

Cyber Charter School Application

Submitted to
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Education
October 3, 2011

By
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CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

APPLICATION FACT SHEET

This application fact sheet is intended to be a "finger-tip" summary of your application. The information furnished below must be an accurate representation of the application and must correspond to the information provided in the body of the application.

Proposed Cyber Charter School Name (Must Include "Charter School" in the Title)

Akoben Cyber Charter School

Proposed Cyber Charter School Administrative Location (City/Town and Zip Code) County **Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19100 through 19155**

Intermediate Unit 26

Proposed Start Date August 2012

Federal Employer Identification Number **27-1030166**

Contact Person: First Horace Middle Arthur Last Trent III

Organization **Concerned Parents of Philadelphia**

City State Zip Code 2246-2248 North 52nd Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19131

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Founding Coalition: Indicate Number	Grade and Age Ranges	Projected Student
of Representatives per Group		Enrollment Year 1-5
Parents <u>59</u> Other Adults <u>43</u>	Elementary Grades 5 - 8	1st Year 400 (5 th -7 th)
Teachers/Educators 22	Secondary Grades 9 - 12	2nd Year 600 (5 th -8 th)
Business Partners 3	Age of Kindergarten	3rd Year 800 (5th-9th)
Community Based Orgs. 3	Age of Beginners 5 th Grade	4th Year 1,100 (5th-10th)
Museums <u>0</u>		5th Year 1,450 (5 th -11 th)
Higher Education 0	Circle Appropriate Grade(s)	
Other Group	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12	
(Identify)		Total Number of Teachers
	Kindergarten: Full Day or Half Day?	<u>10 FTE (Year 1)</u>

Does the cyber charter applicant have an existing retirement system? Yes_No \underline{X} We intend to use the PSERS (Pennsylvania State Educators' Retirement System).

Does the applicant group presently have access to a facility suitable for the cyber charter school's administrative offices?

Yes____NoX (actively considering several possibilities in Philadelphia)

School Focus: Describe, in brief terms and on an additional page, the proposed cyber charter school's mission, educational focus, and other essential characteristics. **See next page.**

School Focus:

The mission of the Akoben Cyber Charter School (Akoben) is to optimize academic mastery, community responsibility, and college/career readiness for young people from the Greater Philadelphia Metropolitan Area and across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through a unique African-centered, technology-facilitated school experience. Akoben will combine top-quality online curriculum, excellent teaching, and a proven-effective mentoring network to prepare students for success in school, work and life. As a public school of choice, Akoben welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. Akoben will launch with a focus on middle school (grades 5-8) and hopes to ultimately add high school grades.

Akoben joins a small but growing community of schools providing African-centered education in Pennsylvania and around the nation which are demonstrating the effectiveness of this cultural approach, especially for learners who have previously struggled in school. In Philadelphia, for example, Imhotep Institute Charter School regularly outperforms the state on the PSSA and sends more of its graduates—66 percent—to college than any other charter school in Philadelphia. African-centered schools are also having an impact in communities like Detroit, Chicago, and Kansas City. What makes Akoben unique is its complete integration of technology to both deliver instruction and build community. To the best of its founders' knowledge, Akoben will be the first African-centered cyber charter school in America.

Although Akoben will blaze a trail as an African-centered cyber charter, the school will make strategic use of facilities for services such as sports training, art/music, homework help and afterschool programming. Initial drop-in/after-school locations will include the school's offices in Philadelphia. It is Akoben's hope to ultimately have such locations throughout Pennsylvania.

At the heart of Akoben is a rich and rigorous academic program that addresses all Pennsylvania and Common Core standards while Rites of providing unique enrichment opportunities in foreign language. Passage technology, art/music, and cultural studies. At the same time, (mentoring & Akoben students will benefit from a Rites of Passage program socialization) that teaches core values such as cooperative work and selfdetermination while connecting students and their families with each other and with successful community mentors. Students will also participate in a career-exploration program called PRIME STEP (Pennsylvania Regional Institutes for Math, Engineering, Science, Technology, Education, and Pharmacy), which connects them Akoben with internships and helps guide their academic choices. **Academics** Finally, Akoben aspires to provide opportunities for its students to travel within the US, the Caribbean, Africa and Europe through a Globe Globe **PRIME** Trekker educational travel program focused Trekker **STEP** on the African Diaspora. (educational (career travel) exploration) Akoben will fulfill all Pennsylvania cyber charter school requirements while offering a unique and

¹ http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/02/23/22pnbk african-centered.h30.html

effective choice for families in Philadelphia and beyond.

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STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Akoben Cyber Charter Application meets the statutory requirements of the Charter School Law as follows.

Section 1719-A: Page:			
1.	The identification of the cyber charter applicant.		
2.	The name of the proposed cyber charter school.		
3.	The grade or age levels served by the cyber charter school.		
4.	The proposed governance structure of the cyber charter school,		
	including a description and method for the appointment or election of		
	the board of trustees.		
5.	The mission and (measurable) education goals of the cyber charter		
	school, the curriculum to be offered and the methods of assessing		
	whether students are meeting educational goals. Cyber charter		
	school students shall be required to meet the same testing and		
	academic performance standards established by law and regulations		
	applicable to public school students.		
6.	The admission policy and criteria for evaluating student admission		
	which shall comply with the requirements of section 1723-A (of the		
	Charter School Law).		
7.	Procedures which will be used regarding the suspension or		
	expulsion of pupils.		
8.	Information on the manner in which community groups will be		
	involved in the cyber charter school planning process.		
9.	The financial plan for the cyber charter school and the provisions		
	which will be made for auditing the school under section 437 (of the		
10	Public School Code).		
10.	Procedures which shall be established to review complaints of parents regarding the operation of the cyber charter school.		
11.	A description of and address of the physical facility in which the		
11.	cyber charter school will be located and the ownership thereof and		
	any lease arrangements.		
12.	Information on the proposed school calendar for the cyber charter		
	school, including the length of the school day and school year		
	consistent with provisions of section 1502.		
13.	The proposed faculty and a professional development plan for the		
	faculty of a cyber charter school.		
14.	Whether any agreements have been entered into or plans developed		
	with the local school district regarding participation of the cyber		
	charter school students in extracurricular activities within the school		
	district. Not withstanding any provision to the contrary, no school		
	district of residence shall prohibit a student of a cyber charter school		
	from participating in any extracurricular activity of that school district		
	of residence: provided, that the student is able to fulfill all of the		
	requirements of participation in such activity and the cyber charter		
4.5	school does not provide the same extracurricular activity.		
15.	A report of criminal history record, pursuant to section 111, for all		
	individuals who shall have direct contact with students. Direct		
10	contact includes contact through any electronic means		
16.	An official clearance statement regarding child injury or abuse from		

	the Department of Public Welfare as required by 23 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 Subch. C.2 (relating to background checks for employment in schools) for all individuals who shall have direct contact with students. Direct contact includes contact through any electronic means.	
17.	How the cyber charter school will provide adequate liability and other appropriate insurances for the cyber charter school, its employees and its board of trustees.	

Section	on 1747-A:	
1.	The curriculum to be offered and how it meets the requirements of 22 Pa. Code Ch.4 (relating to academic standards and assessment) or subsequent regulations promulgated to replace 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4.	
2.	The number of courses required for elementary and secondary students.	
3.	An explanation of the amount of online time required for elementary and secondary students.	
4.	The manner in which teachers will deliver instruction, assess academic progress and communicate with students to provide assistance.	
5.	A specific explanation of any cooperative learning opportunities, meetings with students, parents and guardians, field trips or study sessions.	
6.	The technology, including types of hardware and software, equipment and other materials which will be provided by the cyber charter school to the student.	
7.	A description of how the cyber charter school will define and monitor a student's school day, including the delineation of on-line and off-line time.	
8.	A description of commercially prepared standardized achievement tests that will be used by the cyber charter school in addition to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment test, including the grade levels that will be tested and how the data collected from the tests will be used to improve instruction.	
9.	The technical support that will be available to students and parents or guardians.	
10.	The privacy and security measures to ensure the confidentiality of data gathered online.	
11.	The level of anticipated enrollment during each school year of the proposed cyber charter school including expected increases due to the addition of grade levels.	
12.	The methods to be used to insure the authenticity of student work and adequate proctoring of examinations.	
13.	The provision of education and related services to students with disabilities, including evaluation and the development and revision of individualized education programs.	
14.	Policies regarding truancy, absences and withdrawal of students, including the manner in which the cyber charter school will monitor attendance consistent with the provisions of section 1715-A (9).	

15. The types and frequency of communication between the cyber charter school and the students and the manner in which the cyber charter school will communicate with parents and guardians.
16. The addresses of all facilities and offices of the cyber charter school, the ownership thereof and any lease arrangements. If the cyber charter school has more than one facility, it must designate the administrative office where all student records shall be maintained as required by section 1748-A(h).

Section	on 1743-A(c)(d)	
1.	Describe how your cyber charter school will make available upon	
'-	request, either in writing or electronically, the following information	
	to each student's school district of residence:	
	a. A copy of the charter.	
	b. A copy of the cyber charter school application.	
	 c. A copy of all annual reports prepared by the cyber charter school. 	
	d. A list of all students from that school district enrolled in the	
	cyber charter school.	
2.	Describe how the cyber charter school upon request and prior to	
۷.	the student's first day in the cyber charter school will provide, either	
	in writing or electronically, the following information to the parent or	
	guardian of a student:	
	a. A list and brief description of the courses of instruction the	
	student will receive. The list shall be updated annually for	
	each grade level in which the student is enrolled.	
	b. A description of the lessons and activities to be offered	
	online and offline.	
	c. The manner in which attendance will be reported and work	1
	will be authenticated.	
	d. A list of all standardized tests the student will be required to	
	take during the school year and the place where the test will	
	be administered, if available.	
	e. The meetings to be held during the school year between a	
	parent or guardian and a teacher and among other school	
	officials or parents or guardians and the manner in which the	
	parent or guardian will be notified of the time and place for	
	the meeting.	
	f. The address of the cyber charter school and the name,	
	telephone number and e-mail address of the school	
	administrator and other school personnel.	
	g. A list of any extracurricular activities provided by the cyber	
	charter school.	
	h. The names of the student's teachers, if available, and the	
	manner in which each teacher can be contacted by the	
	student or the parent of guardian.	
	i. A list of all services that will be provided to the student by	
	the cyber charter school.	
	j. Copies of policies relating to computer security and privacy,	
	truancy, absences, discipline and withdrawal or expulsion of	

	students.
k.	Information on:
	i. The cyber charter school's professional staff,
	including the number of staff personnel, their
	education level and experience.
	ii. The cyber charter school's performance on the
	PSSA and other standardized test scores.
I.	Information regarding the proper usage of equipment and
	materials and the process for returning equipment and
	materials supplied to the students by the cyber charter
	school. A parent or guardian shall acknowledge, either in
	writing or electronically, the receipt of this information.
m.	A description of the school calendar, including, but not
	limited to, the time frame that will constitute a school year
	and a school week, holiday and term breaks.

Section	Section 1748-A		
1.	Within 15 days of the enrollment of a student to a cyber charter school, the parent or guardian and the cyber charter school shall notify the student's school district of residence of the enrollment through the use of the notification form developed by the Department of Education.		
2.	The cyber charter school and the parent or guardian shall provide written notification to the school district of residence within 15 days following the withdrawal of a student from the cyber charter school.		

I. SCHOOL DESIGN

1. Mission Statement:

Explanation: Define a concise plan for an innovative public school that will lead to improved educational performance. Consistency between the mission and the educational programs should be articulated to achieve improved performance.

A. Briefly describe the core philosophy or underlying purpose of the proposed school.

The mission of the Akoben Cyber Charter School (Akoben) is to optimize academic mastery, community responsibility, and college/career readiness for young people from the Greater Philadelphia Metropolitan Area and across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through a unique African-centered, technology-facilitated school experience. Akoben will combine top-quality online curriculum, excellent teaching, and a proven-effective mentoring network to prepare students for success in school, work and life.

B. What is your overarching vision of the school?

Akoben's overarching vision is of 21st century African-centered education for students in elementary school, middle school, high school and beyond.

Akoben joins a small but growing community of schools providing African-centered education in Pennsylvania and around the nation that are demonstrating the effectiveness of this cultural approach, especially for learners who have previously struggled in school. In Philadelphia, for example, Imhotep Institute Charter School regularly outperforms the state on the PSSA and sends more of its graduates—66 percent—to Rites of college than any other charter school in Philadelphia.2 Passage (mentoring & African-centered schools are also having an impact in socialization) communities like Detroit, Chicago, and Kansas City. What makes Akoben unique is its complete integration of technology to both deliver instruction and build community. To the best of its founders' knowledge, Akoben will be the first African-centered cyber charter school in America. Although Akoben will blaze a trail as an African-centered Akoben cyber charter, the school will make strategic use of **Academics** facilities for services such as sports training, art/music, homework help and afterschool programming. Initial drop-in/after-school Globe **PRIME** Trekker STEP locations will include the school's offices (educational (career in Philadelphia. It is Akoben's hope to travel) exploration) ultimately have such locations throughout Pennsylvania.

² http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2011/02/23/22pnbk_african-centered.h30.html

At the heart of Akoben is a <u>rich and rigorous academic program</u> that addresses all Pennsylvania and Common Core standards while providing unique enrichment opportunities in foreign language, technology, art/music, and cultural studies. At the same time, Akoben students will benefit from a <u>Rites of Passage</u> program that teaches core values such as cooperative work and self-determination while connecting students and their families with each other and with successful community mentors. Students will also participate in a career-exploration program called <u>PRIME STEP</u> (Pennsylvania Regional Institutes for Math, Engineering, Science, Technology, Education, and Pharmacy), which connects them with internships and helps guide their academic choices. Finally, Akoben aspires to provide opportunities for its students to travel within the US, the Caribbean, Africa and Europe through a <u>Globe Trekkers</u> educational study-abroad and travel program focused on the African Diaspora.

In addition to its strong cyber program, Akoben will integrate key elements of blended learning, combining the best of face-to-face and online programming. For example, all Akoben students and their families will participate in a six-week orientation program at the beginning of each school year, which will involve up to 15 hours per week of face-to-face time at the Akoben headquarters and selected community locations. Throughout the year, students will have extensive access to physical education and recreational activities at the Kroc Center near the school's headquarters. In the last six weeks of each school year, students will participate in the community/business-based PRIME STEP program. And as the Globe Trekkers program evolves, Akoben students will engage in face-to-face exploration of their world.

Akoben will provide new generations of citizens with the requisite skills needed to continue the development of society in general, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in particular. The Akoben Cyber Charter School will use proven systems to bridge the gap of the digital divide through dynamic instruction, the use of technology, an integrated curriculum, and the blending of culturally relevant socialization and activities. Akoben will prepare its students for leadership and entrepreneurship that will embrace and exceed the challenges of the new millennium. The ability to utilize digital technology, the internet, and all emerging technologies at younger ages will afford Akoben students the skills needed to fully participate in the world's global economy, in general, and in America's cultural, political and social leadership in that economy, in particular. As lifelong learners of the blending of technology into their daily lives, students will acquire 21st Century skills that can automatically increase their values of education, their quality of life, those of their families, and the lives of their subsequent children. This will produce students with fantastic digital literacy skills, access to advanced computer technologies, and the receiving of corrective-actions that affords students all of the "next steps" and "best practices" to travel the multiple-paths to success in the 21st Century, and beyond. Akoben Cyber Charter School is poised to effectively deliver these opportunities to all Pennsylvania youth, inclusive of those who hail from under served, under represented, at-risk minority and ethnic populations. Our community organizers have asked, "If not Akoben, then who? And if not now, then when?" Many populations of families have not been properly included in such offerings, whether as stakeholders or even as aspirants. Akoben will change this, dramatically, These systems will also prepare our teachers to stay ahead of the "norms" of the past, and to stay focused on the future towards the cutting edge of the delivery of education services. And this demonstrates the viability of the Rites of Passage parable, "You cannot lead where you won't go, and you cannot teach what you don't know!" This cyber charter model will bring a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environments (LRE) to students in their homes, at our sites, and everywhere

in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the world where our children, or future, happen to have an interest. This includes the inclusion of mobile and migratory populations of students being able to maintain an excellent educational opportunity, without being attached to an historical, typical public school that's restricted to a city neighborhood, a community sector, or a topographical zone.

As a public school of choice, Akoben welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. Akoben will launch with a focus on middle school (grades 5-8) and will ultimately add high school and elementary school grades.

To fulfill its mission and vision, Akoben intends to license core online curriculum and the Connexus® education management system (EMS) from Connections Education, whose affiliated cyber charter in Pennsylvania, Commonwealth Connections Academy, is one of the state's most highly respected cyber charter schools.

2. Measurable Goals and Objectives:

Explanation: Develop clear, <u>measurable</u> goals with objectives for building the educational program that reflects a commitment to academic excellence for all students.

A. What are the school's <u>measurable</u> academic goals and objectives to promote student learning?

Academic Goal 1: Student Performance

Akoben students will demonstrate mastery of key concepts and academic standards across core academic subjects.

Measurement Tool/Data Source: Student performance is measured on internal assessments including quizzes, tests and portfolios, graded by the teacher and reported in real time through the Connexus® Education Management System (EMS). This Performance metric is tracked and aggregated in EMS for each student based on performance on assessments.

Objective 1.1: The school wide Performance rate will demonstrate mastery across all content areas.	Timeline/Target: The school wide Performance rate averaged across all reported months within the school year will be: Year 1: 75% or higher Year 2: 77% or higher Year 3: 79% or higher Year 4: 81% or higher
Objective 1.2: Students in the bottom quartile in the first half of the year will show improvement on Performance by the end of the year.	Timeline/Target: The aggregate improvement in Performance by the end of the school year for students in the bottom quartile during the first half of the year will be: Year 1: at least 3% Year 2: at least 5% Year 3: at least 7% Year 4: at least 9%

Academic Goal 2: Yearly Academic Growth

Akoben will demonstrate a year of academic growth for a year in school.

Measurement Tool/Data Source: The school will administer a pre- and post-test each school year to measure academic growth over the year, and will also track results against the Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System (PVAAS).

Objective 2.1: Akoben students will increasingly demonstrate academic growth in reading and/or math from the beginning of the school year to the end.

Timeline/Target: The percentage of students demonstrating appropriate annual academic growth based on the pre- and post-test will be:

Year 1: 75% or higher Year 2: 77% or higher Year 3: 79% or higher Year 4: 81% or higher

Objective 2.2 Akoben will demonstrate its effectiveness in supporting students to achieve one year's worth of academic growth in a year, as measured by the PVAAS.

Timeline/Target: Akoben will achieve and maintain an annual Green/Effective rating on the PVAAS.

Academic Goal 3: Student Achievement Scores

Akoben will meet or exceed statewide performance on key required state tests.

Measurement Tool/Data Source: Required state tests including Pennsylvania System of Student Assessment as defined and reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Objective 3.1: Akoben will demonstrate at least 95% participation in PSSA and other required state tests.

Timeline/Target: Akoben will achieve test participation rates as follows:

Year 1: at least 95% Year 2: at least 95% Year 3: at least 95% Year 4: at least 95%

Objective 3.2: Akoben students will meet and then exceed the state's percentage of students achieving the standard on the PSSA in Language Arts, Math, and Science.

Timeline/Target: Akoben's percentage of students meeting or exceeding standard on PSSA shall be:

Year 1: Within 5% of state on the aggregate of grades and subjects tested Year 2: 1-5% above state on at least 50% of

the aggregate of grades and subjects tested Year 3: 1-5% above state on at least 75% of the aggregate grades and subjects tested Year 4: 1-5% above state on the aggregate of grades and subjects tested

Objective 3.3: Akoben will meet AYP (or its future equivalent) each year.

Timeline/Target: Akoben will meet AYP in its first eligible year and will maintain its AYP status each year.

[B. Missing from PDE Cyber Charter Application]

C. What are the schools <u>measurable</u> non-academic goals and objectives to promote student performance?

Non-Academic Goal 1: High Quality Mentoring Akoben will provide its students with high-quality mentoring focused on the needs of each learner.			
Objective 1.1: Rites of Passage, PRIME STEP, and Globe Trekker programs will be fully staffed with mentors as needed throughout the year.	Measurement Tool/Data Source: School records, reported monthly to Board of Trustees		
Objective 1.2: At least 90% of parents and students will express satisfaction with their mentors.	Measurement Tool/Data Source: Annual Parent Satisfaction survey; results reported to Board of Trustees and all stakeholders.		
Non-Academic Goal 2: School Community Akoben will create a measurable sense of community within the cyber charter environment.			
Objective 2.1: Parent Advisory group will be active and well-attended throughout school year.	Measurement Tool/Data Source: Minutes from Parent Advisory group		
Objective 2.2: At least 75% of parents/guardians will participate in programming around Rites of Passage, PRIME STEP, and/or Globe Trekker programs.	Measurement Tool/Data Source: Data collected by school administration and reported monthly to Board of Trustees.		
Objective 2.3: On annual Parent Satisfaction survey, respondents will demonstrate at least 80% satisfaction with Rites of Passage, PRIME STEP, and/or Globe Trekker programs.	Measurement Tool/Data Source: Annual Parent Satisfaction survey; results reported to Board of Trustees and all stakeholders .		
Non-Academic Goal 3: Overall Family Satisfaction Akoben families will rate their school highly and be satisfied with their children's school experience.			
Objective 3.1: Akoben will measure at least 3.0 or at least 75% in overall program satisfaction	Measurement Tool/Data Source: Annual Parent Satisfaction survey; results reported to Board of Trustees and all stakeholders.		

3. Educational Program:

Explanation: Describe effective teaching methods, curriculum, and a specific plan to meet the needs of ALL students that are consistent with the mission of your school.

A. Describe the educational program of the school, providing a detailed description of the curriculum and the content in all subject areas.

As an African-centered "school without walls," Akoben embodies innovation while implementing educational and cultural relevance strategies proven effective for increasing student achievement. The Akoben Board of Trustees has the vision and expertise to offer a thoroughly unique charter school that will effectively meet the urgent educational needs of students throughout Pennsylvania who will benefit from the learning approach, flexibility, and academic outcomes that the program offers.

For its core academic program and certain electives, Akoben will license the rigorous, Pennsylvania-proven Connections virtual curriculum that is aligned to state and Common Core Standards. This curriculum is the first of its kind to be accredited by AdvancED (formerly CITA, Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation), and has an established track record in increasing academic achievement for previously low-performing students. The core curriculum is integrated with the Connexus® education management system (EMS) designed specifically for high-quality, highly accountable K-12 cyber charters to provide 360-degree accountability through comprehensive data collection, analysis and reporting.

To round out its African-centered education program, Akoben will build or license African history, language, and cultural curricula to be delivered through the same EMS (see Appendix A for content details.)

All courses will be taught by top-quality teachers who are Pennsylvania-certified, highly qualified under NCLB, and specially trained to excel in a virtual environment. Akoben students will access the program via loaned computers and Internet subsidies it provides for its students, ensuring that no Akoben family is left on the wrong side of the Digital Divide.

The complete description of the Akoben educational program that follows integrates some unique terminology, as defined below:

- Jegna: A parent, extended family member, or similarly qualified adult designated by the parent/guardian who works in person with each Akoben student under the guidance of the Pennsylvania-licensed professional teacher. At the high school level, the Jegna is less involved with daily instruction but serves an important supervisory role for the student.
- Connexus® Education Management System (EMS): The platform for organizing and managing the entire Akoben educational environment, this proprietary, secure webbased software delivers every assignment and tracks every activity (whether online or offline), monitoring completion of individual lessons as well as mastery of discrete skills and knowledge. Parents and students must access Connexus® to organize, document, and interact in the learning experience, ensuring Akoben an unprecedented level of time-on-task detail.
- Multi-tiered Intervention: Akoben will employ a multi-tiered intervention model so that every student has access to the resources they need to be successful: Tier 1 – Core

Instructional Program; Tier 2 – Supplemental Programs and Supports; Tier 3 – Alternative Programs; The school's Student Support Team meets on a weekly basis to discuss students who are struggling academically to develop an intervention plan and strategies for improvement.

- Student Status/Escalation Process: The Connexus® system tracks and reports
 ongoing student attendance progress based on the objective numeric data
 generated by the EMS including student contact with Akoben teachers, participation,
 and completion of lessons and assessments. The student's status (On-Track,
 Approaching Alarm and Alarm) is displayed on the Jegna and teacher home pages
 for instant identification of potential problems.
- LiveLesson™: This innovative web conferencing tool allows Akoben's online teachers to work synchronously (in real time) with small groups of students using voice over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing; based on Adobe® Connect™.
- TeachletsTM: Highly interactive, asynchronous tutorial "movies" integrated in many lessons introduce and illustrate targeted skills and concepts to guide student learning. Teachlets are created in Flash® (an industry-standard web animation protocol) to provide maximum media impact for minimum bandwidth.
- WebMail: The proprietary private email system included in the EMS. Because this
 system is "closed," Akoben students, parents, Jegnas and teachers may only use it
 to communicate with each other, and are protected from spam, contact from
 strangers, and other mainstream email issues.
- StarTrak: This integrated rating system allows every Akoben student and teacher to rate each lesson from a low of one star to a high of five stars. Ratings are used by curriculum staff to identify areas of needed improvement as well as curriculum approaches that work especially well.

Following are important aspects of any quality virtual charter school program and how the Akoben program addresses them.

Curriculum Design: The curriculum selected by Akoben combines proven and rigorous print-based materials, when appropriate, with the best in technology-enhanced learning such that a significant portion of the curriculum is delivered through the Internet and other electronic means in a developmentally appropriate way. Connections is the ideal provider because its instructional design and curriculum development are guided by principles which correspond directly with the principles, beliefs, and attitude of the school:

- Curriculum fosters breadth and depth of understanding in each subject area
- Content is aligned to national and state standards
- Curriculum is supported by quality, reputable, recently published textbooks and/or proven instructional resources and materials
- Content and assessments are accurate and unbiased
- Content is current, relevant and provides real-world applications
- Content is appropriate for the learner (age, ability, background, reading level, learning style)
- Instructional design is adaptable and flexible to meet individual needs of students

- Instructional design provides students with opportunities to improve learning skills using technological tools (e.g., virtual labs and instruments, Teachlet tutorials, business software, online calculator, WebQuests)
- Navigation is intuitive and age-appropriate
- Scope of course is appropriate with regard to amount of content, length of course and lessons, and course requirements
- Lesson introduction is effective and presents lesson objectives, accesses prior knowledge, sets expectations and motivates
- Background information effectively prepares students to access new content, skills and strategies
- Curriculum includes opportunities for developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills
- Curriculum includes opportunities for collaboration and independent study
- Curriculum includes opportunities to develop oral and written communication skills
- Curriculum incorporates timely and appropriate feedback to students
- Curriculum incorporates ongoing formative assessment
- Active learning: Each core Akoben course includes active learning elements (including online and/or offline interaction) that address diverse learning styles and preferences, including textual, visual, auditory, and/or hands-on. The core courses include 1,500 Teachlet® proprietary instructional movies and more than 1,000 primary source and instructional videos. Integrated "i-text" electronic textbooks are licensed from a variety of leading publishers including Pearson®, McGraw Hill®, and others, while non-proprietary technology-based content is licensed from "best of breed" providers such as, BrainPOP®, Grolier Online®, SkillsTutor™, Compass®,

and Discovery Education®. In addition, the instructional design includes interactive LiveLesson® webconferencing sessions and threaded discussions.

Lesson structure: Key
curriculum design principles
are reflected in a consistent
course design allowing for
both general ease of use and
flexible implementation to
meet specific student needs.
The consistent elements are
shown at right, and include an
overview ("Getting Started"),
content ("Instruction"),

Getting Started - An overview of the lesson will be provided, along with a fact or exercise to pique a student's interest and establish relevancy and connection with prior knowledge.

Instruction

Instruction - Teachlets™ will incorporate graphics, video, and audio to show the student the concepts and ideas he/she will need to complete the lessons.

Activity

Activity - The student will apply what he or she has learned during the instructional segment.

Review

Review - This section will recap the key terms, concepts or ideas covered in the lesson.

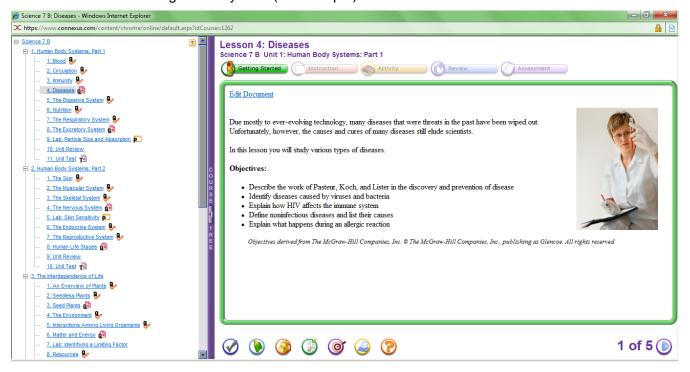
Assessment

Assessment - Finally, the student will be required to show what he or she can now do as a result of what he or she has learned in the lesson.

activities and assignment ("Activity" and "Review"), and assessment ("Assessment"). A student may generally spend as much time as she or he needs on each element to master the concept, and may repeatedly return to any element (except Assessments) for reinforcement.

• **Content:** The "course tree" (syllabus) for each course is always available for students and teachers to review in its entirety while they are working on any given lesson, which helps students plan ahead and develop metacognitive skills – learning

how to learn – that are critical to future success. Each Connections course has clear goals and objectives. The course objectives are available for review by the student, teacher or Jegna at any time (see sample).



Detailed information about the curriculum (Core and African Heritage/Enrichment) is shown in Appendix A.

Details about the Rites of Passage program for social development, the PRIME STEP career exploration program, and the GlobeTrekker educational travel and adventure program are shown in Appendix B.

B. Describe how your school will meet the educational needs of students with disabilities in accordance with Chapter 711. Provide a projection of the number and type of special education programs that will be operated directly by your charter school or through contracts. Provide a projection of the number and type of related services that will be provided directly by the charter school or through contracts.

Akoben will provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities, including, but not limited to, identifying and evaluating students; planning educational programs; conducting IEP team meetings; arranging for the provision of any necessary related services through charter school staff and contractual arrangement with private providers and/or, where feasible, traditional public school districts; and implementing placements in accordance with federal and state law.

The Akoben teaching staff will include a Special Education Coordinator, who together with the Principal, regular education staff, service providers, and virtual special education consultants will be able to effectively meet the needs of special learners. The role and the function of the Special Education Coordinator at Akoben, who will at a minimum possess full certification in special education, will be to facilitate the implementation of the students' IEPs. The Special Education Coordinator will consult with the general education teachers so that the general education teachers may provide direct instructional support to special education students. Consultation provided by the Special Education Coordinator will include adjustments to the learning environment, modifications of instructional methods, adaptation of curricula, and the use of appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of individual students. If specified by the child's IEP, direct special education will be provided by the Special Education Coordinator via telephone, Internet, LiveLesson, and in person.

To ensure service for students entering Akoben without prior diagnosis for special education, the Akoben Principal and Special Education Coordinator will regularly review teacher observations, assessment results and other data to identify any possible special education needs among Akoben students. The Akoben Special Education Coordinator will serve as the Child Find coordinator to conduct Child Find coordination and location activities. These activities will include coordination with appropriate state and local organizations and agencies, as well as ensuring public awareness throughout Pennsylvania through outreach each fall about Akoben special education services and procedures.

Pre-referral/Referral/Evaluation: The Akoben staff will form a Child Study team consisting of teachers, Special Education Coordinator, and Principal to handle all pre-referrals, which may be made by teachers, parents, or others. (Child Study team procedures will be reviewed with PDE if the department so desires.) The Child Study team will determine if the student's needs can be met through a Response to Intervention (RTI) approach, with curriculum modifications, or if a formal referral for special education evaluation is warranted. If the former, the teacher then implements and documents suggested modifications, lesson adaptations, and alternative instructional strategies, as well as the student's level of success with each.

If the Child Study team suspects that a student requires special educational services, the following procedures are implemented:

- The Akoben teacher consults with the Principal and Special Education Coordinator to complete an official special education referral. The parent is notified of this referral.
- Parental consent for the student evaluation is obtained and the appropriate evaluations are arranged. Parents are sent a copy of *Procedural Safeguards*.
- The initial evaluation is conducted within 45 school days of receiving parental consent for the evaluation; and will consist of procedures to determine if the student is a student with a disability; and the educational needs of the student.
- Either the parent or the Akoben staff may initiate the request for an initial evaluation.
- Parent is invited to the interdisciplinary Child Study team meeting to review the assessment results.

IEP Development: If, as a result of evaluation, the Child Study team determines that the student has a disability, the Pennsylvania Special Education Rules will be followed to develop an IEP. An IEP meeting is scheduled within 30 calendar days— at the Akoben office, at another mutually agreeable site, or by telephone— and the parents are invited to attend. IEP goals are formulated with parental consent. All appropriate parties, including the student where possible, are invited to participate in this meeting to develop an IEP that makes effective use of the virtual environment.

For students enrolling in the charter school who do already have an IEP, Akoben begins meeting their needs with a review of the existing IEP. All families applying to Akoben are

asked to disclose if their child has an IEP in place and, if so, to provide the IEP for review. (It is understood by families and by the enrollment team that the presence of an IEP will never prevent a student from gaining admission to Akoben.) During the enrollment process, Akoben will review the existing IEP and take one of these actions:

- If the IEP already reflects a virtual environment, the student continues through the enrollment process with the existing, compliant IEP.
- If a student with a disability who had an IEP that was in effect in a previous Pennsylvania public school transfers to Akoben, Akoben (in consultation with the parents) will provide FAPE to the child (including services comparable to those described in the child's IEP from the previous public agency-to the extent possible), until the Akoben either (1) Adopts the child's IEP from the previous public school; or (2) Develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP that meets the Pennsylvania Special Education Rules.
- If a student with a disability who is receiving special education services pursuant to an IEP in another state transfers to Akoben, Akoben will, in consultation with the parents of the pupil, provide the pupil with a FAPE including services which are comparable to the services described in his/her previous IEP. Akoben shall continue to provide such a free appropriate public education to the pupil until such time as the school conducts an evaluation of the pupil and develops a new IEP for the pupil, if determined appropriate, in accordance with applicable federal and state law.

Although Jegnas (parents and others so designated) may play an important role in this cyber charter setting, the Akoben staff of highly qualified, Pennsylvania certified teachers will in fact be responsible for the day-to-day monitoring of progress for students with special needs. Teachers carry out this responsibility through a variety of means, including monitoring of attendance, participation and performance metrics through the Connexus (described in "Student Status/Escalation Process" in the Definitions section); WebMail, telephone, and LiveLesson communication; and student completion of online quizzes and activities. Students with special learning needs are further assisted by the school's Special Education Coordinator, working closely with a national team of trained cyber charter special education consultants, the school's regular education staff, and contracted professionals in the students' communities. These professionals work in close partnership with the Jegna (thus allowing the student to benefit from the proven positive impact of parent/family involvement) but the responsibility remains with the professional teachers.

Virtual schools like Akoben open up a vast range of possibilities and options for the delivery of the full continuum of special education and related services such as speech-language, occupational or physical therapy, psychological counseling, among others-to eligible students as described below. These services include but are not limited to:

- consultative support to the Akoben regular education teachers to provide modification and accommodation to the general education curriculum;
- direct special education support to a student which may be provided via the telephone.
- Internet, LiveLesson, as well as in person;
- direct related service support (for example, speech-language, occupational or physical
- therapy, psychological counseling, among others) provided face to face via computer, in homes, community sites and therapist offices;
- related services may also include parent training, autism support, parent groups, student support groups, and itinerant supports;
- hearing or vision support consistent with the student's IEP;

- ongoing progress monitoring for every student, including:
- frequent and thorough review of student performance, attendance, and participation data;
- as reported to the student, parent and teacher through their respective home pages; careful logging in the Connexus of every conversation (by phone, WebMail, LiveLesson or other means) and consultation with the student and/or parent;
- specific tracking and reporting for providers of direct/related services, with close scrutiny by the special education staff of any missed appointments or incomplete services.

It is also worth noting that the individualized focus of a cyber charter, along with the one-onone learning environment, often has a positive impact on students' ability to participate in the general education environment. While a special education student in a brick-and-mortar school may need to be removed from a busy classroom in order to focus, in a cyber charter that same student may need little special education support to progress satisfactorily in the general education curriculum.

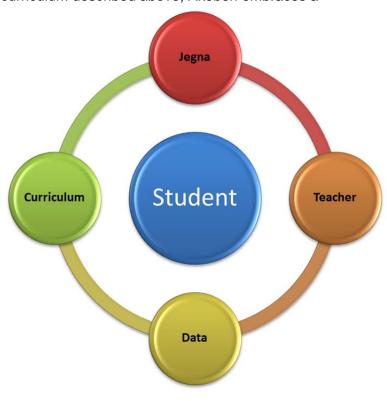
C. Describe the teaching methods that will be used to deliver instruction and assess academic performance. How will this pedagogy enhance student learning?

Explanation: Describe your commitment to high academic standards for all students; well-developed evaluation program for either school-developed or standardized testing; use of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) or the PA Alternate School Assessment (PASA); and an analysis of assessment results to improve student performance.

To effectively implement the high-quality curriculum described above, Akoben embraces a

unique instructional model that combines deep personalization with high expectations and data-driven accountability. Key aspects of the instructional model are as follows.

- The Learning Circle: Instruction at Akoben surrounds each student with the resources needed for success. Each student is part of a "learning circle" as shown in the accompanying graphic. Each student has at least one Jegna – a parent, extended family member, caregiver or mentor – who provides face-to-face guidance, with professional teacher direction using high-quality curriculum directed by data.
- The Personalized Learning Plan:
 The centerpiece of instruction at Akoben is the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), which



provides for individualized instruction tailored to the learning needs of each child. The PLP is an extensive document developed at the beginning of the school year by the Pennsylvania-certified teacher in consultation with the student and the student's parents/guardians. This PLP is built from a combination of baseline assessments of both academic skills/knowledge and learning modalities, information gathered from the parents, and input directly from the student. Learning needs that go beyond the purely academic (such as study habits and interpersonal skills) are addressed in the PLP as well. The PLP then guides the student's course through the Pennsylvania Core Curriculum Content standards-aligned curriculum. All daily lesson plans are provided to students and families online as well as in print, directing them step-by-step through use of the comprehensive set of textbooks, trade books, manipulatives, and consumables that Akoben ships to them.

- Multi-Tiered Intervention: Akoben will utilize a multi-tiered intervention approach to
 curriculum and instruction, which ensures that individual students receive the support they
 need. Students who may not be successful in the standard program, Tier 1, receive
 additional support via the supplemental and alternative programs in Tier 2 and Tier 3. The
 Akoben staff will form a Student Support Team (SST) to focus collaboratively on the needs
 of students who are struggling, and facilitate tutoring and other supports using this multitiered approach.
- A complete learning team: At Akoben, student learning benefits from multiple stakeholders
 committed to seeing them achieve success including dedicated educators and involved
 parents who provide total support for the student's PLP.
 - Pennsylvania-licensed, highly qualified teachers: Each Akoben student has a Pennsylvania-certified teacher specially trained in the Connections curriculum and instructional method. Teachers work closely with each student on a one-on-one basis using innovative technology tools. The teacher is responsible for evaluating assignments and work products, providing instructional assistance, assigning and scoring assessment activities, and providing feedback on the child's performance. Based on a student's demonstrated mastery of the material, teachers add, expand or replace assignments; they also grade students in each subject for the regular progress reports and make promotion or retention decisions. Depending on the need of the learner, teacher contact –via telephone, LiveLesson session, and WebMail with the student and Jegna may be as frequent as several times a day, and at minimum once every two weeks depending on student age. Teachers do not wait to be contacted; they are proactive participants in their students' learning plans. In addition, Akoben families are always welcome to visit the school office/teaching center during business hours to meet with their teachers in person.
 - Face-to-face Jegna support: Each Akoben student has a Jegna—a parent or other responsible adult designated by the parents— who works with him or her in person under the guidance of the Pennsylvania-certified professional teacher. Parent involvement is a centerpiece of the Akoben concept. Whether a parent's role is as a Jegna, or as someone providing oversight to the Jegna, all parents/guardians are intimately familiar with their child's progress on a day-to-day basis. The school provides ongoing training and support to help Jegnas carry out their important role while making optimum use of the available technology tools and professional teacher support to do so. In grades K-8, Jegnas are directly involved with students' day-to-day learning. In high school, they play an important oversight role, but students work with their teachers more independently, taking on increasing responsibility for their learning.

Wrap-around motivational support: The Akoben Rites of Passage system, staffed by
professionals and paraprofessionals, will support participating students' school success
by focusing on aspects of history, interpersonal relationships, language mastery,
cultural reinforcement, academic enrichment, and the practical application of their skills,
knowledge, and talents. Similarly, the mentors in the PRIME STEP career exploration
and community service program will guide students in applying their academic skills
and focusing on their long-term goals.

Assessment

Akoben shall adhere to the same accountability measures, administer the same state assessments Including both PSSA and the Keystone Exams) and follow the same proficiency measures as all public schools in Pennsylvania. As a cyber charter, Akoben must implement its state testing plan with care, administering all required state assessments to its students at in-person, proctored locations throughout the state, in compliance with Pennsylvania Department of Education guidelines for test security. In addition, Akoben will



appoint a testing coordinator, who will attend all required training through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This testing coordinator will ensure that all guidelines for test security and test administration are adhered to.

In addition to the state-mandated tests, Akoben will use a variety of internal assessment tools, including a standards-based, technology`-facilitated pre- and post-test. Akoben's various assessments combine with top-quality curriculum and instruction to improve student achievement and maintain a high level of accountability, as described below and shown in the accompanying schematic.

Akoben's assessment efforts begin with a thorough placement process and progress assessment, offered online and offline, which help to customize the student's academic program and formulate the Personalized Learning Plan. Akoben will also utilize ongoing online and offline assessments to measure student progress on the curriculum, and a commercially available standardized assessment tool to measure student gains over the school year. Specifically, Akoben shall use the following assessments and standardized tests to measure pupil progress:

- Placement process: As part of the application process, Akoben works with parents of
 incoming students to determine the appropriate grade level placement for each child.
 Students identified as potentially working significantly above or below grade level take a
 placement test.
- Yearly progress: In the value-added model of academic growth upon which Akoben is based, each student will demonstrate a year of academic growth for a year in school. Using its standards-based, technology-facilitated pre- and post-test, Akoben will gauge each student's academic growth over the course of the year.
- Ongoing informal assessments: During each phase of their curriculum mastery,

students will engage in several assessments that tap into all levels of student thinking. Such assessment activities include: scored daily assignments, daily "checks for understanding" requiring students to apply and integrate new skills in a thoughtful manner, and regular online quizzes to measure understanding of newly presented material.

- Unit assessments and portfolios: Each subject in the Akoben curriculum is broken into logical units of study. Throughout each unit, students are required to complete a series of offline and online assessments. Offline assessments may include written compositions, science lab reports, short answers and essays, book responses, and a variety of work samples, which will make up a student's portfolio. These assessments require direct teacher evaluation. Online assessments include several quizzes and a unit test. While the quizzes are brief and frequent (occurring after every third or fourth lesson), the unit tests are more comprehensive and occur at the end of an entire unit. Online assessments provide families with immediate objective feedback, while offline assessments provide valuable reflection and expertise from Akoben's certified program teachers. Student report cards and grades will ultimately include a balanced combination of guizzes, tests, work samples (portfolio items) and Jegna feedback.
- Baseline achievement data: To the extent that state standardized test results are
 available for an incoming student, these results are integrated into that student's basic
 information in the EMS; likewise, results for state standardized tests that students take
 while enrolled at Akoben are also included in the EMS, along with internal pre- and posttest data. This data will be used to track student progress from year to year and also
 within the year.
- Keystone Exams: Akoben high school students will be prepared for success on the Keystone Exam end-of-course assessments in Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Literature, English Composition, Biology, Chemistry, U.S. History, World History, and Civics and Government.

In addition to the assessment methods described above, the Akoben EMS gathers very granular data on every student's performance every day. During each phase of their curriculum mastery, students will engage in many different types of evaluations, both formal and informal. Formal assessments include quizzes, unit tests, skills checks, portfolio items and graded discussions. Informal assessments include the variety of methods teachers use to gather ongoing feedback about student progress from both Jegnas and students, such as WebMail, LiveLessons, phone conversations, review of student work samples.

Students should expect work to be graded, based on the assignment and format, from immediately to up to one week, with the average being 24-hour turnaround time. In addition to formal graded assignments, teachers continuously monitor student work via the EMS, noting performance on machine-graded quizzes and checks for understanding. The EMS tracks teacher response time and teacher-student/teacher-parent communications, providing the school Principal with rich, actionable data on this key aspect of teacher performance.

D. Attach the school calendar and identify hours of the school operation, as per Section 1715-A(9).

School Starts – 3rd Week of August

Holidays:

Labor Day – September

Columbus Day - October

Veterans' Day – November

Thanksgiving Day – November

Christmas Eve/Day – December

Winter Break – December/January (One Week)

New Years' Day – January

King Day – January

Presidents' Day – February

Good Friday – March/April

Spring Break – March/April (One Week)

Memorial Day - May

School Ends - First Week of June

Hours Of Operations:

Advanced Start: 07:00AM Standard Start: 08:00AM Advanced Close: 02:00PM Standard Close: 04:00PM Extended Day Close: 06:00PM

Cyber Systems: 24 Hours Per Day (Multi-Modality)

Blended/Hybrid Systems: 24 Hours Per Day (Multi-Modality)

Rites Of Passage (ROP) Systems: 24 Hours Per Day (Multi-Modality)

Standard Systems: 24 Hours Per Day (Multi-Modality)

4. School Accountability:

Akoben Cyber Charter School is dedicated to a culture of performance that provides accountability for all stakeholders and continuous improvement for the entire school enterprise, driven by rich data from the education management system.

-	Principal: using a variety of data including student work, observation, etc.	
	Instructional Leadership: monitoring strategies and progress report data	
_	Teacher teams: monitoring instructional strategies and tasks and peer obs data	
	Teacher - student: developing/monitoring indiv. goals and improvement strategies	
	Teacher - parent -student: monitoring student data	
	Parent - student: developing/ monitoring student data	
	Student - student: self-assess, set goals, provide peer feedback	

A. What methods of self-assessment or evaluation will be used to ensure that the school is meeting its stated mission and objectives?

Akoben will use the Connexus® EMS to gather the granular student, teacher, and related data specified in the school goals and objectives shown in B2, above. The leadership team and Board will consider this data at least monthly with an eye toward meeting the school's overall mission.

Once a year, the school will conduct a Parent Satisfaction Survey and use the results to promote continuous improvement.

In addition, all stakeholders can use the StarTrack system in Connexus® to rate every lesson on a scale of 1(poor) to 5(excellent). Data from these ratings flow directly to Akoben's curriculum provider and academic teams to continuously improve the curriculum.

B. How will teachers and administrators be evaluated? Describe your standards for teacher and staff performance.

Akoben's philosophy of teacher and administrator evaluation is based upon the fundamental belief that the purposes of teacher performance evaluation are to:

- 1. Determine competence
- 2. Assess strengths
- 3. Provide support and mentoring
- 4. Assure continued growth through differential experiences
- 5. Monitor the organization's employment decisions.

These philosophic tenets have shaped the development of criteria, instruments, and procedures and take full advantage of the data-rich environment of the cyber charter. Criteria for teachers include productive teaching techniques, student achievement, organized, structured class management, positive interpersonal relations, and employee responsibilities. Please see Appendix C for details of the performance evaluation framework.

The Akoben evaluation system recognizes the need for:

- 1. Orienting, inducting, and evaluating teachers and staff
- 2. Evaluating teachers and staff
- 3. Offering professional growth options

The purposes of performance evaluation are to determine competence, assess strengths, provide support and mentoring, assure continued growth through differential experiences, and monitor Akoben's employment decisions.

In support of the Akoben performance framework, the Connexus® system will provide tremendous visibility into the practice and effectiveness of Akoben teachers and administrators, allowing school leaders to set meaningful goals with his or her team and then track progress towards those goals anytime and anyplace. Goals may include

everything from using the technology more effectively to developing new course modules, but the bottom line will always be student performance.

For any virtual teachers that provide services via our curriculum provider, we will expect our providers to establish similar staff goals and track them using data from Connexus.®

C. How will your school be accountable to the parents of the children attending your school?

Akoben administration and Board of Trustees' members will maintain direct relationships with all parents of the children attending the cyber charter school. This will be accomplished through monthly meetings of the Parents' Advisory Council, bi-annual welcome back nights at the physical school sites, welcome back interactive dialogues through the EMS, homecoming celebrations in the Fall of each year, scheduled meetings for common concerns, scheduled office hours, and walk-in visits (scheduled and not scheduled). Letters home, newsletters, emails, video messages, voice phone calls, video/voice phone calls, and meetings by grade and school-collective shall also be sent, performed, and made available to all parents. All teachers, professionals and paraprofessionals associated with each grouping of students will form cohorts that coordinate and collaborate with parents regarding the concerns and needs of each student, whether through requests, referrals, or even self-referrals.

D. Discuss your plan for regular review of school budgets and financial records.

The Treasurer of the Board of Trustees shall arrange for mandated meetings, records checks, budget reviews, account inspections, checks to be signed, contracts to be honored, invoices to be verified, and all accounts payable and receivable for the cyber charter school's daily, monthly, and quarterly operation. Comparative analyses will be routinely checked with financial software, banking records, and the overall budget so that all services, supports, and operations are successfully completed on time, on budget, with high fidelity and accuracy. Emergency routines shall also be established by the Board of Trustees, through its President and Treasurer, with the banking institutions, fiduciary agencies, and financial entities for handling of any anomalous or unusual activity that threatens the funding, finances, accounts payable, and/or accounts receivable of the Akoben Cyber Charter School (Akoben). The records of all actions, transactions, receivables, payables, etc., will also be audited by Certified Public Accountants, and provided in required formats for the review and approval of/by administrators of the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and agents of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Records will remain in secured paper and electronic forms, within the approved means of Commonwealth of Pennsylvania laws and regulations. All investments shall be subject to the standards set forth in PA 24 PS 4-440.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code.

The Board of Trustees has met after reviewing the portfolios and packages offered by several, reputable banking institutions, and has selected the PNC Bank as its first financial depository for the purposes and operations of the cyber charter school. Paper records from the bank shall be received at a secured location. Electronic access to the

record shall also be arranged, with three (3) levels of access needed for the usage of the on-line system. These three (3) levels shall be for the President, the Treasurer, and the 3rd designee (whether the Vice President, Secretary, or another duly designated member of the Board of Trustees). The on-line access will originate from separate computers, and the operation will be completed consecutively. An on-line monitoring system will engage each fiduciary member accessing the funds with a check-and-balance routine through the banks website, then with authorization checks through emails, and with a final follow-up confirmation from the bank (both electronically and by phone if necessary), before any transactions are authorized and implemented. This sophisticated system will not include petty cash accounts, or standard operations such as the ordering of office supplies. It will, however, include all payroll operations, invoice payments, insurance installments, purchasing of goods and services above a stated standardized amount, accounts receivable, and the management of funds from allocations, grants, any fundraising, reimbursements, etc.

E. Describe your system for maintaining school records and disseminating information as required under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Akoben will fully comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a federal law that affords parents and students certain rights with respect to the student's educational records, including assurance that such data are safeguarded and not shared with unauthorized parties without the family's permission. Students and families will be apprised of their FERPA rights during the enrollment process and have ubiquitous access to the FERPA policy from the school's log-on page.

In addition, Akoben will observe all other records retention and confidentiality procedures required by the State of Pennsylvania provided these do not conflict with FERPA. To safeguard confidential student data, Akoben will maintain physical records in secure, fireproof cabinets in the Philadelphia administrative offices, while online data is protected by the security measures in place for the EMS as described below.

The EMS has a sophisticated mechanism for providing multiple levels of permissions to effectively accommodate many different kinds of users while ensuring system and data security. The EMS was engineered to allow the System Administrator to readily create a multitude of "roles" (which already include students, parents and guardians, teachers, school administrators, support staff and authorized partners) with specific permissions (also readily adjustable by an authorized System Administrator) for accessing, viewing, and interacting with various aspects of the system.

Policy on Confidentiality, Student Records

Akoben, its members of the Board of Trustees, directors, administrators, staff, faculty, volunteers, contractors, sub-contractors, and vendors, shall keep in strict confidence as required and to the fullest extent required by any Applicable Law, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g ("FERPA"), any and all records and information, in whatever form or format received, pertaining to the cyber charter school's individual students and children, including but not limited to any academic or grade information, attendance, truancy, discipline, receipt of special education services or supplementary educational services, social security or public

benefits, or information as to race, ethnicity or disability. Akoben shall transmit information or records, or both, protected by FERPA solely and officially to an individual named in an official Memorandum of Understanding, and such other duly authorized individuals as permitted in writing by the parents or legal guardians of the children enrolled in the cyber charter school.

Policy on Student Record-Keeping During The Resolution Of Incidents:

- 01. Policies adopted for student records must adhere to FERPA regulations, and any other applicable laws;
- 02. Accurate (observable) records must be maintained (no hearsay);
- 03. Corrections redacting or adjustments to records should be dated and initialed by the person responsible with approval of school officials;
- 04. Avoid and prevent the labeling of students in records;
- 05. Discipline records must be specific with copies going to students and parents;
- 06. Students' records are not to be discussed with third parties or without a need for the party to know;
- 07. Student records must be kept in a safe and secure location and system;
- 08. Student records should not be removed from the cyber charter school without proper authorization;
- 09. A Non-custodial parent has the right to access records unless prohibited by an official court order;
- 10. The band on sharing information must be narrow, and is to include only what is officially requested;
- 11. Information is never to be released by telephone or electronic devices unless the requestor's identity is confirmed, and the request has officially been authorized in writing.
- 12. When in doubt on student records, and after a policy review, the cyber charter school's legal counsel is to be immediately consulted before proceeding; and
- 13. Maintain a clear policy for students, parents, staff, and the administration on the storage of electronic student data.

F. Describe your system for maintaining accurate student enrollment and withdrawal information as required under Section 1748-A, Enrollment and Notification.

The Connexus® EMS that Akoben will be using will provide detailed tracking of all enrollment and withdrawal data as required under Section 1748-A. Working with the Connexus® enrollment and data teams, the school collects and verifies all required documentation from parents who wish to enroll their students; carefully tracks attendance of enrolled students using detailed log information entered by parents and verified by the school; and thoroughly documents and reports all withdrawals. The Akoben Board of Trustees will fully flesh out its enrollment, attendance, and reporting policies prior to the launch of school.

Additionally, daily scanning and registration will occur for each student. A registry count of on-line and physical presence for each student shall be deployed to count daily attendance for cost reciprocity from the local school district.

G. Describe plans to evaluate student performance.

Please see item 3C, above. In addition to the assessment methods described there, the Akoben EMS gathers very granular data on every student's performance every day. During each phase of their curriculum mastery, students will engage in many different types of evaluations, both formal and informal. Formal assessments include quizzes, unit tests, skills checks, portfolio items and graded discussions. Informal assessments include the variety of methods teachers use to gather ongoing feedback about student progress from both Jegnas and students, such as WebMail, LiveLessons, phone conversations, review of student work samples.

H. How will student development toward the school's overall learning goals and objectives be measured?

The Connexus® EMS collects a vast array of granular data about individual student development as well as progress toward learning goals and objectives, with on-demand reporting for school leaders and monthly reporting to the Board of Trustees. The Akoben leadership team will focus on students' Immediate Needs, Intermediate Needs, and Final Outcomes.

Immediate Outcomes

Social competence fosters resiliency to substance use and violent behavior

- Students actively participate and become involved in all groups and activities
- Students gain knowledge of substance abuse and violence prevention and intervention skills

Positive social influence facilitates the establishment of pro-social behavioral norms

- Students make a commitment to avoid negative behaviors and peers
- Participants gain experience in positive risk taking, coping with peer pressure, facing challenges, decision-making, and conflict management

School and community bonds and associations with positive role models and peers protect adolescents from negative influences

• Increased identification with positive roles and focus on altruism models

Intermediate Outcomes

- Improved communication, refusal skills, and relationship building skills
- Increased perception of competence and self-worth
- Increased confidence in making decisions and setting future goals
- Increased self-reliance and coping skills
- Increased ability to manage risk, choose healthy risks, resolve conflicts, and problem-solve
- Increase in self- esteem

Final Outcomes

- Increased school bonding
- Increased grade point averages
- Reduction in school absences
- Reduction in school suspensions
- Increased rates of employment or post-secondary education

I. Describe how student evaluation will be used to improve student achievement and attain the stated learning objectives.

If student achievement goals are not met – falling short on internal assessments or PSSA growth or absolute score targets -- Akoben will implement a corrective action plan at the individual student level.

Akoben will employ a multi-tiered intervention model so that all students have access to the curriculum and instructional resources they need to be successful. The school's Student Support Team meets on a weekly basis to discuss students who are struggling academically to develop an intervention plan and strategies for improvement, which may include use of Tier 2 – Supplemental Programs and Supports or Tier 3 – Alternative Programs depending on the student's needs.

Students who are working below grade level will benefit from an Akoben intervention program focusing on building proficiency in reading and math skills using SkillsTutor and there intervention tools as well as intensive LiveLesson sessions. The child continues in the regular curriculum during the intervention program, but the LiveLesson sessions allow for very focused remediation on topics likely to be problematic on the next state assessment.

5. School Community:

Explanation: Describe expectations of family members (or guardians) to be active participants in their children's education and the integration plan of the school to collaborate with other community organizations.

A. Describe the relationship of your school with the surrounding community.

The Akoben Cyber Charter School shall maintain a presence in the greater community. Akoben administrators and trustees shall engage community concerns for which proper and appropriate supports can be given. This includes, but is not limited to, usage of public spaces for meetings, hosting of parental and professional development sessions to the benefit of families and students, arranging college fairs and tours, holding career fairs, and arranging for mentor/mentee orientation and workshops. The Akoben administration and Board shall also provide video and in-person updates on education from issues raised and addressed by the local, State, and Federal governments.

B. Describe the nature and extent of parent involvement in the school's mission.

Parents and family involvement is absolutely central to the Akoben model. There are many benefits to parent involvement in education. Parent participation in a child's education can lead to:

- Improved grades and test scores
- Higher graduation rates
- Greater enrollment in post-secondary education

Parents are crucial to the planning process of the school, as well as its operation. Interested parents have already played an important role in encouraging the formation of the school, and will remain involved leading to the school's opening. Parental feedback is also an important hallmark of the school's outreach and information sessions in the community. The school will take full advantage of this valuable communication with families to ensure that the school reflects their unique needs and creative ideas.

Akoben parents and Jegnas will be invited and expected to be involved with their child's educational development, academic enrichment, and cultural reinforcement. Each parent must participate in at least two (2) physically attended, school/parent meetings. These can include, but will not be limited to, 'Welcome Back Night', Orientation, First Evolution with the assignment of technology to all students, Parents' Night, Rites of Passage orientation and ceremonies, coming of age ceremonies, promotion and graduation exercises, and standard public meetings of the Board of Trustees. Rites of Passage Coordinators (advanced Jegnas) will also contact parents on at least a monthly basis to update them on their child's development, skills enhancement, and communal engagements, socialization trips and outings. The beginning and middle of the year also has time requirements and regimen for students and parents to prepare for the Globe Trekkers Academies. And, there are rigorous requirements for students to prepare for the PRIME STEP Academies. Parents must and will be required to share in their child's preparation for these academies.

Parents are often the "Jegna" at Akoben, although an extended family member or other caring adult can also serve in that role. The Jegna works in person with each Akoben student under the guidance of the Pennsylvania-licensed professional teacher. At the high school level, the Jegna is less involved with daily instruction but serves an important supervisory role for the student. Parents will be involved with the Student Assistance Process performed by the Student Support Team(s), when issues involve their child.

In addition to involvement focused on their own children's learning needs, Akoben parents will have multiple opportunities to shape the overall school experience. Specifically, parents are encouraged to have a hand in managing the school as:

 Parent Advisory Council: The Parent's Advisory Council will be formed with its leadership voted upon by the majority of the parents. The Parents' Advisory Council shall have a male and female co-chair, and shall have components that address parents' concerns based upon students' needs and demographics. The Parents' Advisory Council shall select no more than two (2) members of either the council or the general parent population to represent their interests at the meetings of the Board of Trustees, as non-voting members of the Corporation.

- Involvement in Intervention programs: In the course of providing these support services, Parents will also be involved with any tobacco, alcohol, and other drug and violence prevention programs. As the Akoben Cyber Charter School provides programs and services to students, parents shall be invited to participate in the selection of the prevention and intervention program(s) and with program implementation. Parents will also be invited to become involved in periodic reviews and/or evaluations of programs, services, supports, teachers, and the administrations response to requests and needs.
- Providers of ongoing, actionable feedback: On a daily basis, Akoben parents are encouraged to express their opinions about school matters large and small. Through the five-star StarTrack lesson rating system, they can rate and comment upon every lesson in the curriculum; they can also rate their entire school experience through StarTrack every time they log on. Principals often conduct informal surveys and calls for feedback via WebMail. In addition, Akoben parents participate in a formal annual satisfaction survey to help identify what the school is doing well and how the school can improve. Parents evaluate the school on a number of criteria including student progress, teacher support, and quality of the curriculum. School staff and Akoben leadership use the results of this Parent Satisfaction Survey to measure school performance against annual goals as well as overall company performance, with specific action steps planned for the following year to improve satisfaction in targeted areas.

C. Describe procedures established to review complaints of parents regarding operation of the charter school.

Parents shall be able to have issues and grievances addressed in a professional and expedited manner whether they call, email, phone conference, video conference, schedule a meeting, attend a hearing, and/or walk into the main administrative office. The Akoben Cyber Charter School shall maintain regular business hours that shall be posted, advertised, launched on the website, and distributed with materials and standard information. Parent feedback, advice and involvement are important, encouraged, and always expected.

The procedures for addressing parents' complaints regarding the operation of the charter school shall follow these "best practices":

- 1) A parent may lodge or indicate a complaint using the telephone to make a phone call, sending email, engaging a video conference, participating in a phone conference, sending a postal letter, scheduling a meeting, or walking into an office.
- 2) Office staff shall use the computer network and student support systems to register the complaint with a tracking number. The issue is then forwarded to the school principal, Chief Academic Officer, or the officially designated administrator or staff who (for particular time periods) are assigned the management of this task.
- 3) The issue raised is to be addressed immediately if the situation is of an emergency nature, within an hour if it is of an urgent nature, and within 24 hours if it is of an alarming, non-harmful nature. The response can range from policy reviews

and making alterations in basic procedures, to the recommendation of a major policy update or amendment to the Board of Trustees.

4) The principal or Chief Academic Officer shall either perform, or be made aware, of the resolution of the issue, shall be shown the registry into the computer network, and shall assign the time period for mandatory follow-up to that concern. If warranted, the Student Assistance Process (SAP) is to be activated, especially if the issue is of concern to the students' ability to obtain a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The resolution can also be placed in writing to the parent, in general, and at least into document form in the students' records and file, in particular.

6. Extracurricular activities (athletics, publications and organizations):

Explanation: Identify organized activities that complement the mission of the cyber charter school and the programs in the students' school districts of residence.

A. Describe the program of extracurricular activities planned for the charter school.

Note: Charter schools shall be permitted, if otherwise qualified, to be members of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Akoben will make it a priority to connect its students with the broadest possible array of school- and community-based sports activities, through the Kroc Center and elsewhere, including:

PIAA ATHLETICS

Baseball, basketball, bowling, cross-country, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, indoor track & field, lacrosse (boys, girls), rifle, soccer, softball, swimming & diving, tennis, track & field, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling.

ADDITIONAL ATHLETICS

Skiing; Snowboarding; Snowtubing; Snow-Mobiling (age appropriate); Boxing; Capoeira de Angola; Wing Chun (Ving Tsun); Aikido; Ju Jitsu; Archery;; Biking; Spinning; Horseback Riding; All Terrain Vehicles (ATV); SCUBA Diving; etc.

PUBLICATIONS

Newsletter (School Paper, Web Blog, etc.)
Magazine (Paper form, Web-based, etc.)

ORGANIZATIONS

Drama and Performing Arts Club
Center for Black Culture
Cultural Programming and Advisory Board
General Student Government - Nexus Government
Rites of Passage Student Government - Kafo Parliament
Media Cubs - Internet Radio, Internet Television, Film/Video Crew
Akoben Knights Chess Team
Robotics Club
Sentinel Venture Crews (158, 159, 160, 161, 162, and 163)

B. Describe whether any agreements have been entered into or plans developed with the local school district regarding participation of the charter school students in extracurricular activities within the school district.

PIAA membership will be pursued and established for the Philadelphia Akoben campus. Additionally, each sport of interest not offered through an Akoben community partnership shall be offered through the public school district at or near the students' residency. A letter (see Appendix H) was sent to each of the intermediate units and the 500 public school districts announcing the charter proposal, and our intent to provide PIAA sports offerings to any students who subsequently register. Akoben campuses and regional collectives shall be located throughout Pennsylvania. And over time, each campus shall offer sports and athletics program particular and specific to its campus. This will begin small and will expand as Akoben grows and expands, thus mitigating rapid growths with limited means. At each stage, relationships (any and all) with local public school districts shall be engaged, and then agreed upon in writing, and as is permissible and allowable under the public school codes and other laws in the State of Pennsylvania.

7. Technology Support:

A. Describe how your cyber charter school uses technology to provide a significant portion of its curriculum and to deliver a significant portion of instruction using the Internet or other electronic means.

Akoben will use the Connections technology-based, Internet-delivered core curriculum which has been successfully utilized by a leading cyber school in Pennsylvania since 2003 – the first school approved after passage of the cyber charter law, in fact. As described above, Akoben's curriculum and instruction are designed to maximize academic results in an African-centered cyber charter environment.

B. Describe how you will improve student achievement through effective uses of technology.

The Akoben Cyber Charter School approach will use technology to effectively improve student achievement in two ways: by increasing engagement/time on task, and by producing performance data to allow more targeted personal instruction. Both of these technology-effects have shown a positive impact on student performance in other cyber schools around the nation using this curriculum and platform.

C. Describe the technical support that will be provided to students and parents.

Akoben students and families have access to extensive tech support (and a wide range of other support services) both through online Help (always available in the EMS) and live help via Connexus Support Services. *Online Help* is accessible anywhere in the EMS through a click on the question mark icon, and provides a very robust array of answers and guidance. The online Help interface is shown here.

Connexus Support Services, based in Maryland, can be reached by calling 1-800-382-

6010 then selecting the appropriate menu selection for Support Services, by e-mailing support@connectionseducation.com or by using the WebMail message feature in the Learning Management System and sending a message to "Support Services" (included in the WebMail address book under Parent and Student Services). The Support Services Team is available during the school's calendar year from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. eastern time. Voicemail messages can be left for Support Services at any time. The Support Services Team can be called for the following reasons:

- Equipment or materials supplied by the school do not match the items listed on the packing list.
- A user cannot log in to the EMS.
- Equipment, software, or materials supplied by the school do not function or have been damaged or lost (be sure to check any training resources or the Online Help section of the EMS first).
- A request needs to be made to transfer equipment or materials to another location.
- A request needs to be made to authorize the installation of hardware or software on equipment supplied by the school.

D. Describe the policy for ensuring the privacy and security measures that will guarantee the confidentiality of data gathered online.

Akoben will benefit from Connections' multi-faceted disaster recovery plan to safeguard Connexus®, sensitive student data, and the overall school infrastructure by preventing and/or rapidly recovering from a prolonged outage or other technology disaster. This plan is detailed below, with the assurance that the Connexus® web hosting environment, which is defined as the facility, network infrastructure, and internet access, are guaranteed to be available 99.9% of the time.

CONNEXUS® SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE & DISASTER RECOVERY PLAN

Data Center

The Connexus® production site is hosted at a 6,500 sq. ft. data center located in Baltimore, MD. Connections contracts for the use of this center from Educate, Inc. This data center provides a secure physical and technical operating environment that facilitates the delivery of consistently reliable Web services. The facility is custom designed and sized for scalability, offering unique hosting and co-location services. The facility is equipped with redundant uninterruptible power supplies and an on-site diesel generator. A team of technicians is on hand 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure successful management and maintenance of all facility operations. The physical security of the data center is monitored by video surveillance. Card key and biometric scanners control access to the facility.

Network and Systems Operations

The Connexus® multi-layer network employs a modular, scalable design that provides multiple levels of security, redundancy and failover. The platform consists of multiple Cisco 6500 series fully-meshed switching environment connecting redundant Cisco 3600 series routers front-ending redundant Cisco PIX 525 Firewalls and redundant load-balancing devices. This design enables Connexus® to maintain a high bandwidth, high-availability network infrastructure while minimizing downtime.

Security Management

Connections has invested significantly in a variety of infrastructure security measures to ensure the safest network transmissions of our confidential and sensitive communications and to avoid service disruptions resulting from the accidental or intentional actions of external parties.

Internet Bandwidth

The data center is serviced by two fully diverse high-speed Internet backbones. The primary connection is an OC-3 provided by Global Crossing. A backup connection is provided by AT&T via a burstable T3. Failover is facilitated in NOC core via BGP.

Load Balancing

Connexus® uses multiple Load Balancers to provide a high-performance load balancing solution. This approach ensures continuous accessibility, scalable performance and balanced site traffic activity between multiple servers allowing for higher throughput and availability of the Connexus® web-based services...

Data Backup

To ensure that valuable data is available when needed, Connections has built a quality infrastructure that affordably protects Connexus® Web sites and content. Powered by BackupExecTM from VERITAS Corporation, the system utilizes Disk to Disk backups for fast restore/recovery. The disk backup is then saved to DLT multi-drive tape backup libraries for off-site storage. Connexus® has a rotating backup schedule for all production and corporate server resources. On a bi-weekly basis, the backup tapes are removed for secure off-site storage. Web server backups include a complete snapshot of all application data, content data, configuration files, data files, registry files, and libraries.

Incremental – The Web servers are backed up incrementally each day.

Full – The Web servers are backed up fully once a week

Database server backups include database files and the database structure.

Incremental – The SQL database are backed up incrementally each day.

Full – The SQL database are backed up fully once a week.

Site Monitoring & Site Security

The Connexus® monitoring services, powered by SiteScope, SNORT and HP Openview, provide a complete end-to-end Information Assurance, and Vulnerability Detection solution. Connections Academy's Network Operations Centers (NOC) staff monitors the web-hosting environment 24 x 7 x 365. In the event that a server or application is not meeting the appropriate operating and performance criteria, alerts are sent automatically to the NOC staff and development team to resolve the issue real-time.

Site monitoring includes:

Monitor HTTP Service & SSL for HTTP service for availability and response times Perform ICMP checks

Monitor Server URLs for availability, content and response times

Display real-time status of all monitored components and services

Automatic alert notification if established thresholds are exceeded

Monitor server CPU Utilization, disk space, memory, NIC utilization, required services and bandwidth

Monitor SQL cluster and execute SQL queries to ensure database is functioning properly

Infrastructure Security Components:

High Availability Firewall - Dual Cisco PIX Firewalls ensure a high level of network access and

information availability, as well as integrity and privacy with the redundant structure that supports synchronization and automatic failover

Corporate VPN – Connexus® operates an IPSEC VPN to create efficient trust relationships for both site-to-site and desktop to host operations.

Intrusion Detection System (IDS) - IDS enhances protection by proactively monitoring for security violations or system misuse. Through a series of built-in alarms, our NOC and engineering teams are automatically alerted to any suspicious activity, prompting quick response and assuring the security of the systems.

Hosting Service Level Agreement (SLA)

The Connexus® web hosting environment, which is defined as the facility, network infrastructure, and internet access, are guaranteed to be available 99.9% of the time.

E. Describe the methods to ensure authenticity of student work and the proctoring of exams.

Akoben will have multiple mechanisms in place to ensure academic integrity and the authenticity of student work, from a Student Honor Code to proctoring of key exams.

Student Honor Code: All Akoben students (as well as parents of elementary students) are asked to review and agree to the Honor Code included in the School Handbook. Among other responsibilities, the Honor Code calls upon each student to concur with the following:

I agree that I will...

- never submit work of any kind that is not my own, nor ever give my work to other students to submit as their own.
- never post exam or quiz answers on the Internet or in other public places, nor use answers from posted exams or quizzes.
- never provide a forged document or signature to the School.
- never plagiarize in written, oral, or creative work.
- be well-informed about plagiarism and not use "lack of knowledge" as a reason for engaging in plagiarism.
- take assessments only after I have completed the lessons leading up to that test or quiz.
- never give or receive unauthorized assistance on assessments. I understand that all assessments are "closed-book" and that my Jegna shall not provide assistance in determining answers on assessments.

Students in grades five and up are required to sign the Honor Code upon enrollment in Akoben.

Parent/Caretaker Responsibilities: Assessment security at Akoben begins with a signed acknowledgment of responsibilities by the parents/legal guardians and any other adults designated by the parents to support the student's learning. These responsibilities include following the school's rules about cheating and ensuring ongoing academic integrity. In addition, parents/caretakers have unique user names and passwords that are different from

those provided to the student to ensure proper access to online assessments.

Telephone Assessments: Telephone assessments are a quick and effective way of gathering formative information on students' understanding of concepts. Teachers conduct two types of telephone assessments: verification and diagnostic. Verification assessments are implemented at all grade levels to gauge authentic student learning of concepts previously graded as successfully completed with scores of B or higher. This contact helps teachers determine whether students fully understood a specific concept, completed their assignment in a cursory manner, or received inappropriate assistance in completing the work. Such insight allows the teacher to make informed decisions in assigning follow-up work, making instructional recommendations to the student and parent/caretaker, in determining future educational programming, or in establishing whether referral to further disciplinary action is warranted.

CheckMyWork.com: Students using the electronic drop box for written assignments are required to submit this work through CheckMyWork.com, an online plagiarism detection tool provided with Connexus.®

Assessment Diversity: The Akoben curriculum includes many different kinds of assignments and assessments that allow teachers to gauge students' academic integrity through multiple views and checkpoints into the student's skills and abilities. For example, before school starts, the teacher conducts telephone interviews with the parent and student to develop a solid baseline against which to compare online assessments. Students submit portfolio work products for in-depth review by the teacher. Regular embedded assessments such as online quizzes, tests, and checks for understanding are balanced by unit assessments that may take the form of essays or projects. Real-time interaction with the teacher via phone or LiveLesson provides multiple opportunities for informal checks. Finally, all state standardized tests are administered in face-to-face, proctored settings.

Teacher Monitoring: Akoben teachers are trained to be alert for any signs that a student's work may not be his or her own. Teachers watch for mismatches between mastery indicated by a student's online assignments and that of portfolio work in the student's own handwriting or answers to question in a telephone conference.

Intervention and Consequences: Specific consequences for breaches of academic integrity are laid out in the School Handbook. Students and parents who are suspected of inappropriate assessment behavior or of breaches of academic integrity are confronted immediately and subjected to standard disciplinary action. Teachers intervene with the student's parents, establish a routine of additional real-time assessments between the student and the teacher, and if needed, require proctoring of key tests. Disciplinary action against the student, up to and including suspension or expulsion, can be a consequence of repeated or sustained breaches.

F. Describe equipment such as hardware, software and Internet connections to be provided to students.

Akoben Cyber Charter School will truly bridge the Digital Divide to ensure that its students have the best of the technology world. Students shall be assigned a laptop computer, printer/scanner device, and internet connectivity service as described in the Student Technology section below. They will also build desktop computers for their households and be able to sign-out for additional advanced equipment from the schools as equipment as described in the Akoben Advantage section that follows.

The Akoben Board of Trustees has the option of leasing student computers through Connections or leasing/purchasing them from another source.

Student Technology Package

- One laptop computer per student in grades 5 and above. The laptop system includes:
 - Hardware
 - MacBook Air, 13-inch 128GB flash storage
 - 1.7GHz Dual-Core Intel Core i5
 - 128GB Flash Storage
 - 4GB 1333MHz DDR3 SDRAM
 - Accessory Kit
 - Keyboard (English) & User's Guide
 - Mini Display Port to VGA Adapter
 - USB Ethernet Adapter
 - Apple MacBook Air SuperDrive
 - Headphone/line out
 - Software
 - Microsoft Office
 - Antivirus
 - Anti-spyware protection
 - Other software installed includes: Adobe Acrobat Reader, Flash Player, Shockwave Player, and Windows Media Player
 - CyberSitter® Internet filtering software is available upon request
 - Extras
 - Headset/Microphone combo
 - Unlimited Technical Support
- One color printer per household. The HP Color Deskjet printer comes with one ink
 cartridge, provided the first year of enrollment. Each student receives one ink cartridge
 each year. One additional cartridge per student may be requested. Supporting
 documentation may be required if additional cartridges are needed to complete school
 work.
- Subsidy for Internet service. Each household with dial-up service receives \$50.85 paid three times a year. Each household with broadband service (e.g. cable, DSL, or satellite Internet service) receives \$120 paid three times a year. Payments are made during the first week of December, the first week of March, and the first week of June.
- Student technology management: Akoben intends to contract with Connections for warehousing, delivery, tech support and overall management of student technology using the AssetAware function in Connexus®.

"Akoben Advantage" Technology Program

In addition to providing each student with a laptop as described above, the Akoben Cyber Charter School shall utilize its trademark Rites of Passage Systems to bridge the digital divide faced by many of Pennsylvania's households. A computer repair, refurbishing and construction engineering program shall be implemented as a part of the six (6) week student orientation. For the first two (2) weeks of orientation, students will be trained, educated and

challenged in computer repair and refurbishing as a part of their development towards technology education and equipment maintenance. The computers will be obtained from surplus and excess supplies from the Federal and state governments, corporations, donor programs, college and universities, and any other seasoned operation. For the second two (2) weeks of orientation, students will be mentored, trained, educated and challenged in computer engineering and construction of the desktop computer for home use. Akoben shall obtain the computer's components from contactors and vendors that provide the best prices, warranties, shipping and handling. For the final two (2) weeks of orientation, students will be mentored, trained, educated and motivated to install software, advance their experiences and knowledge of using the cyber learning and distance education infrastructure, and will demonstrate mastery of skills at using technology for their on-line courses and educational interfaces.

In addition, an advanced computer lab suite shall be maintained on-site at the Akoben office for use by students, programs, Jegnas, and enrichment activity managers. In this lab suite, computers shall be equipped with advanced graphics software, database design software, and systems that permit the design of software applications (apps). The advanced computer lab suite shall be used by educators and Jegnas for the development of classes, tests, research projects, and the design of addition curricular elements. The advanced computer lab can be scheduled for any after-school activities and weekend programs that are student-focused. In addition, students will be able to check out advanced mobile equipment such as iPads, digital cameras, and digital camcorders, for use at home or in the field.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1. Statement of Need:

Explanation: Provide recognition of potential opportunities to improve service and expand choices for students and parents.

A. Why is there a need for this type of school?

The School District of Philadelphia is managing its educational programs as best possible. However, the persistently dangerous and chronically unsafe environments in these public schools make it impossible for true learning to occur. ATOD policy violations increased 6.70% in AY 2009-10. There were a total of 359 reported violations in AY 2009-10. There were 42,055 suspensions in AY 2009-10. A total of 30,146 students (46%) were referred to CSAP Tier II in AY 2009-10. CSAP is the Comprehensive Student Assistance Process, and is an expanded version of the State of Pennsylvania's mandated Student Assistance Process (SAP). There were 4,616 incidents of reported violence and/or weapons-related incidents in targeted regions during AY 2009-10. For the 2010-2011 Academic Year (AY), there are 19 schools are listed as "Persistently Dangerous", and many have had this designated 'title' for several years. Annually, there are always more than three (3) dozen schools that are added to a "focus" or "empowerment list", because most are closely acquiring the numbers of incidents necessary to become designated as "Persistently Dangerous" as well. And, there are fewer options of "safe" schools to which parents can transfer their children, if desired and able. A total of 5,978 students (36.09%) referred to CSAP Tier II in 2007-08 were referred to CSAP Tier II again in 2008-09. There are reading situations among students that cannot promote proper educational attainment in these schools. Of those students referred to CSAP Tier II in 2007-08, 59.8% scored Below Basic on the 2007-08 PSSA Reading Assessment. Of these same students, 69.3% scored Below Basic on the 2008-09 PSSA Reading Assessment. There are also serious situations to attaining proper education as observable in students' mathematics scores. Of those students referred to CSAP Tier II in 2007-08, 50.8% scored Below Basic on the 2007-08 PSSA Math Assessment. Of these same students, 67.4% scored Below Basic on the 2008-09 PSSA Reading Assessment, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, so intricately interwoven, seem to be a failing point in the available public education system. There needs to be another option.

The Inquirer Newspaper reported on the school drop-out crisis in Philadelphia on September 2, 2010. As reported by Martha Woodall, "The drop out rate for African American and Latino males in the Philadelphia public schools is so horrific that the school district needs to revise many of its strategies, according to a task force that has studied the problem. Only 45 % of the district's African American male students graduate in four years (of high school), while the rate for Latino males is 43 percent. After studying the problem for 10 months, the task force established by the Philadelphia School Reform Commission called for the ... 'district to reexamine its zero tolerance policy toward violence; consider offering single-sex classes; add more music and arts programs and raise academic standards. The district also should give students mentors, internships and opportunities for paying jobs that demonstrate how the academic subjects are tied to workforce skills. But above all,' the panel said, 'teachers and school

staff must treat students fairly and with respect. Students and former students told the task force that the district now "pushes" them to leave before graduation."³

A coalition of parents, educators, community groups, and advocates joined the Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) Advisory Council in the hopes of gaining and providing solutions to students' educational crises. And as a result, the School District's Title IV SDFSCA 2008-2009 AY (Academic Year) initiatives were deployed as part of an integrated, prevention and intervention services sequence for our students, parents, and schools. The Title IV SDFSCA operations staff and SAP services were focused on the reduction of students' use and abuse of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs, incidents of violence, etc., that prevented pupils from obtaining a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). District-wide, the number of ATOD policy violations that occurred in school or on school grounds decreased by 10.11% from 376 in 2007-08 to 338 in 2008-09. The number of suspensions decreased overall by 14.98% from 54.362 in 2007-08 to 46,219 in 2008-09. There was also a decrease of 13.5% in the number of violence and/or weapons related incidents that occurred in school or on school grounds from 11,259 in 2007-08 to 10,025 in 2008-09. The areas of concern where this system was hampered for full deployment had the following results: In targeted regions, while there was a 3.3% increase in tardiness from 2007-08 to 2008-09; and District-wide, the average daily attendance decreased by 0.9% from 2007-08 (90.3%) to 2008-09 (89.4%).

The 2009-2010 AY Safe and Drug Free Schools programs surveyed an assessment of risk and protective factors for youth in Philadelphia. Many of these factors affect other Pennsylvania communities, also. The risk factors include low neighborhood attachment, community disorganization, transitions and mobility, laws and perceived norms favorable to drug use and firearms, poor family management, family history and attitudes favorable of/to anti-social behaviors, poor academic performance, low school commitment, and peer rewards for anti-social behaviors. The deployed and expanded protective factors included community rewards, school opportunities and rewards for pro-social involvement, social skills, and belief in the moral order. The assets of the evidence based intervention called Rites of Passage system, and the research based interventions (RBI) deployed to complement and supplement that system, included, but was not limited to, caring adult and out of home relationships, demonstration that segments of the community values children, provision of adult role models and mentors, positive peer interaction and influence, responsibility, and the enjoyment of learning and bonding to school.

The Rites of Passage Systems were revised and deployed through the Leadership and Resiliency Program (LRP), the Gang Awareness Training Education (GATE) Program, and the prevention/intervention resources and direct services support operations made available by need and request. All were deployed in Philadelphia to targeted schools with 7th to 12th grades. The system was multi-faceted, and was blended into the operations and services provided by the direct services staff of the Title IV SDFSCA Operations Team and the SDFSCA Advisory Council. Overall, there was a 14.64% decrease in related offenses from 2007-09 and 2008-09. District-wide, the number of

³ Task force: Minority male dropout rate is horrific, September 02, 2010|By Martha Woodall, INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

http://articles.philly.com/2010-09-02/news/24974255_1_task-force-dropout-college-graduation-rates

suspensions decreased by 14.98% from 2007-08 (54,362 suspensions) to 2008-09 (46,219 suspensions).

A report by Dr. Marciene Mattleman of KYW Newsradio indicated that "Truancy is a problem in major urban areas. In Philadelphia 10.000 students, or 6% of the public school population, have 10 or more unexcused absences. The School District is working with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Family Court to find the reasons. According to The Philadelphia Public School Notebook, some students are homeless, others have children, or care for ailing relatives or siblings or work to make ends meet." And in a May 2010 report from the State roundtable Truancy Report: A Call To Action, it was stated that, "Truancy has often been referred to as a "symptom" of a larger problem. Often we find, when we dig deeper, that beneath truancy lies a wide variety of issues, ranging from children caring for younger siblings during school hours, performing various duties to provide for the families needs, exposure to violence in the home, abuse and neglect (victimization), bullving and/or peer pressure at school, acting out behaviors. incorrigibility and borderline delinquency behaviors. Practitioners recognize that truancy is often one of the earliest indicators that the child and/or family are struggling with their sense of belonging and a connection with the school and the community. What we know is that truancy is a risk factor for a myriad of problems that can affect young children throug adolescence, the teenage years and into adulthood. Truancy is often a key indicator tyat a child may be severely neglected and in older adolescents a "gateway" to serious criminal offenses."

In 2009, Pennsylvania schools reported 8.6% of its students habitually truant (more than 6 unlawful absences) from school. Statewide, 50% of truants are in high school, 25% in middle school, and 25% in elementary school. Statewide, 47% of truants are African Americans, who comprise only 15% of the state student population. And in that population, boys are slightly more likely to be truant than girls.⁴

May 2011 Truancy and Court Data reflect grave concerns for Pennsylvania's youth. The following data was derived from the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts' Magisterial District Justice System. And while Philadelphia statistics were not captured in this system and, therefore, were not included, the following was determined for all other locales surveyed ands studied. "In 2010, truancy citations accounted for accounted for 17% of overall non-traffic citations filed in magisterial district courts. This is a 4% increase from 2009. The total number of truancy citations filed against students and/or their parents has increased from 57, 555 in 2009 to 77, 261 in 2010, equating to 19, 706 more citations. Based on the data shown, truancy citations are more often filed against the parent or the guardian (as opposed to the student). In 2010, roughly \$1.2 million in fines were collected by the magisterial district courts across the Commonwealth and sent to schools. The number of juveniles certified to the Court of Common Pleas for failure to pay fines more than doubled from 2009 to 2010, increasing from 2,707 to 5,616, respectively. ..."

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⁴ Report from the "Truancy Workgroup: A Progress Report to the Pennsylvania State Roundtable" found on the internet at http://www.ocfcpacourts.us/assets/files/page-331/file-812.pdf.

⁵ Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts' Magisterial District Justice System http://www.ocfcpacourts.us/assets/files/page-331/file-812.pdf

Akoben will provide a safer, more accountable, more personalized and more educationally effective option for many Philadelphia and Pennsylvania families. It is also a much-needed alternative to the traditional brick-and-mortar type of education for students and parents in our community.

Akoben's overall effective school design prepares students for the workforce, college, technical and trade endeavors, and personal life-long learning opportunities. And since no one-size-fits-all methodology works for each and every student, Akoben provides several educational systems, multiple curricula, various hours of services delivery, and enhanced supports for accelerated, regular, and remedial instruction. There's college preparation for those students who know and/or never suspected that they want to attend college. There's a vocational and technical system for those students who want to gain experience and preparation in technical skills and trades training.

B. Explain why the cyber charter school model is an appropriate vehicle to address this need.

Our students' engagement of the world necessitates that experiential learning occur in that world – including daily engagement with technology. The bricks and mortar structure to education has been built around economies and occupations that no longer exist, or that have become archaic. Factories have been moved out of the cities. Jobs have been transferred to cities and countries outside of the United States of America. Students must be taught and educated around the future economies and endeavors in an educational setting that properly prepares them for that future. Additionally, youth tend to live on the cutting edges of development and technology, but primarily for entertainment. This prepares them to become consumers, or perhaps customers, instead of becoming producers and creators. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is the cradle of liberty. And a key component of liberty is the freedom to act in a sovereign manner by controlling resources, developing opportunities, and replicating successful methodologies. This was true of the American Revolution. It is also true of the industrial revolution, and the technology revolution. It must also be true of the education revolution. Students must be trained effectively to become the Nation Builders and participatory citizens of tomorrow.

Having a few computers in a bricks and mortar classroom does not guarantee a student's access to technology. It just indicates that during the time period for a course, for the limited minutes in that schedule, and for the minimal moments each student can touch the equipment (especially in classes with 25, 33, or more students), a child may get some access to the usage of computer technology during a minute part of the educational process. Many times, students complain that their usage of a computer is likened to the age-old usage of paper dictionaries. An item, event, or fact is assigned, referenced, determined, and the media used to access the information is placed "back on the shelf." Many computers in today's public schools are used more for electronic dictionaries, the creation of end-of-year and 12th grade project PowerPoint presentations, and as a 'babysitter' when the teacher does not teach, or refuses to. Public schools, long-time systems of agrarian societies with factory models and structures, have become outdated, and are quickly becoming obsolete. Education models should, and must, assist and propel students into the path of human evolution.

This includes the drive and aspirations for life long learning, attaining experience for self-preservation, and contributing to the development and expansion of society. The old system of public schools and its educational infrastructure has served Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and the United States of America well... in the days of the old models. And if the buildings and infrastructure of the olds ways cannot be retrofitted into the newer and more advanced systems needed for this next stage and evolutionary 'jump', then the only reason why anyone would visit such a facility would be as a memorial, museum curiosity, or as past American history. Bricks and mortar were a construct type that worked well in the industrial age. And in the technology age, the construct typologies must be student centered, delivery enabled, content rich, first rate, up-to-date, and not limited, hampered, or erroneously forced to fit in antiquated ideologies, deteriorating buildings, or failing pedagogy based on fleeting and non-existent economies.

Certified teachers, who are empowered with effective delivery methodologies, excited to impart knowledge and challenge their students, and engaged with the progressive matriculation of student populations will be able to inspire students to achieve wherever those students happen to be. And rather than have the students affiliate such access to education with an outdated building, they can now associate such learning with a world environment.

The cyber charter school model permits individualized instruction for each student. This model exposes, engages, enriches, and enhances each student's ability to achieve, and to receive success experiences at every step. The cyber charter school model mitigates the avenues and environments affiliated with needless distractions, unwanted neighborhood incidents, and impractical modes of instruction. The cyber charter school model also prevents all populations of students from succumbing to the affects of modernization. The new "digital divide" exposes youth to technology primarily through smart phones, and usually for entertainment and communications. The creation of documents, crafting of reports, programming of software applications, completion of job applications, drafting or resumes, and displaying of experiment reports cannot be performed on these types of handheld devices. On January 10, 2011, Jesse Washington of the Associated Press reported that, "....Latinos and blacks are more likely than the general population to access the Web by cellular phones, and they use their phones more often to do more things. But now some see a new "digital divide" emerging — with Latinos and blacks being challenged by more, not less, access to technology. It's tough to fill out a job application on a cellphone, for example. Researchers have noticed signs of segregation online that perpetuate divisions in the physical world. And blacks and Latinos may be using their increased Web access more for entertainment than empowerment. Fifty-one percent of Hispanics and 46% of blacks use their phones to access the Internet, compared with 33% of whites, according to a July 2010 Pew poll. Forty-seven percent of Latinos and 41% of blacks use their phones for e-mail, compared with 30% of whites. The figures for using social media like Facebook via phone were 36% for Latinos, 33% for blacks and 19% for whites. A greater percentage of whites than blacks and Latinos still have broadband access at home, but laptop ownership is now about even for all these groups, after black laptop ownership jumped from 34% in 2009 to 51% in 2010, according to Pew" This article was entitled, "For minorities, new digital divide seen."

The cyber charter school model includes parents into the educational process, directly. This enables parents to expand, engage and enhance their child's educational experience, and, ultimately, that of the entire family. The Rites of Passage systems that

will be employed directly socialize the students and their families into this methodology. In the same manner that training program prepares a candidate for employment, and that medical school prepares a doctor to treat patients, and that boot camp prepares recruits to abide by and to defend the Constitution of the United States of America, the cyber charter school model, enhanced with the substantial Rites of Passage systems will prepare each and every student for cyber education, multiple modes of instruction for every learning style and intelligence, and will provide students with experiences to adapt and evolve their acquired and tested skills for every situation, economy and endeavor as life-long learners. Students will learn foreign languages and cultures in on-line classes, both at home and during visits to those lands where the people of the languages and cultures reside. This is a part of the study-abroad component. Students will learn about careers in engineering, mathematics, and sciences while engaging core curricular courses and while learning on-line both at home and at a PRIME STEP Academy that's on site for a few weeks at a corporation, university, or industrial laboratory. Students will learn about life sciences, human interaction, physical and health education, and interdependence skills both on-line at home and during field trips and organized outings as a part of the socialization component of this model. And if the students need more face time with their teachers and administrators, the cyber charter school model allows for an on site office with meeting spaces for times when "iContact" and "iTouch" must include "eye contact" and the "touches of empathy and human contact!!"

2. School Demographics:

Explanation: Provide a description of the students to be served and the community in which the school will be located

A. What are the school's enrollment projections for each of the first five years? What is the school's ultimate enrollment goal? What grades will be served? What is the entry age for kindergarten students and the entry age for beginners? How many students are expected to be in each grade or grouping?

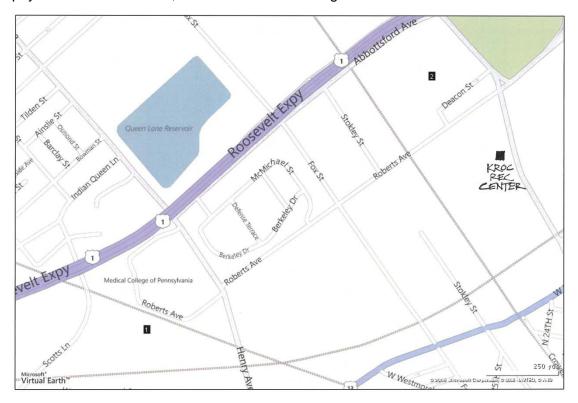
Please see table for Akoben's anticipated enrollment by grade and year.

Grade	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
5	100	150	200	200	250
6	150	150	150	200	250
7	150	150	150	200	250
8		150	150	200	200
9			150	150	200
10				150	150
11					150
12					
	400	600	800	1100	1450

In the renewal period, if awarded by the PDE, and within that additional five (5) years, this cyber charter school shall have a targeted student population of **5,000** pupils maximum in grades K-12.

B. Describe the community or region where the school, particularly the administrative office, will be located.

Akoben anticipates locating its administrative offices land meeting spaces in the Wissahickon Center located at 4700 Wissahickon Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19144 (shown as #2 on the map below). This location is near the Kroc Center of the Salvation Army in Philadelphia, which shall be a primary host of Akoben enrichment activities, physical fitness activities, and after-school offerings.



The main part of the facility will be an administrative site, and will include spaces for teachers, counselors, administrators, a computer lab suite, and meeting rooms for on site visits by parents, students (when necessary), and alliance partners. The cyber school infrastructure will be the basis of the delivery of academic instruction and educational attainment. Therefore, an exorbitant number of classrooms and other 'bricks and mortar' types of facilities are not needed.

An alternative facility has been identified at 3500 Scotts Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19129 (shown as #1 on the map) should the Wissahickon Avenue facility fall through as an option.

Both locations are in the Northwest Philadelphia neighborhood, which is a major focus area for Akoben. This particular community has a mix of economic levels, residential arrangements, businesses, and history. The residential neighborhoods are predominantly African American, ethnic whites, immigrant/emigrant Africans, and some Southeast Asians and Latinos. This Northwest Philadelphia neighborhood has many home ownership areas, a number of low-income housing complexes, and high rates of poverty in certain contiguous and adjacent neighborhoods. The neighborhood and the

proposed Akoben facility are both accessible from throughout the Philadelphia metro area via public transportation and automobile (see discussion below).

Complete details of both locations are discussed in Section IV -2, below, and shown in Appendix J.

C. Why was this location selected? Are there other locations suitable to the needs and focus of the school?

The proposed Akoben location was selected due to its office space, meeting room spaces, ease of access, and proximity to public transportation. This location is near the Kroc Center of the Salvation Army in Philadelphia. The Kroc Center shall be a location at which enrichment activities, physical fitness activities, and after-school offerings will be made available to the students.

This building was also immediately available, and already zoned as an educational school site. Its location is only two (2) blocks away from a major public transportation depot, as well as three (3) major automobile routes. This site is easily accessible to automobile traffic travelling along the expressways and/or highways of Interstate Route I-76 (East and West), U.S. Route 1 (North and South), and U.S. Route 13 (North and South). And regular local traffic routes can be used by automobile to access the site via the Wissahickon, Roberts, Hunting Park, Allegheny, Wayne, and Erie Avenues.

The South Eastern Public Transportation Authority (SEPTA) provides public transportation in the City of Philadelphia. Six (6) major SEPTA public transit route buses are located near this site, and there are other connecting routes nearby. The bus routes are the H, XH, R, 1, 33, 56. The Broad Street subway train (North and South Bound) has connection/transfer locations to bus Routes H, XH, and 33 at different locations in the city. And the bus Route R has a connection/transfer location with the Market-Frankford Elevated trains (East and West Bound). These public transit routes provide buses and trains that allow students, parents, and staff to travel to this site from everywhere in the City of Philadelphia, PA, if using public transportation.

This location is the best suited for our needs. The low cost leasing associated with the facility, and its "turn-key" usage of space for educational purposes provides a ready-made solution our proposed operations. There is no need for facility retrofitting, tumultuous inspections, pricy upgrades, and even site rehabilitation. The accessibility by parents and students, especially from the diverse neighborhoods, is fantastic. And the proximity to the Kroc Center for enrichment activities makes this site a win-win-win for everyone!!

D. Describe any unique demographic characteristics of the student population to be served including primary languages spoken.

Akoben shall serve each and every student, all parents, and families who have a vested interest in a quality, progressive, individualized public education. The unique demographic shall include youth and families from economically disadvantaged, traditionally under-represented, historically low-performing ethnic and minority populations. The primary languages that are spoken by this demographic are English

and Spanish (Latin American). Other languages include Yoruba, French, Creole, Portua, Wolof, and various Africanized dialects of English, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

3. District Relations/Evidence of Support:

Explanation: Document efforts to foster open communications with local school districts; evidence that the founders inspire the confidence of their targeted community; evidence that the program provides an attractive educational alternative to students and parents; and evidence that the breadth of community support extends beyond the core group of founders.

A. Provide evidence that your cyber charter school has the sustainable support to operate.

Akoben's founding coalition is composed of parents, educators, community advocates, and students who want to provide and receive (respectively) an individualized public school education, delivered through a cyber designed distance learning system, with a Rites of Passage framework.

Pursuant to the goal of establishing this cyber charter school with its blended socialization components, the founding coalition has obtained the names and signatures of over 200 supporters. Of these supporters, 59 are parents, 80 are students, 22 are educators, and 43 are adult advocates. In addition, we have the support of multiple community and business organizations, including Kids First, LLC; Philly Project PRIDE; September Apples Diversified Services, LLC; The Summit USA; Ramesu Society International, Inc.; and Boy Scouts of America.

Please see Appendix D for evidence of this support.

B. What efforts have you made to notify the district(s) from which your charter school would draw students?

Akoben's founders have made efforts to meet with the School District of Philadelphia several times for at least seven (7) years. Members have visited the School District headquarters at 21st Street South of the Ben Franklin Parkway, and at the 440 North Broad Street location in attempts to be included in the community meetings and charter school processing sessions, and in attempts to establish our technology based charter school. Announcements to our email addresses, postal addresses, and phones were never made, as we were promised, when registering. We continually registered on the official and makeshift forms, but were never contacted. Upon viewing web postings, we were often times informed that the process was closed, and/or the ability to apply would fall short if attendance at a particular meeting has not occurred. The founders stopped this pursuit in Fall 2007, focusing on the pursuit of a cyber charter school through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Our collective efforts, research, and decisions being made by fellow parents resulted in this application. Lastly, the Letter shown in Appendix H was sent to the School District of Philadelphia announcing our intent to create and implement the Akoben Cyber Charter School.

Akoben will establish the Philadelphia system during the first five (5) years. Afterwards, and within the next five (5) years, the school hopes to establish sites in Chester, Upper Darby, Lancaster, Reading, Williamsport, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Yeadon, and other Pennsylvania regions and communities, as determined by interested parents and

students. Dialogues shall be engaged with each of the school districts located in those targeted cities, well before the projected start dates.

C. What efforts will be implemented to maintain a collaborative relationship with school districts?

Akoben administration will maintain contact with the school districts from where its students will be drawn, primarily the School District of Philadelphia in the first five years – please see item B above for details. With confidentiality in mind, students' records for incoming enrollments shall be administered with professional accuracy to insure that all placements are current, and all attendance matters are well established.

Please see Appendix H for letters to relevant Intermediate Units and School Districts.

D. Convey the scope of community backing for the proposed charter school and its founding coalition. Document community support among teachers, parents, students, community members, institutional leaders and others through the use of letters of support, surveys, or other tangible means.

The Akoben founding coalition and its vision for an African-centered cyber charter school have wide support among educators, parents, and others in the Philadelphia community. The founding coalition's roots are in community-based efforts to improve education and youth services since 1997 (see Section III A, below). Evidence of this support, in the form of community petitions and letters of support, is shown in Appendix D.

III. GOVERNANCE

1. Profile of Founding Coalition:

Explanation: Describe a group that is composed of people with a range of professional skills capable of the organizational, financial, pedagogical, legal and other skills required to operate a functioning public school.

A. Describe the make up of the group or partnership that is working together to apply for a charter, including the names of the founders, their background and experiences, and references for each.

The Akoben founding coalition has been working together since 2007 to develop and fine-tune the vision for our unique African-centered cyber charter school.

Our founding coalition is comprised of professionals, students, parents, experts, and veterans from the field of education, curriculum development, youth development, college and career preparation, technology, software and hardware development, and student achievement.

FOUNDERS/BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Harris Arthur Treat III	Title IV ODEOOA Occasionate	O a A a a a a dia O
Horace Arthur Trent III - President	Title IV SDFSCA Coordinator; Coordinator of Services Supports; CSAP/Behavioral Health Liaison; TRIO Talent Search Coordinator; Substitute Teacher; Educational Consultant	See Appendix G
Jason Boyer - Secretary	Education Consultant; SDFSCA RBI/EBI Contractor; Rites of Passage Jr. Master; Collegiate Financial Aid Counselor	See Appendix G
Dr. Verna Cole – Vice President	Former Charter School Principal; Coordinator of Service Supports; Emergency Management Liaison	See Appendix G
Keith Richardson - Treasurer	Deputy Budget Manager, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and City of Philadelphia; Branch Manager, Empowerment Zone Fiduciary Agency; Bank Branch Manager;	See Appendix G
William McCreary – Parliamentarian/ Sergeant at Arms	Mathematics Teacher; Educational Technology Consultant; Rites of Passage Specialist	See Appendix G

CONCERNED PARENTS OF PHILADELPHIA

Nathaniel Withers	Parent; Co-Owner and CEO of Kids First, LLC
Ontanya Withers	Parent; Co-Owner and Director of Kids First, LLC
Kenny Perry	Parent; Owner and CEO of Philly Project PRIDE
Dorretha Wiley	Parent
Eric Thomas	Parent

B. Discuss how the group came together, as well as any partnership arrangements with existing schools, educational programs, businesses, non-profits, or any other entities or groups. Provide information on the manner in which community groups are involved in the charter school planning process.

The origin of the Akoben founding coalition was a group of parents and educators, community advocates, and youth who would meet every Saturday for the advanced Rites of Passage Academies, and for the Saturday Advanced Youth Leadership Academies. These Saturday Academies operated from the Fall 1997 through to June 2010. The parents and advocates became members of the Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act (SDFSCA) Advisory Council, along with their children and members of various schools, offices, and agencies.

Most of the adults were trained in some form of prevention and/or intervention services and supports in the public schools of Philadelphia. These services were Research Based Interventions (e.g. Reconnecting Youth, The Leadership and Resiliency Program, Peers Making Peace, etc.). Others were mentors, were certified in evidence-based interventions (e.g. GATE – Gang Awareness Training Education), or were Rites of Passage specialists. A large number of serious incidents in which most of these adults became involved were so horrendous for the student victims (and perpetrators) that they decided to organize to resolve the situations. Trying to work within the established system bore remarkable, but unsustainable results. The organized effort eventually led to the desire to develop, create, and open a charter school where the schools' environments would be conducive to learning, and the students' futures would become brighter by the day. Thus was the vision born for Akoben Cyber Charter School.

C. Include any plans for further recruitment of founders or organizers of the school.

Upon approval of the charter, the Akoben founders will embrace the roles and responsibilities of an effective charter Board of Trustees, as detailed below. The founding members may recruit additional members to form a diverse and well balanced Board of Trustees.

2. Governance:

Explanation: Describe the effective governance model; consistency with the mission; clearly defined roles of the Board of Trustees; teacher, student and parent input in school decision-making; and the well-developed, viable management structure.

A. Describe the proposed management organization of the school, including the following requirement:

The operating structure of Akoben will be similar to a traditional educational environment, with a Principal, selected by the Board of Trustees, who will supervise administrative staff and the teachers who implement the curriculum according to the policies and procedures approved by the Board of Trustees. The Principal will also act in an information and advisory capacity to the Board of Trustees and will be responsible for implementing board policies in the day-to-day operation of the school. The need for new policies may be suggested by parents, the school staff, or others, but development of those policies will be the responsibility of the Board of Trustees with advice from its counsel (who will be formally engaged during the start-up year).

The roles and responsibilities of the Akoben Board of Trustees include, but are not limited to:

- Protect the legal interests of the charter school
- Determine the vision/mission of the school
- Set board policy
- Govern the operations of the school
- Exercise sound legal and ethical practices and policies
- Manage liabilities wisely
- Advocate good external relations with the community, school districts, media, neighbors, parents, and students
- Hire and evaluate the administrator
- Hire Akoben's teachers
- Hire contractors, negotiate service agreements, and hold contactors accountable for performance under such agreements
- Comply with state and federal reporting requirements
- Practice strategic planning
- Ensure adequate resources and manage them effectively
- Assess the organization's performance

Specifically, the Akoben Board of Trustees will take action on the following items only by an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board, duly recorded, showing how each member voted.

 School calendar (must include 990 hours or 180 days of instruction for secondary students [grades 7-12] and 900 hours or 180 days for elementary students [grades 1-6]. School cannot be kept open for students or staff on Sundays, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, the first of January, Christmas, or Saturdays unless Monday is the weekly holiday for the entire school year)

- Adopting textbooks
- Appointing or dismissing charter school administrators
- Adopting the annual budget
- Purchasing or selling of land
- Locating new buildings or changing the locations of old ones
- Creating or increasing any indebtedness
- Adopting courses of study
- Designating depositories for school funds
- Entering into contracts of any kind where the amount involved exceeds \$200
- Fixing salaries or compensation of administrators, teachers or other employees of the charter school.
- Entering into contracts with and making appropriations to an intermediate unit, school district or Area Vocational/Technical School for the charter's proportionate share of the cost of services provided or to be provided by the foregoing entities.

In addition, The Akoben Board of Trustees will ensure that all personnel undergo required background checks and other investigations before they are employed in the school.

The Board of Trustees shall negotiate and oversee contracts for services such as financial accounting, legal services, and other services.

The Board of Trustees shall develop and adopt pay scales, performance criteria, a performance appraisal system, and discharging policies for all employees, include the Principal. Explanation of such policies will be integrated into the Employee Manual adopted by the Board of Trustees.

The Akoben Board of Trustees will ensure that the school adheres to the same health, safety, civil rights, and disability rights requirements as are applied to all public schools operating in Pennsylvania.

The Board of Trustees will also be responsible to ensure that the public as well as students, parents and employees have the ability to communicate appropriately with the Board in keeping with state law and regulation.

B. How will the Board of Trustees be selected?

The initial members of the Board of Trustees (see A, above) were selected, and voted upon, by the founding coalition members. These Trustees were chosen leaders by the parents and community advocates, who observed their efforts and services provided to youth in the fields of education, career planning, youth development, and observed

activities in community based youth programs and operations. It was determined that the best selection of members of the Board of Trustees would be from experienced members of the founding coalition, and duly affirmed by majority vote of the parents, students, founders, supporters, etc. This decision was affirmed during a meeting at the Saturday Advanced Youth Leadership Program held in early Fall 2009.

The Articles of Incorporation (see Appendix E) and By-Laws (see Appendix F) and were devised, discussed, and drafted over the course of several Saturday Academies. Coalition members were recruited to incorporate the Akoben Cyber Charter School with the Division of Corporations of the State of Pennsylvania. It was determined that the operations of the Board of Trustees would include the responsibility of the Trustees to supervise and administer all actions, all legal decisions, and management obligations as per the fundamentals of operating a corporation in the State of Pennsylvania. And to insure that the coalition members, in general, and the parents and youth, in particular, would have a place as stakeholders in the Akoben effort, major components to the school's design that were added to include the following: An Advisory Council; Rites of Passage Systems; The ability to authorize Committees and Sub-committees; and to have monthly public meetings of the Board, at which parents and youth could present offers of supports, complaints about issues for official solutions via resolution, requests for educational and enrichment services, and offers of advise on solving common and uncommon situations.

The By-Laws (see Appendix F) mandate that members of the Board of Trustees are to be elected by a majority of those Trustees (who are in good standing) at its annual meeting, or at a special meeting in the cases of the death, resignation, removal or termination of a board member. They also mandate that public meetings be held and advertised in a manner that is accessible to the community stakeholders and the full Board of Trustees through various media. The By-Laws were designed such that the purposes of the Akoben Cyber Charter School would be perpetual, focused upon cyber learning, with the establishment of Regional Collectives, PRIME STEP Academies, and the Rites of Passage systems as major enrichment components to the overall services, operations and functions. The By-Laws are accompanied by a set of Conflict of Interest Policies that helps to prevent mismanagement of funds and operations through any semblances of proprietary relationships on the part of Trustees, and even as members of councils, committees and sub-committees, with outside entities, agents, and individuals.

C. What steps will be taken to maintain continuity between the founding coalition's vision and the Board of Trustees?

Members of the founding coalition have become members of the Board of Trustees. Additionally, the by-laws of the Akoben Cyber Charter School shall maintain irrevocable, core beliefs for this typology of educational and academic services delivery. In effect, the vision is the mission and focus for everything that this cyber charter school will pursue, perform, and provide.

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D. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the board.

Please see item A, above, for a description of Board roles and responsibilities.

As noted above and in the ByLaws in Appendix F, the Akoben Board of Trustees may elect or appoint a Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, a President, one or more Vice-Presidents, a Secretary, a Treasurer, one or more Assistant Secretaries or Treasurers, and such other officers as the Board of Trustees may from time to time appoint.

One person may hold more than one office in the Corporation, except that no one officer may hold the offices of President and Secretary, nor of President and Treasurer (unless the person is a Perpetual Term Member and is approved by vote based in the By-Laws).

E. What steps will be taken to facilitate a productive relationship between administrators and teachers?

The Akoben administration will maintain a collegial and cooperative relationship with its faculty through ongoing dialog and professional development, formal semi-annual reviews, and an annual employee satisfaction survey. In addition, each employee will be fully oriented to the due process procedures captured in the Employee Handbook, including the procedure for bringing an issue to the Board of Trustees.

F. Discuss the nature of parental and student involvement in decision-making matters where appropriate.

The Board of Trustees also provides a venue for parent involvement. It is anticipated that at least one Board of Trustees member will be a parent or Jegna of Akoben students. In addition, parents and students will have direct impact through the Parent Advisory Council that provides guidance to the Board on particular subjects such as school services, community partnerships and neighborhood outreach.

Parents who are not Board members are also encouraged to be involved with Board activities. Contact and other information about the Board will be available through the school website and the public website, and the school will make all Board minutes available to families on request and will report on Board activities in the school newsletter.

A complete explanation of the Board's due process framework will be included in the school handbook provided to every family upon enrollment.

G. Submit copies of the school's Articles of Incorporation, by-laws and contracts, and other documents required by applicable law.

The Akoben Cyber Charter School Articles of Incorporation are included in Appendix E, and the By-Laws are included in Appendix F. These documents meet all the requirements for a Pennsylvania cyber charter school.

H. Submit board members' names, addresses, phone numbers and resumes.

Please see table below for names, addresses, and phone numbers. Resumes are provided in Appendix G.

All Board members have undergone or will undergo criminal background checks.

Horace Arthur Trent III - President	140 East Pomona Street Philadelphia, PA 19144	267.228.5636
Jason Boyer - Secretary	119 Auckland Drive Newark, DE 19702	(302) 365-5882
Dr. Verna Cole – Vice President	2153 Kent Road Abington, PA 19001	(215) 887-1183
Keith Richardson - Treasurer	4934 Osage Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19143	(215) 748-5632
William McCreary –	P.O.875	215-989-3279
Parliamentarian/Sergeant at Arms	Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004	

I. Submit copies of the school's management contracts, if any.

Akoben will be a self-managed school. The Board of Trustees does anticipate contracting with multiple service providers for curriculum, technology, and related services as described throughout the application, following Board purchasing policies. Copies of these vendor contracts will be available to all stakeholders once they are finalized.

IV. FINANCE AND FACILITY

1. Financing:

A. Develop a preliminary startup and operating budget. Use the attached Pennsylvania Department of Education budget templates; draft a preliminary operating budget covering all projected sources of revenue, both public and private, and planned expenditures.

Please see Appendix I for Akoben's preliminary start-up and operating budget.

The Treasurer of the Board of Trustees shall lead the Corporation in the development and implementation of a financial management and accounting system that accurately prepares and distributes all funds receivable and payable for the school's operations. This will include the implementation of an RFP (Request For Proposal) and an RFQ (Request for Quotation/Qualification) process to select a viable, reputable, and financially stable contractor or vendor to perform such operations. These operations will be implemented to manage the payment (via check, direct deposit, or other appropriate means) of benefits, salaries, compensation pay (if any), over time pay (if any), vacation pay, holiday pay, personal illness pay, personal leave pay, family leave pay, and all appropriate reimbursements (appropriate travel, etc.) to employees, applicable contactors, vendors, and any encumbrances incurred by non-employee volunteers (which shall have been, or will need to be, approved by resolution of the Board of Trustees). Additionally, this management and operation shall be designed to comply with the calculation and depositing of appropriate funds into specific accounts with regards to the payment of Federal taxes, FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) distributions. FICA medical distributions, state taxes, city taxes (residential), city taxes (commuter), retirement packages (including PSERS, TSA-403B plans, etc.), unemployment taxes and insurances.

The Treasurer of the Board of Trustees, and through Board approved contracts with contractors or vendors, shall design into the financial accounting systems a series of identity theft prevention routines that restricts access to sensitive information to Board approved personnel. This system shall also be made to designate employee identification numbers on pay stubs, direct deposit tickets, checks, allocations, reimbursements, etc., to mitigate identity theft. The usage of social security numbers shall be made for financial records relevant to local, state, and Federal fiduciary agencies for the appropriate accounting of taxes, retirement accounts, etc. A system of severance payment shall be included in the system for those employees whose employment with the Akoben Cyber Charter School is terminated for any reason. This system shall implement the payment to the said employee for any unused personal leave time earned, vacation time earned, and illness time earned, at appropriately preestablished rates and percentages, specific to each category.

B. Develop a purchasing procedure that addresses a competitive way to purchase goods and services.

The Akoben Board of Trustees did extensive competitive research in selecting its proposed major partners for a cyber-school proven education management system, online courseware, and student technology. The Board will develop further competitive

purchasing policies for major future contracts and purchases that are not by their very nature sole source, such as school business services and insurance. These procedures will involves soliciting at least three quotes for each purchase over \$25,000.

C. What fund raising efforts have occurred and/or are planned to generate capital or to supplement the per pupil allocations?

Akoben intends to seek grant funding from the Federal Charter Schools Grant Program (applying directly to the U.S. Department of Education as needed), as well as funding currently available from the National Science Foundation, the Walton Foundation, the Hume Foundation, and other philanthropies focused on education and technology.

In addition, the school will seek favorable financing plans from its major vendors (e.g. Apple Computer and Connections) for assistance during the start-up period.

D. Describe the implementation of the following required financial procedures:

The Akoben Board Treasurer, working with the Principal, will deposit all funds belonging to the charter school in a depository approved by the board and shall report monthly to the Akoben Board of Trustees on the amount of funds received and disbursed by the Treasurer each month.

All deposits of charter school funds by the charter treasurer shall be made in the name of the charter school.

The Akoben Board shall invest the school's prudent fund balance in a savings/checking account that meets PDE's requirements for deposit insurance, or in one of the other allowable investments outlined in24 PS 4-440.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code

The Akoben Board will engage an independent financial auditor annually to review and audit the school's accounts as required by 24 P.S. §4-437, the accounts of the cyber charter school treasurer shall be audited annually.

In addition, Akoben will institute rigorous internal financial controls as follows.

- Segregation of Duties: Akoben will develop and maintain simple check request and purchase order forms to document the authorization of non-payroll expenditures. All proposed expenditures must be approved by the Principal, who will review the proposed expenditure to determine whether it is consistent with the Board-adopted budget and sign the check request form. All check requests and purchase orders over One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) must be co-signed by the Principal and a Board member who has been approved as a signatory on the school's checking account. Payments for invoices for operational services contracted by the school do not need to be countersigned. All transactions will be posted on an electronic general ledger. The transactions will be posted on the ledger by school staff or a contracted bookkeeper. To ensure segregation of recording and authorization, the bookkeeper may not co-sign check requests or purchase orders.
- Authorization and Processing of Disbursements: To ensure fiscal responsibility and compliance, the Board of Trustees will meet regularly to review the operations and financial performance of the school. The Treasurer will be required to provide

- supporting documentation for all expenditures. The school will not authorize any payment until it has reviewed such support. The Board will establish fiscal policies covering school expenditures. It will also designate specific check signing authority. It is anticipated that all checks over \$1,000 will require two authorized signatures.
- Banking Arrangements/Reconciliation: Akoben will maintain its accounts at a federally insured commercial bank or credit union. Funds will be deposited in non-speculative accounts including federally-insured savings or checking accounts or invested in non-speculative federally-backed instruments. For all funds, the Board must appoint and approve all individuals authorized to sign checks in accordance with these policies. Bank statements from private banking institutions will be sent directly to the school's bookkeeper for reconciliation. A written report of results of the reconciliation will be provided to the Board Treasurer. A reconciliation of the school's savings and checking account, showing all transactions, will be provided to the Board of Trustees at every meeting.

2. Facility

Explanation: Describe progress toward identifying and acquiring a school facility, with a back-up plan considering alternative facilities.

A. Provide descriptions of and addresses for the physical facilities, including the administrative office, and the ownership of the facilities and any lease arrangements.

See Appendix J for details about proposed sites and lease arrangements, which are as follows:

Option 1 - 4700 Wissahickon Avenue, Philadelphia, PA

Option 2 - 3500 Scotts Lane, Philadelphia, PA 19129

The main part of the facility will be an administrative site, and will include spaces for teachers, counselors, administrators, a computer lab suite, and meeting rooms for onsite visits by parents, students (when necessary), and alliance partners. The cyber school infrastructure will be the basis of the delivery of academic instruction and educational attainment. Therefore, an exorbitant number of classrooms and other 'bricks and mortar' types of facilities are not needed.

B. Explain how this site(s) would be a suitable facility for the proposed cyber charter school. Consider the necessity of renovation to the facility and compliance with applicable building codes and accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Describe the services of the facility including heating, ventilating, lighting, sanitary conditions and water supply.

Both facilities under consideration are "turnkey" for cyber charter educational administrative purposes. The all-ground-floor layout and compliant entryways ensure ADA access. Inside, there is no need for facility retrofitting for Akoben's purposes.

Heating, ventilation, water supply and sanitation are all suitable for daily office use and periodic student/Jegna meetings. At our first choice option on Wissahickon Avenue, a glass roof provides abundant natural light. Akoben will ensure that all necessary inspections are complete before finalizing any lease.

C. Discuss the plan for maintaining the facility on a daily basis (custodial) and extended basis (facility maintenance).

The budget shown in Appendix I sets aside \$20,000 annually for daily custodial services and facility maintenance beyond that provided by the landlord.

D. Discuss any progress, partnership developments or other future steps towards acquisition of a facility/land.

Akoben has initiated discussions with the landlords at both facility options, has received quotes as shown in Appendix J, and has indicated initial interest. Both facilities are available should Akoben be ready via charter approval to move to the next step.

E. Describe facility financing plans.

The lease cost of the above facilities is included in the school budget shown in Appendix J. Special financing will not be necessary.

3. Liability and Insurance

Explanation: Provide evidence of insurability in all areas identified above.

A. Describe the proposed cyber charter school's insurance coverage plans, including health, general liability (including school operation, extracurricular activities and parent volunteer activities), property, and director and officer's liability coverage (see Section 1727-A of the charter school legislation).

The Akoben Cyber Charter School will purchase an insurance coverage package and policy of usage for the corporation, its Board of Trustees, professional and volunteer staff, students, equipment, facilities, for all walking and distant field trips, travel abroad, and all athletics, in-school, after-school, and out-of-school activities associated with our programs.

The purchase procedures will include the creation of an RFQ (Request for Quotation/Qualification) for insurance coverage from several brokerages and/or research groups in this industry. The best policy at the most reasonable price shall be selected for contract.

To date, the West Insurance Group, Hartford Casualty Insurance Company, and researchers at Grant & Associates, Incorporated have contributed information inquired of, for the coverage that will be needed by the proposed Akoben Cyber Charter School.

Once awarded a charter, the RFQ will be advertised, and the best package purchased, in alignment with the start-up and operation of the cyber charter school. The formulation of the coverage needed shall include the following:

General Liability

Each Occurrence -	\$1,000,000.00
Damage to rented Premises -	\$1,000,000.00
Medical Expense (Any One Person)-	\$ 25,000.00
Personal and ADV Injury -	\$1,000.000.00
General Aggregate -	\$5,000.000.00
Products – Comp/OP Aggregate -	\$5,000,000.00

Automobile Liability – Combined Single Limit

Each Occurrence - \$1,000,000.00

Workers Compensation and Employers' Liability

E.L. Each Accident - \$100,000.00 E.L. Disease Each Employee - \$100,000.00 E.L. Disease Policy Limit - \$500,000.00

Other: Professional Liability

Educator's Legal Liability - \$1,000.000.00/Occurrence - \$2,000,000.00/Aggregate

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.The Additional Insureds shall be the corporation (Akoben Cyber Charter School), its members of the Board of Trustees, its officers, its agents, directors, administrators, professional and volunteer staff, students, and visitors. Additional insureds shall also include local directors of school boards of students' residencies, as appropriate, and in compliance with Section 1727-A, stating that, ".... The board of trustees of a charter school and the charter school shall be solely liable for any and all damages of any kind resulting from any legal challenge involving the operation of a charter school. Notwithstanding this requirement, the local board of directors of a school entity shall not be held liable for any activity or operation related to the program of the charter school."

The Akoben Board may also purchase Directors and Officers insurance separate from the policy covering school operations

All policies shall be kept current, active, and valid, and renewed in a time period that prevents and mitigates loss of coverage, as well as periods of time that coverage could have been inactive or non-existent. An Acord Insurance Certificate shall also be maintained and available as further proof of coverage, and rendered to relevant managers of venues, contracts, leased spaces, student activities, athletics, travel, etc., for which proof of coverage is required, and applicable coverage is mandated.

4. Child Accounting

Explanation: Cyber charter school funding is based on enrollment; therefore, a totally accurate child count is necessary to meet audit standards.

A. Describe the proposed cyber charter school's enrollment and attendance procedures. **Note**: State child accounting procedures must be followed. (24 PS 13-1332)

Akoben will use the Connexus® education management system to ensure detailed tracking of all enrollment and withdrawal data as required under 24 PS 13-1332 and Section 1748-A. The system has been used very precisely and successfully by Commonwealth Connections Academy for this purpose since 2003.

Enrollment: Using Connexus, Akoben will collect and verify all required documentation from parents who wish to enroll their students; will carefully track attendance of enrolled students using detailed log information entered by parents and verified by the school; and will thoroughly document and report all withdrawals. See Appendix K for details.

Attendance: The Akoben policy on attendance is summarized as follows:

School attendance laws require students to attend school regularly. The virtual nature of the Akoben Cyber Charter School does not alter this requirement. Attendance is a joint responsibility of Jegnas (parents, legal guardians, and designees) and students. School authorities have a responsibility to enforce attendance laws.

Students in this virtual public school program have no physical classrooms but still must meet all regulatory requirements for attending public schools in the state. These regulatory requirements include attending school for a required number of days and completing a required number of hours of instruction. Although there is more flexibility in the Akoben program than in a traditional school with regard to when instruction occurs, students are still expected to follow the school calendar.

Students are required to have their attendance recorded on a daily basis in the school's Connexus® Education Management System (EMS). There are additional requirements (described below) in order to demonstrate attendance for the required number of days and hours. Students not attending school as mandated by law will be considered truant. Students and their legal guardians are subject to local truancy laws and regulations.

Withdrawals: Students may withdraw from the school at any time, provided that the parent or legal guardian indicates which qualified educational program, as permitted by state law, will be provided instead. The notice of withdrawal must include either evidence of home school registration consistent with state requirements or the name and location of another public or private school that the student will attend. All withdrawals will be appropriately reported to the districts and the state.

Complete policies, procedures and sample forms are shown in Appendix K.

V. ADMINISTRATION

1. Recruiting and Marketing Plan:

Explanation: Develop a solid plan to attract sufficient students to operate a cyber charter school; publicize the cyber charter school; and ensure a match between the cyber charter school program and applicants' educational and personal needs.

A. Demonstrate how you will publicize the cyber charter school to attract a sufficient pool of eligible applicants.

Akoben will use a variety of high-tech and high-touch methods to publicize the school and attract applicants. These include:

- Web 2.0: Akoben will use Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and other electronic means to
 publicize the school and its unique mission. The school will update its current
 placeholder website (https://sites.google.com/site/akobenccs/) with fresh information
 and enrollment directions.
- Community-based events: Akoben Trustees and founding group members have building grassroots interest in the school and its unique model for nearly five years.
 Following approval of the charter, the team will step up its efforts to distribute literature and gather indications of interest at community events such as sports and arts activities, church events, and political gatherings.
- Media messaging: The Akoben team will reach out via press release and personal contact to all available media, including newspaper, radio, blogs, community access television, and beyond.
- **Low-cost advertising**: Akoben will investigate such cost-effective means of advertising as bus and food court signage, coop marketing with local merchants, street fair booths, and grocery bag stuffers.
- Referrals and word of mouth: Quality charter schools like Akoben benefit from
 informal networks of referrals by parents, community members and traditional school
 leaders. Akoben parents will play an important role in serving as a source of
 information about the school and referring other families; in quality cyber schools
 nationally, 95% of parents say they would recommend their school to friends, neighbors
 and family members.

B. What type of outreach will be made to potential students and their families?

In addition to general outreach described above, Akoben will follow up with prospective students and their families in the following ways:

- In-person and online information sessions: Akoben will conduct multiple free
 information sessions at physical locations throughout the Philadelphia area at libraries
 and other community meeting spaces to provide a complete picture of the Akoben
 program. Online information sessions will also be held to accommodate busy family
 schedules.
- Telephone/email outreach: Akoben staff will conduct outbound and inbound calling

and emailing with prospective families to answer school program and enrollment questions "just in time." Founding group volunteers will assist in this effort to provide broadest possible coverage.

- Cohort parties: Akoben will hold pizza parties and other fun, informal events to introduce prospective families to each other while providing hands-on enrollment assistance.
- Home visits: Where possible, Akoben staff will arrange home visits with prospective families to answer questions and provide guidance on enrollment and implementation. The Akoben team may also conduct door-to-door informational outreach in certain neighborhoods that have high concentrations of eligible students but limited access to technology and media.

2. Admissions Policy:

Explanation: Establish consistency with the mission of the school and the non-discriminatory policies for timely and realistic procedures for admitting students in accordance with charter school law (Section 1723-A).

A. Describe the admission methods and eligibility criteria you will use to select students.

Akoben will be open to all students on a space available basis and shall not discriminate in its admission policies or practices on the basis of intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a handicapped person, proficiency in the English language, or any other basis that would be illegal if used by a school district.

The school will not discriminate against pupils on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability or handicap in its education programs or activities, including its admissions policies and procedures. However, the school's enrollment/ admissions process will include rigorous screening for verification of Pennsylvania residency (address check, etc.). All students who enroll in Akoben will be full-time public school students.

B. Explain administrative procedures to ensure compliance with laws pertaining to special education.

Akoben admissions procedures comply with IDEA 2004 and Civil Rights protections. Akoben will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary schools and secondary schools in the State. All admissions personnel will be fully trained in these procedures to prevent inadvertent non-compliance.

C. Describe the timetable to be used for admitting students, including a plan for the admission lottery for students from both within and outside the district.

Akoben intends to begin formal outreach and enrollment procedures no later than February of each year, with an initial application deadline of May 1. If more students apply by that

date than can be accommodated even within the flexible ranges of a cyber school, a lottery will be held within 2 weeks of the deadline. The lottery will be conducted electronically (ensuring random selection) in a public place, with supervision by the authorizer or its representative. Students not selected in the lottery will be placed on a wait list. If fewer students have applied by the deadline than there are spaces for, enrollment will continue on a first-come, first-served basis.

Akoben will comply with state charter law and federal guidelines in constructing its final lottery policy and procedures.

D. Explain how these policies further the mission of the school in a non-discriminatory fashion.

Akoben will build upon its deep roots and long reach in the Philadelphia community and the State of Pennsylvania to enroll students who represent the full cultural, demographic, and socioeconomic range of the city and beyond, resulting in a school enrollment that includes special needs, low-income, minority, and otherwise underserved populations as is typical of cyber charter schools. Akoben's African-centered education approach will be fully previewed to prospective students and their parents so that they may make informed choices, but all outreach and admissions personnel will emphasize that the school is open to students of all races and backgrounds.

3. Human Resource Information:

Explanation: Establish high professional standards for teachers and other staff; commitment to professional development of staff; and working conditions and compensation packages that will attract and retain quality staff as per compliance with labor laws.

A. Describe the standards to be used in the hiring process of teachers, administrators and other school staff.

The Akoben Board of Trustees has developed draft job descriptions for all key staff (see Appendix L). Upon approval of the charter, the Board will finalize these job descriptions and use them to recruit all Akoben staff.

To provide the highest quality, broadest range of curriculum to its students, Akoben will also license teacher-led online curriculum from Connections and other providers. Akoben will require that teachers in these courses be certified, and will assign its own staff to serve as supervising teachers of record.

B. What is the targeted staff size and teacher/student ratio?

The chart below provides an overview of Akoben's staffing plan as it relates to its directly employed administrative and instructional staff. Staffing is driven by enrollment, which is shown at the top of the chart.

Enrollment		Pre-Op	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Grade 5			100	150	200	200	250
Grade 6			150	150	150	200	250
Grade 7			150	150	150	200	250
Grade 8				150	150	200	200
Grade 9					150	150	200
Grade 10						150	150
Grade 11							150
Total Enrollment			400	600	800	1100	1450
Special Ed Enrollment	10%		40	60	80	110	145
Staffing Principal Administrative Assistant Special Ed Coordinator Guidance Counselor subtotal administration		0.25 0.00 0.00 0.00 0.25	1.00 1.00 1.00 1.00 4.00	1.00 1.00 1.00 1.00 4.00	1.00 2.00 1.00 1.00 5.00	2.00 2.00 1.00 1.00	2.00 2.00 1.00 1.00 6.00
	Studen	t Load					
Teachers	50	0.00	8.00	12.00	16.00	22.00	29.00
Aides/Paraprofessionals	100	0.00	4.00	6.00	8.00	11.00	14.50
Special Ed Teachers		0.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	3.00	3.00
subtotal Teachers		0.00	13.00	19.00	26.00	36.00	46.50
Total Staff		0.25	17.00	23.00	31.00	42.00	52.50

Note: Staffing totals above do not include certified online teachers of licensed courses, nor do they include Jegnas – the face-to-face mentors (who may be parents, guardians, or their designees) who guide students through the cyber curriculum.

C. What professional development opportunities will be available to teachers and other staff?

Akoben intends to contract with Connections to provide intensive pre-service and ongoing training to teachers and other staff in the use of the online curriculum, education management system, and cyber charter instructional protocols. Training will be conducted both onsite and online, and will include "train the trainer" models to build Akoben's long term capacity as a cyber school.

In addition, Akoben teachers will be encouraged to take advantage of local and national professional development opportunities relating to African-centered education, cyber schooling, charter schooling, and at-risk interventions.

D. Describe your human resource polices governing salaries, contracts, hiring and dismissal, and benefits.

Akoben has developed initial personnel policies and procedures regarding the hiring and termination of employees.

Akoben strives to offer a work environment that provides opportunities for each employee to maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards. Incorporated in this mission are core values as an organization, which include:

- We value creativity in all aspects. We expect and support employees to be creative with their ideas, their work environment, and their approach to their jobs.
- We value the health and comfort of our employees.
- We will recognize and reward exceptional performance.
- We will be available to answer questions or take suggestions from any employee.
- We appreciate your ideas. We firmly believe the person doing a job is in the best position to think of ways of doing it more easily, efficiently, and effectively.
- We value and support education and expect everyone to undertake life-long learning.
- We expect everyone to work very hard, but we value family above all else. We will always work to make sure that we provide the flexibility and support in our work environment so that our employees can attend to family emergencies and school conferences.

Offers of employment are contingent upon satisfactory reference and background checks as well as receipt of valid certification documents and fingerprint clearances as required or any other approvals as listed in the offer letter. Akoben reserves the right to conduct additional background checks periodically during employment. Employment may be denied or terminated if Akoben believes the result of any of the background checks performed would affect an individual's ability to do his or her job and/or the safety of the workplace or customers.

Benefits:

Akoben will provide a benefits package comparable to that available for local school district employees, which may include:

- Comprehensive health benefits (medical, dental, vision, prescription drug coverage)
- Health Care Flexible Spending Account and Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account
- PERS Retirement Plan
- Life insurance, accidental death and dismemberment insurance, short term disability insurance and long term disability insurance
- Voluntary supplemental programs (life insurance, critical illness, accident insurance, discounted auto insurance, discounted homeowners insurance, discounted renters insurance, pet care discount program)
- Work at home days
- Paid time off
- Employee Assistance Program (resources for seniors, emotional well-being, parenting and child care, and pet care among other resources)

E. Identify the proposed faculty.

Faculty have not yet been identified or selected.

F. Attach a report of criminal history record, pursuant to Section 111 of the Public School Code for all individuals seeking the charter who shall have direct contact with students. Direct contact includes contact through any electronic means.

Faculty have not yet been identified or selected.

G. Attach an official clearance statement regarding child injury or abuse from the Department of Public Welfare as required by 23 Pa. C.S. Chapter 63 subchapter C. 2 (relating to background checks for employment in schools) for all individuals who shall have direct contact with students. Direct contact includes contact through any electronic means.

All staff that will have direct in-person or online contact with students will undergo complete background checks to ensure clearance regarding child injury or abuse, among other issues. No staff members are currently in place, so no background checks have yet been conducted.

H. What procedures have been developed, through research of NCLB guidelines, that ensure the hiring of certified, highly qualified teachers and other professional staff?

Akoben will aim for 100% highly qualified teaching and paraprofessional staff in order to meet NCLB guidelines. The percentage of highly qualified staff will be reviewed regularly by the principal and reported monthly to the Board of Trustees.

4. Code of Conduct:

Explanation: Provide evidence that the founders inspire the confidence of their targeted community; program provides an attractive educational alternative to students and parents; and community support extends beyond the core group of founders. Expectation for student behavior is clear and specific processes for disciplinary actions are established.

A. Discuss any rules or guidelines governing student behavior.

Akoben will have three levels of disciplinary measures: 1) Warning, 2) Suspension, and 3) Expulsion. Each level has associated conduct breach definitions and corresponding disciplinary actions that may occur.

- Warning: Students that receive warnings from the school will have a conference (via phone or in person) with their parent/guardian(s) and the school administrator(s), and the incident will be formally documented in writing and will become part of the student's permanent record. The student will not have a disruption in schooling and will not be removed from the class. Warnings are issued when a student demonstrates a breach of expected conduct, but not as serious as those listed under the suspension and/or expulsion categories listed below.
- **Suspension:** When a student is suspended, he or she is temporarily removed from class or a school sponsored program or activity. The length of a suspension is

determined by the school Principal (up to 10 days at a time). A suspension will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

During a period of suspension as defined by the school Principal, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of Connexus® is restricted. Student access to WebMail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or the entire Connexus® may be revoked. In such cases where the student's access is completely revoked, the Jegna is responsible for logging on to Connexus® and obtaining the student's assignments, responding to WebMail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his or her schoolwork during a suspension.

Violations that may lead to suspension include, but are not limited to, the following breaches of conduct:

- Cheating on tests or daily work: A student who knowingly participates in copying, using another's work, and representing it as his or her own (for example, students transmitting their work electronically for another student's use), or who provides other students with test answers, answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation.
- Plagiarism: A student's use of another person's words, products, or ideas without
 proper acknowledgement of the original work with the intention of passing it off as his
 or her own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or
 accidentally (due to poor referencing). It includes copying material from a book,
 copying-and-pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to
 help with coursework.
- *Unexcused absence:* An unexcused absence is the absence of a student due to truancy, illegal employment or parental neglect.
- *Illegal absence:* Illegal absences are unexcused absences by a student who is under the age of 17 who are absent from school due to avoidable absences, parental neglect, illegal employment, unapproved family vacations, and truancy.
- Abusive conduct: A student who uses abusive language or engages in abusive conduct in the presence of others either in person or electronically/virtually.
- Bullying (Cyber or In-Person): A student that repeatedly engages in negative actions against another student in an attempt to exercise control over him or her.
- Harassment: A student who demonstrates verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the school's programs that: 1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment, 2) unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational performance, or 3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.
- Vandalism: A Student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency(ies).
- Theft and robbery: A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the school of that property. The threat or the use of force or violence is considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.

- Sexual harassment: A student who subjects another to any unwelcome sexual advances including verbal harassment, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or suggestions, requests, or demands for sexual favors.
- Violation of acceptable use policy: Students who violate the acceptable use policy in one form or another are open to disciplinary action including suspension. This would include signing on as parents.
- Repeated violation of any disciplinary issues: Included in this category could be
 when inappropriate items are included in drop boxes after previous incidents or
 previous excuses of accidents. (Some sexual related attachments have been
 included in the past and the reason given was an accident. This may happen once
 but not repeatedly.)
- **Expulsion:** When a student is expelled, he or she is separated from the school for an extended period of time, or permanently, for disciplinary reasons. An expulsion will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record. Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others, possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, under the influence of or possession of, or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia. Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

B. Describe your school's policies regarding student expulsion and suspension, including students with disabilities.

See above.

C. Describe your school's mandatory student attendance plan and its fit with the code of conduct.

The Akoben policy on mandatory attendance is summarized as follows:

School attendance laws require students to attend school regularly. The virtual nature of the Akoben Cyber Charter School does not alter this requirement. Attendance is a joint responsibility of Jegnas (parents, legal guardians, and designees) and students. School authorities have a responsibility to enforce attendance laws.

Students in this virtual public school program have no physical classrooms but still must meet all regulatory requirements for attending public schools in the state. These regulatory requirements include attending school for a required number of days and completing a required number of hours of instruction. Although there is more flexibility in the Akoben program than in a traditional school with regard to when instruction occurs, students are still expected to follow the school calendar.

Students are required to have their attendance recorded on a daily basis in the school's Connexus® Education Management System (EMS). There are additional requirements (described below) in order to demonstrate attendance for the required number of days and hours. Students not attending school as mandated by law will be considered truant. Students and their legal guardians are subject to local truancy laws and regulations.

5. Timetable:

Explanation: Establish a well-developed, realistic plan of action for opening a charter school.

A. Provide a detailed timetable of projected steps and dates leading to the opening of a charter school.

START-UP ACTION PLAN Responsible Party: B=Board P=Principal T=Teachers V=Vendors						
Activity	Staffing	Marketing	Systems	Facilities		
Oct 2011	Submission of Cyber Charter Application October 3 (B)					
Nov. – Dec. 2011	Preliminary Posting Application for all ne	Board review of selected facilities (B) Preliminary Posting for Principal (B) Application for all necessary facility-related licenses and certifications (B) Approval of charter application by PDE				
Jan. – Mar. 2012	Principal prospect early interviews, shortlist (B) Final selection Principal (B)	Mail, community group and media outreach (B)	System start-up tasks w/Connections (B)	Final selection of space; inspections and CofO; signing of lease (B) Renovations if needed (B)		
Apr. 2012	Principal training (P) Recruitment plan for teachers, initial postings (P, B)	Internet outreach Applications open Parent information sessions (P)	Launch of enrollment/ fulfillment systems (P)	Arrangement of utilities and infrastructure B)		
May 2012	Teacher interviews and hiring of teachers (P)	Mail and media outreach (P) Parent information sessions (P) Lottery if needed (P)	Finalization of employee handbook, school procedures (B, P) Board approval (B)	Development of safety plan (P) Equipping/ furnishing of facility (P)		
June 2012	Hiring of teachers (P)	Parent information sessions and media relations (P) Waitlist if needed (P)	Family access to Education Management System (P, V)	Principal moves into facility (P)		
July – early Aug. 2012	Hiring of teachers (P) August: Teachers report to work; training (P, T)	Ongoing outreach and media relations (P)	Family access to Education Management System Student/family online orientation (P, V)	Teachers move into facility (T)		
Aug. 2012	School begins (B, P, T, V)	School begins (B, P, T, V)	School begins (B, P, T, V)	School begins (B, P, T, V)		

6. Safety:

- A. Submit written documentation of intent to comply with all applicable safety requirements, including the following to demonstrate the safety and structural soundness of the school:
 - Inspection by a local building inspector.
 - Inspection by a local fire department.
 - Approval from the municipal licensing authority for use of any explosives and flammable compounds or liquids in connection with courses taught at the school.
 - Compliance with all other federal, state, and local health and safety laws and regulations.
 - Application for certificates, licenses, etc. are part of the planning process.

Note: All necessary certificates and occupancy permits must be issued and in effect prior to the opening of the charter school. <u>Preliminary clearances on all these requirements</u> should be obtained prior to a lease being executed.

Before signing a lease for its facility, Akoben will ensure that it complies with all applicable safety requirements. The Akoben team will apply for all necessary certificates, licenses, and so on as part of its planning process (see Timetable above). To demonstrate the safety and structural soundness of the facility, Akoben will provide documentation of:

- Inspection by a local building inspector.
- Inspection by a local fire department.
- Approval from the municipal licensing authority for use of any explosives and flammable compounds or liquids in connection with courses taught at the school.
- Compliance with all other federal, state, and local health and safety laws and regulations.

7. School Health Services

A. Describe your plan for providing school health services as required under Article XIV of the Public School Code.

Akoben requires proof of immunization (or a certificate of waiver) for all students as part of the enrollment process, and tracks this data through the EMS.

Akoben will request the comprehensive health record of each enrolling student from that student's previous school or district of record to ensure that the student has received mandatory vision testing (annual), hearing testing, measurement of height and weight, tuberculosis testing, and any other health tests mandated by the Advisory Health Board. Akoben will arrange necessary testing for students in need of it (via the school nurse service or referral resources, as noted below) and will keep each student's comprehensive health record up to date in Connexus®.

Akoben will form relationships with qualified school physicians and school dentists to whom students can be referred as needed. Families may also choose to use their own health care providers for such screening and related services.

B. Describe how school nursing services, including administration of medication, will be delivered.

Akoben has budgeted for nursing services to be available to students when they are on site or on field trips.

MODEL CHARTER CONTRACT

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

CHARTER

to operate a cyber charter school known as

(insert school name)
Pursuant to the authority vested in the Pennsylvania Department of Education under the Public School Code of 1949, as amended, and specifically under 24 P.S. §17-1745-A, the Board of Trustees of the (insert name of cyber charter school) is hereby granted a Charter to operate a cyber charter school located at
It is specifically understood and agreed between the signatories hereto that: 1) the Board of Trustees shall operate the cyber charter school in accordance with the provisions of 24 P.S. §§17-1741-A through 17-1751-A, any amendments thereto enacted during the term of this charter and any regulations or standards applicable to cyber charter schools;
2) the granting of this charter is specifically contingent upon operation of the cyber charter school in strict adherence to the terms of the Application submitted by the Board of Trustees and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the State Charter School Appeal Board. Said Application is attached hereto as Appendix A and is incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth;
3) this Charter and the Appendix hereto constitute a legally binding agreement for the term set forth above and the terms of said agreement cannot be changed absent a written amendment to this Charter;
4) this Charter may be renewed for additional periods of five (5) years duration and upon any such renewal, a new Charter shall be executed by the parties; and
5) this Charter can only be terminated in accordance with the provisions of applicable law.
WHEREFORE , the undersigned, intending to be legally bound hereby set their hands this of 20

ATTEST:	BOARD OF TRUSTEES:
Horace Arthur Trent III	*Horace Arthur Trent [[[
Verna Cole	<u>*Verna Gole</u>
William McCreary	<u>*William McGreary</u>
Jason Boyer	<u>*Jason Boyer</u>
ATTEST:	PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
	Ronald J. Tomalis, Secretary

^{*} Please refer to the physical, paper Akoben Cyber Charter School applications or the CD-ROM for actual signatures. This sheet is inserted to permit the Pennsylvania Department of Education to post this application into the public media without compromising an individual's signature and to prevent the compromise of one's identity through the acquisition such signature.

APPENDICES

- A. Curriculum Information
 - A-1. Core Curriculum Details (in separate binder)
 - A-2. Evidence of Alignment, and Sample Lessons
 - A-3. African Heritage and Enrichment Curriculum
- B. Rites of Passage, PRIME STEP, and Globe Trekker Program Overview
- C. Staff Evaluation and Performance Management Framework
- D. Evidence of Community Support
- E. Akoben Cyber Charter School Articles of Incorporation
- F. Akoben By-Laws
- G. Resumes for the Board of Trustees
- H. Letter to School Districts and Intermediate Units
- I. Budgets Preliminary/Startup and Operating
- J. Facility Information
- K. Child Accounting Policies and Procedures
- L. Job Descriptions
- M. Draft Student Handbook