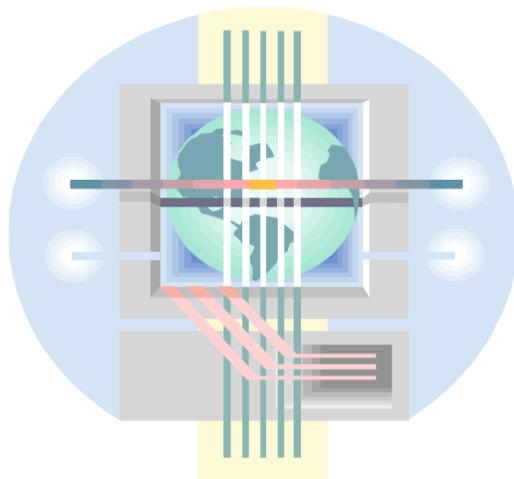


# **Education Plus Academy** **Cyber Charter School**

**Application to the  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Department of Education**

**October, 2011**



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# CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

## APPLICATION FACT SHEET

Proposed Cyber Charter School Name – Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School

Proposed Cyber Charter School Administrative Location – Philadelphia, 19102

County – Philadelphia

Intermediate Unit – As appropriate

Proposed Start Date – September 2012

Federal Employer Identification Number – 82-0374669

Contact Person – Nicholas Daniel Torres

Organization – Education-Plus, Inc.

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Founding Coalition: Indicate Number of Representatives/Group	Grade and Age Ranges	Projected Student Enrollment Year 1-5
Parents <u>2</u>	Elementary <u>240</u>	1 <sup>st</sup> Year <u>100</u>
Teachers <u>4</u>	Secondary <u>120</u>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year <u>180</u>
Business Partners <u>3</u>	Age of Kindergarten <u>5</u>	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year <u>220</u>
Community Based Orgs <u>2</u>	Age of Beginners <u>5</u>	4 <sup>th</sup> Year <u>260</u>
Museums <u>0</u>	Circle Appropriate Grade(s) <u>K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12</u>	5 <sup>th</sup> Year <u>300</u>
Higher Education <u>0</u>	Kindergarten: Full or Half Day? <u>Full</u>	Total Number of Teachers 1 <sup>st</sup> Year <u>4</u>
Other Group (Identify) _____		

Does the cyber charter applicant have an existing retirement system? Yes \_\_\_ No X

Does the applicant group presently have access to a facility suitable for the cyber charter school's administrative offices? Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_

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

**Mission:** Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School is designed to be an alternative learning charter cyber-school that provides *accessible, quality, evidence-based* educational services for children aged 5–21 (grades K – 12) and their families, and specializes in services for students who are academically behind and/or have learning disabilities/differences.

The Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School (EPAC Charter School) intends to provide extraordinary educational opportunities, particularly to families who are schooling their children with language-based learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia at home. To this end, a coalition of educational leaders, parents, and community organizations has formed to develop the new Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School, Inc., which was incorporated on 09/21/2011 as a 501(c)3 and identified by IRS Employer Identification Number 45-3435637. The development of this new non-profit and of this application has been led by Education-Plus, Inc., a non-profit organization that has worked to improve education and disseminate innovations and best practices in education since 1982. In addition to several parents, educators, and a licensed psychologist, the founding coalition includes:

- Academy in Manayunk, the nation’s leading education institution for children with language-based learning disabilities, and
- Public Health Management Corporation, a public health institute that leads in identification of and response to existing and emerging public health issues.
- Other organizations that have committed to participating in the EPAC Charter School include the School Collective, a professional development network that uses an online tool to increase collaboration both within a school and across the wider education community, the National Nursing Center Consortium and Temple Department of Nursing, which provide comprehensive health services and leverage healthcare related financial resources, and Charter Choices, which provides financial management and State Reporting services.

Existing evidence-based educational services for children with learning disabilities or who struggling in a traditional school setting are often too costly to parents, who have to pay for services out of pocket (Tuition of a Pennsylvania private school that specializes in teaching students with learning disabilities or who are academically behind is \$26,000). Although open to all Pennsylvania children, the EPAC Charter School will specialize in services for children with language-based learning disabilities, providing their parents with an affordable and accessible option to help students increase skills in reading, writing, and spelling. In addition, the Charter School will provide intellectually stimulating subject matter courses in mathematics, literature, science, and social studies, to improve skills and foster confidence for students who are academically behind or struggling in a traditional school setting.

Over 7% of children in the U.S. have significant learning difficulties and, of those children, approximately 85% struggle most with reading and language processing. Another 20% of the general population has symptoms of dyslexia, such as poor writing and spelling, slow and inaccurate reading, and a tendency to confuse similar words. As children, these people also struggle in school and, as adults, they have a hard time helping their children with school work, particularly if their children are struggling. Pennsylvania has a high demand for specialized services. Of the state’s total school enrollment of 1,787,000 students, 15%, or 268,000, are enrolled in Special Education programs. As many as 50% of these are students with specific learning disabilities. Education-Plus and its collaborating partners are making this proposal to develop the Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School to meet a critical need.

## **I. SCHOOL DESIGN**

*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.*

**“No other skill taught in school and learned by school children is more important than reading. It is the gateway to all other knowledge.”**

**American Federation of Teachers**

### **1. Mission Statement**

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

Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School is designed to be an alternative learning charter cyber-school that provides accessible, quality, evidence-based educational services for children aged 5–21 (grades K – 12) and their families, and specializes in services for students who are academically behind and/or have learning disabilities/differences.

The Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School (EPAC Charter School) intends to provide extraordinary educational opportunities, with a specialization in working with children with language-based learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia, particularly to families who are schooling their children at home. The EPAC Charter School will use a standards-based structured curriculum that capitalizes on the advancement of technology to advance learning, supplemented by research-based intervention strategies demonstrated to be effective with language-based learning disabilities and produce students who are prepared for college and/or the workforce.

*B. What is your overarching vision of the school?*

The basic philosophy of the EPAC Charter School is based on the belief that students who will be enrolled, regardless of any social, academic, and/or diagnosed learning disability challenges, have the capacity to achieve academic success and to realize individual learning potential. The current research and practice in working with students who are academically behind and/or have learning disabilities/differences provides the promise that children can maximize their learning potential through mastery of reading and mathematics skills. The experienced and committed partners and educators are committed to seeking out the avenues by which each child learns, discovering strengths and interests, and exploring research-based techniques until the student achieves academic progress. Each child will be taught through his or her unique style of learning and parents will be supported in understanding and working with their child’s style and needs.

The EPAC Charter School is committed to developing a sense of inquiry and love of learning in each student. It will focus on remediation in the areas of reading, oral and written language, math and gross motor skills. Social studies and humanities will be taught through a program that incorporates art, music, drama, and hands-on learning experiences. Students will learn to function effectively using tailored social pragmatics and an understanding of how they best learn. Knowing the appropriate behavior in a given situation, how to approach the unknown, and how to interact with other people constitute life skills critical for success. The focus of the 9-12 grades will be to prepare students for higher education and to assist them in acquiring the necessary 21st century workforce skills of problem solving, inquiry, and collaboration.

The quality of the EPAC Charter School staff that puts this philosophy into practice has to be extraordinarily high. The EPAC Charter School will seek top quality staff and unusually talented teachers who respect and deeply care for their students. All teachers will be certified in their unique areas of expertise. There will be an ongoing commitment to teacher training and advanced professional development in research-based curricula and programs. Related services staff members (special education coordinators, occupational therapists, speech/language pathologists, and psychologists) will be an integral part of the academic team.

The EPAC Charter School team is guided by the following beliefs:

- All children who are academically behind and or have learning disabilities/differences can learn when taught with research-based curricula.
- Students who are academically behind and/or have learning disabilities/differences often have skills and talents essential for the 21st century workforce, including creativity and resourcefulness.
- All children who are academically behind and or have learning disabilities/differences should have access to quality teachers who teach research-based curricula.
- Proven intervention and remediation strategies must be brought to the cyber classroom.
- It is the School's responsibility to celebrate students' unique gifts and explore their individual strengths and talents.
- The cyber school must foster positive self-esteem and sound social pragmatics as key components of future success. All students should be able to articulate their strengths, areas of need, and learning styles in order to advocate for themselves.
- An enthusiastic, compassionate, and creative staff committed to ongoing professional development is essential to the School's success and the success of every student.
- As is evidenced in the curricula, the EPAC Charter School has a commitment to:
  - Academic Excellence and Student Centric Education: All students can learn at high levels by honoring and teaching to students' multiple intelligences.
  - Lifelong Learning: We, students and staff, are lifelong learners.
  - Collaborative Partnerships: Students, parents, teachers and partnering organizations are focused on student success. All are stakeholders and share in decision-making.

### **The Team**

The EPAC Charter School will have the advantage of a team of nationally known non-profit organizations that have come together to ensure that students with learning disabilities/differences are provided with an extraordinary education and the foundation to be successful in life. The team has already established strategic partnerships with a number of organizations to assure the best possible 1) curriculum and design and instructional delivery, 2) teacher recruitment and training, 3) student support services, and 4) school management and administration. The partners working with the EPAC Charter School in each area include:

#### **Curriculum Design and Instructional Delivery**

Academy in Manayunk (AIM), based in Philadelphia PA, is the nation's leading educational institution for children with language-based learning disabilities. AIM has helped to develop the curriculum and will serve as the collaborative partner for the licensure of curricula. AIM will

work with the EPAC Charter School to ensure teachers and other school staff are well versed in the specialized educational interventions through professional development and support. AIM's extensive expertise and experience will provide the basic curriculum foundation and professional development for EPAC Charter School staff.

Education-Plus, Inc. specializes in individual reading and math tutoring modules based upon Orton-Gillingham pedagogy and in developing neurological brain connections based upon Delacato neurological functioning. The extensive expertise and experience brought by Education-Plus, Inc. will serve as the foundation for individualized interventions in reading, math, and neurological patterning and functioning.

#### Teacher Support via online Learning Communities

The School Collective (TSC) is a professional development network that uses an online tool to increase collaboration both within a school and across the wider Philadelphia education community. Launched as a Beta in April 2009 in local Philadelphia schools, TSC partnered with Mastery Charter Schools, KIPP, the William Penn Charter School, The Young Men's Leadership Academy at Fitzsimons Thomas and Martin Luther King High Schools. Over 250 Philadelphia teachers in these schools assisted with the development of the tool through focus groups and effective feedback sessions. Along with Academy in Manayunk, TSC will assist in the initial and ongoing staff development for the EPAC Charter School teachers.

#### School Management and Administration

Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) is one of the nation's leading public health institutes and one of the largest non-profit management services company in Pennsylvania. PHMC will provide office space for executive and administrative staff and overall management support for the EPAC Charter School. Management services include: business operations, office management, insurance/banking broker arrangements including access to line of credit, and a quality assurance structure including student/parent satisfaction and assistance with reporting. In addition, PHMC will provide facilities that can be used by students living in Philadelphia that will include telecommunications and computer, technology equipped classrooms; common areas for parent training, conferences, and other school-related activities; access to conference rooms; and office space for administrative and educational records.

Charter Choices is a financial planning and practice firm that specializes in assisting charter schools with financial management. Charter Choices will provide the EPAC Charter School with accounting services that include receivables (state and charitable grants and tuitions), assets (computers, desks, books, etc), and expenses (rent, labor and consumables), compliance and efficiency, as well as preparation of city, state, and federally mandated reports and personnel and payroll services including payment, benefits, and retirement planning.

#### Student Support Services

In addition to the special education coordinators that will work with families to assure that they have the community connections needed to support their children's learning, the National Nursing Center Consortium and the Temple University Department of Nursing will work as needed to provide families with access to comprehensive health services and access to

specialized health interventions related to students' disabilities. NNCC and the Department of Nursing will leverage healthcare-related financial resources as needed.

In Philadelphia, the Free Library of Philadelphia will provide students with library memberships and access to over 1,000 titles in their children's collection (under 14 years of age), teen interest titles, and over 145 electronic databases that include 15 research databases on historical topics, six general research databases, and eight databases targeted for K-12 students. The Free Library will also provide access to a resource called *Opposing Viewpoints In Context*, which contains pro and con articles on a variety of social issues. The Free Library will extend their online homework help tutoring services (in Spanish and English) to students that include tutoring services in math, science, English, and social studies. Online tutoring services include skill building resources, a writing lab, and test prep for state and national tests. As the EPAC Charter School grows and begins to enroll students in other areas of the state, similar arrangements will be developed with libraries in other communities.

Philadelphia area YMCAs and the KROC Center here, will provide student memberships, which will be purchased by the EPAC Charter School, that will allow students access to gyms, swimming, and various exercise opportunities. The YMCAs and the KROC Center will also serve as a centralized social meeting place for students with space usage coordinated through the School. The KROC Center, will also provide classroom space and access to technology to convene Philadelphia students in a blended learning approach.

## **2. Measurable Goals and Objectives**

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

### *A. What are the school's measurable academic goals and objectives to promote student learning?*

The Academic Guiding Principles for the EPAC Charter School will be:

- Provide a rigorous quality education for a lifetime of learning.
- Employ technology as the foundation for quality instruction while embracing the essentials of in person instruction and support.
- Provide evidenced-based intensive remediation and teaching of strategies.
- Engage parents and family members in the education of their children.
- Challenge the child's mind while caring for the student's emotional well being.
- Employ all the art forms as central to the educative process and treat the arts as scholarly pursuits.
- Employ multi-sensory and experiential learning for each student.
- Encourage the child's strengths to flourish while working on areas of needs.
- Provide responsive tutoring services in reading, math, writing and homework support to those students who require additional supports.
- Provide a summer program to support continued reading, writing and math development while enhancing and enriching student's background knowledge.
- Provide access to quality health services, including occupational and speech/language pathology and psychology to support student learning.

The EPAC Charter School will adhere to the curriculum standards of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. At the heart of the School's academic goals are student involvement and student achievement.

Goal 1: By 2017, EPAC Charter School students will meet Pennsylvania requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress.

Objective 1.1: By 2017, Students will demonstrate significant annual academic growth in reading, listening, and written and oral communication leading toward proficiency as determined by:

- Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA);
- PSSA with accommodations;
- PSSA-Modified (Reading grades 4-8, 11; Science grades 8, 11); and/or
- PSSA Modified with accommodations (Reading grades 4-8, 11; Science grades 8, 11).

Objective 1.2: By 2017, Students will demonstrate significant annual academic growth in math leading toward proficiency as determined by:

- Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA);
- PSSA with accommodations;
- PSSA-Modified (Math grades 4-8, 11); and/or
- PSSA Modified with accommodations (Math grades 4-8, 11) or PASA.

Goal 2: By 2017, Students will demonstrate competency in Social Studies.

Objective 2.1: By 2017, 90% of students will demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of world cultures as measured by a portfolio of work whose curriculum is mapped against Pennsylvania core standards.

Goal 3: Students will demonstrate competency in Science.

Objective 3.1: By 2017, 90% of students will demonstrate mastery of science concepts as measured by demonstration and written assessments whose curriculum is mapped against Pennsylvania core standards.

Goal 4: Students will demonstrate competency in Technology and Information Literacy.

Objective 4.1: By 2017, 90% of students will demonstrate competencies in technology and information literacy as measured by quantity and diversity usage of technology and information literacy tools toward school assignments.

Goal 5: Students will demonstrate competency in the Arts & Humanities

Objective 5.1: By 2017, 90% of students will demonstrate competencies in arts and humanities as measured by a portfolio of work whose curriculum is mapped against Pennsylvania core standards.

Goal 6: Students will demonstrate competency in Health and Physical Fitness.

Objective 6.1: By 2017, 90% of students will demonstrate competencies in health and physical education as measured by demonstration assessments whose curriculum is mapped against Pennsylvania core standards.

Goal 7: Students will complete a diploma-granting program.

Objective 7.1: By 2017, 85% of students who remain enrolled as students in the EPAC Charter School will earn a diploma.

Goal 8: Students will formulate plans for their school-to-college or school-to-career transition.

Objective 8.1: 100% of EPAC Charter School high school juniors will create a “High School and Beyond” plan, including a career interest inventory, college/technical school search, and test preparation program, as appropriate.

Objective 8.2: Every student will create a portfolio of his/her best work.

*B. What are the schools measurable non-academic goals and objectives to promote student performance?*

The Non-Academic Guiding Principles for the EPAC Charter School are:

- Ensure that teachers are certified, in addition to Pennsylvania Special Education certification, in appropriate research-based curricula.
- Support and educate parents in regard to school and home issues.
- Provide enrichment, cultural, and sports activities to enhance learning experiences.
- Disseminate best practices through workshops, lectures and seminars to school partners and to facilitate excellent instruction.
- Ensure that staff members remain engaged with current research surrounding brain development while reflecting on its impact on learning and implications for teaching.
- Continue to grow and better the research-to-practice curriculum by challenging the highly skilled staff to remain on the cutting-edge of the field of education through training opportunities on new research-based programs.

Goal 1: Students will build self-management skills and take increased responsibility for their own learning.

Objective 1.1: Students will learn more about how they learn best by completing a Learning Style Inventory.

Objective 1.2: Students will consult regularly with a learning coach regarding the development and implementation of student-specific learning strategies.

Goal 2: Parents will actively support and participate in their child’s education.

Objective 2.1: Parents/guardians will actively participate in their child’s learning as measured by time on task during the K-5 grades.

Objective 2.2. Parents/guardians will guide their child’s learning as measured by self-reports during the 6-12 grades. These older students are expected to be more self-directed.

Goal 3: Teachers will be certified according to Pennsylvania Department of Education and Special Education standards and will hold certifications in specialized research based curricula.

### **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.*

The EPAC Charter School instructional model is based on the development of sophisticated inquiry skills. This focus has been chosen because it promotes student engagement and motivation because research indicates that it leads to in-depth learning. Through the process of inquiry, individuals construct much of their understanding of the natural and human-designed worlds. Inquiry implies a ‘need or want to know’ premise. Inquiry is not so much seeking the right answer – because often there is none – but rather seeking appropriate resolutions to questions and issues. For educators, inquiry implies emphasis on the development of inquiry skills and the nurturing of inquiring attitudes and habits of mind that will enable individuals to continue the quest for knowledge throughout life ([www.thirteen.org/edonline](http://www.thirteen.org/edonline)). In other words, through a process of inquiry, an individual develops critical thinking skills enabling him or her to solve problems through innovative and creative solutions.

In each Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School subject area, supplemental instructional practices will promote inquiry, active learning, critical thinking skills, the ability to see connections, and skills to work both in groups and individually to solve problems. For example, science classes will focus on a student’s understanding of the scientific process rather than only the understanding and retention of specific scientific knowledge, which changes over time with new scientific discoveries. Students will work as scientists, making hypotheses, recording observations, performing experiments to test hypotheses, drawing conclusions from these observations and experiments, using technology, and preparing oral and written reports, which will include drawing and the creation of three-dimensional models. These hands-on supplemental activities will engage the student in the process of discovery and develop their critical thinking and general academic skills.

The EPAC Charter School will deliver a high-quality, well-supported education that combines: 1) academic rigor; 2) flexibility; and 3) a strong support network to deliver successful student outcomes. The EPAC Charter School will celebrate the inherent differences of learners by providing courses that speak to the strengths of multiple learning styles and accommodate to the special needs of students. Content will be presented in multiple formats including audio, text, diagrams and drawings, illustrations, and interactive simulations to accommodate the learning preferences of audio, visual, and kinesthetic learners. Courses will accommodate students who are academically behind and/or who have diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disabilities and to scaffold the metacognitive and organizational skills of all students. The curriculum has been designed with assistance from Academy in Manayunk, the leading school in the nation for children with learning disabilities/differences.

The EPAC Charter School will use the best practices in online learning, as identified in existing research and instructional theory and research-based curricula for learning disabled students (dyslexic) to serve any student who is academically behind. The EPAC Charter School is

committed to using research-based programs and to continuous improvement through testing and experimentation, data collection, and analysis. The School will review and revise the program as intelligence suggests, data dictates, and industry research progresses.

The EPAC Charter School educational program has been designed by combining:

1. Standards-aligned K-12 curricula that provide interactive, self-paced, challenging, and engaging activities;
2. Specialized reading, reading comprehension, writing, and math curricula/techniques, specialized software programs, and neurological patterning for those students who will benefit, to complement and supplement the basic curricula to assure that students who are academically behind and/or have learning disabilities/differences attain the skills needed to read, write, organize ideas, and synthesize information and succeed academically;
3. Assessment and one-to-one specialized coaching and learning techniques; and
4. Facility-based activities and community connections that will support students' learning.

#### 1. Standards Aligned Online K-12 Curricula

The EPAC Charter School intends to use Study Island, a leading provider of online educational products, to ensure compliance with Pennsylvania's required academic content standards (i.e. Math, Social Studies, World Languages, etc.), grouped by grade level (i.e. K-4, 5-8, 9-12).

Study Island (<http://www.studyisland.com/demoAsk.cfm?myState=PA>) is an affordable, easy-to-use, web-based standards mastery program that combines highly specific and dynamic content with real-time reporting to create a customized assessment, diagnostic, and instructional program based on each state's standards. The content of the Study Island program is designed for use in each state and provides assessment and skill practice in all major subject areas in both tested and untested grade levels. Study Island allows for web-based instruction, practice, assessment and reporting, rigorous academic content that is both fun and engaging, research-based with proven results for all students, easy to use (in the lab, classroom, library or home), and is affordable compared to other print or technology learning products. The EPAC Charter School intends to also work with Learning.com, which supplies a network of content providers and a curated collection of award-winning digital content.

The Study Island Pennsylvania Standards Mastery and PSSA Preparation Program is specifically designed to help students master the content in the Pennsylvania Assessment Anchors. Study Island's focus on the Assessment Anchors enables students to improve their performance in all skill areas tested on the PSSA. Programs are available for 2nd through 8th grade, as well as high school Math, Reading, Writing, and Science. Study Island also offers Algebra I & II, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, Civics & Economics, US History & Geography, and World History & Geography Skills Mastery programs for high school, as well as Fine Arts, Technology, and Health for elementary and middle school. Kindergarten and 1st grade products are available for Math and Reading Skills.

Study Island provides a user-friendly interface, allowing students to move through the program step-by-step. Each section has a pre-test and a post-test, as well as topics that cover each of the standards outlined in the Assessment Anchors. Topics consist of questions, answers, explanations, and lessons that address specific skills required in order to master the Assessment

Anchors. These assessments will give teachers and administrators an accurate predictor of PSSA scores as well as valuable diagnostic information that can be used to guide classroom instruction.

During program implementation, students answer a customizable set of questions that correspond to a state's standards and learning objectives. If students answer a question incorrectly, the program provides immediate feedback and opportunities for remediation and further learning. The Study Island system also uses adaptive testing technology to create individualized learning paths for each student, cycling students down, as needed, to lower levels of practice in skill areas that are building blocks for more difficult skills. This allows students the opportunity to practice continually, build their skills until they reach mastery level for each standard, and demonstrate proficiency at state-required levels. The Study Island program also uses motivation tools, such as gaming and student-controllable instructional sequences, both to engage students and to provide them with autonomy over their learning environment.

Through a comprehensive system of assessment and instructional practice tools, the program functions both as an instructional program and a progress-monitoring tool, providing instructors with ongoing and in-depth feedback regarding student progress toward mastery against content standards. Educators can use the system as a stand-alone tutorial program or as a supplement to their classroom curriculum. The flexible nature of the program creates a personalized learning experience for each student, helping instructors to individualize and differentiate instruction in order to meet the needs of all students and target remediation to the areas that are most critical.

The web-based platform of the Study Island program creates a learning environment that is accessible from any computer connected to the internet, allowing students to practice skills both at school and at home. Through its interactive and flexible instructional platform, Study Island provides engaging, ongoing practice and remediation to help students meet their required standards in all major content areas. Subject matter courses in mathematics, history, literature, and science will be complemented with materials that are designed to meet the learning style of students with learning disabilities/differences. Visual, auditory, and kinesthetic presentations will supplement textbooks.

## 2. Specialized Reading, Writing, Math Techniques, Software, and Neurological Patterning

With the understanding that many EPAC Charter School students will be significantly academically behind and/or diagnosed with a learning disability, the School will supplement Pennsylvania's academic content standards and the Study Island curricula with teaching methods to ensure student's academic success. The evidenced-based specialized education interventions will include Reading, Reading Comprehension, and Writing; Math; Neurological Patterning; and Specialized Technology Software Programs.

*Specialized Reading, Reading Comprehension, and Writing Programs:* Orton-Gillingham is the method upon which most evidence-based reading curricula are modeled and a number of programs based on this method will be used by the School. Below are examples of the evidence-based reading techniques that EPAC Charter School will offer by trained and certified teachers.

*Orton-Gillingham:* (<http://www.orton-gillingham.com/>) The Orton-Gillingham system is offered through the Institute for Multi-Sensory Education and includes the five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension

strategies and teaches the six types of syllables. This system utilizes phonetics and places a strong emphasis on visual, auditory, and kinesthetic styles of learning. A student is taught reading, handwriting, and writing expression as one body of knowledge and reciprocal teaching helps students understand and gain meaning from their readings. The approach provides students with immediate feedback and a predictable sequence of reading, writing, and spelling. Orton-Gillingham uses both synthetic (take individual letters or sounds and put them together to form a word) and analytic (look at a long word and break it down into smaller pieces) phonics.

*Wilson Language Training:* (<http://www.wilsonlanguage.com/>) This multisensory structured language program is built on the Orton-Gillingham approach and includes four programs:

- Wilson Foundations is a research-based approach for children in grades K-3 that is used as a phonics and spelling supplement to a core literacy program and has an emphasis on phonics and word structure.
- Just Words is a multisensory decoding and spelling program that is a study of “how English works” for children in grades 4-12 who do not require intense intervention.
- Wilson Reading System is the main program off of which the other three Wilson programs are based. It is built on the principles of the Orton-Gillingham program and is intended for kids in grades 2 and up. It is a highly-structured, research-based remedial reading program that has the backing of 20 years of data from districts that have established Wilson Reading Programs. Using a “sound tapping system,” this comprehensive program can follow children as they progress through grades. It includes a ten-step lesson plan that teaches decoding, encoding, and total word structure.
- Wilson Fluency provides extended texts to students so they can improve their fluency and comprehension.

*Hooked on Phonics:* (<http://www.hookedonphonics.com/our-approach>) Hooked on Phonics is based on research that demonstrates that phonics produces significant benefits for children of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Hooked on Phonics builds systematically from letters/sounds, to reading words, sentences, and stories for meaning and uses word recognition as a key factor in establishing a good base in reading development. The EPAC Charter School will use Hooked on Phonics and the RAVE-O program noted below because research indicates that systematic phonics instruction, coupled with reading, is the most effective way to establish good reading skills.

*RAVE-O:* (<http://ase.tufts.edu/crlr/raveo>) The RAVE-O (Retrieval, Automaticity, Vocabulary, Engagement with Language, and Orthography) Program is an intervention designed by the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, which works on multiple linguistic components at the text level. The instruction is laid out in a way that allows students to connect the various types of linguistic information. Each week, a student is presented with a group of core words. These four to five words are meant to serve as a foundation from which the student can learn more linguistic knowledge. The more a child knows about a word, the faster and better the word is understood. RAVE-O lessons tend to focus on achieving accuracy and automaticity and emphasize letter-pattern knowledge, multiple meanings, grammar, and morphological endings. Comprehension and analytical skills are used throughout the entire process.

*Schuler Reading, Spelling, and Comprehension:* The Schuler methods were developed based on phonetic word categories from Remedial Training for Children with Specific Disability in

Reading, Spelling, and Penmanship by Anna Gillingham and Bessie W. Stillman. The methods include: gradual introduction of the single consonants, blends, and digraphs with the short vowel sounds; application of phonics when sounding out words, introduction of the remaining vowel sounds using Mary Schuler's Vowel Reference Card; division of words into syllables using a method that does not require prior knowledge of prefixes or suffixes; a reading comprehension program that applies the phonics skills learned to actual reading experiences. Spelling is introduced by "reversing" the Vowel Reference Card.

*Lindamood-Bell Visualizing and Verbalizing* (<http://www.lindamoodbell.com/visualizing-verbalizing.aspx>) is for individuals who suffer from weak concept imagery, which causes students to understand only part of the picture, while missing important aspects/details. These students have difficulty with critical thinking and reading comprehension, and may not easily follow directions, and this program stimulates concept imagery. This tool stimulates concept imagery and teaches students to image gestalts which include color, and even movement. Students using this tool are able to vastly improve their language comprehension, reasoning for critical thinking, and expressive language skills.

*Kurzweil 3000*: (<http://www.kurzweiledu.com/products.html>) is a comprehensive reading, writing, and learning software program for struggling students, including those with learning difficulties like dyslexia. It is designed for students in grades three and above and provides supports for fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, study skills, and test-taking. The program offers decoding support, writing and self-editing tools, independent test taking, and a variety of study skills.

*Read Naturally*: (<http://www.readnaturally.com/>) is a program that develops the five essential components of reading, as identified by the National Reading Panel: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It combines teacher modeling, repeated reading, and progress monitoring. Students monitor their progress by graphing the number of words read correctly and includes the following steps: Select a Story, Read Along to the Key Words, Write a Prediction, Cold Timing, Graph the Cold Timing Score, Read Along to the Story, Practice Reading the Story, Answer the Questions, Pass Timing, which means reading at their goal rate, reading with good expression, and answering comprehension questions correctly, Retell the Story, and Practice and Pass the Word Lists.

*Slingerland*: (<http://www.slingerland.org/>) teaches reading skills starting with the smallest unit, a single letter. Starting from that base, students follow an approach that strengthens inter-sensory associations for a complete language learning experience. Students learn to put sounds with visuals, in order to put letters together and form words. They work with a dictation paragraph that enables them to practice their punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and language mechanics. This phonetic approach to decoding helps students read individual words and learn more about the structure of the English language.

*Specialized Math Programs*: The EPAC Charter School will utilize the Saxon Math and Schuler Math systems to supplement the Study Island Pennsylvania-standard curricula, based on each student's specific difficulties with math.

*Saxon Math*: ([http://saxonpublishers.hmhco.com/en/sxnm\\_home.htm](http://saxonpublishers.hmhco.com/en/sxnm_home.htm)) The Saxon system uses hands-on activities that engage students in the learning process. Students move from the

concrete to the pictorial to the abstract and work through daily lessons with practice and assessment with established key concepts and problem-solving skills with real world applications. Students begin to communicate with each other mathematically. In the middle grades, students begin to develop higher order thinking that allows them to become more confident in their problem-solving skills. In high school, Saxon Math incorporates fully integrated texts that get students ready for college-level classes.

*Schuler Math* uses an approach to mathematics that is closely aligned with language training both in its logical, sequential approach and its daily assignments, and is based upon Mortensen Math Blocks and Cuisenaire Base Ten Blocks concepts. Schuler Math processes are described include: the introduction of addition and subtraction concepts using base ten blocks; learning multiplication and then division using skip counting, the 9's Rule, and some memorization before drilling on the facts; the use of the Schuler Fraction Folder to help students visualize fractions and mixed numbers and learn proper to improper fractions and improper to proper fractions; and finally learning decimals and percents.

*Specialized Software Programs:* The EPAC Charter School will take advantage of the rapid development of technology which has proven to be a great asset to students who are academically behind and/or learning disabled (i.e. dyslexic). Current computer operating systems and software helps students read, write, organize ideas, and synthesize information in ways that may have been impossible for them in the past. Software such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking, Dragon Dictate for Mac, Co:Writer, Inspiration, MacSpeech Scribe, Ginger contextual spell checker, and Microsoft Word have made the demands of language-based activities much easier for learning disabled students.

The EPAC Charter School will also tap into the following online educational services based upon the academic needs of students to create a student-centric educational plan and facilitate/support learning for students:

- *Accelerated Reader* <http://www.renlearn.com/> (Comprehension for independent reading)
- *Star Early Literacy and Reading* (Younger Children's Reading Skills Assessments)
- *Star Math, Mathfacts in a Flash, & Accelerated Math* (Children's Math Skills Assessments)
- *Kidbiz* <http://www.achieve3000.com/article/a3k/?c=2&sc=1> (Individualized reading and writing instruction solutions for grades 2-5. Teachers can customize content and monitor student growth)
- *Odyssey* <http://odyssey.mcas.k12.in.us/childu/odysseymath.html>. (Provides activities in math, reading, science & social studies.)
- *Spelling City* [www.spellingcity.com/](http://www.spellingcity.com/) (Teachers can set up lists of spelling words and students can practice games using the spelling list set by the teacher. VocabularySpellingCity is an educational website with 25 different learning activities including spelling tests, vocabulary Flashcards, HangMouse (like Hangman), Unscramble, and crossword puzzles.)
- *Essential Skills* [www.essentialskills.net/](http://www.essentialskills.net/) (Leading provider of CD and web-based educational software for K to 6, older remedial students and English language learners. Games & activities to support phonics, grammar, spelling, math, writing, geography, science.)

- *Book Adventure* <http://bookadventure.com/Home.aspx> (Provides free book comprehension online quizzes and is a fun, free way to motivate students to read)
- *Scholastic* <http://read180.scholastic.com/reading-intervention-program>. (READ 180 is a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, assessment and professional development proven to raise reading achievement for struggling readers in Grades 4–12+. READ 180 is designed to maximize student engagement, teacher effectiveness, and leader empowerment.)
- *Math Magician* <http://oswego.org/ocsd-web/games/mathmagician/cathymath.html> (an online basic math facts practice with one-minute tests.)
- *Timez Attack* <http://bigbrainz.com> (Free basic downloadable multiplication/division facts program) Mountain Math/Mountain Language site (testimonials—not research)

The EPAC Charter School will incorporate several mobile apps that can be used with an iPhone, iPod touch, or iPad.

*Neurological Patterning:* When it is determined through assessment that the student will benefit, neurological patterning will be implemented. The process is based upon research by Delacato (1982), which indicates that neurological patterning activates the brain, helps with the management of stress and performance anxiety, and optimizes learning. The efficacy of patterning has been verified by medical doctors and neuroscientists such as John Ratey (2001), Daniel Amen (2009), and John Medina (2008).

Parents, and sometimes older students, will be instructed in the Delacato Homolateral Crawl, Bilateral Crawl, and Creeping stages. (Rarely will students be required to go through the pre-Homolateral Crawl Delacato stages, nor the final Dominance Level stages.) These neurological patterning stages are introduced gradually and mastery is required before moving onto the next stage. All stages are continued as new stages are introduced until the final stage is mastered as demonstrated by a smooth and efficient Homolateral and Bilateral Crawl, a synchronized and rhythmic Creeping Pattern plus the ability to jump rope (forwards, backwards, hopping with either foot forwards and backwards, skipping with either foot forwards and backwards, cross over with right or left hand forwards and backwards).

### 3. Assessment, Planning, and One-To-One Specialized Coaching

The EPAC Charter School will have on staff special education coordinators who will work from the beginning of each student's enrollment to schedule individual psychological/educational assessments, development and ongoing monitoring of Individualized Education Plans, which will include support plans to assure that students and parents get the assistance they need to carry out the educational plans and provide the child with contacts and activities in the community that will support their academic education. The special education coordinators will then work with families to carry out obtain the supports they need.

Many students will come to the EPAC Charter School with diagnoses of learning disabilities and Individualized Education Plans developed with their school districts. Their parents will be fully aware of their learning issues and needs and dissatisfied with either the IEPs or with the school districts' implementation of them. Other students will come to the School later with a history of school or home schooling struggle or failure and no understanding of the problem. In all cases, an EPAC Charter School psychologist will conduct an assessment of the student to understand his/her

learning issues. The special education coordinator will also conduct an assessment with the parent and student regarding the supports that might be needed at home and in the community for the student to be successful as a cyber school student. These assessments will then be used to develop or revise the student's IEP, including the specialized services needed to help the student develop skills to succeed academically and the home and community supports that will be needed.

Although the EPAC Charter School will be a cyber school, in order to support students and parents, ten hours per month of face-to-face individual work with a "learning coach" teacher will also be part of the program. This critical home support will be provided weekly or bi-weekly in face-to-face instruction with the student and the parent or guardian. The learning coach will be able to assess on an ongoing basis how the student, and the parent in the case of younger students, is managing their school process and work and will be able to provide advice and assistance to assure that the process works optimally for the student. When new subjects are introduced, the learning coach will supplement the online teacher's instructions with face-to-face individually tailored sessions. The learning coach will check that the instruction was understood by the student and parent/guardian and incorporated with the student correctly. Once the subject is mastered by the student and parent/guardian, the learning coach will refer back to the online teacher instructional setting. The special education coordinators and learning coaches will get to know children and parents well and will be key to students' success and satisfaction.

#### 4. Facility- and Community-Based Services

Students' enhanced confidence will be achieved through activities, such as the arts, athletics, and community life. Involvement in extracurricular activities that capitalize on the innate strengths of the learning disabled student often leads to lifelong interests. Leadership and service opportunities provide additional means for personal and social growth. In addition to academic instruction, the EPAC Charter School will offer programs to provide physical education (neurological patterning in some cases), socialization, peer-to-peer learning circles, and community service connection for students. Some of these will be held in the PHMC facilities in Philadelphia for students from the area. Others, particularly from outside Philadelphia, will be held in community organizations. The special education coordinator in each community will be responsible to set up connections in the community and assure that all of the students in the area are involved according to their IEPs.

Depending on the enrollment in the EPAC Charter School in an area, the School will set up contractual arrangements with local organizations including libraries, YMCAs, local community centers or the Kroc Center, area schools, and the like where the Scholl and students can utilize local facilities. Through these various community venues, the EPAC Charter School will offer physical education/neurological patterning services to all students at least twice/month. Neurological patterning will be reinforced weekly during the three-hour weekly face-to-face instruction. The School will also offer social gatherings and community service connections via the community Centers and YMCA networks.

A unique feature of the EPAC Charter School is the initial participation of the Free Library system in Philadelphia and the use of its facilities. Students will be offered the opportunity to participate in face-to-face activities at their local library or, if no local library exists within a reasonable distance, the EPAC Charter School will partner with another regional non-profit organization to facilitate these services. Activities will be both for academic purposes (such as

tutoring and homework help) and for social development purposes (sports, clubs, and other activities).

Anticipating that the initial cohort of students will primarily live in Philadelphia County, the EPAC Charter School has partnered with the Kroc Center here. The Salvation Army Kroc Center of Philadelphia is the newest, largest (130,000-square foot super community center), most comprehensive community center on the east coast and represents the Salvation Army's ongoing commitment to building communities of faith, hope, compassion, and grace. The Kroc Center programs, as well as the building itself, have been designed to stimulate the mind, body and spirit, to provide hope, and to transform the life of each and every member of the community. Specifically, the Kroc Center will provide, in addition to recreational facilities, classroom space, computers with web access, and wireless web access to the EPAC Charter School. It is important to note that the Kroc Center is currently utilized by over 60 home and cyber education students.

Children with learning disabilities also require access to in-school occupational therapy, speech therapy and, in some cases, physical therapy. Some of these health services are reimbursable. In partnership with NNCC and Temple School of Nursing, the EPAC Charter School will ensure students have paid access these services, as dictated by their IEPs, via private and public health insurance, Medicaid, and CHIP which all cover these basic services.

*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.*

The EPAC Charter School is committed to providing students with a quality education that is appropriate to their needs, abilities and interests. The School will comply with all Federal and State legal requirements. The CEO will ensure a least restrictive environment and inclusion at all levels of the academic programs, physical education, and extracurricular activities to maximize positive experiences for all students.

The EPAC Charter School is especially proud to offer education services with a special focus on children with learning disabilities/differences. The School will promote its focus on children with learning disabilities/differences and the capacity of its teachers to educate and accommodate students exhibiting educational and associated behavioral difficulties. All children accepted for admission to the School will be assessed by the School psychologist, to understand the underlying issues and/or disabilities that are hindering their learning. All children who are diagnosed with a learning disability will have an Individualized Education Plan. Students who are not diagnosed with a learning disability, but are academically challenged, will also have a individualized learning plan. This way their use of the School and its services will be optimized.

#### IDEA

The EPAC Charter School will not deny enrollment or otherwise discriminate in its admission policies or practices based on measures of achievement or aptitude. The EPAC Charter School values the individual differences of all children and looks forward to educating those with special

needs. The basic Pennsylvania standards-based curricula will be supplemented, based on students' needs, with specialized programs designed to help them succeed. Activities will include but not be limited to: collaboration, problem solving, team building, team maintenance, instructional assessment and adaptation, effective interaction patterns, student discipline and behavioral management. EPAC Charter School students who are assessed to need special services beyond those in the School's design will be referred to outside organizations such as Catapult Learning, Devereux, and other appropriate providers.

The EPAC Charter School is aware that, students within the specified age range and with one or more of the following disability categories are eligible to receive special education and related services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA):

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impaired
- Mental Retardation
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impaired
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech or Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment, including Blindness

As noted above, an initial assessment will be conducted for all students within 60 calendar days from the receipt of the student's application to the School, unless the parent and the EPAC Charter School agree otherwise. Upon parental consent, signified by a signed Permission to Evaluate form, the school psychologist will, within the 60 day period, perform a battery of tests to determine if the student has a learning disability as identified by IDEA. If it is determined that the student has a learning disability or is academically challenged, a Support Team that includes the parent will be impaneled and will convene to discuss the findings and the appropriate educational program will be planned and noted in the IEP or Individual Learning Plan. Additionally, any special resources that may be needed to support use of the computer, i.e. Braille keys, voice activated system, an audio component, etc., will be obtained. Parents must be present, provide input and sign off on all required documents.

### Child Find

The EPAC Charter School will participate in Child Find, which refers to activities that lead to the identification, location, and evaluation of students requiring special education. In addition to Child Find procedures, EPAC Charter School staff will provide a Student Assistance Program to supplement these efforts. The School recognizes that, in addition to Chapter 711 of Pennsylvania regulations, it must also abide by Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. The EPAC Charter School will ensure the rights of children with disabilities and will establish written policies and

procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities who are in need of special education and related services are identified and provided with appropriate services. The EPAC Charter School plans to publish its special education policies including procedures, programs and services available to those attending the School and those requesting information. Systematic screening of EPAC Charter School students will be ongoing and will lead to the identification, location and evaluation of those needing special education services beyond those focused on learning disabilities. The EPAC Charter School special education coordinator and staff will be thoroughly trained to understand their responsibilities concerning Child Find and will be able to refer students to counseling and further assessment, as needed.

### Screening

Screening procedures will include but not be limited to ongoing analysis of the response to instruction; performance on state-wide assessments; reviews of enrollment records, health records and transcripts/report cards. The screening activities will also include hearing and vision screens to be completed by the school nurse or a private physician/primary care provider as mandated under Pennsylvania Public School Code. An EPAC Charter School special education coordinator will assess each student according to their past and current records and will be available to answer questions from parents relating to policies and procedures in order to assist in matters such as completing forms or requesting various aspects of special education.

### Evaluation

As appropriate, students will receive an initial assessment that includes psycho-educational testing conducted by the School psychologist. A sample of tests that students may be given to assess their academic learning needs include:

- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-IV
- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-II
- Test of Sight Word
- Reading Fluency-Form A Bender-Gestalt II
- Beery-Test of Visual-Motor Integration
- Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing Rapid Automatic Naming/Stimulus Test
- Clinical Assessment of Attention Deficit-Child Lateral Dominance Examination
- Keystone View Vision Screeners which tests for all of the essential visionary functions including acuity (monocular and binocular), color blindness, peripheral vision, and glare recovery.
- Parent Input Questionnaire

Students may be referred for additional evaluation in two ways: (1) parents may make a request in writing for an evaluation at any time, or (2) the school may contact the parents for permission to evaluate the student. The EPAC Charter School recognizes that a student may need additional assistance. The entire evaluation process will be conducted according to state and federal laws. The evaluation will include information from the student and narrative statements. This process will also include an evaluation by the appropriate individual, such as a psychologist, tests conducted by a hearing specialist, a medical doctor/primary care provider for a student with health problems, input from a therapist if certain related services, such as physical, language, speech, or occupational therapy, may be needed. The determination of specific learning

disabilities will follow the state-level criteria and will be included in The EPAC Charter School Policy Manual. The EPAC Charter School recognizes that, according to Chapter 711, a parent or the School has the right to request a reevaluation annually. If both the school and the parent agree, a reevaluation may occur more frequently. Students with disabilities will be reevaluated at least once every three years.

### IEP

The EPAC Charter School will have a special education coordinator to ensure that the School remains in compliance with Chapter 711 through periodic review of student IEPs for appropriateness, relevancy and consent. In addition to the organizations noted above, the School will contract with organizations/individuals to provide speech therapy, reading support, and physical therapy. If a student with an IEP enrolls at the EPAC Charter School, the School will ensure that the student receives special education services and related services as directed by the IEP, either by adopting the existing IEP or developing a new one. IEPs will be developed by a team and that includes the parent/legal guardian, special education coordinator, general education teacher, a member of the administrative staff and, where appropriate, the student. The team may include the school psychologist or someone who is able to interpret the evaluation results and others who know the student or have worked with the student who can give input into the IEP. Parents will be notified of the date, time and location of the IEP meeting and who will attend. Meetings will be scheduled at a time convenient to all those who plan to attend. The IEP will be completed within thirty days after the evaluation report is complete. The IEP will be in place as soon as possible but no later than ten days after the IEP is completed. The student IEP will be reviewed each year at an IEP meeting, or more often if requested by the parent or any other IEP member. Positive behavioral support and procedural safeguards involving discipline will be included in IEP.

### Access to Instructional Materials

The EPAC Charter School will provide high quality alternate instructional material in a timely manner to students needing specialized, accessible formats such as, large-print, audio, digital or Braille. The School will take all reasonable steps to ensure that students who are blind or have print disabilities have access to accessible format instructional materials at the same time students without disabilities have access to instructional materials. If a student enrolls after the start of school and needs alternate print format, the staff will make every effort to provide the student with this material within ten days. Assistive technology will be available to further enhance access to instructional materials such as the use of scanners and screen readers.

### Education Records and Confidentiality

The EPAC Charter School will maintain records and confidentiality for children with disabilities consistent with the regulations for the Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. The School understands the requirements of a school to give annual notice regarding Special Education services and programs and the rights of students with disabilities and notification of rights under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The administration or designee will notify parents annually of their confidentiality rights according to FERPA and at the end of each school year. The EPAC Charter School staff will adhere to all rules under Chapter 711 concerning transferring of records.

### Personnel and Projected Enrollment

Special education teachers and coordinators will hold Pennsylvania certification. A coordinator will be available to assist students with disabilities. If educational interpreters are needed to provide students who are deaf or hard of hearing with interpreting or transliteration, only those who are qualified under the Sign Language Interpreter/Translator State Registration Act will be contracted. The EPAC Charter School will be responsible to ensure that in-service trainings are appropriately and adequately provided to address the special knowledge required to serve unique needs of children with disabilities. These trainings will be part of the Professional Development Plan and Act 48 credits will be available. Completion of training of personnel will be documented on a regular basis and an opportunity for staff to request specific training will be available.

The EPAC Charter School plans to provide full inclusion in instruction to all children with disabilities. Students will receive a wide a range of accommodations based on their individual needs, as noted in their IEPs or their Section 504 agreements. Annual goals described in measurable terms of what a student is expected to learn will be included in the IEP. Services and programs will be decided at the IEP meeting and included in the IEP. Section 504 agreements will include services and accommodations covered under the Rehabilitation Act of 1974. The team will determine what supplemental aids and adjustments/accommodations are necessary for the student to meet success in the general education class. These accommodations may include but will not be limited to extended time on tests or assignments, oral testing, use of assistive technology, adaptation of curriculum, auxiliary aids such as large print or Braille, assistive listening devices, and/or a paraprofessional under the supervision of a certified teacher to assist in instruction. Supplemental tutoring will also be available.

The EPAC Charter School will commit to a staffing level at the opening of school based on anticipated enrollment, projections of needs, and parent questionnaires. As the student population grows and individually assessed needs are recognized, the School will add additional staff and services and contract with qualified individuals or organizations to meet specific student needs that may include speech, occupational, physical or rehabilitation therapy. The School will provide special education teachers, paraprofessionals, student personnel staff and qualified contracted professionals based on enrollment and the specific needs of students policies for the provision of special education services to ensure compliance with state and federal legal requirements. The EPAC Charter School is committed to providing a quality education to students with disabilities appropriate to their needs, abilities and interests and will comply with all Federal and State legal requirements. The School CEO will ensure a least restrictive environment and inclusion at all levels of the academic programs, physical education, and extracurricular activities to maximize positive experiences for all students. In cases where there is no parental involvement, the School will involve a designated guardian. In cases where a meeting of the minds is not possible regarding the provision or level of services, The School will utilize the Pennsylvania Office of Dispute proceedings, as appropriate.

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

### **Pedagogical Approach**

The EPAC Charter School will implement sound instructional theory and practice, using tools that are standards- and evidence-based and are supplemented with techniques designed to meet students' individual needs. Learning objectives, including both mastery of principles and concepts and their application, will be clearly defined. Course content will engage student attention and provide anchors for the construction of new knowledge and schemata. Content will be presented in instructionally effective, efficient, and appealing ways, and students will have the opportunity to demonstrate understanding of new material and to apply the concepts to unique and relevant situations, thereby making the content their own. Students will be held accountable for daily independent assignments to reinforce the skills taught. Understanding that students will have periods of frustration and even temporary failure, they will be supported and learn to work through these frustration periods. Ultimately, the goal will be for students to become independent learners.

The EPAC Charter School will contract with the trainers of Study Island to ensure that teachers and learning coaches have full understanding of and are able to deliver Pennsylvania's required academic content standards (i.e. Math, ELA, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, etc) and will group teachers by grade level (i.e. K-4, 5-8, 9-12). To complement Study Island's standard academic content, the School will contract with AIM to ensure that all teachers and learning coaches understand the pedagogical theory involved in teaching children who have learning disabilities/differences and that they are able to incorporate the specialized interventions for each child based on their specific issues. AIM will provide resource guides and progress rubrics to the Charter School and will develop and implement a series of webinars, on-line training, and support sessions to assure that teachers are fully prepared.

Most critical for children with language-based disabilities/differences is learning to read. "Teaching reading IS rocket science," as noted by Louisa Moats, a teacher, psychologist, researcher, and author on the topics of reading, spelling, language, and teacher preparation. Teaching reading, reading comprehension, and writing is a scientific endeavor based on the complex integration of sophisticated language comprehension and word recognition skills. With AIM's assistance, EPAC Charter School teachers will learn theories behind the tools that will be used to teach the learning disabled students served, including those noted below.

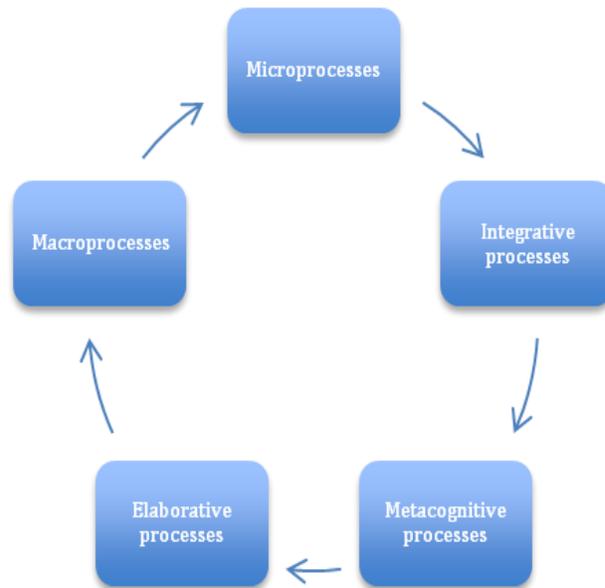
### **Reading and Comprehension (Grades K-3)**

Learning to read well is a long-term developmental process. At the end point, the proficient adult reader can read a variety of materials with ease and interest, can read for varying purposes, and can read with comprehension even when the material is neither easy to understand nor intrinsically interesting. (Rand Report, 2002). It is now accepted that reading comprehension is not a unitary construct nor can it be thought of as a single process or product. Comprehension involves multiple levels of cognitive processes that allow the reader to work at the surface and deeper levels of text to create a coherent representation or "mental model" of what has been read. It is these processes that allow the student to produce evidence of their learning. Carlisle & Rice (2002) define comprehension as a: "process, not a product, through which the reader draws meaning from the text."

Cain and Oakhill (2007) call attention to the importance of the language processing necessary to extract and construct meaning and have articulated that,

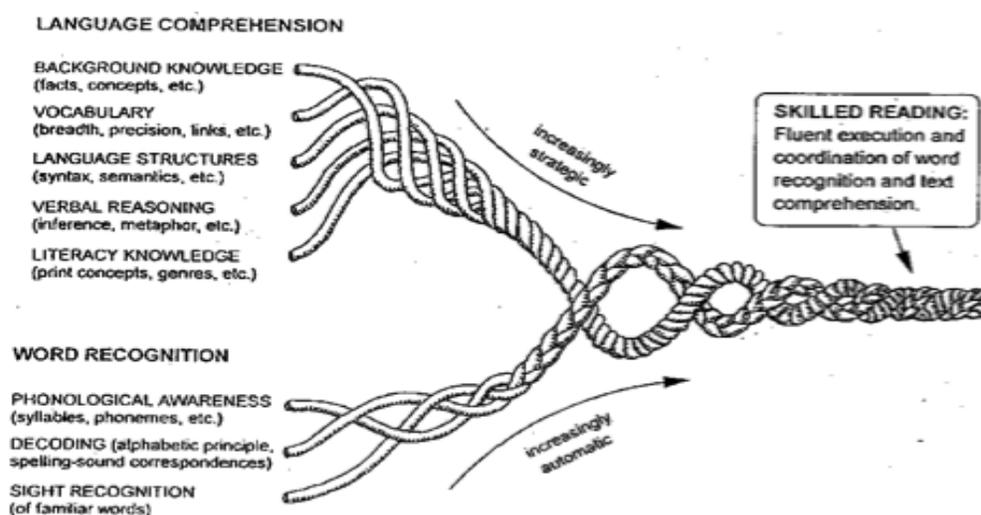
“Comprehension of written text involves processing language at many different levels. ...At the word level, the reader must decode individual words... access meaning of the words they hear or read. At the sentence level, the comprehender needs to work out the syntactic structure and sense of each sentence. Simply deriving the meanings of individual words and sentences is insufficient. In order to construct a mental model of the text, the comprehender needs to integrate information from different sentences to establish local coherence and to incorporate background knowledge and ideas (retrieved from long term memory) to make sense of details that are only implicitly mentioned.”

Others, such as Irwin (1991), have described five basic processes that work simultaneously and complement one another as the reader makes meaning of idea units in sentences (micro-processes), integrates ideas between sentences, monitors for understanding (metacognitive), incorporates prior knowledge and makes inference (elaborative) and organizes/summarizes understanding (macroprocesses).



Hollis Scarborough’s Reading Rope (2001) provides a research-based analogy for understanding the skills that the reader must develop over time to engage in these processes and achieve skilled fluent reading. The two major strands of the rope, word recognition and language comprehension, are each deconstructed into contributing competencies that develop independently and reciprocally as students strive to become proficient readers capable of reading words and making meaning simultaneously. The strands of the rope representing development of language comprehension is the predominant focus of comprehension instruction and also acknowledges the necessity of proficient word recognition skills in order to work independently in text.

### The Many Strands that are Woven into Skilled Reading (Scarborough, 2001)



One other consideration that will be addressed is the dynamic interaction that occurs between the reader and the text. The nature of academic text contributes to the comprehension of the text and challenges can include: Proposition density, Unusual (low frequency) words, Domain-specific vocabulary, Length of sentences, Sentence structure, and Text structure.

### Writing (Grades K-3)

“If students are to make knowledge their own, they must struggle with the details, wrestle with the facts, and rework raw information and dimly understood concepts into language they can communicate to someone else. In short, if students are to learn, they must write.”

– National Commission on Writing, 2003

Writing skill is a predictor of academic success and essential for participation in the academic setting, civic life, and the global economy. It has been identified as the most neglected R of the Three R's (National Commission on Writing, 2003) and as such, has been the focus of several recent commissions, publications, and research efforts. The importance of writing in an information-based economy and the fact that so many of our graduating students are “deficit in written communication” (Casno-Lotter et al, 2006) has resulted in a call for a literacy-centric perspective in our schools that includes a focus on writing as well as reading instruction.

By the end of the 20th century, writing had been acknowledged both as a process and a product. With this recognition, there emerged an increased emphasis on the development of multiple skills and processes that contribute individually and, in concert, to the production of a written product. Writing has been described as the “mirror image of reading.” Not unlike reading proficiency, skilled writing demands the development of lower order (e.g. transcription) and higher order skills (e.g. composition). The reciprocal relationship between reading and writing has been recently addressed in the report, “Writing to Read” (2010). However, while reading and writing are complementary, there are students who learn to read and comprehend complex

texts but still struggle with writing proficiency. Without question, writing requires similar competencies, but it also requires some unique skills and processes. Any theoretical model, used to guide curriculum development and instruction, must account for additional contributors to competency.

While models exist that focus on different perspectives of writing, Berninger & Amtmann’s (2003) simple view of a functional writing system outlines the essential skills for basic writing. The model surfaces the importance of the development of three essential components of writing and respective skills/processes and conveys their inter-connectedness. These are:

- Text Generation: words, sentences, and discourse
- Transcription: handwriting, keyboarding, and spelling
- Executive Function: Self-regulation of attention and strategy use, planning, reviewing, and revising

This simple view is elaborated on in the literature providing insight into the multidimensional nature of writing and a deeper understanding as well as guidance for working with writers who struggle. This elaborated model addresses all of the multiple components such as motor, sub-lexical and lexical, syntactic, executive and working memory processes, as well as automaticity with procedural and declarative knowledge. All students, but particularly those who struggle, will require direct explicit teaching that results in the development of handwriting, spelling, syntactical and semantic skills as well as word meaning and background knowledge including understanding of genre, and strategies that facilitate the writing process.

The following chart illustrates tasks commonly associated with writing mechanics and writing process components of writing and prerequisite skills (ACCESS, 2008) and is a good one to adopt to illustrate curriculum and learning methods that will be used at the School.

Task		Prerequisite skills
<b>Writing Mechanics</b>		
	Graphemic realization of writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symbolic understanding (symbols have meaning)</li> <li>• Alphabetic principle (letters represent speech segments)</li> <li>• Memory for letters</li> <li>• Visual discrimination</li> <li>• Fine-motor skills (handwriting and typing)</li> </ul>
	Spelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphemic realization of writing</li> <li>• Sound-symbol connection</li> <li>• Recognition and understanding of spelling conventions and patterns</li> <li>• Memory for regularly and irregularly spelled words</li> </ul>
	Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linguistic comprehension</li> <li>• Memory for words</li> </ul>
	Grammar/syntax/semantics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition and understanding of grammatical patterns</li> <li>• Memory for syntactically correct patterns</li> <li>• Understanding and application of semantic conventions</li> </ul>
	Punctuation/capitalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Memory for punctuation types and capitalization rules</li> <li>• Understanding and application of punctuation and capitalization</li> </ul>

<b>Writing Process</b>	
Acquire knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Auditory, nonverbal, and reading comprehension</li> <li>• Short- and long-term memory</li> </ul>
Retrieve knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short- and long-term memory</li> <li>• Translation of cognitive information into language</li> </ul>
Plan text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of purpose and goals of writing</li> <li>• Knowledge of planning processes and steps</li> <li>• Knowledge of various text structures</li> <li>• Ability to use or invent organizing tools to fulfill writing goals</li> </ul>
Construct text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding and application of text conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Words with appropriate inflection</li> <li>○ Topic-centered sentences and paragraphs</li> <li>○ Organization of information from broad to specific</li> <li>○ Situation- and genre-dependent demands</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Understanding of others' perspective</li> </ul>
Editing text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of writing mechanics (above)</li> <li>• Ability to recognize errors or places for improvement</li> <li>• Ability to monitor text construction (above) and monitor content cohesion and revise text accordingly</li> </ul>
Regulating entire process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of many of the skills above</li> <li>• Knowledge of distinct steps involved in writing</li> <li>• Ability to monitor own progress (executive function)</li> </ul>

A writing curriculum, including stated goals, objectives and essential skills, must reflect current theoretical models by addressing all the necessary processes and skills for writing proficiency and by incorporating research supported instructional approaches and strategies.

#### Advanced Word Study (Grades 2-3)

The importance of an Advanced Word Study course, primarily focused on the morphology, particularly for students who struggle with reading proficiency, has been explained by Sally Shaywitz (2002),

“Knowing the etymology or the roots of a word is a very powerful aid to reading, shedding light on a word’s pronunciation, its spelling, and its meaning.”

As noted above regarding Hollis Scarborough’s Reading Rope (2001), word recognition skill is critical to skilled reading. Its development is described in Linnae Ehri’s model, “Phases of Word Reading Development” (2004). This model identifies four phases of development; the pre-alphabetic, early or partial alphabetic, later or full alphabetic, and consolidated alphabetic phases. In the final phase, the student is able to read fluently by sound, syllable, morpheme, whole word families, and analogies. From this point on, students are increasingly able to use their knowledge of syllabication and morphemes to read the academic words found in literature and content area texts. A student’s knowledge of the morphophonemic nature of the English language facilitates understanding of written representation of phonemes and morphemes. Morphological knowledge not only improves word recognition, but also reading comprehension by helping readers understand the meanings or syntactic roles of unknown words (Carlisle, 2003). A study of the pronunciation and spelling of Latin prefixes, roots, suffixes and Greek forms may also contribute to reading comprehension.

The ability to extract and construct meaning from the text is dependent on many factors including vocabulary. The importance of the contribution of word meaning to reading comprehension has a well-documented history. Both breadth and depth of word knowledge are critical to making meaning. Vocabulary is acquired in several ways including rich language experiences, direct instruction of targeted words, and instruction in word learning strategies. Morphology is widely held to be part of the explanation for how children learn so many words that they were never explicitly taught. Morphology is considered a critical independent word learning strategy along with the use of context and the dictionary. Nagy and Anderson (1984) estimated that about 60% of the novel words students encounter in texts could be worked out through problem solving morphological structure and their use in a sentence. More recently, Baumann and colleagues (2004) found that students skilled in use of morphemes and context maximized ability to increase breadth and depth of word knowledge. Increasing numbers of studies focused on effectiveness of explicit instruction in morphology, are surfacing positive effects on sublexical and supralexical literacy skills, particularly for less able students.

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

### **The Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School 2012-2013 School Calendar**

#### **August 2012**

20th - 21st: Board of Trustees Retreat

20th - 31st: Professional Development/Teacher Prep

#### **September 2012**

3rd: Labor Day

4th: First Day of School for Students

17th: Board of Trustees Meeting

18th: Rosh Hashanah (No School)

26th - Yom Kippur Observed (No School)

#### **October 2012**

8th: Columbus Day (No School)

TBD: 1/2 Day for Students / Professional Development

15th: Board of Trustees Meeting

#### **November 2012**

6th: Election Day (No School)

TBD (2 Days) Progress Reports Mailed/Report Card Conferences

TBD: 1/2 Day for Students / Professional Development

19th: Board of Trustees Meeting

24th - 25th: Thanksgiving Holiday (No School)

#### **December 2012**

1/2 Day for Students / Professional Development

17th: Board of Trustees Meeting

TBD Winter Break

**January 2013**

TBD: Winter Break / Staff Reports  
 TBD: 1/2 Day for Students / Professional Development  
 21st: Martin Luther King Holiday (No School)  
 22st: Board of Trustees Meeting

**February 2013**

TBD Progress Reports Mailed/Report Card Conferences  
 TBD: 1/2 Day for Students / Professional Development  
 18th: Board of Trustees Meeting

**March 2013**

TBD: 1/2 Day for Students / Professional Development  
 TBD: PSSA Math & Reading  
 TBD: PSSA Writing  
 18th: Board of Trustees Meeting

**April 2013**

Spring Recess  
 TBD: 1/2 Day for Students / Professional Development  
 15th: Board of Trustees Meeting  
 TBD: Progress Reports Mailed/Report Card Conferences

**May 2013**

TBD: 1/2 Day for Students / Professional Development  
 20th: Board of Trustees Meeting  
 27th: Memorial Day (No School)

**June 2013**

Last Day for Students  
 Final Progress Reports Mailed  
 17th: Board of Trustees Meeting

**Total # of School Days: 186 Days**

**School Hours of Operation: 7:30 am to 3:00 pm**

**4. School Accountability**

*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.*

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

The Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School will develop a full quality assurance and improvement process that will focus on the goals noted at the beginning of this proposal, as well as student and parent satisfaction with the services received. A plan will be developed that details the activities to be undertaken to meet each of the goals set and ways to monitor progress

and make adjustments on an ongoing basis, not only at the end of the year when the standardized tests take place. Discussion of the goals and progress will occur in team meetings, faculty meetings, and individual teacher supervision sessions. The EPAC Charter School goals will form the basis of the evaluation of the teachers' performances, as well as the Board's evaluation of the Principal/CEO.

The Board and School leadership will self-evaluate based most importantly on students' progress and reaching proficiency and then on student and parent satisfaction. The following process indicators will also be included:

- Quality teaching,
- Teacher training and retention,
- Student attendance, and
- Parental involvement.

At the beginning of each school year, goals for each outcome indicator of student performance, quality teaching, teacher training and retention, student attendance, and parental involvement will be set in a manner that can be measured in concrete terms (i.e., 95% of professional staffed trained on the Delacato approach by June 30, 2011; 93% student school attendance; 90% of students who do not meet academic standards receive supplemental supports; parents log in 12,000 volunteer hours). These indicators will then be weighted by their importance. This method will provide a transparent and concrete evaluation by which the CEO/Principal and School performance can be measured and financial arrangements can be calculated. It is important to note that the School will re-evaluate the outcome indicators every year as the School progresses and lessons learned are incorporated from the prior year. It will be the Board's responsibility to clearly set expectations for the CEO/Principal and then hold him/her accountable for results.

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

EPAC Charter School teachers and administrators, including school leadership, will be evaluated through the setting of goals that are based on the School's goals, and will be supported through collaboration and professional development. The rating system will comply with the model developed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Professional staff will be rated using the appropriate Pennsylvania Department of Education forms.

Ultimately, teachers and administrators will be evaluated and held accountable based on student performance. There will be a formal induction process for all new teachers. Teachers and administration will develop lesson plans that include lesson objectives, lesson activities, student expectations, subject integration, and technology integration. All lesson plans, assignments, activities, and assessments will be made available for a curriculum supervisor to ensure that they are rigorous and aligned to content standards, as well as meeting the guidelines and expectations of the school. All lesson plans will be made available online.

A board of teacher review will be established to review teacher performance per quarter utilizing a performance management system. Teacher observation, both formally and informally, will also take place. Supports will be put in place to help teachers if there is a need.

The School will support best practice development. Administrators and teachers will be expected to attend professional development conferences, workshops, in-service, and college course work when appropriate. Teachers will attend workshops and conferences that support their content and regular classroom professional development. Teachers will have ongoing collaborative session in which they will share strategies and methodologies.

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

EPAC Charter School parents/guardians will be considered valuable members of the Team supporting each child and, as such, will be apprised of student progress and problems on a regular basis. The learning coaches will be meeting with students and parents/guardians at least every other week, so progress and any difficulties will be addressed immediately. When parents are not involved in the regular meetings with the learning coach, as may be the case with older students, informal progress reports will be provided by the learning coaches during the regular checkup calls or within three school days of written or verbal request by the parent/guardian. In addition, if a student's progress or performance in any class becomes unsatisfactory, the teacher will contact the parent/ guardian to discuss him/her of the problem and, where possible, to enlist support in the implementation of interventions. Parents will be provided an Observer Role in the Student Information System so that they can monitor their child's progress on their own convenience.

Formally, the EPAC Charter School will inform parent/guardians in writing of student's progress one week after the completion of the four grading periods (Day 45, Day 90, Day 135, and Day 180). Student progress will also be discussed with parents by phone at the Day 45 check to assure the student is getting the right start. Teachers will mail written reports to students and parents within 10 school days of receipt of official test results by the School.

The EPAC Charter School will be held accountable by the results it generates as measured by student performance and overall family satisfaction. The School's ability to satisfy the needs of students and parents will result in student retention and increased new enrollment. The School will implement the following initiatives and programs to hold itself accountable and to keep the lines of communication open with the parents of the students served:

Parent Advisory Council

The EPAC Charter School Parent Advisory Council will be a School-facilitated informal group of parents of the school that meet virtually and/or face-to-face in order to give input on how the School can be improved for all students, serve as a resource for new families considering enrolling in the School, and discuss and react to future school plans.

Satisfaction Reporting

The EPAC Charter School will exist to serve students and their families. One way to measure organizational success and identify areas that need improvement is to frequently survey students, families, and staff to measure satisfaction with school programs and operations.

Student and parent satisfaction surveys will be anonymous surveys that can be completed online. The surveys will be administered upon completion of the enrollment, registration, and orientation processes, at the first 45-Day Check as part of the right start, and annually at the end of the

school year, when a summative satisfaction survey targeting course content and student support will be administered. Online staff satisfaction surveys will be administered as part of the First Quarter Review and Annual Performance Evaluation. New staff will also be surveyed about the effectiveness of training and preparation.

The results of the satisfaction surveys will be aggregated by contracted program evaluators and distributed within 30 days of the final submission date for each survey to the CEO/Principal and the Board. These results will be used as part of the EPAC Charter School's self-study and evaluation processes for continual improvement.

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

The Board of Trustees will have fiduciary responsibility over the EPAC Charter School. The CEO/Principal will be responsible to the Board in this area and will assure that all records are maintained in a safe and secure location both on the computer and in hard copy. The School intends to contract with Charter Choices for the Chief Financial Officer role and financial management. Charter Choices will work closely with the CEO/Principal to develop the budget for the Board's consideration and to oversee all financial processes and records. Charter Choices and the CEO/Principal will oversee the budget and all financial processes and the School will maintain a vigorous Internal Controls Policy. The CEO/Principal will report to the Board monthly and provide financial statements that include a list of expenditures, allocation of resources, explanation of significant variances, and any expected changes in the approved Budget. The Treasurer will present these statements to the Board at the monthly meetings, and the Board will review these monthly statements to determine (taking into consideration recommendations of school leadership) if any changes need to be made to the then-current Approved Operating Budget.

The EPAC Charter School will submit to all financial audits and comply with all required audit procedures, including an annual audit by the Pennsylvania Department of Education Comptroller's Office. Specifically, the School will hire an outside independent certified public accounting firm and will be audited annually by that firm according to the same guidelines applicable to public school systems in Pennsylvania. The cost of the independent audit will be part of the Budget. Copies of the audit will be submitted to all required parties.

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

The EPAC Charter School will protect, secure, and maintain the security and privacy of all student records. Student educational records that are kept in hard copy will be maintained in a locked file room in locked file cabinets. Student information kept electronically will be restricted. Everyone entering a student record will sign in using a protected password that will record anyone having accessed a particular student's records. Parents will have the right to access, seek to amend, or consent to disclosure of their children's educational records except when the school either has in its possession or has been provided information by appropriate authorities that a court order exists denying same.

### Access to Education Records

In compliance with FERPA, parents and students of EPAC Charter School will have access to view their child's/their own educational records upon written request (forms will be provided). Parents will be able to request a copy of their child's records in writing and one will be sent within 30 days. A free copy will be provided on the first request; after which the requesting party will need to pay the cost of copying (which will be determined). Any information pertaining to any student other than the student of record will be redacted.

Parents' requests for corrected understanding or perspective on a record perceived to be inaccurate will be scheduled for consideration. If the result is deemed less than acceptable by the parents, they will be offered the choice of a hearing to amend the records. If the hearing does not result in the desired amendment of the records, the parents will be offered the opportunity to place a written statement that will be both kept in the record and disclosed with the educational records except in the following situations:

- When a parent or student is seeking to change a grade or disciplinary decision.
- When the parent or student is seeking to change the opinions or reflections of a school official or other person reflected in an education record.
- When a parent or student is seeking to change a determination with respect to a student's status in special education programs.

Required IEPs will be maintained, revised, and re-evaluated in accordance with federal and state law. The EPAC Charter School will follow IDEA and FERPA guidelines for protecting and keeping confidential information relating to the special needs of students and, in compliance with Federal Laws 93-308 and 93-568, will present the following for the information of parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and students.

- Student records are open for review and inspection by parents/guardians or students 18 years of age or older. Students 16 years of age or older or who are emancipated have the right to give informed consent regarding their records, with some exceptions. Information regarding students 14 years of age or older with HIV/AIDS or an STD may be released by the student only.
- Appointments may be made with the Principal/CEO's office for viewing cumulative records of grades and achievement test scores.
- The EPAC Charter School, in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits parents and/or guardians or students to do the following:
  - Inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the EPAC Charter School receives a request for access. Under state public disclosure law, the EPAC Charter School must acknowledge the request in writing within five (5) working days and, unless the documents are presented at that time, an estimate will be provided as to when they will be available within the 45-day response period. Parent(s) and/or guardian(s) or eligible students should submit to the CEO/Principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The CEO/Principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected;

- Request amendment of the student's education records that the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) or eligible students believe to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's rights to privacy. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record to be amended as well as specify why the information in question is inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's rights to privacy. If the EPAC Charter School decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student, the School will notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student of the decision and advise them of the right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing;
  - Consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the EPAC Charter School as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the EPAC Charter School has contracted to perform a special task (such as attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility;
  - File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education under Section 99.64 concerning alleged failures by QVSD to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA follows:
    - Family Policy Compliance Office
    - U.S. Department of Education
    - 600 Independence Avenue, SW
    - Washington, DC 20202-4605
- Students of majority age (over 18) will have parental rights regarding issues related to their educational program.

Disclosure of Education Records

In compliance with FERPA, the EPAC Charter School will require written, dated, and signed parental consent before disclosure of student education records and ensure that the consent is signed and dated and states the purpose of the disclosure.

Disclosure of Education Records Without Parental Consent

The EPAC Charter School will disclose student records without parental consent when such disclosure is allowed under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act or its implementing regulations, as amended.

### Annual Notification

The EPAC Charter School will post on the website and send out with final report cards, notification that, with regard to their children's education records, parents have the right to:

- Access and review their children's educational records.
- Request correction of inaccurate or misleading information.
- Consent to appropriate disclosures of personally identifiable information.

The above Annual Notification will also be included in the Student and Parent Handbook.

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

The Education Plus Cyber Charter School is committed to integrity at every level and to maintaining accurate, authentic records of enrollment. The EPAC School recognizes and acknowledges the importance of child accounting, as charter school funding is enrollment based.

### Enrollment

At the time of enrollment, the following documentation will be provided for proper registration:

- Original Birth Certificate of the child with parents' names listed
- Immunization Records
- Final Report Card/Transfer Slip from previous school
- Lease, Deed, Current Mortgage Statement or County Tax Bill
- Current Utility Bill
- Government Issued Photo Identification for parents

### Withdrawal

Within 15 days of a student's withdrawal from the EPAC Charter School, the school will provide notification of withdrawal to the school district of residence. Students will have passwords to enter the master system, such as Blackboard which will keep an accurate record of time, date, duration of activity, etc. The data on this site will only be accessed by designated school personnel. We will comply with all requirements of section 1748-A.

The EPAC Charter School will access and use the required forms suggested and mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and by each child's school district of residence. Student Services and accounting personnel will work closely together to communicate student enrollments and withdrawals. Notification regarding students within the timeframe mandated by Charter School Law to school districts of origin will be a top priority for both enrollments and withdrawals. Student Services personnel will be responsible to gather all of the appropriate information, which will be included in the enrollment and withdrawal packets and will, within three days of receipt, notify the Accounting Department. The Accounting Department will provide all the necessary information to the district of origin on the next district school day or day of operation (as in the summer months and other school breaks).

The EPAC Charter School will use a data collection and storage program to maintain current student data, including enrollments and withdrawals, so that it will always be able to give an up-to-the-minute accounting for PIMS and the Pennsylvania Department of Education and School District child accounting forms.

### *G. Describe plans to evaluate student performance.*

Student performance will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and this information will be shared with students and parents/guardians on a regular basis, including in the regular meetings with the learning coaches. The special education coordinators will be informed as well and will maintain an active role in communicating and meeting with students to identify any needed supports. In addition, a system of interim student progress reports will be developed and delivered to students and parents on a monthly basis. Keeping parents and students informed assures accountability. Teachers will develop alternative assignments to support student efforts for enhancement or remediation. Using student evaluation to improve student achievement, all professional staff members will become well-versed in analyzing standardized assessments, designing rubrics, performance assessments, understanding formative assessment, summative assessment, and benchmarks. The standardized academic assessments noted below will allow teachers and learning coaches to monitor students' progress toward understanding content and applying skills.

### Academic Assessment and Monitoring

Connected to the psychological tests that determine a student's diagnosis, the EPAC Charter School will use educationally based testing to determine appropriate educational interventions and track progress. These educational tests and assessments provide the roadmap to teachers and learning coaches for student centric interventions. Examples of educational testing to determine the area of student, determine appropriate goal, and monitor progress include:

- *Alphabet* (Kindergarten through 1st grade level) – Students are quizzed on their ability to say and write the alphabet in order, both upper and lowercase, and then identify and reproduce, orally and in writing, the names of the capital and lowercase letters.
- *Spelling Test* – This test is based on the WRAT and provides a Kindergarten through 11.7 spelling level score. The first word is cat and words get progressively more difficult. This test can be given as a group test but must be closely monitored.
- *Knowledge of Letter Sounds* – Students are individually quizzed on their knowledge of single consonants, blends, digraphs, and Schuler's forty-three common vowel sounds as chosen from the Orton-Gillingham list.
- *Slosson Oral Reading* – This must be given as an individual test. Besides obtaining a grade level score, the teacher can monitor students' strategies for reading sight words, figuring out words that are more difficult, and dealing with frustration because words are too difficult.
- *Woodcock-Johnson Passage Comprehension* – This test must be given as an individual test. Besides obtaining a grade level score, the teacher is able to monitor the student's strategies for understanding simple sentences, figuring out which word will make the sentence/paragraph make sense when the questions are more difficult, and dealing with frustration because the sentences/ paragraphs are too difficult.
- *Basic Word Vocabulary Test* by Harold J. Dupuy, PhD (above grade four) – This test can be given as a group test, having the students just choose the correct answers and mark their papers. However, sometimes it is of great benefit to individually read orally to the student any questions they missed. Often their oral comprehension of words is much higher than their reading comprehension of words.
- *Counting Skills* (Kindergarten through 3rd grade) – Students are tested on their ability to count and write their numbers to 100 and then identify and reproduce, orally and in writing, the numbers randomly presented.

- *Skip counting* by 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s, 10s and 25s is tested. – This test is usually given by having the students respond orally but could be administered by having the students write out their skip counting responses.
- *Multiplication Facts* – This test can be given as a group test. Students are required to write the answers to a series of multiplication facts, from 0s to 9's, as quickly as possible. The time taken could be recorded based on when the students complete their tests.
- *Woodcock-Johnson Math Calculation, Applied Problems, and Quantitative Analysis* – The Math Calculation can be given as a group test. The Applied Problems and Quantitative Analysis tests must be given as individual tests. Besides obtaining a grade level score, the teacher is able to monitor the student's strategies for solving simple math concepts, figuring out more difficult problems, and dealing with frustration because the problems are too difficult.
- *SRA Corrective Reading Comprehension Placement Test* – This test must be administered individually. Not only does this test give a placement score into the SRA Corrective Reading Program, it tests the student's ability to repeat sentences and understand logic and reasoning tasks, plus vocabulary and basic information skills.
- *Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities* (up to age 9) – An age score is obtained from this test for Auditory Reception, Auditory Association, Visual Reception, and Visual Association.
- *Test of Written English* by Velma R. Andersen and Sheryl K. Thompson – This test can be given as a group. Grade scores for Capitalization, Punctuation, Written Expression, and a sample Paragraph are obtained.
- *Keystone Telebinocular School Screening Visual Acuity* (clear vision) is obtained, at both near and far, with both eyes open. This is a more accurate and more normal measure than by having a student cover one eye while checking the other. Muscle Balance, Fusion, Depth Perception (3-D), Color Perception, Lazy Eye and being too Far-Sighted are also checked.
- *Delacato Crawl* – Students are checked on their ability and how they move across the floor on their stomachs, using both sides, only the right side, and only the left side.
- *Quick Neurological Screening Test* Mutti, Martin, Sterling, and Spalding – This test checks for soft neurological signs, including hopping and balancing skills. Hand, Eye, Foot, and Ear Dominance Subjective Tests.
- *Jordan Left-Right Reversal Test* – This test can be given as a group. Not only does it test for individual letter and number reversals, it also checks for reversals of individual words and words in sentences.
- *Learning Efficiency Test* Raymond E. Webster, PhD – This test must be given individually. It tests both visual and auditory short and long term memory, in order and out of order.

### Student Assessment Methods

*Norm-Referenced Exams* – Students will participate in the norm-referenced exams as prescribed by PDE standards. Performance on these exams will be used to help school teams composed of the teacher, learning coach, and parent identify and prescribe customized remediation, where necessary.

*Performance-Based Exams* – Performance-based exams will be used to track student performance relative to state standards. These exams provide an analytical approach to student

performance and will be used as key criteria to adjust instructional strategies and modify the Student Learning Plans for all students, but especially for high- and low- achieving students.

*Performance Rubrics* – Literacy, numeracy, and other core skills affect student performance across the curriculum. Therefore, a set of standard rubrics will be used to ensure that students demonstrate mastery of these core skills as they complete assignments and exams required for course completion.

*Criterion-Based Testing* – Criterion-based tests show progress in a specific subject and are often included as part of a curriculum package. EPAC Charter School will use packaged pre- and post-course assessments to track student progress on the core content of the curriculum, where possible.

*Portfolio Projects* – Students reflect on and demonstrate personal academic growth by compiling, in consultation with the EPAC Charter School instructor, a portfolio of his/her best work from each course and a short (1-paragraph minimum) statement chronicling "Lessons Learned" from each course. "Lessons Learned" may include the "Aha!" moments in which the student made a connection to the content in a profound way or a candid reflection on study habits and/or interactions with the learning environment that either helped or hindered his/her progress in the course. The portfolio will be maintained online and updated each semester by the student. A current portfolio is required before grades for the semester will be issued to the student; a complete portfolio is required for graduation from the EPAC Charter School.

*Special Education Requirements* – IEPs will be revised by the Support Team that will meet at least once each year and will be re-evaluated at least every three years in accordance with federal and state requirements. The Support Team will include at minimum the teacher, learning coach, special education coordinator, psychologist, the parent/guardian, and the student as appropriate. The School Principal and/or other licensed/qualified professional will be included as necessary. The annual IEP revision process will result in revisions to the original IEP documentation. The third year re-evaluation process will result in a new set of written documentation specifying the student's needs and prescribing modifications to the student's curriculum and/or learning environment. The primary author of both the revision and the re-evaluation documentation will be an instructor certified in special education in the state of Pennsylvania.

Special services required by a student's IEP that are not provided by the school, but may be provided by the local Intermediate Unit or through fee-for-service programs, include, but are not limited to: mobility training and occupational therapy, adaptive and assistive technologies, psychological testing and counseling, speech/language programs, and transportation (when required).

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) will take one of five state assessment options available for Math, Reading and Science:

- PSSA
- PSSA with accommodations
- PSSA-Modified
- PSSA-Modified with accommodations
- PASA

### High School Students

High School Students will demonstrate their skills, knowledge, and awareness of their place in the local community by producing a capstone project that includes: product or performance and a research or reflection paper. Student mentors will work with students over a two-year period from the design and implementation phase to the completion of the senior/community service project. Students will present a summary of their project and paper at regional Parent Advisory Council Meetings and/or other school format.

### High School Exit Exams

High School Students must demonstrate math and reading competencies to be eligible for the Pennsylvania Certificate of Proficiency or Pennsylvania Certificate of Distinction.

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

The EPAC Charter School will leverage technology to collect and manage student data as efficiently, accurately, and securely as possible. The School will license a Student Information System (SIS) that integrates with the Learning Management System in order to collect essential data about student demographics and performance and to enable the School to provide accurate information in a timely manner and in compliance with FERPA and other student privacy requirements. Diagnostic testing will determine a baseline for individual student achievement.

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

As noted above, in addition to regular updates the students and parents/guardians will receive from teachers and the learning coaches, a system of interim student progress reports will be developed and delivered to students and parents on a monthly basis. Keeping parents and students informed assures accountability. Teachers will develop alternative assignments to support student efforts for enhancement or remediation. To use student evaluation to improve student achievement, all professional staff members will become well-versed in analyzing standardized assessments, designing rubrics, performance assessments, understanding formative assessment, summative assessment, and benchmarks. Assessments will be designed or acquired to monitor students' progress toward understanding content and applying skills.

## **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.*

Although the EPAC Charter School will be a virtual school and will not start out with a physical presence in a community, as soon as students enroll from a community, the special education coordinators will be connect with the school districts from which the students come and begin working with the parents to find resources in the community. When more than a few students are grouped geographically, the special education coordinators will arrange in-person activities as appropriate to the students and the community. Appropriate and effective academic learning

sites (libraries, community settings and the like) will be identified by the special education coordinators, teachers, administrators and the technology team.

A Parent Advisory Council will be established with members from across the state to support parents and to guide the EPAC Charter School staff and board. Additionally, there will be partnerships developed with special education associations to ensure parents have access to direct supportive resources.

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

Learning that your child is academically behind and/or has a learning disability/difference can be devastating to parents. The Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School will empower parents to support their child's education by providing them with information and the right resources and tools, including a support network. Parents need to understand their child's disability and the kinds of support the child will need and be connected to support resources.

At EPAC Charter School parents will be key partners in the learning process. All relevant research points to strong parental presence as one of the main reasons students succeed in school. Parents will be included in every aspect of EPAC Charter School. Parents will help to ensure that their children stay on task throughout their school years. Parental involvement in assuring that students are participating and learning effectively will be supported by the School. The administration of EPAC Charter School realizes that schools are no longer just a place where students learn; rather, schools are increasingly becoming a type of social service agency. To deny this would be to be blind to the realities of today's student. Thus, we will seek out funding opportunities to support this goal as the School works to make services available to parents that will be designed to assist them with everything from improving parenting skills to job readiness. Parents will be required to attend the face-to-face meetings with learning coaches in grades K-5 and to have monthly meetings with the learning coaches in grades 6-12. They will be invited to participate on the Parent Advisory Council and to serve as ambassadors for the School by participating in open house activities designed to increase School enrollment. This goal will be measured by student and parent participation and by higher enrollment each year.

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

Parents will be encouraged from the time their children enroll in the EPAC Charter School to let School staff know immediately if they become aware of a problem or if they have a complaint about the School. They will be in contact regularly with the learning coaches, who will be alert for any issues or dissatisfaction. Parents will also be informed in the Student and Parent Handbook that they will receive each year of a formal complaint/grievance procedure that will include the name and contact information for the Principal/CEO, timeframes in which grievances will be handled, and steps in the process.

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

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

#### Virtual Socialization

Virtual Socialization will be a principal component of the EPAC Charter School. The School believes that the creation of a virtual social environment within ‘Virtual Walls’, supervised by adults, is critical to providing an environment that promotes social growth of the students, but is also safe. Virtual socialization at EPAC Charter School will take many forms. Clubs and organizations enabled by technology will be made available to students (e.g., chess, debate, school newspaper, student government). On their own time, but with oversight from School staff, students will be able to socialize online through email exchange, online discussion forums (movies, philosophy, sports), instant messaging and Skype, and through publishing of their own personal websites. Virtual socialization will be closely monitored by School staff using tools to prevent cyber bullying, protect the identities of students, and ensure appropriate behavior. The EPAC Charter School will provide password-protected security to keep cyber predators out.

Within the EPAC Charter School Learning Community, social/learning networks will support like groups of members in the learning community as well as across groups. For example, there will be student government and clubs, parent associations, peer-to-peer learning communities, and instructor/mentor professional development groups.

#### Community Activities

EPAC Charter School students will be encouraged to participate in activities sponsored by their local school district, such as clubs, choirs, etc. In addition, the Charter School, in cooperation with the Parent Advisory Council, will identify appropriate activities throughout the state that students can attend such as social gatherings, recreational sports at local YMCAs, trips to museums, and dances. The School will plan quarterly events in multiple locations throughout Pennsylvania to bring together families from various regions. These events will include both school and social functions: class registration, orientation, first quarter review, school dances, summer picnics, graduation, etc.

There will be School/Community Coordinators, also known as Parent Liaisons, who will be parents of current or former EPAC Charter School students and will serve several roles in these paid positions. First, they will bring together students for social events in their area – both purely social and educational (e.g., museum field trips, trips to the theater, community projects, etc.). Second, the School/Community Coordinators will serve as advocates for the School in marketing, speaking with families considering the school, speaking to the press as needed, and speaking with community organizations as warranted. Finally, these School/Community Coordinators will work with the special education coordinators to create learning and support communities across current parents of students and provide a vehicle to communicate concerns to school staff and administrators.

*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.*

The EPAC Charter School has not yet pursued resident district extracurricular partnerships, but will do so quickly when the charter is granted. EPAC Charter School students, by law, are allowed to participate in the extracurricular activities of their resident school district, assuming

the student is able to fulfill the requirements of participation and EPAC Charter School does not provide the same extracurricular activity. The EPAC Charter School will work in partnership with students' resident school district to assure that students' needs and desires are met. The School will provide copies of a student's attendance record and grades, as needed to verify that the student has met the established standards for the extracurricular activity. The School will inform the student's parents that they must authorize release of such information, which may constitute the student's education record, in order for the resident school district to verify that their children are eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities. The EPAC Charter School will also advise parents that the resident school districts are not required to provide transportation for the EPAC Charter School student to or from the extracurricular activity. In the case of a disabled student, the School will work cooperatively with the resident school district to provide any additional information needed in support of the student's participation.

Should the resident school district charge for the participation of the student in an extracurricular activity, EPAC Charter School will work in partnership with the school district to determine appropriate fees and schedule for payment.

## **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.*

### Virtual Classroom

Synchronous cyber instruction bridges the gap between text-based asynchronous distance learning and the face-to-face interaction of a real classroom. For a significant part of each day, the students will attend the EPAC Charter School's synchronous virtual classroom, which will be an instructor-led environment that delivers real-time, interactive education and encourages real learning. Synchronous learning provides opportunities for existing students and reaches new students – across town or around the globe. Synchronous learning expands the boundaries of the physical classroom with remote guest speakers; connects students from other classrooms across the globe for joint lessons and activities, and records in-class lectures that can be easily accessed later for exam preparation.

In addition, there will be times of group classes and other times of asynchronous instruction that will allow instructors to easily engage students, promote understanding, improve performance, lower dropout rates, create a community of learners, and best of all, enhance the learning experience. This model will include instructor-led courses, peer-based tutoring, student collaboration, virtual office hours, and much more.

Finally, the synchronous meeting capacity will be used to offer professional development to instructors and administrative staff without costly travel or telephone/video conferencing. Instructors will be able to participate in meetings, and instructional designers and other teams will be able to work together on projects. Those who missed a course or meeting will be able to access recorded sessions on demand.

### Learning Management System

The Learning Management System (LMS) is a portal or gateway to the online classroom. As the name implies, a learning management system provides a suite of integrated tools to facilitate all aspects of the learning process, including content delivery, communication, and assessment and evaluation. Technology is leveraged to provide customizable learning experiences for all students; the technology itself is transparent to the students. The LMS is a highly interactive, secure website that hosts the course content. It contains a set of integrated communication tools, including discussion boards, private chat rooms, and email, that allow students to communicate with the instructor and with each other both asynchronously and live time. It provides a tool for students to submit work and take exams and for instructors to provide feedback on that work. A grade-book that is updated regularly and linked to each submitted assignment is an essential element of any learning management system. Customizable reports allow members of the Support Team to get up-to-date information as needed regarding the students' progress through the course, login dates and times, and the quality of work that has been submitted.

New students and parents are trained in the use of the LMS via an online orientation module in advance of course start dates and via learning coach visits to homes.

The EPAC Charter School's LMS solution was reached based on the following criteria:

- Technical reliability
- Superior service levels
- Platform interoperability and course portability
- Administrative and course-level data-capturing and reporting capabilities
- Ease of use for students and instructors
- Hosted solution
- Customizability of solution

Based on these criteria and the flexibility needed by its target population, as noted above, the EPAC Charter School has selected Study Island to be its LMS solution. Study Island allows for web-based instruction, practice, assessment and reporting, rigorous academic content that is both fun and engaging. This research-based program has proven results. It is affordable compared to other print or technology learning products and easy to use (accessible in the lab, classroom, library, or home). The EPAC Charter School intends to also partner with Learning.com which provides a network of content providers and a curated collection of award-winning digital content.

The Study Island Pennsylvania Standards Mastery and PSSA Preparation Program is specifically designed to help students master the content specified in the Pennsylvania Assessment Anchors. Study Island's focus on the Assessment Anchors enables students to improve their performance in all skill areas tested on the PSSA. Programs are available for 2nd through 8th grade, as well as high school Math, Reading, Writing, and Science. Study Island also offers Algebra I & II, Geometry, Biology, Chemistry, Civics & Economics, US History & Geography, and World History and Geography Skills Mastery programs for high school, as well as Fine Arts, Technology, and Health for elementary and middle school. Kindergarten through 1st grade products are available for Math and Reading Skills.

The user-friendly interface will allow students to move through the program step-by-step. Each section has a pre-test and a post-test, as well as topics that cover each of the standards outlined in the Assessment Anchors. Topics consist of questions, answers, explanations, and lessons that address specific skills required in order to master the Assessment Anchors. Through a comprehensive system of assessment and instructional practice tools, the Study Island LMS program functions both as an instructional program and a progress-monitoring tool, providing instructors with ongoing and in-depth feedback regarding student progress toward mastery of content standards. Educators can use the system as a stand-alone tutorial program or as a supplement to their classroom curriculum. The flexible nature of the program creates a personalized learning experience for each student, helping instructors to individualize and differentiate instruction in order to meet the needs of all students and target remediation to the areas that are most critical.

The web-based platform of the Study Island program creates a learning environment that is accessible from any computer connected to the Internet, allowing students to practice skills. Through its interactive and flexible instructional platform, Study Island provides engaging, ongoing practice and remediation to help students meet their required standards in all major content areas.

#### Student Information System

The EPAC Charter School will utilize a Student Information System (SIS). The SIS will contain all student personal information, course schedule, and links/access to online classrooms, access to instructors' online offices, and the online library/resource center, and will serve as the entry point for EPAC Charter School students. The SIS will be used to maintain accurate student count, including all new enrollments and withdrawals, enabling the School to complete the required Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) student accounting forms. The EPAC Charter School will maintain accurate records, which will include the basic data required for each student necessary to complete the student accounting forms and other student data forms to be submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Examples of the type of information that will be stored within the EPAC Charter School SIS include:

- School year
- Instructional skill
- Collection period
- State Student ID (SSID)
- Student legal name
- Student birth date
- Student gender
- Student Address
- Names and addresses of parents or legal guardians
- Student grade level
- Student primary language
- Student race/ethnicity
- Student disability status
- Student resident county-district code
- Services codes (numerous)
- Enrollment status
- Enrollment date
- Withdrawal date
- Exceptionality codes

The EPAC Charter School will provide resident school districts with the PDE Charter School Student Enrollment Notification Form for each district student enrolled in the School within 15 days of the student's enrollment, and will notify the school district within 15 days of a student's withdrawal.

### Administrator/Teacher Information System

The EPAC Charter School will utilize The School Collective (TSC) as the foundation for its administrator/teacher information and professional development network to increase collaboration both within the School and across the wider education community.

Currently, TSC is working in 20 schools, including eight charter schools, five district schools, three independent schools and three parochial schools. TSC partners closely with these schools and educational organizations to maximize their teaching potential, institutionalize their school's data, and encourage the sharing of best practices and other educational materials. TSC enables collaboration on curriculum and best practices for each teacher and administrator individually and increases the overall collaboration between the larger education communities. TSC's goal is to see measurable impact on school collaboration, lesson quality, and administrator feedback on lesson plans. In current schools, TSC shows direct correlations between its data and improved teacher quality, which it tracks through school-based tools used to assess teacher performance (student assessments and observation forms).

TSC also provides a vital tool to help with professional development and collaboration. As a system that enables teachers and administrators to communicate with each other within and outside of school buildings through the use of technology, it expands the hours of potential collaboration and professional development for educators. With the networked system, teachers are able to share information and best practices with ease and principals/administrators have a tool to facilitate peer observations and knowledge sharing (through videos and lesson plan attachment tools). Also, with tools such as "Sort by Standard", teachers can be more data driven in their instruction and use their network of educators to ensure they are taking the best approaches with their class to master the material.

With the ability to track feedback, observations and professional development steps, TSC increases accountability among teachers and administrators. In alignment with the latest in teacher development research, TSC believes that giving educators more control over their learning and holding them accountable for their results will enable teachers to make effective use of professional development tools to improve student performance.

### Student Technology

All students will be provided with laptop computers, printers, and an Internet stipend to facilitate the delivery of content. Students will also be provided with textbooks and course materials as dictated by the program. Online course materials will be accessed by students via a password protected secure server. Laptops will be equipped with the appropriate learning software that prohibits students from accessing inappropriate internet sites and filters will be put in place to assist students in "staying on task".

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

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

Personalizing education to meet the needs of each individual student and to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome requires data to appropriately assess learning, monitor progress, and efficiently act on the information to guide the student towards a successful outcome. Each student has his/her own story, and that story – to be acted on through technology

in an efficient, cost-effective way to improve student outcomes – can be told through data. Data collection will include:

- A unique student identifier that follows them through EPAC Charter School systems to tie all student data together;
- Information (for both students and parent/guardians) regarding student level enrollment, demographics, early assessment, placement exams, contact information, and student interests and desires;
- Student level test data and school history;
- Course level completion, assignment, and assessment data; and
- LMS data on time spent, logon times, etc.

The EPAC Charter School Support Team will be made up of technology facilitators, teachers, learning coaches, and parents/guardians and will ensure that no student falls through the cracks. Too often in online learning, keeping abreast of how the student is faring in the program and how events or situations in their learning environment impact that performance does not receive the attention that the student deserves. Where many online programs orient their program by course, the EPAC Charter School program will be oriented by individual and course, so that there are reinforcing, intersecting points of contact to ensure that the student/family receives support as needed. At the course level, the teacher and learning coach support the student. At the individual level, the learning coach will work directly with the student (and his/her family) to provide support. The parent/guardian will play a critical role in interfacing with the learning coach relative to his/her child.

#### *Technology Facilitator*

The EPAC Charter School Technology facilitators will train teachers, learning coaches, and parents/guardians on the proper use of the technology portal to access course content, submit assignments, and network. In addition, the technology facilitator(s) will provide customer service to all technology users to ensure consistent online access.

#### *Teacher*

The EPAC Charter School instructors will be carefully selected to be excellent teachers, who are deeply committed to helping each student achieve success as online learners. They will be well trained in the implementation of the curriculum and the management of online classes. The teacher will be the primary point of contact for student questions regarding the course content and will answer questions, evaluate assignments, and provide timely feedback to students.

#### *Learning Coach*

The learning coach will be the primary point of contact for student/parent questions about technology, course organization, expectations, etc. The learning coach will also be responsible for reinforcing and assisting students with teacher instructions and assignments, collecting reports, and contacting students who have not been participating regularly. Learning coaches need not be content experts in the content of the courses.

#### *Parents/Guardians*

Parents and guardians are considered valuable members of the Support Team supporting each student and as such are apprised of student progress and problems on a regular basis. Each student's parent or guardian receives at minimum a monthly grade update for each course. If the student's progress or performance in any class is unsatisfactory, the teacher and/or learning

coach will contact the parent/guardian to notify him/her of the problem and, where possible, to enlist support in the implementation of the interventions recommended by the Support Team.

### *Student Support Programs*

The likelihood of success of an online learner is significantly higher when that student's initial experience is positive and when she/he feels a clear sense of personal direction. A positive experience is marked by student confidence, excitement, connection, support, and a feeling of momentum. The EPAC Charter School believes that the crucial time period for student engagement and retention begins weeks before the student officially starts his/her studies and lasts at least for the first semester. By the very nature of technology and taking online courses, rich data that indicates activity (login, assignment submission, time of study, assessment completion) can be readily reported on and monitored. To ensure a Strong First Step, the EPAC Charter School will offer the following actions:

- Initial Learning Assessment to determine learning style,
- Personal Interview to determine personal interests,
- Collection of Personal Data,
- Assignment of a EPAC Charter School Student Mentor (fellow student),
- Assignment of a EPAC Charter School Mentor as part of Support Team,
- EPAC Charter School online Orientation module (for students and parents),
- Face-to-face school orientation (for students and parents),
- Readiness check prior to school start,
- EPAC Charter School social events (to meet other EPAC Charter School students),
- Course selection for High School Students,
- Initial Day 3 Check In (for technical issues and startup),
- Day 14 Check In (further follow-up), and
- First quarter review w/parents.

### Continuous Monitoring/Support

Just like a strong beginning is critical to success, so too is continual monitoring of student progress to improve student outcomes and completion. As noted above, to ensure continuing progress, the EPAC Charter School will offer day 45 check ins, parent reviews at least monthly, and a summer development plan every year.

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

Please see FERPA Information section above. Parents will receive regular notification of FERPA policy, including the system for maintaining records, which will be communicated with staff in formal printed communications and personal conferences with staff members, and student and parent rights and requirements, which will be communicated with parents using handbook (printed and online) communications.

Parent/guardian(s) who do not want personally identifiable information (otherwise known as directory information) contained within a student's educational records made public may file a written objection with the School CEO/Principal in regard to the release to the public of such information within ten (10) calendar days following notice of these rights to students.

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

The EPAC Charter School realizes that verifying the authenticity of student work is problematic in both traditional and online school environments. The School will implement a number of policies and procedures in order to ensure students are doing their own work, including use of online tools to identify the amount of borrowed or plagiarized material in written assignments and the use of password protected mid-term (semester) and final exams.

The EPAC Charter School will utilize the online plagiarism identification tool called TurnItIn.com to verify originality of students' written work. TurnItIn.com references not only the Internet and "paper mills" available online, but also other student work that has been submitted through TurnItIn.com. In addition, the School's exams will be password protected. In order to obtain the password, students will need to call a student services desk during posted business hours to obtain the password for their exam and they will need to correctly answer three questions (e.g., zip code, mother's maiden name, and birth date) in order to obtain the password. The EPAC Charter School will continually monitor, implement, and create best practices in ensuring the authenticity of student work in an online environment.

Ultimately, however, the School believes that one of the most powerful methods of verifying the authenticity of student work is a deep knowledge of the student's voice, style, and level of work, which comes from working with students regularly in an instructional setting throughout the year. As stated earlier, students are visited weekly or bi-weekly to assist with and assess student's academic work and progress. Weekly or bi-weekly visits will ensure academic progress connected to the authenticity of the student work.

Academic Dishonesty

The EPAC Charter School will have a zero tolerance policy for academic dishonesty. Cheating (giving or receiving information) and plagiarism on class work will result in a zero grade for the assignment. Students will not have the opportunity to complete additional assignments to make up lost points. The following procedure will be used for identification and discipline for instances of academic dishonesty:

- The teacher and/or learning coach will notify the student in writing that an instance has been identified in which the work's authorship is in question and request that the student respond in writing within three school days. The instructor will copy the Principal on the email.
- The teacher and/or learning coach will send the Principal an email identifying the alleged infraction and providing evidence to support the allegation. Evidence may include links to websites that have been plagiarized, references to "collaboration catchers" embedded in quizzes/exams, time and date stamps on assignments, inconsistency in quality of work, comprehension of concepts, verbal print, etc.
- The Principal will contact student and parent/guardian for comment.
- The Principal will make a decision based on the evidence presented and inform the instructor and student via email of the decision.
- The student will be placed on internal academic watch. The incident will be reported to the student's other instructors and the student's work will be routinely run through plagiarism-identification software.
- Additional disciplinary action may be taken.

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

Students will be provided with a laptop computer with a built-in webcam and a printer, and will have an Internet stipend to help cover the costs of Internet service. By supplying each student with a pre-configured hardware and software platform (Student Technology), the EPAC Charter School will be able to provide better support and ensure a consistent and secure educational environment for every student. Actual hardware is not listed here due to the rapid changing environment of technology and individual computer capabilities.

Technical support will begin from the moment the student registers and the Student Technology is prepared to ship. The EPAC Charter School will perform a detailed quality assurance check at the point of shipment to make sure all the necessary components are included in the shipment. In addition to the Student Technology, the School will include a number of “Getting Started” documents to assist the student and family once the shipment arrives on their doorstep. The School will provide a technology checklist that will include: shipment contents, hardware setup, internet connection, and software application check. Additionally, families will receive information about how to contact the School Technology Department should they have questions. Students and their families will have several ways to access support from the School: by phone through a 1-800 number, via a technical support email address, through online support, or through an extensive FAQ available on the EPAC Charter School website.

Students and their families will be provided with an online orientation and learning coach visit that will enable them to become familiar with all aspects of the EPAC Charter School online learning environment. Again, questions will be answered via phone, email, or online support.

Ongoing technical support that will be provided includes:

- Correction of hardware/software/connections problems
- Fulfillment of school materials
- Accessing courses/LMS
- Academic questions
- Course change questions
- Policy/dispute questions

The EPAC Charter School is organized to ensure that specific questions can be responded to in an expedited fashion. The School will provide 1-800 phone support 12 hours a day, 5 days a week, as well as 24-hour online support to help families with course access issues, lost passwords, and to troubleshoot hardware/software/internet connectivity issues.

## 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?*

#### Disabilities with Serious Consequences

There is a critical window of language development from birth through roughly 10 to 11 years, during which time children with language-based learning disorders must receive intensive instruction in phonological awareness, phonological memory, sound-symbol connections, letter identification, reading decoding and reading comprehension (Shaywitz, 2003) if they are to succeed as readers, writers, and learners.

In the case of children with language-based disorders, early identification of the disability and the correct application of special education programs and services are essential to a positive prognosis for developing literacy skills commensurate with age, grade, and ability expectations (Shaywitz, 2003). Research shows that once children enter formal schooling, variables related to their reading instruction become the most critical influence on their eventual reading attainment (Spear-Swerling, 2004). Torgesen (1998), for example, found that weak readers who receive insufficient or substandard instruction during their early elementary school years almost invariably continue to be poor readers in the later grades and into adulthood. Thus, the lack of early identification and special education programming for students with language-based reading disorders and dyslexia has serious long-term consequences for such individuals.

Research also shows that students who acquire reading skill levels appropriate to their grade during the first three years of elementary school suffer less negative severe consequences which, in turn, mitigates the well-documented negative risk factors of a language-based learning disability (Scanlon and Mellard, 2002). When children do not receive appropriate and effective instruction in reading and fall behind their peers in the acquisition of critical literacy skills, a process known as the “Matthew Effect” often takes place (Stanovich, 1986). This term refers to the biblical phrase about the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer, where the student actually learns less in school than her non-disabled peers and accumulates deficits in general knowledge, vocabulary, and language as a direct result of educational deprivation.

The lack of early diagnosis, along with proper and affordable educational support systems for parents, results in many dyslexic children ending up with low literacy, low self-esteem, and too often engaging in delinquent behavior and dropping out. When students are correctly identified as having language-based learning disorders during the critical window of development and are provided with the intensive, synthetic, phonetic, code-emphasis literacy skill instruction that is tailored to their needs, they can establish their reading, spelling and writing skills as well as their non-disabled peers and commensurate with their cognitive abilities. Having done so, they can then access the general education curriculum at grade level. If remediation and a focused educational curriculum are offered to children with dyslexia, who usually have average or high IQs, most of them will prosper. A recent survey in the US indicated that 35% of entrepreneurs are dyslexic. (NPR, December 26, 2007)

### Lack of Accessible Services

While schools and educators have become very good at assessing that children who are academically behind have learning disabilities or other challenges, few institutions have created systematic interventions that directly address the issues underlying the learning challenges.

The lack of early diagnosis and proper and affordable educational support systems causes many children with academic challenges or learning disabilities to end up with low literacy and low self-esteem, resulting in increased high school dropout rates and high delinquency:

- Two-thirds of secondary students with learning disabilities read three or more grade levels behind, and 20 percent read five or more grade levels behind (National Center for Learning Disabilities 2009).
- More than 38.7 percent of children with learning disabilities drop out of high school, compared to 11 percent of the general student population (National Center for Learning Disabilities 2009).
- Three-quarters of learning-disabled students remain learning-disabled in the ninth grade (National Institutes of Health 1994).
- Individuals with learning differences often experience symptoms of anxiety, depression and low self-esteem (Ryan 2004).
- National studies (National Center for Learning Disabilities 2009) show that 80 percent of all students in special education in the public schools have learning disabilities, and two-thirds of secondary students with learning disabilities are reading three or more grade levels below their peers. Approximately one-third of children identified with learning disabilities drop out of high school – twice the rate of their non-disabled peers.
- A study of dropout rates in Philadelphia public high schools during the 2003-04 school year showed that a shocking 78 percent of eighth-grade students who failed either math or English later dropped out of high school.

The need for a public school such as the Education Plus Cyber Charter School is overwhelming. Seven percent of children in the U.S. have learning difficulties. Of those children, approximately 85 percent struggle the most with reading and language processing. Furthermore, 20 percent of the general population has symptoms of dyslexia, such as poor writing and spelling, slow and inaccurate reading, and a tendency to confuse similar words. As an example, dyslexia affects at least 10 million, or one child in five. Most children with dyslexia have average to high IQs and have strengths in areas such as technology, arts, and spatial relationships. Pennsylvania has a total school enrollment of approximately 1,787,351 of which 15% or 270,150 are enrolled in Special Education Programs. Of these, 50% are students with specific learning disabilities.

In an ideal world, all students would have their educational needs met in the traditional setting. In the real world, however, there will always be a need to provide educational opportunities for students who do not fit into the traditional setting. Most public schools simply do not have the resources, or staff with the skills needed to work effectively with children with average or higher IQs and language-based learning disabilities. Children are often placed in general special education classes with children with very different needs from theirs, where they do not receive the intensive language-based instruction and challenging curriculum that they need.

Parents who look for alternatives for their academically challenged and/or learning disabled children, including schooling them at home, find that there are very few resources – financial, technical, or otherwise – available to support them. Although evidence-based educational solutions currently exist to serve these students; they are often very costly to parents paying out of pocket. The average private school tuition for a specialized school along with tutoring needs falls between \$26,000 - \$40,000. Thus, parents with children who need an alternative education intervention are put under tremendous strain. In most cases, parents in Pennsylvania are not able to afford the education or tutoring for their children. Ultimately, most families cannot afford schools that specialize and have systematic interventions that directly address the issues underlying the learning challenges. For the most part, adequate public options for these families simply do not exist.

*Private Special Education Schools* – According to the National Center for Learning Disabilities, private schools that focus on the needs of students with learning disabilities vary greatly in their student populations, faculty constellations, philosophies of instruction, and funding and administrative structure. Some accept state or local school district funding to satisfy tuition obligations, some accept partial payment and hold parents responsible for the remainder. And some neither charge families nor receive state subsidies, relying completely on fundraising from private donors and foundations to pay for their operation. Private schools can often (but not always) receive text books and other instructional materials from public schools to support their students.

Parents can decide to send their children to a private school, but the public school district in which they reside is not required to pick up the private school tuition for a disabled child if the parents choose to send their child to the private institution. However, there are some exceptions to this rule. Parents can ask that the regional intermediate unit in which the child’s school is located to determine if the child needs special education services. If the child is found to need services, a school district is “not required to pay for the cost of education, including special education and related services, of a child with a disability at a private school or facility if the school district makes a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) available to the child and the parents elect to place the child in a private school or facility.” If the school district does not provide adequate services to the disabled child, parents can ask a holding officer to order the school district to pay the tuition for a private school that offers the appropriate services. However, this often requires leaving a child in a failing program while the critical window for remediation passes.

There are a number of private schools that serve children with learning disabilities/differences in the Philadelphia region:

- Academy in Manayunk
- Center School
- Delaware Valley Friends School
- Hill Top Preparatory School
- Silver Springs- Martin Luther School
- Stratford Friends School
- The Hillside School

- The Janus School
- The Phelps School
- The Quaker School at Horsham
- The Solebury School
- The Vanguard School
- ACLD Tillotson School
- Woodlynde School
- Benchmark School

As noted above, the tuition for these schools can range up to \$40,000 per year and critical time for the child can be lost going through the process of having the school district pay some or all of the tuition. There are few schools elsewhere in Pennsylvania that serve learning disabled children. Many parents elect to school their children at home to avoid the problems that the children can encounter in special education in public school. However, few parents have the knowledge to provide the specialized services their learning disabled child needs to learn the skills that will make him or her a successful student.

The cyber school being proposed here will be a technology-based program designed to provide specialized evidence-based instruction techniques complemented with individualized learning for students and significant parental involvement/training for students who were unable to succeed in a traditional educational setting.

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

The EPAC Charter School will be an appropriate vehicle for educating students who are academically behind and/or diagnosed with a learning disability/difference for three primary reasons:

- This model provides academically challenged and/or learning disabled students with individualized and student centric instruction, using a medium that they can relate to and be successful with, computers.
- This model provides the parents/guardians of academically challenged and/or learning disabled students with weekly support via online instruction and weekly or biweekly individualized student lessons to ensure they are well versed in the school's methodology and content to help their child stay on task with their academic work.
- This model captures the full power and advancement of technology to provide expert and quality controlled instruction that supports the needs and learning styles of academically challenged and/or learning disabled students.
- The cyber school model uses technology to keep the cost of expert instruction low, allowing it to be offered as a public service without sacrificing quality.

Many schools are not able to teach reading to some students because they do not have a team of experts well versed in specialized evidenced-based instruction models. Failing to teach reading is truly a pay now or pay later proposition. The teaching of literacy skills to children, including decoding, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling, and writing, represents the primary goal of all educators, regardless of their school or grade level. At the same time, the research on the

teaching of reading indicates that this skill is an incredibly complex task for all children, but particularly so for learning disabled students, and that it is based on sophisticated studies of how the brain engages to complete this task and how language develops.

The challenge expressed in a paper by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) in May, 2006 entitled *What Education Schools Aren't Teaching about Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning* is that teaching colleges are not adequately preparing the teachers of reading in the key components of reading instruction as outlined by the National Reading Panel Report in 2000. In fact, only 15% of the education schools surveyed mentioned all five components of reading. This presents a challenge for the administrators of schools who must work to continue the education and coaching of the teachers of reading and literacy.

The world-wide web is full of lesson plans for teachers in every subject and at every grade imaginable. Teachers can simply search a subject and have access to thousands of lesson materials and ideas. **Why is there a need for additional assistance for teachers?** Searching the web for content assumes that the specific literacy need of the child has been identified by the teacher and has been pinpointed sufficiently so that the content maps to the child's need. **This is the challenge.** *"Teaching reading IS rocket science,"* as Louisa Moats so aptly noted. Learning to teach reading is no different than learning to be a skilled medical surgeon. It requires extensive experience, ongoing coaching and mentoring, and sophisticated knowledge of the research behind the practice. Sadly, our society does not equate the level of knowledge and experience needed for the teaching of literacy to that needed by our medical professionals.

"The field of learning disabilities, like other areas of education, is in the process of transforming from a discipline based largely on clinical intuition and craft to a profession that relies on scientific research. Although intuition and experience influence teaching practices, especially with individual students, instruction needs to be informed by research on effectiveness and the mechanisms that underlie efficacy."

– Learning Disabilities, Fletcher and Lyon et al (2007)

The EPAC Charter School professionals will all have expertise and will be well trained in teaching challenged students with alternative evidence-based models. They will have ongoing coaching and mentoring to allow them to help students advance academically where the traditional school has not been successful. Combining this specialized expertise and tailored instruction with direct guided parent/guardian involvement in the student's instruction and with technology-facilitated tools will provide students with the proper environment to learn.

Children who are attending a cyber school do not have to miss out on all of the social benefits and activities of a traditional school. As noted above, the EPAC Charter School will provide a number of activities for students, including virtual socialization, student government and clubs, community connections, and in-person activities. In addition, parents can enroll their child in the local public school district to get some services from the intermediate unit. The public school is not allowed to prohibit a parentally-placed private school student from enrolling in the school district to receive services, such as occupational therapy, and to participate in activities, such as choir, sports, or clubs.

## **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?*

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

The EPAC Charter School expects to enroll 100 students for the first year (2012-2013), averaging 25 students for grades K-3. In year two, the School will add an additional grade and an additional cohort equaling 40 students per grade. In each of the years three through ten, the School will add an additional grade, resulting in an estimated 40 students per grade for a total student population of 300 students by year 5 and 500 students by year 10.

The EPAC Charter School will most likely attract students who struggle to succeed in traditional settings due to many factors including their own learning disabilities/differences and their school's limited knowledge of educational evidenced based interventions. The School will also likely attract students who are currently being home-schooled or enrolled in other cyber charter schools due to the nature of the instruction and the need for home support. All students will be accepted regardless of race and ethnicity and both males and females will be accepted into the program. Students will be in grades K-12 and so will be aged 5-21. It is expected that the primary language of the students will be English, but accommodations will be made if and when an ESL student enters the school.

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

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

The EPAC Charter School will serve students throughout Pennsylvania, providing regionally based face-to-face services wherever there are groups of students. Philadelphia was selected as the initial site for the School because of the density of population, ease of bringing students together, and need. However, the EPAC Charter School will educate children throughout Pennsylvania based upon need and demand. The administrative offices will be located at the Public Health Management Corporation in Philadelphia. This site was selected for several reasons: 1) it will be convenient for the initial group of students and parents, who are expected to come mostly from the City; 2) the technological set-up is already available; and 3) this institution has agreed to partner and serve as a resource for the EPAC Charter School and its students.

The PHMC offices are conveniently located near Center City (downtown Philadelphia). Since students will need to travel to the administrative offices for a variety of reasons, this location will provide the most convenient access. As the school population grows, additional administrative offices will be opened in partner agencies that may include libraries and/or recreation centers. In order for our teachers to conduct lessons and interface with their students and parents, a location is needed to accommodate this type of technology. PHMC and the Kroc Center have agreed to

provide the EPAC Charter School with both telecommunications and computer services and technology equipped classrooms; common areas for parent training, conferences, and other school-related activities; access to conference rooms; and office space for administrative and educational records.

### **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.*

*Note: Please attach letters of intent that were sent to all school districts from which the cyber charter school could reasonably expect to draw students.*

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

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

*C. What efforts will be implemented to maintain a collaborative relationship with 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 EPAC Charter School intends to provide value added to all schools given the expertise and specialty instruction for students with language based needs. It is anticipated that schools and districts will welcome this partnership and welcome the addition of a school to serve this specialized population.

In order to maintain a collaborative relationship with school districts, the EPAC Charter School will work closely with each school district from which students come. One of the Principal/CEO's responsibilities will be to ensure that communication with the school districts is open and ongoing. The School will respond timely to districts requests for information and notify them of enrollments and withdrawals.

#### Letters to Districts

Letters have been sent out to all districts, including charter school districts, across Philadelphia (The School expects to draw students primarily from Philadelphia for the first year) notifying them of the intention to provide specialized services to students who are academically behind and/or learning disabled (i.e. students with language-based learning disabilities such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia). Letters can be found in the Appendix.

#### Partnership Letters

Letters of support have been obtained from partner agencies including Academy in Manayunk, The School Collective, Education Plus, Inc., Kroc Center, The Free Library of Philadelphia, Charter School Choices, and Public Health Management Corporation. Letters are attached and located in the Appendix.

### Community Backing and Need

Letters of support have been received from partnering organizations and some founding board members. In addition, signatures have been obtained from prospective parents of students who are academically behind and learning disabled children seeking a school providing specialized services to learning disabled and dyslexic students. In addition, letters of support have been obtained from a sample of psychologists and schools indicating that they would refer appropriate students to the EPAC Charter School. These letters are located in the Appendix.

The EPAC Charter School will host community meetings for parents and have them complete feedback forms, letters from community organizations that may potentially refer students to the Charter School.

### 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 makeup 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.*

*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 members of the founding coalition for the Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School have a long and deep history of providing social and educational development programs to the communities across Pennsylvania. Tine Hansen-Turton's son was struggling in school and was diagnosed with dyslexia in 2008 by Dr. Margaret Kay, who referred her son to Academy in Manayunk. Her son started attending AIM and receiving supplemental individualized support from Education-Plus, Inc. In less than two years, her son has gained more than three years in reading.

The EPAC Charter School idea began when Ms. Hansen-Turton enlisted the support of Nicholas Torres, founder and chair of Pan American Academy Charter School and current President of Education-Plus, Inc., Pat Roberts, founder and CEO of AIM, and Dr. Kay, to help build a quality school specialized in serving students who are academically behind and/or are diagnosed with a learning disability/difference that could be accessible to all Pennsylvania students. To further this vision, the below organizational partners and founding members were assembled to create the EPAC Charter School.

#### Organizational Partners

The EPAC Charter School will have the advantage of a team of nationally known non-profit organizations that have come together to ensure that students with learning disabilities/differences are provided with an extraordinary education and the foundation to be successful in life. The team has already established strategic partnerships with a number of organizations to assure the best possible 1) curriculum and design and instructional delivery, 2) teacher recruitment and training, 3) student support services, and 4) school management and administration. The partners working with the EPAC Charter School in each area include:

#### Curriculum Design and Instructional Delivery

Academy in Manayunk (AIM), based in Philadelphia PA, is the nation's leading educational institution for children with language-based learning disabilities. AIM has helped to develop the curriculum and will serve as the collaborative partner for the licensure of curricula. It will work with the EPAC Charter School to design the final professional development plan. AIM's extensive expertise and experience will provide the basic curriculum foundation and professional development for EPAC Charter School staff.

Education-Plus, Inc. specializes in individual reading and math tutoring modules based upon a Orton-Gillingham pedagogy and in developing neurological brain connections based upon Delacato neurological functioning. The extensive expertise and experience brought by Education-Plus, Inc. will serve as the foundation for individualized interventions in reading, math, and neurological patterning and functioning.

#### Teacher Recruitment and Training

The School Collective (TSC) is a professional development network that uses an online tool to increase collaboration both within a school and across the wider Philadelphia education community. Launched as a Beta in April 2009 in local Philadelphia schools, TSC partnered with Mastery Charter Schools, KIPP, the William Penn Charter School, The Young Men's Leadership Academy at Fitzsimons Thomas and Martin Luther King High Schools. Over 250 Philadelphia teachers in these schools assisted with the development of the tool through focus groups and effective feedback sessions. Along with Academy in Manayunk, TSC will assist in the recruitment, hiring, and ongoing staff development for the EPAC Charter School teachers.

#### School Management and Administration

Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) is one of the nation's leading public health institutes and one of the largest non-profit management services company in Pennsylvania. PHMC will provide office space for executive and administrative staff and overall management support for the EPAC Charter School. Management services include: business operations, office management, insurance/banking broker arrangements including access to line of credit, and a quality assurance structure including student/parent satisfaction and assistance with reporting. In addition, PHMC will provide facilities that can be used by students living in Philadelphia that will include telecommunications and computer, technology equipped classrooms; common areas for parent training, conferences, and other school-related activities; access to conference rooms; and office space for administrative and educational records.

Charter Choices is a financial planning and practice firm that specializes in assisting charter schools with financial management. Charter Choices will provide the EPAC Charter School with accounting services that include receivables (state and charitable grants and tuitions), assets (computers, desks, books, etc), and expenses (rent, labor and consumables), compliance and efficiency, as well as preparation of city, state, and federally mandated reports and personnel and payroll services including payment, benefits, and retirement planning.

#### Student Support Services

In addition to the special education coordinators that will work with families to assure that they have the community connections needed to support their children's learning, the National Nursing Center Consortium and the Temple University Department of Nursing will work as needed to provide families with access to comprehensive health services and access to specialized health interventions related to students' disabilities. NNCC and the Department of Nursing will leverage healthcare-related financial resources as needed.

In Philadelphia, the Free Library of Philadelphia will provide students with library memberships and access to over 1,000 titles in their children's collection (under 14 years of age), teen interest titles, and over 145 electronic databases that include 15 research databases on historical topics,

six general research databases, and eight databases targeted for K-12 students. The Free Library will also provide access to a resource called *Opposing Viewpoints In Context*, which contains pro and con articles on a variety of social issues. The Free Library will extend their online homework help tutoring services (in Spanish and English) to students that include tutoring services in math, science, English, and social studies. Online tutoring services include skill building resources, a writing lab, and test prep for state and national tests. As the EPAC Charter School grows and begins to enroll students in other areas of the state, similar arrangements will be developed with libraries in other communities.

Philadelphia area YMCAs and the KROC Center here, will provide student memberships, which will be purchased by the EPAC Charter School, that will allow students access to gyms, swimming, and various exercise opportunities. The YMCAs and the KROC Center will also serve as a centralized social meeting place for students with space usage coordinated through the School. The KROC Center, will also provide classroom space and access to technology to convene Philadelphia students in a blended learning approach.

### Founding Members

#### *Tine Hansen-Turton*

Nationally known as an advocate, social innovator, and change-agent, Tine Hansen-Turton has managed and led nationally known health care models providing access to primary care, health promotion, and disease prevention services to over 20 million people throughout the U.S. over the past two decades. She serves as Vice President at Public Health Management Corporation, and CEO of National Nursing Centers Consortium (NNCC), a non-profit membership organization of nurse-managed health centers. She co-founded and serves as executive director of Convenient Care Association, a national trade association of over 1200 retail health clinics and she is a co-founder of the Pennsylvania office of Education-Plus, Inc. The regional and national media regularly seek out Ms. Hansen-Turton for her expertise.

Ms. Hansen-Turton has received several advocacy and leadership awards, including an Eisenhower Fellowship and the Philadelphia Business Journal 40 under 40 Leadership Award, and was named one of the 101 emerging Philadelphia Connectors by Leadership, Inc. in 2008. Hansen-Turton serves on numerous boards, is a Fellow of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, and advises the federal Industry Trade Advisory Committee on Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Health Science Products and Services. She earned a B.A. from Slippery Rock University, a masters in Government Administration from University of Pennsylvania Fels Institute, and her Juris Doctor from Temple University Beasley School of Law.

#### *Dr. Elizabeth Polizzi*

An advocate for children, Elizabeth Porth Polizzi believes that children reach their potential and learn best when they are safe, healthy and in attendance. While serving as Director of Policy and Planning for the Family Resource Network of the School District of Philadelphia, she collaborated with the Office of Mental Health of the Philadelphia Department of Public Health and co-authored and developed the implementation strategy for school-linked behavioral health services. She collaborated with multiple city agencies in the administration of grants, such as the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Dyson Foundation Initiative, which provided pediatric training in the community, the \$5 Million federal grant for Philadelphia Safe Schools, and the Healthy Students initiative. She also established a literacy mentoring program with Philadelphia

Reads. Dr. Polizzi developed and administered university collaborations with Temple University to recruit and train special education teachers and with Arcadia University to establish emotional support programs in school district classrooms, and she partnered with other city agencies as a member of Common Ground of the Mayor's Children and Family Cabinet.

Dr. Polizzi gleaned business experience as the sole proprietor of a physical therapy private practice, teaching experience as an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Graduate Department of Physical Therapy at Arcadia University, and administrative experience while serving for nine years as a School Director in Montgomery County and on the Board of Directors of the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit. She has served on multiple Boards and is currently Secretary of the Board of the Children's Scholarship Fund Philadelphia. She is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and the Medical College of Pennsylvania where her doctoral dissertation focused on Public Law 94:142 "the Right to Education".

#### *Patricia M. Roberts*

Patricia Roberts is the CEO of Academy in Manayunk and is both a passionate educator and successful businesswoman. Her lifelong commitment to education began at West Chester University where she received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in education. Along with a business partner, Ms. Roberts was able to continue the work of research-based curriculum development begun at West Chester University. A commitment to the power of technology as a unique learning tool led her to spearhead the development of cutting-edge educational software, which was sold to Houghton Mifflin. Ms. Roberts launched PTS Learning Systems, Inc., providing corporate computer training and learning support software to both small and large businesses in the region. In 2000, she became an adjunct faculty member in the College of Education at West Chester University, supervising student teachers in the field. She also launched the Institute for Educational Excellence and Entrepreneurship (3E Institute) with the belief that corporate and community partners need to collaborate with schools to enrich programs for students and engage students in the opportunities of the 21st century workforce.

It was through the Educator 500 program that Pat Roberts and Nancy Blair worked closely with Sally L. Smith from The Lab School of Washington to establish Academy In Manayunk, in conjunction with The Lab School of Washington®. AIM began in September 2006 with 24 students and, now in its sixth year, had grown to over 155 students.

#### *Nancy Blair*

Nancy Blair is the Associate Director and Director of Admissions of Academy in Manayunk. She started her career as an intensive care nurse. After completing graduate training in Nurse Anesthesia at the University of Pittsburgh, she became licensed as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). Ms. Blair believes her training in medicine has prepared her to have a deeper understanding of recent scientific studies, where functional MRI's have shown the importance and the critical need for explicit and systematic scientific-based instruction for children with learning disabilities. Ms. Blair has worked in conjunction with West Chester University's 3E Institute and the Educator 500 program. Educator 500 identifies, rewards, and supports entrepreneurial educators and teams who are proactively developing and implementing innovative programs that meet the unique needs of students by incorporating collaborative solutions, business partnerships, and parent and community involvement.

Ms. Blair holds her Level I and Level II Wilson certification and is a Wilson Level I Trainer. She received training at Tufts University in Lindamood-Bell and the RAVE-O Vocabulary and Fluency Program, and in the Neuhaus Metacognition program to increase vocabulary and reading comprehension. She holds a private academic reading specialist license from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Ms. Blair grew a tutoring practice, for students in public, parochial and independent schools, based on the success of students with whom she was working. In June 2006, her dream of helping many more students was realized when she collaborated with other passionate educators to start AIM. Ms. Blair has served on the Board of Directors of the Pennsylvania Branch of International Dyslexia Association (PBIDA) for seven years. She served as Co-Chair for the 2009 PBIDA conference and Chair of the 2010 conference where AIM hosted Dr. Louisa Moats as the keynote speaker to a sold out crowd. She is currently on the Program Committee for the 2011 conference.

#### *Lydia Jerchau*

Mrs. Lydia Jerchau is the Special Education Director of the Pan American Academy Charter School, and has been a special educator since 1978. She received a Bachelor of Science in Education with a core in Special Education from the Pennsylvania State University, a Masters of Education from Arcadia University, and a Secondary Principal's certificate from Arcadia University. Most of her undergraduate and graduate work was supported by private scholarships for academic achievement with the highest distinction. Mrs. Jerchau is an urban student who graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls. She supports urban education and has been involved with diverse populations of students for most of her career.

Mrs. Jerchau was a special education teacher until 2004 serving students with disabilities from kindergarten through undergraduate studies both in private and public schools. In 2004, Mrs. Jerchau joined her colleagues in the field of charter school education in Philadelphia to bring special education to underserved students in the city. Her charter school experience began as a Secondary Coordinator of Special Education, then Secondary Assistant Principal of Special Education in a startup charter school. She is currently the Director of Student Services and Special Education for Pan American Academy Charter School, which serves students in the Kensington section of Philadelphia and is in its fourth year of operation. Mrs. Jerchau was invited to direct the special education program during the school's second year of operation. Pan American Academy Charter School participated in the Six Year Cyclical Monitoring Cycle facilitated by the Office of Special Education within the Pennsylvania Department of Education during the 2010-2011 school year. The charter school received three commendations related to the special education program, evaluations related to annual child find, and collegiality between general and special education teachers under the direction of Mrs. Jerchau.

#### *Nicholas Torres*

Nicholas Torres is President of Education-Plus, Inc. Pennsylvania. He served as President of Congreso de Latinos Unidos, one of the nations' premier multi-service organizations, from 2000-2010. As President of Congreso, he launched a K-college continuum of educational services; launched mental health and primary care services as part of its integrative approach; standardized a model of case management across child welfare, welfare to work, health, behavioral health, workforce/education services; and aligned programs through standardized outcome measurements. Mr. Torres also launched a nonprofit venture philanthropy firm that leverages and invests financial resources to improve the quality of education across Philadelphia's system of schools.

Mr. Torres plays a leadership role in Pennsylvania and beyond. In 2008, he was one of ten Americans to receive the prestigious Eisenhower Fellowship, which honors emerging leaders from around the world. He was also recognized by Leadership Philadelphia as one of the 101 Philadelphia Connectors. Currently, Mr. Torres serves on the boards of the Free Library of Philadelphia, Children's Scholarship Fund, and the Pan American Academy Charter School. Previously, he served as Advisor to Knight Foundation Philadelphia, Chair of the Southeastern Pennsylvania United Way's Professional Advisory Council, Co-Chair of the National Council of La Raza's Northeastern Affiliates, and as a Human Relations Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia.

Mr. Torres currently consults to organizations and on projects that have the potential for high social impact. He serves as Senior Consultant for Community Wealth Ventures, where he engages in ecosystem business planning; faculty at the University of Pennsylvania's Fel's School of Government; and President of Education-Plus, Inc., where he works on scaling higher education models for low-income students, school-based health centers and cyber education for specialized populations. He is also co-founder and publisher of the Philadelphia Social Innovations Journal.

#### *Mary Schuler*

Mary Schuler is President of Education-Plus, Inc, Idaho. She is an experienced and result-oriented Special Education teacher and tutor with close to 40 years of experience in the special education field. Obtaining her B.A. in Elementary Education from the College of St. Catherine's in St. Paul, Minnesota, and her M.A. in Special Education from Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico, Schuler taught Kindergarten, 1st grade, 5th grade, and Special Education on the Navajo Indian Reservation in Crownpoint and Thoreau, New Mexico. While tutoring public school children with learning problems, one-on-one, in Santa Fe, she discovered that solving learning problems is not accomplished by just requiring the students to do more school work. She realized that having them accomplish just one year of growth each year would not be enough. She convinced the parents of her students to enroll their children in the Learning and Rehabilitation Center in Santa Fe, run by Brother Lucian Wingate, and convinced Brother Lucian to hire her as a teacher. She learned to implement the Delacato Crawl and to use visual training in her work with students. These students, as a result, jumped two and three years in their learning.

Moving to Caldwell, Idaho, Ms. Schuler started Education-Plus, Inc. in 1982. She taught a self-contained Special Education classroom for students ages 9 to 14 for four years. Besides tutoring individual students, she taught potential teachers and interested parents two classes: Tutoring Phonics for Reading and Spelling and Tutoring Math Using Manipulatives, using textbooks she wrote herself. These classes were offered through the University of Idaho, Teacher Education Program. Ms. Schuler has continued her own studies, attending colleges in Minnesota, Idaho, and Washington, accumulating numerous credits beyond her M.A. She has studied alternative teaching methods, including Mortenson Math and the Learn-To-Learn Program offered in Seattle, Washington. She has a Kindergarten-12th grade Educationally Handicapped teaching certificate in Washington State and Idaho, and a Pennsylvania Teaching Certificate, Special Education N-12, issued December 2010.

*Margaret J. Kay, Ed.D. NCSP*

Dr. Margaret Kay is a psychologist licensed in Pennsylvania and Delaware, a Nationally Certified School Psychologist, and a Diplomate of the American Board of Psychological Specialties with Forensic Specialization in Educational and School Psychology. She and her associates are passionate advocates for children and provide school-age children and their parents with exemplary psychological, neuropsychological, educational and psychoeducational services throughout Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia, New York, Ohio, and the District of Columbia. Dr. Kay has been in private practice since 1980 and is often relied upon by parents and schools to perform Independent Educational Evaluations (IEE's). In addition, she provides training programs and in-service presentations for educators and civic organizations; psychotherapy services for children and adults; cognitive retraining and tutorial services; and consultation services for individuals, agencies, schools, and colleges.

Dr. Kay has testified as an expert witness in State and Federal court and in Educational Due Process hearings for individuals with Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities (NLD), Asperger's Syndrome, High-Functioning Autism (HFA), Dysgraphia, Disorders of Written Expression, Reading disabilities, Autistic-spectrum disorders, Tourette syndrome, Angelman syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), Post Otitis Auditory disorder (POAD), genetic syndromes and specific learning disabilities.

*Richard Binswanger*

Richard Binswanger is the Managing Principal of Not for Profit Services for the ClearView Group, a strategic consulting firm. Previously, he helped found and served as Executive Vice President for Align-alytics, which developed business frameworks and software tools to help companies deal with their performance, risk, and governance issues. Mr. Binswanger co-founded and led an organization called BUILD (Better Understanding of Individuals with Learning Differences), which provided resources and information to parents of student with learning issues, primarily using the web, and served for ten years as the Assistant Head of Woodlynde School in Wayne, PA, an independent school for students who struggle with learning. He also served as technology coordinator for Agnes Irwin School for Girls in Rosemont, PA and taught at Germantown Academy.

Mr. Binswanger currently serves on the boards of the Philadelphia School Partnership, Russell Byers Charter School, Startup Corps (Entrepreneurism for High School Students), the Philadelphia Mural Arts Program and the United Way of Southeastern PA's Community Impact Committee. He holds a B.S. in Mathematics from Brown University, an M.S. in Computer Science from Villanova University, and has done doctoral work at the University of Pennsylvania's graduate school of education.

*Carolyn Torres*

Carolyn Torres is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher since 1995 and holds a K-12 Special Education License. She has over 20 years of teaching grades 1-12. She has specialized, is licensed/endorsed in math, science, and art for grades 5-12, and is elementary certified.

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

There are no plans to recruit additional founders for the EPAC Charter School. Six of the founding individuals described above will be the initial board members. Over time, they will recruit additional board members, based on the needs of the School as it progresses.

## **2. Governance**

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

The Board of Trustees of the Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School will be comprised of individuals representing groups with a vested interest in services to children who have learning disabilities/differences. These groups include parents, special education experts, educators, psychologists, and business leaders. The Board will govern pursuant to and in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation, the bylaws of the Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School, and Charter School Law and the Public School Code. As required, an affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Trustees of the EPAC Charter School, duly recorded, showing how each member voted, will be used in order to take action on the following subjects:

- Setting the School calendar;
- Adopting textbooks;
- Appointing or dismissing charter school administrators, and other employees on the recommendation of the CEO/Principal;
- 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 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;
- Authorizing major resource expenditures, substantial program changes; addition or development of new programs, and facility and inventory issues; and
- Electing the officers of the Corporation and determine their terms.

As a public school, the EPAC Charter School will strictly adhere to the governance rules and procedures dictated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The EPAC Charter School will have a Board of Trustees, appointed by the Founding Coalition, that will govern all operations of the EPAC Charter School. The Board will be responsible to work with the CEO/Principal to oversee the day-to-day management functions of the School and facilitate the reporting relationship between the Board of Trustees and the administrative staff. The Board of

Trustees will be responsible for ensuring that the school operates in compliance with the charter and with all applicable laws and for ensuring the school's sustained financial viability. An affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the EPAC Charter School Board of Trustees will be required to take action on the above-listed items, as is noted in the by-laws.

As public officials, the members of the EPAC Charter School Board of Trustees will be subject to the provisions of the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act, 65 P.S. §1101-1113 ("Ethics Act") and are required to file Statements of Financial Interest & Code of Conduct by May 1 each year. In addition, as members of the Board of Trustees, they will have legal obligations under the Charter School Law and the Public School Code. A Board of Trustees has the responsibility to be a good and effective steward of public money, and needs to provide independent oversight of the charter school's administrators.

*B. How will the Board of Trustees be selected?*

The EPAC Charter School Board will have a minimum of five and a maximum of nine members. The original membership will be determined by the founders. The Board will ensure that at least one board seat is filled by a parent of a student of the EPAC Charter School. Further, the initial Board of Trustees will consist of those individuals actively recruited for content expertise and organizational competencies.

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

Sustaining the continuity of the vision of the founders will result from careful scrutiny of prospective Board members' commitment to the EPAC Charter School's mission, as well as continual education of Board members as to the scope of its legal responsibilities, including the Board's duty of loyalty, obedience and faithfulness to the school's mission. To that end, the Board will plan to have annual retreats where progress and outcomes are analyzed and plans for continuity are considered.

*D. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the board.*

The Board of Trustees will be responsible to ensure that the mission of the school is followed and that the financial affairs of the school are conducted in an appropriate manner. The Board is responsible for the complete operations and budget of the EPAC School, including:

- The subjects noted in section A,
- Development of school policies and will oversee compliance with said policies
- Long-term planning,
- Monitoring the performance of the School via student performance and student, parent, and staff satisfaction;
- Evaluating and monitoring the activities of the CEO/Principal and the other members of the School team, and
- Evaluating the functioning of the Board.

The Board will be responsible to provide direction to the CEO/Principal and in adoption of the annual performance goals in accordance with NCLB and applicable PDE requirements. The Board will also provide advice and counsel as appropriate with regards to issues of substance.

The Board will exercise all powers that may be necessary and proper to further the mission and operation of the school. In addition to the items noted above required to have a recorded voted, the Board will have the power by an affirmative majority vote to perform and take action to:

- Authorize or establish a Committee of the Board or appoint a qualified hearing officer to hold hearings regarding recommendations of suspensions or expulsion of students; and
- Authorize or establish a Committee of the Board or appoint a qualified hearing officer to hold hearings regarding recommendations of suspension or dismissal of employees with or without cause;
  - Consistent with the aforesaid, pursuant to the approved School policies, assembling to hear the recommendations of the CEO/Principal regarding any employee issue. Specifically, following the Principal/CEO's or the Principal/CEO's designee's recommendation, the Board will 1) make a determination based on the information produced at the meeting; or 2) establish a fact-finding committee to gather additional evidence for the Board's examination of the issue. Upon the submission of all evidence, the Board will render a decision pursuant to the employee's contract of employment.
- Discharging the duties of a Board of Appeals regarding complaints and disputes arising out of the operation of the school that cannot be resolved by the staff, administrators, or the Principal/CEO.

The Board of Trustees will have and exercise the corporate powers prescribed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and more particularly described in the Charter School Law. The CEO/Principal will manage the school. The essential function of the Board will be policy-making, the assurance of sound management, and active participation in the provision of necessary funds. The Board has the ultimate responsibility to determine general, academic, financial, personnel, and related policies deemed necessary for the administration, development, and ongoing operation of the Charter School in accordance with its stated purposes and goals.

#### Board Reporting

The CEO/Principal will regularly report to the Board of Trustees on the performance of the EPAC Charter School against its goals including; student outcomes, program quality, financial performance, operational efficiency, and compliance with Charter School Law and the Public School Code. Specific reporting topics and schedule will be agreed upon between the CEO/Principal and the Board. At a minimum, the CEO/Principal will report four times a year on the following topics (quarters below are fiscal) to coincide with the normal progression of the school year:

- 1st Quarter (Spring): Financial performance for preceding fiscal year; program changes and updates for upcoming school year; operations plan for upcoming school year; marketing plan for upcoming school year
- 2nd Quarter (Summer): Student results from the preceding school year; preparedness report for the upcoming school year; marketing results to date vs. plan; satisfaction results for students and parents

- 3rd Quarter (Fall): Debriefing on fall enrollment and school start; enrollment numbers for FTE reporting; budget update vs. new enrollment numbers
- 4th Quarter (Winter): Fall semester performance results; budget presentation; statewide exam results

#### Financial (& Programmatic) Audit

The EPAC Charter School will form an audit committee each fiscal year to oversee selection of an independent auditor, who will have experience with public school audits, and the completion of an annual audit of the school's financial affairs. The audit will verify the accuracy of the school's financial statements, attendance and enrollment, and accounting practices, and review the school's internal controls. The audit will be conducted in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles applicable to the school. It is anticipated that the annual audit will be completed within six months of the close of the fiscal year.

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

Building positive relationships between administrators and teachers is paramount to the overall learning objectives of the school. Research by the National Center for Education Statistics through the Schools and Staffing Survey has indicated that teachers who are supported by their administrators are more likely to be satisfied with their employment. There is not enough that can be said about the importance of teacher job satisfaction. To this end, the EPAC Charter School administration will provide monthly professional development opportunities during which teachers and administrators can interact outside of the classroom around issues of school concern, e.g., student achievement, increasing parental support, etc. In addition, teachers and administrators will be encouraged to participate in social activities that will be conducted throughout the Commonwealth on a regular basis. This too, will provide opportunities for teachers and administrators to interact with each other; and this type of visibility will afford opportunities for students and parents to see positive interactions among all of the staff at the EPAC Charter School. The staff will essentially be modeling the types of interaction that they wish to encourage among the students.

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

There will be a Parental Support Program established that will consist of parents from across the Commonwealth. Each region of the state will have a Parent Ambassador who will serve as the parent leader for that region. Each Parent Advisory Council member (potentially five in total) will be volunteers who make up a Parent Advisory Council, which will convene regular meetings and provide recommendations to the administration and the Board of Trustees. A Student Government also will be impaneled. The Student Government will operate online, will have a President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, and will be guided by staff to follow all usual parliamentary procedures per Roberts Rules of Order. The Student Government will make recommendations to the CEO/Principal about student concerns.

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

The Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School's Articles of Incorporation and draft by-laws are attached with this application as required.

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

The founding coalition has not officially appointed Board members, but has selected Nicholas Torres as the incorporator. The initial board members who are being considered (bios listed above) include:

Tine Hansen-Turton (Parent)  
260 South Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
(215) 731-7140

Elizabeth Polizzi  
310 Stenton Avenue  
Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462  
(484) 410-5893

Lydia Jerchau  
126-136 W. Dauphin Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19133  
(215) 425-1212

Nicholas Torres  
501 Glen Echo Road  
Philadelphia, PA 19119  
(215) 718-4250

Richard Binswanger  
210 Huntsman Suite 100  
Blue Bell, Pennsylvania 19422-2818  
(215) 870-1559

Margaret Kay  
2818 Lititz Pike  
Lancaster, PA 17601-3322  
(717) 569-6223

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

The EPAC Charter School intends to contract with the following partnering organizations, but will only enter into formal contracts after approval of the charter and upon approval by the Board.

*Academy in Manayunk* – To serve a collaborative partner for the licensure of curriculum and provider of online training/professional development and support services. The contract with AIM will be negotiated on a per professional EPACCS staff person (teachers, learning coaches) basis for training on the approach the EPAC Charter School will use in teaching the learning disabled children served. In addition, AIM will contract to provide teachers and learning

coaches individual and group support. The EPAC Charter School Board will approve the initial contract terms and annually evaluate performance before a new contract is provided.

*Education-Plus, Idaho* (Mary Schuler) – To provide online training and professional development support services related to individualized interventions in reading, math, and neurological patterning and functioning. The contract with Education-Plus, Idaho will be negotiated on a per professional EPACCS staff person (teachers, learning coaches) basis for training on the approach the EPAC Charter School will use in teaching the learning disabled children served. In addition, Education-Plus will contract to provide teacher and learning coach individual and group support. The EPAC Charter School Board will approve the initial contract terms and annually evaluate performance before a new contract is provided. Mary Schuler is related to Nicholas Torres and both Tine Hansen-Turton and Elizabeth Polizzi are on the board of Education Plus, PA. Any contract to Education-Plus, assuming these individuals are on the Board, will require them to recuse themselves from the discussion and board vote for approval.

*Public Health Management Corporation* – To provide administrative offices and overall management support for the EPAC Charter School. Management services include: business operations, office management, insurance/banking broker arrangements including access to line of credit, and a quality assurance structure including student/parent satisfaction and assistance with reporting. As part of the contract, PHMC will provide facilities that will include telecommunications and computer, technology equipped classrooms; common areas for parent training, conferences, and other school-related activities; access to conference rooms; and office space for administrative and educational records. The contract with PHMC will be based upon actual costs of space usage, market based fees for business operations estimated to be between 2-5% of the annual budget, and 5% interest on any loans (cash flow) for providing access to line of credit. The EPAC Charter School Board will approve the initial contract terms and annually evaluate performance before a new contract is provided. Tine Hansen-Turton is a Vice President of PHMC. Any contract to PHMC, assuming she is on the Board, will require her to recuse herself from the discussion and board vote for approval.

*National Nursing Center Consortium and Temple Department of Nursing* – A contract with NNCC would be to provide nursing services to clients via Temple Department of Nursing and specialized health interventions as they relate to a student's disability, including occupational, speech, and physical therapies and psychology. The contract will be negotiated based upon a per pupil evaluation and/or service. The EPAC Charter School Board will approve the initial contract terms and annually evaluate performance before a new contract is provided. Tine Hansen-Turton is Executive Director of NNCC. Any contract with NNCC, assuming she is on the Board, will require her to recuse herself from the discussion and board vote for approval.

*Charter Choices* – To provide the EPAC Charter School with accounting services that include receivables (state and charitable grants and tuitions), assets (computers, desks, books, etc), and expenses (rent, labor and consumables), compliance and efficiency, as well as preparation of city, state, and federally mandated reports and personnel and payroll services including payment, benefits, and retirement planning. The EPAC Charter School will seek a proposal from Charter Choices and negotiate costs associated with accounting services and required reporting. The EPAC Charter School Board will approve the initial contract terms and annually evaluate performance before a new contract is provided.

*The School Collective* (TSC) – To provide a framework for a professional development network that uses an online tool to increase collaboration both within the School and across the wider education community. The TSC contract will be based upon a per professional staff fee and hours associated with training and technical assistance. The EPAC Charter School Board will approve the initial contract terms and annually evaluate performance before a new contract is provided.

All contracts let by the EPAC Charter School will include:

- services and resources to be provided,
- performance evaluation measures and mechanisms,
- detailed explanation of compensation to be paid to the provider,
- methods of contract oversight and enforcement,
- conditions for contract renewal and termination, and
- disclosure and explanation of any existing or potential conflicts of interest between the school governing board and proposed service provider or any affiliated business entities

## **IV. FINANCE AND FACILITY**

### **1. Financing**

*Note: For additional financing procedures see Section 1725-A of the Charter School Law.*

*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.*

The Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School has developed preliminary startup and operating budgets, using the required templates, and these are attached to this application. These cover all projected sources of revenue, both public and private, and projected expenditures. Also attached is a monthly cash-flow statement for the first year to allow the school to meet monthly expenses when revenues are slow to materialize. PHMC has extended their line of credit to ensure that the EPAC Charter School can meet expenses until a significant fund balance is reached and/or a line of credit can be established.

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

The EPAC Charter School by-laws will indicate that expenditures in excess of \$10,000 will require prior approval of the Board of Trustees after the submission of a minimum of three bids (the first time a contractor or vendor is used) to ensure competition and advertising where appropriate. Purchasing procedures used by the Board will be modeled after the requirements of the Public School Code.

The Board will establish a revolving checking account with a \$2,500 limit for the Principal/CEO. From that account, the CEO/Principal will be authorized to spend up to \$200 on any single transaction for the purchase of supplies, materials, instructional aids, educational software, books, transportation, and/or tickets for special events. This checking account will be established with the signatures of the CEO/Principal and/or the Business Manager. The Principal/CEO's signature will indicate that the expenditure is consistent with the instructional needs of the School and consistent with the guidelines established by the Board of Trustees. Upon receipt of adequate documentation, Charter Choices will be authorized to reimburse the checking account at appropriate times to reestablish a \$2,500 limit out of the general school account.

Trustees will develop additional procedures regarding purchasing and expenditures as the need arises.

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

To date, no fundraising has occurred, nor is it anticipated to be needed because the EPAC Charter School expects to be able to operate with public funds. Funds will be solicited from foundations and interested parties for extra- and co-curricular programs and new academic tools that facilitate a vibrant learning community.

Administrators and staff may confer, develop, write, and submit to various agencies grant proposals seeking additional funds as needed.

Specifically, it is likely that the School will seek healthcare supplements to meet the health and behavioral health needs of students. The Support Team will conduct an assessment of all needed health related services, including psychology, occupational, speech, physical, and eye therapies that each student will need and assess how some or all of these services can be covered by the child's insurance coverage, whether it be Medicaid, CHIP, or private insurance. If healthcare service needs are not covered fully, the School will work with its partners to supplement these services with Medicaid or private insurance.

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

The treasurer of the EPAC Charter School will deposit the funds belonging to the Charter School in a depository approved by the board and will at the end of each month make a report to the Board of the amount of funds received and disbursed by him or her during the month. All deposits of charter school funds by the charter treasurer will be made in the name of the charter school. The Board of Trustees will invest charter school funds consistent with sound business practice and only in authorized types of investments for charter schools as defined by the Pennsylvania School Code. The school treasurer will settle his or her accounts annually with the Board of Trustees for each school year and these accounts will be audited annually.

Financial procedures will be followed that entail a system of internal controls and checks and balances. All funds received will be deposited in a Board of Trustees approved bank account and monthly reports of funds received and disbursed will be completed. The investment of Charter School funds will be limited to short term certificates of deposit.

#### Plans for Regular Review of School Budgets and Financial Records

Internal audit reviews are planned for annual review of budgets and financial records and annual external audits will be scheduled in accordance with requirements for charter schools. On a monthly basis, a statement of income and expense will be prepared with comparisons to budget and, when applicable, to prior year results. These statements will be reviewed by the School's Executive Committee and will be presented at all Board of Trustee meetings. In addition, a trial balance will be produced each month for review by the treasurer. The bank accounts will be reconciled each month and various internal control measures will be implemented. Included in the internal control measures will be the separation of duties for critical financial functions.

## **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.*

*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.*

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

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

*E. Describe facility financing plans.*

The EPAC Charter School is an online school, thus there is no requirement for a facility the size of a traditional brick and mortar school. Upon PDE approval of the EPAC Charter School charter application, the School will seek to lease or sub-lease sufficient facilities (PHMC has been selected preliminarily) that can house the local administrative staff, including offices and conference and meeting rooms. PHMC will maintain the facilities, including custodial and maintenance. In addition, the EPAC Charter School will lease and/or coordinate space with libraries and/or YMCAs, and with the Salvation Army Kroc Center in Philadelphia, for recreational and social activities.

### **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).*

Insurance will be obtained based upon best practices of other schools and will provide sufficient coverage regarding health, general liability, extracurricular activities and parent volunteer activities, property, and directors' and officers' liability. The EPAC School intends to engage Willis of Pennsylvania, Inc. and Exude Benefits as representatives to secure insurance and health benefits.

### **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)*

The EPAC Charter School will abide by the compulsory attendance guidelines as set forth by Pennsylvania Department of Education. Truancy will be handled as set forth by PDE procedures. Attendance will be taken each day and linked to the time and duration the student logs onto the school e-portal. The School will follow Commonwealth child accounting procedures (24 PS 13-1332). Students will follow the school calendar, which will include a minimum of 180 days of instruction. Students will be recorded into the schools e-portal each day. Additionally, teachers will contact the responsible adult regarding unexcused absences.

The EPAC Charter School will collect all necessary enrollment data as required under Section 1748-A of Commonwealth Charter School Law (Act 22) and will report enrollment data to the PDE via forms 4059CS Instructional Time Summaries, 40262C Annual Attendance Membership Reports, and 4002CS Summary Reports of Aggregate Days membership. The school will utilize the e-portal student information software system to track enrollment data to ensure that its enrollment figures are up to-date and continuously monitored.

The procedure for withdrawal from the school will include the following steps:

- Notification of intent to withdrawal through request for a Withdrawal Form;
- Filing by parent or guardian of a completed and signed Withdrawal Form;
- Filing of a request by a parent or guardian to send the student's records to the school to which the student is transferring;
- Notification the sending district of the student's withdrawal.

## 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.*

The EPAC Charter School will utilize proven methods to publicize the school in an effort to inform the community and solicit families and students interested in online learning. The School will leverage the relationship with the existing cyber charter schools and with small school districts that have limited capacity and/or expertise to serve learning disabled students. In addition, the EPAC Charter School will utilize a combination of traditional media methods, such as direct mail, radio, and newspaper to further increase awareness within the target audience. The purpose of this publicity will be to direct interested parties to participate in numerous local community information sessions, or contact the School directly via phone or Internet.

Brochures, letters, electronic mail, and other methods will be employed to market the educational programs and services to school districts across the State of Pennsylvania. In addition, educational information will be distributed to support groups for parent of learning disabled or dyslexic children.

Most students will be recruited from referrals from psychologists who assess students, but cannot identify a proper placement to meet their educational needs and/or their home district's school, including other cyber and charter schools, where more specialized instruction is required for student success or directly from parents who are seeking alternative instruction models for their dyslexic or learning disabled child.

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

As described above, the EPAC Charter School will use a variety of traditional media methods to reach families and students interested in online learning, but will also reach out in particular to psychologist who assess students. The School will work with psychologists and county-based intermediate testing units throughout the state to identify students who have been diagnosed with a learning disability and whose parents might be interested in sending their child to a cyber school. In addition, the EPAC Charter School will work with school districts to identify children who are struggling in school due to learning disabilities and could benefit from the evidence-based quality learning the school will provide. The School will also reach out to parent groups throughout the state to educate them about the unique educational services the school provides for learning disabled children.

The EPAC Charter School's goal is to have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with interested families and students during one of the numerous locally held community information sessions. During these sessions, representatives of EPAC Charter School will present the educational philosophy, mission, goals, and describe in detail the educational methods used to ensure success. The School understands that online learning is not for everyone, therefore, time will be

taken to clearly articulate the expectations that each family and student should have as it relates to the School, as well as the expectations EPAC Charter School has related to a student's course work and class participation. It is the Charter School's goal to use these community information sessions as a means to assist families and students in determining whether this alternative learning approach is a good fit for them.

During these community information sessions, the EPAC Charter School will provide information packages that will include general EPAC Charter School marketing collateral, a course catalog, course description, Pennsylvania testing & graduation requirements, and an enrollment form. For those families and students who are interested but unable to attend, the School will have staff available to conduct phone calls. Additionally, the same material provided could be requested via the EPAC Charter School website.

## **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.*

The EPAC Charter School will be a full-time, online, diploma-granting public school serving students in grades K-12 and will comply with §17-1723-A of the Charter School Law. Specifically, the School will be open to all resident children in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The EPAC Charter School will have an open admissions policy, based on the desire and motivation of those served, and will offer equitable services and opportunities to all students without regard to their demographic, cultural, racial, gender, or any other characteristics.

If more students apply to attend the EPAC Charter School than the number of attendance slots available, students will be selected on a random basis (a lottery) from a pool of qualified applicants meeting the established eligibility criteria and submitting an application by the EPAC Charter School enrollment deadline. If the student is admitted, the EPAC Charter School will record the students on the waiting list based upon when they applied. Anyone who applies after the lottery has been conducted will be added at the end of the waiting list on a first-come, first-served basis. Enrollment preference will be given to a child of a parent who has actively participated in the development of the EPAC Charter School and to siblings of students presently enrolled in PA Cyber Academy Charter School.

### Non-Discrimination Policy

The EPAC Charter School will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

### Out-of-State Transfer

The EPAC Charter School is a publicly-funded school. Currently, students who are or will be residing in Pennsylvania for the 2012-2013 school years are eligible to attend.

### Age Restrictions

The School admits students between the ages of 5 and 21.

### Non-English Native Language Speakers

The EPAC Charter School will work with Non-English Native Language Speakers and will budget for the appropriate specialized language instructors based upon projections.

### Special Education

Students who qualify for a special education IEP or are currently receiving special education services outside the School's capabilities must complete an enrollment counseling process during which the student's current IEP and services will be discussed with the EPAC Charter School team.

### 504 Plan

Students who qualify for a 504 Plan or are currently receiving accommodations or other services must complete an enrollment counseling process during which the student's current 504 Plan and services will be reviewed with the EPAC Charter School team.

### Expelled/Suspended Students

The EPAC Charter School reserves the right to deny enrollment to students who are currently under suspension or expulsion. Enrollment of students under expulsion or suspension must be approved by the CEO/Principal or designee.

### Criminal Background

The EPAC Charter School complies with state regulations regarding student privacy. However, for the safety of all students, the School will as a matter of course ask students to disclose whether they have been convicted of a crime and the nature of the offense. If the EPAC Charter School CEO/Principal or designee deems that admitting the student would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the other students, the CEO/Principal may deny the student admission to the School.

### Enrollment Windows

Students may enroll in the EPAC Charter School at any time provided space is available.

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

### Identification

The EPAC Charter School will assume that all students enrolled will be in need of special education services and programs.

### Evaluation

The EPAC Charter School will conduct multi-disciplinary evaluations ("MDE") for students who attend the school and who are in need of special education services and programs or are thought to be in need of such services. The School will also be responsible for conducting re-evaluations for children with disabilities who have already been identified. Parents of EPAC Charter School students will have the right to an independent educational evaluation.

### IEP Development

The EPAC Charter School will develop an Individualized Education Program ("IEP") for each student with disabilities who attends the Charter School and/or will revise an existing IEP. The IEP will recommend placement of the student with disabilities in the charter school unless the

IEP team determines that the IEP cannot be implemented in that placement, needs outside of the schools expertise and capacity, even with supplemental aides and services.

#### IEP Provision

The EPAC Charter School may at its option provide the special education services determined necessary by the student's IEP or it may contract with the Intermediate Unit or another party, including the local school district, to provide services. Such services will be paid by the School.

#### Due Process

Parents may request an impartial due process hearing concerning the identification, evaluation or educational placement of, or the provision of a free appropriate public education to a student who is exceptional or who is thought to be exceptional, if the parents disagree with the charter school's identification, evaluation or placement of, or the provision of a free appropriate public education to the student.

When disputes arise regarding the identification, evaluation, placement or provision of a free appropriate public education, a mediation process shall be available to resolve the dispute. The EPAC Charter School will provide all of the procedural safeguards to the students with disabilities who attend EPAC Charter School as set forth in the IDEA.

#### Authority

The EPAC Charter School has the obligation and the authority to supervise and manage the provision of services to special education students who attend the charter school. The School will schedule all meetings, conferences, evaluations, hearings, etc. regarding the identification, evaluation and development of special education services and programs. The EPAC Charter School will have the appropriate staff attend and participate in such meetings, conferences, evaluation, hearings, etc.

#### Confidentiality

The EPAC Charter School will maintain the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding children with disabilities.

#### Special Education Staffing

As the EPAC Charter School is a school designed for students with learning disabilities, it is projected that all professional staff will have special education certification as required by PA Charter School legislation. The School will meet the needs of students with disabilities, as stipulated by the State of Pennsylvania's Plan for meeting NCLB requirements.

*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.*

The EPAC Charter School anticipates a student admittance timetable as follows:

November 2011-April 2012 – Application forms available at school administrative office or online at EPAC Charter School website

April 27, 2012 – Admission lottery conducted (if necessary)

May 11, 2012 – Admission notification and enrollment packets distributed to parent and children who have been accepted

May 25, 2012 – Completed enrollment packets due back to PA Cyber Academy Charter School

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

In accordance with §17-1723-A of the Charter School Law, the EPAC Charter School will not discriminate in its admissions policies or practices on the basis of intellectual ability, athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a person with a disability, proficiency in the English language, or any other basis that would be illegal if used by a school district. Also, the school will not discriminate in its admissions policies on the basis of race, sex, color, national origin, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, or political affiliation.

#### Academic Freedom/Student Rights

In addition to other rights established by law, each EPAC Charter School student served by or on behalf of a common school district will possess the following substantive rights, and will not limit these rights except for good and sufficient cause:

- No student will be unlawfully denied an equal educational opportunity or be unlawfully discriminated against because of national origin, race, religion, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, previous arrest, previous incarceration, or a physical, mental, or sensory handicap.
- All students possess the constitutional right to freedom of speech and press, the constitutional right to peaceably assemble (see Freedom of Assembly) and to petition the government and its representatives for a redress of grievances, the constitutional right to the free exercise of religion and to have their schools free from sectarian control or influence, subject to reasonable limitations upon the time, place, and manner of exercising such right.
- All students possess the constitutional right to be secure in their persons, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures.
- All students will have the right to be free from unlawful interference in their pursuit of an education while in the custody of a common school district.
- No student will be deprived of the right to an equal educational opportunity in whole or in part by a school district without due process of law.

The foregoing enumeration of rights will not be construed to deny or disparage other rights set forth in the constitution and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the rights retained by the people.

### **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.*

Online learning requires a new breed of instructor. While many face-to-face instructors have successfully made the transition to the online classroom, others have found that online teaching is not a good fit for them. Candidates for online instructor positions will be encouraged to take an online orientation course and self-assessment to become familiar at a detailed level with the expectations and roles of an online instructor. This orientation program will help prospective online instructors identify well in advance whether online teaching is a viable teaching environment for them. Successful candidates will be thoroughly trained before assuming

responsibilities in the online classroom (see “Instructor Training” below). Successful online instructors possess the following qualifications and personality traits:

- Passion for teaching
- Expertise in the subject matter
- High-level written communication skills
- Comfort with technology and technology-mediated communication
- Ability to work independently within a virtual community
- Flexibility in schedule and a willingness to adapt to students’ work schedules
- Ability to work with an inbox that will never be empty
- Comfort working in an “open” classroom where details of communication are visible to parents, mentors, and administrators
- Deep personal motivation for exploring this alternative route of education.

Just as motivation is one of the most important factors in determining student success in an online environment, instructors who have a driving personal motivation for transitioning to the online classroom are often the most successful online instructors.

#### Recruitment of Teachers

Instructors at the EPAC Charter School must meet the following minimum qualifications:

- Hold at least a Bachelor’s Degree
- Hold a current Pennsylvania state special education teaching certificate (or be in process of obtaining a reciprocal certificate)

Education Plus Academy Charter School has already identified potential CEO/Principal and teacher candidates via its organizational partners and founders who have indicated they would have an interest in working for this school

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

The EPAC Charter School has budgeted a ratio of 1 teacher to 30 students, but will complement the teachers with learning coaches with 1 learning coach to 15 students. The teacher to student ratio is high because the teachers represent the content expertise that will guide the instruction of the students. The learning coach to student ratio is low in anticipation of the individualized instruction and student centric education that EPAC Charter School intends to provide.

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

The EPAC Charter School will utilize the trainings provided by the Study Island technology portal as previously described. These will be complemented with the development of lesson plans that support curriculum on Study Island and other web based materials.

In addition, Academy In Manayunk, the School’s Professional Development and Training Partner, is uniquely qualified to provide training to the EPAC Charter School in this endeavor due to its designation as a Wilson Partner School, a LETRS Affiliate Site and RAVE-O Affiliate Site (pending). AIM educators are professionals certified as Foundations Presenters, Wilson Trainers, RAVE-O instructors and LETRS Trainers. AIM will work closely with the EPAC

Charter School to negotiate licensing arrangements for any online modules available by Wilson Language or Cambium, publishers of these research-based programs as well as teacher kits and student workbooks published by these companies:

- Wilson Foundations Training
- Wilson Training
- RAVE-O Training
- LETRS – Early Literacy
- LETRS – Modules 1-6

On-site facilitator training will be conducted by AIM where logistics will allow for this in-person training. AIM will further develop and implement a series of webinars, on-line support sessions to supplement both the on-line publisher training and the on-site AIM training. Publishers of the above Research-Based Curricula will provide curriculum guides, resource guides and progress monitoring rubrics to EPAC Charter School for use by facilitators and educators.

Education-Plus, Inc. will provide training to teachers and learning coaches on the assessments and interventions related to reading, writing, comprehension, math, and neurological patterning face to face support visits.

#### Technology Professional Development

The EPAC Charter School instructors will not only be highly qualified, they will also be highly trained to perform in their new role as online instructors. Most online instructors are emigrants in a land of digital natives; from the first day of class, they must convey a sense of comfort with and deep knowledge of not only the content, but also the technology used to deliver the content, organizational goals, their responsibilities within the organization, and how best to provide support for online students. To this end, an intensive face-to-face initial training session for new online teachers and learning coaches will take place over four days. During these sessions, teachers and learning coaches will be trained in:

- Best practices in online communication and classroom management, including how and when to effectively use communication tools, including the discussion board, the chat room, and email; how to identify and reduce opportunities for academic dishonesties; how to establish and maintains individual relationships with students; and how to accommodate the needs of EPAC Charter School students.
- Course content, assessment, and evaluation – Face-to-face instructors use a textbook, formally present/expand upon content in the textbook, and develop/share supplemental assignments and activities to test student comprehension and ability to apply concepts. Online instructors also use a textbook (whether online, offline, or integrated into the course content), but the online course itself contains the formal presentation of content and assignments, activities, and assessments. The time an instructor would use to prep presentation and supplementary assignments in the face-to-face classroom is reallocated to one on one communication and feedback in the online world. Instructors are trained well in advance of course deployment in what content is available to the students, the modes in which it is delivered, and the specific requirements for assignments and assessments.
- EPAC Charter School operations, policies and strategies for policy implementation – To be an effective member of the educational team, online instructors must have a deep

understanding of the mission and organization of EPAC Charter School and the needs and characteristics of the students and community of the school they are operating within. Instructors are educated about the policies that have been created to ensure students achieve the intended educational outcomes and are trained in strategies for implementing those policies in their online classrooms.

- Effective use of the Learning Management System (LMS) – As described above, the learning management system is a portal or gateway to the online classroom. It provides a suite of tools to facilitate all aspects of the online learning process, including content delivery, communication, and assessment and evaluation.

The ultimate goal of PA Cyber Academy Charter School—personalized, customized education for each student—requires a new model of student support. Online instructors will be trained in the roles and responsibilities of various members of the educational team as part of the Support Team, as well as in their own roles and responsibilities as a critical participant in these learning teams. When possible, these training sessions will be held at a central location that enables local students to meet their instructors face-to-face in a formal meet-and-greet reception.

Education-Plus, Inc. will provide training to staff on reading, reading comprehension, math, and Delacato methods as previously described.

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

The EPAC Charter School will use a mix of full-time and part-time teachers and learning coaches. At least 75% of the professional staff will hold appropriate state certification. Special education instructors will hold appropriate PA state certification. All instructional staff members will meet current requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act. Instructors will be hired based on demonstrated competency in their subject matter, their ability to effectively teach students of the age to which they will be assigned, and their understanding of and ability to implement effective online pedagogy.

#### First Quarter Reviews

Just as a Strong First Step is essential for new online students, new staff in all positions need feedback in the first quarter of their work in order to reinforce superior performance and to strengthen performance in weaker areas. New instructors will be reviewed within the first six weeks, and at the first quarter as well if necessary. The support and office staff will also be reviewed by the CEO/Principal within the first quarter of their employment. For all staff, reviews will include a written self-evaluation, a formal written evaluation by the reviewer, and a synchronous discussion between the staff member and reviewer. Written reviews and recommendations for improvement will be made available to the staff member within two weeks of their discussion.

#### Annual Performance Evaluations

Annual performance evaluations will be performed for all staff by May 1 of each year. The CEO/Principal will perform evaluations of the teachers and learning coaches, which will include an analysis of student performance, a written self-evaluation, a written evaluation by the

reviewer, and a discussion between the staff member and reviewer of strengths and areas that need improvement. Instructors will be evaluated against a number of criteria:

- Instructional skill;
- Virtual Classroom management;
- Professional preparation and scholarship;
- Effort toward improvement when needed;
- Appropriate handling of student discipline and participation issues;
- Interest in teaching pupils; and
- Student Knowledge/Competence of subject matter via formal tests.

Written evaluations and recommendations for improvement will be made provided to the staff member after the discussion, and kept on file. Similar evaluations will be conducted for support and office staff. Written evaluations will be kept on file by the local office for the duration of the staff member's employment.

As noted above, the performance of all new instructors will be reviewed initially within the first six weeks of their start date. All instructors will be evaluated at least annually, although an evaluation may be held prior to the instructor's annual evaluation date if necessary. If an instructor's performance is considered unsatisfactory and, after appropriate support is given for remediation, the instructor's performance does not improve within the allotted timeframe, the instructor's employment will be terminated.

#### *E. Identify the proposed faculty*

Once the Cyber Charter authorization is received, the EPAC Charter School will recruit and hire instructor, administrative, and office staff to launch and operate the School. The following are the personnel that will be hired, the main functions that they will perform, and their general accountabilities.

##### CEO/Principal

*Functions:* Interface with the Executive Committee and the Board, execute School policy, monitor and continually improve curricula and School processes, administration of the School.

*Accountability:* Student outcomes; student, parent, and staff satisfaction; program quality, financial/operational performance, implementation and management of Support Team, academic and student/parent disputes, administration of school.

##### Teachers/Instructors

*Functions:* Instruction/presentation, answer student questions, evaluation of student work, facilitation of student understanding of content, participate in student plan process.

*Accountability:* Student outcomes, student comprehension, student and parent satisfaction, program improvement.

##### Learning Coaches

*Functions:* Assist students and parents in understanding and maximizing use of instruction, answer questions about technology or processes, seek out and assist course lurkers and non-participants, update students, parents, and database re: student progress, participate in student plan process.

*Accountability:* Student outcomes, student and parent satisfaction, program improvement.

Special Education Coordinators

*Functions:* Coordinate assessments and development and monitoring of individual learning plans (including IEPs), input on program improvement relative to Special Education, work with school/community coordinators to develop and implement in-person activities and educational learning opportunities for students.

*Accountability:* Student outcomes (for assigned students and student body), student and parent satisfaction, program improvement.

School/Community Coordinator

*Functions:* Work with special education coordinators to organize family socialization events and student clubs, work with students to ID/coordinate community service projects, build/train/manage community coordinator organization, grassroots outreach to local organizations.

*Accountability:* High level of student/family interaction, relationships w/local community organizations, student and parent satisfaction.

Administrative Assistant

*Functions:* As directed, administrative tasks, including student enrollment and attendance, day-to-day financial tasks, reporting, coordination of staff and Board meeting, minutes, correspondence, etc.

*Accountability:* Operational/financial performance, student and parent satisfaction.

In addition to faculty and staff, the EPAC Charter School has strategic partnerships with the following organizations, which have the roles outlined below:

*AIM and Education-Plus, Inc:* Professional Development

*The School Collective:* Provide the technology platform for professional development and shared lesson plans.

*Charter Choices:* Fiscal Management and Reporting and State Reporting.

*Public Health Management Corporation:* Functions: Administrative offices and overall management support, including the Business Operations Manager, including fulfillment, student services, technology liaison, office management.

*Nursing Center Consortium and Temple Department of Nursing:* Access to comprehensive health services and leverage healthcare related financial resources.

*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.*

No employee will be hired nor will students be enrolled until the Pennsylvania Department of Education approves the charter application and issues a contract for service. Therefore, no employee child abuse clearance or criminal history forms are included in this proposal. See statement below detailing requirements.

*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.*

Prior to reporting for duty, all employees will be required to submit to the EPAC Charter School a Background Check for Employment in Schools or an official document from the Department of Public Welfare as required by 23 Pa. C.S. Chapter 63 subchapter C. 2. The administration will require each applicant to submit an official clearance statement obtained from the Department within the immediately preceding year as to whether the applicant is named as the perpetrator of an indicated or a founded report or is named as the individual responsible for injury or abuse in an indicated report for school employee or a founded report for a school employee.

The official clearance statement noted above will not be required for an applicant who transfers from one position as a school employee to another position as a school employee of the same school district or of the same organization; and has, prior to the transfer, already obtained the official clearance statement.

#### Grounds for Denying Employment

Except as provided in section 6356 (relating to exceptions), the EPAC Charter School will not hire an applicant if the Department verifies that the applicant is named as the perpetrator of a founded report or is named as the individual responsible for injury or abuse in a founded report for school employee.

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

At least 75% of the professional staff will hold appropriate state certification. Special education instructors will hold appropriate PA state certification. All instructional staff members will meet current requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act. Instructors will be hired based on demonstrated competency in their subject matter, their ability to effectively teach students of the age to which they will be assigned, and their understanding of and ability to implement effective online pedagogy. Upon hire, all instructors will be required to provide copies of their certifications as well as supporting documentation to demonstrate that they meet the state and federal definition of Highly Qualified. This documentation will be maintained and tracked by EPAC Charter School staff.

#### **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.*

The founders of the EPAC Charter School are committed to providing exceptional educational opportunities for children. The parents of the School's students will be an integral part of the success of the students, so it will be essential for the School to keep parents' trust. One way that this will be done is to ensure that all students and parents are fully aware of the student Code of

Conduct and to ensure that it is followed so that all students are comfortable and able to focus on their education. Students will be monitored on an ongoing basis and infractions, particularly those that affect other students, will be acted upon promptly and consistently.

### Student Code of Conduct (Overview)

The EPAC Charter School recognizes and strives to meet the individual needs of each student through programs which promote the development of self-esteem, cooperation, and vision. This expanded view of school will result in well-educated, productive, and socially responsible citizens. To this end, the EPAC Charter School should reflect the desires and expectations held by the community for children, and that EPAC Charter School must provide an environment that ensures the safety and well-being of students. For this reason, it is important EPAC Charter School have clear expectations and guidelines for students. Please see the attached draft Student and Parent Handbook, which includes detailed information about student conduct expectations.

### *Virtual Classroom Conduct*

In order for a virtual classroom session to be educationally effective for students, all students should abide by a standard set of rules. The following rules govern student conduct in the virtual classroom:

- Students' written and oral communications must be free of vulgar, belittling, or offensive language.
- Students must abide by rules established by the course instructor.
- Students must comply with usage instructions communicated orally or in writing by the instructor.

Students who violate the virtual classroom rules of conduct will be warned by the instructor to correct their behavior. If the student does not comply with the instructor's instructions, he/she will be removed from the virtual classroom for the rest of the session. If a student has been removed from a virtual classroom three times within a month, the student will receive read-only privileges in the virtual classroom for the rest of the semester or until the instructor deems it appropriate to restore write privileges to the student.

### *Use of Language and Images*

Students must not use vulgar, obscene, abusive, or demeaning language, writing, pictures, signs, or acts in written or oral communications, including email, discussion board, listserv, virtual classroom, student websites, or in photographs. Students are prohibited from posting content from or links to suggestive, lewd, or otherwise inappropriate websites.

### *Dress Code*

Appropriate attire shall be worn at school activities.

### *Personal Respect*

EPAC Charter School instructors, administrators, and students know that personal respect is the foundation of learning. Language, comments, or images that show a lack of respect for individuals or groups will lead directly to disciplinary action.

### *Defiance*

Students should follow the requests of EPAC Charter School staff; failure to do so is defiance toward EPAC Charter School personnel and rules. Defiance is defined as defying instructions of

school personnel, the bold resistance of school authority, and/or contemptuous behavior or attitude that is manifested by breaking of school rules. Acts of defiance may result in disciplinary action.

#### *Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying*

The EPAC Charter School will have a zero tolerance policy towards intimidation, harassment, bullying, and/or fighting. Intimidation, harassment, bullying, fighting and racial and/or sexual harassment are violent acts against others. These behaviors cannot be tolerated, and the natural consequence is to be barred from interactions with others. A warning letter will be sent for the first harassment, bullying, or intimidation offense. Subsequent offenses will lead to suspensions in accordance with EPAC Charter School discipline policy.

EPAC Charter School will promptly and thoroughly investigate reports of harassment and bullying, whether of a physical or of a nonphysical form. If it is determined that either has occurred, EPAC Charter School will act appropriately within discipline codes and will take reasonable action to end the bullying.

*Harassment* – No one should be subjected to harassment at school for any reason. Therefore, it will be the policy of the EPAC Charter School that all students will deal with all persons in ways which convey respect and dignity. Harassment in the form of name-calling, taunting, gestures, intimidation, conduct, jokes, pictures, slurs, or ridicules are prohibited. Such conduct referencing or directed at an individual or group that demeans that person/group on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, creed, age, disability or other extraneous factors is prohibited and will be grounds for disciplinary action.

*Sexual Harassment* – Sexual harassment includes all unwanted, uninvited, and non-reciprocal sexual attention as well as the creation of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive school or work environment, whether online or in person. This can include:

- Sexually suggestive looks or gestures
- Sexual jokes, pictures, or teasing
- Pressure for dates or sex
- Sexually demeaning comments
- Deliberate touching, cornering, or pinching
- Attempts to kiss or fondle
- Threats, demands or suggestions that favors will be granted in exchange for sex or tolerance of sexual advances

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

The Discipline Philosophy that will be described in the Student and Parent Handbook is:

Discipline should be thought of as a learning experience with behavior modification as its objective. Unwanted behaviors are modified most easily when the school and parents work together as a team. Any consequences that are used to modify unwanted behaviors should be supported at home, imposed immediately, firm, fair, consistent, and progressive.

The Handbook will include a full explanation of the various levels of offenses, which include:

- **LEVEL 1 OFFENSES:** Behavior that disrupts or disturbs the educational or school-related programs, and the possible consequences include teacher conference with student, teacher directed consequence, parent contacted by teacher, administrative referral.
- **LEVEL 2 OFFENSES:** Behavior of greater frequency or seriousness that disrupts the learning climate of the school, and the possible consequences include teacher conference with student, teacher directed consequence, parent contacted by teacher, administrative referral that may result in detention or suspension.
- **LEVEL 3 OFFENSES:** Behavior that may threaten the health, safety, or welfare of a member of the school community, and the possible consequences include teacher conference with student, teacher directed consequence, parent contacted by teacher, administrative referral that may result in detention, suspension, or expulsion.

Students will be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. Depending on the nature of the offense, an informal hearing (suspension) or a formal hearing (all expulsion actions) will take place. In these settings, the student will have the right to be represented by counsel. The student will also have the right to hear the charges against him or her, and to present evidence on his or her behalf, including the presentation of witnesses.

Students with disabilities (except those in MR categories 1\*) may be suspended and cease educational services for up to 10 consecutive days, or 15 cumulative school days in one school year without providing special education procedural safeguards. In cases where there is a referral for expulsion from the school, or when suspension may exceed 15 cumulative school days, written notice will be provided to the parent/guardian or surrogate parent with regard to the disciplinary action being considered and the date of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, which will be held within 24 hours of the date of misconduct. At the IEP meeting a Manifestation Determination will be made as to whether misconduct is related to the student's disability and/or placement. Based on that determination, further action will be decided upon, according to law and regulation.

*C. Describe your schools mandatory student attendance plan and its fit with the code of conduct.*

The EPAC Charter School will mandate attendance on certain dates or at specific times and these requirements will be detailed in the Student and Parent Handbook. Student attendance in online courses will be tracked by time to facilitate student support in online learning. Students' attendance will be reported as days since last login. Parents/guardians can request reports be sent when students have not logged in within the number of days specified by the parent/guardian through the student information system.

The following attendance guidelines will guide contact with absentee students:

- If a student has not logged into one or more courses for three consecutive school days, the Learning Coach will contact the student via email; the learning coach will copy the teacher for all of the student's courses on the email.
- If a student has not logged into a course for five consecutive school days, the learning coach will contact the student via email.

- If a student has not logged into one or more courses for seven or more consecutive school days, the teacher and/or learning coach will contact the student and his/her parent/guardian via telephone.

Students will be reported truant under the following conditions:

- Student is less than 16 years of age,
- Student has not completed the 9th grade,
- Student has not logged in to any courses for 10 consecutive school days, and
- Student did not pre-arrange the absence AND does not have a valid, documented medical or family excuse for non-participation.

Truancy reports will be made to the student's resident school district by the student's learning coach.

## 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.*

### **Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School Schedule**

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| September – January | – Hold Community Information Sessions for parents throughout Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, concentrated in Philadelphia, describing the education philosophy of the EPAC Charter School.             |
| October 3, 2011     | – Submit the completed charter school application to PDE   |
| October – November  | – Contact community groups for involvement in planning process<br>– Complete recruitment of Board of Trustees<br>– Recruit for CEO/Principal position<br>– Recruit for Teachers and Learning Coaches |
| January 2012        | – Select Board of Trustees<br>– Elect officers and Executive Committee<br>– Finalize Student and Parent Handbook<br>– Set up Education Plus Academy Cyber Charter School website                     |
| January – February  | – Draft Contracts with Partnership Organizations<br>– Finalize admissions procedures/forms   |
| March               | – Establish payroll<br>– CEO/Principal begins<br>– Establish financial structure and policies<br>– Interview teachers and learning coaches   |
| April – May         | – Begin admissions process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Conduct lottery</li> <li>○ Send admissions letters</li> <li>○ Establish a waiting list if necessary</li> </ul>                  |

- June – July
  - Select local administration office facility and renovate as required
  - Establish technology infrastructure
- July
  - Satisfy all reporting requirements including:
    - Official charter signed by the authorizing board
    - Completed charter school application addressing the 5 elements of design
    - The application fact sheet containing projected enrollment, mission statement, and federal EIN
    - Completed PDE-2028 Budget Form
    - Completed wire transfer form (ACH form)
    - Charter School Application Addendum (Federal Requirement)
    - Assurances (Federal Requirement)
    - Master Agreement Assurances (PA requirement)
- July - August
  - Hire/contract with teachers and staff
  - Set up Special Education Services:
    - Identify students with IEP
    - Acquire records
    - Develop alternative IEPs
    - Get parent approvals
    - Define service requirements for all Special Education students
    - Hire/Contract with providers
  - Teacher and Learning Coach Training
  - Courses finalized in LMS
- Mid-August
  - Send enrollment report to PDE
  - Complete requirements of conditional charter for final approved charter
  - New staff orientation and professional development
  - Have special education services in place
    - Review existing IEPs
    - Begin special education evaluations
- Late August
  - Receive student records, including PSSAs and existing IEPs
  - Shipment of computers, printer, and books to students
  - Face-to-face family orientation sessions
  - Online orientation for students
- September 4, 2012
  - School regular session begins

## **6. Safety**

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

*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.*

The EPAC Charter School intends to comply with all applicable safety requirements described above prior to occupancy of EPAC Charter School facilities.

## **7. School Health Services**

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

The EPAC Charter School will adopt a plan for providing school health services that complies with Article XIV of the Public School Code. Through Temple Department and the National Nursing Centers Consortium, nursing services will be contracted to be available when students are on school sites.

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

School nursing services will be delivered by having regional health and immunization drives. EPAC Charter School with Temple School of Nursing and NNCC will rent space at sites across the state for these activities to take place. The school nurse will ensure that all students have access to health related services, such as dental and vision. The School Nurse, during on-site activities will be responsible for following all 504 accommodation plans.