checklist or rubric to evaluate these projects, often on both content and presentation.

### **Grades**

Letter grades are not used at Infinity. The research on grades indicates they are not reliable indicators of student performance. Letter grades are often assigned based on how the student compares to other students in the classroom. An “A” or a “D” in a subject does not indicate what skills s/he has mastered, or which skills s/he is working on, nor does it convey the level of difficulty of the work. A “B” in one school may mean something entirely different than a “B” in another school. The letter grade does not indicate what criteria were used to evaluate student learning. Nor does a letter grade with a brief comment tell a student specifically what s/he must do to improve.

Because we believe letter grades are not effective in communicating with parents or other schools (should a student transfer) about content or skills learned, and because we believe letter grades do not help students identify specific strengths they need to build on, nor specific weaknesses they need to improve, we use other more qualitative measures of evaluation, as noted below.

### **Report**

Students at Infinity do not receive report cards. Portfolios are utilized instead. Portfolios are updated each quarter for each child, including Language Arts and Math Checklists and Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs). Copies of the Conference Record Form completed at each conference are sent home to parents following the conference.

### **Cards**

### **Student**

Infinity’s student portfolios are **cumulative**. They are passed on from teacher to teacher. Work that is purged is sent home to the parents. Infinity’s student portfolios are **growth** portfolios. They do not always show a student’s best work. Through samples taken throughout the year, they show the progress a student has made. Sometimes work from an entire process, such as the writing process, is included.

### **Portfolios**

Infinity's student portfolios are also **documentation** portfolios. Skills marked on the checklists, either as introduced or as proficient, are backed up with evidence in the portfolio, as much as possible. For example, the concept of synonyms can be covered at a variety of levels. The teacher includes some student work to indicate to which level the student has progressed.

As students mature, they begin having more ownership of their portfolios and begin taking more responsibility for selecting what goes in them. They are able to include written comments about why they selected each item and what they learned. (However, this does not alleviate the teacher of his/her responsibility to ensure that necessary samples are included.)

### **Checklists**

At Infinity, we have a checklist for language arts and one for math. These checklists were revised for the 2009-2010 school, are based on the state standards, and include the skills our students are working on in grades K - 8. These checklists also indicate at which grade level these skills would normally be mastered by the typical student. In this way, we, as teachers, are able to address any "holes" our students have, and parents can rest assured their child is learning what s/he needs at each grade level.

Including the skills for more than one grade level on the checklists allows us to show when a student is working on skills at a higher, or lower, grade level. It also means these checklists are cumulative and will follow the student from class to class. The skills for each grade level are highlighted in a different color to make it easier to review. The checklists also have two columns to indicate when the skill was introduced, and when the teacher has evidence that the child is consistently proficient at this skill.

### **Personal**

### **Learning Plans (PLPs)**

In addition to the checklists, each student has a Personal Learning Plan (PLP) developed in conjunction with the student herself, the parents, and the teachers. This plan is reviewed quarterly, with the aforementioned parties, and revised as necessary. Although specific academic goals may be included, we do not want to simply restate all the skills from the checklists. Therefore, for the most part, PLPs focus more on behavioral goals, self-directed learning goals, and goals related to theme and theme projects.

Teachers send home blank PLP forms before the first conference. We do not expect families to complete the entire form, but we do ask them to sit down and discuss, as a family, what kinds of goals they want for their child/ren during the year. When they bring these ideas to the conferences, they are able to discuss them with the teacher and come to an agreement. The teacher is also prepared with goals s/he believes each student should be working on during the quarter, or during the year, and shares those with the family. In this way, we try to make the PLP more of a working document and more useful to everyone.

### **Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences**

Because we believe it is important to meet with parents to discuss these evaluations, we

schedule four conferences during the year. The first three conferences are at least 30 minutes each to provide sufficient time for the teacher and parents to discuss the child's progress. The majority of the conferences are held during the scheduled release times on the calendar and include evening times for those parents who cannot come during the day.

Students are welcomed and encouraged to attend. Even at the younger grades, we feel it is important for the child to be aware of his/her progress and to take responsibility for his/her own learning. As the children mature, they take on more responsibility for conducting the conferences themselves.

The fourth conference of the year is held shortly after the last day of school and is student-led, with the teacher and parents present. It is more of a portfolio review and celebration of the year's learning. Teachers are available to answer questions. Morning and afternoon times are available.

### **PSSA**

Furthermore, to ensure each child meets or exceeds local, state and national academic standards, our students participate in the state PSSA, and any other mandated assessments.

### **Staff**

Moreover, consistent with our goals, our teaching staff continues to participate in professional development to become more skilled in using a variety of assessment measures. They are also encouraged to explore and experiment with different types of assessment, with the goal of improving student learning.

### **Development**

Teacher evaluation at Infinity includes pre- and post-observation conferences in addition to the formal observation itself. The focus of these conferences and observations are related to how the teacher can improve instruction to improve student performance.

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

By utilizing a combination of standardized and non-standardized, direct, and indirect assessments, we use assessment measures to guide and improve student learning, as well as to provide documentation for accountability purposes.

Initially, diagnostic testing/pre-testing in both reading and math enables Infinity's staff to form flexible ability groups for instructional purposes. By working with small groups with similar performance levels, the teacher can tailor instruction to more effectively meet student learning needs.

Once a classroom teacher identifies (either through test results or through observations) students who demonstrate difficulties with concepts and/or skills, s/he may regroup these students with other peers who are having similar difficulties. In this way, the teacher has the ability to gear instruction to these students' needs. This may include a change in pace, level of complexity, amount of review and practice, and so on.

When a student requires further assistance, the teacher/s and parent/s (and usually the Learning Specialist) meet to discuss and create an individualized learning plan targeting the specific areas of weakness. Using data collected through direct observation of the student, formal and informal assessments of the student and anecdotal information provided by the teacher and the parent, the Learning Specialist makes recommendations for strategies and adaptations to be used by the teacher and the student within the regular classroom. Parents are also given ideas and strategies to use at home to help build skills and to reinforce the school's interventions. The teacher may make arrangements for the student to receive additional one-on-one or small group instruction.

If the student is making insufficient progress, the Learning Specialist may provide additional help to him/her in the classroom. This "push-in" approach is scheduled during the normal classroom instructional time for that subject, and lessons are developed in coordination with the regular education teacher's instructional goals. These lessons provide additional direct instruction, as well as extra review and practice. The Learning Specialist may also provide individualized direct instruction outside of the classroom one to three times per week, as needed. In addition, the Learning Specialist may address time management and/or organization management strategies with the student.

Parents and teachers meet quarterly to discuss strategies and student progress. They may meet more often, as needed. Progress is monitored through reviewing student assignments, post-tests, and observations.

If there continue to be concerns about a student's learning difficulties or rate of progress, that child may be referred for a special education evaluation. Infinity contracts with the Capital Area Intermediate Unit for such assessments and services, as needed.

Infinity is developing a more detailed process for meeting the needs of students who are at-risk of failure or not making reasonable progress. We expect this plan will include more specifics, delineate timelines and meetings, as well as document student progress.

## **Student Assessment - Attachment**

- Attachment H: Local Test Data Statement

## **Teacher Evaluation**

## **TEACHER EVALUATION: List the main features of your teacher evaluation plan.**

The success of the school in achieving its mission and goals is largely dependent on the effectiveness of the staff. Infinity strives to hire highly competent staff members and provides them with ongoing support and professional development opportunities to help them to become even better, which again is consistent with our core value of Kaizen, or continuous improvement.

Our philosophy at Infinity is that evaluation, whether involving students or staff, should be used primarily as a springboard for improvement and growth.

### **Teacher**

### **Evaluation**

We are working to create something different in this area, since traditional teacher evaluation systems are seen as either meaningless or threatening to most teachers. We are continuing to work with our teaching staff to develop a system that maximizes teacher motivation and commitment to the process, in order to achieve greater gains in professional growth and development. At this point, teacher supervision and evaluation at Infinity consists primarily of clinical supervision and administrative evaluation.

### **Observations**

An administrator (either the CEO/Director or Assistant Principal) conducts informal and formal observations of each teacher. Administrative observations are based on the CSU Assessment of Competencies of Teaching, Scales 1 - 11 and Scales 15 — 17 (See **Attachment I**). These scales were developed through the Colorado State University Teacher Induction Program and have been widely validated. The program includes definitions of desired behaviors, collection of objective data based on the scales, a process of analyzing the data, and a process for improvement planning.

### **Clinical**

### **Supervision**

An administrator works with the teacher to identify areas for improvement. Each cycle involves a planning conference, an observation to collect data, and a feedback conference.

### **Evaluation**

As for evaluation procedures that impact dismissal of teachers, we are reviewing a three-tiered approach. Beginning teachers or teachers new to the school would be involved in a more directed development process for the first year. Once this has been completed satisfactorily, teachers would advance to the experienced track, which would likely involve more collaborative and self-guided development. Teachers who receive an unsatisfactory evaluation would be placed on a remediation track. The remediation track would consist of a very structured process with a specific plan devised by the teacher and the administrator to improve deficiencies. If improvement was satisfactory, this teacher could be placed in the experienced track. If improvement was not satisfactory according to the designated timelines, the employee would be notified of intent to terminate.

### **Competencies**

The competencies are included in **Attachment I**, as is a copy of the **Teacher Evaluation Checklist** that is completed by the teacher and an administrator at the end of the year.

**TEACHER EVALUATION: List entities/individuals who are responsible for teacher and staff evaluation AND indicate whether those individuals have administrative certificates.**

The CEO/Director is responsible for all teacher evaluations.

**TEACHER EVALUATION: Describe training for evaluators, particularly in the areas of Special Education and instructional techniques unique to the mission of the charter school.**

Ms. Nancy Hall, Infinity's CEO/Director during the 2009-2010 school year, is a Pennsylvania certified school administrator. In addition to having worked as a school administrator previously, Ms. Hall has participated in specific Evaluator Training and Mentor Training. Ms. Hall has learned about Special Education through her education administration graduate work, has been involved with Special Education in her previous administrative positions and has attended workshops related to Special Education through the Intermediate Unit, PATTAN, and PDE. Ms. Hall has a Master's Degree in Gifted Education and has taken courses and participated in training on a variety of instructional techniques and assessment techniques relevant to the mission and educational design of the charter school. During the 2009-2010 school year, Ms. Hall also participated in PILS courses on "Leading the Management of Resources in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools" and "Students with Disabilities."

## **Teacher Evaluation - Attachments**

- Attachment I(1) - Teacher Evaluation Checklist
- Attachment I(2) - Teacher Evaluation Plan

## **SECTION V. GOVERNANCE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Leadership Changes**

**Discuss briefly any leadership changes during the past year on the Board of Trustees and in the school administration (President of the Board, Chief Executive Officer, Principal, etc.) explaining why or how those changes occurred.**

There were a few changes in the overall leadership of Infinity Charter School during the 2009-2010 school year. Mrs. Carol Hilty was elected for a fifth term as parent representative, beginning July 2009. She was elected President of the Board in July 2009, and served in that capacity from July 2009 through June of 2010.

Ms. Nancy J. Hall was, and continues to be, the school's CEO/Director. Mrs. Suzanne Gausman resigned to take a position as a principal at a parochial school. Infinity hired an Assistant Director, Mr. Michael Wilson for the 2009-2010 school year. No other changes occurred in the leadership or administration of the school in the 2009-2010 school year.

## Board of Trustees

Name of Trustee	Office (if any)
Hon. Michelle Coleman	joined 6/09
Mrs. Carol Hilty	President from 07/09 to 06/10
Mr. Joe Schell	Secretary/Treasurer from 7/09 to 6/10

## Professional Development (Governance)

**Describe the professional development provided or taken regarding governance of the school (including Sunshine Law and the Public Officials Act) for the Board of Trustees.**

All members and potential members of the Infinity Charter School Board of Trustees are to review the "Orientation Packet for New Board Members." This packet includes information about the school, governance activities and requirements (including the Sunshine Law), School By-laws, and so on. The Board members have been provided information on the Pennsylvania Ethics or Public Officials Act.

Infinity's Board has tried to follow the precepts espoused by Board development and management expert, John Carver, in his work, such as *Boards That Make A Difference*.

## Coordination of the Governance and Management of the School

**How does the Board of Trustees coordinate the governance and management of the school?**

The Infinity Board of Trustees is not involved in the day-to-day management of the school, handled by the CEO/Director and the Business Manager. In a type of split-principal model, the CEO/Director serves as the school's educational leader, focusing on curriculum and instruction. Business activities, such as finances and facilities, are managed by the Business Manager, with the CEO/Director having oversight responsibilities. During the 2009-2010 school year, Infinity also employed an Assistant Director.

It is our intent that, in addition to the Board's legally mandated responsibilities, its primary focus is long-term strategic planning and policy-making related to the mission and vision of the school. The roles and responsibilities of the Infinity Board of Trustees have been delineated as follows:

- Carrying the vision
- Serving as advocates for the student body as a whole
- Evaluating the school's management, and appointing or dismissing as necessary
- Fixing salaries or compensation of administrators, teachers, or employees of the charter school
- Overseeing and approving the school's annual budget
- Enacting policy
- Designating sound fiscal management policies, including defining acceptable depositories of school funds, creating or increasing indebtedness, purchasing or selling land
- Approving curriculum, adopting courses of study and/or textbooks
- Adopting the school calendar
- Entering into contracts (of any kind) on behalf of the school
- Raising funds for the school
- Evaluating its own (the Board's) performance
- Serving as a focus group for the management
- Bringing stakeholder concerns to the management
- Problem-solving, as requested
- Serving as key communicators to the parents and staff
- Serving as "cheerleaders" for the school, as warranted
- Serving as good-will ambassadors to the larger community.

During the 2009-2010 school year, the Board met for eleven regular meetings. The CEO/Director and Business Manager attended all of these meetings. The Assistant Director attended all meetings after he was hired, except September.

There is a written agenda for each meeting. This agenda includes a Citizen Comment Time, Approval of the previous meeting Minutes, Old Business, New Business, and Executive Sessions, as necessary, to discuss legal and personnel issues. The CEO/Director and Business Manager complete reports on their activities for each meeting.

The Board reviews each report and may ask questions or request more information concerning the outlined activities. Members of the Board may direct the CEO/ Director or Business Manager to supply additional information prior to making decisions. When the Board makes a decision and/or approves a policy, the staff is responsible for the implementation of such directives.

**Describe the Board of Trustees' efforts in maintaining a working relationship with the charter granting School District's Board of School Directors.**

Infinity's Founding Group began by trying to establish a positive working relationship with Central Dauphin School District, and at every opportunity, Infinity has continued to express its desire to work collaboratively with the district.

Nancy Hall, Infinity's CEO/Director, met with Dr. Luis B.Gonzalez, the new CD superintendent, in the summer of 2009, shortly after he was hired, to again express our desired to work collaboratively with the district.

The Central Dauphin School District has provided all ADM funding requested by Infinity for resident students enrolled at our school.

Infinity submitted a charter renewal intent letter to the Central Dauphin School District on August 1, 2006, and on June 11, 2007, the District renewed Infinity's charter for five years.

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

- Attachment J: 2010-2011 ICS Board Meeting Schedule

## **Community and Parent Engagement**

**Describe the Board of Trustees' efforts in promoting opportunities for community and parent engagement in school activities.**

Infinity is committed to making the community and our parents an integral part of our school and our educational program. Our desired relationship with the community and parents is reflected in our original goals, several of our educational components, and in our staffing pattern.

### **COMMUNITY**

With respect to the community, our intent is to:

- Facilitate student service to, and involvement in, the community, *and*
- To blur the boundaries between school and community and actively promote the concept that the school and the community have mutual responsibilities to each other.

To use a scientific analogy, we want to create a “permeable membrane,” such as that of a living cell, between our school and the outside community. As we create our own learning community, we want to draw in the rich resources of the community and, at the same time, we want to extend the concept of the school beyond the physical edifice, and send our students out into the community, to learn and to contribute, in an extended environment.

### **Utilization of Community Resources**

Education at Infinity is not just campus-based. There is a vast array of resources available to students throughout our local communities and beyond. Sometimes the community members and organizations come in to the students, and sometimes the students go out into the community. Field trips and speakers are an integral part of the educational program at Infinity, with goals and objectives clearly tied to the curriculum. We want our students to be able to take advantage of a wide variety of community resources to enhance our curriculum. In addition to the academic benefits, we also believe community members have the potential to contribute a great deal in the affective realm. In the words of an old African proverb, “It takes an entire village to raise a child.”

Infinity had 51 speakers and 12 field trips (not including community service) over the course of the 2009-2010 school year. In addition to individual class experiences, this included elementary and middle school trips to the Harrisburg Symphony and overnight/extended field trips for all students in grades K-8.

### **Telecommunications**

Telecommunications are a way to enlarge our “community of resources.” Computer telecommunications and speaker phones were used this last year to enable students to connect to resources otherwise unavailable. Parents and teachers often communicate about students via email. Almost all of our parents have internet capabilities, so we are able to send emails to provide information to parents, particularly if this needs to be accomplished quickly. In addition, information about the school is available to the community and our parents on Infinity’s web site.

### **Community Service Projects**

We believe the school and community have mutual responsibilities to each other. While we want our students to be able to take advantage of a wide variety of community resources to enhance our curriculum, we also want our students to use their time and talents to give back to the community. As our students participate in community service activities, they are actively engaged with the community in a positive way. Students participated in 7 school-organized community service activities/projects during 2009-2010.

### **Community Resources Coordinator**

Infinity's commitment to creating a symbiotic relationship with the community is also reflected in our staffing. Our Community Resources Coordinator is an integral part of the educational program at the school. This individual is primarily responsible for assisting

classroom teachers to enhance the educational experience by coordinating speakers, field trips (including overnight programs), assemblies, and other resources in the community. The CRC is also responsible for arranging community service activities.

### **Committee**

### **Membership**

Infinity also taps community members to serve on various committees for the school, such as the Professional Education Plan Committee.

### **Board Meetings**

All Board meetings are open to parents and community members, and an opportunity for interested individuals to speak is offered at the beginning of the meetings. Visitors are often involved in Board discussions on topics of interest to them.

The Board is currently composed of community members and one parent member, as permitted in our by-laws. It is continuing to recruit additional community members to serve on the Board.

## **PARENTS**

One way to encourage parents to be engaged with the school is through effective two-way communication. It is not simply enough that the school distribute information to the parents. We must also listen to what parents want to share with us about the school, and respond to their feedback in appropriate ways.

### **Communication**

**Weekly Folders:** These folders include student work, the weekly school calendar of events, a weekly school-wide letter written by the CEO, a weekly letter written by the classroom teacher, and a form that allows teachers and parents to write notes back and forth each week about each child.

**Weekly Classroom Letters:** Teachers write and send home weekly newsletters to parents, including information about content, skills, and activities in which their children are involved.

**Weekly School-wide Letters:** The CEO letter is a communication that goes out to the parent community on a weekly basis and includes information about the school, information about gifted students, general parenting information, assessment results, school philosophy, and so on.

**Weekly Calendar of Events:** The Calendar of Events is a weekly communication to parents that notifies them of upcoming school activities.

**Student Assessment:** Parents want, and need, to know how their child is progressing in school. As noted elsewhere, students do not receive report cards at Infinity. Instead, portfolios are used and include Language Arts and Math Checklists and Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs). Copies of the Conference Record form completed at each conference are sent home to parents following the conference.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences:** Formal conferences with parents are scheduled four times each year. Students are welcome to attend, and, as they progress through the grades, are expected to take on a larger role in leading the conference. The first three conferences are a minimum of thirty (30) minutes each, and evening times are available for those parents who cannot come during the day. The majority of the conference times are during the scheduled release times on the calendar. The fourth conference takes place shortly after the last day of school and is more of a portfolio fair at which the child has the primary responsibility in sharing his/her progress with his/her parent/s. Teachers are available to answer questions. Morning and afternoon times are available.

**Parent Handbook:** The school has developed a Parent Handbook to provide important information to parents about the school. This includes general information, enrollment information, office information, attendance/absence information, arrival and dismissal procedures, health services, special education services, assessing and communicating student progress, lunch program, student behavior expectations, and school policies.

**Web Site:** Information about the school is available to our parents on Infinity's web site. This may include summaries of approved Board Minutes.

**Board of Trustees Meetings:** The location and meeting times of the school's Board of Trustees are posted at the school and on the school's web site. Meetings are open to the public. Parents have an opportunity to speak near the beginning of meetings and often share opinions during meetings. There is one parent representative serving as a Board member.

**Informal Dialogue:** Opportunities for dialogue between parents and school staff present themselves during times that parents volunteer in the school. In addition, parents always have the opportunity to call or email a teacher or other staff member to discuss areas of concern or to express compliments.

**Formal Parent Concern Process:** When a parent calls, or comes in with a concern, the CEO listens and refers the parent to the teacher directly. If the parent refuses to talk with the teacher, the CEO talks with the parent and then informs the teacher of the concern. If necessary, a conference is arranged with all parties involved. The school does not believe that parents are always right or that staff is always right. The CEO will try to help resolve any and all concerns in the best interest of the children, and, as much as possible, to the satisfaction of all parties involved.

**End-of-Year Survey:** Infinity distributes a questionnaire to parents at the end of each year to determine parent satisfaction with the school program. The results are shared with the entire parent body and the school staff.

The following are the results from the 2009-2010 survey.

**Satisfied with school**

**Question**  
**Strongly (A&SA)**

**Strongly**

**St**

**Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree**

**Ag**

ree

1. My child is satisfied overall with Infinity.	2%	2%	3%	35%	58%	93%
2. As a parent, I am satisfied overall with Infinity.	0%	0%	3%	50%	47%	97%
3. My child's overall interest in school is high.	0%	2%	9%	34%	55%	90%
4. The learning opportunities at Infinity have been appropriate for my child's needs.	0%	0%	3%	33%	64%	97%
5. My child has made appropriate academic progress this year.	0%	0%	14%	35%	51%	86%
6. My child's relationship with his/her peers is good.	0%	1%	7%	46%	46%	92%
7. My child's relationship with his/her teacher/s are good.	0%	2%	5%	21%	72%	93%
8. My child's feelings about himself/herself are positive.	0%	3%	16%	28%	53%	81%
9. Our child's school activities are discussed at home often.	2%	0%	5%	44%	49%	93%
10. The school and teachers, through such information/activities as the Calendar of Events, school-wide Monday Letters, Monday Folders, Open Board and Information Meetings, is doing a good job communicating with me as a parent.	0%	0%	9%	33%	58%	91%
11. I feel I have sufficient opportunities to be involved in my child's education at Infinity.	0%	5%	2%	36%	57%	93%
12. Overall, my child has been more successful at Infinity that at previous schools.	0%	0%	20%	29%	51%	80%

*Note: Some A+SA totals have been rounded to the next appropriate %.*

We had 58 responses to the End-of-Year Survey, from 45 families who had students enrolled.

At Infinity, we want parent involvement to be more than just a phrase; we want it to be an integral part of our culture. Productive partnerships allow us to provide more for the children than any of us could accomplish alone. We welcome parents' talents, skills, and

energies toward that end.

### **Parent**

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers contributed an estimated 1374 hours of service to Infinity during the 2009-2010 school year. There was an average of 17 volunteers per week. Volunteers were involved in working in classrooms, offering hot lunches, coordinating fundraising, producing the school yearbook, driving for field trips, presenting to students, painting, renovating and cleaning the facility, organizing school spirit activities, as well working on committees, leading Math 24 Teams, and so on.

### **Class/School**

### **Picnics**

In the summer, before school starts each year, Infinity has class and/or whole school get-togethers, so that parents, students, and staff can get to know each other in an informal setting.

### **New**

### **Parent**

### **Ice**

### **Cream**

### **Social**

This informal meeting is held prior to the start of school for families, who are new to Infinity. New parents have said it helped them feel a part of the Infinity community from the start.

### **Back-to-School**

### **Night**

Infinity has a special evening event in the fall for parents of students attending the school. The staff is introduced, educational programs are described, and opportunities for being involved in the school are discussed.

### **Parent**

### **Committees**

Infinity does not have a formal PTA/PTO group. However, we do have very active parents, who address needs as they arise. Several committees have been active during the 2009-2010 school year. These included:

- Staff Appreciation Committee
- Facilities Committee
- Yearbook Committee
- Holiday Shop Committee
- Hot Lunch Committee
- Family Activities Committee

Each committee continued to make significant contributions to the school during the 2009-2010 school year.

### **Partnership Picnic**

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Infinity did not hold its seventh annual Partnership Picnic in June 2010. This social get-together reinforces Infinity's philosophy that it takes both parents and staff working together to accomplish the most for the children.

We know Infinity would not be as successful as it is, without the commitment and efforts of our parents.

## **SECTION VI. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

During the 2009-2010 fiscal year, Infinity did not participate in any major fundraising activities.

Infinity Charter School had parent volunteers, who helped with minor fundraising efforts during the 2009-2010 school year. Activities included:

- Collecting soup labels, box tops, grocery receipts, used printer cartridges, and Target purchases
- Giant A+ Rewards

The school raised a total of \$1202, a majority (\$984) of which supported school spirit and/or school social activities. Two hundred eighteen dollars were designated for students to attend the Harrisburg Symphony.

While the school itself has no major fundraising activities planned for the 2010-2011 school year, Infinity Programs for the Gifted may be involved in a campaign to raise monies that may benefit the school. In addition, activities similar to those described above are expected to continue. During the 2009-2010 school year one family made contributions through their employers' annual United Way campaign. Another Infinity family that owns a bookstore donated 50% of their proceeds from sales on a specific date, which amounted to \$206. The school won \$500 from the Colonial Park Mall's Cash for Your Cause campaign. Two donations, totaling \$150, were received from individuals who wanted to show their appreciation for performances done by our students. One final contribution of \$425 was made to fund participation in the Central Penn Family Fun Festival in June.

None of these donations were solicited by the school. Payments were deposited to a special "Pledges and Donations" account held at Metro Bank. The majority of the donations contributed during the 2009-2010 school year were used to purchase classroom supplies and software.

<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>CONTRIBUTORS</u>
<b>\$1-\$500</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>\$501-\$1,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>\$1,001-\$2,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>\$2,001-\$3,000</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>\$3,001-\$4,000</b>	<b>0</b>

### **Fiscal Solvency Policies**

Infinity utilizes the following procedures to maintain fiscal solvency.

**Budget Preparation:** Infinity’s annual General Fund budget is prepared by the Business Manager, in conjunction with the CEO, and is presented annually to the Board of Trustees for approval. A balanced budget is designed using a lower revenue figure than expected, combined with higher expenses than anticipated. For example, if Infinity is expecting 115 students to be enrolled for a particular school year, the revenue might be based on ADM revenue from 110 students. However, the expenses would be calculated on an enrollment of 115 students. This provides a “cushion,” which can absorb changes in enrollment, if needed.

Budgetary reserves are also held to offset possible cash flow problems, due to such things as delays in ADM payments from sending districts, increased student services’ expenses, or, as was the case in 2009-2010, delays in funding due to a state budget impasse.

**Budget Transfers:** The Board of Trustees approves all transfers between budgeted line items to reallocate monies from one account to another.

**Financial Reports:** The Business Manager prepares a financial report for each Board meeting. This monthly report includes details of revenue received, and expenses incurred, by account. The budget figures are also provided to allow for regular monitoring of actual year-to-date expenses in comparison with budgeted expenses. A list of checks and deposits is presented for Board review.

ICS uses an accrual basis of accounting, which conforms to generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP). All financial reports are based upon an accrual basis.

**Contracts:** Contracts over \$2500 are approved by the Board of Trustees before being entered into.

**Purchases:** Efforts are made to purchase goods and services at low prices, and the school utilizes the PEPPM education technology bid/buy program when available. Property, plant and equipment purchase are capitalized if they meet the requirements of the school’s Capitalization and Depreciation policy. Infinity utilizes the EasyProcure education procurement card for all credit card purchases. Pre-defined limits on each of the cards restrict overspending by the cardholder, which improves purchasing control for the business office. The program is sponsored by PASBO, PASA, PSBA, and PSDLAF.

**Investments:** The ICS Board has directed the Business Manager to invest the bulk of the previous years’ carryover with the Pennsylvania School District Liquid Asset Fund (PSDLAF). This money will remain available to Infinity for use with future facility plans, or other special needs, while earning higher rates of return than money market accounts that were used in previous years. The PSDLAF is a well-respected fiscal fund that is used by many Pennsylvania School Districts for their investments. The fund’s investment focus is safety of principal, liquidity and yield. This focus matches the strategies recommended by Infinity’s audit firm—to maximize the school’s interest earnings and to

protect the school's assets. Additional funds are held in a money market account at a local bank.

**Audit:** An annual audit is performed on the school's accounts and financial transactions. The audit is conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and is initiated as soon as all income and expenditures for the fiscal year are entered, typically within a month after the end of the fiscal year. At the completion of the audit, the Board receives a copy of the audit report and the audit firm's management letter, which may provide recommendations for additional internal control practices to improve the efficiency of the accounting and financial reporting functions for the school. The Board then reviews the audit and recommendations, and takes action, as it sees fit.

## **Accounting System**

During the 2009-2010 school year, Infinity Charter School used QuickBooks 2007 from July 2009 until May 2010 for its accounting system. In May, the school switched over to the QuickBooks 2010 Pro Edition. For the reports submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the budget and financial reports are converted to the standard Chart of Accounts.

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

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

- Preliminary Statement of Revenues, Expenditures & Fund Balances 2009-2010

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

Infinity's audit firm is Brown, Schultz, Sheridan, and Fritz (BSSF). Since an annual financial audit cannot begin until the school's fiscal year is complete, and all income and expenditures are reconciled, the actual audit of the 2009-2010 school year began in July of 2010.

As a result, the Auditor's Report Summary for 2009-2010 is not yet available. The Auditor's Report Summary from 2008-2009 school year is included in Attachment K. The 2009-2010 Audit Report will be uploaded as soon as it becomes available.

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

- 2008-2009 Final Audit Report

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

Infinity has no citations or follow-up actions from any State Audit Report.

## **SECTION VII. FACILITY RESPONSIBILITIES**

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

#### **Facility (2009-2010)**

Infinity Charter School began its operations in a former Central Dauphin school building at 51 Banks Street in Penbrook. This space is within the Central Dauphin School District boundaries, and is the facility originally planned for the school (See the Infinity Charter Application, July 2001). Although expanding into additional space within the building, Infinity has remained in the Penbrook facility since its inception. There have been no significant changes to the spaces or areas leased during the 2009-2010 school year. ICS currently maintains a year-to-year lease with the Penbrook United Church of Christ (building owners), and plans to continue to be located in this space for the immediate future.

#### **Furniture and Fixtures**

There were no significant furniture or fixtures purchased during the 2009-2010 school year.

#### **Equipment**

We purchased four FOSS science kits (Weather and Water, Levers and Pulleys, Measurement and Solids and Liquids) for a total of \$4,433, eight pull-down classroom maps for a total of \$1,524, a \$820 aptop for the for staff use, and other small items, as needed.

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

At this time, Infinity plans to remain at the same facility for the 2010-2011 school year. As a result, having reached capacity in our current building, we do not anticipate any significant capital needs for the current facility.

However, consistent with our Board of Trustees' approved growth plans, Infinity is exploring the possibility of working with another non-profit, Infinity Programs for the Gifted (IPG), to purchase property and build a new, larger facility in the next three-four years. While a tentative site selection has been made within the Central Dauphin School District boundaries, it has not been purchased. As part of this effort, Infinity worked with a local engineering firm to conduct a preliminary due-diligence investigation of the site. Based on the positive results of this initial report, Infinity entered into a "Phase 2

investigation” of the property. Infinity has also worked with the same local company to consider preliminary site use and architectural integration plans for the property.

Infinity has designated a significant portion of its carryover from the 2009-2010 budget for facility planning, development, and possible additional lease costs. We anticipate additional monies will be set aside each year. Once Infinity moves to a new facility, additional equipment will be leased, or purchased, on an as-needed basis.

All of these plans are part of the Board’s strategic planning for the school.

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

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

**Describe how the charter school has complied with health and safety requirements (e.g. fire prevention, safety standards, requirements to hold fire drills), and provide appropriate evidence of maintaining health and immunization records for students.**

Health and safety requirements are a high priority for Infinity. Therefore, we have engaged in the following activities during the 2009-2010 school year.

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>Procedure</b>	<b>Manual</b>
Infinity’s Emergency Procedure Manual, developed in cooperation with the Penbrook Police Department and the Penbrook Emergency Management, is still being used. The Manual is distributed to, and discussed with, Infinity staff on an annual basis. Copies of the Emergency Procedure Manual are in all classrooms, and used during emergency drills.		

<b>Emergency</b>	<b>Plan</b>	<b>for</b>	<b>Incidents</b>	<b>at</b>	<b>TMI</b>
			<b>Evacuation</b>		<b>Plan</b>

The Penbrook Emergency Management Coordinator has assured us that Infinity has been included in their plans.

#### **Potassium-Iodide Pills**

Infinity also obtained K-I pills from the Pennsylvania Department of Health for administration to staff and students in the case of a Radiological Emergency at TMI. Parents completed and returned permission slips for this medication, and Infinity's School Physician completed standing orders related to this medication.

### **Fire**

Infinity held 10 fire drills during the 2009-2010 school year.

### **Drills**

### **Security**

Infinity currently shares space in a facility with one other tenant—The Penbrook Learning Center. Infinity has coordinated its security measures with PLC to maximize the safety of our children.

All doors into the building are kept locked (from the outside) at all times. All exterior doors are equipped with panic hardware to facilitate exiting in an emergency. No required exits are ever barred or chained shut. Handicapped levers have been installed on all classroom doors.

Handicapped access to the various floors is by elevator. This elevator has been equipped with a user-code, which restricts access to the third floor and the basement, where Infinity classrooms/offices are located.

Primary access to the school is through the entrance on the east side of the building. Infinity has installed a security camera and call system at this entrance that allows school personnel to inspect and "buzz-in" visitors to the school. Only parents/guardians, or those having legitimate business with the school, are allowed into the facility by Infinity staff. Once in, visitors are directed to the main office, where they must register and wear a visitor's badge while in the school. Any visitors within the building, who are not recognized, or do not have a visitor's badge, are asked to report to the main office. Visitors must also check out in the main office prior to leaving the school.

Parents, who arrive or leave with their child outside of the regular arrival and dismissal times, must check their child in and out of the school at the main office.

Infinity staff and volunteers also wear official badges for identification and security purposes.

### **Volunteers**

Infinity has many individuals who volunteer at the school. For security reasons, the school requests a criminal background check, child abuse clearance, and FBI clearance for these individuals. Infinity also conducts a motor vehicle check for those volunteers who drive on field trips.

### **School**

During the 2009-2010 school year, Infinity continued to employ a part-time registered nurse to provide school nursing services and to review and securely maintain appropriate

### **Health**

student health and immunization records. We also continued to employ a part-time certified school nurse to supervise this person and assist with required screenings, collecting height and weight data, and recordkeeping.

Infinity requires parents/guardians to provide student immunization records when admission paperwork is submitted. Once a student is officially enrolled, health and immunization records are requested from his/her previous school. When these records are received, they are reviewed and filed by our nursing staff. If any required exams or other necessary information is missing, the nursing staff contacts the parent/guardian to remedy the situation. If necessary, Infinity will contract with a qualified dentist or physician to conduct any necessary exams.

Infinity also contracted for the 2009-2010 school year with a certified School Physician and a certified School Dentist for services on an as-needed basis.

**Provide evidence that the Request for Reimbursement and Report of School Health Services has been submitted.**

The Request for Reimbursement and Report of School Health Services is not due until September 30, 2010. However, we have included an electronic copy of what we submitted for the 2008-2009 school year, as well as a copy of our Division of School Health Reimbursement Voucher.

<p><b>Describe how the charter school is complying with the Federal Wellness Policy and Pennsylvania Chapter 12 requirements.</b></p>
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Infinity recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. While we are always exploring how to better promote student wellness, we are not required to comply with the new Wellness Policy requirements because we do not participate in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Program.

Infinity completed and submitted its Chapter 12 Student Services Plan, and it was approved on April 2, 2008.

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

- Attachment L(1): Report of School Health Services 2008-2009
- Attachment L(2): School Health Reimbursement Voucher 2008-2009

**Current School Insurance Coverage Policies and Programs**

During 2009-2010, the Rigg Darlington Group acted as Infinity's insurance broker. Working with Rigg Darlington, Infinity developed the following school insurance coverage package:

<b>Policy Type</b>	<b>Term</b>	<b>Provider &amp; Policy Number</b>	<b>Cost</b>
<b>Accident</b>	09/02/09-09/02/10	American Management Advisors ACE American Insurance Company (Policy number available upon request.)	\$520
<b>Non-Profit Organization Directors &amp; Officers &amp; Employment Practices Liability</b>	08/18/09-08/18/10	Cincinnati Insurance Company  (Policy number available upon request.)	\$2,162
<b>Workers Compensation</b>	09/05/09-09/05/10	Cincinnati Insurance Company (Policy number available upon request.)	\$4,804
<b>Package:</b>  Including Property, Business Income Loss, General Liability, Overnight Events, etc.	09/05/09-09/05/12	Cincinnati Insurance Company (Policy number available upon request.)	\$7,860

Infinity has finalized arrangements for similar coverage for the 2010-2011 school year.

**Health Insurance:** During the 2009-2010 school year, all Infinity full-time certified employees were offered medical, prescription, and vision benefit packages through Highmark Blue Shield. Dental coverage was through United Concordia. This is comparable to what is offered to Central Dauphin School District employees.

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

- Attachment M: Insurance Declaration Pages

## **SECTION IX. ADMINISTRATIVE NEEDS**

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

**QUALITY OF TEACHING AND OTHER STAFF: Describe the professional staff of the school, including total number of personnel, how many are returning from the 2008-2009 school year and how many were with the school for the entire 2009-2010 school year.**

**Professional Staff**

**In summary, during 2009-2010, the total number of professional staff was:**

- Six (6) full-time classroom teachers for the entire 2009-2010 school year.
- One (1) Assistant Director. This person stayed the entire year, after starting in mid-September.
- Four (4) part-time specials teachers (Art, German, Music and Physical Education). The Art, German, Music and P.E. specialist teachers stayed for the entire year.
- One (1) Counselor. This person stayed the entire year. However, she did take a maternity leave during part of the year.
- One (1) Learning Specialist. This person stayed the entire year.
- One (1) part-time registered nurse. This person stayed the entire year.
- One (1) part-time certified school nurse. This person stayed the entire year.

**Returning**

**Staff**

Of the six full-time classroom teachers in 2008-2009, four returned for the 2009-2010 school year. The Learning Specialist also returned for the 2009-2010 school year. Of the five part-time instructional support personnel, four returned for the 2009-2010 school year. The Assistant Principal did not return. Infinity’s CEO/Director has remained the same since the school started.

**QUALITY OF TEACHING AND OTHER STAFF: Discuss staff turnover and retention patterns and possible reasons for each.**

**Non-returning staff from 2008-2009**

Name	Position	Reason for Leaving
Katie Mang	K-1	Took a position in a larger district, that included desired extracurricular

		responsibilities
Mary Smigel	4-5	Non-renewed
Robert Baker	P.E.	Too long a commute for P/T position
Suzanne Gausman	Assistant Principal	Took a principal position

## Staff

## Turnover/Retention:

There are many reasons for staff changes. In a small school, such as Infinity, staffing needs may change. Sometimes a staff member and a school are not “in-sync.” Whether personally, or professionally, a good match is critical for all long-term relationships. When this is not the case in a teaching position, a nonrenewal is often the best solution for both parties. In addition, as we have stated previously stated in 2008, it is not unexpected that part-time staff may not return, since most are seeking full-time positions. Infinity understands this may continue to be the case until we can grow sufficiently to support full-time specialist positions. It is also common for an assistant principal to leave for a principal position.

Infinity’s instructional, specials, support, and administrative staff were quite stable over the course of the 2000-2010 school year. We have a very dedicated staff, who are recognized and appreciated. It is our belief that our staff members consider Infinity to offer a unique and challenging educational opportunity, which they find rewarding.

**QUALITY OF TEACHING AND OTHER STAFF: Complete the PDE-414 to provide percentages for certified and non-certified professional staff members.**

Attachment N is a copy of Infinity's completed PDE-414 Certification Verification Form.

Attachment O (1) is a copy of Infinity's LEA Staff Profile and ACS, showing that our staff data was submitted through the PIMS system in the spring of 2010. The ACS was submitted June 21, 2010.

Attachment O (2) is a copy of Infinity's HQT, Course Enrollment and Instructor ACS, which was submitted March 1, 2010.

## Quality of Teaching and Other Staff - Attachments

- Attachment O (1) LEA Staff Profile and ACS 2009-2010
- Attachment O (2): HQT, Course Enrollment and Instructor ACS
- Attachment N: PDE-414

## Student Enrollment

**Describe the charter school’s student enrollment procedures and policies, including the admissions policy.**

According to 1723-A (a) of the Charter School Act, all resident children in this Commonwealth qualify for admission to a charter school within the provisions of subsection (b).

When a parent/guardian is interested in having his/her child attend Infinity, s/he is required to submit a completed copy of the Infinity Enrollment/Registration Form, a Home Language Survey, the PDE Charter School Student Enrollment Notification Form, proof of residency, proof of student's date of birth, and a copy of required student immunizations, and if applicable, verification of a sibling already enrolled at Infinity. This information is put into a file for each student and kept until the next lottery. Potential parents are also required to attend an information meeting or tour.

Section 1723 — A (b) of the Charter Act states, "If more students apply to the charter school than the number of attendance slots available in the school, then students must be selected on a random basis from a pool of qualified applicants meeting the established eligibility criteria and submitting an application by the deadline established by the charter school..." Therefore, if there are more applicants than spaces available, Infinity conducts an annual lottery of students whose applications are complete. (See details below.) If there is only one applicant for an open space, that applicant can be accepted.

Section 1723-A (b) (2) states, "A charter school shall not discriminate in its admission policies or practices on the basis of intellectual ability, except as provided in paragraph (2), or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a person with a disability, proficiency in the English language or any other basis that would be illegal if used by a school district."

Therefore, there are no requirements for admission to Infinity, other than those noted above. Although we had indicated our intent to have parents complete and submit a Parent Questionnaire in our initial application, we have never done so. Despite our mission, admission decisions at Infinity are not based on intellectual or academic ability.

Infinity has an Information Packet that is sent to anyone expressing an interest in enrolling his/her child in the school. Most of the information contained in that packet is also available on our web site. In addition, Infinity holds school information meetings/tours (usually monthly) for interested parents. In the spring, Infinity conducts special evening information meetings for potential parents.

There was one lottery conducted at Infinity for the 2010-2011 school year. It was held on April 23, 2010, and parents were notified of the results by mail within ten days. (10)

**ANNUAL LOTTERY:** The following rules were reviewed and approved by the Infinity Board, and were used during the 2009-2010 school year for enrollment

in the 2010-2011 school year. These same rules and procedures will be used (with a change of specific deadline dates) for all future Lotteries, unless amended by the Board.

## **INFINITY CHARTER SCHOOL**

### **RULES FOR THE 2010-11 STUDENT ADMISSION**

#### **LOTTERY AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

1. To be complete, an Application for the ICS Lottery must include the following material:
  - a. ICS Enrollment/Registration Form
  - b. PDE Enrollment Form
  - c. Birth certificate
  - d. Proof of the applicant's residence (*utility bill, mortgage statement, lease, tax bill*) — *not to be dated **before** February 1, 2010*
  - e. Copy of the applicant's immunization record
  - f. Verification of sibling(s) attending ICS, if applicable
  - g. ICS Home Language Survey
  - h. Documentation that a parent/guardian has attended an Infinity tour/information meeting
2. If an applicant does not have all the necessary, completed documents in their file, their parent or guardian will be notified by letter or telephone concerning the items which need to be submitted to complete the application. All submitted enrollment/registration forms will be reviewed by ICS.
3. All ICS Enrollment/Registration forms must be received at the ICS office no later than **4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 16, 2010**. Any form submitted after this time will not be accepted for the Lottery. It is the responsibility of an applicant's parent or guardian to verify receipt of the enrollment/registration form by ICS. If there is any question, contact the office at (717) 238-1880.
4. Each complete application will qualify the applying child as an eligible applicant to be entered in the enrollment process. If an application is only partially complete by 4:00 p.m. on **Friday, April 16, 2010**, that applicant will not be eligible for the lottery enrollment process.

5. ICS will have prepared for the day of the Lottery a list of the grade level spaces available to be filled by the enrollment process. Parents of students currently enrolled at ICS must notify ICS by March 16, 2010 as to whether they intend to return for the 2010-11 academic year.
6. A lottery will be conducted for admission to the available spaces. Preference in the Lottery for the available classroom spaces will be given in the following order:
  - (i) All eligible applicants who reside *within* the Central Dauphin School District and have a sibling or siblings *currently enrolled* at ICS;
  - (ii) All eligible applicants who reside *outside* the Central Dauphin School District and have a sibling or siblings *currently enrolled* at ICS;
  - (iii) All eligible applicants who reside *within* the Central Dauphin School District; and
  - (iv) All eligible applicants who reside *outside* the Central Dauphin School District.
7. The Lottery will be conducted by members of the ICS Board of Trustees at 4:30 p.m. on **Friday, April 23, 2010**. The name and grade of each eligible applicant in the Lottery will be written on a plain piece of paper and placed in a container for random selection. The names will be withdrawn one at a time, numbered sequentially and recorded on a list (the "Lottery List").
8. Once all the names of the eligible applicants in the Lottery have been randomly selected and numbered, a list will be compiled for purposes of determining the order of enrollment by applying the categorical preferences listed in paragraph 6 to the sequential order in which the applicant names have been randomly selected (the "Enrollment List"). Specifically, the Enrollment List will be compiled by moving to the top of the Lottery List all in-district sibling applicants, maintaining the order in which they were randomly selected and placed on the Lottery List; next on the Enrollment List will be placed all out-of-district sibling applicants, again maintaining the order in which they were selected; third on the Enrollment List will be inserted all remaining in-district applicants in their Lottery List order; and fourth will be placed all remaining out-of-district applicants, again in their Lottery List order.
9. After the Enrollment List is prepared, any remaining available classroom spaces will be filled from the Enrollment List. The first name on the list will be assigned to the first space available in the appropriate grade; the second name will be assigned to the next space available in the appropriate grade, and so forth until the available spaces are filled. *Even if an applicant is number one on the Enrollment List, that applicant will only be admitted to a particular grade if there is an*

*opening in that student's grade. Placement depends both on the applicant's order on the Enrollment List and on the number of spaces available in each grade.*

10. Once all available classroom spaces are filled, the remaining eligible applicants will be entered onto a waiting list for each grade in the order in which they occur on the Enrollment List.
11. Applicants seeking admission to ICS for the 2010-11 school year who submit a complete enrollment/registration form *after* the submission deadlines for the 2010-11 lottery (and thus are not eligible for the lottery) will be added to the end of the applicable grade's 2010-11 waiting list *in the order in which the completed registration forms are received by ICS.*
12. If spaces become available in the classrooms at any time after the lottery enrollment process has been completed (i.e., a vacancy arises during the 2010-11 school year), the first applicant on the applicable grade's waiting list will be offered the available space. The Director will notify the eligible applicant and that student will have ten (10) calendar days to decide if she wants to accept the space. Upon acceptance, the student must transfer to the school as soon as possible (but not to exceed 30 days). If the offer of admission is declined, the available space will be offered to the next eligible applicant on the 2010-11 waiting list, who will then have ten days to decide whether to accept or decline the position, and so forth down the list.
13. An eligible applicant will not be eligible for more than one grade level per year (e.g., if unsuccessful getting into a particular grade, they cannot move into a lower or higher grade that has spaces available).
14. Any issue, concern, conflict or disagreement with the process or outcome of the ICS Lottery must be presented in writing to the Board of Trustees.

**Describe how all policies and procedures comply with state law.**

The policies outlined above were developed to meet all applicable State Laws and requirements, specifically Section 1723-A of the Charter School Act. All resident children in the Commonwealth qualify for admission; if more students apply than the number of spaces available, Infinity conducts a lottery; Infinity does not discriminate in admissions; and Infinity enrolls nonresident students on a space-available basis (See above for more details.).

**Describe if a lottery was used, how students were placed on a waiting list and how those students were enrolled from the list.**

See "Rules for the 2010-11 Student Enrollment Process and Admission Lottery" above.

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

A full-day Kindergarten and First Grade are offered at Infinity. The general admission policy for these grades is no different than for any other grades.

At this time, students must be at least five years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of entry, in order to enter Kindergarten, and at least six years of age by September 1<sup>st</sup> of the year of entry, in order to enter first grade at Infinity. However, if a student has already completed an approved, accredited Kindergarten program, that student would then be eligible for first grade, even if s/he did not meet the usual age requirements. Infinity may also make an exception to these age guidelines, if a child has been grade-skipped by his/her home district.

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

**Enrollment history for 2009-2010:**

Grade	# initially enrolled 2009	# withdrew during year	# added during year	# ended with	To School
K	14	2	1	13	1. CD-Paxtonia 2. CD-Southside
1	17	0	0	17	
2	17	3	0	14	1. St. Stephen's 2. CD-Southside 3. Steelton-Highspire
3	12	0	0	12	
4	9	1	0	8	1. CD - Southside
5	10	0	0	10	
6	15	1	1	15	1. Harrisburg
7	12	0	0	12	
8	11	0	0	11	

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**Provide the number of students who completed the 2009-2010 year who are currently enrolled to return in September.**

Infinity's eleven (11) eighth graders from 2009-2010 will not be returning in 2010-2011, since we do not offer ninth grade at this time. Of the remaining 101 students, who completed the 2009-2010 school year, 98 are currently enrolled to return in September.

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

There were no students who were required to leave the school during the 2009-2010 school year.

During the 2009-2010 school year, there were seven (7) students who left Infinity voluntarily.

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

**Student Turnover:** We had one less student leave Infinity during 2010-2011 than we did in the previous year. To the best of our knowledge, all of these students returned to their home schools or previous schools.

There are a variety of reasons students will not be returning to Infinity for the 2010-2011 school year. The first is that all of our eleven eighth grade students graduated, so they will not be returning to Infinity next year.

Parents don't always share with us why they are choosing not to return. To the best of our knowledge, we have students, who moved, left to attend Christian schools, or cyber charter schools, are returning to their home schools due to location and convenience of the family, are returning to their home schools for middle school to adjust to a larger school prior to entering high school, or may have left due to the rigor of the program.

We do not believe this data reflects any significant trends, other than we have a transient society. While we try to meet the needs of all of our students at Infinity, we recognize that charter schools are designed to be schools of choice and will not always be a good "match" for a specific child/family at a particular time. The number of students, who completed the school year, but did not choose to return in September, is significantly less

than last year, and we are pleased that the stability of the student population seems to be increasing.

**Over/Under Enrollment:** Infinity currently has fewer students enrolled than was initially projected in our charter application. This is primarily due to the lack of space in our current facility. While we are able to maintain enrollment K-8, we do not have space to expand to any significant degree. However, the advantage of this, is that Infinity can maintain a small, safe school that is able to focus on the needs of individual children.

There are currently no supporting documents selected for this section.

## **Transportation**

In accordance with Section 1725-A of the Charter Act, school districts of residence provide transportation for Infinity students. Names and addresses of the Infinity students are provided to each applicable district's transportation department, busing assignments are made by the district, and then are communicated by the district to the parents, or to Infinity. When Infinity is notified directly by the district, we then notify the parents. In those cases where no district transportation is provided, Infinity works with the parents to arrange possible carpooling.

**Special Education Students:** During the 2009-2010 school year, Infinity did not have any special education students requiring special transportation arrangements, enrolled in the school.

## **Food Service Program**

During the 2009-2010 school year, Infinity did not provide any formal food service program for any students, in large part because there is no kitchen/cafeteria in the facility. All students bring their lunches to school.

Infinity does not participate in the Free and Reduced Lunch Program, because no formal food service program is offered by the school.

## **Student Conduct**

<b>Describe your expectations for student behavior and discipline. Explain how your</b>
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**discipline policy complies with Chapter 12 of the Public School Code, particularly with respect to due process. Attach a copy of the Charter School's Discipline Policies as Attachment P.**

The following are guidelines that govern student behavior at Infinity. Specific policies and procedures were adopted by the Board of Trustees that comply with all requirements related to student behavior as required in the public school code, such as Section 1317.2, relating to the prohibition of weapons and ammunition.

**Student Behavior Standards**  
Infinity's Behavior Standards are what most schools call a discipline policy. We have purposely not used that terminology because we want to focus on a more positive approach. We have included student rights and student responsibilities. It is important to make sure the students understand the expectations and abide by them, so we can all work together constructively. The following was published in our Parent Handbook to introduce parents and students to our philosophy regarding student behavior.

*We ask that you sit down with your child/ren and discuss these Behavior Standards. If you do not agree with our standards, please contact the Director and make an appointment to discuss your concerns.*

*At Infinity, we believe children who learn to solve problems constructively at an early age develop lifelong skills that will help them solve more complex problems as they get older. Our behavior plan is based on the following principles:*

- Children should learn from their experiences.*
- Children should solve their problems without making additional problems for anyone else.*
- Children should do as much or more thinking about their behavior than adults do.*
- Children should think, make decisions, and live with the consequences of their actions.*
- Children who experience consistent, logical, and realistic consequences learn that they themselves have positive control over their lives.*

The following is **written for children in language easily understood** and is also published in our Parent Handbook.

In order for school to be a safe, happy place for learning, we need to honor everyone's rights, act responsibly, and follow certain rules.

## **INFINITY CHARTER SCHOOL STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **I. Safe Environment:**

#### **A. *I have the right to learn in a safe environment.***

School should be a place where I can feel comfortable and not be afraid.

***B. I have a responsibility to help create a safe environment at school.***

I will not intentionally hurt other children or adults. I will not bring these things to school: weapons or weapon-type items (guns, swords, knives), skates, roller-blades, or skateboards.

**II. Fairness:**

***A. I have the right to be treated fairly at school.***

I should be treated fairly regardless of my abilities or differences, whether I am tall or short, boy or girl, have blond, brown, red or black hair, have red, brown, white, or yellow skin, have glasses, braces, or other special equipment.

***B. I have the responsibility to treat others fairly at school.***

I should treat others fairly regardless of their abilities or differences, whether or not they look like me, have glasses, braces, or other special equipment.

**III. Respect:**

***A. I have a right to be treated with respect at school.***

I deserve to be treated with respect. Other children or adults should not laugh at me, make fun of me, or intentionally hurt my feelings.

***B. I have the responsibility to treat others with respect at school.***

I have the responsibility to treat other children and adults with the same respect I expect. Name-calling, put-downs, insulting words and gestures are not allowed at Infinity.

**IV. Property:**

***A. I have the right to expect that my personal belongings will be safe at school.***

I expect that my personal belongings will not be intentionally damaged or stolen.

***B. I have the responsibility to respect the property of others.***

I will not intentionally damage or steal things that belong to another student, a staff member, or the school.

**V. Communication:**

***A. I have the right to tell my side of the story.***

When I have a disagreement with another person, I may talk about or write down my behaviors, ideas, and feelings without being disrespectful to, or about, anyone else.

***B. I have the responsibility to listen to the other person's side of the story.***

I need to listen/read carefully to what the other person says/writes about the situation and to think about what they said/wrote.

## **VI. Mistakes:**

### ***A. I have the right to make mistakes.***

I have the right to try new skills, explore new ideas, and make mistakes without having others criticize or make fun of me. School should be a place where I can “fail” in a safe environment.

### ***B. I have the responsibility to stretch myself.***

If I only repeat skills I have already mastered, and I only repeat information I already know, I will never learn anything new. In order to grow, I must take some risks.

## **VII. Education:**

### ***A. I have the right to a free appropriate education.***

I will not have to pay to go to school. My teachers will work hard to address my intellectual, academic, and social-emotional needs.

### ***B. I have the responsibility to actively participate in my education.***

No one can teach me anything if I am determined not to learn. I will attend school regularly, I will arrive at school on time, and I will make my best effort to learn and participate in class and homework.

## **Due Process**

All students are entitled to:

1. Oral or written notice of the charges, or of the rule that has been broken.
2. An explanation of the evidence.
3. An opportunity to present his/her side of the story.

*(A more formal treatment of due process is included in the discussion of exclusion from school.)*

*At Infinity, student’s rights and responsibilities are underlaid by behavioral expectations which are written in language targeted for older students and adults. These Behavioral Expectations listed below, were also published in our Parent Handbook.*

## **Behavioral Expectations**

It is Infinity’s goal for behavior expectations to work in conjunction with academic standards to create a total learning environment for all students, at all grade levels. The eight (8) behavior expectations are:

### **Work Habits/Time Management:**

*Students, staff, and parents will develop and use productive work habits.*

**Indicators:**

- Complete work to the best of their ability.
- Strive for excellence in all their work.
- Honor time commitments.
- Arrive at school prepared to work.
- Work cooperatively with others and independently when appropriate.
- Persevere even when tasks are difficult.

**School Climate:**

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*Students, staff, and parents will behave in a manner that fosters a positive school environment.*

**Indicators:**

- Participate actively in the learning process.
- Encourage parent/community involvement.
- State expectations clearly.
- Show sensitivity toward others.
- Use courteous and polite language and behavior.
- Exercise self-discipline.
- Follow school rules.

**Dress:**

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*Students, staff and parents will dress appropriately for the school environment.*

**Indicators:**

- Dress in a clean, neat, and safe manner.
- Dress in a manner that is non-demeaning to self or others.
- Dress in a manner that promotes practices that are consistent with Infinity dress codes.
- Dress in a manner that is conducive to the activity in which engaged.

**Physical and Emotional Safety:**

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*Students, staff, and parents will promote, create, and maintain an environment free from physical and emotional harm.*

**Indicators:**

- Ensure conflicts are resolved through non-violent means.
- Ensure school is free from weapons.
- Ensure school is free from harmful substances.
- Ensure that school is free from intimidation, discrimination, and harassment.

**Respect for Grounds and Property:**

---

*Students, staff, and parents will be thoughtful caretakers of the school property and the property of others.*

**Indicators:**

- Use property and materials for their intended purpose.
- Take responsibility for maintaining school property.
- Show respect for the personal property of others.

**Integrity and Responsibility:**

---

*Students, staff, and parents will accept personal responsibility and accountability for their actions or inactions.*

**Indicators:**

- Accept responsibility for one's actions.
- Be honest in communications with others.
- Promote excellence by setting challenging and attainable goals.
- Serve self and others through community involvement.
- Take the initiative to help others.
- Determine the right thing to do and do it.

**Diversity:**

---

*Students, staff, and parents will respect the unique attributes and qualities of every individual.*

**Indicators:**

- Treat others with fairness, respect, and compassion.
- View diversity as enhancing the school environment and community.
- Promote and encourage increased knowledge and understanding of diversity in the curriculum.

**Communication:**

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*Students, staff, and parents will communicate effectively to build a more positive school environment.*

**Indicators:**

- Communicate with positive intent.
- Communicate in an open, trusting, and truthful manner.
- Express ideas clearly.
- Communicate in a timely and on-going manner.
- Discuss misunderstandings or concerns directly with the source.

<b>SUSPENSIONS AND EXPULSIONS: Provide the number of suspensions and expulsions by student. [Example: 12 students were involved in 21 suspension incidents and 1 student was expelled.]</b>
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One student was involved in 3 suspension incidents. There were no expulsions.

## **Student Conduct - Attachments**

- Attachment P(1) - Student Code of Conduct Policy #309
- Attachment P(2) - Suspensions Policy #316

## **Signature Page**

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

School Year: 2010

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Board President

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief Executive Officer  
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 Infinity 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:** Nancy J. Hall    **Title:** CEO/Director  
**Phone:** 717-238-1880    **Fax:** 717-238-1190  
**E-mail:** infinitygifted@aol.com

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*Signature of the Chief Executive Officer and Date*

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

**Name:** Carol Hilty    **Title:** Board President  
**Phone:** 717-238-1880    **Fax:** 717-238-1190  
**E-mail:** shelly\_fredericks@verizon.net

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

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

**Name:** Cindy Walker    **Title:** Learning Specialist  
**Phone:** 717-238-1880    **Fax:** 717-238-1190  
**E-mail:** shelly\_fredericks@verizon.net

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*Signature of the Special Education Contact Person and Date*

### **Signature Page - Attachments**

- Assurance Page
- Signature Page