



## Application to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education

Submitted by

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# CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION

## APPLICATION FACT SHEET

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

*Proposed Cyber Charter School Name (Must Include “Charter School” in the Title)*

Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania

Proposed Cyber Charter School Administrative Location (City/Town and Zip Code) Pittsburgh,  
15201 County Allegheny

Intermediate Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Proposed Start Date September 2007

Federal Employer Identification Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Person:** First Terri Middle \_\_\_\_\_ Last Henderson

Organization Career Connections Charter High School

City Pittsburgh State PA Zip Code 15201

Telephone (412) 682-1816 x118 Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail thenderson@ccchs.net

Founding Coalition: Indicate Number of Representatives per Group	Grade and Age Ranges	Projected Student Enrollment Year 1-5
Parents _____	Elementary _____	1 <sup>st</sup> Year <u>400</u>
Teachers _____	Secondary _____	2 <sup>nd</sup> Year <u>800</u>
Business Partners _____	Age of Kindergarten _____	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year <u>1200</u>
Community Based Orgs. _____	Age of Beginners _____	4 <sup>th</sup> Year <u>1700</u>
Museums _____	Circle Appropriate Grade(s)	5 <sup>th</sup> Year <u>2000</u>
Higher Education _____	K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <b>9</b> 10 11 12	Total Number of Teachers <u>16FTE in 2007/2008</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 \_\_\_

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

## CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION FACT SHEET

### OVERVIEW

Every student deserves an opportunity to excel—an honest and real chance to reach their potential. **At Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania (CICSP), our mission is to help high-school-age students fulfill their individual potential.** We provide an excellent education alternative for the thousands of high-school-age students across the Commonwealth who, for a variety of reasons, do not attend school, or may benefit from a non-traditional school setting.

Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania (to be formed post receipt of charter authorization) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization founded by the **Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania (BGCWPA)**. We are a full-time, public online high school—a statewide Cyber Charter high school. Our school serves high school students who have needs that may not be easily met in a traditional school or classroom setting. We provide a flexible, innovative, independent study program, where students can study at their own pace, on their own schedule—with instruction and support from a team of certified, highly-qualified instructors. We provide a broad selection of online courses aligned against state standards, and provide each student with use of a school laptop computer and printer, while also providing a monthly internet stipend. **We also provide a unique offering of facility-based activities, which leverage Boys and Girls Clubs facilities across the state (as well as our non-profit regional partners), to provide important academic and social benefits for our students.**

Technology has made the personalization of education possible. Full-time online school is not appropriate for every student. But for some students, we can be the bridge that brings them back into the public school system:

- Allowing students to advance at their own pace;
- Schedule flexibility to accommodate work or family care responsibilities;
- Freedom of location, for those who have physical challenges;
- Connections in a one-to-one setting with certified instructors, for those who need more personalized attention.

CICSP exists to fulfill the needs of today's high school students who find they are in need of a different high school environment, for a variety of reasons:

- Home-schooled students may want subject matter help from a certified teacher, in advanced classes, but do not want to attend the traditional setting;
- Some students don't function well in a large, impersonal classroom setting, or don't connect socially in a large school;
- Some students may need more challenging coursework, or to move at a faster pace;
- Students may reach their creative peak in the evening, and find it difficult to attend school in the early morning;
- Some are challenged with health or physical issues;
- Teens that are pursuing their dreams in sports, entertainment, modeling, dancing, or other careers may not be able to attend school regularly.

Our vision is to assist these individuals as they acquire the necessary life skills that will equip and arm them for later stages in life, and to optimize learning for each and every student to assist them to achieve their individual learning objectives. This requires understanding each student and his/her own profile; designing a high quality and relevant program that gives these students the best possible shot at academic success; and constantly measuring progress against our goals.

**FEDERAL GRANT APPLICATION ADDENDUM TO COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION**

Public Law 108-382: Improving America’s Schools Act of 1994 imposes certain additional requirements for applications for Public Charter Schools. The following application serves as an addendum to the Cyber Charter School Application for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and, if approved, may entitle the applicant to federal funds.

- I. Describe how the cyber charter school agency will provide for continued operation of the school once the federal grant has expired.

Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania will operate from per-pupil fees  
paid to it as a public school entity.

- II. Describe how the federal sub-grant funds will be used, including specifically how such funds will be used in conjunction with other federal programs (Attach PDE-362: Charter School Start-up Grant).

The founding coalition of Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania is not seeking federal sub-grants in conjunction with opening this cyber charter school.

- III. Please check  that you will provide an annual report to the Department of Education, no later than August 1, including information on the progress made in meeting the cyber charter school’s stated goals and objectives.

- IV. Please check  that you will cooperate with the Department of Education in the evaluation of your cyber charter school program.

- V. Please check  that you will provide additional information and assurances required by the Department of Education.

**SIGNATURES**

Name of Proposed Cyber Charter School Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania

Date October 2, 2006

President/Vice-President \_\_\_\_\_

Board of Trustees

Secretary/Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_

Board of Trustees

## **FEDERAL ASSURANCES FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS**

PLEASE SIGN THE FOLLOWING ASSURANCES AS A SUPPLEMENT TO THIS  
FEDERAL GRANT APPLICATION

**PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM ASSURANCES FOR PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Pursuant to section 10303(b) of Public Law 108-382: Improving America's Schools act of 1994, as a duly authorized representative of a Public Charter School, I certify the following:

- the charter school, with an enabling state statute, is exempted from state and local rules that inhibit the flexible operations and management of public schools;
- the charter school will make a contribution to assisting educationally disadvantaged and other students in achieving State content standards and State student performance standards and, in general, will contribute to the State's education improvement plan;
- the charter school is created by a developer as a public school, or is adapted by a developer from an existing public school, and is operated under public supervision and direction;
- the charter school operates in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives determined by the school's developer and agreed to by the authorized public chartering agency;
- the charter school provides a program of elementary or secondary education, or both;
- the charter school is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations, and is not affiliated with a sectarian school or religious institution;
- the charter school does not charge tuition
- the charter school complies with the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1993, and part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- the charter school admits students on the basis of a lottery, if more students apply for admissions than can be accommodated;
- the charter school agrees to comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other elementary and secondary schools in the State.
- the charter school meets all applicable Federal, State, and Local health and safety requirements; and
- the charter school operates in accordance with State law.

Charter school Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania Date  
10/2/2006

Authorized Representative \_\_\_\_\_

## I. SCHOOL DESIGN

### 1. Mission Statement:

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

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

#### OVERVIEW

Every student deserves an opportunity to excel—an honest and real chance to reach their potential. **At Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania (CICSP), our mission is to help high-school-age students fulfill their individual potential.** We provide an excellent education alternative for the thousands of high-school-age students across the Commonwealth who, for a variety of reasons, do not attend school, or may benefit from a non-traditional school setting.

Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania (to be formed post receipt of charter authorization) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization founded by the **Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania (BGCWPA)**. We are a full-time, public online high school—a statewide Cyber Charter high school. Our school serves high school students who have needs that may not be easily met in a traditional school or classroom setting. We provide a flexible, innovative, independent study program, where students can study at their own pace, on their own schedule—with instruction and support from a team of certified, highly-qualified instructors. We provide a broad selection of online courses aligned against state standards, and provide each student with use of a school laptop computer and printer, while also providing a monthly internet stipend. **We also provide a unique offering of facility-based activities, which leverage Boys and Girls Clubs facilities across the state (as well as our non-profit regional partners), to provide important academic and social benefits for our students.**

Technology has made the personalization of education possible. Full-time online school is not appropriate for every student. But for some students, we can be the bridge that brings them back into the public school system:

- Allowing students to advance at their own pace;
- Schedule flexibility to accommodate work or family care responsibilities;
- Freedom of location, for those who have physical challenges;
- Connections in a one-to-one setting with certified instructors, for those who need more personalized attention.

There are five key elements to our program that differentiate us from other cyber charter offerings presently available in the state:

- The founding coalition has a long and deep history of providing social and educational development programs to the communities across our state. The founding coalition is led by the **Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania**. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for youth, with particular emphasis on members who live in urban communities of highly diverse cultures. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania has served the youth of Allegheny County for over 100 years, and our primary mission is to promote health, social, educational, vocational and character development for boys and girls ages 5 through 18, by building self-esteem, values and skills. The agency currently serves 8 communities through several outreach sites, a charter high school and a charter middle school impacting an approximate total of over 7,000 youth per year.

- **Facility-based activities and services.** Pure online charter models are often criticized for a lack of face-to-face interaction. While we recognize that today's teens are capable of building successful educational and social relationships in a pure online environment, we also believe that supplementing the online experience with face-to-face interactions will provide powerful social and academic benefits for students. We will be leveraging the network of Boys and Girls Clubs facilities, as well as other non-profit regional partners, to allow our students to participate in both academic (tutoring and "homework help") and social development (sports, clubs, community building, etc) face-to-face activities. (see Appendix A for a complete listing of the BGCWPA programs)
- **Career Curriculum.** The BGCWPA currently operates the Career Connections Charter High School (CCCHS), serving students in the Pittsburgh surrounding area. CCCHS has developed a well-regarded career exploration curriculum that we will be incorporating into our statewide cyber charter school.
- **Focus on high school.** We are focused on serving high school students, whereas most other cyber charter programs in the state that serve high school students also serve lower grade levels. We believe there is a significant difference between serving the needs of high schools students, vs. serving the needs of younger students. Programs for younger students tend to require high involvement from the parent, with the parent acting as the delivery vehicle for instruction. At the high school level, however, we are focused on creating direct connections between students and teachers, and between students and other students, in a "virtual classroom" model. Our programs are designed to work for high school students in an independent study model, rather than relying on a parent to deliver instruction.
- **Individual Student Learning Plans (iSLP's).** We create an iSLP for each student in our school. This document provides a roadmap for the learning objectives that the student is to complete during the semester or school year. The learning objectives are aligned against the Pennsylvania state standards and against the courses that student is enrolled in. Our academic staff monitors the progress of each student against their iSLP on a weekly basis. (see Appendix B for a sample of an iSLP)

We believe that the program elements described above will allow us to provide a unique, high-quality cyber charter high school offering for students across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania who have needs that are not currently being met in a traditional school environment.

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

CICSP exists to fulfill the needs of today's high school students who find they are in need of a different high school environment, for a variety of reasons:

- Home-schooled students may want subject matter help from a certified teacher, in advanced classes, but do not want to attend the traditional setting;
- Some students don't function well in a large, impersonal classroom setting, or don't connect socially in a large school;
- Some students may need more challenging coursework, or to move at a faster pace;
- Students may reach their creative peak in the evening, and find it difficult to attend school in the early morning;
- Some are challenged with health or physical issues;
- Teens that are pursuing their dreams in sports, entertainment, modeling, dancing, or other careers may not be able to attend school regularly.

Our vision is to assist these individuals as they acquire the necessary life skills that will equip and arm them for later stages in life, and to optimize learning for each and every student to assist them to achieve their individual learning objectives. This requires understanding each student and his/her own profile; designing a high quality and relevant program that gives these students the best possible shot at academic success; and constantly measuring progress against our goals.

Here are the **guiding principles** around which our unique School is designed that enable us to achieve our mission:

**Online delivery** meets student needs that aren't met in a classroom.

- Technology in education enables the delivery of educational content that can be efficiently personalized to multiple learning styles, interests, and capabilities.
- Online delivery leverages the power of the information age through deep, varied content made available through the internet.
- Technology allows students to be educated efficiently and effectively through a flexible schedule where they can learn at the time, pace, and place of their choosing.

**Independent study** helps high school students build life skills.

- Lessons learned through independent work can be “stickier” than if learned via lecture and tend to remain with the learner longer than knowledge gained through a classroom lecture.
- Students in an independent study program develop more effective time-management skills, discipline, and self-direction.
- Maturity, time-management, and self-direction aid in college and/or career success.
- We believe that today’s teens are capable of building successful educational and social relationships even though they work independently. But we also believe that supplementing the online high school experience with facility-based, face-to-face interactions will provide powerful social and academic benefits for students. By leveraging the network of Boys & Girls Clubs facilities, we can allow our students to participate in both academic (tutoring and “homework help”) and social development (sports, clubs, community building, etc) face-to-face activities.

**All students – as individuals – should be celebrated.**

- Traditional schools may not be for everyone.
- Different individuals may need to take a different path to achieve academic proficiency and to achieve their desires and dreams.
- Education should be supportive of differences in interests, abilities, styles, and dreams.

## **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?

**Measurable academic goals and objectives to promote student learning:**

Goal 1: School will meet Pennsylvania No Child Left Behind requirements for Adequate Yearly Progress.

Objective 1.1: Students will achieve at or above the current target for math and reading proficiency as determined by the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).

Objective 1.2: 80% of seniors will earn their high school diplomas.

Objective 1.3: 95% of students will participate in PSSA.

Goal 2: Students will achieve proficiency in Math.

Sample Objective 2.1: Students will apply number theory concepts to show relationships between real numbers in problem solving settings.

Sample Objective 2.2: Students will apply the order of operations in computation and in problem-solving situations.

Goal 3: Students will achieve proficiency in Reading and Listening.

Sample Objective 3.1: Students will make inferences, draw conclusions, and make generalizations based on text.

Sample Objective 3.2: Students will identify and explain main ideas and relevant details.

Goal 4: Students will demonstrate competency in Written and Oral Communication.

Sample Objective 4.1: Students will participate in large and small group discussions using both asynchronous and synchronous/written and oral communication technologies.

Sample Objective 4.2: Students will revise writing to improve style, word choice, sentence variety, and subtlety of meaning to better address the purpose, audience, and genre of the composition.

Goal 5: Students will demonstrate competency in Social Studies.

Sample Objective 5.1: Students will identify and evaluate primary documents, material artifacts and historic sites important in Pennsylvania history from 1890 to present.

Sample Objective 5.2: Students will evaluate their own civic rights, responsibilities, and duties.

Sample Objective 5.3: Students will evaluate how conflict and cooperation among social groups and organizations impacted world history from 1450 to present in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe.

Goal 6: Students will demonstrate competency in Science.

Sample Objective 6.1: Students will analyze and explain the nature of science in the search for understanding the natural world and its connection to technological systems.

Sample Objective 6.2: Students will use evidence or examples to explain the characteristics of and interactions within an ecosystem.

Sample Objective 6.3: Students will apply the elements of scientific inquiry to solve multi-step problems.

Goal 7: Students will demonstrate competency in a World Language or Technology.

Sample Objective 7.1: Students will apply their understanding of new vocabulary to create meaningful dialogue.

Sample Objective 7.2: Students will apply their knowledge of programs or systems to solve a problem or make a process more efficient.

Goal 8: Students will demonstrate competency in the Arts & Humanities.

Sample Objective 8.1: Students will analyze works of art influenced by experiences or historical and cultural events through production, performance, or exhibition.

Sample Objective 8.2: Students will analyze and interpret works in the arts and humanities from different societies using culturally specific vocabulary of critical response.

Goal 9: Students will demonstrate competency in Health and Physical Fitness.

Sample Objective 9.1: Students will examine and apply a decision-making process to the development of short- and long-term health goals.

Sample Objective 9.2: Students will evaluate and engage in an individualized physical activity plan that supports achievement of personal fitness and activity goals and promotes life-long participation.

Goal 10: Students will demonstrate competency in Study and Life Skills.

Sample Objective 10.1: Students will evaluate the effectiveness of using interpersonal communication skills to resolve conflict.

Sample Objective 10.2: Students will analyze the management of financial resources across the lifespan.

Goal 11: Students will demonstrate competency in Information Literacy.

Objective 11.1: Students will evaluate websites for authoritativeness and accuracy.

Objective 11.2: Students will use standard search conventions such as Boolean logic to locate information in online library resources.

Goal 12: Students will complete a diploma-granting program.

Objective 12.1: 66% of non-seniors who finish their first year at the school will re-enroll for the following school year.

Objective 12.2: 80% of seniors will earn a diploma.

Objective 12.3: 85% of students who complete at least thirty days of school will stay through the last day of the school year.

Goal 13: Students formulate plans for their school-to-college or school-to-career transition.

Objective 13.1: Every student will participate in one or more Career Exploration class(es).

Objective 13.2: Every student will create a "High School and Beyond" plan, including a career interest inventory, college/technical school search, and test preparation program, as appropriate.

Objective 13.3: Every student will create a resume and a portfolio of his/her best work.

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

Goal 14: Students will build self-management skills and take increased responsibility for their own learning.

Objective 14.1: Students will learn more about how they learn best by completing a Learning Style Inventory.

Objective 14.2: Students will consult regularly with a mentor regarding the development and implementation of student-specific learning strategies.

Objective 14.3: Students will work closely with a mentor to review and refine their work and study habits.

Goal 15: Students will participate as good citizens in their local community.

Objective 15.1: Students will plan, implement, and present the results of a community-based service project.

### **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 CICSP 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.

Our program is based on best practices in online learning (see Appendix C) as identified in existing research and instructional theory, as well as on the experience of the CICSP team. As a research-based program, CICSP is committed to continuous improvement through testing and experimentation, data collection, and analysis. We review and revise our program as intelligence suggests, data dictates, and industry research progresses.

#### **Program Overview**

CICSP builds and operates a complete, full time, independent study diploma-granting high school program for students in grades 9-12. Students must demonstrate completion of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade prior to participating in our high school program.

Through each course, students can progress at their own pace (subject to the semester boundaries) and complete their studies at the time of their choosing. Support will be offered to students to ensure that they are on track with completing their requirements.

#### **Program Format**

The program at CICSP is primarily an asynchronous online independent study program that operates on a semester schedule. Target deadlines are set within each course to help students budget their time and stay on task throughout the semester, but the actual time a student spends on the instructional and evaluative components of each course will vary according to student's ability, prior learning, and special needs. A summer semester is not part of the school program.

Over the course of a year, a typical student will take between five and six courses per semester for two semesters. An Admissions Counselor meets with the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to the student's course registration to help the student develop an Individual Student Learning Plan (iSLP), based on the student's interests and preferences, and informed by the graduation requirements. Students ultimately determine the sequencing of courses that do not have prerequisites. Students are expected to complete a set of core courses (Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies), as well as a number of exciting and engaging electives. Dual credit, foreign language, AP, honors, and foundation-level courses are offered (see Appendix D for our Course Catalog).

Our course catalog includes a wide variety of selections in all core academic areas—Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies—plus electives in areas such as World Languages, Business and Marketing, Digital Technologies, Fine/Visual/Performing Arts, and Life/Study Skills.

Courses are designed with text, diagrams, images, audio content, and interactive simulations to facilitate the comprehension of concepts, assessments (self, objective, and subjective) that test mastery of concepts, and activities/projects/assignments that test higher-order thinking skills and engage students with other students. Courses are supported by certified highly-qualified (under No Child Left Behind – “NCLB”) instructors that engage students that have questions, problems, or curiosities through a virtual whiteboard (synchronous), email, phone, and scheduled office hours or discussion groups.

### **Course Catalog**

The course catalog includes a broad range of courses in each of the following areas:

1. AP/Dual Credit Courses
2. Honors Courses
3. Core Courses
4. Foundation Courses
5. Foreign Language Courses
6. Elective Courses
7. Vocational Courses
8. Test Prep Courses (national and state standardized exams)
9. Library of Skill-Building and Remediation Modules
10. Community Service Project (required for graduation)

Individual courses have been selected for their quality as measured by the course evaluation rubric (see Appendix E for the CICSP course evaluation rubric).

### **Synchronous Instruction**

Our instructional model is an instructor-facilitated, independent study model. A key component of this model is the inclusion of a significant portion of online, synchronous interaction between students and instructors, and between students and other students. At least once each week, the teacher in every course holds a synchronous “virtual classroom” session. These virtual classroom sessions typically involve a presentation by the teacher of some prepared materials, together with extensive question-and-answer opportunities for students. The virtual classroom offers a voice-over-IP delivery, so that students can talk to the teacher and hear the conversations between the teacher and other students; the virtual classroom also facilitates teacher-student and student-student communications via a shared whiteboard, and text messaging capabilities. Virtual classroom sessions are archived, so that students can review later if they were unable to attend the session or are preparing for an exam.

### **Facilities-based Services**

In addition to academic curriculum, CICSP will also offer programs to provide career exploration, socialization and community service connection for students.

In partnership with The Boys and Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania, CICSP will offer facility-based services to all students. The programs will be face-to-face services that leverage the expertise and resources of the Boys and Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania. The services will have an academic, social, and community focus, and will be categorized as follows:

1. Formal Services – Part of the academic program
2. Informal Services – Part of the “school day”
3. Boys and Girls Club after school services

Examples of the types of programs offered through the facility-based services are listed below, with detailed descriptions provided in Appendix A.

1. Career Guidance and Counseling
  - P.S.S.A testing
  - Other standardized testing
  - Internet assessments
  - Aptitude assessments
  - Parent meetings
  - Career exploration
  - Social development
  - Behavioral modification
  - Mentoring
  - Internships
2. Academic Services
  - Special education services
  - Remediation services
  - Title I services
  - Academic enhancement activities
3. Physical Education
  - Fitness Activities
  - Nutrition
  - Anti-smoking activities
  - Substance abuse prevention
  - Healthy lifestyle choices
4. Miscellaneous
  - Leadership development
  - School newsletter
  - School yearbook
  - Youth entrepreneur program
  - Special interest groups
  - Boys & Girls Club Program

### **Graduation Requirements**

To earn a high school diploma, incoming students must meet the following diploma requirements.

Each student must earn 21.0 credits as listed below during his/her four years in high school.

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Credits</b>
English	3.0
Math	3.0
Science	2.0
Social Studies	2.5
Physical Education	2.0
Occupational Education	2.0
Arts and Humanities	1.0
Electives	5.5
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>21.0</b>

Although students who enroll in CICSP after the start of their freshman year are eligible to transfer credits earned towards their graduation requirements, they must complete at least five credits at CICSP before being eligible to earn a diploma.

Additionally, students must achieve proficiency level or higher on the math and reading sections of the Pennsylvania System of Student Assessment (PSSA) to be eligible for the Pennsylvania Certificate of Proficiency or Pennsylvania Certificate of Distinction.

- 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.

#### **Enrollment Counseling Process**

CICSP' mission is to serve students whose needs are not well met for a variety of reasons in traditional classroom settings. Based on experience in other states and on the demographics of the Pennsylvania urban centers, we anticipate that 15%-18% of CICSP students will require special services. In addition to the services and programs required by state and federal law, CICSP provides enrollment counseling to all students who have been in the past or who currently are on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. The enrollment counseling process is led by Special Needs Enrollment Counselors who hold current state certification in special education. The enrollment counseling process has two intended outcomes: first, it is an educative process for students and families; it helps them become familiar with the requirements and unique challenges that online learning could pose given the student's need. Second, it allows the school to better understand the student's needs and make adequate provision for servicing those needs.

The Special Needs Enrollment Counseling Process begins with the self-identification by the student and/or family that the student has need of special services. After the school has obtained permission from the parent/guardian, or, if the student is emancipated or attained the age of majority, the student's special education records are requested from the student's last school. These records are received via electronic fax and stored online in password protected environment. In accordance with FERPA and IDEA requirements, only those who have legitimate educational reasons for viewing the records can obtain access to them. Once the records have been received, the Special Needs Enrollment Counselor reviews the records and contacts the student and parent/guardian for an initial consultation about the student's needs.

Once a student has enrolled in the school, the School's Special Needs Team may either adopt the IEP or 504 Plan in its entirety or make revisions to the IEP or 504 Plan as necessary.

#### **Student Services**

CICSP offers several types of academic support for students on IEPs. CICSP offers three levels of most core academic classes. Students with special needs who are admitted to the school will be placed in the level of each core course that best corresponds to their current needs and abilities as well as to their target performance goals. Course placement decisions are made jointly by the Special Needs Enrollment Counselor and the school guidance counselor.

Students' progress will be monitored regularly by a Special Needs Mentor. The Mentor will informally communicate progress to the student and family weekly by phone and will coordinate with the rest of the iSupport Team (see page 17) to ensure that the students' academic needs are accommodated in the online classroom. A formal, written progress report will be issued with the student's quarter and semester course grades.

#### **IEP Revisions and Re-Evaluations**

IEPs will be revised by the Special Needs Team at least once each year and re-evaluated at least every three years in accordance with federal and state requirements.

The Special Needs Team includes at minimum the Special Needs Enrollment Counselor, the School Guidance Counselor, one or more of the student's regular education instructors, and the parent/guardian. The school principal and/or other licensed/qualified professional will be used 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 may be provided by the local Intermediate Unit or through fee-for-service programs, including, but not limited to: mobility training and occupational therapy, adaptive and assistive technologies, psychological testing and counseling, speech/language programs, and transportation (when required).

### **Identifying and Evaluating Students with Special Needs**

Each year, CICSP will sponsor a student health awareness week during which students/families are encouraged to check student vision, hearing, mobility, and other indicators of health manifest in adolescents.

Parents or school administrators or staff may recommend that a currently-enrolled student be screened for special education services at any time during the school year. Recommendations may be based on evidence including, but not limited to, student's cumulative academic records, enrollment records, health records, and report cards and must be made in writing to the school principal. Once the parent/guardian's permission to evaluate the student is obtained, the School will perform or contract an IU or fee-for-service program to perform an initial evaluation of the student's academic achievement level and/or needs. The evaluation process is designed to assess at minimum the educational and learning needs of the individual student. Other needs will be evaluated as appropriate. Parents also have the right to obtain an independent evaluation.

Once an evaluation has been completed, students who are identified as having special needs will go through the Special Needs Enrollment Counseling process to ensure that students and families are aware of the services available and the unique challenges of online learning. If the student chooses to continue as a CICSP student, the Special Needs Team will create IEP or 504 Plan documentation as appropriate based on the evaluation findings and recommendations. Once the documentation has received all necessary signatures, the student is assigned a Special Needs Mentor. From that point, the Special Needs Team will adhere to state and federal law for timelines and procedures for reporting and evaluation.

The team members Special Needs Team for students who have not previously been on an IEP or 504 Plan consists of at minimum the Special Needs Enrollment Counselor, the School Guidance Counselor, one or more of the student's regular education instructors, and the parent/guardian. The school principal and/or other licensed/qualified professional will be used as necessary.

### **Protected Handicapped Students**

School age children with a physical or mental disability that severely limits their ability to participate in or access an aspect of the school but who do not qualify for special education programs or services may qualify as "protected handicapped" students. These students are protected from discrimination by federal law. CICSP will make every effort to provide reasonable 504 accommodations to students with disabilities in accordance with the requirements of IDEA.

### **Record Keeping**

IEPs will be maintained, revised, and re-evaluated in accordance with federal and state law. CICSP will follow IDEA and FERPA guidelines for protecting and keeping confidential information relating to the special needs of students.

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

### **Curriculum**

Curriculum is based on sound pedagogical theory and practice, is effective, efficient, and appealing, is aligned to state content and national quality standards, and accommodates multiple learning styles and needs.

### **Pedagogical Approach**

CICSP courses implement sound instructional theory and practice. Learning objectives, including both mastery of principles and concepts and their application, are clearly defined for each organizational unit.

Courses use a blended approach of objectivist content presentation and constructivist application of content. Course content engages student attention and provides anchors for the construction of new knowledge and schemata.

Content is presented in instructionally effective, efficient, and appealing ways; students 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.

Ongoing research in best practices of online course design and implementation at CICSP continuously informs the course design, development, review, and revision process.

### **Content Selection/Development Criteria**

Course design is informed by the ADDIE model for instructional design and development. It includes the **assessment** of learner needs; a comprehensive **design** plan produced by the development team, including a subject matter expert, instructional designer, and multimedia developers; **development** of high quality, relevant instructional content, including multimedia and simulations; **implementation** of the course in a pilot environment; and an ongoing **evaluation** and revision process.

Third party courses are evaluated against the following criteria:

#### **1. Course Organization and Structure**

- a. The organization and sequence of content is clear and logical.
- b. Lessons and modules are easy to access and navigate between.
- c. The course structure is transparent to students.
- d. The organization of the course facilitates the construction of mental models and schemata.
- e. Lesson components include objectives, introduction and presentation of concepts, guided practice, application of concept, and assessment of understanding.
- f. Activities are authentic, challenging, and, where appropriate, interdisciplinary in approach.
- g. An organizational theme is used to enhance content and student engagement.
- h. Structure allows for adaptable, customizable pacing within the academic semester.

#### **2. Graphic Design**

- a. Instructional pages make use of best practices in online layout and design.
- b. Fonts and themes are used consistently throughout the course.
- c. Color schemes are applied systematically and conservatively; they enhance learning and are not distracting.
- d. Images are used liberally to enhance learning.
- e. Low resolution images are used to ensure that students with low-bandwidth connections can view the images.
- f. Overall appearance is visually appealing and the message design is clear.

#### **3. Communication and Interactivity**

- a. Students have frequent opportunities to interact with the content, with other students, and with the instructor.
- b. The communication process is clearly defined within the course.
- c. Communication tools are reliable and used appropriately.
- d. Requirements, rules, and expectations for student-student communication are clearly defined and modeled.

#### **4. Content Quality**

- a. Content is written at an audience-appropriate level.

- b. Content uses standard language and is free of slang.
- c. The content has depth and richness.
- d. Content is accurate and current.
- e. The tone of the text is unambiguous and engaging.
- f. Multimedia presentation and interactive simulations are used appropriately to reinforce mastery of concepts.
- g. Content images and examples reflect the multicultural world of which our students are a part.

**5. Web Resources**

- a. Web resources are redundant and stable.
- b. Resources are directly related to the content in the course.
- c. Resources direct students to trustworthy content sources.
- d. Explanations of the relevance of the resource, what the student is looking for, and how he/she knows when he/she is finished are provided.
- e. Resources supplement and enrich the content of the course.

**6. Accessibility**

- a. Courses comply with ADA section 508 accessibility requirements.
- b. Images have alt tags.
- c. Text versions of audio and flash presentation are provided.

**7. Assessment and Evaluation**

- a. Assessment opportunities are authentic and mapped to the learning outcomes.
- b. Opportunities for pre-assessment are provided (as appropriate).
- c. Self-checks with automated feedback are used frequently to help students and instructors gauge how well a student is “getting it.”
- d. Multiple approaches to assessment, including objective and subjective quizzes and exams, creative writing assignments, research papers, group projects, are included in the course.

**Standards Alignment**

CICSP leverages curriculum from a variety of online content providers with the express purpose of providing the most effective, efficient, and appealing educational experience to its students. The 140+ courses that make up the CICSP catalog present on average 75 total hours of course work each semester. This work is completed in a mix of online and offline activities, including, but not limited to, online content presentations, practice activities, interactive modules, self-checks, quizzes, discussions, worksheets, group projects, web research projects, essays, and exams. Courses in the CICSP catalog average more than 75 graded assignments each semester.

Core content courses for grades 9-11 are correlated to Pennsylvania content standards as published in 22 Pa. Code Chap. 4 using a combination of information provided by vendors and standards correlations created by teachers holding state certifications in the subject for which they are creating correlations. These standards correlations show not only which standards are met in the course but also where in the course each standard is met. Standards information is included in the students’ iSLPs (Individual Student Learning Plan) to assist the Mentor in monitoring each student’s progress toward standard mastery and preparation for the PSSA.

Once the correlations are complete, additional course content may be created by Pennsylvania certified instructors to bring the catalog into full alignment with Pennsylvania state standards as published in 22 Pa. Code Chap. 4.

**Accommodation of Multiple Learning Styles and Needs**

CICSP celebrates the inherent differences of learners by providing courses that speak to the strengths of multiple learning styles and accommodate in advance the special needs of students. Content is 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 are designed to accommodate students with both diagnosed and undiagnosed learning disabilities and to scaffold the metacognitive and organizational skills of all students.

Each student participates in some or all of the following activities to help the iSupport Team identify and accommodate the needs of each student.

- Learning Style Inventory
- One Year Course of Study Plan (iSLP)
- IEP and special needs reporting

### **Multimedia**

Technology is used in course content to help students elaborate and refine their understanding of concepts and principles. Multimedia, the presentation of content in multiple modes or media such as text, audio, video, and interactive simulations, reinforce learning and accommodate learners' special needs.

Multimedia, however, can become frustrating rather than effective if a student does not have access to high-bandwidth internet technology. Therefore, reasonable attempts to deliver multimedia elements of online courses to students who are using dial-up connections through other methods will be made. Students' computers are pre-configured with the plug-ins and players required by all courses in the course catalog at the time of distribution.

### **Course Review and Revision Process**

Courses are reviewed and revised after the first semester of implementation. After the initial review and revision process, courses will be reviewed for accuracy and currency of content by subject matter experts and for implementation of new instructional technology by instructional designers; statistics will be gathered and correlated relating to student completion and success rates on both the assignment level and the course level. Revisions will be made as necessary.

### **Instructor Model**

Highly qualified instructors are selected for their ability to thrive in the online environment; they are well trained in the best practices of online course instruction, the content they will be working with, and the specific requirements of their position with an eye towards the needs of the student and school.

### **iSupport Team**

The CICSP iSupport Team is comprised of the Instructor, Assistant Instructor, and Mentor. These individuals work in unison to achieve the individual learning objectives of the students, families, and the school. The focus of the iSupport Team is to challenge the student to not only achieve a basic understanding of the core material, but to explore and expand on those concepts by applying them to real-world scenarios. Each member of the iSupport Team plays a key role in the academic experience for the student. See Appendix F for a complete description of the roles and responsibilities of each iSupport Team member.

#### *Instructor - Role and Responsibilities*

The Instructor's role at CICSP is to support and individualize learning and to inspire students to reach beyond the content and find meaning and application to life. The instructor's role in the online environment includes evaluation and assessment of work; however, it also includes establishing and maintaining individual mentor-type relationships with students.

Technology and the nature of online communication/courses enable instructors to meet and work with each student as an individual. The biggest part of the online instructor's job is to answer questions. Students ask questions privately via email or publicly via classroom discussion boards.

#### *Assistant Instructor – Role and Responsibilities*

Assistant Instructors are focused on answering questions related to technology and the processes of applying and using it within the CICSP educational experience. Assistant Instructors seek out students who are "hiding" in the back of the class (i.e., not participating

in class discussions) or who are AWOL (i.e., not logging in or completing assignments in a timely manner), invite them to return, and assist them as they get back on track. The Instructor and Assistant Instructor communicate progress about both the quality and the quantity of each student's work to the mentors, parents, and students each month so that problems can be identified and corrections made throughout the course of the semester. Assistant Instructors are also responsible for updating the student database.

#### *Mentor – Role and Responsibilities*

Mentors serve as the main contact with the student and their families. Once the student is enrolled in CICSP, the Mentor engages the student and the family to develop an iSLP that outlines the learning strategies and course focus. The Mentor also monitors and remediates as required. The Mentor is accountable for the outcomes of their assigned students, as they are focused on a 360 degree view of the student, utilizing not only the information provided by Instructors and Assistant Instructors, but also accounting for the personality and characteristics of the student. Mentors will seek effective learning strategies for each student and maintain good relationships with both the student and their family.

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

CICSP uses a 180-day calendar that aligns closely with the start and end dates of districts and high schools in Pennsylvania. Students can access their online course content 24x7x365. Administrative and student services personnel and instructional staff are available Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Eastern Time, except on state and federal holidays and during posted vacation periods (winter and spring breaks).

In addition to the average 75 hours/semester of online course content, students have access to at least 5 hours each week of synchronous tutorials and reviews led by certificated instructors. The average CICSP student completing 6 credits in a given year will have access to 1128 hours of instruction. Therefore, CICSP will exceed the 180day/990 hours of instruction time requirement set forth in 1715(A) of the Charter School Law.

#### **Add/Drop Period**

Students may add or drop courses through Day 10 of the semester (within normal school operation hours - 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Eastern Time). After that date, students may petition the School principal to add a course. Students wishing to drop a course after Day 10 will be guided by the withdrawal policy.

#### **Facility-based Services Schedule of Operation**

In partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania, CICSP will offer opportunities for face-to-face services (see Appendix A).

Schedule: October 1, 2007 through April 30, 2008 (28 Weeks) – Monday to Thursday.

- Students commit to one, 3 to 4 hour session, per week.

Flexible scheduling – Students can choose any morning: Monday to Thursday, any afternoon: Monday to Thursday, or 1 to 2 evenings.

#### **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?

A transparent, regular, and complete system for reporting and review of the School's performance is a key tenet to CICSP being held accountable as the operator of a statewide online high school.

**Compliance with State Standards**

CICSP leverages curriculum from a variety of online content providers with the express purpose of providing the most effective, efficient, and appealing educational experience to its students. The 140+ courses that make up the CICSP catalog present on average 75 total hours of course work each semester. This work is completed in a mix of online and offline activities, including, but not limited to, online content presentations, practice activities, interactive modules, self-checks, quizzes, discussions, worksheets, group projects, web research projects, essays, and exams. Courses in the CICSP catalog average more than 75 graded assignments each semester.

Core content courses for grades 9-11 are correlated to Pennsylvania content standards as published in 22 Pa. Code Chap. 4 using a combination of information provided by vendors and standards correlations created by teachers holding state certifications in the subject for which they are creating correlations. These standards correlations show not only which standards are met in the course but also where in the course each standard is met. Standards information is included in the students' iSLPs (Individual Student Learning Plan) to assist the Mentor in monitoring each student's progress toward standard mastery and preparation for the PSSA.

Once the correlations are complete, additional course content may be created by Pennsylvania certified instructors to bring the catalog into full alignment with Pennsylvania state standards as published in 22 Pa. Code Chap. 4.

**Executive Committee Reporting**

The Executive Director will regularly report to the Executive Committee on the performance of CICSP against its goals including: student outcomes, program quality, financial performance, and operational efficiency. Specific reporting topics and schedule will be agreed upon between the Executive Director and the Executive Committee.

At a minimum, the Executive Director will report at least four times a year (quarters below are fiscal) to coincide with the normal progression of the school year on the following topics:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (Spring): financial performance review; program changes & updates for upcoming school year; operations plan for upcoming school year; marketing plan for upcoming school year
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (Summer): student results from prior school year; financial results from prior year; budgeting for coming year; preparedness report on upcoming school year; marketing results to date vs. plan; satisfaction results for students/parents
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter (Fall): debrief on fall enrollment and school start; enrollment numbers for FTE reporting; budget update vs. new enrollment numbers
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter (Winter): Fall Semester Performance Results; Budget Presentation; Statewide Exam Results

**Parents**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed in writing of student’s progress in courses according to the following schedule:

<i>Grading Period</i>	<i>Grading Period End Date</i>	<i>Grade Report Mail By Date</i>
Mid-Term 1	Day 23	Day 30
Quarter 1	Day 45	Day 52
Mid-Term 2	Day 67	Day 74
Semester 1	Day 90	Day 97
Mid-Term 3	Day 113	Day 120
Quarter 3	Day 135	Day 142
Mid-Term 4	Day 158	Day 165
Semester 2	Day 180	Day 187

Student progress is also discussed with parents by phone at the Day 45 check as part of the Strong First Step program (see page 28 - Strong First Step program)

Informal progress reports will be provided by the Mentor within three school days of written or verbal request by parent(s)/guardian(s). Mentors are also prepared to provide an informal overview of student progress to parent(s)/guardian(s) during the regular checkup calls to students conducted by the Mentor.

Written reports are mailed to students and parent(s) within 20 school days of receipt of results by CICSP. Parents will also be provided an Observer Role in the Student Information System so that they can monitor their child’s progress on their own timetable.

**Satisfaction Reporting**

CICSP serves students and their families. One way to measure our organizational success and to identify areas that need improvement is to frequently measure student, family, and staff satisfaction with school programs and operations.

*Student & Family Satisfaction Surveys*

Student and parent satisfaction surveys are anonymous surveys that can be completed online. The surveys are administered upon completion of the enrollment, registration, and orientation processes. An informal satisfaction survey is administered to students and parents at the 14 and 45-Day Checks as part of the Strong First Step program. A summative satisfaction survey targeting course content and student support is administered upon completion of each semester of course work. A program satisfaction survey is conducted at the end of the student’s course of study.

*Staff Satisfaction Surveys*

Online staff satisfaction surveys are administered as part of the First Quarter Review and Annual Performance Evaluation. New staff is also surveyed about effectiveness of training and preparation.

*Results*

The results of the satisfaction surveys are aggregated by contracted program evaluators and distributed within 30 days of the final submission date for each survey to the School Principal, Operations Manager, and Executive Committee, and to the central office. These results are used as part of CICSP self-study and evaluation processes for continual improvement.

**Financial (& Programmatic) Audit**

The Schools’ Executive Committee will form an audit committee each fiscal year to oversee selection of an independent auditor, who has 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, accounting practices and review the schools 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.

### **Data Collection**

CICSP leverages technology to collect and manage student data as efficiently, accurately, and securely as possible. CICSP licenses 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 CICSP to provide accurate information in a timely manner and in compliance with FERPA and other student privacy requirements. The CICSP rubric for selecting the SIS can be found in Appendix G.

CICSP collects mandated student data as part of the enrollment process and reports enrollment statistics to the state and district in compliance with legislation. A sample of the type of data collected in the SIS can be found described on page 25.

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

CICSP firmly believes that clear, consistent, open and timely performance feedback is critical to improving the quality of a program and ultimately improving student outcomes and parent/student satisfaction.

### **First Quarter Reviews**

Just as a Strong First Step (see page 28) is essential for new online students, new administrative and student support staff need feedback in the first quarter of their work in order to reinforce superior performance and to strengthen performance in weaker areas.

The local office support staff will be reviewed by the Executive Director and Principal within the first quarter of their employment. 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 Executive Director and the Principal will perform evaluations of the student support staff. All evaluations will include 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. Written evaluations will be kept on file by the local office for the duration of the staff member's employment. An example of our annual performance evaluation form for administrative staff is contained in Appendix H.

### **Instructor Evaluations**

Instructors are 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
- Knowledge of subject matter.

All evaluations include a written self-evaluation, a written evaluation by the school Principal, and a discussion between the instructor and the Principal. Written evaluations and recommendations for improvement will be made available to the instructor after the discussion, and kept on file. An example of our instructor evaluation form is contained in Appendix I.

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

CICSP will be held accountable by the results it generates as measured by student performance and overall family satisfaction. Our ability to satisfy the needs of students and parents will result in student retention year-over year, as well as increased new enrollment. CICSP will put the following initiatives and programs in place to hold ourselves accountable and to keep the lines of communication open with the parents of the students we serve.

**Parent Advisory Counsel**

The CICSP Parent Advisory Counsel is a School-facilitated informal group of parents of the school that meet virtually and/or face-to-face from time to time to; give input on how CICSP can be improved for all students, serve as a resource for new families considering enrolling in CICSP, and a forum for reaction to future school plans.

**Student Progress Reports**

Parents and guardians are considered valuable members of the iSupport 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 iSupport Team leader and/or Mentor contacts the parent/guardian on record to notify him/her of the problem and, where possible, to enlist support in the implementation of the interventions recommended by the iSupport Team.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed in writing of student's progress in courses according to the following schedule:

<i>Grading Period</i>	<i>Grading Period End Date</i>	<i>Grade Report Mail By Date</i>
Mid-Term 1	Day 23	Day 30
Quarter 1	Day 45	Day 52
Mid-Term 2	Day 67	Day 74
Semester 1	Day 90	Day 97
Mid-Term 3	Day 113	Day 120
Quarter 3	Day 135	Day 142
Mid-Term 4	Day 158	Day 165
Semester 2	Day 180	Day 187

Student progress is also discussed with parents by phone at the Day 45 check as part of the Strong First Step program.

Informal progress reports will be provided by the Mentor within three school days of written or verbal request by parent(s)/guardian(s). Mentors are also prepared to provide an informal overview of student progress to parent(s)/guardian(s) during the regular checkup calls to students conducted by the Mentor.

Written reports are mailed to students and parent(s) within 20 school days of receipt of results by the School. Parents will also be provided an Observer Role within the Information Management System so that they can monitor their child's progress on their own timetable.

**Family Satisfaction Surveys**

Student and parent satisfaction surveys are anonymous surveys that can be completed online. The surveys are administered upon completion of the enrollment, registration, and orientation processes. An informal satisfaction survey is administered to students and parents at the 14 and 45-Day Checks as part of the Strong First Step program. A summative satisfaction survey targeting course content and student support is administered upon completion of each semester of course work. A program satisfaction survey is conducted at the end of the student's course of study.

The results of the satisfaction surveys are aggregated by contracted program evaluators and distributed within 30 days of the final submission date for each survey to the Executive Director, School Principal, Operations Manager, and Executive Committee, and to the central office. These results are used as part of CICSP' self-study and evaluation processes for continual improvement.

### **Community Coordinators**

The role of Community Coordinator is a paid position and is open to parents of current or former CICSP students. Community Coordinators serve two roles. 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, 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.

### **Title I of NCLB - Parent Involvement**

The Title I Parent Involvement section of the NCLB requires each Title I school to develop a written Parental Involvement Policy that describes the means for carrying out the requirements of Section 1118.

CICSP is committed to hosting a minimum of 3 seminars for parents over the course of the school year and over the summer on academic, social development, special needs, and career focused topics that would target the unique high school learner. Parents will be contacted by phone at least once a month by the student's Mentor to discuss progress levels. Parents will have the opportunity to check weekly student progress in reading and math performance levels using a secured internet account on the CICSP Learning Management System. Each parent will have access to teachers online on a daily basis.

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

### **Executive Committee Reporting**

The Executive Director will regularly report to the Executive Committee on the performance of CICSP against its goals including; student outcomes, program quality, financial performance, and operational efficiency. Specific reporting topics and schedule will be agreed upon between the Executive Director and the Executive Committee.

At a minimum, the Executive Director will report at least four times a year (quarters below are fiscal) to coincide with the normal progression of the school year on the following topics:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter (Spring): financial performance for preceding fiscal year; program changes & updates for upcoming school year; operations plan for upcoming school year; marketing plan for upcoming school year
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter (Summer): student results from school year; preparedness report on upcoming school year; marketing results to date vs. plan; satisfaction results for students/parents
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter (Fall): debrief on fall enrollment and school start; enrollment numbers for FTE reporting; budget update vs. new enrollment numbers
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter (Winter): Fall Semester Performance Results; Budget Presentation; Statewide Exam Results

### **Financial (& Programmatic) Audit**

The Schools' Executive Committee will form an audit committee each fiscal year to oversee selection of an independent auditor, who has 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, accounting practices and review the schools 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. Describe your system for maintaining school records and disseminating information as required under the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA).

**Student Privacy**

CICSP, in compliance with Federal Laws 93-308 and 93-568, presents these facts for the information of parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and students.

1. 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 a STD may be released by the student only.
2. Appointments may be made with the principal's office for viewing cumulative records of grades, achievement test scores.
3. CICSP, in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits parents and/or guardians or students to do the following:
  - a. Inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the CICSP receives a request for access. Under state public disclosure law, CICSP 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 student should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The 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;
  - b. Request amendment of the student's education records that the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) or eligible student believes 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 CICSP decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or eligible student, CICSP 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;
  - c. 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 CICSP 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 CICSP 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;

- d. 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 Personally Identifiable Information**

Parent(s)/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, as shown in Appendix J – Release of Student Information, with the CICSP Principal in regard to the release to the public of such information within ten (10) calendar days following notice of these rights to students.

#### **Notification of FERPA Policy**

- The system for maintaining records will be communicated with staff in formal printed communications and personal conferences with staff members.
- Rights and requirements will be communicated with parents using handbook (printed or online) communications.

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

CICSP utilizes a Student Information System (SIS); see Appendix L. The SIS will be used to maintain accurate student count, including all new enrollments and withdrawals, enabling CICSP to complete the required Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) student accounting forms. CICSP 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 PDE. Examples of the type of information stored within the CICSP 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

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

## G. Describe plans to evaluate student performance.

Students demonstrate mastery of course content, proficiency in foundational skills such as literacy and numeracy, growth as an individual, and awareness of themselves as a member of academic and local communities through multiple types of assessment.

### **Mastery of Course Content**

#### Traditional academic courses

Courses licensed and/or developed by CICSP allow students multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of traditional academic course content. Because our students are unique individuals with unique learning styles and strengths, we also allow students to demonstrate their learning in multiple formats. These formats include self-checks, quizzes, and exams which utilize a combination of objective (multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank) and subjective (short answer and essay) questions. Students may also be assessed through research or creative writing papers, written assignments including reviews and essays, case studies, simulations, group projects, and portfolio pieces. The focus of traditional academic assessment is authentic assessment types that demonstrate mastery of content standards and is appropriately weighted to take into account for common student characteristics such as test-taking anxiety and learning difficulties. Final exams will therefore not be weighted more than 7% of the final grade for the course.

Best practices to ensure academic honesty and security and privacy of student information in an online environment will be implemented.

#### Vocational Courses

Students taking vocational courses are evaluated in mastery of concepts and principles by the CICSP instructor. In cases where application of concepts is demonstrated by students through simulations in a virtual environment, the CICSP instructor assesses student mastery. In courses that require a local "apprenticeship," the CICSP instructor and local vocational mentor jointly assess the students' ability to apply concepts in authentic situations.

#### Physical Education Courses

Students demonstrate mastery of concepts, principles, and a rule related to health, physical education, and activities through online quizzes and self-checks. Students apply these concepts and principles as individuals or by participating in organized group sports; they report their progress through journals and other documentation as appropriate. These progress reports are evaluated by CICSP instructors. CICSP provides the necessary equipment needed to complete certain individual activities, including monitors, pedometers, and resistance bands.

### **Literacy, Numeracy, and Core Skills**

CICSP is obligated to meet standards and benchmarks set by the PDE (see Standards Alignment on page 16). The iSLP's, curriculum selection and development are focused on attainment of these standards.

#### 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 iSupport Teams 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 iSLP's 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. CICSP will use packaged pre- and post-course assessments to track student progress on the core content of the curriculum, where possible.

### **Student Assessment Methods**

CICSP gives high priority to multiple, varied, and frequent opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of course content and as a best practice to strengthen student learning. CICSP courses average more than 75 graded assignments per semester course; these assignments include practice assignments, quizzes, journals, class discussions, worksheets, group projects, web research projects, essays, research papers, and exams.

### **Portfolio Projects**

Students reflect on and demonstrate personal academic growth by compiling, in consultation with the CICSP 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 CICSP.

For non-special needs and non-limited English proficient (LEP) students, "mastery" will be defined as a 70% or better in all year-end academic portfolios and exhibits. Portfolios and exhibits will be assessed according to school-wide rubrics, with input from CICSP instructors across all content areas and outside community members. "Mastery" for special needs and LEP students will be defined appropriately according to their Individualized Education Plans and English proficiency levels.

### **Community Service Project**

Students 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 Association meetings.

### **High School Exit Exams**

Students must achieve proficiency level or higher on the math and reading sections of the Pennsylvania System of Student Assessment (PSSA) or *PA Alternate School Assessment (PASA)*; to be eligible for the Pennsylvania Certificate of Proficiency or Pennsylvania Certificate of Distinction.

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

### **Individual Student Learning Plans (iSLP's).**

CICSP creates an iSLP for each student in our school (see Appendix B for a sample iSLP). This document provides a roadmap for the learning objectives that the student is to complete during the semester or school year. The learning objectives are aligned against the Pennsylvania state standards and against the courses that the student is enrolled in. The CICSP Mentors monitors the progress of each student against their iSLP on a weekly basis.

### **iSupport Team**

The CICSP iSupport Team ensures 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, we orient our program 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 Instructor and Teaching Assistant support the student. At the individual level, the Mentor works directly with the student (and his/her family) to provide support. The parent/guardian plays a critical role in interfacing with the Mentor relative to his/her child. Below is a brief description of the key participants in the iSupport Team. See Appendix F for detail descriptions of iSupport Team roles and responsibilities.

#### Instructor

CICSP instructors are the best in the business; they are deeply committed to helping each student achieve success as online learners and are well trained in the implementation of the curriculum and the management of online classes.

The instructor is the primary point of contact for student questions regarding the content of the course; the instructor answers questions, evaluates assignments, and provides timely feedback to students.

#### Assistant Instructor

The Assistant Instructor is the primary point of contact for student questions about technology, course organization and expectations, etc. The Assistant Instructor is also responsible for collecting reports and contacting students who have not been participating regularly. Teaching Assistants need not be content experts in the content of the courses.

#### Mentor

The adult Mentor role is to liaise between the students, encourage them to articulate questions or concerns, coach them in study strategies, monitor a student's progress through their courses, identify warning signs, and help students design and implement recovery strategies.

Mentors begin their interactions with students with the Strong First Step (described below). They conduct the initial Personal Interview; help students develop their iSLP which details achievement goals and maps out an initial four-year course of study based on the students learning preferences and interests; help returning students refine and revise their iSLPs; advise students on course selection and assist them in the course registration process.

The Mentor facilitates and coordinates communication among all members of the iSupport Team by ensuring that each member of the team has regular access to the latest information about issues that could affect student performance, new student needs, patterns of behavior, and steps that have been taken to correct the course of students who have gotten off track. Mentors are responsible for conducting quarterly progress reviews with parents as part of the Strong First Step and continuous monitoring programs.

#### Parents/Guardians

Parents and guardians are considered valuable members of the iSupport 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 iSupport Team leader and/or Mentor contacts the parent/guardian on record to notify him/her of the problem and, where possible, to enlist support in the implementation of the interventions recommended by the iSupport Team.

## **Student Support Programs**

### *Strong First Step*

CICSP knows that 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. CICSP believes that the crucial time period for student engagement and retention begins weeks before the student officially starts his/her studies and ends after 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, CICSP offers the following actions:

- Initial Learning Assessment to determine learning style
- Personal Interview to determine personal interests
- Collection of Personal Data
- Assignment of CICSP Student Mentor (fellow student)
- Assignment of CICSP Mentor as part of iSupport Team
- CICSP online Orientation module (for students and parents)
- Face-to-face school orientation (for students and parents)
- Readiness check prior to school start
- CICSP social event (to meet other CICSP students)
- Placement tests (as appropriate)
- Course selection
- 3 Day Check (for technical issues and startup)
- 14 Day Check (further follow-up)
- First quarter review w/parents

### *Continuous Monitoring/Support*

Just like a Strong First Step is critical to success, so too is continual monitoring of student progress to improve student outcomes and completion. To ensure continuing progress, CICSP offers the following actions:

- Course selection
- Quarterly parent reviews
- Building (and/or review) of iSLPs
- 45-day checks
- Summer development plan

### *Data Collection*

Personalizing education to meet the needs of each individual student and to increase the likelihood of a successful outcome requires data to appropriately assess the situation, 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 must include:

- Unique student identifier that follows them through CICSP systems to tie all student data together
- Student level enrollment, demographic, early assessment, placement exams, contact information (both students and parent/guardians), student interests and desires
- Student level test data and school history

- Course level completion, assignment, assessment data
- LMS data on time spent, logon times
- Student level SAT, ACT and AP exam results (as appropriate)

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

The Board of Trustees of CICSP will produce an Annual Report that among other information will include student achievement as compared to the CICSP academic objectives. As required by 24 P.S. §17-1741-A, this Annual Report will be submitted to the PDE by August 1 of each year.

CICSP will evaluate student achievement utilizing student daily work product such as; homework, test scores, and project portfolios. A core component of student achievement toward CICSP learning objectives is documented progress of students against their Individual Student Learning Plan (iSLP). The iSLP is reviewed on a monthly basis by the Mentor assigned to each student. Proactive student evaluation at this level enables CICSP to make policy and operation adjustments quickly should specific achievement trends be identified.

Results from the Pennsylvania System of State Assessment (PSSA) or *PA Alternate School Assessment (PASA)*, as well as other standardized tests will play a key role in measuring the student's proficiency in core subjects against similar age and grade groups. The Board of Trustees and management team of CICSP will review the results of these tests in detail, seeking to identify areas in: curriculum content, teaching methods, teaching staff development, or other policy and operational activities that should be implemented to improve student achievement toward CICSP learning objectives and Pennsylvania academic standards. Should areas of improvement be identified, CICSP will include those within the annual strategic development plan as areas of focus and measurement for the following year.

## 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.

### **Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania have served the youth of Allegheny County for over 100 years. The agency currently serves 8 communities through several outreach sites, Career Connections Charter High School and Career Connections Charter Middle School, impacting an approximate total of over 7,000 youth per year. (See Appendix M for a history of BGCWP and Appendix A for community programs for teens)

### **Community Information Sessions**

To date, the founding coalition has conducted three community information sessions. The first community meeting was held on September 20, 2006 in the Duquesne School District. Twelve people were in attendance and all were favorable to the blended (cyber/facilities-based) learning model proposed in this cyber charter application. The second meeting was held on September 21, 2006 in the Sto-Rox School District. Six people attended, with five favorable and one opposed. The third planned meeting was September 26 at the McKeesport School District. Twelve people attended, and all were favorable, with two mothers wanting to enroll their children immediately.

CICSP will continue to meet face-to-face with interested families and students throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. During these sessions, representatives of CICSP will present the educational philosophy, mission, goals, and describe in detail the educational methods used to ensure success. CICSP 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 CICSP, as well as the expectations CICSP has related to student's course work and class participation. It is CICSP' goal to use these community information sessions to inform the community about CICSP, as well as to assist families and students to determine whether this alternative learning approach is a good fit for them.

### **Community Surveys**

Massolutions, an independent marketing company conducted a local phone survey where 300 parents and guardians of children 13-17 years old were interviewed by telephone to learn their awareness of, and perceptions regarding, online high school education.

The overall finding from this study is that most Pennsylvania parents (80%) believe a new cyber charter high school that included face-to-face academics, extracurricular activities and is operated by a community-based organization would be helpful to students who struggle with the social challenges in high school and/or face health issues, teen pregnancy, and other challenges that make it difficult for them to attend a traditional high school.

Complete results of the survey can be found in Appendix N – Community Perception Survey Report, and Appendix O – Survey Statistics

### **Community Events**

In addition to the facility-based opportunities students will have through the BGCWPA, students will come together periodically in CICSP-sponsored events to meet other students in their school.

CICSP plans on quarterly events in multiple locations throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to bring together families from particular regions. These events will include both school and social functions; orientation, school dances, graduation, summer picnics, class registration, first quarter review, etc.

School Community Coordinators will facilitate social events on a regional and ad hoc basis. Community Coordinators are parents of current or former CICSP students and will serve two roles in a paid position. 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, 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.

### **Community Projects**

As part of the academic requirements of CICSP, students must 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.

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

On a formal basis, parents will hold appointed seats on the Parent Advisory Counsel.

### **Parent Advisory Counsel**

The CICSP Parent Advisory Counsel is a School-facilitated informal group of parents of the school that meet virtually and/or face-to-face from time to time to; give input on how CICSP can be improved for all students, serve as a resource for new families considering enrolling in CICSP, and a forum for reaction to future school plans.

### **Student Progress Reports**

Parents and guardians are considered valuable members of the iSupport 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 iSupport Team leader and/or

Mentor contacts the parent/guardian on record to notify him/her of the problem and, where possible, to enlist support in the implementation of the interventions recommended by the iSupport Team.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed in writing of student's progress in courses according to the following schedule:

<i>Grading Period</i>	<i>Grading Period End Date</i>	<i>Grade Report Mail By Date</i>
Mid-Term 1	Day 23	Day 30
Quarter 1	Day 45	Day 52
Mid-Term 2	Day 67	Day 74
Semester 1	Day 90	Day 97
Mid-Term 3	Day 113	Day 120
Quarter 3	Day 135	Day 142
Mid-Term 4	Day 158	Day 165
Semester 2	Day 180	Day 187

Student progress is also discussed with parents by phone at the Day 45 check as part of the Strong First Step program.

Informal progress reports will be provided by the Mentor within three school days of written or verbal request by parent(s)/guardian(s). Mentors are also prepared to provide an informal overview of student progress to parent(s)/guardian(s) during the regular checkup calls to students conducted by the Mentor.

Written reports are mailed to students and parent(s) within 20 school days of receipt of results by the School. Parents will also be provided an Observer Role within the Student Information System so that they can monitor their child's progress on their own timetable.

#### **Family Satisfaction Surveys**

Student and parent satisfaction surveys are anonymous surveys that can be completed online. The surveys are administered upon completion of the enrollment, registration, and orientation processes. An informal satisfaction survey is administered to students and parents at the 14 and 45-Day Checks as part of the Strong First Step program. A summative satisfaction survey targeting course content and student support is administered upon completion of each semester of course work. A program satisfaction survey is conducted at the end of the student's course of study.

The results of the satisfaction surveys are aggregated by contracted program evaluators and distributed within 30 days of the final submission date for each survey to the Executive Director, School Principal, Operations Manager, and Executive Committee, and to the central office. These results are used as part of CICSP' self-study and evaluation processes for continual improvement.

#### **Community Coordinators**

The role of Community Coordinator is a paid position and is open to parents of current or former CICSP students. Community Coordinators serve two roles. 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, 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.

#### **Title I of NCLB - Parent Involvement**

The Title I Parent Involvement section of the NCLB requires each Title I school to develop a written Parental Involvement Policy that describes the means for carrying out the requirements of Section 1118.

CICSP is committed to hosting minimum of 3 seminars for parents over the course of the school year and over the summer on academic, social development, special needs, and career focused

topics that would target the unique high school learner. Parents will be contacted by phone at least once a month by student's Mentor to discuss progress levels. Parents will have the opportunity to check weekly student progress in reading and math performance levels using a secured internet account on the CICSP Learning Management System. Each parent will have access to teachers online on a daily basis.

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

If a parent has a complaint concerning the operation of CICSP, the Principal will verify the information in the complaint by interviewing all relevant parties. After gathering this information, a review of the facts will be conducted by the administration. This will then result in any or all of the following actions:

- A conference between relevant staff and administration.
- A conference between relevant staff, administration and the person issuing the complaint.
- A written response to the complainant stating the outcome of the review of the facts.
- A reprimand or warning for the staff involved with remediation steps enacted.

**6. Extra-curricular activities (athletics, publications and organizations):**

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

**A. Describe the program of extra-curricular activities planned for the charter school.**

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

**Facility-based Services**

A unique feature of CICSP is the participation of the Boys and Girls Clubs facilities. We will offer our students the ability to participate in face-to-face activities at their local Boys and Girls Clubs, or if no Boys and Girls Club exists within reasonable driving range, CICSP 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) as well as for social development purposes (sports, clubs, and other activities). Students will be able to participate in these specific Career Exploration and Social Development programs, as well as others: (See Appendix A for a listing of Club Programs)

**Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania – Social & Learning Networks**

Within the CICSP Learning Community, social/learning networks will support like groups of members in the learning community as well as across group. For example, there will be student governments and clubs, parent associations, and instructor/mentor professional development groups.

**Virtual Socialization**

Virtual Socialization is a principal component of CICSP. CICSP believes that the creation of a virtual social environment within 'Virtual Walls', supervised by adults, is critical to providing a safe environment.

Virtual socialization at CICSP 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 the CICSP, students can socialize online through email exchange, online discussion forums (movies, philosophy, sports), instant messaging, and through publishing of their own personal websites.

Virtual socialization through tools offered by CICSP will be closely monitored by our team to prevent cyber bullying, protect the identities of students, and ensure appropriate behavior. CICSP will provide password protected security to keep cyber predators out.

### **Quarterly Events**

CICSP plans on quarterly events in multiple locations throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to bring together families from particular regions. These events will include both school and social functions: orientation, school dances, graduation, summer picnics, class registration, first quarter review, etc.

School Community Coordinators will facilitate social events in the state on a regional and ad hoc basis. Community Coordinators are parents of current or former CICSP students and will serve two roles in a paid position. 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, 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.

### **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.**

CICSP has not yet pursued resident district extracurricular partnerships, however, students of CICSP, by law can participate in the extracurricular activities of their resident school district assuming the student is able to fulfill the requirements of participation and CICSP does not provide the same extracurricular activity. CICSP will work in partnership with the resident school district by providing copies of the student's attendance record and grades, and verification that the student has met the established standards for the extracurricular activity. CICSP will also 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. CICSP will also advise parents that the resident school districts are not required to provide transportation for the CICSP student to or from the extracurricular activity. In the case of a disabled student, CICSP 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 the extracurricular activities, CICSP will work in partnership with the resident 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.**

#### **Technology Overview**

At CICSP, we have assembled the industry's best online education delivery platform. This platform was selected using the Technology Vendor Evaluation Rubric shown in Appendix X and includes;

1. Student Information System
2. Learning Management System
3. Virtual Classroom
4. Content

5. Student Technology
6. Student Support Services

### **Student Information Systems (SIS)**

The SIS serves as the entry point for the students of CICSP. The SIS contains all student personal information, course schedule, and links/access to online classrooms, access to instructors' online offices, and the online library/resource center.

### **Learning Management System (LMS)**

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 iSupport 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 are trained in the use of the learning management system via an online orientation module in advance of course start dates.

CICSP' 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

### **Virtual Classroom**

Synchronous instruction bridges the gap between text-based asynchronous distance learning and the face-to-face interaction of a real classroom. CICSP' virtual classroom is an intuitive, instructor-led environment that delivers real-time, interactive education and encourages real learning. Asynchronous Instruction enables 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. It's perfect for instructor-led courses, peer-based tutoring, student collaboration, virtual office hours, and much more.

Synchronous learning enhances 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. It is also used to offer professional development to instructors and administrative staff without costly travel or telephone/video conferencing. Instructors can participate in meetings, and instructional designers and other teams can work together on projects. Those who missed a course or meeting can access recorded sessions on demand.

## **Content**

CICSP content is comprised of curriculum and the Digital Learning Commons (DLC). CICSP' curriculum includes a wide variety of selections in all core academic areas—Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies—plus electives in areas such as World Languages, Business and Marketing, Digital Technologies, Fine/Visual/Performing Arts, and Life/Study Skills.

Courses are designed with text, diagrams, images, audio content, and interactive simulations to facilitate the comprehension of concepts, assessments (self, objective, and subjective) that test mastery of concepts, and activities/projects/assignments that test higher-order thinking skills and engage students with other students.

The DLC is a collection of digital library and college/career planning resources. Students use the DLC to research papers for courses and to complete many of the CICSP course requirements. The DLC is accessed through the SIS.

## **Student Technology**

All students are provided with laptop computers, printers, and an internet stipend to facilitate the delivery of content. Students are also provided with textbooks and course materials as dictated by the program. Online course materials are accessed by students via a password protected secure server. Laptops are equipped with the appropriate learning software that prohibits students from accessing inappropriate internet sites. See page 38 for a complete listing of the Student Technology provided by CICSP.

## **Student Support Services**

For a complete description of the Student Support Services provided by CICSP, see section C below.

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

CICSP believes that improvement in student achievement will result through a balanced application of technology and online learning best practices. CICSP is constantly evaluating technology in an effort to improve our ability to educate our students, support our instructors, and communicate with the families we serve. We believe that CICSP aggregated a best-of-breed technology platform (described above) that is comprised of innovative and practical applications, enhancing our student's ability to engage with the course material and their iSupport Team.

CICSP believes that combining the technology platform with online learning best practices serves to further enhance student achievement. The founding coalition of CICSP is actively involved in research within the online learning industry, including active participation in industry research consortiums. CICSP is committed to applying proven best practices as appropriate. Appendix C includes a listing of online best practices and their influence on our online instruction approach.

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

The educational experience provided by CICSP is designed with the students and families in mind. CICSP utilizes computer technology as one component of the learning experience to connect students with courses, content, iSupport Teams and other students. Students are provided with a laptop computer, a printer, and 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), CICSP can provide better support and ensure a consistent and secure educational environment for every student.

Technical support begins from the moment the student registers and the Student Technology is prepared to ship. CICSP performs 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, CICSP includes a number of "Getting Started" documents to assist the student and their families once the shipment arrives on their doorstep. The CICSP Tech Check provides a

checklist including: shipment contents, hardware setup, internet connection, and software application check. Additionally, the Tech explains how to contact CICSP should they have questions. Students and their families have numerous ways to access support from CICSP: by phone through a 1-800 number, via a technical support email address, through online support, or through an extensive FAQ available on the CICSP website.

Students and their families are also provided with an online orientation that will enable them to become familiar with all aspects of the CICSP online learning environment. Again, questions associated with this orientation can be addressed through phone, email, or online support.

Ongoing technical support is categorized as follows:

- Hardware/software/connections that don't work
- Fulfillment of school materials
- Accessing courses/LMS
- Academic questions
- Course change questions
- Policy/dispute questions

CICSP is organized to ensure that specific questions can be responded to in an expedited fashion. CICSP provides 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.

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

CICSP, in compliance with Federal Laws 93-308 and 93-568, presents these facts for the information of parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and students.

1. 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 a STD may be released by the student only.
2. Appointments may be made with the principal's office for viewing cumulative records of grades, achievement test scores.
3. CICSP, in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits parents and/or guardians or students to do the following:
  - a. Inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the CICSP receives a request for access. Under state public disclosure law, CICSP 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 student should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The 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;
  - b. Request amendment of the student's education records that the parent(s) and/or guardian(s) or eligible student believes 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 CICSP decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s) or

eligible student, CICSP 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;

- c. 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 CICSP 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 CICSP 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;
- d. 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 Personally Identifiable Information**

Parent(s)/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, as shown in Appendix J – Release of Student Information, with the CICSP Principal in regard to the release to the public of such information within ten (10) calendar days following notice of these rights to students.

#### **Notification of FERPA Policy**

- The system for maintaining records will be communicated with staff in formal printed communications and personal conferences with staff members.
- Rights and requirements will be communicated with parents using handbook (printed or online) communications.

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

CICSP realizes that verifying the authenticity of student work is problematic in both traditional and online school environments. CICSP has implemented 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.

CICSP utilizes an 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.

CICSP' mid-term and final exams are password protected. In order to obtain the password, students must call the student services desk during posted business hours to obtain the password for their exam. Students must correctly answer three questions (e.g., zip code, mother's maiden name, and birth date) in order to obtain the password.

CICSP will continue to monitor, implement, and create best practices in ensuring the authenticity of student work in an online environment. Ultimately, however, we believe 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.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

CICSP has 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 an additional assignment to make up lost points.

The following procedure governs identification and discipline for instances of academic dishonesty:

1. Instructor notifies student in writing that he or she has identified an instance in which the work's authorship is in question and requests that the student respond in writing within 3 school days. Instructor copies principal on the email.
2. Instructor sends principal an email identifying the alleged infraction and providing evidence to support the allegation. Evidence can 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.
3. Principal contacts student and parent/guardian.
4. Principal makes a decision based on the evidence presented and informs instructor and student via email of the decision.
5. Student is placed on internal academic watch. Incident is reported to students' other instructors. Student's work is 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.

### **Student Technology and Materials**

All students are provided with laptop computers, printers, and an internet stipend to facilitate the delivery of content. Students are also provided with textbooks and course materials as dictated by the program. Online course materials are accessed by students via a password protected secure server. Laptops are equipped with the appropriate learning software that prohibits students from accessing inappropriate internet sites.

The following hardware and software is provided to every CICSP student:

#### Laptop

HP Compaq NX6310

- Processor: Core Duo T2300E / 1.66 GHz
- RAM: 512 MB
- Hard drive: 60 GB
- CD-ROM: CD-RW / DVD
- Wireless: 802.11a/b/g
- Display: 15" TFT 1024 x 768 ( XGA )

#### Software

- Operating System: Microsoft Windows XP Service Pack II
- Anti-Virus: Norton Anti-Virus Enterprise Edition v10.1
- Content Filtering: ICRAplus

- Microsoft Office: Microsoft Office 2003
  - Word
  - Excel
  - Access
  - Powerpoint
- Internet Browsers:
  - Internet Explorer
  - Mozilla Firefox
  - Netscape Navigator
- Other Applications:
  - Adobe Acrobat Reader 7.0
  - Macromedia Flash Player 8.0
  - i-tunes
  - Real One Player 2 or Windows Media Player
  - Sun Java 2 JRE (Java 1.3.1)
  - QuickTime 6.5.1
  - Shockwave Player 10.1 or later
  - FileZilla FTP
  - GraphCalc

Printer

HP DeskJet 3940

- Color ink-jet
- Up to 1200x1200 dpi
- Up to 16 ppm B/W
- Up to 12 ppm color
- USB interface

Other

- USB printer cable
- Notebook case
- Microphone headset

## 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?

Across the nation, approximately 5 million high-school-age children per year do not presently attend high school. According to a recent (Feb-2005) study by the Policy Information Center at Educational Testing Service, the high school drop-out rate averages 30% across the nation.

In addition, a recent study (Mar-2006), funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, states that among dropouts surveyed, the top cited reasons for leaving high school before graduation were:

- 32% - Needed to take a job for family financial reasons
- 26% - Needed to care for a family member
- 22% - Became a parent

Of the respondents who listed one of the above as a reason for dropping out, 88% indicated that they had passing grades before leaving school, and 81% indicated that they knew completing high school was important to future success.

Today's high school students can find themselves needing a different kind of high school environment, for a variety of reasons:

- Home-schooled students may want subject matter help from a certified teacher, in advanced classes, but do not want to attend the traditional setting;
- Some students don't function well in a large, impersonal classroom setting, or don't connect socially in a large school;
- Some students may need more challenging coursework, or to move at a faster pace;
- Students may reach their creative peak in the evening, and find it difficult to attend school in the early morning;
- Some are challenged with health or physical issues;
- Teens who are pursuing their dreams in sports, entertainment, modeling, dancing, or other careers may not be able to attend school regularly.

Across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the following statistics also speak to the need.

- According to the 2000 U.S Census Bureau estimates, The State of Pennsylvania has approximately 1,023,000 individuals age 14-19, while only 690,000 students of high school age (grade 9-12) are attending school.
- There are an estimated 25,792 homeschoolers, grades 9-12, in PA. (<http://homeschooling.gomilpitas.com/weblinks/numbers.htm>)
- High school graduation rates in PA is 82%, based on the CIVIC Report, November 2001 in PA. This means that, based on the high school age students above, for each graduating class (e.g., Class 2007), approximately 31,050 end up dropping out. ([http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr\\_baeo\\_t1.htm](http://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_baeo_t1.htm))
- During 1996-97, the most recent year for which data is available, 20,675 Pennsylvania students dropped out of grades 7-12. (<http://www.able.state.pa.us/able/cwp/view.asp?a=3&Q=42738>)
- Teen pregnancy rate in PA. There are 24,950 pregnancies among women age 15-19 in PA. (<http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/2006/09/12/USTPstats.pdf>)

- **24% OF PENNSYLVANIA'S 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS AT RISK OF NOT GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL:**  
As Pennsylvania's schools reach the end of the class year, 148,000 eighth grade students will head out for their summer vacations. However, over the next four years, 24 percent of those students will be at-risk of dropping out of high school because they will not read will enough to understand the material in their textbooks or complete their assignments.  
(<http://www.all4ed.org/states2/Pennsylvania/index.html>)

During September 2006, an independent third-party agency was hired by CICSP to conduct a community perception survey. Families across the state were contacted, and presented a variety of questions relating to education needs of the community and to the cyber charter industry as a whole. The full survey report is attached as Appendix N. The overall finding of the report is this:

“An overwhelming majority of Pennsylvania parents (80%) believe that a new cyber charter high school that includes face-to-face academics, extra-curricular activities, and is operated by a community-based organization would be helpful to students who struggle with the social challenges in high school and/or face health issues, teen pregnancy and other challenges that make it difficult for them to attend a traditional school.”

Additional highlights from the community survey include:

- High-school-age students who are affected by extenuating circumstances are generally seen as individuals who would have more difficulty attending a traditional high school than students who are not affected. A majority of parents agreed that teens facing these circumstances would have difficulty:
  - Teens who have to get jobs to support their families and have schedule conflicts at work (72%)
  - Students who have health issues that prevent them from attending school easily or regularly (69%)
  - Children who live in unsafe neighborhoods and are concerned about crime, drugs and their safety (66%)
  - Pregnant teens or teen parents who have child-care responsibilities (64%)
  - Students who struggle with the social challenges in high school (64%)
- One-third (34%) of families responding personally know a student who faces one of these challenges.
- Most (62%) are not at all familiar with cyber high schools that operate in Pennsylvania.
- Of those who are familiar (n=110):
  - When asked what they know about cyber high schools, most did not provide a specific response or provided only vague comments, suggesting most do not have a detailed understanding of the schools or their programming.
  - When asked about their overall opinion of cyber charter high schools, 9% said very positive, while others said somewhat positive (42%), not at all positive (21%) or they did not know (27%).
- Their opinions of these high schools would improve if:
  - An individual student learning plan is created for each student to help customize the courses and meet their needs within PA state standards (71%).
  - The cyber high school was operated by a community-based organization such as the Boys and Girls Clubs located throughout the state who has served thousands of teenagers over the decades (66%).
  - The operating organization has experience running other charter high schools (66%).
  - Students would be required to participate in some face-to-face academic programs with teachers and others students in real buildings, such as the Boys and Girls Clubs (57%).
  - Students could participate in extracurricular activities, such as sports, band, chorus, clubs or other programs (45%).
- When asked if a new cyber high school was created that included face-to-face academics, extracurricular activities and was operated by a community-based organization, could it help students facing health issues, teen pregnancy and other challenges, most parents (80%) said “yes,” while 12% said “no” and 8% did not know.

We recognize that full-time online school is not appropriate for every student. But for some students, we can be the bridge that brings them back into the public school system. Our model provides several elements that will allow us to serve students whose needs might not be easily served in a traditional school environment:

- Students are allowed to advance at their own pace;
- Schedule flexibility to accommodate work or family care responsibilities;
- Freedom of location, for those who have physical challenges;
- Connections in a one-to-one setting with certified instructors, for those who need more personalized attention.

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

- The founding coalition has a long and deep history of providing social and educational development programs to the communities across our state. The founding coalition is led by the **Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania**. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for youth, with particular emphasis on members who live in urban communities of highly diverse cultures. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania has served the youth of Allegheny County for over 100 years, and our primary mission is to promote health, social, educational, vocational and character development for boys and girls ages 5 through 18, by building self-esteem, values and skills. The agency currently serves 8 communities through several outreach sites, a charter high school and a charter middle school impacting an approximate total of over 7,000 youth per year.
- **Facility-based activities and services.** Pure online charter models are often criticized for a lack of face-to-face interaction. While we recognize that today's teens are capable of building successful educational and social relationships in a pure online environment, we also believe that supplementing the online experience with face-to-face interactions will provide powerful social and academic benefits for students. We will be leveraging the network of Boys and Girls Clubs facilities, as well as other non-profit regional partners, to allow our students to participate in both academic (tutoring and "homework help") and social development (sports, clubs, community building, etc) face-to-face activities. (see Appendix A for BGCWP programs)
- **Career Curriculum.** The BGCWPA currently operates the Career Connections Charter High School (CCCHS), serving students in the Pittsburgh surrounding area. CCCHS has developed a well-regarded career exploration curriculum that we will be incorporating into our statewide cyber charter school.
- **Focus on high school.** We are focused on serving high school students, whereas most other cyber charter programs in the state that serve high school students also serve lower grade levels. We believe there is a significant difference between serving the needs of high schools students, vs. serving the needs of younger students. Programs for younger students tend to require high involvement from the parent, with the parent acting as the delivery vehicle for instruction. At the high school level, however, we are focused on creating direct connections between students and teachers, and between students and other students, in a "virtual classroom" model. Our programs are designed to work for high school students in an independent study model, rather than relying on a parent to deliver instruction.
- **Individual Student Learning Plans (iSLP's).** We create an iSLP for each student in our school. This document provides a roadmap for the learning objectives that the student is to complete during the semester or school year. The learning objectives are aligned against the Pennsylvania state standards and against the courses that student is enrolled in. Our academic staff monitors the progress of each student against their iSLP on a weekly basis. (see Appendix B)

We believe that the program elements described above will allow CICSP to provide a unique, high-quality cyber charter high school offering for students across the state that have needs that are not currently being met in a traditional school environment.

## **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?

CICSP will market to reach families of high school aged students entering grades 9-12 across the entire Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Our 5-year enrollment goal is as follows:

**Year 1** (2007/2008) - 400  
**Year 2** (2008/2009) - 800  
**Year 3** (2008/2010) - 1200  
**Year 4** (2010-2011) - 1700  
**Year 5** (2011/2012) - 2000

In Year 1, CICSP anticipates the grade enrollment breakdown as follows:

Grade 9 - 50%  
Grade 10 - 28%  
Grade 11 - 13%  
Grade 12 - 9%

The enrollment breakdown is expected to be temporarily skewed in Year 1 toward the lower grades. CICSP will deliver a high quality learning experience that will result in student retention year over year. High student retention will result in a more equal distribution across the grades beginning in year 2 and beyond.

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

A final location for the local administrative offices of CICSP has not yet been selected, however the founding coalition anticipates that CICSP will reside in the urban Pittsburgh community near the facilities of one of the local founding coalition partners--The Boys and Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania or the Career Connections Charter High School.

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

To facilitate close working relationships with the founding coalition, as well as engage the local community that has already demonstrated support for CICSP, we believe this to be the best and most suitable location

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

Online learning is not for everyone, yet the need crosses socioeconomic boundaries. CICSP will serve an exceptionally diverse group of students throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, many of which are NOT currently in the public school system. CICSP students will have two things in common; English will be the primary language spoken, and students will be seeking an alternative academic experience. Our experience in online learning indicates that the students enrolling will come from various backgrounds. There are many reasons for interest in online learning, some driven by current life situations, others driven by past experiences with the traditional learning environment. We anticipate student profiles as follows:

- Home-schooled students may want subject matter help from a certified teacher, in advanced classes, but do not want to attend the traditional setting;
- Some students don't function well in a large, impersonal classroom setting, or don't connect socially in a large school;
- Some students may need more challenging coursework, or to move at a faster pace;
- Students may reach their creative peak in the evening, and find it difficult to attend school in the early morning;
- Some are challenged with health or physical issues;
- Teens that are pursuing their dreams in sports, entertainment, modeling, dancing, or other careers may not be able to attend school regularly.

### **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.

The founding coalition has received numerous letters of support (see Appendix V – Letters of Support), as well as signatures of support from the local community (see Appendix W – Petitions of Support). We believe that this community support demonstrates desire by the local community for CICSP to create an alternative learning experience that will enhance the lives of the students and families within the communities across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Additionally, sustaining support long-term will result in CICSP' ability to continue to fulfill the need in these communities. We believe that the independent survey by Massolutions indicates that the need is significant. Our ability to respond through the measurable results of our students' achievements will further increase confidence, support and trust in CICSP.

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

The founding coalition believes that the majority of the students who will be interested in attending CICSP are students not currently enrolled in the Pennsylvania public school system (see School Demographic above). We do, however, understand that some students currently enrolled in local districts may opt for this alternative education experience. To date, the founding coalition has conducted 3 community information sessions in an attempt to engage the community at large, including the local school districts. We are committed to proactive and direct communication with the local districts in an attempt to develop partnerships to improve the overall education system within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

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

The founding coalition is aware of the current dynamics between the local districts and current charter schools. We are committed to demonstrating that CICSP is unique not only in our approach to online charter education, but also in the way we engage our local school district partners. CICSP believes that the entire Pennsylvania education system benefits from the ability to reach the students CICSP is targeting, and our ability to bring them back into the public school system. We will seek every opportunity to partner with local 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 founding coalition has received numerous letters of support (see Appendix V – Letters of Support), as well as signatures of support from the local community (see Appendix W – Petitions of Support). We believe that this community support represents demonstrated confidence by the local community to create an alternative learning experience that will enhance the lives of the students, families and community we serve.

### III. GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Profile of Founding Coalition:

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

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

The founding coalition has a long and deep history of providing social and educational development programs to the communities across our state. The founding coalition is led by the **Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania**. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for youth, with particular emphasis on members who live in urban communities of highly diverse cultures. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania has served the youth of Allegheny County for over 100 years, and our primary mission is to promote health, social, educational, vocational and character development for boys & girls ages 5 through 18, by building self-esteem, values and skills. The agency currently serves 8 communities through several outreach sites, a charter high school, and a charter middle school impacting an approximate total of over 7,000 youth per year.

For the creation of Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania, The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania have partnered with Insight Schools. Insight Schools is an Education Management Organization (EMO), with offices in Bloomsburg, PA, that specializes in creation of online public high schools. Insight Schools contributes startup capital, online courses, instructional management and training programs, operating systems (Learning Management System, Student Information System), and school administration.

CICSP' mission is to bring high school students back into the public school systems through providing online, teacher-led, independent-study high schools for students whose needs can not be well served in the traditional high school environment. The founding members of Insight Schools are pioneers within the online high school industry, and have led online high school organizations that collectively have enrolled over 700,000 students.

#### **Founding Coalition/Management Biographies**

##### **Mike Hepler, President – Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania**

Mike Hepler began his affiliation with Boys Club in 1958 as a youth member in McKees Rocks, and has been with the Boys & Girls Club movement as a full-time professional for 37 years, 29+ years of which have been with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania. Mike served as Executive Director of Jamestown Boys & Girls Club from 1981 through 1987. He has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Management from Robert Morris University and attended extensive Boys Club and Administrative Training Programs. Mike is a Certified Boys Clubs of America Professional.

##### **Timothy McElhone, Executive Vice President – Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania**

Timothy McElhone has been with the organization since February, 1982, first as Controller & Business Manager, then as Vice President – Finance. He is currently the Executive Vice President. Timothy has a B.A. in Accounting from Walsh College and an M.B.A. Degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Before coming to the Boys & Girls Clubs, Timothy held the position of Business Manager at Chatham College.

##### **Dr. Theresa Henderson, CEO – Career Connection Charter Schools**

Dr. Theresa Henderson started her affiliation with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania in July of 2004 as CEO of CCCHS. She has a Doctorate of Education in Elementary and Secondary Administration from the University of Pittsburgh. Prior to coming to the Boys & Girls Clubs' CCCHS, Theresa was an Assistant Professor at Duquesne University. She has 32 years experience in education, administration and corporate management.

**Keith Oelrich, Founder & CEO – Insight Schools**

Prior to founding Insight Schools, Keith Oelrich was President and CEO of KC Distance Learning, where he operated Keystone National High School—one of the largest private online high schools in the U.S., headquartered in Bloomsburg PA—and also founded iQ Academies, a publicly-funded online high school serving the State of Wisconsin. Prior to joining KCDL, Keith was President and CEO of Apex Learning, a leading virtual high school company founded by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. Under Keith's direction, Apex's products were adopted by 14% of the nation's school districts, and served over 120,000 students annually. Keith has a BA in Economics from the University of Washington, and an MBA from Cornell University, where he was a Thomas Scholar.

**Dr. Timothy P. Shriver, Ed.D., Chairman, Advisory Board - Insight Schools**

Dr. Timothy Shriver is currently the Chairman of the Special Olympics, where he has served as President since 1996, and as President, Chairman and CEO since 2003. Tim has served in various roles including educator, counselor, author and speaker in order to bring issues to the forefront such as substance abuse, violence, dropout rates and teen pregnancy. Tim worked with the New Haven Public Schools Social Development Project, now considered the leading school-based dropout prevention effort in the United States. Tim also serves as Chairman of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the leading research organization in the field of social and emotional learning. He currently serves on the Board of the Education Commission of the States' Compact for Learning and Citizenship, the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina, and the American Association on Mental Retardation. Tim holds an undergraduate degree from Yale University, a Master's degree from Catholic University, and a Doctorate in Education from the University of Connecticut.

**Rich Maye, Director of Operations – Insight Schools**

Based in Bloomsburg, PA, Rich joins Insight Schools from KC Distance Learning. At KCDL, Rich was in charge of technology and back-office operations for Keystone National High School, the nation's largest private online high school. Rich designed and implemented EnrollTek, Keystone's proprietary Student Information System, led internal process improvement and automation projects to improve efficiency, and managed integration projects with outside third party technologies, including Blackboard. Rich studied Computer and Information Systems at Bloomsburg University, in Bloomsburg, PA.

- 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 have been working together, in many cases, for several years. Mr. Hepler has served the BGCWPA for the past 29 years, and Mr. McElhone has served with BGCWPA since 1982. Dr. Henderson began her affiliation with BGCWPA in 2004, when she joined as CEO of Career Connections Charter High School. In the Fall of 2005, BGCWPA began to look for additional options to bring online education into the CCCHS program. At the same time, Insight Schools was looking for partners to expand its online high school programs across the nation. BGCWPA and Insight Schools began discussions during September 2005, and signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) in November 2005. Since that time, BGCWPA and Insight Schools have been working together to define the program that will be implemented at CICSP.

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

As the charter application process continues, CICSP will continue to meet with the community to describe our vision and goals. Although no additional resources are required to launch CICSP (other than the Board of Trustees), the founding coalition will discuss potential opportunities for involvement with individuals or groups that demonstrate interest and motivation consistent with the vision and goals of CICSP.

## **2. Governance:**

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

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

An affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Board of Trustees of the cyber charter school, duly recorded, showing how each member voted, shall be used in order to take action on the following subjects:

- *School calendar (must include 990 hours or 180 days of instruction for secondary students [grades 7-12] and 900 hours or 180 days for elementary students [grades 1-6]. School cannot be kept open for students or staff on Sundays, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, Christmas, or Saturdays unless Monday is the weekly holiday for the entire school year)*
- *Adopting textbooks*
- *Appointing or dismissing charter school administrators*
- *Adopting the annual budget*
- *Purchasing or selling of land*
- *Locating new buildings or changing the locations of old ones*
- *Creating or increasing any indebtedness*
- *Adopting courses of study*
- *Designating depositories for school funds*
- *Entering into contracts of any kind where the amount involved exceeds \$200*
- *Fixing salaries or compensation of administrators, teachers, or other employees of the charter school.*
- *Entering into contracts with and making appropriations to an intermediate unit, school district or Area Vocational/Technical School for the charter's proportionate share of the cost of services provided or to be provided by the foregoing entities.*

As a public school, CICSP will strictly adhere to the governance rules and procedures as dictated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. CICSP will elect a Board of Trustees that will govern all operations of CICSP. An Executive Committee will be appointed by the Founding Coalition. This Executive Committee will be responsible for the day-to-day management functions to the administrative staff and establishing a reporting relationship between the Board of Trustees and the administrative staff of CICSP. The Board of Trustees will be responsible for ensuring that the school operates in compliance with the charter application and all applicable laws and for ensuring the school's sustained financial viability. An affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the CICSP Board of Trustees will be required to take action on the above-listed items.

B. How will the Board of Trustees be selected?

The Board will be selected and appointed by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania. Five of the Board seats will be filled by individuals

who are also Board Members of the Boys & Girls Club. Business executives, community leaders, an instructor and one parent will be appointed for the remaining four Board seats.

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

The founding coalition has worked to develop a unique vision for CICSP that we believe will serve a growing need throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. That vision has been developed by the individuals who comprise the founding coalition, and they will play key roles within the management structure of CICSP, including the Executive Committee operational roles within CICSP. The vision of CICSP has also been documented in a strategic plan that describes the vision, mission, and strategy, as well as details for successful implementation. This strategic plan will serve as the basis for describing CICSP when recruiting members of the Board of Trustees and will serve as the foundation of policy and operations of CICSP.

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

As public officials, members of the Board of Trustees of a CICSP are 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 have legal obligations under the Charter School Law and the Public School Code. A Board of Trustees has a responsibility to be a good and effective steward of public money, and it needs to provide independent governance of the charter school’s administrators.

The Board of Trustees (BoT) will be responsible for the development of school policies and will oversee compliance with said policies. The BoT will also ensure that the mission of the school is followed and that the financial affairs of the school are conducted in an appropriate manner. The BoT provides direction to the Executive Director and the Executive Committee in adoption of the annual performance goals in accordance with NCLB and applicable PDE requirements. The BoT provides advice and counsel as appropriate with regards to issues of substance.

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

CICSP will develop an organizational structure that facilitates a close working relationship between administrators and teachers. The Executive Director will hold weekly staff meetings to discuss topics such as goals and objectives, professional development, curriculum development, performance appraisal, student and parent satisfaction surveys, and other matters of relevance to the school.

Furthermore, teachers will be guaranteed a voice in the decision-making process, as each year the teaching staff will elect one teacher to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees.

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

CICSP’ core mission is to help high-school aged students fulfill their individual potential. CICSP was established with the student and family needs in mind. Our success, and ultimately the success of our students require ongoing participation from all members of the community, of utmost importance, the parents and students that are actively engaged in CICSP.

CICSP will utilize a number of proactive methods to solicit feedback on current or new initiatives from both students and parents. The Executive Director and Principal of CICSP will form a Parent Advisory Counsel that will meet regularly to discuss school policy and operations. During these meetings, parents will be encouraged to provide their feedback on how CICSP may best continue to serve the students. In addition, CICSP will conduct student and parent satisfaction surveys.

These surveys are anonymous surveys that can be completed online. The surveys are administered upon completion of the enrollment, registration, and orientation processes. An informal satisfaction survey is administered to students and parents at the 14 and 45-Day Checks as part of the Strong First Step program. A summative satisfaction survey targeting course content and student support is administered upon completion of each semester of course work. A program satisfaction survey is conducted at the end of the student's course of study.

Finally, CICSP has an open "virtual door" to all students and parents. Parents and students are encouraged to contact the school directly with any concerns or issues associated with the operation of the school.

**G. Submit copies of the school's Articles of Incorporation, by-laws, and contracts and other documents required by applicable law. Requirements for the bylaws are as follows:**

The bylaws must contain a provision for "failure to organize or neglect of duty". Specifically, the bylaws must outline a removal procedure for the failure of a Board member to perform his or her duties as outlined in the Charter School Law. No Board member shall, as a private person, engage in any business transaction with the charter school of which he or she is a trustee, be employed in any capacity by the charter school of which he or she is a trustee, or receive from such charter school any pay for services rendered to the charter school. A charter school Board of Trustees shall have a designated treasurer who shall receive all funds including local, state and federal funds and privately donated funds. The treasurer shall also make payments out of the same on proper orders approved by the Board of Trustees, signed by the president or vice-president of the Board. The treasurer may pay out such funds on orders that have been properly signed without the approval of the Board first having been secured for the payment of amounts owing under any contracts which shall previously have been approved by the Board, and by which prompt payment the charter will receive a discount or other advantage.

Procedures for dismissal of an employee must be contained in the bylaws.

See Appendix P for a copy of the Articles of Incorporation – Nonprofit. At the time of the charter application submission, the by-laws had not yet been completed. CICSP is committed to including the components listed above in said By-Laws. Appendix Q - Example By-Laws are provided to demonstrate the Articles that will be included.

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

CICSP has not yet finalized recruitment strategy of the Board of Trustees (BoT). CICSP anticipates leveraging the relationships of the members of the founding coalition to identify potential Board of Trustees.

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

The founding coalition of CICSP has signed a non-binding letter of intent for the school management services described in Appendix R – Management Agreement Summary

## IV. FINANCE AND FACILITY

### 1. Financing:

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

Copies of CICSP' startup and operating budget are attached to this application as Appendix S.

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

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

The purchasing procedures utilized by the CICSP are based on proven and effective methods, focused on assuring a competitive system for purchasing goods and services. The system includes the usage of purchase orders, clearly defined spending authorization levels, price comparison shopping, and established thresholds for competitive bidding.

- 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 a requirement. Insight Schools, a member of the founding coalition will provide all necessary start-up capital. This capital will be used to fund:

- School administration
- Trained, certified staff to facilitate highly personalized interaction with students
- Student recruitment and outreach
- Laptops and printers for student use
- Technology systems (SIS, LMS, Virtual Classroom)
- Broad selection of core and complementary online courses
- Extra- and co-curricular programs to facilitate a vibrant learning community

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

The treasurer of the charter shall deposit the funds belonging to the charter school in a depository approved by the board and shall at the end of each month make a report to the

charter 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 shall be made in the name of the charter school. The Board of Trustees of a charter school shall invest charter school funds consistent with sound business practice. Authorized types of investments for charter schools shall be:

- *United States Treasury bills.*
- *Short-term obligations of the United States Government or its agencies or instrumentalities.*
- *Deposits in savings accounts or time deposits or share account of*

*institutions insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or the Federal Savings and Loan Insurance Corporation or the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund to the extent that such accounts are so insured, and for any amounts above the insured maximum, provided that approved collateral as provided by law therefore shall be pledged by the depository.*

- *Obligations of the United States of America or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith and credit of the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith of the Commonwealth, or of any political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or any of its agencies or instrumentalities backed by the full faith and credit of the political subdivision.*

- *Shares of an investment company registered under the Investment Company of America Act of 1940 (54 Stat.789, 15 U.S.C. \* 80a-1 et seq.) as defined in PA 24 PS 4-440.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code.*

**Note:** All investments shall be subject to the standards set forth in PA 24 PS 4-440.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code.

The school treasurer shall settle his or her accounts annually with the Board of Trustees for each school year. Pursuant to 24 P.S. §4-437, the accounts of the cyber charter school treasurer shall 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.
- 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 towards 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.

CICSP is an online high school, thus there is no requirement for a facility the size of a traditional brick and mortar school. Upon PDE approval of the CICSP charter application, CICSP will seek to lease or sub-lease sufficient facilities that can house the local administrative staff, including offices, and conference and meeting rooms. CICSP will seek a facility near public transportation

services, and that is handicapped accessible, in the Pittsburgh area near the facilities of members of the founding coalition (Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania or Career Connections Charter High School).

- 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.

CICSP has not yet selected a facility to house its local administrative staff. Criteria for the facility will be similar to that described 2.A. above.

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

CICSP will lease or sub-lease the space necessary to house the local administrative staff of the school. Therefore, long-term facility maintenance of the building will be dually held with the building owner being responsible for the general maintenance (i.e. heating, ventilating, lighting, sanitary conditions, water supply, exterior and roof maintenance, etc.) and CICSP will be responsible for the daily operational maintenance (i.e. fixtures, light bulbs, interior painting, etc.). Any additional required renovations will be listed and negotiated in the lease.

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

CICSP has entered into no agreements or partnership discussions regarding acquisition of a facility or land. See 2.A above.

- E. Describe facility-financing plans.

Upon charter application approval by Pennsylvania Department of Education, CICSP will seek to lease office space for administrative staff that can be covered by 75% of projected student enrollment, or sub-leased to members of the founding coalition (Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania or Career Connections Charter High School).

### **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, extra-curricular activities and parent volunteer activities), property, and Director and Officer's liability coverage (see Section 1727-A of the charter school legislation).

See Appendix T for a description of Liability and Insurance coverage.

### **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 following procedures govern the enrollment process at CICSP. Students reserve their place in line by completing an online student enrollment form; completion of this form does not obligate a student to move through the entire enrollment process. In order to maintain their position in line, students must complete additional state and district mandated intake forms within the time specified to them via email and phone. Once a student has completed the enrollment process in CICSP, he/she begins the registration process which includes filling in all data points required for state reporting purposes, registering for courses, and signing an Acceptable Use Agreement governing use of the Student Technology and school materials.

## 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.

CICSP will utilize proven methods to publicize the school in an effort to inform the community and solicit families and students interested in online learning. CICSP will leverage the relationship with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania to create grassroots awareness within the communities CICSP will serve. In addition, CICSP 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 CICSP directly via phone or internet.

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

As described above, CICSP will use a variety of traditional media methods to reach families and students interested in online learning. CICSP' 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 CICSP will present the educational philosophy, mission, goals, and describe in detail the educational methods used to ensure success. CICSP 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 CICSP, as well as the expectations CICSP has related to a student's course work and class participation. It is CICSP' goal to use these community information sessions as a means to assist families and students to determine whether this alternative learning approach is a good fit for them.

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

CICSP is a full-time, online, diploma-granting public high school serving students in grades 9-12. Full-time status is defined as students enrolled in 4, 5, or 6 credits each year. CICSP will comply with § 17-1723-A of the Charter School Law. Specifically, CICSP will be open to all resident children in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

If more students apply to attend CICSP than the number of attendance slots available, then 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 CICSP enrollment deadline. If the student is admitted, CICSP 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 CICSP and to siblings of students presently enrolled in CICSP.

**Non-discrimination policy**

CICSP does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

**Out-of-State Transfer**

CICSP is a publicly-funded school. Currently, students who are or will be residing in Pennsylvania for the 2007-2008 school years are eligible to attend.

**Age Restrictions**

The School admits students between the ages of 14 and 20, provided that 14-year old students will turn 15 before the last day of the school year and that students who are 20 will be no more than 20 years of age on the first day of school. Students who do not meet the minimum age requirement must demonstrate completion of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade or mastery of 8th grade content. Students who were home-schooled until the 9<sup>th</sup> grade must demonstrate mastery of 8th grade content through state standardized testing and/or portfolio of completed work. Families of entering freshmen must provide any and all documentation necessary to establish successful fulfillment of this requirement.

**Completion of 8th grade**

Students who are 14 years of age or younger AND who will not be turning 15 on or before the last day of school must have completed 8th grade in a public or private school setting OR demonstrate mastery of 8th grade content through state standardized testing and/or portfolio of completed work. Families of entering freshmen must provide any and all documentation necessary to establish successful fulfillment of this requirement.

**Non-English Native Language Speakers**

CICSP currently provides ESL curriculum with native language support and a set of core academic courses appropriate for early-stage language learners. Much of the student's experience at an online high school is through the written word; therefore, LEP students will take the placement exams to assist CICSP to determine the most appropriate placement of the student.

**Special Education**

Students who qualify for a special education IEP or are currently receiving special education services must complete an enrollment counseling process during which the student's current IEP and services are discussed with the CICSP Special Education 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 are reviewed with the CICSP Special Education team.

**Expelled/Suspended Students**

CICSP 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 Executive Director or designee.

**Criminal Background**

CICSP complies with state regulations regarding student privacy. However, for the safety of all students, we 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 CICSP Executive Director or designee deems that admitting the student would pose a significant risk to the health and safety of the other students, the Executive Director may deny the student admission to the School.

**Enrollment Windows**

Students may enroll in CICSP through Day 15 of each semester provided space is available. Students wishing to enroll after the enrollment window is closed must petition CICSP.

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

**Identification**

CICSP will identify students thought to be in need of special education services and programs if they have not already been identified.

**Evaluation**

CICSP 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. CICSP will also be responsible for conducting re-evaluations for children with disabilities who have already been identified.

- Parent of CICSP students will have the right to an independent educational evaluation.

**IEP Development**

CICSP will develop an Individualized Education Program ("IEP") for each student with disabilities who attends the charter school

- The IEP shall 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 even with supplemental aides and services.

**IEP Provision**

CICSP 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 shall be paid by CICSP.

**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.
- CICSP will provide all of the procedural safeguards to the students with disabilities who attend CICSP as set forth in the IDEA.

**Authority**

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

**Confidentiality**

CICSP will maintain the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding children with disabilities.

**Special Education Staffing**

It is projected that a Special Education Supervisor, three - four teachers and two paraprofessionals will be hired to implement the special needs program.

CICSP 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.**

Due to the charter application process, the CICSP admissions timeframe for school year 2007/2008 will be shortened. For the first year of operation, CICSP anticipates a student admittance timetable as follows:

March - July	Application forms available at school administrative office or online at CICSP website
July 16	Admission lottery conducted (if necessary)
July 31	Admission notification and enrollment packets distributed to parent and children who have been accepted
August 17	Completed enrollment packets due back to CICSP

**For Year 2 and beyond, CICSP will operate under an admission calendar as follows:**

January – middle of April	Applications forms available at school administrative office or online at CICSP website
Middle of April	Deadline for parents of CICSP students to notify the school if their student will be returning next year
Second week of May	Admissions lottery conducted (if necessary)
Third week of May	Admission notification and enrollment packets distributed to parent and children who have been accepted
June 1	Completed enrollment packets due back to CICSP

**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, CICSP 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 student served by or on behalf of a common school district shall possess the following substantive rights, and no school district shall limit these rights except for good and sufficient cause:

- No student shall 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 shall 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 shall 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 shall 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.

#### **Instructor Profile**

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 are 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 helps prospective online instructors identify well in advance whether online teaching is a viable teaching environment for them. Successful candidates are 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 Instructors**

Instructors at CICSP must meet the following minimum qualifications:

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

## Course Assignments

Instructors are assigned to teach courses for which they hold current endorsements.

<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Required Endorsement</u>
English Lang & Comp	English Language Arts
English Lit & Comp	English Language Arts
Foundation/ESL English	Language Arts/ESL
Basic Math	Mathematics OR Biology OR Chemistry
Advanced Math	Mathematics OR Chemistry OR Physics
World History & Electives	Social Studies OR History
US History and Gov't & Electives	Social Studies OR History
Social Studies Electives	Social Studies OR Humanities
Earth Science	Science OR Earth Science
Biology	Science OR Biology
Chemistry/Physics	Science OR Chemistry and Physics
Health/P.E.	Health/Fitness
Spanish	World Languages (Spanish)
German	World Languages (German)
French	World Languages (French)
Latin	Any certificate + competency
Business	Business Education/CTE
Digital Media Development	CTE
Programming/Computer Science	CTE
Visual Arts	Visual Arts
Music	General Music
iLearning	Any certificate

## Highly Qualified Instructors

CICSP utilizes highly qualified instructors for all core academic positions, including English, Math, Science, Social Studies, designated World Languages, and Arts. Highly qualified instructors hold at least a bachelor's degree in the subject(s) they teach and a full teaching license in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with endorsements required for the subjects they teach.

## Recruitment and Training of Local Office Team

Executive Director will manage personnel recruitment and hiring. All local office personnel will be employees of CICSP; key management positions will be approved by the Executive Committee. The Administrative staff will be located in the local office and will, where possible, be recruited from the community. They will be trained using a combination of face-to-face and virtual training methods in the details of their position; the use of the Learning Management Systems; the Student Information System; the various school programs, functions, and operations performed by the local and central offices; the organizational points-of-contact for each function; and school governance and policies.

## Recruitment of iSupport Team and Special Educator Coordinators

CICSP student support staff may or may not be located in the local office. They will be recruited from the school district, community, state colleges and universities. Preference in hiring will go to highly qualified candidates from the sponsor district, the local community, and then the state. Members of the student support staff will be trained to fulfill their responsibilities; in the use of the LMS and SIS; the various school programs, functions, and operations performed by Insight Schools local and Insight Schools central; the organizational points-of-contact for questions they are likely to encounter; and school policies. Instructors will also be trained in best practices for online education and in the implementation of the content for which they will be instructors.

See Appendix F for Job Descriptions for Instructors, Assistant Instructors and Mentors.

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

CICSP will maintain a student/instructor ratio of 25:1, which correlates to 16 FTE for 2007/2008. CICSP will utilize both full and part-time resources to achieve the 16 FTE.

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

*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.*

**Instructor Training**

CICSP instructors are not only highly qualified, they are highly trained to perform in their new role as an online instructor. 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 instructors takes place over four days. During this session, instructors are trained in:

1. Best practices in online communication and classroom management

Best practices include how and when to use communication tools, including the discussion board, the chat room, and email, effectively; 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 CICSP students.

2. 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.

3. CICSP 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 CICSP 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.

4. 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. See Appendix L for a listing of the features contained within the LMS used by CICSP.

#### 5. Student support teams

The ultimate goal of CICSP—personalized, customized education for each student—requires a new model of student support. Online instructors are trained in the roles and responsibilities of various members of the educational team as part of the iSupport Team, as well as in their own roles and responsibilities as a critical participant in these learning teams.

When possible, these training sessions are held at a central location that enables local students to meet their instructors face-to-face in a formal meet-and-greet reception.

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

CICSP uses a mix of full-time and part-time instructors. Depending on their role, instructors may be either employees of or Independent Contractors for, CICSP. The instructor compensation schedule is based on a person's instructional role and the number of students the instructor is working with.

At least 75% of the professional staff holds appropriate state certification. All special education instructors hold appropriate PA state certification. All instructional staff members meet current requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Instructors are hired based on demonstrated competency in the subject matter, their ability to effectively teach high school age students, and their understanding of and ability to implement effective online pedagogy.

The performance of all new instructors is reviewed within the first six weeks of their start date. All instructors are 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 contract will be terminated.

#### E. Identify the proposed faculty.

Once the Cyber Charter authorization is received, CICSP will recruit and hire school and local office to launch and operate the School. The following are the personnel that will be hired, the main functions that they'll perform, and their general accountabilities.

- **Executive Director:** *Functions:* interface w/Executive Committee; execute school policy; administration of the school; *Accountability:* student outcomes, program quality, financial/operational performance.
- **Principal:** *Functions:* implement and manage iSupport Team; academic disputes; administration of school; *Accountability:* student outcomes, program quality, student/parent satisfaction.
- **Instructors:** *Functions:* answer student questions, evaluation of work, facilitate understanding of content; *Accountability:* student outcomes, student comprehension, program improvement.
- **Assistant Instructors:** *Functions:* questions about technology or processes; seek out course lurkers and non-participants, update student progress database; *Accountability:* Student outcomes, offload low level instructor work, program improvement.

- **Mentors/Counselors:** *Functions:* main contact with student/family; develop personal learning plan (PLP); coach on learning strategies; monitor/remediate student progress; *Accountability:* student outcomes (for assigned students), 360 degree view of assigned students; effective deployment of learning strategies; good parent/family relationships; program improvement.
- **Special Education Coordinator:** *Functions:* help in identifying students with special needs or learning disabilities; development & monitoring individual learning plans (IEPs); input on program improvement relative to Special Ed; internal education; *Accountability:* student outcomes (for assigned students), program improvement.
- **Business Operations Manager:** *Functions:* fulfillment, student services; technology liaison; accounting/finance/budget; office manager; *Accountability:* operational/financial performance; student/parent satisfaction; reporting.
- **Administrative Assistant:** *Functions:* as directed; student/parent satisfaction *Accountability:* operational/financial performance; student/parent satisfaction.
- **Outreach Coordinator:** *Functions:* organize family socialization events, student clubs; work with students to ID/coordinate community service projects; build/train/manage community coordinator organization; grassroots outreach to local organizations; *Accountability:* parent/student satisfaction; high level of student/family interaction; relationships w/local community organizations.
- **Community Coordinators:** *Functions:* participate/organize family socialization events & field trips; advise on student clubs; *Accountability:* parent/student satisfaction; high level of student/family interaction; relationships w/local community organizations

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.

Prior to reporting for duty, all employees that will have contact with children must submit to the business office 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 shall 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 school employee.

The official clearance statement under paragraph one shall 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 under paragraph one.

#### **Grounds for denying employment**

Except as provided in section 6356 (relating to exceptions), an administrator shall 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. No individual who is a school employee on the effective date of this subchapter shall be required to obtain an official clearance statement under subsection (a) (1) as a condition of continued employment.

- 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.

No employee will be hired or students enrolled in CICSP until the PDE 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 F above detailing requirements.

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

In accordance with NCLB guidelines, at least 75% of the CICSP professional staff hold appropriate state certifications. All special education instructors hold appropriate PA state certification. All instructional staff meet current requirements for Highly Qualified Teachers under the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Instructors are hired based on demonstrated competency in the subject matter, their ability to effectively teach high school age students, and their understanding of online pedagogy.

All instructors who have been hired must provide copies of their certifications as well as supporting documentation required to demonstrate they meet the state and federal definition of Highly Qualified. This documentation is maintained and tracked by CICSP 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.

##### **Student Code of Conduct (Overview)**

CICSP 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, we believe CICSP should reflect the desires and expectations held by our community for our children, and that CICSP must provide an environment that ensures the safety and well being of students. For this reason, it is important CICSP have clear expectations and guidelines for students.

##### **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 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**

CICSP 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 CICSP staff; failure to do so is defiance toward CICSP 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**

CICSP has 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 home for the first harassment, bullying, or intimidation offense. Subsequent offenses will lead to suspensions in accordance with CICSP discipline policy.

CICSP 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, CICSP 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 is the policy of the CICSP 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 shall 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. 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.

**Discipline Philosophy**

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

See Appendix U for a description of CICSP’ Discipline Process

C. Describe your school’s mandatory student attendance plan and its fit with the 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.*

**Attendance**

CICSP does not mandate attendance on certain dates or at specific times. Student attendance in courses will be tracked to facilitate student support in online learning. Student’s 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 Mentor shall contact the student via email; the Mentor will copy the Assistant Instructor for all of the students’ courses on the email.
- If a student has not logged into a course for five consecutive school days and the Assistant Instructor has not been copied on an email from the Mentor, the Assistant Instructor for the course shall contact the student via email.
- If a student has not logged into one or more courses for seven or more consecutive school days, the Mentor shall contact the student and his/her parent/guardian via telephone. If the Mentor fails to reach the student, he/she shall attempt to contact the student via telephone and email until the student returns to full attendance.

**Truancy**

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.
- 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 Mentor.

## 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.

### Schedule

September, 2006	Community Information Sessions for parents throughout Commonwealth of Pennsylvania describing education philosophy of CICSP
October 2, 2006	Deadline for submitting completed charter school application to PDE
Oct. – Nov.	Contact community groups for involvement in planning process Recruitment of Board of Trustees
January 2007	Select Board of Trustees Select Executive Committee Recruiting for Executive Director position Finalize Strategic Plan, School Design Document, and Operations Manual Identify staffing requirements including hiring policies and procedures Receive charter application comments from PDE
Jan. – August	Solidify partnerships with community organizations and school districts
February	Revise charter application for PDE as required Identify Executive Director to be hired upon charter approval Develop admissions procedures/forms
March	Receive conditional charter from PDE Set up CICSP website Establish payroll Executive Director begins Establish financial structure and policies

March – June	Community Information Sessions for interested families outlining admission procedures
June	Receive conditional charter from PDE
July	Satisfy all reporting requirements including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Official charter signed by the authorizing board</li> <li>○ Completed charter school application addressing the 5 elements of design</li> <li>○ The application fact sheet containing projected enrollment, mission statement, and federal EIN</li> <li>○ Completed PDE-2028 Budget Form</li> <li>○ Completed wire transfer form (ACH form)</li> <li>○ Charter School Application Addendum (Federal Requirement)</li> <li>○ Assurances (Federal Requirement)</li> <li>○ Master Agreement Assurances (PA requirement)</li> </ul>
July	Select local administration office facility and renovate as required
July - August	Interview and hire teachers and staff
July	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>
July - August	Set up Special Education Services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identify students with IEP</li> <li>○ Acquire records</li> <li>○ Develop alternative IEPs</li> <li>○ Get parent approvals</li> <li>○ Define service requirements for all Special Education students</li> <li>○ Hire/Contract with providers</li> </ul> <p>Establish CICSP technology infrastructure</p>
Late July – Early Aug.	Instructor Training
Early August	Courses finalized in LMS
August	Send PDE an enrollment report
	Confirm acceptances and request student records
	Complete requirements of the conditional charter for final approved charter
	New staff orientation and professional development
Mid August	Have special education services in place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Review existing IEPs</li> <li>○ Begin special education evaluations</li> </ul>
Late August	Receive student records, including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PSSA</li> <li>○ existing IEPs</li> </ul>
Late August	Shipment of computers, printer, and books to students
	Face-to-face family orientation sessions

	Online orientation for students
Early September	School regular session begins
April – June	Student recruitment outreach

## 6. Safety:

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

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

CICSP will provide written documentation of intent to comply with all applicable safety requirements described above prior to occupancy of CICSP 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 CICSP will adopt a plan for providing school health services that complies with Article XIV of the Public School Code. 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.

Through a contracted agreement with the visiting Nurse's Association or a similar agency, nursing services will be contracted to be available when students are on school sites.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

CHARTER

*to operate a cyber charter school known as  
Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania*

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Pursuant to the authority vested in the Pennsylvania Department of Education under the Public School Code of 1949, as amended, and specifically under 24 P.S. §17-1745-A, the Board of Trustees of the (insert name of cyber charter school) is hereby granted a Charter to operate a cyber charter school located at \_\_\_\_\_, for the period commencing on \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_. The grant of this charter was approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education on \_\_\_\_\_.

It is specifically understood and agreed between the signatories hereto that:

- 1) the Board of Trustees shall operate the cyber charter school in accordance with the provisions of 24 P.S. §§17-1741-A through 17-1751-A , any amendments thereto enacted during the term of this charter and any regulations or standards applicable to cyber charter schools;
- 2) the granting of this charter is specifically contingent upon operation of the cyber charter school in strict adherence to the terms of the Application submitted by the Board of Trustees and approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education or the State Charter School Appeal Board. Said Application is attached hereto as **Appendix A** and is incorporated herein by reference as if fully set forth;
- 3) this Charter and the Appendix hereto constitute a legally binding agreement for the term set forth above and the terms of said agreement cannot be changed absent a written amendment to this Charter;
- 4) this Charter may be renewed for additional periods of five (5) years duration and upon any such renewal, a new Charter shall be executed by the parties; and
- 5) this Charter can only be terminated in accordance with the provisions of applicable law.

**WHEREFORE**, the undersigned, intending to be legally bound hereby set their hands this \_\_\_\_\_ of 2007.

ATTEST:

BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

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ATTEST:  
OF

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT  
EDUCATION

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Gerald L. Zahorchak, Secretary

## **Boys & Girls Club Facility-based Programs for Teens**

### **Keystone Clubs**

Keystone Clubs are chartered leadership and service clubs for boys and girls ages 14-18. Keystone Club members elect officers and implement activities in six areas: service to Club and community, character and leadership development, education and career exploration, unity, free enterprise and social recreation. Keystone Club members and their advisors can be nominated to steering committees that organize regional and national Keystone Conferences attended by thousands of Keystone Club members each year. Keystone Club Awards are bestowed annually on Keystone Clubs that implement programs and activities that best promote the Keystone Club principles. Each year, Keystone Club members develop a National Keystone Project. The combined action of hundreds of local Keystone Clubs results in a service project with a national scope.

### **Teen Tech Teams**

Pronounced "T-cubed" is a small-group club program for teens interested in technology, career exploration and community service. T<sup>3</sup> members assist staff and other Club members in the technology center, run Club help desks, learn about high-tech careers and implement annual projects that use technology to better the Club or community; all while developing their own advanced computing skills. Teen Tech Teams are open to all Boys & Girls Club members ages 12-18.

### **CareerLaunch®**

CareerLaunch encourages Club members ages 13-18 to assess their skills and interests, explore careers, make sound educational decisions and prepare to join our nation's ever-changing work force. Club staff or volunteers can use the Career Exploration Quick Reference Guide to work with teens individually or in small groups to build their job-search skills and job readiness. CareerLaunch Teen Tips is an easy-to-read, pocket-sized booklet for teens full of practical job-hunting advice that comes with an attractive portfolio for storing resumes, job applications and other job-hunting documents. The dynamic [CareerLaunch Web site](#) provides Club teens, staff and volunteers with online career exploration and college and job search information and interactive activities. Mentoring and job shadowing opportunities for Club teens and training for Club staff round out the CareerLaunch program.

### **JOB READY!**

JOB READY! prepares Club members ages 16-18 with specific skills to secure employment and be successful in the world of work. Using the comprehensive program materials and assessment tools that JOB READY! provides, Club staff can tailor the program to meet their members' particular needs. Teens learn how to identify job opportunities, write effective résumés, perform well in interviews, dress appropriately, develop good work habits and get along well with others in the workplace.

### **Money Matters: Make It Count**

Money Matters promotes financial responsibility and independence among Club members ages 13-18 by building their basic money management skills. Participants learn how to manage a checking account, budget, save and invest. They also learn about starting small businesses and paying for college. Money Matters features three components. The Teen Personal Finance Guide is a fun, attractive booklet containing practical tips and activities to

help teens learn the important skills of balancing a checkbook, creating a budget and saving and investing for college and retirement. The Facilitator's Guide provides Club staff and volunteers with basic financial information and instructions for easy-to-implement small-group activities. The [Money Matters Web site](#), offers teens an engaging online tool for building their money management knowledge and skills through interactive activities, games and tools like a savings and financial aid calculator to plan for college.

### **SMART Girls**

SMART Girls is a small-group health, fitness, prevention/education and self-esteem enhancement program designed to meet the developmental needs of girls ages 8-12 and 13-17. Through dynamic sessions, highly participatory activities, field trips and mentoring opportunities with adult women, Club girls explore their own and societal attitudes and values as they build skills for eating right, staying physically fit, getting good health care and developing positive relationships with peers and adults.

### **Act SMART**

Act SMART is an HIV/AIDS prevention program designed for Club members ages 6-17. The program features age-appropriate units and activities that focus on health, decision making and communication skills needed to practice healthy behaviors.

### **TRIPLE PLAY: A Game Plan for the Mind, Body and Soul**

TRIPLE PLAY, is a health and wellness program designed to empower young people to make informed decisions about their physical, mental and social well-being. The goal of TRIPLE PLAY is to improve Club members' knowledge of healthy habits, good nutrition and physical fitness; increase the number of hours per day they participate in physical activities; and strengthen their ability to interact positively with others and engage in healthy relationships.

Program components include:

- Daily Challenges
- Sports Clubs
- Sports Leadership Camps
- Triple Play Games
- Healthy Habits Nutrition Curriculum
- Social Recreation

### **FITNESS AUTHORITY**

FITNESS AUTHORITY®, promotes fitness in all youth. FITNESS AUTHORITY provides a fun-filled, motivating fitness experience for members. There is a 12-week curriculum for each of three age groups: FITNESS SQUAD, 6-9; FITNESS MASTERS, 10-14; and FITNESS ALL-STARS, 15-18. Weekly sessions cover every aspect of fitness, drawing upon themes of sports culture and history, self-esteem, nutrition and physical fitness. The annual FITNESS AUTHORITY Club-Wide Pentathlon competition allows Club members of all ages to demonstrate and test their fitness levels.

## Online Learning Best Practices Bibliography

In addition to resources available from the North American Council on Online Learning's Online Learning Clearinghouse (<http://www.edgateway.net/cs/nacol/print/docs/437>), the following studies are instrumental in shaping best practices in k12 online learning and at CICSP.

Cavanaugh, C. 2004. "Distance Learning Success Factors in the Resources-Processes-Results Cycle and Virtual School Accreditation" in *Development and Management of Virtual Schools: Issues and Trends*. Hershey, PA: Idea Group Publishing.

Cavanaugh reviews the accreditation standards for the seven regional accreditation boards and compares the standards to success factors in the RPR (resources-processes-results) Cycle. Her findings indicate that though standards vary across accreditation bodies, a consistent measure of quality found in the 67 virtual schools studied that have achieved accreditation is the institutional priority of continuously reviewing lessons learned and subscribing to a set of quality standards.

**The quality standards identified in this article reflect best practices in instructional design embraced by CICSP, including a commitment to quality through implementation, evaluation, and revision at the course level. The compilation of accreditation standards from accrediting boards also informs best practices at CICSP's course and program level.**

Cavanaugh, C., Gillan, K., Kromrey, J., Hess, M., & Blomeyer, R. (2004). *The effects of distance education on K-12 student outcomes: A meta-analysis*. Naperville, IL, Learning Point Associates. Retrieved September 21, 2006, from <http://www.ncrel.org/tech/distance/k12distance.pdf>

Cavanaugh et al identify instructor effectiveness as the single greatest contributing factor to student success in the k12 online classroom. They identify three areas of pedagogical expertise online instructors must have in order to be effective online teachers: 1) they must know how to teach the subject matter; 2) they must know how to teach teen-agers; 3) they must know how to teach online.

**The findings in this report have informed the content and structure of CICSP' professional development and instructor training program.**

National Forum on Education Statistics. (2006). *Forum Guide to Elementary/Secondary Virtual Education* (NFES 2006-803). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

This report published by NCES reviews data points traditionally collected by states and proposes additional data points for collection by online schools. The authors demonstrate how each of the proposed data elements becomes actionable data and enables appropriate policy formation.

**The recommendations made in this Guide form part of the foundation of CICSP' data collection and evaluation program.**

Roblyer, M., & Marshall, J. (2003). "Predicting success of virtual high school students: Preliminary results from an educational success prediction instrument." *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 35(2), 241-255.

In this preliminary study, Roblyer and Marshall found that their success prediction instrument had 100% accuracy in predicting student success in online courses. Success factors included the students' priority on face-to-face interaction as well as their ability to choose between a distance learning and face-to-face program.

**The findings in this study are used in combination with other research and best practices in student support to build out a series of best practices and prescriptions for scaffolding online learners.**

Russell, T. (1999). *The no significant difference phenomenon.* Montgomery, AL: International Distance Education Certification Center.

Based on studies of student performance, achievement, and connectedness, Russell concludes that there is no significant difference in student outcomes between traditional and online learning environments.

**CICSP uses this study as part of the training program for instructors who are new to online learning.**

Sherer, J. (2006). *Distance Educator.com Special Report: Virtual High Schools.* Santee, CA: Distance Educator.com.

Sherer reviews research and best practices for student motivation and access; curriculum, instruction, and technical support; evaluations; and professional development at the virtual high school level.

**These practices inform the strategies used by the mentors to ensure students engage with their courses and instructors and the evaluation and professional development programs implemented by CICSP.**

Bridgeland, J.M. et al. (2006). *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts.* Washington, D.C.: Civic Enterprises and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

In this seminal new study, Bridgeland presents findings from interviews of 500 high school dropouts. Among the more surprising statistics, we find that 80% of dropouts left school for personal reasons, including needing to earn an income (32%), becoming a parent (26%), or needing to take care of a family member (22%). More than 80% of high school dropouts believe that a high school diploma is important to their success and 74% say that, given the chance to “relive” their high school years, they would find a way to stay in school and earn their diploma.

**The findings of this study provide CICSP with important information about the perceptions and attitudes toward education held by a significant segment of CICSP’s target population.**

Kolderie, T et al. (2005). *Listening to Student Voices – On Technology: Today’s Tech-Savvy Students are Stuck in Text-Dominated Schools: A summary of available research on student attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors.* St. Paul, MN: Education Evolving.

The authors review student perspectives on common technologies such as the internet, cell phones, and iPods and the disjuncture between the modes of communication they use to socialize and gather information as consumers and the media and modes in which information is pushed out to them in traditional school environments. The authors find that internet use is prevalent, that students are sophisticated users of technology, and that more than 90% of students rely on technology to help them complete their homework. Students see technology as an essential requirement rather than an optional supplement.

**The findings in this study inform CICSP’ curriculum design practices, particularly as they relate to the modes of course delivery.**

### **Administrator Performance Evaluation**

Employee: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Period being Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Key Accomplishments during period:**

**Customer Focus**

Models outstanding customer service (both internal and external) and expects same from staff.

Evaluation:

### **Planning and Organizing**

Formulates strategic, tactical and/or operating plans which support and maintain areas of responsibility and corporate direction and goals. Prioritizes efforts to achieve most important goals. Effectively communicates these plans to subordinates and peers, along with appropriate goals and milestones. Develops/presents thoughts and plans in a realistic, positive and convincing manner, then translates them into practical, meaningful action plans.

Evaluation:

### **Leading**

Provides flexible leadership, direction and motivation to reporting employees by setting well-understood organizational goals, and clear, achievable objectives. Models professional demeanor. Manages staff effectively to support both company goals and professional development.

Evaluation:

### **Communication and Teamwork**

Listens effectively and solicits input from peers. Shares information with other managers to ensure effective cross-functional planning. Demonstrates the importance of teamwork through cooperation and collaboration with those inside and outside the department. Maintains positive, respectful communication style.

Evaluation:

**Financial and Operational Control**

Establishes and monitors financial and operational parameters for work in area of responsibility. Budgets appropriately for department/area activities and works within budgetary guidelines to achieve efficient, cost-effective operations. Controls workflow and resources through directives which optimize operational effectiveness.

Evaluation:

**Areas for Growth:**

**Overall Comments:**

**Manager Self-Evaluation**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

For Period: \_\_\_\_\_

Key Accomplishments during period:

Opportunities for Improvement:

Future Career Goals / Other Comments:



*II. Release of Student Information*

**Please read carefully!**

Safeguarding personal information is important to parents/guardians, students, and staff. This document outlines some federal and state laws and district policy governing what personal information about students might be released under what circumstances.

**“FERPA Directory information”** – what it is and how it can be used:

Federal law (*Family Education Rights and Privacy Act –FERPA*) allows school districts to release what each district designates as “*FERPA directory information*” and to do so **ONLY** for non-commercial, school related purposes.

<p><u>“FERPA Directory information” in Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania is:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• name</li> <li>• address</li> <li>• telephone number</li> <li>• e-mail address</li> <li>• photograph</li> <li>• date and place of birth</li> <li>• participation in officially recognized activities</li> <li>• dates of attendance</li> <li>• diplomas and awards</li> <li>• schools attended</li> </ul>	<p><u>Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania “FERPA directory information” is routinely used for such things as:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• school yearbooks and school newspapers</li> <li>• publication of student directories</li> <li>• commencement programs</li> <li>• honor rolls and other school information about students in the media</li> <li>• college, university, or other post-high school recruiters</li> <li>• parent organization mailing lists</li> </ul> <p><i>“FERPA Directory information” will not be released for commercial use. All use must be authorized by the Superintendent and includes only information necessary for each non- commercial use.</i></p>
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If you do not wish “*FERPA Directory Information*” to be shared, make that request by sending it in writing to your school principal no later than September 20th of each school year.

FERPA allows parents (and students who are at least 18 years old) to ask their school district once at the beginning of each school year NOT to release “*FERPA directory information*” without consent.

See other side for more about release of student information

**More information about release of student information:**

**Side 2**  
(more on front)

A family may be comfortable with students' names (*FERPA information - as explained on the previous page*) in traditional items such as school newspapers, yearbooks and honor roles but might want to restrict how student information is released to other entities.

Families may choose to deny release of information as outlined in items 1 and 2 below:

1. Please check carefully and check **ONLY** the boxes that match your family wishes:

Do NOT release FERPA directory information to the Military

DO NOT release FERPA directory information for publication in Student Directory

*Checking this box will eliminate ALL student information from appearing in the Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania published student directory (Student/parent names, address, grade, phone number, e-mail address)*

2. At times, student names, photos, or work is published on the Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania website and/or school and classroom websites as a way to inform the public about educational programs and activities.

Please read carefully and check **ONLY** the boxes that match your family wishes:

Do NOT publish my child's school work on Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania, school, or classroom websites

Do NOT publish my child's picture on Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania, school, or classroom websites

Do NOT publish my child's picture on websites or literature for promotional purposes

Do NOT publish my child's name on Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania, school, or classroom websites

**There is no need to sign or return this form UNLESS you wish to restrict release of student information in the manners described on both sides of this form.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian Date (printed name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of student PLEASE PRINT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student if 18 years old or older Date

**Important note:**

The permissions denied on this page will remain in effect for the duration of this student's enrollment (which includes transition from school to school and grade level to grade level) at Career Insight Charter School of Pennsylvania, unless rescinded.

To rescind permissions, complete and sign another copy of this form and return it to your school registrar. Fax copies will be accepted: 1.800.852.3622

# Charter School Student Enrollment Notification Form

## For School Year \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Charter School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Charter School Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

### I. Student Information:

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address (If Different From Home Address) \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

### IV. II. School District of Residence and Former School Information

School District of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Former School Information (Other Than Pre-School):

\_\_\_\_\_ Public School \_\_\_\_\_ Charter School \_\_\_\_\_ Home School \_\_\_\_\_ Nonpublic School

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Not Enrolled in School Preceding Enrollment in Charter School Because:

\_\_\_\_\_ Entering Kindergarten \_\_\_\_\_ Re-Enrolling Dropout \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Former School: \_\_\_\_\_

Address of Former School: \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Withdrawal Date From Former School: \_\_\_\_\_

Was Your Child Receiving Special Education Services Based On An Iep? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

If Yes, Do You Have The Child's Special Education Records (Iep)? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

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### III. Parent/Guardian Information:

Child Lives With: \_\_\_\_\_ Both Parents \_\_\_\_\_ Both Parents Alternately \_\_\_\_\_ Mother Only \_\_\_\_\_ Father Only \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Legal Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Foster Parents \_\_\_\_\_ Other Adult \_\_\_\_\_

Special Custodial Court Instructions:  
(If Yes, Please Provide a Copy of Court Order.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

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### Complete Parent/Guardian Name and Address Information As Applicable

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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### If The Student Is Not Living With Parents, Please Complete This Section.

\_\_\_\_\_ Guardian's Name Or \_\_\_\_\_ Foster Parent's Name Or \_\_\_\_\_ Other Adult Name  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

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My signature on this form indicates my decision to have my child attend the charter school named on page 1 of this form and signifies my request that appropriate school records be forwarded from the school district to the charter school.

**Signature of Parent/Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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### IV. To Be Completed By Charter School:

Verification of Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Certificate \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Proof of Residency \_\_\_\_\_ Mortgage Statement \_\_\_\_\_ Lease \_\_\_\_\_ Utility Bill \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Official Enrollment Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Anticipated Date of Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade Student Is Entering: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Charter School Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_

## History of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Western PA

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania has served the youth of Allegheny County for over 100 years. The agency currently serves 8 communities; several outreach sites and a charter high school impacting an approximate total of over 7,000 youth per year. Over the past several years, the agency has experienced substantial growth. In 1998, the agency received a state charter to establish a high school. In 1999, Outlet Connections retail store opened through foundation generosity and employs local teens and trains them in retail management. In 2000, the 2.5 million dollar Estelle S. Campbell Boys & Girls Club opened its doors to the Lawrenceville community, gaining over 1,000 members in the first 3 months. In May 2003, the Youth Enterprise Zone opened in Career Connections Charter high school with *The Spot* teen restaurant venture opening in October 2003. On January 1, 2004, the Club celebrated a merger with the Rejuvenating Baseball in the Inner City (RBI) program. The Youth Enterprise Zone teens developed and produced their first sales catalog in 2004 to complement Outlet Connection initiatives. The teens of the Youth Enterprise Zone released the *Pittsburgh Music Legends* CD in March 2005. The year 2006 kicked off with the grand opening of the new Walnut Avenue Boys & Girls Club in the Burns Heights Housing Community of West Mifflin. This description highlights a commitment to youth and a long-term history of success.

### MISSION

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for youth, with particular emphasis on members who live in urban communities of highly diverse cultures.

The primary mission of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania is to promote health, social, educational, vocational and character development for boys & girls ages 5 through 18, by building self-esteem, values and skills.

### GOALS

- To provide activities that will assist youth, especially the disadvantaged, to attain their highest potential in character, health and leadership.
- To provide an environment that will enable youth to develop in the company of their peers, their best social, educational and vocational attributes and thereby become good citizens able to positively participate in society.
- To provide adult leadership and guidance that youth will respect and respond to, and try to emulate in their relationship with other persons, especially those younger than themselves.

### CURRENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania currently serves over 7,000 youth ages 5-18. More than 45% of youth members are from families living below the poverty level, with 67% of members residing in single family households. Staffing consists of 30 full-time and 200 part-time employees, and over 200 program volunteers. Through public and private funding, Club membership and program fees are kept at a very minimal, affordable cost. When additional financial need is identified, the Club provides scholarship funding for membership and program costs. No child is turned away due to the inability to pay.

## *BRANCHES*

We are currently serving youth in the following Allegheny County communities: Burns Heights Housing Community, Chartiers, Duquesne-West Mifflin, Lawrenceville, McKeesport, Millvale, Shadyside, McKees Rocks, Wilkinsburg, and Sheraden.

## *CORE SERVICE AREAS*

- **CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP**—Helping Youth become responsible, caring citizens and acquire skills for participating in the democratic process is the main thrust of these programs. They also develop leadership skills and provide opportunities for planning, decision-making, contributing to Club and community and celebrating our national heritage.
- **EDUCATION AND CAREER**—These programs help youth create aspirations for the future, providing opportunities for career exploration and educational enhancement. Programs include: Money Matters, Project Learn, POWER Hour, Goals for Graduation, Goals for Growth, Career Launch and Job Ready.
- **HEALTH AND LIFE SKILLS**—These initiatives help youth achieve and maintain healthy, active lifestyles. Programs include: SMART Moves, SMART Girls, Cavity Free Zone, VSP Vision Screening and Street SMART.
- **THE ARTS**—These initiatives help members enhance self-expression and creativity, develop multicultural appreciation, provide exposure to and develop skills in crafts, visual, literary and performing arts.
- **SPORTS, FITNESS & RECREATION**—These programs promote fitness, help develop a positive use of leisure time, stress reduction, appreciation for the environment, and social and interpersonal skills. Programs include: Dapper Dan Youth Sports programs, Fitness Authority, sports tournaments, daily challenges and RBI.
- **SPECIALIZED INITIATIVES**—Digital Arts Festivals, Club Tech, Camp Fire USA, Great Start Youth Juvenile Justice Program.
- **YOUTH ENTERPRISE ZONE**—Outlet Connection, Music Connection, Career Connections Charter High School, The Spot, Catalog Connection, NFTE.

## *ACCOMPLISHMENTS*

- **SHACC** - merged with the Sheraden Homework and Computer Center January 1, 2001.
- **CAPITAL CAMPAIGN** - a three year capital campaign completed internally, ending in December 2001 with awards totaling over 6.5 million dollars.
- **ESTELLE S. CAMPBELL** - a 2.5 million dollar state of the art facility opened in the Lawrenceville community in April 2000.
- **OUTLET CONNECTIONS** - teen-driven retail store opened it's doors in August 1999.
- **CAREER CONNECTIONS CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL** - welcomed it's first class of freshman as a school to career based high school supported by the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education in August 1999.
- **CAMP FIRE** - merged with Camp Fire Boys & Girls of Western Pennsylvania, July 1, 1998.
- **THE SPOT** - Café began serving lunch and breakfast in October 2003.
- **ROBERTO CLEMENTE FOUNDATION~RBI PROGRAM** - merged with the Boys & Girls Club

January 1, 2004. “Rejuvenating Baseball in the Inner City” sports activities focusing on various sports initiatives in inner city communities while providing support and expertise to existing Club programs.

- **CATALOG CONNECTION** - The teens of the Youth Enterprise Zone selected baskets as their focus in the design and production of a catalog business to complement the Outlet Connection initiatives in 2004.

- **PITTSBURGH MUSIC LEGENDS CD** - The Youth involved in the Music Connection produced and released this professional CD in March 2005.

- **TECHNOLOGY UPGRADE** - In Spring of 2005 through the Beaumont Foundation and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America Operation Connect initiative, the 8 Club branches and Career Connections received state of the art technology upgrades including laptops computers and all wireless connectivity. All of this technology is used for the enhancement of the technology and educational programs.

- **BIZZ MOBILE** - A complement to the Youth Enterprise Zone initiatives, the BIZZ Mobile is a 35 foot trailer designed to provide interactive entrepreneurship activities to youth “on the road”, March 2005.

- **WALNUT AVENUE** - The Brand New Walnut Avenue Boys & Girls Club opened in the Burns Heights Housing Community in West Mifflin through a partnership with Allegheny County.

- **THE SPOT II** - Opened in the Estelle S. Campbell Boys & Girls Club as an extension of the original restaurant initiative, expanding youth entrepreneurship training opportunities.



### Discipline Process

1. The most effective discipline is taught and dealt with before problems arise. It is a learning process that should be instructor directed. This being said, when applicable, internal interventions will be utilized prior to the referral process.
2. If a warning is ignored and the behavior continues, the student will be referred to the Principal and their Mentor. The Instructor will email the Principal and the Mentor a referral which states the nature of the problem.
3. Within one school day of receipt of the referral, the student will write out an explanation of what caused him/her to be excluded from the classroom and will develop a three-step plan to resolve the problem.
  4. If a solution cannot be reached, the student will be suspended from class access for the remainder of the day.
  5. The Mentor will contact the student's parent by the parent's preferred method of contact (phone or email). The Mentor will copy the Instructor and Principal on the email. If the parent receives contact by email, he or she must reply to the email acknowledging receipt of the email.
  6. The student will miss the virtual classroom session from which he/she was sent and is responsible for viewing the archive; if necessary, he/she will be blocked from participating in the discussion board and/or the course itself.
  7. Instructors will not re-admit a student to the online classroom until they have read and agreed to the student's plan. If the student has been blocked from course access, access will not be restored until the instructor has read and agreed to the student's plan.
  8. If the student doesn't follow through with the agreed-upon plan he/she will be referred to the Principal and Mentor again.
  9. With each additional referral, the student will be assigned a consequence or a disciplinary step to be determined based on the student's behavior.
  10. The third referral in one day or within the same week will result in a one-day out-of-school suspension. If the student chooses to earn another referral within that same week, he/she will be suspended for the remainder of that day plus one additional day.

It should be noted that there are instances where this process may be altered. Behaviors such as: violence toward others, bullying, harassment, intimidation, disrespect toward instructors, non-compliance, and other behaviors that a staff member deems as disruptive to an orderly learning environment may result in an automatic referral to the Principal.

### Progressive Discipline

General Guidelines for CICSP Progressive Discipline (*may be subject to change*)

1. Any student with 3 behavior referrals in one day/week will be blocked from accessing all courses for one or more days.
2. Any student who refuses to resolve an issue will be choosing to be suspended.
3. Referrals require parent notification and may result in notification to law enforcement agencies and/or a counselor.

### Cumulative Discipline Referrals

<u>Number of Referrals</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
1-3	Resolve
4-9	Blocked from course access (rest of day)
10-14	Blocked from course access (rest of day plus one day)
15-19	Blocked from course access (rest of day plus three days)

### **Individual Discipline Classifications**

#### *HARASSMENT/INTIMIDATION: VERBAL, PHYSICAL, SEXUAL, RACIAL*

1. 1st Referral = written warning or suspension
2. 2nd Referral = 1 day suspension
3. 3rd Referral = 3 day suspension
4. 4th Referral = 5 day suspension

#### *ROUGH HOUSE/ENDANGERMENT*

1. 1st Referral = written warning
2. 2nd Referral = 1 day suspension
3. 3rd Referral = 3 day suspension
4. 4th Referral = 5 day suspension

#### *FIGHTING/ASSAULT/ABUSIVE COMMENTS TOWARD STAFF MEMBERS*

1. 1st Referral = 3 day suspension
2. 2nd Referral = 5 day suspension
3. 3rd Referral = 10 day suspension

#### *VANDALISM/THEFT*

1. 1st Referral = replacement/restitution, possible suspension
  2. 2nd Referral = replacement/restitution, suspension
  3. 3rd Referral = replacement/restitution, suspension
- \* May include a referral to the police

#### *TOBACCO*

1. 1st Referral = 1 day suspension
2. 2nd Referral = choice of a 5 day suspension and enrollment into a tobacco cessation program or 15 day suspension
3. 3rd Referral = long term suspension
4. 4th Referral = expulsion

#### *DRUGS/DRUG PARAPHENALIA /ALCOHOL*

1. 1st Referral = choice of a 5 day suspension and enrollment in a drug/alcohol program or 15 day suspension.
  2. 2nd Referral = long term suspension
  3. 3rd Referral = expulsion
- \* Referral to the police

#### *WEAPONS*

1. 1st Referral = 5 day suspension
  2. 2nd Referral = 10 day suspension
  1. 3rd Referral = long term suspension
- \* May include a referral to the police

#### *EXCEPTIONAL MISCONDUCT*

Dangerous weapons, threats with a weapon, distribution of drugs, etc

1. 1st Referral = expulsion
- \* Referral to the police

### **Readmission**

A student, who has been long-term suspended or expelled from CICSP and wishes to be considered for entrance or readmission to CICSP, must appeal to the Superintendent.

### **Appeal Process**

A parent or a student has a right to appeal disciplinary action. If an appeal is desired, a letter must be received by the school's office within 10 school business days (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) with an official request for an appeal hearing.

CICSP will comply with Section 1318 of the Public School Code of 1949 and with the applicable provisions of Chapter 12 of 22 of the Pennsylvania Code with respect to any suspension or expulsion.