

**Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Department of Education
Cyber Charter School Application
2015**

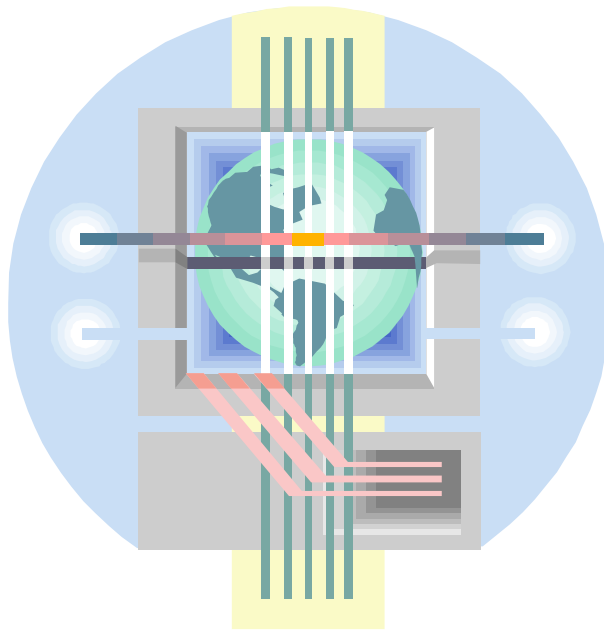


TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMPLIANCE MATRICES	1
I. SCHOOL DESIGN	7
I.1 MISSION STATEMENT.....	7
I.2 MEASURABLE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	9
I.3 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.....	16
I.4 SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY.....	80
I.5 SCHOOL COMMUNITY	100
I.6 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (ATHLETICS, PUBLICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS)	104
I.7 TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT	109
II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT.....	124
II.1 STATEMENT OF NEED.....	124
II.2 SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS.....	128
II.3 DISTRICT RELATIONS/EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT.....	131
III. GOVERNANCE	133
III.1 PROFILE OF FOUNDING BOARD	133
III.2 GOVERNANCE	137
IV. FINANCE AND FACILITY	146
IV.1 FINANCING	146
IV.2 FACILITY.....	151
IV.3 LIABILITY AND INSURANCE	156
IV.4 CHILD ACCOUNTING.....	157
V. ADMINISTRATION	161
V.1 RECRUITING AND MARKETING PLAN	161
V.2 ADMISSIONS POLICY	163
V.3 HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION	167
V.4 CODE OF CONDUCT	188
V.5 TIMETABLE.....	210
V.6 SAFETY.....	214
V.7 SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES	215

APPENDICES

A	Course List for 2016-17
B	NCAA Information
C	Special Education Policies and Procedures
D	ELL Information
E	Certificates of Insurance
F	Acceptable Use Policy
G	Sustainable Support
H	Letters of Intent to Superintendents
I	Board Member Resumes
J	Non-Profit Corporation Status
K	Board Meeting Minutes
L	By-laws
M	Articles of Incorporation
N	Statement of Agreement
O	Board Counsel Letter Regarding Provider Selection
P	Preliminary Startup and Operating Budget
Q	Assurances Letter
R	Letter of Intent to Lease
S	Board Policies
T	Draft Employee Handbook
U	Professional Learning Schedule
V	Draft Student Handbook

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Pacing Options	6
Figure 2. ADDIE – Curriculum Development Framework	23
Figure 3. Graduation Requirements	28
Figure 4. Course Development and Revision Model	36
Figure 5. College Acceptances for Graduates of Schools Supported by Connections (2014-2015 SY)	38
Figure 6. SAT Performance of Students in Schools Supported by Connections in 2013-2014	40
Figure 7. ACT Performance of Students in Schools Supported by Connections in 2013-2014	40
Figure 8. Growth in Scholarship Award Totals for Students Graduating from Schools Supported by Connections	41
Figure 9. 2013-2014 Post Graduation Plans of Students enrolled in Schools Supported by Connections	41
Figure 10. Breakdown by Disability Type	47
Figure 11. Learning Triad	70
Figure 12. Student Calendar 2016-2017	77
Figure 13. Student Calendar 2017-2018	78
Figure 14. A Day in the Life of a Student	79
Figure 15. A Day in the Life of a Teacher	79
Figure 16. Principal Performance Review Competencies	83
Figure 17. Teacher Performance Review Competencies	86
Figure 18. 2014 Parent Satisfaction Survey Results	88
Figure 19. Assessment Plan	99
Figure 20. Calendar of Parent and Community Information Sessions	101
Figure 21. Time Spent Online by Grade Span	110
Figure 22. Intervention Cycle	112
Figure 23. Assessment Objective Performance Report (AOPR) Screen Shot	113
Figure 24. Response to Intervention	114
Figure 25. Teacher’s Homepage	117
Figure 26. Students with Overdue Lessons	118
Figure 27. Specific Student Grade Book	118
Figure 28. Reasons for Attending a Cyber Program Supported by Connections	126
Figure 29. Location of Interested Students and Families	127
Figure 30. Enrollment Projections	128
Figure 31. Students Per Grade/Grouping	129
Figure 32. Trustee References	135
Figure 33. Organizational Chart for Year 5	139
Figure 34. Trustee Information	144
Figure 35. Facility Floor Plan	153
Figure 36. Calendar of Recruitment Activities to Open in Fall of 2016	162
Figure 37. Staffing Plan	169
Figure 38. Sample Professional Learning Schedule and Topics–Year 1	173
Figure 39. Professional Development to Support Numeracy	175
Figure 40. Available Training for Advance School Leaders	180
Figure 41. Hours of Schooling Each Week	202
Figure 42. Timetable of Projected Steps	210

COMPLIANCE MATRICES

Section 1719-A:	Location in Application
1. The identification of the cyber charter applicant.	Fact Sheet
2. The name of the proposed cyber charter school.	Fact Sheet Section III.2
3. The grade or age levels served by the cyber charter school.	Fact Sheet
4. The proposed governance structure of the cyber charter school, including a description and method for the appointment or election of the board of trustees.	Section III Appendix L
5. The mission and (measurable) education goals of the cyber charter school, the curriculum to be offered and the methods of assessing whether students are meeting educational goals. Cyber charter school students shall be required to meet the same testing and academic performance standards established by law and regulations applicable to public school students.	Response I.1 Response I.2 Response 1.3
6. The admission policy and criteria for evaluating student admission which shall comply with the requirements of section 1723-A (of the Charter School Law).	Response I.4.F Appendix S
7. Procedures which will be used regarding the suspension or expulsion of pupils.	Response V.4.B Appendix S Appendix V
8. Information on the manner in which community groups will be involved in the cyber charter school planning process.	Response I.5
9. The financial plan for the cyber charter school and the provisions which will be made for auditing the school under section 437 (of the Public School Code).	Response IV.1 Appendix P
10. Procedures which shall be established to review complaints of parents regarding the operation of the cyber charter school.	Response I.5.C
11. A description of and address of the physical facility in which the cyber charter school will be located and the ownership thereof and any lease arrangements.	Fact Sheet Response IV.2 Appendix R
12. Information on the proposed school calendar for the cyber charter school, including the length of the school day and school year consistent with provisions of section 1502.	Fact Sheet Response 1.3.D
13. The proposed faculty and a professional development plan for the faculty of a cyber charter school.	Response V.3.E Response V.3.C Appendix U
14. Whether any agreements have been entered into or plans developed with the local school district regarding participation of the cyber charter school students in extracurricular activities within the school district. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, no school district of residence shall prohibit a student of a cyber charter school from participating in any extracurricular activity of that school district of residence: provided, that the student is able to fulfill all of the requirements of participation in such activity and the cyber charter school does not provide the same extracurricular activity.	Response II.3 Response I.6.B
15. A report of criminal history record, pursuant to section 111, for all individuals who shall have direct contact with students. Direct contact includes contact through any electronic means.	Response V.3.F
16. An official clearance statement regarding child injury or abuse from the Department of Public Welfare as required by 23 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 Subch. C.2 (relating to background checks for employment in schools) for all individuals who shall have direct contact with students. Direct contact includes contact through any electronic means.	Response V.3.G
17. How the cyber charter school will provide adequate liability and other appropriate insurances for the cyber charter school, its employees and its board of trustees.	Response IV.3 Appendix E

Advance Cyber Charter School Application

Section 1747-A:	Location in Application
1. The curriculum to be offered and how it meets the requirements of 22 Pa. Code Ch.4 (relating to academic standards and assessment) or subsequent regulations promulgated to replace 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4.	Response I.3 Appendix A
2. The number of courses required for elementary and secondary students.	Response I.3
3. An explanation of the amount of online time required for elementary and secondary students.	Response I.7
4. The manner in which teachers will deliver instruction, assess academic progress and communicate with students to provide assistance.	Response I.7
5. A specific explanation of any cooperative learning opportunities, meetings with students, parents and guardians, field trips or study sessions.	Response I.3
6. The technology, including types of hardware and software, equipment and other materials which will be provided by the cyber charter school to the student.	Response I.7.F
7. A description of how the cyber charter school will define and monitor a student's school day, including the delineation of on-line and off-line time.	Response I.3. Response I.4
8. A description of commercially prepared standardized achievement tests that will be used by the cyber charter school in addition to the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment test, including the grade levels that will be tested and how the data collected from the tests will be used to improve instruction.	Response I.4.G
9. The technical support that will be available to students and parents or guardians.	Response I.7.C
10. The privacy and security measures to ensure the confidentiality of data gathered online.	Response I.7.D Response I.4.E
11. The level of anticipated enrollment during each school year of the proposed cyber charter school including expected increases due to the addition of grade levels.	Responses II.2, Question 1
12. The methods to be used to ensure the authenticity of student work and adequate proctoring of examinations.	Response I.7.E
13. The provision of education and related services to students with disabilities, including evaluation and the development and revision of individualized education programs.	Response I.3.B Response IV.2.B Response V.4.B Appendix C
14. Policies regarding truancy, absences and withdrawal of students, including the manner in which the cyber charter school will monitor attendance consistent with the provisions of section 1715-A (9).	Response IV.4.C Appendix S
15. The types and frequency of communication between the cyber charter school and the students and the manner in which the cyber charter school will communicate with parents and guardians.	Response I.4.A Response 1.5 Response I.7
16. The addresses of all facilities and offices of the cyber charter school, the ownership thereof and any lease arrangements. If the cyber charter school has more than one facility, it must designate the administrative office where all student records shall be maintained as required by section 1748-A(h).	Response IV.2 Appendix R

Advance Cyber Charter School Application

Section 1743-A(c)(d)	Location in Application
1. Describe how your cyber charter school will make available upon request, either in writing or electronically, the following information to each student's school district of residence:	Response I.4.F
a. A copy of the charter.	Response I.4.F
b. A copy of the cyber charter school application.	Response I.4.F
c. A copy of all annual reports prepared by the cyber charter school.	Response I.4.F
d. A list of all students from that school district enrolled in the cyber charter school.	Response I.4.F
2. Describe how the cyber charter school upon request and prior to the student's first day in the cyber charter school will provide, either in writing or electronically, the following information to the parent or guardian of a student:	Response I.4.F
a. A list and brief description of the courses of instruction the student will receive. The list shall be updated annually for each grade level in which the student is enrolled.	Response I.4.F
b. A description of the lessons and activities to be offered online and offline.	Response I.4.F
c. The manner in which attendance will be reported and work will be authenticated.	Response I.4.F
d. A list of all standardized tests the student will be required to take during the school year and the place where the test will be administered, if available.	Response I.4.F
e. The meetings to be held during the school year between a parent or guardian and a teacher and among other school officials or parents or guardians and the manner in which the parent or guardian will be notified of the time and place for the meeting.	Response I.4.F
f. The address of the cyber charter school and the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the school administrator and other school personnel.	Response I.4.F
g. A list of any extracurricular activities provided by the cyber charter school.	Response I.4.F
h. The names of the student's teachers, if available, and the manner in which each teacher can be contacted by the student or the parent of guardian.	Response I.4.F
i. A list of all services that will be provided to the student by the cyber charter school.	Response I.4.F
j. Copies of policies relating to computer security and privacy, truancy, absences, discipline and withdrawal or expulsion of students.	Response I.4.F
k. Information on:	Response I.4.F
i. The cyber charter school's professional staff, including the number of staff personnel, their education level and experience.	Response I.4.F
ii. The cyber charter school's performance on the PSSA and other standardized test scores.	Response I.4.F
l. Information regarding the proper usage of equipment and materials and the process for returning equipment and materials supplied to the students by the cyber charter school. A parent or guardian shall acknowledge, either in writing or electronically, the receipt of this information.	Response I.4.F
m. A description of the school calendar, including, but not limited to, the time frame that will constitute a school year and a school week, holiday and term breaks.	Response I.4.F

Section 1748-A	Location in Application
1. Within 15 days of the enrollment of a student to a cyber charter school, the parent or guardian and the cyber charter school shall notify the student's school district of residence of the enrollment through the use of the notification form developed by the Department of Education.	Response I.4.F
2. The cyber charter school and the parent or guardian shall provide written notification to the school district of residence within 15 days following the withdrawal of a student from the cyber charter school.	Response I.4.F

Section 1745-A. (f) Evaluation Criteria.¹

(1) A cyber charter school application submitted under this subdivision shall be evaluated by the department based on the following criteria:

(i) The demonstrated, sustainable support for the cyber charter school plan by teachers, parents or guardians and students.	Acknowledged and Addressed
(ii) The capability of the cyber charter school applicant, in terms of support and planning, to provide comprehensive learning experiences to students under the charter.	Acknowledged and Addressed
(iii) The extent to which the programs outlined in the application will enable students to meet the academic standards under 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment) or subsequent regulations promulgated to replace 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4.	Acknowledged and Addressed
(iv) The extent to which the application meets the requirements of section 1747-A.	Acknowledged and Addressed
(v) The extent to which the cyber charter school may serve as a model for other public schools.	Acknowledged and Addressed

¹

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/LI/uconsCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&yr=1949&sessInd=0&smthLwInd=0&act=14&chpt=17A&sctn=45&subscn=0>

CYBER CHARTER SCHOOL 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)

Advance Cyber Charter School

Proposed Cyber Charter School Administrative Location (Address, City/Town and Zip Code)

Governor’s Plaza North, 2101 Front Street, Harrisburg PA 17110-1086

County - DAUPHIN

Intermediate Unit - Capital Area Intermediate Unit (IU 15)

Proposed Start Date - September 6, 2016

Federal Employer Identification Number 47-4968734

Contact Person:

First David Middle _____ Last Taylor

Organization Pennsylvania Manufacturers’ Association

City Elizabethtown State PA Zip Code 17022

Telephone (717) 298-1105 Fax Number _____ E-mail dntaylor90@gmail.com

Founding Coalition: Indicate Number of Representatives per Group	Grade and Age Ranges	Projected Student Enrollment Year 1-5
Parents _____	Elementary <u>K-8</u>	1st Year <u>500</u>
Teachers _____	Secondary <u>9-12</u>	2nd Year <u>1,500</u>
Business Partners _____	Age of Kindergarten <u>5</u>	3rd Year <u>2,500</u>
Community Based Orgs. _____	Age of Beginners <u>5</u>	4th Year <u>3,500</u>
Museums _____	Circle Appropriate Grade(s) <u>K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12</u>	5th Year <u>4,500</u>
Higher Education _____	Kindergarten: <u>Full Day</u> or Half Day?	Total Number of Teachers <u>176.1</u>
Other Group (Identify) _____		

Comment [LM1]: Do we have any to add to this column?

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

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

Patricia Hennessey – Board Legal Counsel – The Payne Shoemaker Building, 240 North Third Street, 5th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17101

David Taylor – Board President – Pennsylvania Manufacturers’ Association, 225 State Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101

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

School Focus:

Advance Cyber Charter School's mission is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program through flexible pacing and 21st Century Learning including STEM opportunities.

Advance will be a year-round cyber school for students in grades K-12 throughout Pennsylvania. The school will offer multiple calendar options: traditional, year-round, and accelerated, as illustrated in Figure 1. The traditional and year-round options are available for all students. The accelerated schedule is an option for students in grades 9-12. In all options, students will complete the required 180 school days, which can be completed in either a traditional September-May school year or extended over a July-June school year.

Figure 1. Pacing Options

Pacing Options	Typical Number of Courses (Credits) Taken During each Term			
	Fall	Spring	Summer	Total Number of Courses (Credits)
Traditional Pace (K-12) Students take a full course load in the fall and spring sessions.	6 (3 credits)	6 (3 credits)	0 (0 credits)	12 (6 credits)
Year Round Pace (K-12) Students take fewer courses than a typical course load in the fall and spring sessions, but also attend the summer session.	4 (2 credits)	4 (2 credits)	4 (2 credits)	12 (6 credits)
Accelerated Pace (9-12) Students attend summer, fall, and spring sessions full-time, enabling them to graduate early.	6 (3 credits)	6 (3 credits)	2 – 4 (1 – 2 credits)	14 – 16 courses (7 – 8 credits)

The Advance Founding Board has selected Connections Education LLC (Connections) to provide educational products and services as approved by the Founding Board. Advance will offer an educational program, supported by Connections, designed to help students gain the knowledge and thinking skills they will need for life, work, and higher education. At each grade level, structured lessons will be blended with self-paced learning to ensure that each student reaches his or her full potential while also developing skills in the important "four Cs" of 21st century learning: Critical thinking and problem solving, Communication, Creativity and innovation, and Collaboration

Advance will incorporate additional science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) offerings to both students and staff. STEM enrichment in the early grades allows early and repetitive opportunities for students to become interested in and ready for courses and careers in STEM. A STEM Coordinator will seek out partnerships and opportunities within the statewide community, including organizations already committed to supporting Advance such as the Academy of Natural Sciences at Drexel University, Harrisburg University of Science and Technology, Carnegie Science Center, Pennsylvania Girls Collaborative Project. The STEM Coordinator will also organize field trips, LiveLesson sessions (a real-time, interactive web conferencing tool), experiential opportunities, clubs and activities including the STEM Talent Network, internships, and competitions through the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).²

Along with the student STEM experiences, teachers will participate in the professional development courses that Connections provides to teachers regarding STEM. We will work with founding coalition organizations throughout the state such as Harrisburg University to provide teachers with various options to enhance the STEM activities and experiences provided at Advance. Partnering strengthens Advance's commitment to STEM education and prepares teachers for supporting students in Pennsylvania's P-20 educational institutions.

² "Student Creations Shine at First Governor's STEM Competition" http://www.education.pa.gov/Pages/STEM-Competition.aspx#_VbFgAfl5w

I. SCHOOL DESIGN

I.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.*

Advance Cyber Charter School's mission is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program through flexible pacing and 21st Century Learning including STEM opportunities.

Core Philosophy

Children in the 21st century must become literate and articulate, mathematically competent, scientifically and technologically adept, and have the opportunity to develop their creative and physical abilities. Advance recognizes its responsibility to generate enthusiasm and excitement for the lifelong process of learning by providing a curriculum that is relevant, integrated, and age-appropriate and at the same time is aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. The Advance cyber program with flexible scheduling will offer students an alternative means of achieving academic proficiency.

By providing a flexible schedule, which is core to the school, Advance will provide an innovative and unique educational opportunity for students beyond what is currently available in the Commonwealth. Advance will be a year-round cyber school offering multiple calendar options: traditional, year-round, and accelerated (for students in grades 9-12). In all options, students will complete the required 180 school days, which can be completed in either a traditional September-May school year (traditional pacing) plus summer school option (year-round pacing) or extended over a July-June school year (accelerated pacing). Advance will provide students with flexible pacing options for meeting the student's individual academic goals and Pennsylvania education standards.

The Founding Board recognizes the need to expand students' views of the world to include experiences and opportunities, starting in the primary grades, to STEM competencies and career opportunities. Advance will focus on 21st Century Learning skills and will provide science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) opportunities. The National Academy of Sciences, advisers to the nation on Science, Technology, and Engineering, recently released a paper "Identifying and Supporting Productive STEM Programs in Out-of-School Settings"³. The Advance Founding Board believes that by providing a high quality K-12 educational program enriched with STEM experiences, opportunities, and professional development for teachers, Advance can bring school, family, and community together in a unique and exciting way.

The National Academies paper "...shows that STEM learning results from the dynamic interactions that occur over time among the diverse settings in which learning occurs (e.g., youth groups, hobby clubs, museums, libraries, schools, home), the community and culture in which they are embedded, and the characteristics of the learner (e.g. interests, dispositions, values).

³ National Research Council. (2015). Identifying and Supporting Productive Programs in Out-of-School Settings. Committee on Successful Out-of-School STEM Learning, Board on Science Education, Division of Behavioral and Social Science and Education. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Within this dynamic system, out-of-school programs have been shown to:

- contribute to young people's interest in and understanding of STEM,
- connect young people to caring adults who serve as role models, and
- reduce the achievement gap between young people from low-income and high income families.”

Purpose

Students at Advance, including many who have not thrived in the traditional classroom, will engage in a challenging learning program that is tailored to their individual needs and focused on equipping them for post-secondary success. The primary building blocks of our school's instructional approach will be individualized instruction, high quality teaching, and parental involvement.

The purpose of Advance is to:

- provide an innovative and unique educational opportunity for students beyond what is currently offered in Pennsylvania;
- focus on 21st Century Learning Skills with offerings and opportunities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics courses and programs (STEM);
- improve student learning through curriculum aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards;
- serve students who are seeking another educational option including students who are home-schooled, students who are bullied, pregnant teens, elite athletes, performance artists, students who have dropped out, gifted and talented students, and medically fragile students; and
- meet high academic standards.

While some students and families decide to use a cyber learning method permanently, other families choose cyber schooling as a viable point-in-time option to meet a child's changing specific needs.

B. What is your overarching vision of the school?

Vision

Students learn best when lessons match their interests, abilities, and goals. The vision of Advance is to create a personalized, learner-centered approach leveraging cyber learning and Pennsylvania-certified teachers resulting in academic and personal success for students statewide. Our school will provide a flexible pacing option with unique STEM opportunities for students with the hope that students find better academic success and leave with a broader view of STEM opportunities in the world around them. The school will also individualize instruction, support and train high quality teachers with a focus on STEM professional development, and provide opportunities for parental involvement in student learning. Advance will be accountable for academic success of students. Advance will develop and implement best practices to support the flexibility and innovative atmosphere inherent in cyber charter schools.

Advance will provide a full-time public school experience with a cyber learning community that connects students, teachers, and families through unique technology tools as well as face-to-face interaction. Advance will provide a whole-school experience for its students with academic, behavioral, emotional, and career supports. School counselors will work with each student individually on graduation plans with a focus on appropriate courses, credits, and post-secondary planning. Advance will provide students with cyber and in-person clubs, activities, and electives to complete the full-school experience.

I.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?

To help PDE perform the annual assessment, Advance will submit an Annual Report to PDE no later than August 1 of each year.

Measurable Academic Goals and Objectives to Promote Student Learning

The following are the school's measurable academic goals for the initial five-year charter period:

A. Students at Advance will meet the Pennsylvania Academic Learning Standards as evidenced by their performance on the annual state assessments and the school's School Performance Profile (SPP) rating.

In Year 1, the school will achieve a 0.90 ratio of school pass rates to statewide pass rates across all tested subject-grade levels on Pennsylvania assessments. (For example, if the state average of students scoring proficient or better for 3rd grade reading is 75% and 70% of the Advance 3rd grade students score proficient or better for 3rd grade reading, the ratio for this assessment would be calculated as $0.7 / 0.75 = 0.93$.) Ratios will be calculated for each subject-grade combination, and an overall average is calculated across ratios and weighted by number of students taking each particular test. This overall ratio will improve to 1.0 (i.e., the school will have passing rates across state assessments that is equivalent to statewide performance) by Year 5.

In Year 1, the school will achieve an SPP score of 70. The school will seek to improve this score by three points each year, achieving an SPP score of at least 80 by Year 5.

Action Steps:

- Use the Assessment Objective Performance Report (AOPR) to identify skill gaps to address with students.
- Encourage completion of Formative Assessments through teacher outreach to students and Learning Coaches.
- Assign, modify, and monitor supplemental resources (interventions) as appropriate based on individual student need.
- Provide online state assessment preparation to students in grades 3-12 who need additional support in preparing for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Students can choose either traditional test activities or interactive games in order to go through the assessment preparation material. Teachers then have access to real-time progress reports that analyze deficiencies and help target assignments.
- Support Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RTII) through targeted LiveLesson sessions.
- Implement a test retake policy to support mastery learning.
- Review student performance and make teacher-student contacts.
- Prepare, conduct, and log Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA) calls.
- Plan, prepare, conduct, and log LiveLesson sessions, office hours, etc.
- Modify lessons, grant extensions, use temporary zeros, etc.

- Encourage successful course completion.
- Analyze weekly grade reports to identify students with one or more failing grades.
- Send Midterm D or F letters via Post and Read required WebMail.
- Conduct weekly calls to students failing one or more course in high school.
- Support late-enrolling students (on-going Welcome Calls, adjust lessons, etc.).

B. Advance will address the academic needs of all students as evidenced by the closing of the performance gap of subgroups.

Subgroups with a measurable number of students to reliably calculate performance gaps and their change over time will display a yearly reduction of at least 10% of the performance gap in the first year in which that subgroup has a measurable number of students. The goal will be to have that subgroup's initial performance gap reduced to within five percentage points of the overall level of school performance within five years. A performance gap is defined as a statistically significant difference between passing rates on state assessments between a particular subgroup and the school as a whole. A measurable subgroup is defined as any subgroup of students reported for accountability purposes that consists of at least 40 students⁴ during each of the years of any two-year period (e.g., Year 1 and Year 2) in which this goal is examined. Subgroup gaps will be examined separately by subgroups and within tested subject areas (e.g., math) on the Pennsylvania state assessments.

Action Steps:

- Establish progress monitoring expectations for teachers.
- Provide training to teachers on identifying student needs, assigning interventions and working with the Student Support Team (SST).
- Encourage completion of Formative Assessments through teacher outreach to students and Learning Coaches.
- Review all on-time enrollees' math and reading intervention needs so interventions are assigned within 60 days of the first day of school, and for all subsequent enrollees within 30 days of enrollment.
- Assign, modify, and monitor supplemental resources (interventions) as appropriate based on individual student need.
- Update Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs), Tiered Interventions, data views (screens within Connexus providing snapshots and views of student data), and Contact Logs so instructional staff working with the student are aware of student needs.
- Require teachers to prepare for and attend, as necessary, SST and Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings.
- Support MTSS/RTII through targeted LiveLesson sessions.

⁴ <http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=507513&mode=2>

C. Students at Advance will demonstrate academic growth as evidenced by formative assessments.

In Year 1, 71% of students' enrolled for both the pre- and post-test windows for the school administered formative assessment will show growth from pre- to post-test or will indicate proficiency or better on the post-test. English Language Arts and math will be calculated separately and averaged. The percentage of students showing growth or indicate proficiency or better on the post-test across English Language Arts and math will improve by three percentage points each year, reaching 86% by Year 5.

The formative assessments used will vary based on subject area and grade level. The three formative assessments that will be used are the DIBELS® Next, the Longitudinal Evaluation of Academic Progress® (LEAP), and the Scantron® Performance Series™ (SPS).

DIBELS® Next – used for English Language Arts grades K-1

DIBELS® Next is the latest version of DIBELS measures produced by Dynamic Measurement Group. It includes standardized, individually-administered measures of early literacy designed to monitor the development of pre-reading and early reading skills. DIBELS Next includes essential early literacy domains determined by the National Reading Panel (2000) and National Research Council (1998). DIBELS Next goals and cut scores are research-based, criterion-referenced scores with strong evidence of reliability and validity. Benchmark levels in DIBELS Next are based on the DIBELS Composite Score which combines multiple DIBELS scores and provides the best overall estimate of the student's early literacy skills and/or reading proficiency. As the logic and procedures used to establish benchmark goals are consistent across grades and times of year, the percent of students at or above benchmark can be compared across fall and spring assessments.

Longitudinal Evaluation of Academic Progress® (LEAP) – used for English Language Arts grades 2-8 and math for grades K-8

LEAP is the proprietary, diagnostic tool Connections uses to help assess students' academic strengths and weaknesses. Assessment results will be used to help individualize a student's academic program to his or her individual needs. There are separate criterion-referenced reading and mathematics assessments. All students in grades K–8 take the LEAP math assessment and students in grades 2-8 will take the LEAP reading assessment through Connexus. Students will be given these tests three times over the school year: once in the fall, once in the winter, and once in the spring. The test was revised in the 2013-14 school year to incorporate new items, many of which utilize higher-order thinking skills. Results will be available to teachers through Connexus as students complete the assessment. Teachers will have access to student's overall scores, scores within content areas, and information based on the student's overall score that highlights the extent to which a student is at-risk for struggling academically.

Scantron® Performance Series™ (SPS) – used for English Language Arts and math for high school

These tests are online adaptive assessments that Connections uses as a pre-, mid-, and post-test academic assessment. The SPS assessments are managed by Global Scholar and align with the curriculum as well as Pennsylvania Academic Standards. High school students will be given these tests three times over the school year: once in the fall, once in the winter, and once in the spring. There are separate tests for reading and math. Students will be assigned the tests that align with their enrolled curriculum. As with the LEAP assessment, SPS results will be available to teachers through Connexus as students complete the assessment. Teachers will have access to students' overall scores, scores within content areas, and information based on the student's overall score that highlights the extent to which a student is at-risk for struggling academically.

Validation of LEAP and Scantron Performance Series

Connections has conducted an internal analysis of the relationship between academic growth, as assessed by LEAP and the Scantron Performance Series (SPS), and state test proficiency based on data from the 2013-14 school year. Results indicated that growth as assessed by both assessments displayed a statistically significant relationship (through a logistic regressions analysis) with state test scores. For both reading and math, the presence of growth during the year on LEAP and SPS was associated with proficiency on state assessments in the spring.

Definition of growth and proficiency or better

On the DIBELS Next, growth is defined as a student improving one or more benchmark levels across the fall and the spring assessments and define proficiency or better as a student scoring at or above benchmark on the DIBELS Spring assessment.

On the LEAP, growth is defined as a 10 percentage point gain from pre- to post-test and define proficiency or better as 75% correct or higher on the post-test.

On the SPS, growth is defined as a score that moves up across normative interquartile ranges from pre- to post-test on SPS normative scores and define proficiency or better as a score that falls into one of the two upper interquartile ranges for SPS post-test normative scores.

Actions Steps:

- Establish progress monitoring expectations for teachers.
- Provide training to teachers on identifying student needs, assigning interventions and working with the Student Support Team (SST).
- Encourage completion of Formative Assessments through teacher outreach to students and Learning Coaches.
- Review all on-time enrollees' math and reading intervention needs so interventions are assigned within 60 days of the first day of school, and for all subsequent enrollees within 30 days of enrollment.
- Assign, modify, and monitor supplemental resources (interventions) as appropriate based on individual student need.
- Update Personalized Learning Plans (PLPs), Tiered Interventions, data views (screens within Connexus providing snapshots and views of student data), and Contact Logs so instructional staff working with the student are aware of student needs.
- Prepare for and attend as necessary SST and Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings.
- Support MTSS/RTII through targeted LiveLesson sessions.

D. Students at Advance will demonstrate interest in STEM-related topics as evidenced by their participation and performance on various STEM-related offerings made available to students.

Advance intends to offer a variety of STEM experiences for students. These include advanced STEM courses (defined as any STEM course that is above the chronological grade level of the student or a STEM course labeled as Gifted and Talented, Honors, Advanced Placement® (AP), or Dual Credit), an experiential elective independent study course for high school students, STEM-oriented extra-curricular activities, STEM-oriented enrichment activities and STEM-oriented field trips. In year 1, 25% of students will participate in at least one of these activities. The percentage of students participating will increase each year and reach 35% by Year 5.

In addition, starting in Year 3 at least 70% of students enrolled in an advanced STEM courses will complete the course and earn a grade of B or better and by Year 5 this will increase to 80%. A significant percentage of advanced STEM course enrollments will occur at the high school level; since in Year 1, the school will serve students in grades K-9, it is likely there will not be a sufficient number of students participating in advanced STEM courses to accurately measure this goal until Year 3.

Action Steps for the STEM Coordinator:

- Organize STEM-oriented activities on a monthly basis.
- Develop partnerships with organizations connecting the school and larger Pennsylvania community to expand the school's STEM offerings.
- Promote participation in STEM-oriented extracurricular activities, enrichment activities and field trips through Newsletter articles, Message Boards, and communication with Homeroom Teachers.
- Address schedule changes/rescheduling options for students.
- Monitor course completion and academic performance for all students on a weekly basis.
- Analyze weekly grade reports to identify students who are struggle in their STEM courses.
- Conduct weekly calls to students who are earning a C or lower in their STEM courses.

E. Students at Advance will demonstrate their learning through grade-level promotion and earning an appropriate amount of credit towards graduation on a yearly basis.

In Year 1, 80% of Full Academic Year (FAY) students will promote to the next grade (K-8) or earn at least one fourth of the required high school credits for a standard diploma in the school year (grades 9-11). This will be assessed as of the end of the school year as compared with the beginning of the school year. The school will improve on this measure by three percentage points each year achieving a 95% promotion rate across all Grades by Year 5. FAY students are defined as a student enrolled by October 1st of a given year and remaining enrolled through the end of the academic year.

Action Steps:

- Monitor course completion and academic performance for all students on a weekly basis; make additional contacts to students who are falling behind with lesson completion.
- Encourage all 9th grade students to participate in a freshman support program (academy, forum, seminar, etc.).
- Develop a rigorous system of support (examples: summer boot camp, peer mentoring program, parent orientation sessions, etc.) to assist students in the transition from middle school to high school in an effort to support them in their post-secondary experience.

- Address schedule changes/rescheduling/credit recovery options for students.
- Identify students, at the end of the first quarter, in danger of not successfully completing the semester and provide additional supports (minimum weekly phone calls, mandatory LiveLesson sessions, office hour tutoring, extensions, etc.).
- Provide credit recovery.
- Modify lessons, grant extensions, use temporary zeros, etc.
- Encourage successful course completion.
- Create CBA plan that prioritizes student synchronous contacts.
- Analyze weekly grade reports to identify students with one or more failing grades.
- Send midterm D or F letters via Post and Read required email.
- Conduct weekly calls to students failing one or more course in high school.

F. Seniors at Advance will be prepared for post-secondary success as evidenced graduation rate and post-secondary planning.

In Year 1, 85% of Full Academic Year 12th graders on track to graduate will graduate by the end of the year. For 75% of these graduates, a plan will be in place that indicates that they will be pursuing, based on the students' post-graduation plans, one of the following post-secondary options: acceptance into a two- or four-year college, acceptance into an accredited vocational school, and/or joining a military service branch. By Year 5, the school will improve to a 95% graduation rate for Full Academic Year 12th graders on track to graduate and 90% of these graduates will have a post-graduation plan in place that indicates they will be pursuing, based on the students' post-graduation plans, one of the following post-secondary options: acceptance into a two- or four-year college, acceptance into an accredited vocational school, and/or joining a military service branch. Full Academic Year 12th grader is defined as a student in 12th grade enrolled by October 1st of a given year and remaining enrolled through the end of the academic year.

Actions Steps:

- Assign all seniors an adult mentor at the school and have a Welcome Call within the first seven days of enrollment and conduct follow up contacts as needed (Advisor, Homeroom Teacher, or other staff member).
- Encourage all juniors/seniors to attend a minimum of two college/vocational school visits or events each year.
- Encourage all secondary students to attend a minimum of one live or virtual information session on selecting and applying to post-secondary educational and vocational programs.
- Monitor the post-secondary plan data view and make contact with any seniors who have missing information by October and with any juniors who have missing information by March.
- Identify seniors, at the end of the first quarter, in danger of not graduating and provide additional supports (minimum weekly phone calls, mandatory LiveLesson sessions, office hour tutoring, and extensions, etc.).
- Provide credit recovery.

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

Measurable Non-Academic Goals and Objectives to Promote Student Performance

The following are the school's measurable non-academic goals for the initial five-year charter period:

1. Parents of students will perceive their placement positively as evidenced by a parent satisfaction survey.

Advance will have an average of 80% positive responses on the 21 Parent Satisfaction Survey questions that are most directly affected by the school. Advance will improve by two percentage points yearly on this measure achieving a goal of 90% positive responses by Year 5, measured by the annual Parent Satisfaction Survey, administered by a third-party vendor.

Action Steps:

- Support the Learning Coaches through LiveLesson sessions and recordings to provide resources and additional training that is timely and relevant to the current topics at hand.
- Seek input from families about activities/field trips and opportunities they would like to see at the school.
- Monitor regularly the StarTrack Rating Report and make contact with any family who has rated the school three stars or lower (on a five-star scale).
- Respond to WebMails and phone calls within 24 hours.
- Make synchronous contact with families at minimum once every two weeks.
- Provide opportunities for Learning Coaches to interact with each other through the Get Connected initiative.
- Provide Clubs & Activities to students.

2. Students will feel prepared for a successful experience as evidenced by the during school year retention rate.

In Year 1, Advance will have a 70% "during school year" retention rate, measured by the percentage of students remaining enrolled at the end of the school year compared to total enrollment. Advance will seek to improve this value by two percentage points each year to achieve and maintain an 80% retention rate by Year 5.

Actions Steps:

- Market and outreach to families sharing clear expectations of the school and the unique characteristics of this school model to help them be fully informed prior to enrollment.
- Engage families during the summer to help them prepare for the school year.
- Host information sessions to provide families with realistic overview of the school expectations.
- Develop high school transfer policies that will promote successful transfer into the school.
- Monitor regularly the StarTrack Rating Report and make contact with any family who has rated the school three stars or lower (on a five-star scale).

- Encourage Learning Coaches to participate in Learning Coach Central which provides information, trainings, and announcements to help the family be connected and the student be more successful.
- Encourage participation in field trips, STEM enrichment opportunities, and other school activities to help the family be connected and successful.

I.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.*

Educational Program

Advance will meet the needs of all enrolled students. Advance's instructional methods, educational philosophy, and program will include unique elements from our educational partner, Connections. Advance Cyber Charter School will partner with Connections Academy of Pennsylvania, LLC, a subsidiary of Connections Education LLC, (jointly referred throughout the application as Connections). Connections will not manage the school but instead provide specific educational products and services according to the Statement of Agreement with the Board of Trustees and always with the oversight and approval of the Board. The programs outlined herein will enable students to meet the academic standards under 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment) or subsequent regulations promulgated to replace 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4.

The Board selected Connections for several reasons including their innovative cyber school elements. Connections has applied its 13+ years of experience to develop these features which will bring significant benefits to Advance and enrolled students and families. In addition, the Board is impressed with Connections' commitment to constant improvement. Connections will evolve their systems and techniques to incorporate best practices and lessons learned. Connections will continually improve its offering to ensure the needs of Advance's students and families will be met. The following is a list of common terms used in the cyber schools currently supported by Connections.

- **STEM Offerings:** Students and teachers will be provided opportunities including science, technology, math and engineering (STEM) programs, and activities starting as early as kindergarten. In addition to subject specific curriculum offerings such as science, math, and educational technology and online learning, teachers will incorporate STEM opportunities across subjects and grades. Specific professional development will strengthen all teachers' expertise in STEM-related areas.
- **Assessment Objective Performance Reports (AOPR):** These reports will provide real-time student performance data on essential skills and standards based upon individual math, language arts, and science assessment items. They will identify the objectives students should master by the end of that grade level based upon the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards; and will display students' performance against the objectives. Data can be sorted to identify students who have or have not mastered specific objectives.
- **Curriculum-Based Assessments:** Teachers will use curriculum-based assessments (CBAs), via telephone conversation or LiveLesson session, as a quick and effective way to gather information on students' understanding of concepts. Diagnostic curriculum-based assessments (DCBA) will pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in student mastery of concepts. Verification curriculum-based assessments (VCBA) will gauge authentic student learning of concepts previously graded as successfully completed with scores of B or higher.

- **Connexus® Education Management System (EMS):** Connexus will be the platform for organizing and supporting the school's entire educational environment. This proprietary, web-based software will deliver every assignment and track every activity (whether conducted online or offline) while monitoring the completion of individual lessons as well as mastery of discrete skills and knowledge, all under the watchful eye of administrators, teachers, and Learning Coaches. Connexus operates within a secure, robust technology infrastructure protecting data from loss and intrusion while maintaining a safe environment. Students and Learning Coaches will access Connexus to organize, document, and interact, ensuring an unprecedented level of time-on-task documentation. All new releases and updates of Connexus will be automatically provided.
- **Grade Book and Data Tools:** Both Learning Coaches and teachers will have access to an electronic grade book that will track all results and serve as the basis of changes in the student's learning plan. A key aspect of student success will be the detailed feedback provided by the teachers beyond the simple right/wrong grading of many traditional assessment vehicles. Advance will also use a variety of advanced data visualization tools that will provide students, parents, teachers, school administrators, institutional education partners, regulators and researchers with views of how students are performing.
- **Interactive Reviews:** Interactive reviews are additional practice opportunities that are embedded in the curriculum and serve to give students targeted practice and feedback on concepts and skills.
- **Intervention Indicators:** Intervention Indicators will be displayed on the teacher home page in Connexus to facilitate teachers' ability to identify which of their students may be in need of an instructional intervention in math, reading, or both. These indicators are data-driven codes and are the first step of multi-tiered instruction. These indicators facilitate teachers' abilities to ensure that all students learn at high levels of achievement. These codes will be used to identify academically at-risk students, determine and implement appropriate instructional interventions, and monitor the effectiveness of interventions.
- **Longitudinal Evaluation of Academic Progress (LEAP):** This assessment tool, used for students in grades 2-8 reading and K-8 math, is a technology-facilitated pre-, mid-, and post-test. It provides essential diagnostic information for developing and planning instruction. It provides an early read on a student's performance on state-mandated tests and reports key accountability data on student progress throughout the academic year.
- **Learning Coach:** A parent, extended family member, or similarly qualified adult designated by the parent/guardian will work in person with the student as a Learning Coach, under the guidance of the certified teacher. The Learning Coach and student will interact with the teacher via telephone, WebMail message, LiveLesson sessions, and in-person meetings. The school will provide a unique login and ongoing training, support, and resources to help the Learning Coach carry out this important role while making optimal use of the available technology tools and professional teacher support.
- **LiveLesson® Session:** A real-time, interactive web conferencing tool, LiveLesson sessions, allow teachers to work synchronously and directly with individual or groups of students using voice-over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing based on Adobe® Connect™.

- **Message Boards:** Message Boards are designed to facilitate the secure exchange of ideas and information among students, teachers, staff, and Learning Coaches who are active in Connections Education schools and programs. Message Boards provide:
 - answers to parents' most frequently asked questions;
 - tips for success in math, science, and social studies;
 - advice for helping students excel in reading, writing, and spelling;
 - answers to enrollment questions;
 - information about technical issues;
 - links to external educational resources for families; and
 - school news and events.
- **Multi-tiered Instruction:** The school will employ a multi-tiered instruction model so that every student has access to the resources they need to be successful: Tier I Core Curriculum with Differentiation, Tier II Supplemental Instructional Supports (two to three times per week), and Tier III Supplemental Instructional Supports (four to five times per week). Student Support and IEP teams will meet regularly to develop an intervention plan and strategies for improvement for students who are struggling.
- **Personalized Performance Learning™ (PPL):** This instructional process will create a unique learning experience for each student. During enrollment, academic placement advisors and School Counselors will review students' past records and performance to properly place them in the school. A Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) will be developed collaboratively by the teacher, Learning Coach, and student to maximize achievement and to tailor curriculum and instruction. Throughout the year, teachers will monitor students' progress and will adjust their learning programs to focus on areas where students need to improve and areas in which they can build on their strengths.
- **Progression Plan:** For students in grades 9-12, counselors will begin using Progression Plans. A Progression Plan, automated in Connexus, will define and track requirements that must be accomplished to meet a goal. Teachers and counselors will use four-year academic progression plans for students to ensure they are on target for graduation and for meeting their college and career goals.
- **Scantron® Performance Series:** Students in high school may be assessed with the Scantron Performance Series. The Scantron Performance Series assessment is a valid, reliable, current test that measures student proficiency in reading and mathematics, and provides a scaled score that can be used to measure academic growth, and therefore serves as a useful tool in assessing student curricular needs. The online test is a computer-adaptive assessment which automatically adjusts to each student's ability level, generating more difficult questions if the student is answering correctly and easier ones if the student is answering incorrectly. It provides a valid and reliable scale score in math and reading so that student learning growth can be tracked over time. The version that Advance may use is aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and provides teachers with reports and information to address individual student needs. The Scantron Performance Series has a pre-, mid- and post-testing schedule similar to LEAP.
- **SSTAIR™:** The **S**kills, **S**tandards, **A**ssessment, **I**ntervention, and **R**esponse (SSTAIR) instructional model deeply links curriculum, standards, assessments, and interventions that have a direct impact on student mastery and resulting standardized test performance. The SSTAIR program targets Essential Skills/Standards by subject/grade level, uses specified assessments within the curriculum to measure student mastery of these skills and standards, provides tiered interventions for non-mastered skills and standards, and then tracks students' response to the implemented interventions by skill/standard.

- **StarTrack™:** This integrated rating system will allow every student, Learning Coach, and teacher to rate each lesson in which they engage from a low of one star to a high of five stars and give detailed feedback. Ratings and comments will be used by the curriculum staff to ensure continuous feedback and to identify areas of needed improvement as well as curriculum approaches that work especially well. Learning Coaches will be able to rate their overall school experience using a similar system.
- **Student Status/Escalation Process:** The school will track and report ongoing student progress based on the objective quantitative data generated by Connexus. Staff members will analyze attendance, participation, performance, assessment submissions, and teacher contact. The student status will be displayed on the home page for instant identification of potential problem areas. The Escalation Process will go into effect when students are in statuses other than “On-Track” to ensure students continue to gain the full benefits of this educational option and are being educated appropriately through this unique school choice.
- **Synchronous Contact:** In a cyber school setting, synchronous contact is defined as a live interaction occurring in real time between teachers and students which allows for real communication and helps to build a relationship between teachers and students. Teachers schedule LiveLesson sessions, in addition to other synchronous interaction, for students. Teachers log attendance of all LiveLesson sessions with a student in Connexus, as well as other forms of synchronous contact (e.g., phone conversations, face-to-face interactions).
- **Teacher:** The school will employ highly qualified, Pennsylvania-certified teachers, as required by law, specially trained in cyber delivery and personalized instruction. The majority of the teachers will work remotely delivering instruction to a cyber classroom of students and working one-on-one with students through highly interactive, technology-facilitated communication tools. Teachers will maintain a one-on-one relationship with each student. The school will employ a STEM Coordinator with a focus on building partnerships with organizations connecting the school and larger Pennsylvania community to expand the school’s STEM offerings. The school will also employ a Gifted and Talented Coordinator and an English Language Learner Lead Teacher.
- **Teacher Feedback Notification:** A feature in Connexus® will send auto-generated Web-Mail notifications to students and their Learning Coaches when teachers enter feedback in all assessments, except for discussion assessments. Automatic WebMail notifications will direct students and Learning Coaches to the specific assessments for which the feedback is provided creating a continuous loop of communication on student learning.
- **Teachlet® Tutorials:** Teachlet tutorials are proprietary, interactive, asynchronous graphic/video/audio tutorials and will be incorporated into lessons to provide students a dynamic, fun, and engaging way to learn the concepts they need to master learning objectives and standards.
- **WebMail:** This proprietary email system is securely located within Connexus. Students, Learning Coaches, and teachers may only use it to communicate with each other, protecting them from spam, contact from strangers, and other mainstream email issues.

In a virtual environment, students are able to work below or above grade level without the fear of ostracism or other negative social repercussions that students sometimes face in a more traditional, site-based school setting. Therefore Advance will be able to meet the needs of students who are struggling, students who are on pace, and students who are advanced.

Curriculum for Students in Grades K-12

Advance has selected the Connections curriculum. The curriculum meets the requirements of 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4 (relating to academic standards and assessment) and will meet subsequent regulations promulgated to replace 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4.

The Connections curriculum is fully aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), and the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Science, Technology, Environment, and Ecology. The curriculum supports the school's mission to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program. In this cyber charter school application, we provide an overall description of the curriculum. However, the exact courses offered at the school will depend on the number of students enrolled, the grade levels of enrolled students, and the number of staff hired as determined by mutual agreement of the Board, the Principal, and Connections.

The developmentally appropriate curriculum increases its integration of technology as students advance through the grades. Each Connections course includes active learning elements (including online and/or offline activities) that address diverse learning styles and preferences, including textual, visual, auditory, and/or hands-on. Courses include over 1,800 Teachlet tutorials (proprietary instructional movies) and primary source instructional videos. Integrated "etext" electronic textbooks are licensed from a variety of leading publishers and non-proprietary technology-based content is licensed from "best-of-breed" providers such as Grolier Online™, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, and Discovery Education.® The instructional program is supported by technology enhanced student-to-student collaboration via live synchronous instruction (LiveLesson sessions) and threaded discussions.

Our Board has conducted extensive due diligence in evaluating a cyber school program provider as well as their cyber school experience from a parent, user, and instructional designer perspective. The Connections program was the first cyber school program to receive accreditation from the Commission on International and Trans-Regional Accreditation (CITA), now a part of AdvancED™. The program was first granted accreditation in 2005 and in June 2015 was approved for renewal, awarding Connections extremely high "Index of Educational Quality (IEQ)" scores that are significantly above the AdvancED network average. Connections' Teaching and Learning Impact score was 341.18 (AdvancED Network Average score = 274.14), only surpassed by its Leadership Capacity score of 347.50 (AdvancED Network Average score = 296.08). The AdvancED reviewers praised Connections for its "culture and commitment focused on student learning (that) permeates throughout the Connections Education organization." AdvancED further noted that "Connections Education's quality assurance processes and data-driven culture leads to systemic, systematic, and sustainable continuous improvement."

An independent survey conducted in February 2015 of other schools supported by Connections, 95% of parents agree that the curriculum is high quality and 93% of parents agree that Connections' technology tools improve their child's learning experience.

In addition, the curriculum and Connexus have been recognized nationally for quality and innovation, including the following recent awards:

- The **BESSIE Awards** recognize innovative and content-rich programs and websites that provide parents and teachers with technology to foster educational excellence.
 - Connections won three BESSIE awards for Exemplary Educational Software in 2015:
 - § Best High School Algebra Website – Algebra 1;
 - § Best High School Business Education Website – Business Management & Administration; and
 - § Best Middle School Science Course Website – Science Club.
 - Connections won a BESSIE award in 2014 for Best Middle School Science Website.
- The **CODiE Awards** celebrate outstanding achievement across the software, digital information, and education technology industries. This year, nominated education technology products underwent an intensive review by educator judges from around the world. From online and project-centered learning to student information systems and professional development for educators, the finalists illustrate the company's commitment to providing innovative solutions that support personalized learning.
 - Connections' Middle School Art was honored in the Best Arts & Creativity Solution category in 2015.
 - Connections won two CODIE awards in 2014:
 - § Best K-12 Course or Learning Management Solution and
 - § Best Education Cloud-based Solution.
- The **EdTech Digest Awards** program recognizes people and products that are transforming education through technology to enrich the lives of learners. Featuring the best and brightest in education technology, the annual recognition program seeks to highlight the most effective products and the most innovative people.
 - Connections' Virtual Music Tools were recognized as an EdTech Digest Cool Tool Award Finalist in 2015.
- The **EDDIE Awards** honor innovative programs that improve both classroom curriculum and teacher productivity. Some selection criteria include academic content, technical merit, and management system. Winners are selected from titles submitted by publishers around the world.
 - Connections won two EDDIE awards for Curriculum Excellence in 2014:
 - § Best Early Elementary Science Website – Kindergarten Science and
 - § Best Middle School Art Website – Middle School Art.

The research-based⁵ curriculum uses the following proven instructional principles:

- Curriculum fosters breadth and depth of understanding in subject area.
- Content is aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and the NGSS.
- Curriculum is supported by quality, reputable, recently published textbooks, and/or proven instructional resources and materials.
- Content and assessments are accurate and unbiased.
- Content is current, relevant, and provides real-world applications.
- Content is appropriate for the learner (age, ability, background, reading level, style).
- Instructional design is adaptable and flexible to meet individual needs.
- Instructional design provides students opportunities to improve learning skills using technology (cyber labs and instruments, Teachlet tutorials, business software, online calculator).
- Navigation is intuitive and age-appropriate.
- Scope of course is appropriate with regard to amount of content, length of course and lessons, and course requirements.
- Lesson introduction is effective, presents lesson objectives, accesses prior knowledge, sets expectations, and motivates students.
- Background information prepares students to access new content, skills, and strategies.
- Curriculum includes opportunities for developing problem-solving and critical thinking skills, real-world applications, collaboration and independent study, and developing oral and written communication skills.
- Curriculum incorporates ongoing formative assessment and provides timely and appropriate feedback to students and teachers.
- Curriculum promotes active learning through interactive elements in each course (including online and/or offline interaction) that address diverse learning styles and preferences, including textual, visual, auditory, and/or hands-on.

Curriculum Development Framework

The Founding Board fully supports the process Connections utilizes to develop curriculum called *ADDIE*, a five-phase curriculum development model consisting of **A**nalysis, **D**esign, **D**evelopment, **I**mplementation, and **E**valuation (Figure 2), to guide and inform curriculum development and maintenance.

⁵ American Psychological Association's Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: A Framework for School Reform and Redesign
<http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/learner-centered.pdf>

Figure 2. ADDIE – Curriculum Development Framework



In ADDIE, each step has an outcome that feeds into the next step in the sequence.

- *Analysis* – During analysis, the curriculum team identifies the goals and objectives, the audience’s needs, existing knowledge, and any other relevant characteristics. This step also considers the learning environment, any constraints, the delivery options, and the timeline for the project.
- *Design* – During this systematic process of specifying learning objectives, detailed storyboards and prototypes are often made. Also, the look and feel, graphic design, user-interface, and content are determined.
- *Development* – In this step, production and actual creation of the content, assessments, and learning materials based on the Design phase occur.
- *Implementation* – During implementation, the plan is put into action and a procedure for training the learner and teacher is developed. Materials are delivered or distributed to the student group. After delivery, the effectiveness of the training materials is evaluated.
- *Evaluation* – This phase consists of (1) formative and (2) summative evaluation. Formative evaluation is present in each stage of the ADDIE process. Summative evaluation consists of tests designed for criterion-related referenced items and providing opportunities for feedback from the users. Revisions are made as necessary.

Accessibility

Advance is committed to creating a culture of access for inclusive learning. Through the partnership with Connections, students will have access to programs, products, and services that are usable by the greatest number of people. Connections uses information technology as a means of providing equality of opportunity to the greatest number of people, including people with disabilities. Connections develops solutions that remove barriers to a student’s opportunity to learn and ability to demonstrate that learning. Connections aims to create a culture of accessibility through education.

Connections will develop an accessible website for Advance and other electronic information to the Technical Standards and principles set forth in Section 508 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws and regulations.

Federal law requires all public schools to provide students, regardless of disability, with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the school's education program. Advance will provide students equal access to the education program. Students with disabilities will receive access through the delivery of resources and accommodations tailored to each student's individual abilities and needs, including assistive technologies and individualized support.

Connections will provide a 24-hour technical support Accessibility Hotline to support Advance students and parents.

Focus on Math and Science – Grades K-12

Students in Math K through Algebra 2 will encounter regular opportunities for self-reflection in the form of ungraded assessments. These reflections will encourage students to rate their attitudes and self-confidence about math and to consider their work and study habits. Reflections become more frequent as students advance through the grades. As elementary school progresses, reflections shift to encourage students to consider their attitudes and aptitudes in math. By middle school, reflections serve as a user-friendly tool to help students take ownership of their learning.

Students will also have the option to submit an attachment via the WorkPad tool for each assessment, allowing students to show their work by uploading scanned or photographed paper-and-pencil work. Students can select the button to browse for an attachment, or they can drag and drop the file into the assessment. When grading the assessment, teachers will be able to open the student's file and then leave feedback in the assessment.

In addition, the Connections program has a feature in the online practices and pre-tests that provides students with immediate feedback on incorrectly answered questions. Upon completion of practice assessments in most math courses, students will see a message following each question directing them to resources in the lesson associated with incorrectly answered questions. These Review Guidelines are provided in Math 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, Algebra Readiness, Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry courses.

Elementary and Middle School Curriculum (Grades K-8)

In Advance, students in grades K-5 will be enrolled as elementary school students and students in grades 6-8 will be enrolled as middle school students. The program of instruction for students in grades K-8 has the ability to be individualized, personalized, and delivered in a non-traditional environment to give students the best pathways to success. As mentioned previously, in this charter application we provide an overall description of the curriculum. However, the exact courses offered at the school will vary each year (with the anticipation of expanding offerings) and depend on the number of students enrolled, the grade levels of enrolled students, the number of staff hired meeting educational, operational, and financial requirements and the priorities of the school.

Although students in a full-time cyber school have flexibility in their daily schedules, elementary and middle school students will take seven to nine courses per year. The following lessons will be scheduled on a weekly basis for students in elementary grade levels, K-8. In addition to lessons, students will have the opportunity to participate in clubs, activities, and extracurricular experiences on a weekly basis, including many that are specifically STEM related.

Kindergarten-5th Grade:

- Language Arts, 5 lessons per week
- Mathematics, 5 lessons per week
- Social Studies, 3-4 lessons per week
- Science, 3 lessons per week
- Fine Arts, 1-2 lessons per week
- Educational Technology, 1 lesson per week
- Physical Education & Health, 1 lesson per week
- Optional – electives such as music, sign language, Spanish, or Chinese

6th-8th Grades:

- Language Arts, 5 lessons per week
- Mathematics, 5 lessons per week
- Social Studies, 3-5 lessons per week
- Science, 4-5 lessons per week
- Fine Arts, 1-2 lessons per week
- Educational Technology, 1 lesson per week
- Physical Education & Health, 1 lesson per week

The high-quality proprietary curriculum integrates textbooks, instructional activities, and other content from a variety of leading publishers. In addition to high-quality cyber and print textbook resources, the curriculum features technology-based content. The school will use a variety of multimedia and interactive practices to reinforce standards for language arts and math at each grade level. The proprietary and highly effective, online animated Teachlet tutorials, which introduce challenging topics and provide interactive practice, will be also included, along with proprietary interactive online tools and simulations including a virtual rock and mineral kit, pan balance, geoboard, and interactive math practice activities. LiveLesson sessions, which provide for real-time direct instruction with individual and small groups of students using voice-over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing, allow teachers and students to interact with one another in real time in a cyber classroom. In addition, LiveLesson sessions may be recorded and saved for students to revisit at a later date if they missed them or want to refresh themselves on the topics covered.

World language instruction will be available, including Spanish, Chinese, and Sign Language for students in grades K-8. Advanced middle school students will also have the option to take high school level Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Latin, Sign Language, and Mandarin Chinese (pending final course offering decisions). Language courses integrate proven-effective online materials with a unique audio recording tool that allows teachers to hear and grade actual student speech. Courses may also include LiveLesson session direct instruction for maximum student-to-teacher and student-to-student interaction.

The curriculum will also include unique electives such as Home Life, which provides fun hands-on skill-building projects in which the whole family can participate. These activities will include cooking, crafts, sewing, home maintenance, family outings, and genealogy. New Home Life modules are added periodically, including such recent STEM-focused additions as The Name of the Game: Discovering and Designing Board Games; What It Means to Be Green: Creating a Positive Impact on the Environment; Model Bridge Building; and Orienteering (a sport of navigation with map and compass).

To further support Advance's commitment to STEM education at all grade levels, educational technology courses will be provided for students in grades K-8. These Educational Technology and Online Learning courses will provide not only a comprehensive set of technology skills ranging from basic productivity tools to web page development, but also reinforce national and local academic standards, online study skills, and Internet safety. In addition, Advance will have a school-wide focus on developing and nurturing a culture of math acceptance and empowerment. With a focus on student engagement and learning, activities and practices will work to create an awareness of and appreciation for math in the students' everyday lives; make math more approachable for students, parents, and teachers; build pride and confidence in math effort and achievements; and make math connections with college and career planning. Specific activities include student reflection and goal setting activities in math courses, guest speaker series, certificates of effort and achievement, parent book clubs and resource sessions, teacher professional development sessions, and highlighting math connections in everyday school and life activities.

A popular elective amongst elementary school students is Music. Offered for different grade levels and experience levels, this elective is aligned to the National Core Arts Standards. With audio, visual, and interactive technologies, this course provides a unique and advanced learning experience. Students will use critical listening skills to analyze music while participating in interactive experiences. This elective will expand the student's knowledge of the foundations of music.

Students in grades K-8 can also use creative tools to such as MediaChalk™, which provides fun and interactive ways for students and teachers to tell digital stories. The platform allows teachers to teach a concept through the use of digital story-telling and create engaging movies through the use of music, voice narration, and a library of images all available within the program. Digital storytelling supports communication, creative thinking, reading, writing, and comprehension.

Advance will also provide online state assessment preparation to students in grades 3-12 who need additional support in preparing for the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA). Students can choose either traditional tests activities or interactive games in order to go through the material. Teachers then have access to real-time progress reports that analyze deficiencies and help target assignments.

High School Curriculum (Grades 9-12)

Students in grades 9-12 will be enrolled as High School students. Advance intends to serve students in grades K-9 in Year 1, adding grades 10 and 11 in Year 2, and grade 12 in Year 3. As such, this charter application provides an overall description of the curriculum. However, the exact courses offered at the school will depend on the number of students enrolled, the grade levels of enrolled students, and the number of staff hired meeting all educational, operational, and financial requirements.

Advance will provide a balanced, challenging high school experience focused on students pursuing paths that lead to success, whether via college or an immediate career choice. The student's personalized path will be monitored along the way by the student, parents, teachers, and their school counselor. Advance will provide a comprehensive program with four levels of academic coursework: Foundations, Standard, Honors, and AP. While all levels are designed to meet standards and provide students a rigorous curriculum, the four levels will enable differentiation based on student needs and college and career goals. Students will work with their school counselor and Connections' Academic Placement Advisors to determine appropriate course level placement. The high school curriculum currently consists of approximately 250 courses, including a wide variety of electives and intensive world language instruction from Spanish to Mandarin Chinese. STEM core and elective courses may include courses such as Marine Science, Earth Space Science, Web Design, Digital Arts, Engineering Design 1, and Advanced Algebra with Financial Applications. Career Technical Education courses may include Criminal Investigation, Introduction to Homeland Security, and Accounting I and II.

The high school will include substantial teacher-directed instruction, feedback, and support through asynchronous and synchronous e-learning tools. The high school curriculum integrates digital and/or print versions of textbooks from major publishers with enhanced multimedia, interactive materials and resources, discussions, and communication/conferencing tools. In addition, students will have offline assignments, projects, novels, and practice work.

High school courses will include extensive use of Teachlet tutorials, the highly interactive, asynchronous tutorials that incorporate graphics, video, and audio to engage students with the concepts and ideas they will need to complete the lessons. Along with the use of LiveLesson sessions, Teachlet tutorials increase the effectiveness of the secondary school instructional model. In addition, the high school courses will incorporate graded asynchronous online discussions, which are required for all students. This assessment creates important opportunities for collaboration and interaction among students, increases writing skills, and provides opportunities for a “real-world” audience.

The high school will also include a host of services and procedures to address credits, transcripts, and counseling. It is important for students to start early on planning for graduation and post-secondary education or the world of work. Without early planning, students run the risk of missing crucial courses that might thwart their plans or aspirations.

An Honors/AP program will also be available for high school students. Connections offers advanced high school students a wide selection of College Board–approved online AP courses. By enrolling in these demanding college-level courses, students demonstrate their commitment to higher education, which may give them a competitive advantage during the college application process. The program has a history of success, as demonstrated by a national survey of families with students enrolled in gifted or AP classes at schools supported by Connections. In the survey conducted in February 2015 by Shapiro (an independent market research company), 94% of parents stated they were satisfied with the courses and instruction and 93% said the courses are high quality.

STEM-Focused Experiential Opportunities – Grades 9-12

Students may participate in school- and student-identified experiential opportunities structured as independent study. Students will work under the supervision of a teacher and will accomplish activities/work according to a preapproved plan and timeline. The STEM-focused experiential opportunities will be a semester-based 0.5 elective credit course modeled after Independent Study. The course will show up on the student's planner based on the day of the week and hours (e.g., one day a week for three hours).

Students who are highly talented or interested in STEM may choose to design their own STEM-focused independent study course. Students will submit a proposal for independent study to the school counselor for prior approval. Working under the guidance of the Learning Coach, the school counselor or teacher, and an adult considered to be an expert in the field, the student will document the number of hours spent on the project and the work and activities completed, and will submit a final project to earn credit. This independent study will not grant academic credit for normal extracurricular high school activities. It is intended for students who want to deepen their STEM knowledge in a particular field of study.

The student will be responsible for taking the initiative to complete the course, and will complete the assigned tasks in a timely manner in order to meet the established goals. The student must commit the same amount of time and effort to the course as he or she does with other courses.

The student will work independently according to a plan established by the student, the counselor, a teacher, and the parent. The student will remain under the supervision of a certified teacher.

The STEM Independent Study can be used on a short-term or long-term basis, either in combination with their regular course load or as an isolated project (i.e., over the summer).

Independent Study projects must equate in quality and quantity to regular education courses. The student will work with his or her supervising teacher to select five assignments to complete throughout the course. The student will also submit summaries that describe the work that he or she has completed each week throughout the course.

Graduation Requirements – Grades 9-12

To be eligible to receive a diploma from Advance, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

- complete the 21 credits required by the PDE in specific area and subject as outlined herein;
- be enrolled during the semester immediately prior to graduation, and not be full-time enrolled in any other school;
- earn at least 1.5 credits (or 3 courses) in the semester immediately prior to graduation;
- pass all state-mandated Keystone End of Course exams or Project Based Assessment(s); and
- meet any other additional graduation requirements required by the school or state.

Additionally, a student may finish school during the school term in which he/she turns 21 years old.

Advance will use a tool in Connexus called a Progression Plan to help families school staff keeps track of high school students' progress towards meeting graduation requirements. The Principal, Counselor, and other staff will review each senior's records to ensure that these students have completed all graduation requirements prior to "graduating them" in Connexus. The Principal will then initiate the "withdrawal for graduation" process in Connexus for those students who have completed all requirements.

Advance uses a standard whereby one credit equals approximately 180 hours of instruction (sometimes referred to as Carnegie Units). Students must earn the credits listed in Figure 3 in the designated areas and subjects in order to graduate. Students will be required to meet all state requirements for graduation.⁶

Figure 3. Graduation Requirements

Unit of Credit	Subject
4	English
3	Mathematics
3	Science
3	Social Studies
2	Arts or Humanities or Both
1	Health and Physical Education
5	Student selects five additional courses from among those approved for credit toward graduation by the school including approved vocational education courses.

⁶ <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter57/s57.31.html>

Credit Recovery

To support high school students on their path to graduation and college and career, Advance may also choose to provide credit recovery course offerings during the summer and school year. Students who complete and fail a course required for graduation may retake a diagnostic/prescriptive state aligned version of the course to recover the needed credit. The credit recovery course offerings will present students with a pre-test to assess knowledge and then assign those lessons where students have not demonstrated mastery. Teachers monitor, motivate, and facilitate their learning to mastery.

Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities

More detail regarding graduation options for students with disabilities is detailed in the response to (B) in this section for Students with Disabilities.

Advance will meet the requirements of § 4.24. High school graduation requirements with regards to (g) *Special education students*.

Students with disabilities who satisfactorily complete a special education program developed by an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act will be granted and issued a regular high school diploma by Advance.⁷

School Counseling and Guidance Program – Grades K-12

The guidance program will serve all students and will be delivered by certified school counselors with the support of the Connections' Director of Counseling. The counseling program will offer individual and group counseling, as needed, and will focus on academic development, personal and social growth, and college and career readiness activities through a variety of communication tools (LiveLesson sessions, phone calls, message boards, Virtual Library, newsletters, and face-to-face events). The counseling team will work to engage students and support both their academic and emotional growth. The counseling team will communicate with students and parents to ensure post-secondary plans are established and students are following through on actions to realize their post-graduation goals. Technology in Connexus supports this effort with the Progression Plan Manager and the College and Career Readiness data view (a screen within Connexus providing snapshots and views of student data).

With master's degrees and specialized training, counselors will be skilled at helping students address the non-academic barriers in school and life. Counselors will have appropriate Pennsylvania certification. The counseling program will be built on relationships, so counselors will be readily accessible to students and families online, in person, and by phone. Counselors are at the heart of fostering students' engagement, safety, and wellness. As they become aware of issues concerning students' school participation, mental and emotional health, or overall well-being, the counselor will collaborate with school staff to ensure the student is supported by teachers and the family is connected with resources, as needed. With the additional support from Connections and its collaborative network of school counselors, Advance will bring both individual attention and national expertise to students and families.

⁷ <http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/022/chapter4/s4.24.html>

Counselors will review each student's transcripts to determine when an Honors or Advanced Placement® course is appropriate. Counselors will help high school students prepare for college and career with:

- college and career readiness data view focusing on steps needed to meet post-graduation goals;
- interactive LiveLesson sessions connecting families with real-time information on financial aid and scholarships, college application processes, entrance requirements, and more;
- college test preparation courses for the SAT/ACT;
- early identification of students who may be off track for graduating on time; and
- 1-to-1 counseling with students as needed to provide resources and assistance with post-secondary planning, including career options, vocational training, and selecting the right college.

In addition, there will be additional supports and activities available to support a student's college and career goals including the following:

- counseling LiveLesson sessions each Friday for high school students (including Career Fireside Chats on the fourth Friday of each month);
- college admissions LiveLesson sessions;
- career and vocational options LiveLesson sessions;
- college newsletters sent to high school students each month;
- Chat-with-a-Grad sessions; and
- Connexus tools such as the Progression Plan Manager.

High school students will have access to the national counseling LiveLesson session program, which delivers weekly guidance curriculum lessons and national college admissions sessions throughout the school year. The sessions include the Career Fireside Chats on the fourth Friday of each month. Previous sessions have covered such topics as Teen Dating Violence Awareness, Educational/Training Opportunities After High School, Why School Matters: Navigating Your Educational Development Plan, How to Develop a Growth Mindset, Aligning Individual Goals & Abilities, and ACT & SAT Overview. A college newsletter is sent to high school students each month.

In addition, students will be encouraged to enroll in College and Career Focused clubs. Each club includes regular LiveLesson sessions with a career and college counselor. There are several clubs focused on post-secondary planning including:

- College Planning Club (grades 9-12),
- First Generation Club (grades 9-12),
- High School Career Club (grades 9-12), and
- Middle School Career Club (grades 6-8).

The counselor will also plan additional LiveLesson sessions for students which will address specific student needs. The counselor will be a resource to students, families, and staff in ensuring that all students are safe.

Advance will implement the Commonwealth's Student Assistance Program (SAP) which is designed to assist school personnel in identifying issues including alcohol, tobacco, other drugs, and mental health issues which pose a barrier to a student's success. Through the program, Advance will create a SAP team at the school that will aim to help students overcome these barriers so they can achieve, remain in school, and find success in

learning. The counselor will work with school leadership to ensure all staff members are trained on the SAP policies and procedures. Advance will work with a Commonwealth-approved training provider to ensure that team members have received up-to-date professional training consistent with accountable standards and appropriate procedures. A minimum of four Advance team members will attend the three-day training and complete the associated work. If any of those four trained personnel leave the school, Advance will ensure replacements are also trained. Advance will set aside at least seven hours of in-service/faculty meeting time throughout the first calendar year for program implementation. Advance will also set aside time each week for SAP team work.

The counselor will actively seek resources in the communities which families may need to address the personal and social needs of the child. The counseling program will be based on the American School Counselor Association framework, encouraging membership for all professional school counselors, and abiding by their legal and ethical standards of practice.

The counseling team will have an established system for early identification of students who are behind in earning high school credits, or those who are off track for graduation. Once identified, counselors will work with these students to identify support needed to be successful in earning credits, and a plan to try to get back on track to graduate with his/her cohort. Specifically, school counselors will be working directly with students to identify a course of study that works to get the student back to graduating with his or her cohort. Potential options include credit recovery courses, additional credits each semester, block scheduling, and summer school. Counselors will work with students and families individually to identify what is best for the needs of each student. Further, counselors will work with students individually and in groups to instruct students on the mindsets and behaviors necessary to be a successful cyber student. Students will learn about organizational and time management skills, assertiveness in working with teachers, and the skills necessary to become a self-regulated learner.

The technology available in Connexus will allow for teachers and counselors to monitor students' participation and performance in course work to identify students who are behind in lessons or performing poorly in current courses. Advisory teachers and counselors will assist these students in successfully completing courses through frequent calls and access to additional resources, as needed.

College and Career Readiness – Grades 9-12

Colleges and universities continue to grow their cyber learning programs. A recent report by Babson (2014) documented there are approximately 3.75 million students enrolled in full-time cyber learning in public higher education institutions and that over 95% of public higher education institutions with 5,000 or more total students offer distance education programs.⁸ In addition, 70.8% of higher education chief academic leaders report that cyber learning is critical to their long-term strategy.⁹

Cyber learning is critical in higher education and students who graduate from K-12 full-time cyber schools are accepted to colleges throughout the country (as shown later in Figure 5). In addition, students who graduate from a cyber school program may be better prepared for online college coursework since their experience in cyber learning prepared them for setting goals, being independent, and implementing organizational techniques.

⁸ <http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/report/2014SurveyInfo.pdf>

⁹ <http://onlinelearningconsortium.org/read/survey-reports-2014/>

The Founding Board was impressed with the Connections program including the college and career offerings. Students who have graduated from cyber schools supported by Connections have performed well academically, have been accepted into colleges and universities across the country, and have received scholarships. Preparing a student for life after high school is an important goal for Advance. Students will have a wide range of course offerings to pursue their career and college plans including Advanced Placement® courses, career technical education (CTE) courses, and Technology & Engineering courses.

Innovative Feature: STEM Talent Network – Grades 6-12

While all students will have the opportunity to participate in STEM-related clubs, activities, and field trips, those middle and high school students in grades 6-12 who demonstrate exceptional talent in STEM will also have the option to join the Science and Technology Talent Network. Components of the Science and Technology Talent Network include project-based learning activities, collaborative projects, competitions, and networking opportunities devoted to fostering growth in the STEM disciplines. Membership is an ideal way for students to cultivate their burgeoning talents, enrich their academic lives, and enjoy opportunities to interact with other like-minded students and professionals. Students with advanced abilities will gain exposure to today's cutting-edge innovations through guest experts from such fields as robotics, cyber security, environmental science, and astronomy. Past experts have included a NASA engineer and a member of the FBI's Cyber Crime Taskforce. A variety of competitions and learning activities will be provided to inspire and challenge students. The following are examples of the types of activities and programs made available through the Science and Technology Talent Network:

- **RobotC Program**
Students learn how to program a virtual Lego® Mindstorms robot in C-Based programming language by completing lessons. LiveLesson sessions provide opportunities for collaboration, sharing knowledge, and instruction. Once students master basic coding skills and can manipulate their robots as a result of created code, they are able to engage in competitions against robots programmed by their peers.
- **The Stock Market Game**
Students work collaboratively to invest a virtual \$100,000 in stocks for an online portfolio. Students research companies and discuss stock options as well as determine how much money and in which companies to invest in order to create the most profitable portfolio. Decisions made by the team are analyzed and applied in real time using the New York Stock Exchange.
- **Website Creation**
Students work collaboratively to build and create a website to display animal and plant pictures submitted by Connections Academy students. The website incorporates an interactive map, helping students to learn in which locations animals and plants are native. The final website will be available to all members of the Connections community.

In addition, our school will proactively reach out to community organizations with a focus on STEM, such as NASA, Carnegie Mellon University, Drexel University, Pennsylvania State University, and Johns Hopkins as well as other higher education institutions to offer opportunities to all students. It is anticipated partnerships with these organizations would offer STEM-themed field trips, LiveLesson sessions delivered by experts throughout the state, teacher professional development opportunities, or other collaborative activities.

Physical Education – Grades K-12

Advance is committed to ensuring student participate in a planned physical education program designed to optimize their physical, mental, emotional, and social development. We will ensure students are engaged in a variety of health, safety, and physical education activities. The physical education program will be aligned to state standards and will:

- maintain physical, social, and emotional health in students by practicing healthy behaviors and goal setting;
- be age and developmentally appropriate and be taught at each grade level; and
- be coordinated and managed by an education professional.

To track students' day-to-day physical activities and to ensure participation, Connections developed a proprietary online "Activity Tracker" tool that enables students to personalize an electronic log to track activity type (jogging, aerobic training, flexibility training, yoga, etc.), duration, and frequency. This tracker includes activities that align to curriculum goals and state-specific standards. The activity type and time requirements auto-populate by grade and state requirements. Students choose an exercise that aligns with the activity and indicate the frequency, intensity, time, and type (FITT). As students engage in the physical activities, they input data to track their progress. Students then export their tracked activity into an Excel file and send this to their teachers in an online dropbox. Teachers access the students' files to grade and provide feedback to the students on their FITT goals. These activity assessment portfolios are incorporated throughout each physical education course in grades K-12. Learning Coaches mark lessons complete for students and teachers monitor the completion of assessments and grade students based on participation and success in meeting their physical education goals. Additionally, to ensure reliability and accountability, teachers may conduct Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBA) to verify completion of physical activities, discuss their progress, give fitness tips and feedback, and differentiate instruction to meet students' needs. Activity Tracker inspires students to get active and be healthy.

Students in Grades K-2: Students will learn games and activities that require active participation and will be introduced to overall health, wellness, and safety behaviors and concepts. The games and activities that involve movement and motor skills are grouped in thematic units. There are three different options that students in grades K-2 will be able to choose from to fulfill their Physical Education requirement. These include the Personal Fitness Program, the Connections Fitness Program, and Yoga. Students will choose which program they would like to participate in and may change or add a program during the year. Students' participation and progress will be monitored through daily recordings in the Activity Tracker and discussions with the Learning Coach.

Students in Grades 3-5: Students will focus on developing a safe and healthy lifestyle which requires acquiring knowledge to make positive decisions about exercise and nutrition. There are three programs provided in these courses: the Personal Fitness Program, the Connections Fitness Program, and Yoga. Students may start with one program and choose another as they proceed through the course, or they may participate in the same program throughout the course. The curriculum includes the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Tests. Students will record their results on a periodic basis and will receive the appropriate award depending on the performance level. Teachers will monitor students' participation and progress through the Activity Tracker and periodic performance tests as well as through discussions with the Learning Coach and student.

Students in Grades 6-8: Students will learn and apply the concepts and skills necessary for lifelong health, safety, and physical fitness. In the health portion of the course, students will be introduced and assessed on various topics ranging from movement concepts to proper nutrition and fitness, as well as the skills to ensure the development of a safe and healthy lifestyle. There are three programs provided in these courses: the Personal Fitness Program, the Connections Fitness Program, and Yoga. Students may start with one program and choose another as they proceed through the course, or they may participate in the same program throughout the course. The curriculum includes the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Tests. Students will record their results on a periodic basis and will receive the appropriate award depending on the performance level. Teachers will monitor students' participation and progress through the Activity Tracker and periodic performance tests as well as through discussions with the Learning Coach and student.

Students in Grades 9-12: Students may have several courses to choose from to fulfill their health and physical education credits. Teachers will monitor student participation and performance using the escalation system, the school's Grade Book, and CBAs.

- **Health, Fitness, and Nutrition:** This course covers first aid, the benefits of good nutrition, and the dangers of alcohol and drug use. Students learn how to evaluate their own fitness and nutritional needs and how to make changes that lead to a healthier lifestyle over the long run. Also discussed are strategies for resisting peer pressure and ways fitness can influence self-image and overall well-being.
- **Personal Fitness:** Students learn the proper ways to exercise and eat healthy, how to assess their fitness level, and strategies for reaching their highest possible fitness level. They have the option of learning yoga in this course.
- **Physical Education:** This course emphasizes self-directed activities that a student can participate in for a lifetime. This includes the option of learning and practicing yoga. Students' skill levels are measured with written assignments, class evaluations, and demonstrations of a particular skill.
- **Personal Fitness II:** This course looks at the aspects of living a healthy and balanced life. Students will learn the relationship between physical, mental, and social health as they explore topics including: effective communication, building healthy relationships, the effects of violence, coping mechanisms, and how to set goals. Additionally, students will learn basic first aid procedures, what to do in medical emergencies, and how to keep their homes safe. Throughout the course, students will be required to participate in regular physical activity and keep records of their activity. The student will be given a choice of three paths that place emphasis on lifelong activities as well as current fitness trends.

Field Trips – Grades K-12

Students will have the opportunity to participate in regular field trips and outings throughout Pennsylvania facilitated by program staff and Community Coordinators (parent volunteers). Advance will offer a wide range of field trips with a special focus on providing STEM-related activities when possible. Field trips provide students with additional opportunities to socialize with their peers and are designed to help both students and Learning Coaches connect to their school and to each other. Students may go on trips to museums, farms, science centers, cultural centers, and unique experiential learning opportunities throughout the state. Many of the field trips will provide STEM activities or will have assignments based on STEM themes.

While not an exhaustive list, examples include visits to:¹⁰

- Everhart Museum – Natural History, Science & Art – Scranton
- Loyola Science Center – Scranton
- Great Valley Nature Center – Devault
- Valley Forge National Park – Valley Forge Academy of Natural Sciences – Philadelphia
- State Museum of Pennsylvania – Harrisburg Quiet Valley Living History Farm – Stroudsburg
- Longwood Gardens – Kennett Square
- Explore & More – Gettysburg
- Carnegie Science Center – Pittsburgh
- National Aviary – Pittsburgh Field trips will also be focused on college and career readiness for the secondary students. Field trips to local universities and colleges such as Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pennsylvania, Temple University, and the University of Pittsburgh will be scheduled. In addition, it is anticipated that field trips will be organized to explore local businesses and attendance at college and career fairs.

The intent of the field trips will be mission-focused as well as focused on school and community. It will allow many of the families to connect with each other, connect with the local community, and connect with their educational goals. Advance plans to be a school with multiple “connections” throughout the state to ensure that all students are served.

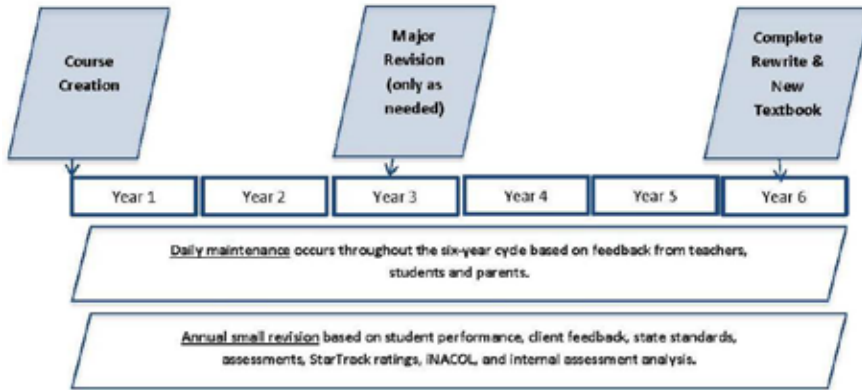
Content in all Subject Areas – Grades K-12

To show a sample of the types of courses offered, we have included a course list for the 20126-17 school year in Appendix A. These are the courses that may be offered to Advance students in 2016-17.

As shown in the Course Development and Revision Model in Figure 4, the instructional program and curriculum proposed will regularly undergo specific audit and revision by the Connections curriculum department. The curriculum is updated based on a rigorous national analysis of student performance on state testing results and school-based assessments, including individual course assessments for specific units and lessons.

¹⁰ <http://www.fieldtrip.com/pa/index.html>

Figure 4. Course Development and Revision Model



Note: Major revisions only occur as needed.

The curriculum will be regularly evaluated, upgraded, and enhanced based on the needs of students and schools supported by Connections. Annual updates will be communicated in the Program Guide as well as the website. Teacher Course Liaisons, who are experts in their curricular areas, will gather feedback from other teachers across all schools supported by Connections and work with Connections' curriculum department to make updates and revisions to the curriculum based on this input.

StarTrack Surveys

In addition, student, parent, and teacher input will be gathered on an ongoing basis via StarTrack ratings for lessons. On every lesson in the curriculum, and on the home page for each Learning Coach, is a StarTrack rating box inviting ratings on a five-star scale and an opportunity to provide text feedback. Data gathered from this feedback will be examined carefully and acted upon by school staff and by Connections. Since the StarTrack rating tool was launched, parents and students in schools supported by Connections have provided more than one million lesson ratings. For the 2014-2015 school year, 913,103 lesson ratings were submitted by parents and students attending schools supported by Connections with an average rating of 4.21 out of five stars.

End of Course Surveys

Connections' End of Course surveys provide students with an opportunity to reflect on their experience taking the courses. The surveys provide teachers and Connections staff with critical feedback to improve instruction, and courses. The surveys also provide valuable information about how students feel about their own learning.

The surveys consist of questions rated on a Likert scale and free response questions. The surveys are divided into the following topic areas:

- My Course: Students comment on the course material and assessments.
- My Teacher: Students comment on the instructional practices of their teacher.
- My Learning: Students reflect on their own learning style and degree of engagement in the course.

There are separate surveys for grades K-2, 3-5, and 6-12. Surveys are administered online via a web-based survey tool. Student responses to surveys are anonymous. Students complete one set of survey questions for each course they are in and surveys are conducted near the middle of the year and at the end of the school year. Teachers can use results to inform their teaching practices. Results at the course level are used to help drive improvements in course content.

Parent Satisfaction Surveys

In addition, the results of parent satisfaction surveys will be used to drive improvements to the curriculum, instruction, and program. The results will be analyzed and an annual report presented to the Board and/or Principal.

Accreditation

Connections Academy is a division of Connections Education LLC, which is accredited by AdvancED, a non-profit organization operating three regional accrediting agencies and trusted partner to 32,000 school and school systems across the United States and 70 countries.¹¹ In July of 2015, AdvancED re-accredited Connections Education LLC for another five-year term. Connections Education's AdvancED accreditation scores significantly exceeded AdvancED's average scores for the 32,000+ schools and corporations they accredit. Connections Education received many commendations from the review committee. The following quotes are from the visiting team's exit report:

- *"A culture and commitment focused on student learning permeates throughout the Connections Education organization."*
- *"The corporation embodies a culture of collaboration that exists throughout all aspects of the corporation and schools."*
- *"Connections Education's quality assurance processes and data-driven culture leads to systemic, systematic, and sustainable continuous improvement."*

Connections is proud of the recognition of its focus on student learning and collaboration, and that the AdvancED team found that Connections truly embodies a culture of continual improvement. It is also excited about collaborating with Advance because of the Board's focus on student learning.

Advance will apply for accreditation, most likely through the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools (MSA). Connections will support the school with the process of accreditation. Accreditation through an accrediting body such as MSA is a diagnostic process to stimulate and guide continuous improvement, with a focus on teaching and learning, leadership capacity, and the effective use of resources.

Many Connections high school courses are also approved by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility Center through a rigorous, approval process to meet requirements for initial-eligibility for college athletes, as shown at the following URL:

<http://www.connectionsacademy.com/Portals/4/ca/documents/pdfs/1516-NCAA-Approved-Course-List-072315.pdf>

This information is also included in **Appendix B** of this application.

¹¹ Accreditation agency serving 32,000 public and private schools and districts <http://www.advanc-ed.org/>

Once Advance is open and has its own CEEB code, Connections will work with the school leadership on adding the school to the Connections Academy district, which will then allow Advance to have the same list of NCAA-approved courses as other schools supported by Connections. NCAA course approvals ensure student athletes have access to the college-preparatory curriculum they need to achieve both their athletic and academic dreams.

History of Student Success Using the Educational Program

The Board reviewed the college and career data from schools supported by Connections and concluded the following:

- Cyber learning is accepted at higher education institutions across the country.
- Colleges and universities have partnered with Connections across the country, vetting both the curriculum and the teachers for academic rigor for dual credit courses in states where dual credit is accepted.
- Students graduating from schools supported by Connections are receiving a high level of scholarship awards for their preparation for college.
- Students attending schools supported by Connections have demonstrated academic achievement on SAT, ACT, and AP assessments.
- Schools supported by Connections focus on college and career readiness through curriculum and support services.
- Schools supported by Connections have a diverse student population with a variety of college and career goals.

Colleges and universities accept students who graduate from full-time cyber schools as demonstrated in the list of college acceptances for students graduating from schools supported by Connections. As illustrated in **Figure 5**, graduates of schools supported by Connections have been accepted at prestigious colleges and universities such as: Bucknell University, Carnegie Mellon University, Penn State, Swarthmore, and the University of Pennsylvania. **Please note: This is just a sample of the schools, not a complete list.**

Figure 5. College Acceptances for Graduates of Schools Supported by Connections (2014-2015 SY)

College Acceptances for Graduates of Schools Supported by Connections			
Alabama • Troy University • University of Alabama	Arizona • Arizona State University • Grand Canyon University • Northern Arizona University • University of Arizona	Colorado • University of Colorado at Boulder • University of Denver • Colorado State University	Connecticut • Yale University • University of Hartford • University of Connecticut
California • California Lutheran University • California State Polytechnic University: Pomona • Chapman University • Humboldt State University	• California State University: • Chico • Fresno • Long Beach • Los Angeles • San Bernardino	• Loyola Marymount University • Pacific Union College • San Diego State University • Santa Clara University • Stanford University • St. Mary's College of California	University of California: • Berkeley • Irvine • Los Angeles • Riverside • Santa Barbara • Santa Cruz
Delaware • University of Delaware • Wesley College	District of Columbia • Catholic University of America • Georgetown University	Florida • Emory-Riddle Aeronautical University • Florida State University • University of Florida • University of Miami	Georgia • Georgia Institute of Technology • Savannah College of Art and Design • University of Georgia
Hawaii	Idaho	Illinois	Indiana

College Acceptances for Graduates of Schools Supported by Connections			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brigham Young University - Hawaii University of Hawaii at Manoa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boise State University Idaho State University University of Idaho 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DePaul University St. Xavier University University of Chicago University of Illinois at Chicago 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indiana University Bloomington Purdue University University of Notre Dame Valparaiso University
<p>Iowa</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drake University Iowa State University University of Iowa University of Northern Iowa 	<p>Kansas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kansas State University Pittsburg State University University of Kansas 	<p>Kentucky</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bellarmine University Murray State University University of Kentucky 	<p>Louisiana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge Loyola University New Orleans University of New Orleans
<p>Maryland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> John's Hopkins University Mount St. Mary's University Towson University Washington College 	<p>Massachusetts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boston College Lesley University Northeastern College Tufts University 	<p>Michigan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central Michigan University Ferris State University Michigan State University University of Michigan 	<p>Minnesota</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Macalester College Minnesota State University Mankato Northwestern College University of Minnesota: Twin Cities
<p>Missouri</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saint Louis University University of Missouri: Kansas City 	<p>Montana</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Montana State University: Bozeman Rocky Mountain College 	<p>Nebraska</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Nebraska – Lincoln 	<p>Nevada</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Nevada: Las Vegas
<p>New Hampshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plymouth State University University of New Hampshire 	<p>New Jersey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey Seton Hall University 	<p>New Mexico</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Mexico State University Santa Fe University of Art and Design 	<p>New York</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cornell University New York University Pace University St. John's University SUNY at Stony Brook Syracuse University
<p>North Carolina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elon University North Carolina State University University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Wake Forest University 	<p>Ohio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowling Green State University Denison University Kent State University Kenyon College Oberlin College Ohio State University: Columbus Campus 	<p>Oklahoma</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oklahoma State University University of Oklahoma 	<p>Oregon</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lewis & Clark College Oregon State University Portland State University Reed College University of Oregon University of Portland Western Oregon University
<p>Pennsylvania</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bucknell University Carnegie Mellon University Penn State Swarthmore University of Pennsylvania University of Pittsburgh at Pittsburgh 	<p>Rhode Island</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brown University Rhode Island School of Design University of Rhode Island 	<p>South Carolina</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charleston Southern University Clemson University Coastal Carolina University Furman University The Citadel University of South Carolina 	<p>Tennessee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Belmont University East Tennessee State University Lee University Milligan College
<p>Texas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baylor University Southern Methodist University Texas A&M University University of Houston University of Texas at Dallas University of Texas at San Antonio 	<p>Utah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Utah Utah State University Westminster College 	<p>Vermont</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> St. Michael's College University of Vermont 	<p>Virginia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> George Mason University Lynchburg College Virginia Commonwealth University Washington and Lee University
<p>Washington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gonzaga University Seattle Pacific University Seattle University University of Puget Sound Washington State University 	<p>West Virginia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American Public University West Virginia University 	<p>Wisconsin</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carthage College University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee 	<p>Wyoming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Wyoming

Schools in blue were rated as "most competitive" or "highly competitive plus" by Barron's 'Profile of American Colleges' (2013 edition)

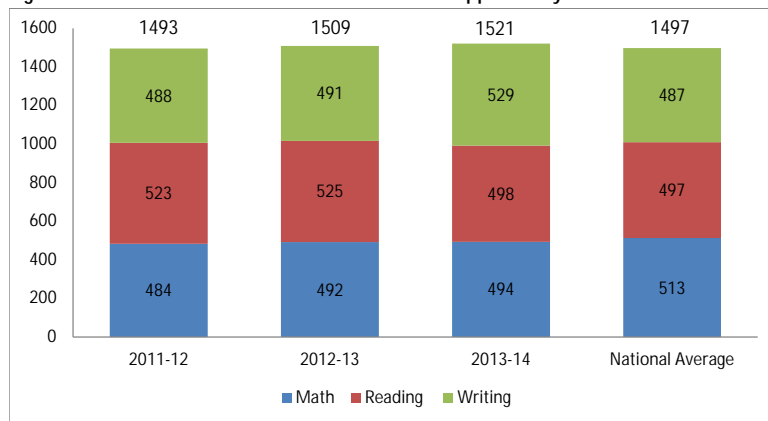
SAT and ACT

Across the country, students enrolled in schools supported by Connections have performed well on SAT and ACT exams.

SAT Performance

In the 2013-2014 school year, a total of 696 students in schools supported by Connections took the SAT test, earning on average a combined score of 1521, thus exceeding the national average score of 1497. Students performed above the national average on both the reading and writing portions of the test, while scoring slightly below average on the Math portion, as illustrated in Figure 6. In addition, performance on the SAT at Connections supported schools has shown slight increases for the past several years.

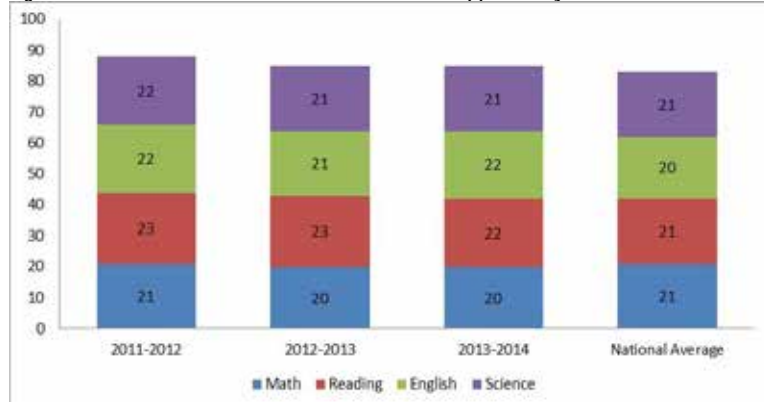
Figure 6. SAT Performance of Students in Schools Supported by Connections in 2013-2014



ACT Performance

The ACT test was the college prep test most taken by students in schools supported by Connections. A total of 989 students took the ACT during the 2013-2014 school year and earned on average a composite score of 21, thus meeting the national average. Students met or exceeded the national average on all portions of the ACT exam with the exception of the math portion, as illustrated in Figure 7.

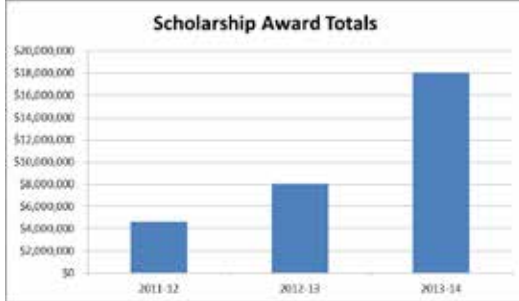
Figure 7. ACT Performance of Students in Schools Supported by Connections in 2013-2014



Scholarships

Graduates of schools supported by Connections earned over \$18 million in scholarships in the 2013-2014 school year, more than doubling the amount awarded the previous school year. There were a total of 2,854 graduates who earned scholarships, averaging \$6,310.26 per graduate. Figure 8 represents the growth in scholarship award totals for students graduating from schools supported by Connections.

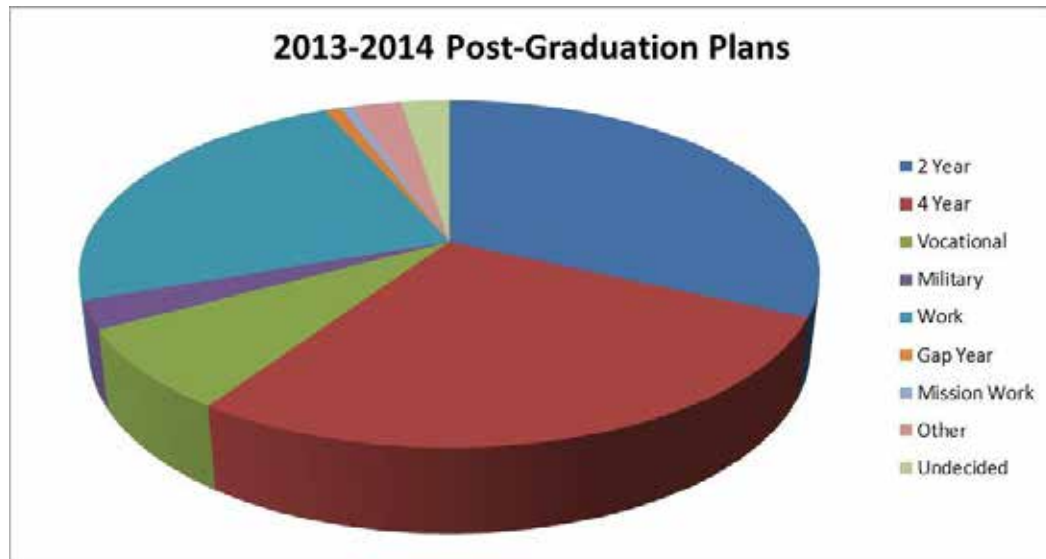
Figure 8. Growth in Scholarship Award Totals for Students Graduating from Schools Supported by Connections



Post-Graduation Plans

Many students enter high school with a variety of college and career pathways. Figure 9 examines the post-graduation plans of graduates of schools supported by Connections as reported by students working with their school counselors. The majority of students have plans to enter into two- or four-year colleges but many also have plans for a career, vocational training, or the military.

Figure 9. 2013-2014 Post Graduation Plans of Students enrolled in Schools Supported by Connections



Performance Data from Schools Supported by Connections

Schools supported by Connections are committed to quality and high levels of student learning. The 2013-2014 state standardized performance results illustrate continual improvement in student academic achievement and overall school ratings. Results often meet or exceed statewide levels of performance particularly in reading.¹² Schools supported by Connections are committed to improved math performance, and a comprehensive initiative has been implemented that includes curriculum and instruction, data analytics and assessment, and research and support programs. All results noted are those publicly reported by the states on their standardized tests and are not based on Connections' internal measures. Highlights from the 2013-2014 school year include:

School Ratings (Based on State Accountability Rating Systems)

- Arizona Connections Academy (ACA) – Received a grade of “B”
- Nevada Connections Academy (NCA) – Received a four-star rating for middle school (highest rating is five stars)
- Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA) – Received a level four rating for growth (second highest rating)
- South Carolina Connections Academy (SCCA) – Exceeded state's expectations in performance for Elementary and Middle School Grades; highest rated virtual charter school in South Carolina (Federal ESEA rating data) - the only virtual charter school to meet the state's expectations on the Federal ESEA rating system for the past three consecutive years
- Texas Connections Academy @ Houston (TCAH) – Met Standard (81% of indicators met); highest rated virtual program

State Tests – Achievement Highlights

- **Reading:**
 - Arizona Connections Academy (ACA) – Exceeded or equivalent to statewide performance at all tested grade levels
 - Colorado Connections Academy (ColoCA) – Exceeded or was equivalent to statewide performance at 7 out of 8 tested grade levels
 - Indiana Connections Academy (INCA) – Exceeded or was equivalent to statewide performance at all tested grade levels
 - Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) – Exceeded or was equivalent to statewide performance at 7 out of 8 tested grade levels
 - Nevada Connections Academy (NCA) – Exceeded or was equivalent to statewide performance at all tested grade levels
 - Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Exceeded or was equivalent to statewide performance at all tested grade levels; Exceeded the Ohio state standard (75.0% proficiency) at 6 out of 7 tested grade levels
 - South Carolina Connections Academy (SCCA) – Exceeded or was equivalent to public school students statewide at 7 out of 8 tested grade levels
 - Texas Connections Academy @ Houston (TCAH) – Exceeded or was equivalent to public school students statewide at all tested grade levels

¹² Based on the overall percentage of enrolled students in the program rated as proficient or above on state standardized tests

• **Math:**

A significant percentage of students who enroll in schools supported by Connections are behind in math and need intensive learning supports to catch up to their grade level peers. In addition, many students start the school year at a traditional school and make the decision to enroll in a cyber school after the school year has started. Data indicates that students who enroll late often struggle to maintain their grades, which is evident in their math performance. To counteract this, schools supported by Connections are addressing math in a comprehensive manner by implementing a systematic Response to Intervention program to ensure all students are receiving timely and effective instructional support and that their performance is being actively monitored.

- Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) – Exceeded state in grade 8
- New Mexico Connections Academy (NMCA) – Exceeded statewide performance in 6th Grade Math
- Texas Connections Academy @ Houston (TCAH) – Exceeded statewide performance in 8th Grade Math
- Utah Connections Academy (UCA) – Exceeded statewide performance in 3rd Grade Math

• **Science:**

- Arizona Connections Academy (ACA) – Exceeds or was equivalent to statewide performance at all tested grade levels
- Indiana Connections Academy (INCA) – Exceeds or was equivalent to statewide performance at 2 out of 3 tested grade levels
- Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) – Exceeds or was equivalent to statewide performance at all tested grade levels
- MTS Minnesota Connections Academy (MTSMCA) – Exceeds or was equivalent to statewide performance at 2 out of 3 tested grade levels
- Nevada Connections Academy (NCA) – Exceeds statewide performance at all tested grade levels
- Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Exceeds or was equivalent to statewide performance at all tested grade levels
- Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA) – Exceeds or was equivalent to statewide performance at all tested grade levels

• **Social Studies:**

- Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) – Exceeds or was equivalent to statewide performance at 5 out of 7 tested grade levels
- Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Exceeds statewide performance at all tested grade levels; Exceeds the Ohio state standard (75.0% proficiency) at all tested grade levels

• **Writing:**

- Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Exceeds statewide performance at all tested grade levels; Exceeds the Ohio state standard (75.0% proficiency) at all tested grade levels
- South Carolina Connections Academy (SCCA) – Exceeds or was equivalent to statewide performance at 4 out of 6 tested grade levels

Year-over-Year Academic Performance Improvement (compared to 2012-2013 school year)

• **Reading/English-Language Arts:**

- Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) – Improved performance in 5 out of 8 tested grade levels
- Georgia Connections Academy (GACA) – Improved mean scale score in 4 out of 6 tested grade levels
- South Carolina Connections Academy (SCCA) – Improved mean scale score in 5 out of 6 tested grade levels

- **Math:**
 - Arizona Connections Academy (ACA) – Improved performance in 4 out of 7 tested grade levels
 - Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) – Improved performance in 4 out of 8 tested grade levels
 - Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Improved performance in 5 out of 7 tested grade levels
 - Oklahoma Connections Academy (OKCA) – Improved performance in 3 out of 6 tested grade levels
 - South Carolina Connections Academy (SCCA) – Improved mean scale score in 5 out of 6 tested grade levels
 - Indiana Connections Academy (INCA) – Improved performance in 4 out of 6 tested grade levels
- **Science:**
 - Indiana Connections Academy (INCA) – Improved performance in 2 out of 3 tested grade levels
 - Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Improved performance in 2 out of 3 tested grade levels
 - Oklahoma Connections Academy (OKCA) – Improved performance in both tested grade levels
- **Social Studies:**
 - Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) – Improved performance in 4 out of 7 tested grade levels
- **Writing:**
 - Arizona Connections Academy (ACA) – Improved performance in 3 out of 4 tested grade levels

Sustained Excellence (2012-13 and 2013-14 school years)

- **Reading/English-Language Arts:**
 - Arizona Connections Academy (ACA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 6th Grade and for 2nd Year High school Students for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - Colorado Connections Academy (ColoCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 4th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - Indiana Connections Academy (INCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in the English 10 End of Course Assessment for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 5th Grade, 6th Grade, and the English 2 End of Course test for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - Nevada Connections Academy (NCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 4 out of 7 tested grade levels for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 10th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - South Carolina Connections Academy (SCCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 6th Grade and 7th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - Texas Connections Academy at Houston (TCAH) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 5th Grade and 8th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14
- **Math:**
 - Texas Connections Academy at Houston (TCAH) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 5th and 8th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14

- **Science:**
 - Arizona Connections Academy (ACA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 8th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - Louisiana Connections Academy (LACA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 5th, 6th, and 8th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - MTS Minnesota Connections Academy (MTSMCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 5th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - Nevada Connections Academy (NCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 3 out of 3 tested grade levels for 2012-13 and 2013-14
 - Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 5th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14
- **Social Studies:**
 - Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 10th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14
- **Writing:**
 - Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Exceeded statewide proficiency in 10th Grade for 2012-13 and 2013-14

Performance on National Tests - ACT®, SAT®, and Advanced Placement® (AP)

- **ACT® – National Average Composite was 21 – Schools supported by Connections that Exceeded the National Average and their Scores:**
 - Capistrano Connections Academy (CapoCA) – Average Composite was 23
 - Indiana Connections Academy (INCA) – Average Composite was 23
 - Kansas Connections Academy (KCA) – Average Composite was 22
 - MTS Minnesota Connections Academy (MTSMCA) – Average Composite was 23
 - Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) – Average Composite was 23
 - South Carolina Connections Academy (SCCA) – Average Composite was 22
 - Texas Connections Academy @ Houston (TCAH) – Average Composite was 24
 - Wisconsin Connections Academy (WCA) – Average Composite was 22
- **SAT® – National Average was 1,497 – Schools supported by Connections that Exceeded the National Average and their Scores:**
 - Arizona Connections Academy (ACA) – Average Student Score was 1,597
 - Capistrano Connections Academy (CapoCA) – Average Student Score was 1,598
 - Georgia Connections Academy (GACA) – Average Student Score was 1,537
 - Great Lakes Cyber Academy (GLCA) – Average Student Score was 1,537
 - Indiana Connections Academy (INCA) – Average Student Score was 1,626
 - Nevada Connections Academy (NCA) – Average Student Score was 1,535
 - Ohio Connections Academy (OCA) - Average Student Score was 1,577
 - Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA) – Average Student Score was 1,575
 - South Carolina Connections Academy (SCCA) – Average Student Score was 1,525
 - Texas Connections Academy @ Houston (TCAH) – Average Student Score was 1,548

- **AP® – National Average of Scoring 3 or Higher was 65.7%. Schools supported by Connections that Exceeded the National Average and their Scores:**
 - California Connections Academy @ Ripon (CalCAR) – 74.1% of Students Scored 3 or Higher
 - Colorado Connections Academy (ColoCA) – 66.7% of Students Scored 3 or Higher
 - Oregon Connections Academy (ORCA) – 85.7% of Students Scored 3 or Higher

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.

Students with Disabilities

Special Education policies and procedures are included in Appendix C. Appendix C also includes a list of 140+ vendors throughout Pennsylvania that the school may contract with as the need arises.

Advance will have an open enrollment policy: any eligible public school student in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania can attend. The school will not discriminate in its admissions policies or practices on the basis of geography, intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, status as a student with a disability, test scores, disabilities, etc.

As a public school, Advance will comply with 22 PA. Code Chapter 711-Charter School and Cyber Charter School Services and Programs for Children with Disabilities and with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C.A. §§ 1400 et. seq. and implementing regulations, including Section 300.209 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794 (sec. 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Advance will provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities, even if such children are progressing from grade to grade, including, but not limited to, identifying, evaluating, and planning educational programs, and implementing placements in accordance with those Acts. Advance is prepared to serve as a Local Education Agency (LEA).

Connections will support the delivery of special education and related services at Advance. Schools supported by Connections have demonstrated success with special needs populations and ELL populations nationally. Connections has extensive experience supporting a cyber school in Pennsylvania and throughout the United States. This experience includes contracting with more than 150 related service providers in Pennsylvania during the 2014-15 school year. Advance anticipates enrolling a population of students consisting of approximately 16% of students having IEPs and an additional 3% of students having 504 plans. (The budget is based on 13% of students having IEPs in Year 1, 15% in Year 2, 17% in Year 3, and 19% in Years 4 and 5.) It is expected that approximately 25% of students with disabilities will receive one or more contracted related services. These estimates are based upon Connections prior experience supporting a statewide cyber school in Pennsylvania. Advance anticipates that the needs of the students will result in approximately 72% of the students being served by itinerant services, 18% supplemental services, and 10% full-time services. Advance expects to enroll students across disabilities. Based on prior experience, the expected percentage of students with specific disabilities is provided in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Breakdown by Disability Type

Disability Type	Percent
Specific Learning Disability	44%
Other Health Impaired	15%
Autism	13%
Emotionally Impaired	11%
Speech language Impaired	10%
Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disability	5%
Multiple Disability	1%
All other disabilities	1%

Procedural Safeguards Notice

Parents of children who receive or who may be eligible for special education services have rights under IDEA 2004. The *Procedural Safeguards Notice* provides a detailed explanation of those rights. Advance will give parents a copy of the *Procedural Safeguards Notice* and the explanatory *Procedural Safeguards Letter* at least once each school year. Parents can also obtain a copy of the *Procedural Safeguards Notice* from Advance at any time. An additional document will be available to help parents to better understand the Notice document. *The Parents' Rights: Understanding the Procedural Safeguards Notice* provides a summary of those rights. Parents will also receive the Parents' Rights documents upon initial referral or upon the parents request for an evaluation and in accordance with discipline procedures when a change in placement occurs.

Surrogate Parent

As part of the IEP process, Advance will recognize a qualified adult must participate as the "parent" (34 CFR 300.30) for the student. A surrogate parent is someone who acts on the child's behalf in matters relating to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, and provision of FAPE to the child. A surrogate will be appointed and trained on how to participate and make decisions on the child's behalf in the following situations: a biological, adoptive, foster, parent, or guardian are not available; a grandparent or step parent with whom the child lives or a person who is legally responsible for the child is not available; the child is an unaccompanied homeless youth.

Advance will have a method in place to secure a surrogate when needed. When it is determined that a student is in need of a surrogate parent, the surrogate will be appointed within 30 calendar days. Advance will maintain a pool of trained parent surrogates and may collaborate with Intermediate Units (IUs) when additional surrogates are needed.

Advance will not allow the following persons to be appointed as a surrogate parent: employees of an agency already involved in the care or education of the student; school employees; or persons with a potential conflict of interest.

Identifying Students and Child Find

As a cyber school in Pennsylvania, Advance will be bound by the Child Find requirements of Chapter 711 of the Pennsylvania School Code, "Charter School and Cyber Charter School Services and Programs for Children with Disabilities," as well as the requirements of IDEA 2004, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The school's Manager of Special Education will serve as the Child Find Coordinator and provide Child Find information to school staff, parents, and state and local organizations and agencies. These efforts will include compliance with the special education referral process, providing professional development to staff and Student Support Team (SST), participating in the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RtII) process, including universal screening procedures, creating and maintaining written policies and procedures related to Child Find, and involvement in public awareness activities related to Child Find of implementation of students enrolled in

Advance. In addition to the Child Find procedures, the staff will provide a Student Assistance Program to supplement these efforts.

Pre-referral/Referral/Initial Evaluation

Students may be referred for special education evaluation by their parents, teacher, or the SST. The SST, consisting of general education teachers, intervention specialists, and school administrators will regularly review struggling students. The SST will consult with the parents and address struggling students' needs through the MTSS/RtII process. With parental consent, the teacher will implement and document interventions and the student's response to interventions. The student's responses to MTSS/RtII efforts are used as one data metric in the determination of special education eligibility. These interventions will not be used to delay or deny a parent-requested special education evaluation.

When a parent requests a special education evaluation, the process will occur concurrently with the MTSS/RtII process if the student is in need of academic intervention. Advance will respond to the parent within ten days with the Permission to Evaluate-Request (PTE-Request) form and will send Permission to Evaluate-Consent (PTE-Consent) form to gain the parent's permission to evaluate. This form outlines the reason for the special education evaluation referral and lists the assessments that will be used. Parental input and any outside evaluations will also be collected during the evaluation process. Parental rights will also be provided during this process by providing the parents with *Parents' Rights: Understanding the Procedural Safeguards Notice*, the *Procedural Safeguards Notice*, and the explanatory *Procedural Safeguards Letter*.

The special education evaluation will be coordinated with the parent and an evaluator in close proximity to the student and completed within 60 days of Advance's receipt of signed PTE-Consent form. Once the evaluation is complete, the parents will join an interdisciplinary team meeting to review the assessment results and determine the student's eligibility for special education, completing an Evaluation Report (ER). If the student is found eligible for special education, Advance will convene a meeting to develop the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with the IEP Team. The IEP Team will meet within 30 days after the completion of an Evaluation Report (ER). The IEP Team will include all required members including the parents.

Allowing for Differences in English Language Skills and Ethnic Background

Evaluations must take into account the child's English language skills and ethnic background to ensure that the testing and evaluation will not be unfair for children of any race or culture. Tests must be given in the native language or mode of communication that is most likely to give accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible. Evaluations also must take into account the child's disability to make certain the test measures what it is supposed to measure. For example, a child with a severe visual impairment should be provided with appropriately-sized testing materials to accommodate for his disability.

School Professional Development Related to Child Find

The school's Manager of Special Education and SST leader will provide the entire Advance staff with Child Find training and compliance progress updates. At the start of the school year, the staff will be provided training on documenting information received by parents regarding special education evaluation requests, including timelines and the importance of timeliness in responding and alerting the Advance special education team. Subsequent professional development for school staff will include how to interpret universal screening results, intervention processes and results, as well as measures of compliance with Pennsylvania Special Education Evaluation Timelines.

The Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RtII) Team

Special education will be represented in the MTSS/RtII process, providing guidance to the team on specific instructional and behavioral approaches for students. The special education team member will ensure that students are referred for special education in a timely manner, engaging parents in the process. As a member of the team, the special educator will verify that the struggling student has received appropriate instruction and that the student's difficulties are not related to Limited English Proficiency. Data related to academic achievement, behavior concerns, intervention results, and academic progress will also be reviewed.

Universal Screening

Advance will administer universal screening instruments including the LEAP and DIBELS assessments to identify students in need of instructional interventions and, potentially, special education evaluation. Systemic screening of students will be ongoing and will lead to identification, location and evaluation of those needing special education services. The special education staff will be thoroughly trained to understand their responsibilities concerning Child Find. Consistent with Child Find, parental notification activities will be combined with screening at the time of student enrollment and throughout a student's educational process. Initially, parents will be provided with a questionnaire about their student's learning styles and functional abilities. These responses will then be reviewed and validated through screening tools used by the special education staff.

Screening procedures will include but are not limited to ongoing analysis of the student's response to instruction; performance on state wide assessments; reviews of enrollment records, health records and transcripts/report cards. The screening activities will also include hearing and visions screens to be completed by the school nurse or a private physician as mandated under the Pennsylvania School Code.

Written Policies and Public Awareness Related to Child Find

Advance's statement about Child Find will be accessible to the general public and will be located on the general school public website as well as through banner messages on homepages within Connexus. In addition, all families enrolled in Advance will receive Child Find information within the school newsletter, published on a semester basis. A link to the *Pennsylvania Parent Guide to Special Education for School-Age Children* will also be provided in all locations.

Disproportionality

Advance will collect and examine data regularly to ensure disproportionality is not evident in the areas of identification, academic settings and placements, and disciplinary measures. In addition to cultural sensitivity and awareness training, the following practices will be implemented to ensure students are found eligible for special education services without unjust bias:

- Evaluations will be administered by trained and licensed personnel.
- More than one single measure or assessment will be used to determine a disability.
- Evaluations will not be discriminatory or racially/culturally biased.
- Evaluations will take into consideration the child's English language skills, including ethnic background.
- Evaluations will be administered in the child's native language, or mode of communication.

If there is any evidence of disproportionality, the school will review, and revise if needed, all procedures and policies that may be contributing.

Reevaluation

Advance will remain in full compliance with regulations requiring triennial special education reevaluations to determine continued eligibility and need for special education services. Prior to conducting the reevaluation, the IEP Team will meet to discuss the need for reevaluation, review existing data, and determine additional data needed to best meet the needs of the student. The review of existing data will be documented in the Reevaluation Report (RR) form. If the team agrees that a reevaluation is needed, the school will then issue a Permission to Reevaluate-Consent (PTR-Consent) form to obtain signed parental consent for reevaluation. Advance will not proceed with the reevaluation without parental consent and will make every attempt to receive consent.

Advance will complete all reevaluations within the 60 days of the receipt of signed parental consent, as required by Pennsylvania statute. Reevaluations will be conducted by a qualified examiner at a location proximate to the child. All evaluations conducted by Advance will take a child's English Language ability and disability into consideration. Once the evaluation is complete, Advance will provide parents with a copy of the report. A multidisciplinary team will then review the report to determine continued eligibility. Once a child is found to continue to need special education services, and the RR form will be completed and provided to parents, then an IEP Team meeting will be scheduled to develop the IEP.

If the team, including the parent, agrees that reevaluation is not necessary, the school will provide the *Agreement to Waive Reevaluation* form to the parents, with reasons the reevaluation was waived. Parents must sign this form as an agreement to waive the evaluation. If parents disagree, the reevaluation must proceed. If at any time, the parent or school believes they need an assessment to benefit the child, the team can convene to discuss conducting a reevaluation. The only exception to the three-year reevaluation requirement involves students that have been identified as intellectually disabled, who must be reevaluated every two years.

If at any time, a parent believes that Advance's evaluation was not conducted properly, the parent has the right to request an Independent Education Evaluation (IEE). Following administrative policies and procedures, Advance will respond to the parent's request for an IEE using the Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) within ten days. Advance will provide the IEE by an approved evaluator to the parent at the school's expense. The IEE results will be taken into consideration when considering eligibility for special education and the provision of FAPE.

Students who Enroll with an IEP

During enrollment families will be asked if their child has an IEP or 504 plan. Parents may provide a copy of the documents or Advance will obtain the documents. Advance will conduct IEP meetings within 30 days of enrollment for all new students to adopt the IEP, amend the IEP, or conduct an annual review. In addition to being active participants in the IEP Team meetings, parents will be provided with Notice of Recommended Educational Placement (NOREP) detailing the decisions of the IEP Team.

IEP Team Process

Once the evaluation team has determined a child has a disability and requires special education and related services, an IEP will be developed within 30 days of the eligibility determination. From that point on, the IEP will be reviewed yearly unless a meeting prior to the annual due date is necessary. The annual IEP will be implemented within ten school days of the IEP meeting. Special Education reevaluations will be conducted every three years or more frequently if needed. If a student has an intellectual disability, the reevaluation will take place every two years or more frequently if needed. An IEP meeting will take place within 30 days of the completion of the reevaluation report. The report will be provided to the parent at least ten days prior to the reevaluation IEP meeting. If a student comes from out of state, and the disability is not recognized in the state

of Pennsylvania, the school will still provide FAPE and comparable services while offering to conduct a new evaluation. The IEP Team will include all required members including:

- the parents;
- a minimum of one general education teacher;
- a minimum of one special education teacher and any related service providers;
- a designated school representative knowledgeable about the special education programs, curriculum and resources (LEA);
- the student (if turning 14 years or older during the duration of the annual IEP or if the parent wants the student to participate prior to age 14);
- a qualified person that can interpret the evaluation findings; and
- anyone else the parent would like present at the meeting that is familiar with the child and their education.

Parents are IEP Team members and Advance will take all steps needed to ensure that one or both of the parents are present at each IEP Team.

The IEP developed will address:

- any new evaluation reports,
- student strengths,
- parent input,
- both present level academic and functional performance,
- measurable yearly goals (and objectives if the student is alternatively assessed),
- how the disability affects progress in the general education curriculum,
- services and programs with dates (including transportation needs),
- progress reporting (at least quarterly during the school year) and how the progress will be evaluated,
- participation in general education classes (and other activities) with children without disabilities,
- accommodations (including supplementary aids and services), and
- participation in Pennsylvania statewide testing.

The IEP Team will also examine behaviors, including how they may interfere with learning (or that of peers) and if a behavioral management plan should be created. The IEP Team will take into account if the student has limited English proficiency, communication and assistive technology (AT) needs, as well as eligibility for Extended School Year (ESY) services. If the student is transition age (14 years or older), transition assessments, annual goals, activities, and courses of study will be developed to support postsecondary goals.

Advance will hold annual reviews of the IEP, including reviewing student progress within the existing IEP, reevaluating whether the student is benefitting from the program, and creating new IEP goals. If the student is not benefitting from the program, a new IEP will be developed and changes will be recommended regarding the student's placement.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities will be educated with children who are nondisabled; and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the general educational environment will only occur if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. In determining the educational placement of a student with a disability, the placement decision is made by a group of persons, including the parents, and other persons knowledgeable about: the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options. Such decision must be made in conformity with the LRE provisions of the federal regulations. In selecting the LRE, the IEP team will give consideration to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that he or she needs. A student with a disability will not be removed from education in age appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general education curriculum. In providing nonacademic and extracurricular clubs and activities, each student with a disability will participate with nondisabled children in the extracurricular clubs and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that student.

Advance will provide special education and related services within the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for all students. This includes taking into consideration supplementary aids and services, accommodations, and ESY while ensuring the student is educated with nondisabled peers, to the maximum extent possible, and making expected gains on IEP goals. The Manager of Special Education will work closely with the general education teachers to ensure that every student receives accommodations, modifications, and all needed services to access and progress in the general education curriculum. Assistive Technology (AT) may include collaboration with PaTTAN AT consultants and Intermediate Unit (IU) staff, collaboration with Connections AT support staff, access to PaTTAN's short term AT loan library and AIM Center (Accessible Instructional Materials), closed captioning, speech to text, and text to speech. Connections has experience supporting cyber schools by facilitating the provision of text-to-speech and speech-to-text software, screen readers, magnification software, tablets, etc. for students with disabilities. In addition, available supports for hearing impaired students include closed captioning or American Sign Language during LiveLesson sessions. Extended School Year (ESY) will be considered by the IEP Team, at each IEP meeting, determining if potential regression over school interruptions or other relevant factors may interfere with the student's access to FAPE.

Continuum of Services and Placement

Advance will have a continuum of special education and alternative placements available to ensure FAPE is being provided in the LRE.

- Consultative support will be provided for the general education teachers to provide modifications and accommodations to the general education curriculum.
- Itinerant, supplementary or full-time special education support will be provided via the telephone, Internet, LiveLesson sessions, as well as in person depending on the needs of the student.
- Direct related service support (for example: speech-language, occupational, or physical therapy, psychological counseling,) will be provided face-to-face, via computer, in homes, community sites, and therapist offices.
- Related services will include: parent training, autism support, parent groups, student support groups, and itinerant hearing or vision support consistent with the student's IEP.
- Ongoing progress monitoring will be provided for every student: including frequent and thorough review of student performance, attendance or non-attendance, and participation data as reported to the student, parent and teacher through their respective home pages.

- Every conversation (phone, WebMail message, LiveLesson session student attendance or non-attendance) and consultation with the student and/or parent as well as general education teachers will be carefully logged.
- Providers of direct/related services will be tracked with close scrutiny by the special education staff of any missed appointments or incomplete services.
- Intermediate Unit classrooms will be provided.
- Private placements will be arranged if required.

Alternative placements will be considered when the virtual environment, including the use of supplementary aids and services, accommodations, and ESY are no longer meeting the needs of the student. Alternative placements will include special classes, special schools, approved private placements, and home and hospital instruction. Connections has prior experience supporting cyber schools in facilitating placements in both Intermediate Unit (IU) schools and in private placements. Resources to support alternative placement options may include collaboration with the student's resident school district, IUs, and approved private schools (APS Directory 2015, Approved Private Schools, School Districts, PA IUs). Once an alternative placement is agreed upon by the team, a NOREP and Procedural Safeguards will be issued to document the team decision.

Program for Alternately Assessed Students

Advance will provide a comprehensive program for students qualified to take Pennsylvania's alternative state assessment, PASA. To the greatest extent possible, these students will be included with their same age classmates so they may enjoy age-appropriate communication and socialization. Students participating in the alternative curriculum program may or may not have classes with their general education peers. For example, some alternative curriculum students will participate in only alternative courses, while others may participate in electives with their general education peers, in addition to their alternative core coursework. The LRE will differ for these two groups of students and is determined by each student's IEP team. The Alternative Education Program will include specially designed instruction to address each student's IEP goals as well as alternative curriculum resources. Connections will provide support for teachers and special education leaders related to data analysis and related service provision for these students.

Alternative Curriculum Resources

Compass Learning Odyssey is a third-party web-based curriculum that uses interactive lessons to engage students in instruction. Alternately assessed students will be assigned courses within Compass Learning Odyssey at their instructional level and also receive exposure to grade level standards. Compass Learning Odyssey lessons are aligned to national standards.

Unique Learning System is an online, dynamic, standards-based curriculum specifically designed for students with special needs. Special education teachers will download monthly instructional thematic units of study. Themes center on Science and Social Studies topics. Each unit contains 30 special education lesson plans and downloadable materials that teachers can readily implement into special education classroom learning activities. All materials are created using SymbolStix graphics. Each lesson plan defines three levels of differentiated tasks to accommodate the diversity of learners with significant disabilities. Lesson plans are organized by chronological grade band; the high school level grade band lesson plans include postsecondary transition activities.

Special education teachers will be supported by Connections staff with the delivery of the alternative curriculum. This support will assist teachers in data analysis of student progress through the alternative curriculum as well as planning direct special education services to best meet students' needs. Special

educators will also work closely with parents and Learning Coaches to design the best learning environment for alternatively-assessed students and coordinate any related services provided virtually or in the community.

Related Services

Cyber schools offer a vast range of options for the delivery of related services. Advance will contract with Connections to support the delivery of related services. Related services provided to Advance students will include, but are not limited to:

- speech-language services,
- occupational therapy,
- counseling services,
- social work services,
- behavior therapy,
- special transportation,
- physical therapy,
- audiology services,
- social skills,
- autism support,
- parent training,
- orientation and mobility,
- closed-captioning, and
- American Sign Language translation.

Related services will be equally accessible to all students in Pennsylvania. It is anticipated that most students receiving related services will receive a combination of speech-language services, occupational therapy services, and counseling services. As determined by the IEP Team, the student may receive these services in a cyber setting and/or face-to-face. Students attending other cyber schools in Pennsylvania have been receiving services in both settings for many years. When the IEP Team determines that the services will be provided face-to-face, the services will be provided at a mutually convenient location for both the family and the provider. Options for locations include the student's home, the therapist's business location, libraries, community centers, and so forth. For services provided outside of the home, special transportation will be provided or the parent may choose to receive mileage reimbursement for transporting their child. In Appendix X, relevant information on contractors that Connections has utilized during 2014-15 in support of Pennsylvania cyber schools is provided. As evidenced in Appendix C, Advance will provide related services by engaging IUs, private businesses, agencies, hospitals, adult service providers, and so forth. For each provider serving enrolled students, Advance will maintain copies of licensure and certification, background checks, etc. consistent with Pennsylvania law.

Assistive Technology

Advance will provide students with Assistive Technology (AT) as defined by IDEA 2004, any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially-off-the-shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. Consistent with Pennsylvania Chapter 711, the IEP Team will consider assistive technology needs for every student with an IEP. Students attending schools supported by Connections have ready access to closed captioning and American Sign Language interpreting. Students have access to screen readers, text readers, dictation and word

prediction software, large monitors, alternative key boards and mice, and other high- and low-tech AT devices as specified in the students' IEP.

Advance is mindful of the USDOE/DOJ/OCR Guidance related to assistive technology through "Dear Colleague" Letters in this ever-evolving area, including (1) Dear Colleague Letter (June 29, 2010) and Frequently Asked Questions concerning the obligation of colleges and universities to ensure students with disabilities have equal access to emerging technologies in education; (2) Dear Colleague Letters (May 26, 2011) to elementary and secondary education officials and postsecondary education officials and Frequently Asked Questions regarding use of electronic book readers and other emerging technologies in compliance with civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability; and (3) Dear Colleague Letter (November 12, 2014) and Frequently Asked Questions concerning effective communication for students with hearing, vision, or speech disabilities in public elementary and secondary schools.

[National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard \(NIMAS\)](#)

Advance will ensure timely delivery of print instructional materials in accessible formats to blind or other enrolled students with print disabilities. Advance will work with Accessible Media Providers (AMPs), such as Bookshare, to provide eligible students files in the NIMAS standard. These files are based on the international DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) standard, essentially the DAISY/NISO (National Information Standards Organization) Z39.86 2005 standard and is required by Federal IDEA regulation. DAISY is an internationally recognized technical standard used to facilitate the creation of accessible content. These files are electronic documents created by textbook providers, submitted to AMPs, and then requested by public schools. These files will be provided to eligible students as part of the school's accessibility provision and assistive technology considerations of the students' IEP teams.

[Independent Living and Life Skills](#)

As part of Advance's postsecondary transition planning and alternative curriculum program, the school will implement independent living and life skills programming for students with IEPs. Designed to provide life skills support, this program will provide the instruction necessary for students to function independently as adults to the fullest extent possible. Independent living and life skills will be addressed in students' IEPs with appropriate transition activities and goals clearly determined and outlined after conducting thorough transition interviews and assessments with the students and their families. All goals and associated activities will be directly aligned with students' present levels. Activities may range from self-care to money management to community navigation. Frequent, regular progress monitoring and documentation of goal progress is an integral part of Advance's life skills and independent living programming. As appropriate, the team may determine that intensive interagency collaboration is needed to best meet the independent living and life skills goals.

[Support for Parents of Students with Disabilities](#)

To support the recommendations of the Pennsylvania Toolkit for Charter Schools and Cyber Charter Schools, Advance will provide specific parent engagement activities for parents of students with IEPs.

All parents have access to Learning Coach Central, a comprehensive resource for Learning Coaches in their role as they support their student's learning. Through the Learning Coach Central webpage, parents can access training, resource sessions, tips, and connect with other parents. Additional resource sessions for parents of students with disabilities will also be accessible from the Learning Coach Central webpage. While these sessions are designed specifically for these families, they are open to all parents.

Resources and sessions specifically for parents of students with disabilities will include:

- Understanding Special Education Processes at Advance,
- How to Support Your Child's Learning Differences,
- Creating the Best Learning Environment for Your Child, and
- Your Child's Brain: A Primer on Brain Development.

Special education staff, with the support of Connections, will provide these virtual sessions quarterly to parents.

Transition

Students turning age 14 or older (or younger if appropriate) during the duration of the annual IEP will have a transition plan developed by the IEP Team. The transition plan will prepare the student to move from school to post-school activities including post-secondary education, vocational education or adult education, independent or supported employment, and, when appropriate, independent living skills or community participation. The student will be invited to join and participate in the IEP meeting. The transition plan developed will include the following: Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, Courses of Study and Transition Activities, agency linkages, measureable annual goals/objectives, and services that the student needs to reach the goals listed in the transition plan.

The following steps will occur to engage students in the transition process:

- The IEP Team Meeting Invitation will be addressed to the student.
- The Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance will include formal and/or informal transition assessments. The assessments will be both age-appropriate and student-focused to determine the students' strengths, needs, goals and interests. The assessments selected may include, but are not limited to, the Casey Life Skills assessment, the Myers Briggs, Keys2Work, and/or PACareerZone.
- Courses of Study will be addressed by the IEP Team to ensure the student is taking courses and making sufficient progress to meet their post-secondary goals by the time the student graduates or transitions to adult services.
- Transition activities will be tied to transition goals. Depending on the student's post-secondary goals, activities may include college visitations and participation in state-wide Career Days. A vast number of agencies are available to support a student's transition plan and activities throughout Pennsylvania.
- Goals and objectives will be developed by the IEP Team and areas of focus will include education, employment, and independent living. Goals will be developed based on the transition assessment results.
- A transition specialist will monitor and support student internships and job shadow opportunities across the state by collaborating with local businesses, colleges and universities, and the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). These opportunities will be based on the student's interests and transition plan. Monitoring will include observing the student in the vocational setting, providing ongoing and frequent feedback and support and, when needed, modeling skills.

For students who are graduating or reaching maximum age, a Summary of Performance (SOP) document will be created to ensure the student has personal summary information that includes all of the student's abilities

and limitations summarized, recommendations for continued supports for a successful transition, and input from both the student and individuals supporting the student.

Interagency Collaboration

Advance will work with students' resident districts and intermediate units to benefit enrolled students with IEPs. Interagency collaboration will be a critical element of Advance's continuum of special education services. This collaboration will be necessary when considering related services, mental health and welfare support, postsecondary transition planning, bridging to adult services, and placement considerations. This system will not replace the school's responsibilities to serve enrolled students with IEPs; rather, this intensive interagency collaboration is designed to provide additional placement considerations to students' IEP Teams when students need full-time support. Advance will contract with resident districts and intermediate units to establish these relationships. The Advance interagency coordinator, a member of the special education team, will serve as a resource for families and as the liaison between Advance and local districts and intermediate units.

IEP Progress Reporting

Student progress on annual goals and objectives will be monitored regularly using a variety of tools. The data will be summarized and provided to the parents quarterly throughout the school year, unless the IEP Team agrees upon more frequent updates. Data collection tools may include rubric scores, curriculum based assessments, tests, portfolios or fluency probes. Data may also be accumulated during small group or one on one instruction. Teachers will chart the data collected and analyze the data points weekly to ensure the student is on track to meet the goal by the annual IEP due date. If the student is not making expected progress on the annual goals or objectives, instructional adjustments will be made accordingly in an effort to increase progress, such as increased repetition opportunities or the re-teaching of critical skills. Related service goals will also be regularly monitored and a summary included in the quarterly report provided to parents.

State Testing

All students will be expected to participate in the appropriate grade level state testing assessment. Students with an IEP in grades 3-8 will take the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) with accommodations (outlined in the Pennsylvania Accommodations Guidelines) to be determined by the IEP Team. For students in high school with an IEP, Keystone Exams in the areas of Algebra 1, Literature, and Biology will be administered with allowable accommodations to be determined by the IEP Team. The IEP Team may determine some students eligible to take the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) in grades 3-8 and 11, rather than the PSSA or Keystone Exams. These will typically be students with significant mental retardation/ intellectual disabilities who have met the six eligibility criteria. Allowable exceptions will be considered for students identified as English Language Learners for all required state testing assessments. All teachers and administrators administering state assessments will be thoroughly trained in test security, roles, responsibilities, chain of custody of the testing materials, and penalties of violations.

Students unable to exhibit proficiency on the Keystones exams will participate in school-led supplemental instructional services in their academic area of need. If the student is still unable to pass the Keystone Exam, he/she may complete a Project Based Assessment (PBA) that corresponds with the content of the specific Keystone Exam module. Determining eligibility for the PBA will be based on the PDE Keystone Guidelines.

Graduation and Dropout

Students with IEPs will have the right to stay enrolled through the school year in which they turn 21, or graduate with a high school diploma, whichever comes first. As with all students, Advance's goal will be for students with IEPs to graduate with a high school diploma. Advance will implement strategic initiatives with the goal of dropout prevention. These researched-based practices, such as those cited by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, will include:

- mentoring,
- attendance monitoring,
- supporting parents, and
- providing strong family and student engagement activities to help students with disabilities feel connected to their school.

Students with disabilities who satisfactorily complete a special education program developed by the IEP Team will be granted and issued a regular high school diploma. The parents or guardians will be provided with NOREP. If the parents disagree with the notice, they may begin due process by asking for an informal meeting, mediation, or a special education due process hearing.

Positive Behavior Interventions and Support¹³

Every student must be treated with respect. Advance will implement an evidenced-based, data-driven, school-wide program of positive behavioral supports to improve the academic and social outcomes of all students. This framework of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)¹⁴ includes a variety of school wide as well as individual strategies focused on teaching and reinforcing positive school engagement and behaviors. Every student will receive positive reinforcement through frequent teacher feedback and interaction.

Components of the PBIS program will include all-staff professional development related to understanding students' negative behaviors and their antecedents as well as how to use preventative measures to prevent them. When a student is in need of behavior interventions, the SST will work with school staff, parents, Learning Coaches, and the student to create positive behavior intervention plans based on data collected from interviews and observations of the student in the cyber classroom and the home, if necessary. Any prior or current behavior interventions plans will be reviewed in the process and adapted as necessary for the cyber environment. Data will be analyzed and interventions will be adapted as needed, based on that data, to determine how to modify environmental factors that may contribute to negative behaviors. Teachers and Learning Coaches will work together to support students' efforts to control their own behaviors by teaching and reinforcing self-management and helping students to identify triggers that lead to negative behaviors.

The PBIS framework will also include efforts related to dropout prevention. School general and special education staff will work collaboratively to monitor students at risk for dropout. These students will be targeted for additional intervention, IEPs may be updated, and families will be engaged. Of particular focus will be engagement with the community, the local neighborhood, and opportunities for service learning. Advance will have staff members dedicated to facilitating service-learning and aligning efforts with students' transition plans and postsecondary goals.

¹³ <http://www.papbs.org/Home.aspx?PageID=68a5038d-36df-414f-8e1f-a78737463ace>

¹⁴ http://www.pattan.net/category/Educational%20Initiatives/Behavior/page/Pennsylvanias_Positive_Behavior_Support_Network_PAP_BS.html

The family will be a critical part of the PBIS framework. All parents and Learning Coaches will receive support and training on creating a positive learning environment to minimize negative behaviors and reinforcing positive behaviors. The PBIS framework will be a tiered system. Therefore, when tiered interventions have been attempted for a period of time, and data reveals that behaviors have not improved, upon agreement of the parent, the student will be referred to the special education team for evaluation that may include a Functional Behavior Assessment and a Behavior Intervention Plan.

Use of Seclusion or Restraint

Advance staff will not have physical contact with students on a regular basis; however, the school will maintain a Seclusion and Restraint plan to implement if necessary during occasions when staff has contact with students during field trips, state testing, or visits to the school offices. A copy of this plan will be available to students and their families in the school handbook. Every effort will be made to avoid the need for the use of restraint or seclusion of a student. Physical seclusion or restraint will not be used except when used as a last resort and only when:

- the student's behavior poses imminent risk of injury to self or others; and/or
- other less restrictive interventions are ineffective.

A student will never be secluded or physically restrained by a school employee who has not received extensive training by the school in the use of seclusion and restraint procedures. These strategies may be used in rare and clearly unavoidable emergency circumstances when fully trained school personnel are not immediately available. Untrained staff shall request assistance from trained staff as soon as possible.

Physical restraint or seclusion of a student may only be used for a short period of time and will be ended as soon as the imminent risk of injury to self or others has dissipated, usually a matter of minutes. The use of any drug, medication, or other chemical to control behavior or restrict freedom of movement (except as authorized by a licensed physician or other qualified health care professional) will be prohibited. An employee will never give a student any drug or medication that is not a standard treatment or dosage, or both, for the student's medical or psychiatric condition unless otherwise prescribed by a physician and only upon consent from parent.

Every instance in which seclusion or restraint is used will be carefully, continuously, and visually monitored to ensure the safety of the student, other students and school employees. Immediately after the imminent risk of injury to self or others has ended, the student will no longer be physically restrained or secluded and a school employee, not involved with the seclusion or restraint, will examine the student to ascertain if any injury has been sustained during the seclusion or restraint of the student.

After each incident a debriefing procedure is followed and the incident will be documented. Advance will annually review the seclusion and restraint policy. Regular professional development and training on these procedures will be provided to school staff.

When Seclusion and Restraint Procedures Will Not Be Employed

Physical restraint and seclusion will not be used unless the student's behavior poses imminent risk of injury to self or others and other less restrictive interventions are ineffective. A verbal threat or verbally aggressive behavior does not itself indicate an imminent risk of injury, and will not result in seclusion or restraint. Unless a student's destruction or damage to property creates an imminent risk of injury to the student or others, the destruction or damage of property does not itself indicate an imminent risk of injury and will not be the justification for seclusion or restraint of a student.

Time-Out

Time-out is a behavior reduction procedure in which access to reinforcement will be withdrawn for a certain period of time. Time-out will occur when the ability of a student to receive normal reinforcement in the school environment is restricted. Short time-out sessions will be both developmentally and behaviorally appropriate.

Debriefing

As soon as practical and after every instance in which seclusion or restraint is used on a student, the school administrator or designee will do the following:

- meet with at least one school employee who participated in the implementation, monitoring, and supervision of the seclusion or restraint to discuss whether proper seclusion or restraint procedures were followed, including the use of proper procedures to prevent the need for restraint or seclusion;
- direct a staff person, who was not part of the seclusion or restraint of the student, to debrief the incident with the student in a manner appropriate to the student's age and developmental ability and to discuss the behavior(s), if any, that precipitated the use of restraint or seclusion; and
- provide a copy of an incident report to the parent(s) or guardian(s) and offer the opportunity to request a meeting regarding the incident of restraint or seclusion.

Incident Documentation and Reporting

Every instance in which seclusion or restraint is used on a student will be documented in order to memorialize the events that led up to the use of either seclusion or restraint. Documentation must be made on the form prescribed by the school and will include the following:

- the student's name;
- the date and time of the incident;
- the duration of any seclusion or restraint or the beginning and ending times of the restraint or seclusion, or both;
- a description of any relevant events leading up to the incident;
- a description of the incident or student behavior that resulted in implementation of seclusion or restraint including a description of the danger of injury which resulted in the seclusion or restraint;
- a description of relevant interventions used immediately prior to the implementation of seclusion or restraint;
- a summary of the student's behavior during seclusion or restraint, including a description of the restraint technique or techniques used and any other interaction between the student and staff;
- a description of any injuries to students, staff, or others or property damage;
- a list of school employees who participated in the implementation, monitoring and supervision of the seclusion or restraint; and
- if applicable, a statement that intervention used was consistent with the student's most current behavioral intervention plan or IEP.

The designee will attempt to verbally report every instance in which seclusion or restraint is used on a student to the student's parent or guardian no later than the end of the school day or as soon as practical. The designee will also send written notification, as soon as practical, to the student's parent or guardian after every instance in which seclusion or restraint is used on a student.

Training

Advance will provide all school employees with training on:

- appropriate use of effective alternatives to physical seclusion and restraint;
- conflict de-escalation procedures;
- positive supports and behavioral interventions techniques;
- the dangers of seclusion and restraint;
- procedures for contacting fully-trained and certified staff when behavioral crises occur;
- the safe use of seclusion and restraint;
- steps to avoid the use of seclusion or restraint; and
- debriefing practices and procedures.

This training will be recurrent and will be provided to new school employees.

A core group of appropriate personnel will be trained in each building in crisis intervention techniques, which will include the use of seclusion and restraint procedures. Any member of the core group, trained in crisis intervention techniques, including the safe use of seclusion or restraint procedures, may provide training to other school employees under this plan.

Recurrent training will be provided to school employees on a regular basis at least annually.

Annual Review, Planning Process, and Oversight

A designee will be designated as the coordinator of data, planning and oversight of the use of seclusion or restraint procedures. Advance will establish a committee to conduct an annual review of all individual and program-wide data associated with this policy. The committee will review the following components related to the use of restraint:

- incident reports;
- procedures used during restraint, including the proper administration of specific approved restraint techniques;
- preventative measures or alternatives tried, techniques or accommodations used to avoid or eliminate the need of the future use of restraint;
- documentation and follow up of procedural adjustments made to eliminate the need for future use of restraint;
- injuries incurred during a restraint;
- notification procedures;
- staff training needs;
- specific patterns related to staff or student incidents; and
- environmental considerations, including physical space, student seating arrangements, and noise levels.

Upon review of the data, the committee will identify any issues and/or practices that require further attention and provide written recommendations for changes in policies or practices. The committee may recommend review of the training program to ensure the most current knowledge and techniques are reflected in training curriculum.

Discipline Procedures for Students with Disabilities (Suspension and Expulsion)

Reflected in the handbook is protection of the rights of disabled students through the fair application of due process. Given the nature of cyber schooling and limited face-to-face contacts with students, suspensions and expulsions will be extremely rare.

Staff may order the removal of a student from school for disciplinary reasons to the extent the removal is applied to non-disabled students, as long as the removals do not constitute a change of placement. A change in placement occurs if the student is removed from school for disciplinary reasons for more than ten consecutive school days or if the student is subjected to a series of removals (15 cumulative school days in a school year) that constitute a pattern of removal. Decisions related to discipline and removal will be made on a case-by-case basis. Any and all decisions related to discipline and associated placement change will be documented on the NOREP and provided to parents.

If a student with a disability is removed from his/her current placement for more than ten days during a school year, the school staff will provide services to the student to the extent necessary for the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and appropriately advance toward achieving the goals in his/her IEP. School staff may order a change of placement to an appropriate alternative setting for no more than 10 days. The extent of the student's removal for disciplinary reasons will be applied to non-disabled students if a student carries a weapon to a school function, knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, or causes serious bodily injury to another person while at a school function. The interim alternative setting must enable the student to continue to progress in the general curriculum and to receive those services and modifications to enable the student to progress on the goals set out in his/her IEP.

If the school staff is considering a disciplinary action that involves changing a student's placement, a manifestation determination must be completed within ten school days of any decision to change the placement of the child with a disability. The parent and relevant members of the student's IEP Team must review all relevant information, including the IEP, teacher observations, information provided by the parent to determine if the behavior in question was a result of or had a direct substantial relationship to the student's disability or failure to implement the IEP. If the result of the IEP Team is that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the relevant disciplinary procedures applicable to students without disabilities may be applied to the student in the same manner in which they would be applied to students without disabilities. However, Advance will provide services to the extent necessary to enable the student to appropriately progress in the general curriculum and appropriately advance toward achieving the goals set out in his/her IEP.

After changing a student's placement for disciplinary reasons, school staff will conduct a functional behavioral assessment and convene the IEP team to develop a behavioral intervention plan; or if a behavior plan was in place it must be reviewed and modified as necessary by the IEP team.

Data Collection and Reporting for Special Education

Advance will follow the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) requirements and specifications and comply with Special Education Data Collection protocol. Templates will be submitted in the Special Education Domain as students enrolled in charter schools are reported by the charter school. The December

Special Education Submission (student template and special education snapshot) will include all special education students with a valid IEP as of 12/1 of the school year. The July Special Education submission (student template and special education snapshot) will include all students that received special education services from July 1 through June 30 who exited at any time during the current school year.

Section 504 Eligible Students

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, commonly referred to as §504, is a statute designed to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those of non-disabled students. An eligible student under §504 is a student who (a) has, (b) has a record of having, or (c) is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as learning, self-care, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and performing manual tasks. §504 plans are typically written for students who are not receiving services under IDEA but who require accommodations and modification to their instructional program. §504 plans may also be written for students who need modified instructional materials or assistive technology due to their disability. Preexisting §504 plans will remain in place for new students and will be updated periodically. School personnel will be alert for and will identify §504-eligible students and will complete a §504 plan for each identified eligible student. Parents of students in the §504 process will be provided with Pennsylvania procedural safeguards and Parents' Rights documents.

Federal law requires all public schools to provide students, regardless of disability, with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the school's education program. Connections is committed to working with the schools it supports in ensuring students are provided equal access to the education program. Students with disabilities receive access through the delivery of resources and accommodations tailored to each student's individual abilities and needs, including assistive technologies and individualized support.

English Language Learners

The English Language Learner (ELL) program at Advance will entail a teacher-implemented instructional program based upon the student's English language proficiency level, the Pennsylvania English Language Proficiency Standards (PA ELPS) for ELLs, and Pennsylvania Academic Standards. Highly qualified teachers will support ELL students through phone conferences, consultation with colleagues and Learning Coaches, and direct instruction targeting reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Continuous progress monitoring will inform the level of support each student needs.

Advance will follow Pennsylvania state procedures to identify ELL students. All incoming families will complete the Pennsylvania home language survey. We have included the Pennsylvania Home Language Survey as Appendix D.

If a language other than English is spoken by the parents or the student, the student will be screened with the W-APT® in-person by trained test administrators to identify their English proficiency level. The screening will take place within 30 days of enrollment (at the beginning of the school year, or within two weeks thereafter). Advance will notify parents or legal guardians of the screening test results and program placement decisions according to Pennsylvania procedures and will provide notifications in English and in a language that parents can understand, to the extent feasible. Students with ELL records from other districts or states will be fully reviewed for eligibility for ELL services. Students may not be required to participate in ELL screening if they can demonstrate English language proficiency; students who meet two out of the following three criteria may be exempted from a formal Limited English Proficiency (LEP) assessment:

- Students who have final grades of “B” or better in core subject areas (Mathematics, Language Arts, and Social Studies).
- Students who have scores on district-wide assessments that are comparable to the BASIC performance level on the PSSA.
- Students who have scores of BASIC in Reading, Writing, and Math on the PSSA or an equivalent assessment from another state.

Once identified as an English Language Learner, the student will be provided instructional support based on their English proficiency level. Classes will be taught (via LiveLesson sessions) by a certified ELL teacher and will be aligned to standards and based on scientific research for English language acquisition. Appendix D includes the Planning and Instruction of ELL Students. Advance will implement the Pearson English Learning System[®] as the basis for its ESL curriculum. The Pearson ELL program is aligned with Pennsylvania’s Reading, Writing, Speaking, and Listening Standards. This system is correlated to the English Language Proficiency Standards outlined in the WIDA framework¹⁵ and the Pennsylvania PreK-12 English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS).¹⁶ Advance will use cumulative data points (to include student assessment scores and success rates) to conduct an annual evaluation of the ELL program each year.

The targeted and individualized instructional support provided in these sessions will focus on helping students attain social and academic English proficiency using the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol[®] (SIOP[®]). Classes based on the SIOP[®] model will include grade level content while simultaneously promoting the development of academic language skills. In addition, the ELL Lead Teacher will work with the content teachers, Learning Coaches, and students to ensure content material is adapted and accessible for all ELL students so that they can fully participate in the core curriculum.

The ELL Lead Teacher will play a key role in ensuring integration of students into the school community. The ELL Lead Teacher will:

- maintain student files,
- screen new students for eligibility of ELL services (using the W-APT[®]),
- provide instructional consultation to Learning Coaches,
- provide direct instruction to ELL students via LiveLesson sessions and phone calls,
- conduct progress monitoring throughout the school year,
- create and implement targeted interventions based on data from progress monitoring,
- administer the annual ELL assessment (ACCESS for ELLs[®]),
- monitor exited ELL students for academic progress using state-specific criteria for two years, and
- stay current on state legislation pertaining to ELL students.

¹⁵ http://assets.pearsonschool.com/correlations/WIDA%20PRIME_Correlation_LC2013%20Grades%206-10.pdf

¹⁶ <http://www.pearsonschool.com/index.cfm?locator=PS2zV9&PMDBSOLUTIONID=6724&PMDBSITEID=2781&PMDBCATEGORYID=1662&PMDBSUBSOLUTIONID=&PMDBSUBJECTAREAID=&PMDBSUBCATEGORYID=&&PMDBProgramID=100101&elementType=correlations&elementID=SeeAIINATL>

If the student qualifies for ELL services, Advance will assess progress in all ELL students' English proficiency and use data to drive ELL instructional decisions. All ELL students will participate in the state's annual language proficiency assessment, ACCESS for ELLs®. The ELL Lead Teacher will coordinate in-person testing of ELL students at various locations across the state within the established timeframe for Pennsylvania. These annual test results will help determine continued program placement and allow teachers to adapt content to individual student needs. All mandated state tests will be administered to ELL students as required by law.

The ELL Lead Teacher will also work with teachers, Learning Coaches, and students to adapt the core material for ELL students and provide appropriate supplemental resources, including various technologies to facilitate language acquisition. Based on Connection's previous experience supporting a cyber school in Pennsylvania, Advance anticipates the enrollment of ELL students to be less than 1%.

Advance will follow the Pennsylvania state exit criteria and timelines for exiting ELL students from the program. Students must score 5.0 in each domain (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) on the ACCESS® assessment in addition to earning a score of BASIC on the annual Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) math or Algebra I Keystone and PSSA Reading or Literature Keystone (PSSA scores must be from the most recent academic school year), and earn a final grade of "C" or better in core subject areas of Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies). Advance will reference the PDE State Required Exit Criteria for Pennsylvania's English Language Instructional Programs for English Language Learners for guidance on students who may have special circumstances for exiting the ELL program.

Advance will monitor ELL students for academic progress using state-specific criteria for two years after program exit. Monitoring may include periodic review of student grades, teacher observation, (using the Pennsylvania Post-Exit ELL Monitoring Forms), and/or review of local assessment or state scores. If at any time an ELL in the monitoring phase struggles to make academic progress, Advance will provide intervention within the context of the RTII/MTSS framework.

Gifted Students

The gifted education program will operate on the premise that gifted students are a diverse subsection of the general student body and thereby require additional educational opportunities for the fulfillment of their exceptional potentials. Guided by this vision of the gifted child, Advance will offer a comprehensive gifted education program that, in recognition of the gifted child's unique needs, will challenge the student, provide expanded learning opportunities, and support the student's affective needs.

At the core of our gifted education program will be a comprehensive identification and screening process. Utilizing a multiple criteria approach, students will be identified through both quantitative and qualitative measures of performance.

The identification process will begin with a comprehensive screening for giftedness. This process will take place primarily during enrollment and placement, at which time screening and identification procedures will be communicated to parents through the website, enrollment documentation, and information contained in the Student Information Form. During the placement process, parents will be informed of their student's standing through responsive communication with their academic placement advisor and/or other school personnel. Meanwhile, staff will be able to access screening and identification procedure documentation through resources hosted virtually on Connexus.

Screening for students once they are enrolled will involve a multi-level approach to identifying who exhibits exceptional performance or potential. Indicators such as parent recommendation, exceptional test scores, classroom performance, and teacher recommendations will be used to nominate students to the School Based

Committee for Gifted Education (SBCGE) for evaluation and further consideration of gifted services. At least one of the following will be used for screening:

- recommendation by parent, Learning Coach, or teacher;
- anecdotal notes that indicate exceptional performance or potential;
- Gifted Individualized Education Plan or recommendation from the student's prior school;
- school and district administered assessments;
- classroom performance and student portfolios;
- nationally normed aptitude and achievement data(e.g., Advanced performance on the PSSA);
- LEAP (Connection's proprietary achievement test); and
- Connections proprietary placement test results.

An essential part of the screening process will be nominations. These nominations will be completed at any point of the year, with predesignated testing and evaluation windows determining admittance and processing of nominations. Nominations may be submitted either to the Gifted & Talented Coordinator and/or other designated administrative staff member. Once submitted, the nomination will then be evaluated by a member of the SBCGE who will collect evidence before then considering the student for formal evaluation.

At least three of the following are used for referral for formal evaluation:

- completed nomination by either the parent and/or Learning Coach or teacher of the student,
- school and district administered assessments,
- classroom performance and student portfolios that exhibit above grade-level performance,
- nationally normed aptitude and achievement data,
- Connections proprietary placement test results, and/or
- patterns of growth or upward trajectories over time based on formal and informal data.

Upon referral to the Gifted Multidisciplinary Team (GMDT), students will undergo the formal evaluation process. Advance will use both quantitative and qualitative evidence to determine whether gifted services are required. Any student with an IQ of 130 or higher will be admitted into the gifted education program. Additionally, the following criteria will also be used to justify placement:

- nationally normed and validated achievement tests that demonstrate a year or more above grade level achievement for the normed age group;
- observed or measured demonstration of rapid acquisition of new knowledge;
- work portfolios that demonstrate achievement, performance, or expertise in one or more academic areas;
- observed or measured demonstrations of exceptional leadership ability, creative thinking, foreign language aptitude, communication skills or technology expertise;
- Connections proprietary placement test results; and
- completed nominations by either the parent and/or Learning Coach or teacher of the student.

Furthermore, in recognition of the importance of equal access to gifted education programming, all formal evaluations will take into account possible confounding variables in the evaluation such as English as a second language, disabilities as defined in 34 CFR 300.8 (relating to child with a disability), gender or race bias, and/or socio/cultural factors that may influence performance.

Once identified, a Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP) will be developed for each identified student. The GIEP will be developed by a team of members including one or both of the student's parents, the Learning Coach, the student if the parent chooses to have the student participate, the Gifted & Talented Coordinator, one or more of the student's current teachers, a teacher of the gifted, and other individuals that may contribute to the formulation of the GIEP. Clear communication of the purpose, time, location, and persons expected to attend will be provided to all members of the GIEP team.

The GIEP will guide and ensure successful implementation of gifted education programming. Each GIEP will contain the following:

- statement of the student's present levels of educational performance,
- statement of annual goals and short-term learning outcomes,
- statement of the specially designed instruction and support services to be provided to the student,
- projected dates for initiation,
- anticipated frequency of interventions,
- objective criteria and process for determining progress,
- names and positions of GIEP team participants, and
- date of the meeting.

All teachers who work with the student will be notified of the GIEP and will be provided guidance in its implementation. The GIEP team will convene on an annual basis, with the option for more frequent meetings if conditions warrant and/or a GIEP team member, the parent, or the student request a meeting. All procedural safeguards will be implemented as noted in the provisions of Chapter 16.

Each gifted student, once identified, will participate in Advance's comprehensive gifted education program. The gifted education program will be founded upon a customizable and adaptable gifted education curriculum that is attuned to the specific needs of the gifted child. In grades 3-8, students will have the opportunity to attend gifted and talented courses in math, science, and English Language Arts. These courses will allow students greater opportunities to interact with the teacher and other students, explore grade-level content, participate in extension projects, investigations, and activities that integrate skills and promote higher-level thinking, and to participate in individualized activities. Gifted students will also be able to choose from a wide variety of electives and club activities to supplement learning in core subjects. Advance will also offer an exclusive online version of Junior Great Books® where students will enjoy age-appropriate works and participate in online literary inquiry discussions with other high-ability students.

Gifted high school students will also have access to rigorous college preparatory curriculum and will be able to choose from dozens of Honors courses and 16 Advanced Placement® (AP) courses. Honors courses will offer advanced students opportunities to participate in extension projects, investigations, and activities that require integrated skills application and higher-level thinking. Furthermore, AP courses will allow students to engage in college-level investigation of subjects with the opportunity to earn college credit by achieving high scores on AP exams.

Along with the provision of advanced courses, the gifted education program will offer a level of flexibility that will make it possible to provide each and every gifted student a course load that is attuned to their particular strengths and interests. During the enrollment and placement process, gifted students may be placed in different curriculum levels for different subjects. For example, a sixth grader with a high aptitude in math could be placed in an eighth grade math course, while continuing to take sixth grade level courses in other subjects. This level of flexibility will allow Advance to provide an impressive level of personalization for the gifted student.

In addition to rigorous coursework, gifted students will be encouraged to apply to the Connections Talent Networks. These Talent Networks will be an additional venue for fostering students' creative and intellectual giftedness. Students specializing in STEM (as explained previously in this application), the Fine Arts, or sports will be provided the opportunity to participate in community-based activities to explore and develop their talents.

In recognition of the fact that high-quality staff is essential to a strong gifted education program, Advance will also provide multiple Gifted and Talented Professional Development courses to all teachers, counselors, and administrators. These courses will cover topics ranging from affective education to gifted student identification and will ensure that staff is well versed in the needs of the gifted student.

Academically or intellectually gifted students will thrive at Advance. The implementation of the robust Connections Gifted and Talented program for students in grades 3-8 and the Honors/AP program for high school students, along with a flexible placement system will ensure gifted students are provided the services required for the realization of their exceptional potentials.

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

Teaching Methods

"It is impossible to list all of the various tasks that a virtual school teacher must accomplish on any given day, but the most important task is providing support and instruction to ensure that our students are mastering the performance standards. The curriculum is rich and interactive,... however, there will never be a curriculum written that can replace quality instruction. Our teachers spend time daily using student performance data to determine which students need direct instruction on which topics and which are able to move along without it. They are personalizing instruction in the truest sense of the word."

Heather Robinson, Principal, Georgia Connections Academy¹⁷

An individualized and supported educational program facilitates the development of self-direction and personal responsibility among its students. In these ways, Advance will develop students who are self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners. Advance will implement the Connections instructional model which incorporates key facets such as 1) the Learning Triad (teachers, Learning Coaches, and curriculum), 2) Advisory Teacher/Counselor, and 3) student motivation.

¹⁷ <http://www.charterconfidential.com/a-day-in-the-life-of-an-online-teacher/>

1) *The Learning Triad*: The Connections instructional model relies on the support of a) highly qualified teachers, b) supportive Learning Coaches, and c) a high quality, standards-aligned curriculum. The Learning Triad, consisting of these three elements, is illustrated in Figure 11. Members of each student's learning team include a face-to-face Learning Coach, one or more Pennsylvania-certified teachers, and trained Connections curriculum specialists. In effect, each student will have a staff of experts working together to leverage the school's myriad resources - technological, instructional, and interpersonal - for success.

a) Highly Qualified Teachers - Student learning benefits from committed educators and involved parents who provide total support. Each student will have one or more certified Pennsylvania teachers specially trained in teaching in an online environment, the Connections curriculum and specific instructional methods. In each of the elementary grade levels or high school core subjects, students will be taught by a highly qualified and certified teacher with expertise in a particular grade level or content area. Teachers will work closely with each student on a one-on-one basis using innovative technology tools. The teacher will be responsible for teaching, evaluating assignments and work products, providing instructional assistance, assigning and scoring assessment activities, and providing feedback on the student's performance. Based on a student's demonstrated mastery of the material, teachers will add, expand, or replace assignments; they will also grade students in each subject for the Grade Book, and make promotion or retention decisions. Depending on the needs of the learner, teacher direct contact - via telephone, LiveLesson session, and WebMail - with the student and Learning Coach may be as frequent as several times a day, and at minimum twice per week. Teachers view the student's attendance, participation, and performance on a daily basis via the Connexus teacher's home page. Teachers will not wait to be contacted; they will be proactive participants in their students' learning plans. Teachers in cyber schools often comment that they understand their students better in the cyber environment than in a traditional classroom since they work with students one-on-one.

All Pennsylvania charter schools must meet the requirements of Pennsylvania's charter school law, including the requirement that 75% of the charter school's professional staff hold appropriate state certification. Additionally, Pennsylvania charter schools must meet the federal law's Highly Qualified Teacher requirements. Teachers at Advance will hold at least a bachelor's degree and will demonstrate competence in the core content areas in which they teach. Federal law further provides that charter school teachers must meet the certification requirements established in the state's public charter school law, which may differ from the requirements for full state certification. In Pennsylvania, in order to be highly qualified, all charter school teachers of core content subjects at all grade levels, whether or not they hold state certification, must (1) hold at least a bachelor's degree and (2) demonstrate subject matter competence in each core content area and grade level at which they teach. To demonstrate subject matter competency, teachers can use a passing grade in the appropriate PRAXIS content area test in the subject area of their teaching assignment. Middle school and high school teachers may also demonstrate competency by having completed a content area major or a graduate degree in the subject area of their teaching assignment. Teachers with three or more years teaching experience may demonstrate subject matter competency through having attained National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) Certification in the core content area of their teaching assignment. Experienced teachers (i.e., one or more years of teaching experience) may demonstrate subject matter competency through completing Pennsylvania's HOUSSSE programs. All special education teachers will be required to hold the appropriate certification.¹⁸

¹⁸ Pennsylvania Department of Education, *Charter School Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements*, February 2007

Figure 11. Learning Triad



b) Supporting Learning Coaches — Each student will have a Learning Coach (a parent, extended family member, or similarly qualified adult designated by the parent/guardian) who works in person with the student, supporting him/her as developmentally appropriate, under the guidance of the Pennsylvania certified teacher. At the high school level, the Learning Coach will be less involved with daily instruction but serves an important supervisory role for the student.

c) A high quality, standards-aligned curriculum — Advance has selected the Connections curriculum. The curriculum meets the requirements of 22 Pa. Code Ch.4 (relating to academic standards and assessment) and will meet subsequent regulations promulgated to replace 22 Pa. Code Ch. 4. The Connections curriculum is fully aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The developmentally appropriate curriculum increases its integration of technology as students advance through the grades.

- 2) *Home Room Teacher/Advisory Teacher/Counselor*: Each student in grades K-12 will be assigned a home room teacher (elementary school) or an advisory teacher/counselor (middle school and high school) who provides an extra layer of monitoring for the whole student. This educator, in collaboration with the Learning Coach, will develop a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) for each student and closely track their overall academic progress. Teachers will work directly with students via the phone, WebMail, and LiveLesson sessions. Student academic progress will be tracked on a daily basis via online discussions, quizzes, tests, science labs, and portfolio items to ascertain mastery of the material. Advisory teachers will also track other parameters of student success, such as attendance and participation.
- 3) *Student Motivation*¹⁹: As part of the services Connections provides through the Statement of Agreement, Connections will train teachers to apply three basic classroom engagement strategies to their instruction to create a motivational cyber learning environment. As stated in the Connections' Core Standards for Facilitating Learning, teachers will include active learning, application of skills, problem-solving, and interaction that result in high levels of student engagement and achievement.
 - *Make Instruction Fun and Engaging*: Train teachers to make synchronous learning sessions fun and engaging by using games, music, and virtual collaboration tools (e.g., virtual whiteboard, polls, and breakout rooms).
 - *Provide a Safe Way to Respond*: Show teachers how to create a welcoming and safe cyber environment where students can feel free to express their ideas and needs without being judged. The more comfortable the student feels, the more productive and engaged he or she will be.
 - *Help Students Succeed*: It is incredibly rewarding for teachers to witness their students succeed! They know firsthand how gratified a student feels when he or she grasps a challenging concept or subject or does well on an assignment. Celebrating student success and achievement increases student motivation.

The Connections program provides an asynchronous model that uses synchronous support.²⁰ In synchronous learning, students and teachers work together at the same time in the same cyber place (LiveLesson sessions). Typical synchronous instruction involves teacher-facilitated lessons, group projects, and class discussions. In

¹⁹ <http://www.connectionsacademy.com/blog/posts/2015-02-11/The-Fundamentals-of-Online-Classroom-Motivation.aspx>

²⁰ <http://www.connectionsacademy.com/blog/posts/2014-09-26/Real-Time-or-Anytime-Learning-Synchronous-and-Asynchronous-Learning-Explained.aspx>

asynchronous learning, students work at their own pace and place, completing coursework within defined time limits. Students and instructors are not necessarily interacting in real time.

Schoolwork that students perform on their own time typically includes:

- viewing pre-recorded cyber classroom sessions at home,
- reviewing course materials online or offline,
- completing assignments, and
- collaborating with other students via secure message boards.

Some students thrive with one-on-one attention while others crave the space to work through problems independently at their own pace. Offering a combination of the two learning approaches allows cyber schools to create a more personalized learning experience that supports different learning styles.

There are many benefits to **asynchronous** learning. Through asynchronous instruction and materials, students are provided the flexibility to:

- learn at their own pace, place, and peak times, unconstrained by others' schedules;
- work at their own level, moving as quickly or slowly through course materials as needed;
- review difficult materials as often as needed; and
- explore resources that may be unavailable in the traditional classroom.

There are also several benefits to **synchronous** learning. Interactivity is the key to synchronous instruction, allowing:

- Students to demonstrate their knowledge and practice their communication skills.
- Students to ask questions to deepen their understanding.
- Students to build relationships with their teacher and fellow classmates.
- Teachers to engage students in discussions, problem solving, and group projects.
- Teachers to focus class time on bridging skills gaps.
- Teachers to build one-on-one relationships with students.

Teachers can record class discussions and instructional sessions, making them available as asynchronous materials to reinforce learning or accommodate student scheduling conflicts.

Together, these two approaches provide teachers and students the best of real-time and any-time learning.

Enhancing Student Learning

Students learn best when lessons match their interests and abilities. Studies have shown that in conventional classrooms many instructional tasks are not matched to students' skill levels. Through its individualized educational program, the school's proposed placement process will align with the needs of the students. Advance will aim to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program. Through the placement process and the school's pre-, mid-, and post-test assessments, students will be provided with curriculum materials and instructional resources appropriate to their achievement level.

“For the first time in my career, I don’t spend the majority of my time working on whole-group instruction. This allows me to consider the individual student as my highest priority. I know my students as people and as learners, and that makes a better teacher.”

Hillary Chase, Middle School Teacher, Maine Connections Academy²¹

Each student deserves an instructional program that maximizes his or her potential. This is the purpose of the **Personalized Performance Learning** process—an academic road map for each student that provides differentiated instruction in a unique, tailored way. Personalizing a student’s program will be an ongoing process. Students, Learning Coaches, and teachers will meet throughout the year to review progress, modify the student’s program, and adjust goals as needed. Examples of differentiation include small group sessions, one-on-one instruction, SkillsTutor™ activities, practice items, additional activities using Teachlet tutorials, manipulatives, virtual labs and/or graphic organizers, and supplemental instructional resources.

- **Placement and Course Selection.** Starting at the time of placement and course assignment, information given during the enrollment process will be used to select courses based on a student’s individual learning needs.
- **Regular Communication.** At the start of school, Learning Coaches and teachers will establish a regular communication schedule, at least once every two weeks with students. Teachers review progress daily and will communicate with students and Learning Coaches frequently. Students will be encouraged to contact their teachers as often as they wish or find necessary.
- **Review of Student Background and Learning Styles.** Teachers, Learning Coaches, and students will discuss student strengths, skill deficiencies, and previous school performance. Students will complete a questionnaire to identify their unique learning style to help inform and guide the best teaching and learning approach.
- **Performance Testing.** Students in grades K-1 will take the DIBELS Next. Students in grades 2-8 will take the LEAP for both English Language Arts/Reading and Math tests at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. The LEAP test identifies areas of strength and need in the student’s learning profile and measures student growth during the school year to help formulate learning goals and monitor student progress. Students in grades 9-12 will take the Scantron Performance Series assessment.
- **Set Goals.** Goal setting will be based on all of the information gathered in the initial process and some initial student work samples. Teachers and Learning Coaches will work together to set goals for the student and to accomplish these during the school year.
- **Schedule Modifications and Electives.** Once the school year gets started, teachers will help personalize the learning schedule. They will inquire about the student’s daily routines and make adjustments to the student’s online learning schedule. Students in grades K-8 may also add one or more elective courses to their schedule. Students in grades 9-12 will have a 6-week add/drop period that can be used to adjust their schedule, as needed.
- **Differentiated Leveled Courses.** As part of a student’s Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), teachers or Academic Placement Advisors may recommend placement into an essential, foundations, honors, or AP course. These courses provide students with scaffolded and/or enriched course content to meet their academic needs.

²¹ <http://www.pressherald.com/2015/06/11/letter-to-the-editor-charter-school-system-makes-her-a-better-teacher>

The Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) tool will place at each teacher's fingertips all of the assessment data available for students, e.g. state test scores, LEAP and Scantron pre-, mid-, and post-test assessment data, participation and performance metrics, and any IEP information (as appropriate to protect student privacy). After continual analysis of multiple data points, teachers may create lesson modifications, custom assignments, and custom assessments to address students' learning deficiencies or provide additional challenges to enrich their educational experience.

Research Base

Students learn best in a safe, positive environment in which they are respected, accepted, valued, and nurtured as unique individuals and are challenged to achieve their full potential. From this, it follows that students learn best when the instruction is tailored to their unique needs and when they are supported by adults who are committed to their success.

Education research has shown that the touchstones of the Personalized Performance Learning (PPL) instructional model — high-quality teaching, personalized instruction, and parental involvement—have been directly correlated to top student achievement.

In 2009, the U.S. Department of Education published a meta-analysis of evidence-based studies of K–12 and postsecondary cyber learning programs. The study reported that, "Students who took all or part of their class online performed better, on average, than those taking the same course through traditional face-to-face instruction."²²

Cyber education improves learning opportunities for students by increased access to high-quality teachers, large-scale customization and optimization, increased flexibility, improved flexibility for teachers, improved productivity and efficiency, and innovation.²³

High-quality teaching: Each teacher is equipped with the skills and technology needed to bring out the best in every student. In his landmark study correlating test data with teacher quality, Harold Wenglinsky²⁴ of the Educational Testing Service showed a direct link between good teaching and higher test scores. While past research on the impact of good teaching occurred before cyber schools were available as study sites, more recent research focusing specifically on cyber learning echoes the critical importance of teacher quality.

In April 2009, John Watson and Butch Gemin on behalf of the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL) published the *Management and Operations of Online Programs* as part of the series Promising Practices in Online Learning. The authors noted, "Most programs agree that new online teachers must 1) put their role as a facilitator of student learning above other aspects of teaching, 2) have the ability to adapt and manage change, 3) have a high level of content mastery, and 4) be ready to make the shift to online instruction."²⁵

²² Barbara Means, Yukie Toyama, Robert Murphy, Marianne Bakia, and Karla Jones, "Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practice in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies," U.S. Department of Education, May 2009, at <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf> (November 16, 2009).

²³ Lips, D. "How Online Learning is Revolutionizing K-12 Education and Benefiting Students." Backgrounder, The Heritage Foundation, January 12, 2010.

²⁴ Wenglinsky, Harold, *How Teaching Matters: Bringing the Classroom Back Into Discussions of Teacher Quality*, Educational Testing Service, 2000.

²⁵ Watson, J. and Gemin, B., (April 2009) *Promising Practices in Online Learning: Management and Operations of Online Programs: Ensuring Quality and Accountability*. Evergreen Consulting Associates, iNACOL
http://www.inacol.org/research/promisingpractices/iNACOL_PP_MgmtOp_042309.pdf

For example, 2005's *A Synthesis of New Research on K-12 Online Learning*²⁶ shows that the unique ability of a cyber teacher to communicate one-on-one with students and offer personalized feedback, as teachers will do at Advance, is key to student success in a cyber learning environments.

Personalized instruction: Students clearly benefit from instruction that is personalized in terms of pace, content, sequence, and style. According to Michael Abell's article, "Individualizing Learning Using Intelligent Technology and Universally Designed Curriculum," published in the *Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment*, "A learning environment such as this should emulate the unique learning style of the individual student."²⁷

In their 2010 article, "Learning Styles in the Age of Differentiated Instruction," authors Timothy Landrum and Kimberly McDuffie note, "Matching the skills and strengths children bring to bear with their life, vocational, and independent living goals provides a framework for planning an instructional program... To summarize, instruction is individualized when (a) it is planned in a way that builds on what individual students currently know and can do and targets meaningful goals regarding what they need to learn next; and (b) accommodations and modifications to teaching and testing routines are made in order to provide students with full and meaningful access to the content they need to learn."²⁸

"Where IS the classroom?" Virtual school teachers do not miss out on having their own classroom; it just doesn't have four walls. Each teacher has a private, virtual classroom that is accessible by students in their classes and, as you would expect, they use their classroom in some unique and innovative ways. While teachers can invite their entire class into their virtual classroom, we find that this is the exception and not the rule. Because we are committed to personalizing instruction, teachers most often provide targeted instruction to individual or small groups of students based on student needs. One of the best features of the virtual classroom is that the instruction is recorded. Students can play the recording as many times as they like; they can rewind, fast-forward, and pause the recorded session. This is something that you just can't do in a traditional classroom! To determine who to meet with each day, teachers review student performance to build their classroom rosters, plan their lesson presentation, and deliver instruction, remediation, or acceleration to their selected groups of students"

Heather Robinson, Principal, Georgia Connections Academy²⁹

Dorraine Fenner, Sueha Kayyal Mansour, and Natalie Sydor noted in their 2010 *Action Research Project* submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education at Saint Xavier University in Chicago that, "Applying differentiation to leveled learners allowed students to grow academically... Using modified activities according to their own learning style allowed students to progress. Differentiation provided students with different options, which allowed students to improve. Students enjoyed the amount of control they were given pertaining to the assignment... Differentiated assignments allowed students to grow academically according to their ability level."³⁰

²⁶ NCREL Synthesis of New Research on K-12 Online Learning, 2005, North Central Regional Education Laboratory/Learning Point Associates. www.ncrel.org/tech/synthesis

²⁷ Abell, M. (2006). Individualizing learning using intelligent technology and universally designed curriculum. *Journal of Technology, Learning, and Assessment*, 5(3). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.itla.org>

²⁸ Timothy J. Landrum & Kimberly A. McDuffie (2010): Learning Styles in the Age of Differentiated Instruction, *Exceptionality: A Special Education Journal*, 18:1, 6-17 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09362830903462441>

²⁹ <http://www.charterconfidential.com/a-day-in-the-life-of-an-online-teacher/>

³⁰ Fenner, D., Mansour, S., and Sydor, N. (2010). The Effects of Differentiation and Motivation on Students Performance. School of Education at Saint Xavier University, Chicago IL

A goal of personalization via cyber instruction is for the student to demonstrate increased content knowledge and critical thinking. At Advance, instruction will be personalized for every student, every day.

Parent involvement: Decades of research show that parent participation in education is very closely related to student achievement.³¹ In an article published in 2010, titled "Parent Involvement and Student Academic Performance: A Multiple Mediation Analysis," in the *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, authors David R. Topor, Susan P. Keane, Terri L. Shelton, and Susan D. Calkins noted that, "Parent involvement in a child's education is consistently found to be positively associated with a child's academic performance. Results indicated a statistically significant association between parent involvement and a child's academic performance, over and above the impact of the child's intelligence."³²

To support the significant role of parents in a student's cyber education, Advance will provide many avenues of communication with parents including a newsletter and website. In addition, Advance will contract with Connections to provide training for parents including the Learning Coach Instructional Support Team offering several supports for Learning Coaches including Learning Coach Central, Learning Coach Link, National Learning Coach Resource Sessions, and Parent-to-Parent orientations.

Carrie A. Semke and Susan M. Sheridan researched the effects of parental involvement on student academic achievement in their working paper published in 2011, *Family-School Connections in Rural Educational Settings: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature*, and found, "Parental participation and cooperation in their child's educational affairs is related to several outcomes deemed important in educational arenas: increased student achievement and academic performance, stronger self-regulatory skills, fewer discipline problems, better study habits, more positive attitudes toward school, improved homework habits and work orientation, and higher educational aspirations (Aeby, Thyer, & Carpenter- Aeby, 1999; Galloway & Sheridan, 1994; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Ma, 1999; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Trusty, 1999)."³³

There are multiple ways for parents to be involved in education. In the cyber learning model, parents often act as the Learning Coach and are therefore directly involved in their child's education. A Stanford study points out one avenue of parent involvement and its impact. The study found that using parents as tutors brought significant and immediate changes in student's I.Q. scores. Another study showed that parental involvement increased students' motivation to learn including school engagement, goal achievement, and even motivation to read.³⁴ At Advance, parents will be closely involved in their child's education in partnership with their child's teacher.

³¹ Fan, X., & Chen, M. (2001). Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review*, 13, 1, 1-22.

³² Topor, David R., Keane, Susan P., Shelton, Terri L., & Calkins, Susan D. (2010). Parent Involvement and Student Academic Performance: A Multiple Mediation Analysis, *Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community*, 38:3, 183-197
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10852352.2010.486297>

³³ Semke C. A., & Sheridan, S. M. (2011). *Family-School Connections in Rural Educational Settings: A Systematic Review of the Empirical Literature* (R2Ed Working Paper No. 2011-1). Retrieved from the National Center for Research on Rural Education website:
<http://r2ed.unl.edu>

³⁴ Gonzalez-DeHass, A. R., Willems, P. P., & Doan Holbein, M. F. (2005). Examining the relationship between parental involvement and student motivation. *Educational Psychology Review*, 17, 2, 99- 123.

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

School Calendar

Advance will meet or exceed the requirements of Section 1715-A(9), "A charter school shall provide a minimum of one hundred eighty (180) days of instruction or nine hundred (900) hours per year of instruction at the elementary level, or nine hundred ninety (990) hours per year of instruction at the secondary level. Nothing in this clause shall preclude the use of computer and satellite linkages for delivering instruction to students."³⁵

Advance will be a year-round cyber school for students in grades K-12 throughout Pennsylvania offering traditional and accelerated options in its first year and introducing the year round option in its second year. The school will offer multiple calendar options: traditional, year-round, and accelerated (for students in grades 9-12). In all options, students will complete the required 180 school days, which can be completed in either a traditional September-May school year or extended over a July-June school year. Advance will offer courses throughout the year—during a combination of the fall, spring, and summer sessions—providing students with flexible pacing options for meeting state education standards.

The Board will approve the school calendar annually. The school calendar may be extended to allow families more flexibility in completing the year's work, or to provide extra learning time for students who are at risk (generally not by more than two weeks). Figure 12 is the anticipated traditional and accelerated pacing student calendar for the 2016-2017 school year. Figure 13 is the anticipated year round pacing student calendar. School will not be kept open for students or staff on Sundays, Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, the first of January, Christmas, or Saturdays unless Monday is the weekly holiday for the entire school year.

Figure 12. Student Calendar 2016-2017

Event	Date
<i>First Day of School (Traditional and Accelerated-Year Round begins in Year 2)</i>	September 6, 2016
Thanksgiving Break (No School in Session)	November 24 – 25, 28, 2016
Winter Break (No School in Session)	December 23, 2016 – January 2, 2017
Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday (No School in Session)	January 16, 2017
<i>First Semester End Date</i>	January 23, 2017
Spring Break (No School in Session)	March 30 – 31, 2017
Memorial Day (No School in Session)	May 29, 2017
<i>Second Semester End Date</i>	June 1, 2017
<i>Last Day of School (Traditional Pacing Option Students)</i>	June 1, 2017
<i>First Day of Summer Session (Accelerated Pacing Option Students)</i>	June 2, 2017
Independence Day (No School in Session)	July 4, 2017
<i>Last Day of Summer Session (Accelerated Pacing Option Students)</i>	July 31, 2017

35

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/LI/uconsCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&yr=1949&sessInd=0&smthLwInd=0&act=14&chpt=17A&scn=15&subscn=0>

Figure 13. Student Calendar 2017-2018

Event	Date
<i>First Day of School (Year Round Pacing Option Students)</i>	July 5, 2017
Labor Day (No School in Session)	September 4, 2017
<i>First Day of School (Traditional and Accelerated Pacing Option Students)</i>	September 5, 2017
Thanksgiving Break (No School in Session)	November 23 – 27, 2017
Winter Break (No School in Session)	December 25, 2017 – January 1, 2018
Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday (No School in Session)	January 15, 2018
<i>First Semester End Date</i>	January 22, 2018
Spring Break (No School in Session)	March 29 - 30, 2018
Memorial Day (No School in Session)	May 28, 2018
<i>Last Day of School (Traditional Pacing Option Students)</i>	May 31, 2018
<i>Last Day of School (Year Round and Accelerated Pacing Students)</i>	June 29, 2018

Hours of Operation

The school site will operate Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM ET – 4:00 PM ET. Since this is a cyber learning environment, the school day is not limited to certain hours for start and end times. However, the teaching staff is available during the hours of operation.

Typical Student Day

The time commitment required by students in the cyber program is comparable to that of a traditional school day. Since learners do not face the distractions and interruptions of a typical school setting (from lining up in the hallway to waiting out the teacher’s handling of disruptive peers), they use their learning time much more efficiently. The in-depth application of concepts that is often relegated to homework in a conventional school setting is an integral part of the learning day; the application of discrete skills, extended projects, and remedial and enrichment activities is part of the daily routine for students and their Learning Coaches. The program provides for and offers more than the legally mandated minimum instructional minutes for every grade. Advance will provide a minimum of 900 hours per year of instruction at the elementary level and 990 hours per year of instruction at the secondary level.

Figure 14 represents an example of a possible school day for an elementary school student. Activities vary based upon student needs, coursework, and personal schedules. Learning is integrated within individual activities as well as LiveLesson sessions and phone calls with teachers. Learning can occur when students learn best – not just between 9 AM and 3 PM. Students create daily checklists to ensure they are staying on-task. The daily routine may include checking WebMail, looking at the To Do List within Connexus, reviewing the daily planner in Connexus, attending scheduled synchronous sessions, and completing lessons listed in the student’s Connexus Planner. Students easily see which lessons are due as they are in bolded text. As lessons are completed they change from bold to regular text. Students can access the lessons directly from their daily planners. In addition, students can access any notes or tips provided by the teacher and view important course-related information like LiveLesson session schedules, recordings, and supplemental materials. Students can track their progress and grades at any time in the Grade Book.

Figure 14. A Day in the Life of a Student

SAMPLE STUDENT "DAY IN THE LIFE"	
Morning	Learning Coach logs on, reads messages, and reviews lessons.
	Student reads and responds to WebMail messages from teacher about progress (with the help of the Learning Coach depending upon reading level).
	Student participates in a LiveLesson session for math with teacher and classmates.
	Student completes a math lesson. Learning Coach monitors and facilitates learning as necessary.
	Student completes a Language Arts lesson, including reading, writing, and discussing the lesson activities and text. Student completes a lesson and takes a quiz online.
	Student goes outside for a playground activity with Learning Coach.
Afternoon	Student makes sandwich for lunch, as part of the Home Life Course.
	Student completes a science lesson and finishes reading a non-fiction reading selection (with the help of the Learning Coach depending upon reading level).
	As part of a STEM-enrichment activity, student completes a hands-on science experiment outside with Learning Coach.
	Student goes to soccer practice and the local library.
	After returning, student completes art lesson and then participates in Book Club.
	Learning Coach confirms lessons completed and records attendance.
	Learning Coach and student review next day's schedule and prepares accordingly.

Typical Teacher Day

The school day is not limited to certain hours for start and end times. However, the teaching staff is available during the hours of operation. Teachers, based out of the school site primarily, collaborate to share ideas, information, and teaching techniques with the families who are always welcome to call or visit the office as indicated in Figure 15.

Figure 15. A Day in the Life of a Teacher

SAMPLE TEACHER "DAY IN THE LIFE"	
Morning	Teacher logs on, reads messages, and reviews individual student participation and performance.
	Teacher sends a WebMail message to a student answering a question; teacher responds to Learning Coaches' questions/feedback.
	Teacher holds a science LiveLesson session with a group of students. During the lesson she notes who is struggling to follow the lesson, and will follow up with those students after the lesson via a phone call or one on one tutoring.
	Teacher grades student portfolio assessments.
	Teacher has a 1:1 session with a student who had questions on a lesson.
	Teacher meets with other staff for a brown bag professional development lunch to discuss the Assessment Performance Objective Report
Afternoon	Teacher checks WebMail & grades assessments that have been submitted
	Teacher calls five students to do a Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA)
	Teacher confers with the Principal
	Teacher contacts three Learning Coaches to discuss student performance
	Teacher works with STEM Coordinator to develop STEM enrichment activities for students

I.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?*

Methods of Self-Assessment

As a public school, Advance will measure and report the academic achievement of all students annually, as well as ongoing progress and performance of cohorts and the school as a whole. As previously stated, students will participate in state proficiency tests depending upon grade level. The school will set up in-person, proctored exam locations for state testing in multiple locations throughout Pennsylvania. Results of these assessments are reported through the PDE. In addition, state assessment data is logged in Connexus to complete a data snapshot of student academic performance. The Board and school leadership also include the results of the state-mandated testing in the evaluation of the school's overall performance.

In addition to these state tests, school-based "formative" or "benchmark" assessments and course-based assessments are used and teachers have the responsibility for implementing them within the school's assessment policies and practices which follow a traditional model. Teachers are primarily responsible for administering assessments. The school's administration oversees the assessment program and will work with education specialists in evaluating and making recommendations for changes. The Board will ultimately be responsible for ensuring that the school is fulfilling the expectations and obligations under charter school law, the charter, and Board-approved school policy.

Periodic Progress Reports and External Evaluations: The school will account for its progress against its student performance measures to all stakeholders, including parents/guardians, its authorizer, the PDE, and greater community partners periodically. In addition, the Board may contract with an outside evaluator (such as a college or university) to assess the school's overall performance against its mission on a longer-term basis.

Annual Goal Report: At least once annually, the school will account for its progress against student performance measures to the Board for presentation at a public board meeting.

Ongoing Communication with Learning Coaches: Communication with parents and Learning Coaches will be frequent and purposeful throughout the school year. Teachers will communicate students' formative and summative progress to Learning Coaches. This communication will keep parents "in the loop" with current school happenings and to help Advance grow and improve from parent feedback.

Continuous School Improvement: All of this takes place within a school culture of continuous improvement driven by high expectations for all stakeholders, from students to school leaders. With student performance as the ultimate measure of success, the school will engage in ongoing review and revisions of policies, processes, and systems, with improvements based on evidence analyzed and lessons learned. This is facilitated by a school year cycle of events focused on improving learner outcomes, including weekly school-based data reviews and SMART goal-focused teacher Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings focused on key processes from Welcome Calls to regular Curriculum-Based Assessments. Monthly School Data Training sessions and PLCs will be used to process data, review student outcomes, and share and discuss best practices. Periodic after-action reviews will focus on outcomes and lessons learned from major improvement initiatives, such as beginning of the school year on-boarding of new families and the winter school leadership intervention identification and assignment campaigns. At quarterly and annual meetings school leadership will be provided opportunities to reflect on Quarterly Metrics, School Focus Goals, and School Improvement Plans – reviewing

results, efforts related to those results, and ways to improve those continuous improvement processes and tools themselves. Assessment data is the main focus of this work, however numerous other data types from multiple data sources will also be used.

Connexus

The Connexus platform facilitates this self-assessment and continuous improvement in support of helping each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program. A rich curriculum and system of assessments deployed by expert teachers will be facilitated by Connexus. Connexus will store all needed data about students, their attendance, and their performance. This data will be accessible for viewing by appropriate school staff, teachers, and parents/guardians on a moment-by-moment, day-by-day basis. Universally used Connections' tools such as the Issue Aware (IA) ticketing system ensure high levels of accountability, transparency, stakeholder involvement, and communication. Connexus provides a myriad of tools for continual capture and strategic analysis of data about student learning. Data will be used for formal reporting to various stakeholders on the students' and the school's instructional progress.

Learning Coaches, teachers, and students will have access to an electronic Grade Book that tracks all results and serves as the basis of changes in the student's learning plan. A key aspect to assessments will be the detailed feedback that will be provided by the teachers beyond the simple right/wrong grading of many traditional assessment vehicles. Advance will also use a variety of advanced data visualization tools that provide students, parents, teachers, school administrators, institutional education partners, regulators, and researchers with views of how students are performing. A screenshot of the Grade Book is provided in Figure 27.

The Board and school leadership will continually assess the performance of Connections through review of monthly reports from Board meetings, review of yearly academic progress data (School Performance Profile, PSSAs, PVAAS, review of compliance related information (e.g., cyclical monitoring, Annual Report submission, etc.), independent annual audits, strategic planning through Board retreats, among other assessment methods.

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

Evaluation Process for Teachers

The Board will employ all staff including the Principal and teachers. Through the Statement of Agreement, the Board has contracted to work with Connections to develop effective performance evaluation practices built on the national experience of Connections in the area of cyber education. Connections uses a Performance Evaluation System (in conjunction with the required Pennsylvania teacher evaluation model) to create a high performance school by encouraging employees to put forth their best effort, focusing all employees on the school's main goals, rewarding and retaining employees based on outcomes/results, and providing continuous feedback for employee development. All employees will be evaluated based on competencies along with state required metrics on student performance as required by law. The professional competencies will align with the core standards for teaching, and may vary by type of teaching position (e.g. Special Education). Competencies will be reviewed with employees at the beginning of the school year, and will be available to employees for viewing and comment throughout the school year on the Human Resources Information System's Performance Management module.

Employees receive a formal mid-year review in December or January, and a formal end-of-year review in May or June. Employees also receive periodic feedback both formally and informally from their manager throughout the school year, via the Human Resources Information System's Performance Management module.

Competencies for teachers will be evaluated in the context of the school's goals, which evaluate student growth and achievement metrics, and observations of an employee's proficiency within each competency will be evaluated using various methods, including parent and student feedback, observations of lessons and interactions, and review of relevant documentation and data.

The outcome of an individual teacher's evaluation will affect future decisions regarding staff retention, promotional opportunities, or disciplinary action and termination decisions.

The competencies will be aligned with student achievement metrics and may include any of the following:

- parent feedback,
- supervisor observations,
- statewide assessment results,
- school assessment results, and/or
- student participation/completion.

Evaluation Process for School Administrators

The Board will employ the school administrators. The school administrators will be evaluated based on competencies along with state required metrics on student performance as required by law. The professional competencies will align with the administrative position (e.g. Principal). The Board will evaluate the school administrators using data and may be assisted by consultative functions provided by Connections.

School administrators receive a formal mid-year review in December or January, and a formal end-of-year review in May or June.

Competencies will be evaluated in the context of the school's goals, which evaluate student growth and achievement metrics, and observations of an employee's proficiency within each competency are evaluated using various methods including parent, school and community feedback; observations of lessons and interactions; and review of relevant documentation and data.

The school administrator competencies may include the following (additional competencies may be assigned based on position, responsibilities, and job level):

- school development and leadership,
- team development and leadership,
- student achievement/data management, and
- personal development and professional skills.

School administrators will be evaluated using the following scale: exceeded goal, met goal, partially met goal, or did not meet goal. School administrators will receive an Overall Individual Rating on the end-of-year review based on evaluation of the competencies, shown in Figure 16.

Figure 16. Principal Performance Review Competencies

Principal Performance Review Competencies	
School Development and Leadership	
School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishes the belief that all students can and must learn at relatively high levels of achievement. Promotes collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations. Establishes a pattern of thinking and acting with the customer in mind. Supports appropriate levels of work/life balance for all employees.
Commonly Owned Vision and Plan for Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates and internalizes a vision for learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders, and seeks to meet goals through creativity and innovation. Sets clear direction for the school by creating written long- and short-term plans, with the input of stakeholders, to support the vision. Monitors implementation of plans, and adjusts them based on new data while clearly communicating changes. Develops clear measurements for each goal in the plan, and builds systematic strategies to ensure sustainability of change. Supports the professional development of the staff as it relates to the mission, vision, and goals of the school, and holds the staff accountable for implementation.
High Performing Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hires the best people based on the level of expertise, leadership style, needs of the team, and certification needed for the school, and commits to the ongoing development of a high- performing leadership team. Creates a school organizational model/structure that best utilizes the skills of all employees for the betterment of the school, and continuously monitors and re- evaluates the structure. Delegates responsibilities as necessary and appropriate, and monitors the successful implementation of those responsibilities. Empowers the leadership team to make decisions to get results. Supports the collaboration, transparency and growth/development within the leadership team.
Team Development & Leadership	
School Team Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively and promptly fills school vacancies using staffing sheet and school allocations. Selects the most talented people by considering level of expertise, certification requirements and school needs; successfully negotiates compensation packages; follows proper procedures in selection; successfully on boards staff. Plans and distributes employee workloads to meet the mission of the school. Develops and maintains effective succession plans and develops and encourages professional development programs to support those plans. Develops the capacity for distributed leadership in a team environment.
Staff Performance Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaches employees to improve and grow professionally through continuous learning, training, and other developmental activities. Holds all employees accountable for the timely accomplishment of all duties and responsibilities relating to school goals and individual competencies. Provides constructive and timely performance feedback in association with performance evaluations, supporting the review schedule and established procedures. Effectively deals with conflict and performance issues, including ensuring that Individual Performance Improvement Plans are implemented, with reasonable timelines, and works with appropriate parties to resolve the issues.
Staff Satisfaction and Retention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains a positive, collaborative team environment for all employees throughout the school organization as evidenced in the school's culture and annual surveys. Recognizes team/employee efforts providing appropriate incentives and rewards. Seeks critical feedback and integrates this data into practice, without defensiveness, to strengthen the team.

Principal Performance Review Competencies	
Student Achievement/Data Management	
Instructional Leader	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibits a high sense of urgency for change and sustainable results in improving student achievement. • Develops and leads school-wide engagement in professional learning communities that in turn facilitate and support collaborative teams. • Promotes an academically oriented, orderly and purposeful school climate. • Is able to quickly move initiatives ahead with applicable stakeholders. • Sets a clear direction for the school focused on student achievement. • Is able to effectively deal with and manage change. • Develops strong teachers; cultivates good teaching practice. • The leader has a working knowledge of RTI instructional model and the related resources, supplemental instructional support programs, current professional development opportunities, etc. and participates in related training and requires staff to do so as well. • Focuses on the needs of students, and preparing them for college and career readiness. 	
Internal/External Data to Effectively Drive Student Achievement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses instructional data to support needed change and empowers staff to make decisions based on the data. • Uses available technology and resources to build systemic strategies to ensure sustainability of change. • Uses internal and external resources to effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program on students. 	
Personal Development & Professional Skills	
Leadership Development of Self	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a high sense of curiosity for ways to get results, and is hungry for evidence. • Possesses strong self-management and self-reflection and self-awareness skills. Is receptive to feedback and/or criticism. Listens to all team members to consider other perspectives, changes personal practices if needed to obtain desired results. • Displays a results oriented, motivational, and innovative mindset. • Completes all required training and professional development in a timely manner and requires the same of the leadership team. • Models the principles of self-awareness, reflective practices, transparency, ethical behaviors and sets an example of excellence. 	
Judgement and Problem Solving	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the elements of a problem situation by analyzing relevant information, framing issues, identifying possible causes and reframing possible solutions. • Reaches logical conclusions by making quality, timely decisions based on available information. • Identifies and gives priority to significant issues. • Takes personal responsibility for problems before he/she looks at others. Provides no excuses. 	
Knowledge and Implementation of Key Policies and Regulations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures that the school complies and creates processes to meet all state/district/client/partner/board and Connections Academy rules, policies, tasks, and requirements. • Communicates all local, state, authorizer regulations/requirements to stakeholders in a timely manner. • Knows local, state, and federal regulations and contract provisions, and how they apply to the school. • Ensures all timelines are met and procedures followed correctly. • Creates, oversees and implements state testing plan effectively to get 95% participation. 	
Environment of Trust: Clear Communication, Relationship Building, and Expectations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates in an open, honest, and direct manner. Demonstrates effective listening skills. Communicates appropriately and effectively (speaking, listening, writing, presenting) for different audiences (Boards, Students, Parents, Staff, Corporate Office). • Follows through with actions and on all commitments. • Creates positive, professional and collaborative relationships with all stakeholders (Boards, Students, Parents, Staff, Corporate Office) • Works cooperatively/collaboratively with stakeholders to meet school goals. 	

Principal Performance Review Competencies

Community Relations

- Articulates organizational purpose and priorities to all stakeholders, the community and media (as needed).
- Demonstrates the ability to build consensus among stakeholders.
- Promotes a positive image of the school and online/blended learning in the state.
- Understands his or her role as being part of a variety of internal and external networks for change and improvement.

Standards for Teacher and Administrator Performance

To ensure the highest quality teaching, Advance will set as its goal that the majority of the teachers earn ratings of Effective or higher. The instructional staff will be observed on a regular basis and evaluated using a comprehensive, multi-layered evaluation system. The teacher evaluation system may include the following and will be aligned to Pennsylvania teacher evaluation systems:

- parent surveys, which may rate such things as the responsiveness, effectiveness, knowledge, and skills of their assigned teacher(s);
- Principal evaluations from observations of Learning Coach/student interaction, including LiveLesson sessions, and review of correspondence;
- peer reviews evaluating the degree of cooperation, support and sharing of knowledge;
- aggregate performance of enrolled students based on a value-added improvement model and documents by data from Connexus; and
- an annual performance plan created by each teacher incorporating strategies to achieve, measurable school goals.

The school administrator evaluation system will be geared towards evaluating the specific competencies that an effective administrator would display. This may include the following and will be aligned to Pennsylvania administrator evaluation systems:

- school development and leadership - school culture, creating a commonly owned vision and plan for success, high performing leadership team;
- team development and leadership - school team formation, staff performance management, staff satisfaction and retention;
- student achievement/data management - instructional leader, internal/external data to effectively drive student achievement; and
- personal development and professional skills - leadership development of self, judgment and problem solving, knowledge and implementation of key policies and regulations, and an environment of trust which includes clear communication, relationship building and expectations, community relations.

Meeting these competencies may be demonstrated through:

- parent surveys, rating the responsiveness, effectiveness, and instructional expertise of the school as a whole;
- aggregate performance of enrolled students based on a value-added improvement model as documented through data captured by Connexus; and
- an annual performance plan detailing his/her strategies to achieve measurable school goals.

Figure 17 provides an example of the types of competencies that may be reviewed during a teacher’s evaluation. Advance would incorporate any statutory changes to its internal Teacher Evaluation system if enacted by the General Assembly.

Figure 17. Teacher Performance Review Competencies

Teacher Performance Review Competencies
Ensure High Quality Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher creates a welcoming environment in their classroom that fosters personalized learning, respect, and communication among students, learning coaches and themselves. • Teacher knows CA curriculum and how it relates to state standards. Teacher assesses students’ learning progress, and develops and implements gap content lessons when standards are missing or lessons are not meeting the needs of students. • Teacher uses LL in targeted and appropriate ways to improve student engagement and performance, and to give direct instruction to students in targeted areas where the student has not shown proficiency. • Teacher encourages active learning, higher-order thinking skills, and interaction amongst students. Questions generate classroom discussion and engagement of students. • Teacher assigns or creates activities that are suitable for students. Lessons are connected to previous learning and relevant to students’ lives. Instructional goals are tied to standards and curriculum and needs of the students.
Personalize Students’ Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher displays understanding of student differences and applies this knowledge to instruction. Based on student performance and working with LCs and CA tools and resources, the teacher modifies lesson pacing, lesson content and organizational routines to differentiate instruction and meet diverse learning styles.
Monitor Student Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher implements the SSTAIR instructional model in their classroom by continuously monitoring students’ academic performance and by evaluating the effectiveness of instruction. • Teacher uses data (formative and summative assessment data) to monitor student performance and provide multi-tiered intervention to facilitate student learning. Interventions are adjusted based on student responses. • Teacher grades and returns quizzes and tests within two working days. Portfolio/essays are returned within five working days. Feedback is appropriate with goal of improving student performance.
Monitor Student Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher ensures students adequately participate (i.e. meet attendance requirements, complete lessons and assessments and communicate regularly) in our program. Teacher must be familiar with school’s escalation criteria, monitor their student’s escalation statuses on a regular basis and work with Learning Coaches to keep students “On Track.” • Teacher involves others (e.g., colleagues, SST, school administration, curriculum and instructional services) as appropriate when students are not responding to interventions and getting back “On Track” or are otherwise beyond the teacher’s ability to help be successful.
Communicate, Document, and Contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher provides ongoing contact with students and Learning Coaches to build rapport, verify, and assess students’ learning, and provide structured and tailored teaching and learning opportunities. (Interactions include WebMail messages, LL sessions, Message Board postings, face to face interaction, and phone conversations). These interactions are appropriate, accurate, and timely. • Teacher completes required phone calls to students and Learning Coaches (Welcome calls, PLP calls, Retention calls, CBAs, End of Year calls). These phone calls must be instructionally focused. • Teacher logs all contacts clearly and professionally, following CA Log Guides, and in a timely manner.
Collaborate and Develop Professionally
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher completes all required training and professional development sessions to ensure knowledge of the CA program and resources, Connexus, the courses and subjects to be taught, and school management goals. • Teacher reflects on teaching performance, and seeks out professional growth opportunities to improve his or her instruction with the goal of increasing student achievement. • Teacher collaborates with colleagues in professional learning communities to use data to drive instruction and increase student achievement. • Teacher models respect, responsibility, honesty, and integrity. • Teacher has excellent attendance record. Wherever possible, teacher proactively plans time off.

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

School Accountability to Parents

Frequent and purposeful communication with parents and Learning Coaches will help teachers monitor the student's progress, keep parents "in the loop" with current school happenings, and help the school grow and improve from parent feedback. Scheduled phone calls, LiveLesson sessions, WebMail messages, and face-to-face meetings will all be used to help conduct parent-teacher conferences. Connections will regularly provide templates for communication and distribute important information in collaboration with the Principal through school newsletters, the Connexus home page, and "Must Read" WebMail messages to ensure parents are informed. Teachers will document all communication with parents and/or students in the log section of Connexus, which allows for detailed tracking of interactions as well as seamless support for students and their families from multiple individuals.

Communication outside of Connexus for existing and prospective families and community members will also be important. Drawing on the combined experience of Connections' outreach and technology groups, Advance will maintain a public website that contains all relevant and required information to ensure that all stakeholders are kept informed. The website will include enrollment and school information but will also create opportunities for parent-to-parent communication through Contact-a-Parent. Advance will develop a student information and community education plan to inform potential students, their parents/guardians, and other interested parties about the education program.

On a daily basis, parents will have the opportunity to express their opinions about school matters large and small. Through the five-star StarTrack lesson rating system, they can rate and comment upon every lesson in the curriculum and their entire school experience. The Principal may also conduct informal surveys and call for feedback via WebMail.

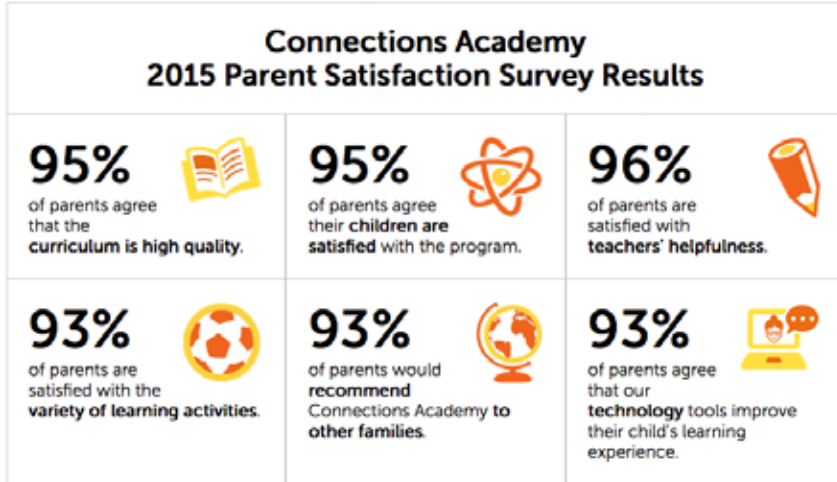
Survey Results

Parents will participate in a formal annual satisfaction survey to help identify what the school is doing well and how the school can improve. An independent evaluator will conduct an independent parental evaluation that measures such items as parent satisfaction with the curriculum, teachers, and other aspects of the program. The independent evaluation results will be used to ensure effective parent satisfaction with the program. Faculty and administration will use these results to undergo continuous school improvement and focus on areas where improvement is needed. Parent satisfaction is key to monitoring success of the program to maximize each student's potential.

An independent survey conducted in February 2015 of other schools supported by Connections, families reported the following (Figure 18):

- 95% of parents agree that the curriculum is high quality.
- 95% of parents agree that their children are satisfied with the program.
- 96% of parents are satisfied with their teachers' helpfulness.
- 93% of parents are satisfied with the variety of learning activities.
- 93% of parents would recommend Connections to other families.
- 93% of parents agree that Connections' technology tools improve their child's learning experience.

Figure 18. 2014 Parent Satisfaction Survey Results



Based on a survey of Connections Academy families conducted in January 2015 by Shapiro+Raj.

Monitoring a Student's Education

The powerful Grade Book, embedded in Connexus, will enable parents to track progress on a daily basis, and to see up-to-the-minute information on grades, assessments, and overall lesson completion.

Connexus will allow parents, counselors, teachers, Learning Coaches, and students to work together in a safe and supportive environment. Connexus will allow communication with teachers and other students and families via secure WebMail messages and message boards. LiveLesson sessions (with individual and small groups of students using voice-over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing) will allow teachers and students to interact with one another in real time in a "cyber classroom." Threaded discussions on course-based message boards will also be used as appropriate by grade level to provide opportunities for collaboration and interaction. Curriculum-based assessments (CBAs), via telephone conversation or LiveLesson session, allow a quick and effective way to gather information on students' understanding of concepts. Diagnostic curriculum-based assessments (DCBA) will pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in student mastery of concepts. Verification curriculum-based assessments (VCBA) will gauge authentic student learning of concepts previously graded as successfully completed with scores of B or higher. Teachers will access the Assessment Objective Performance (AOPR) reports which provides real-time student performance data on essential skills and standards based upon individual math, language arts, and science assessment items and display students' performance against the objectives allowing teachers to identify and react to individual student needs.

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

Reviewing Budgets and Financial Records

Advance will provide monthly reports to the Board and will have an annual audit conducted by an independent auditor. The audit will be conducted by an independent Certified Public Accountant selected by the Board in accordance with Governmental Auditing Standards and will meet the specific compliance requirements set forth by Pennsylvania and as required by the Annual Report filed August 1 of each year. The date of the annual independent audit will be determined by its by-laws and articles of incorporation's provision for end of fiscal year. The school will be insured as required as per the certificates of insurance included in Appendix E.

Advance intends to use an industry-standard accounting software to gain insight into the school's finances, improve decision-making process, speed up response time to financial situations, and create powerful self-service analysis with business intelligence tools. Advance will use the chart of accounts required by the PDE.

The school and the Board's Treasurer will work together to create monthly and annual financial reports.

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

Maintaining Records as Required Under FERPA

Advance recognizes the need to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in the education records of children. Advance will ensure the privacy rights of eligible children in the collection, maintenance, release, and destruction of records. Advance will follow the provisions of the Regulations of the State Board of Education on Pupil Records (PA Code 22, Ch.12), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the Confidentiality Section of IDEA, and the Confidentiality Section of Pennsylvania Special Education Regulations and Standards and other student data privacy laws.

Advance will use Connexus to collect, manage, and maintain student records. The enrollment process will be fully integrated with and supported through Connexus. Advance has contracted with Connections to use the enrollment service center for student placement support, as well as enrollment processing, set up, and support under the oversight of the Principal and in compliance with local, state, and federal law. Once the enrollment process is completed and students are placed into courses, the students will appear to the teacher online, and the teacher can begin tracking, verifying, and reporting attendance.

Advance will house and maintain its physical records at its site in Harrisburg. Advance will fully comply with the requirements of FERPA, a Federal law that gives parents/legal guardians and students certain rights regarding the student's education records. Included is the right to the protection of a student's education records and "personally identifiable information" from unauthorized disclosure.

In Connexus, access to student information and data will be controlled by a central team of administrators, trained in FERPA, using a complex system of roles, permissions, and locations. Only users in a particular location, who have permissions at that location, will be permitted to access student data that is permissioned using roles and locations. Data points and reports will be assigned to roles, including Advance vendors who use student data for accounting and billing purposes. Access to the reports and all student data will be controlled by these roles. Only users in a location with the correct roles will meet the requirements to access the data. All data accessed via Connexus will be accessed through forced SSL for privacy and security purposes. Private data transmitted between systems for data reporting purposes will always be transmitted with secure FTP or over a private VPN that provides encryption.

In addition to the FERPA requirements, IDEA provides additional privacy protections for students who receive special education and related services. Part B of IDEA incorporates and cross-references FERPA. Advance is aware of the cooperation between FERPA and IDEA and will adhere to the requirements of both. The school will also comply with the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 ("COPPA").

Under FERPA, an enrolling student will fall into one of the certain exceptions that will allow for Advance to receive student education records from a previous school without the prior written consent of parents. However, upon enrollment, administrative personnel will ask parents to provide written consent for the release of their student's education records by signing a Release of Records form, allowing the school to receive the information from the student's previous district. Advance will use the PDE Charter School Student

Enrollment Notification Form for notification of a student attending a charter school as required. Per FERPA, there are other exceptions to the release of student education records without the prior written consent of parents. Advance is aware of such exceptions and, outside of these, will require the written consent of parents for the release of their student's education records to a third party.

While FERPA is vast in its discussion of the review, amendment, and privacy rights related to education records, it does not speak to the retention and destruction of such records and does not include a records retention plan. Along with a strict adherence to FERPA, Advance will address compliance with a records management program that addresses the creation, maintenance, storage, and final destruction of records in accordance with Pennsylvania laws and regulations.

Requests to View Files

A parent/guardian has the right to review the files of their child. The parent may also request and receive the following:

- An explanation of information in the student's education records.
- A copy of all or part of the student's education record (the cost of which will not exceed the costs of duplication).
- A list of the types and location of the student's education record collected, maintained, or utilized by the LEA.

Student Access Rights

When a student is 18 years of age or attending a postsecondary education institution, the right accorded to and consent required of a student's parent/guardian by law will only be accorded to and required of the student. However, Advance recognizes that those students who remain enrolled at the school past the age of 18 are subject to Pennsylvania's educational age of majority of 21 years of age.

Parent Access Rights

A parent/guardian, eligible student, or designated representative will have access to the student's education records within 45 days of receipt of written request in order to inspect, review or copy education records. A parent/guardian also has the right to request and receive the following:

- An explanation of information in the student's education records.
- A copy of all or part of the student's education record. If copies are to be released to anyone other than the parent/guardian, the Consent to Release Information form must be completed by the parent/guardian.
- A list of the types and location of the student's education record collected, maintained, or utilized by the LEA.

Accessing Records

Advance will maintain a record indicating the names of those persons who have obtained access, the date of access, and the purpose of access. Administrators, teachers, instructional aides and the administrative assistant are authorized to have access to personally identifiable information.

The parent/guardian has the right to inspect the access record of their child's records.

Maintenance Records

The Manager of Special Education will be responsible for ensuring that the education records, confidentiality rules, and education records policy for eligible young children are enforced and administered. This official will:

- Annually notify parents/guardians and eligible students of this policy, its procedures, and their rights. The notification will be in their primary language unless it is not feasible to do so.
- Develop system of safeguards which will protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at the point of collection, storage, release and destruction.
- Be responsible for ensuring that all faculty and subcontracted agency employees, who collect or use personally identifiable information, receive in-service training regarding the implementation of this policy. In-servicing will consist of providing, at the least, yearly presentation of the information to staff and subcontractors.

Third Party Access to Student Information

FERPA provisions allow the school to disclose certain student information to third parties, such as other schools, without the prior written consent of the parent/legal guardian or eligible student. This occurs in two situations: directory information and situations in which FERPA permits the school to release educational records without consent. All other disclosure of student information to third parties requires the written consent of the caretaker or eligible student.

Release of Educational Records without Consent: Directory Information

The school may release Directory Information (defined as student name, student WebMail address, state of residence, student telephone number, and student grade level) to third parties as permitted by FERPA.

If the caretaker or eligible student does not wish to have Directory Information released to third parties, she/he may prevent the release of this information by indicating so in the FERPA Directory Information section of the Student Information Form. If families do not make a selection, then the school may, without additional permission, disclose the Directory Information to third parties as permitted by FERPA.

Release of Educational records without Consent: Legitimate Educational Interest

Advance may provide a student's educational records to third parties in certain situations listed under FERPA. Examples include the transfer of educational records to the student's new school upon request from the new school, and the provision of educational records to school officials who possess a 'legitimate educational interest' in the student's records, and the provision of educational records to contracted parties providing special education related services.

Release of Student Records with Consent

With the exception of that information which FERPA and/or applicable state law or court order allows the school to release without consent, as noted above, the school must obtain written consent from the caretaker or eligible student prior to releasing any educational record or personally identifiable information to any third party. Consent to release this information must be made in writing, be signed by the caretaker or eligible student, and include the following information:

- A specific description of the information or record(s) to be released.
- The party or agency to which the information will be released and their address.
- The signature of the requestor, and the date of the request.

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

Maintaining Accurate Student Enrollment and Withdrawal Information

Advance will be open to all eligible students statewide and will not discriminate in its admission policies or practices. Advance will actively work to ensure a statewide racial and ethnic balance in the school; however, in such a manner to ensure nondiscriminatory preference or practices. Partnerships and outreach efforts using a variety of community and youth organizations may aid in this process. Through extensive community outreach and full disclosure about the school's program, Advance will attract those students and families who are most committed to student success in a cyber school setting. As part of that process, Advance will be certain to provide parents with a very clear and accurate picture of the cyber learning experience so they can make the most appropriate choices for their students. This will be accomplished through virtual and in-person Information Sessions, Parent-to-Parent Events, and School events. Advance will strongly encourage families to attend an Information Session prior to enrollment, explaining the benefits and importance of attending a session.

Connexus ensures accurate collection and analysis of student information and demographic data. The data collected in this way will then be used to generate reports for the Board and the PDE. It may also be used to evaluate and modify the school's outreach and recruiting strategies when necessary. The Board and all school staff will focus on accountability and abide by student data privacy laws and regulations.

Enrollment Notification

Advance will follow Section 1748-A of the Charter School Law. Within 15 days of enrolling a student, Advance and the parent or guardian, will notify the student's school district of residence of the enrollment through the use of the notification form developed by the PDE.

If the student's school district receiving the notification determines that the student is not a resident of the school district:

- Within seven days, the school district will notify Advance and the PDE that the student is not a resident and provide the basis for the determination.
- Within seven days of receiving the school district notice of non-residency, Advance will provide a response to both the school district and the PDE.
 - If Advance agrees that the student is not a resident of the school district, it will determine the proper district of residence and notify the correct district of residence of the enrollment through use of the notification form developed by the PDE.
 - If Advance reconfirms that the student is a resident of the school district, it will indicate so in the response. The school district may then appeal to the PDE for a final decision.

Advance will also follow Section 1743-A(c)(d) of the Charter School Law. We will make available upon request, electronically via email, the following information to each student's school district of residence:

- A copy of the charter
- A copy of Advance's application
- A copy of all annual reports prepared by Advance
- A list of all students from that school district enrolled in Advance

Advance will, upon request and prior to the student's first day, provide electronically via WebMail, in Connexus, or via the school's website, the following information to the parent or guardian of a student:

- A list and brief description of the courses of instruction the student will receive. The list will be updated annually for each grade level in which the student is enrolled.
- A description of the lessons and activities offered online and offline.
- The manner in which attendance will be reported and work will be authenticated.
- A list of all standardized tests the student will be required to take during the school year and the place where the test will be administered, if available.
- The meetings to be held during the school year between a parent or guardian and a teacher as well as those among other school officials or parents or guardians and the manner in which the parent or guardian will be notified of the time and place for the meeting.
- The address of Advance and the name, telephone number and e-mail address of the Principal and other school personnel.
- A list of any extracurricular activities provided to the student.
- The names of the student's teachers, if available, and the manner in which each teacher can be contacted by the student or the parent or guardian.
- A list of all services that will be provided to the student.
- Copies of policies relating to computer security and privacy, truancy, absences, discipline, and withdrawal or expulsion of students.
- Information on:
 - Advance's professional staff, including the number of staff personnel and their education level and experience.
 - Advance's performance on the PSSA and other standardized test scores.
- Information regarding the proper usage of equipment and materials and the process for returning equipment and materials supplied to the students by Advance. A parent or guardian will acknowledge, either in writing or electronically, the receipt of this information.
- A description of the school calendar including, but not limited to, the time frame that will constitute a school year and a school week, holiday, and term breaks.

Enrollment Process

The Founding Board will contract with Connections to implement and conduct the enrollment process on behalf of Advance, in accordance with placement and withdrawal policies and procedures adopted by the Board and reviewed by Board Counsel, which are consistent with local, state, and federal law. The enrollment policies will be reviewed by Board Counsel and approved by the Board as part of the overall school handbook.

Connections' enrollment service center provides student enrollment and placement support in compliance with local, state and federal law, acting as Advance's agent throughout the enrollment process. The enrollment process is fully integrated with and supported through Connexus, which collects and stores student enrollment and withdrawal data and provides status information each step of the way.

- Each year, school personnel review, edit, and approve the enrollment and eligibility requirements via Connexus, in the *Enrollment Project: Review Process for Schools* web page. In this web page, school staff and the Principal review, edit, and approve “required” and “requested” information and documentation that can be accepted to satisfy Pennsylvania’s enrollment requirements.
- There is comprehensive training program for Connections staff in the enrollment service center that includes instructions for determining valid documentation for enrollment in Pennsylvania (Proof of Residency, Proof of age, Charter Notification Form and Immunization records) as well as requested documentation.

Families may commence the enrollment process online using Connexus or by calling a toll-free number for assistance. Connexus is available to students and their families, and to other authorized users according to their permissions, 24/7/365.

In the initial admission process, parents will complete a simple registration form online or via phone that collects their name, email address, address, phone number, student names, and requested grade levels. They will also confirm that they meet the basic eligibility requirements for Advance (e.g., state residency and legal school age, as noted on the school’s website and through a link on the enrollment page) and that they have read and understood the program’s regulatory requirements.

As per 24 P.S. §13-1301 – §13-1306: “Except when a child is homeless, whenever a child of school age is presented for enrollment by a parent(s), school district resident, or any other person having charge or care of the child, the school district or charter school shall provide that the following information be documented before enrolling the child and allowing the child to attend school”:

1. Proof of the child’s age (the following are typical acceptable documents for proof of age):
 - a. Copy of the official Birth Certificate
 - b. Passport
 - c. Prior School Record indicating Date of Birth
2. Immunizations as required by law
 - a. Per PA Public School Code & 22 PA. Code, Chapter 11: Acceptable documentation includes: either the child’s immunization record, a written statement from the former school district or from a medical office that the required immunizations have been administered, or that a required series is in progress, or verbal assurances from the former school district or a medical office that the required immunizations have been completed, with records to follow.
3. Proof of residency unless the student has obtained a waiver as defined by regulation (the following are typical acceptable documents for residency and students may need to provide one or more of the following forms as proof):
 - a. Current Utility Bill (Electric, Gas, Cable, Water or Sewage)
 - b. Current Property Deed
 - c. Current Mortgage Statement
 - d. Current Lease Agreement
 - e. Property Tax Statement
 - f. Vehicle Registration
 - g. Current Credit Card bill

- h. Driver's License or Department of Transportation ID Card
 - i. Per PA Public School Code & 22 PA. Code, Chapter 11: A district may require that more than one form of residency confirmation be provided. However, school districts and charter schools should be flexible in verifying residency, and should consider what information is reasonable in light of the family's situation.
- 4. Parent Registration Statement (Disciplinary History: Suspension and Expulsion information, Safe Schools Affidavit)
 - 5. Home Language Survey

Advance will require this information as a condition of enrollment, as well as the following actions:

- 1. Signing the Charter Notification Form, in order to comply with prompt district notification
- 2. Defining the relationship to the student
- 3. Agreeing to the terms of the Parent/Legal Guardian Caretaker Acknowledgement

Once this information is collected and the steps taken, the student will then be considered eligible for enrollment.

Once the student is eligible for enrollment, the family will follow these key steps to complete the process; failure to provide such information (except for the required information and documents per Pennsylvania statute), however, will not act as a barrier to enrollment:

- 1. **Stage 1:** The family completes key online forms:
 - a. Information about the Family
 - i. Basic Information: Home/Mailing Address, Phone Numbers, Email, Household PIN, and County/District of Residence
 - ii. Household Income Information
 - iii. General Household Information
 - iv. Materials and Technology Support
 - v. Technology & Internet Subsidy Information
 - vi. Emergency Contact Information
 - vii. Additional Information: Migratory and Referral Information and "How did you find out about us?"
 - b. Information about the Student
 - i. General Student Information: Name, Date of Birth, Location of Birth, Student's Mobile Phone Number, Federal Ethnicity and Race Information
Child Custody Information: Identification of Student's Parents/Guardians and Custody Determination
 - ii. Grade Placement Information
 - iii. General Academic Information: Academic History information, Placement Testing information, Academic Background information, Special Education information, Standardized State Assessment information,
 - iv. Previous Schooling Information
 - v. Home Language Survey
 - vi. Primary Learning Coach Info

- vii. Student Health Information: Student's Physician and Dentist information and Student's Health Insurance information
- viii. Permissions: FERPA Directory information and School Directory information

2. **Stage 2**

- a. The family provides additional documentation:
 - i. While not required for enrollment, it is helpful to receive academic documentation, including unofficial transcripts, reports cards, IEPs and 504 plans to ensure the optimal personalized education plan for the student. Assistance will be provided to the family throughout the enrollment process in obtaining and submitting academic documentation. Receipt of this documentation during the enrollment process ensures that the personalized course placement is accurate and appropriate for the student at the time of enrollment. This substance of any of the information gathered in this process will not act as a barrier to entry.
 - ii. To expedite the process, Advance recommends uploading these documents through the Connexus interface. However, parents may also submit documentation through email, fax or delivery on site to the school.
 - iii. Health and physical examinations
 - b. Connections' enrollment center works with families to obtain the correct information and will then verify the documents to ensure they meet state, local and federal requirements. Connections' Academic Placement Advisors, working in conjunction with school counselors, will place the student in his/her courses, so that the student is ready to start school, in accordance with Pennsylvania state law.
 - c. If prior school academic documentation is not available during enrollment, the student will be placed on the basis of information provided on the Student Information Form ("Information about the Student"). After enrollment, upon receipt of the student's official transcript, the student's courses will be reviewed and any necessary adjustments to the placement will be made at that time.
3. **Stage 3:** In this stage, parents will confirm their student's final placement, address for the shipping of materials and confirm the decision to attend Advance. Parents can complete this online or they may call the Connections enrollment center.
4. **Stage 4:** After parents confirm their decision, and once the process is completed, students are placed into their approved courses. At this time, the students are ready to begin their courses when school starts.

Withdrawal Process

Students may withdraw from Advance at any time in accordance with the state statute. Prior to withdrawing, the school will encourage the Learning Coach and/or student to discuss with the school staff the reason(s) for withdrawing as it may be possible to address issues so the student does not need to withdraw. Advance will request that the Learning Coach provide evidence of homeschool registration consistent with state requirements or the name and location of another public or private school that the student will attend. This data will be recorded and reviewed by the Principal, so school leadership can continually reflect on the school's ability to serve its families and students.

Advance will pursue truancy violations in situations where the student cannot be confirmed as attending as documented by their work product. Advance will follow the compulsory attendance policy.

If a student becomes ineligible or leaves the charter school, Connexus will be updated and Advance will ensure all appropriate paperwork is submitted and/or forwarded to the new school. As per Section 1748-A of Charter School Law, Advance, and the parent or guardian, will provide written notification to the school district of residence within 15 days following the withdrawal of a student.

G. *Describe plans to evaluate student performance.*

Evaluating Student Performance

The following describes the specific assessments Advance will use to evaluate the progress of students.

- **Assessment Objective Performance Reports (AOPR):** This report provides real-time student performance data on essential skills and standards based upon individual math, language arts, and science assessment items. The report identifies the objectives students should master by the end of that grade level based upon the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and display students' performance against the objectives. Data can be sorted to identify students who have or have not mastered specific objectives.
- **Placement:** During enrollment in the program, each new student will take part in a placement process that includes review of previous school records and assessment results, review with parents, and use of placement tests as needed. Academic Placement Advisors from Connections and Counselors at Advance will then determine a grade-level and/or course placement in consultation with parents/guardians.
- **Formative Assessments:** The Longitudinal Evaluation of Academic Progress (LEAP) (a pre-, mid-, and post-test used for students in grades 2-8 for reading and students in grades K-8 for math) provides essential diagnostic information for developing the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) and planning instruction. It provides an early predictor of performance on mandated tests and reports key accountability data on progress throughout the academic year. DIBELS is used for students in grades K-1 for reading. Advance may use the Scantron Performance Series assessment for students in grades 9-12 for pre-, mid-, and post-testing.
- **Ongoing Informal Assessments:** Students will engage in several formative in-course assessments that tap into all levels of student learning such as scored daily assignments, daily checks for understanding which require students to apply and integrate new skills in a thoughtful manner, and regular online quizzes and tests to measure understanding of newly presented material.
- **Unit Assessments and Offline and Online Portfolio Assignments:** Throughout each logical unit of study, students will be required to complete a series of offline and online assessments. Offline assessments will include written compositions, science lab reports, short-answer questions and essays, book responses, and a variety of work samples. These assessments will require direct teacher evaluation. Online assessments will include quizzes and a unit test. While the quizzes are brief and frequent, the more comprehensive unit tests occur at the end of an entire unit. Online assessments will provide students and families with immediate objective feedback, while offline assessments provide valuable reflection, feedback, and expertise from certified teachers. Student progress reports and grades will include a combination of quizzes, tests, work samples, and teacher feedback.

- **Curriculum-Based Assessments:** Advance will use curriculum-based assessments (CBAs) as a quick and effective way to gather additional information on students' understanding of concepts, through telephone conversation. Diagnostic curriculum-based assessments (DCBA) pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in student mastery of concepts. Verification curriculum-based assessments (VCBA) authenticate student learning of concepts previously graded as completed with scores of B or higher.
- **Baseline Achievement Data:** Whenever possible, standardized test results will be integrated into an incoming student's basic information in Connexus. Likewise, results for standardized tests that students take while enrolled at Advance, which are proctored face-to-face at a physical location, will be included in Connexus, along with internal pre-, mid-, and post-test data. This data will be used to monitor student progress from year-to-year and within the year and to inform course placement and instructional needs of students.

Scheduled phone calls, LiveLesson sessions, and face-to-face meetings will all be used to help teachers gauge the student's mastery of concepts and to determine appropriate instructional recommendations. The student's teacher will conduct follow-up conversations by parent-teacher/teacher-student conferences using WebMail messages, LiveLesson sessions, feedback when grading, Message Board postings, phone conversations, and/or face-to-face interactions.

State Accountability Measures

Advance students will be required to meet the same testing and academic performance standards established by law and regulations applicable to all public school students.

Advance will adhere to the same accountability measures, administer the same state assessments, and follow the same proficiency measures as all public charter schools in Pennsylvania, in addition to using its own internal assessment tools.

Advance will administer the PSSAs and Keystone Exams³⁶ and all assessments as required by the Pennsylvania state assessment system. In keeping with the school's mission and overall educational priorities, Advance will utilize ongoing online and offline assessments to measure student progress and a technology-based assessment tool to measure and monitor student gains over the school year.

Advance will be dedicated to meeting and exceeding all of Pennsylvania's goals and grade level requirements. Advance understands its obligation to participate in the required system of assessment and accountability for Pennsylvania, and is fully committed to complying with applicable assessment requirements, consistent with law and relevant policies. At in-person, proctored locations, students will participate in proficiency tests such as the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), Keystone Exams, and the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). Results of these assessments will be reported through the PDE as well as communicated directly to parents. The school leadership will also include the results of the state mandated testing in the evaluation of the school's overall performance and in its reports to the Board and the PDE.

Advance will participate in the School Performance Profile (SPP) which reports performance for all schools in Pennsylvania using multiple indicators of academic growth and achievement, including the four specific Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs)³⁷ included in the waiver and educator effectiveness.

³⁶ <http://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/Pages/default.aspx#.VcDVJvn-mFs>

³⁷ <http://www.education.pa.gov/K-12/Assessment%20and%20Accountability/Pages/PAS.aspx#.VcDW-Pn-kgU>

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

Measuring Overall Learning Goals and Objectives

Figure 19 provides a plan that identifies the measures that may be used to indicate that students are making academic progress, the grade levels at which the assessments will be used, and frequency of assessing. This includes assessments through Connections curriculum and current state mandated assessments.

Figure 19. Assessment Plan

Grade Level	Measures Used to Indicate Progress	Frequency of Assessing
K-1 for Reading	DIBELS Next	Fall, Winter, Spring
2-8 for Reading K-8 for Math	LEAP	Fall, Winter, Spring
9+	Scantron Performance Series (SPS)	Fall, Winter, Spring
3-8	PSSA	Spring
9-12	Keystone Exams	Spring

Detailed descriptions of DIBELS, LEAP and SPS were previously provided in this application.

Whenever possible, state standardized test results will be integrated into an incoming student’s basic information in Connexus. Likewise, results for state standardized tests that students take while enrolled at Advance, which are proctored face-to-face at a physical location, will be included in Connexus, along with internal pre-, mid-, and post-test data. This data will be used to track student progress from year to year and within the year, and to inform the course placement and instructional needs of students.

Information from these assessments will be provided to teachers during the school year as an indicator of the possible risk of a student who may be struggling academically.

- In the case of DIBELS Next, student scores that are Below or Well Below Benchmark will be flagged for teachers as indicating a student may be at-risk.
- In the case of LEAP and SPS, Connections conducted an analysis on the relationship between fall and winter assessment scores on these assessments and state test proficiency across multiple states. They identified particular score values which are associated with an elevated likelihood of the student failing a state assessment in the spring. For the LEAP assessment, scores below a 70% correct will be highlighted for teachers as indicating a student may be at-risk. For SPS, scores that fall within the two lower interquartile ranges of normative scores within the fall and winter will be highlighted for teachers as indicating a student may be at-risk. These values will be highlighted separately for teachers for math and reading.

As state assessment scores become available, students who have a score on that assessment from the prior year that does not meet established state standards for their grade level and tested subject will also be highlighted to teachers as indicating a student may be at-risk.

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

Student Evaluation

Formative assessments provide educators with critical information about student progress and can be used to adjust the teacher’s approach and the pace of instruction throughout the year. Formative assessments are often used as tools for uncovering opportunities for instructional intervention because they give teachers information about where additional practice and support may be needed. Research has shown that timely and

specific feedback from formative assessments can enable teachers to make a significant impact on student learning. In *Formative Assessment in Seven Good Moves* posted to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) website, Brent Duckor stated, "The research is clear: What teachers do in their classrooms matters. But which practices really make a difference? John Hattie (2012) conducted an extensive meta-analysis, looking at 800 meta-analyses that focused on locating a specific student achievement outcome and identifying an influence on that outcome. Formative assessment topped his list of the most influential practices that improve student outcomes."³⁸

Various assessments combined with top quality curriculum and instruction improves student achievement and maintains a high level of accountability. Advance's assessment efforts begin with a thorough placement process and progress review, including online placements tests when needed, which help to customize the student's academic program and formulate the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). Advance will also utilize ongoing online and offline assessments to measure student progress on the curriculum, and a technology-based assessment tool to measure student gains over the school year.

1.5 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.*

Relationship with the Community

Students will have the opportunity to participate in regular field trips and outings facilitated by school staff and Community Coordinators – parent volunteers whom Advance supports in organizing such activities for families who live nearby. As mentioned previously, field trips may include visits to:

- Everhart Museum – Natural History, Science & Art – Scranton
- Loyola Science Center – Scranton
- Great Valley Nature Center - Devault
- Valley Forge National Park – Valley Forge
- Academy of Natural Sciences – Philadelphia
- State Museum of Pennsylvania – Harrisburg
- Quiet Valley Living History Farm – Stroudsburg
- Longwood Gardens – Kennett Square
- Explore & More – Gettysburg
- Carnegie Science Center – Pittsburgh
- National Aviary – Pittsburgh

³⁸ Dukor, Brent. "Formative Assessment in Seven Good Moves". Educational Leadership, Mar 2014. Available (paywall) at: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar14/vol71/num06/Formative-Assessment-in-Seven-Good-Moves.aspx>

As part of the planning process for the school, the following community organizations were contacted:

- Dickinson College of Education³⁹
- Penn State Harrisburg's Capital Area Institute for Mathematics and Science (CAIMS+)⁴⁰
- One Bright Ray⁴¹
- Philadelphia School for the Deaf⁴²
- Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools⁴³
- Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce⁴⁴
- Bartram Gardens⁴⁵
- Harrisburg University of Science and Technology⁴⁶

Information was provided to educate and inform these groups about this unique school model and look for opportunities to work together during the 2016-2017 school year. In addition to program guides, website and contact information were provided. The Board plans on continuing these discussions, after the school has been approved, to identify specific activities in which the school may participate.

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

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is significant to the cyber learning model. There are many benefits to parent involvement in education. Parent participation in a child's education can lead to improved grades and test scores, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in post-secondary education.

Parents are crucial to the planning process of the school, as well as its operation. Interested parents have already played an important role in encouraging the formation of the school and will remain involved leading to the school's opening. Parental feedback is also an important hallmark of the school's outreach and information sessions in the community. The school will take full advantage of this valuable communication with families to ensure that the school reflects their unique needs and creative ideas. Figure 20 lists the information sessions held to inform and engage parents and the community in the school. The Board hosted 22 information sessions prior to submitting the cyber charter school application.

Figure 20. Calendar of Parent and Community Information Sessions

Calendar of Parent and Community Information Sessions		
Date	Time	Location
9/8/15	9:00 AM	Cyber Session
9/9/15	11:00 AM	Starbucks, 10000 Roosevelt Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19116
9/9/15	12:00 PM	Dunkin' Donuts, 2820 Paxton St., Harrisburg, PA 17111
9/9/15	1:00 PM	Cyber Session
9/9/15	6:00 PM	Dunkin' Donuts, Whitman Plaza, 330 W. Oregon Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19148
9/10/15	11:00 AM	Hava Java, 526 N 19th St., Allentown, PA 18104

³⁹ http://www.dickinson.edu/homepage/34/educational_studies

⁴⁰ <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/capital-area-institute-for-mathematics-and-science>

⁴¹ <http://onebrightraycommunity.org/>

⁴² <http://www.psd.org/>

⁴³ <http://pacharters.org/>

⁴⁴ <http://www.pachamber.org/>

⁴⁵ <https://bartramsgarden.org/what-to-do/>

⁴⁶ <http://harrisburgu.edu/>

Calendar of Parent and Community Information Sessions		
Date	Time	Location
9/10/15	12:00 PM	Starbucks, 1950 Fruitville Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601
9/10/15	6:00 PM	Dunkin' Donuts, 92 Bridge St., Lehighton, PA 18235
9/10/15	6:30 PM	Cyber Session
9/11/10	10:00 AM	Cyber Session
9/11/15	11:00 AM	Alabaster Coffee Roaster & Tea Company, 400 Pine St., Williamsport, PA 17701
9/11/15	6:00 PM	Northern Light Espresso Bar and Café, 536 Spruce St., Scranton, PA 18503
9/14/15	11:00 AM	Crazy Mocha, 2 E. North Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15212
9/14/15	6:00 PM	Starbucks, Miracle Mile Shopping Center, 4100 William Penn Hwy., Monroeville, PA 15146
9/14/15	6:30 PM	Cyber Session
9/15/15	11:00 AM	Coffee Culture Café & Eatery, 5761 Peach Street, Erie, PA 16509
9/15/15	12:00 PM	Cyber Session
9/15/15	6:00 PM	Tim Hortons, 209 E 12th St., Erie, PA 16503
9/16/15	9:00 AM	Cyber Session
9/17/15	12:00 PM	Starbucks, 1722 South Queen St., York, PA 17403
9/17/15	6:30 PM	Cyber Session
9/18/15	10:00 AM	Cyber Session

Emails with information regarding the events were sent to parents and community members who expressed an interest in the school and cyber learning.

Parents or other parent-designated caring adults will serve as Learning Coaches and play an active role in the learning process, providing input, and communicating regularly with teachers. Advance will promote the significant role of parents by providing training for parents and multiple avenues for communication.

Learning Coaches will complete an online training designed to familiarize them with the important role they play in supporting their student as a learner. As part of Connections Get Started! and Get Coaching! programs, the Learning Coach Instructional Support Team offers supports for Learning Coaches including:

- **Learning Coach Central** – A page accessed from the Learning Coach Home Page in Connexus that includes links to FAQs, social networking opportunities, and resources to assist Learning Coaches in their role and providing instructional support to their student.
- **Learning Coach Link** – An online monthly communication sent to Learning Coaches with articles on instructional best practices, Connexus updates, tips and strategies for motivating reluctant learners, and information about upcoming Learning Coach Resource sessions.
- **National Learning Coach Resource sessions** – These cyber sessions are designed to assist Learning Coaches with an understanding of their role and responsibilities, and provide strategies for working with and supporting their student. Sample session topics include: Effective Questioning Techniques to Assess Learning, Improving Student Writing Skills, Providing Valuable Feedback, Nurturing Student Motivation and Engagement, and Unlocking Math in a Virtual World.
- **Parent-to-Parent Orientation** – Before the start of each school year, national Parent-to-Parent Orientations led by currently-enrolled parents help families prepare for their first days of school. In addition to open Q&A sessions each week, four different topics are addressed: Virtual School Basics, Understanding Roles and Routines, Getting Acquainted with Connexus, and Tips and Tricks for Success.

Parents may participate in Advance in many ways, including:

- **Parents Involved in Planning the School:** Parents of prospective students were offered multiple ways to provide input on the planning of the school prior to this application being submitted. Parents were invited to attend multiple Information Sessions and to communicate to the Board feedback on the schools emphasis on STEM. They were asked for ways the school can identify opportunities for practical application of STEM near their homes.
- **Parent representation on the Board:** The draft bylaws provide for a minimum of one position to be held by a community leader, an educator, and a parent. The parent position could be a parent or guardian of a student currently enrolled, formerly enrolled, or intending to enroll. These parent members benefit from intensive Board training geared toward making them optimally effective representatives of parent interests. Parent Board members will be encouraged to seek officer positions and may be appointed to provide close review/feedback on key documents such as the School Handbook, Parent/Learning Coach Agreements, and other materials for parents before full Board action.
- **Ad hoc Board Committees:** Parents may serve on ad hoc groups convened by the Board to focus on particular issues such as community partnerships or neighborhood outreach.
- **Public Comment:** Parents may make public comments at public board meetings.
- **Community Coordinators:** The volunteer parent Community Coordinators play a critical role in the school by developing a vibrant and active school community to serve the needs of families distributed across a wide geographic region. In addition to facilitating family get-togethers and formal field trips, the Community Coordinators provide an important communication link between families and the school, ensuring through phone conferences and news updates that school staff are attuned to parent community needs and vice versa. Community Coordinators and staff will reach out to community-based organizations and businesses to coordinate face-to-face community service and field trip opportunities for students.
- **Parent Club:** Parents can also join an exciting club that brings together parents of prospective students who reach out to their local communities to spread the word about Advance and provide support and encouragement to parents.
- **StarTrack and Course Ratings:** As mentioned previously, parent input will be gathered on an ongoing basis via StarTrack ratings for lessons. On every lesson in the curriculum, and on the home page for each Learning Coach, is a StarTrack rating box inviting ratings on a five-star scale and an opportunity to provide text feedback.

Parents are key components of supporting the mission of Advance. Through formal and informal channels from field trips to surveys, parents have an avenue to provide feedback and input. This ensures that the school will be on a cycle of continuous school improvement and that all stakeholders are valued. The school will draw upon the deep and diverse community connections represented on the Board, whose members represent business and education entities across the state and beyond, to ensure that students have multiple opportunities to benefit.

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

Parent Complaint Process

Advance will be committed to ensuring parent satisfaction and will take its responsibilities for the provision of educational services to students very seriously. These school responsibilities will be set out in the Parent/Legal Guardian Agreement (PLCA) and the School Handbook and include such things as:

- Contacting the family regularly
- Delivering educational materials and equipment
- Providing accessible support

The school will also ensure the family and student adhere to their responsibilities as stated in the PLCA and the school handbook, and when necessary, will discipline a student for violation of a school policy.

If a parent has concerns, he/she may institute the following proposed grievance process or one that affords appropriate levels of due process to be adopted by the Board once the charter is approved.

- A parent with the grievance must report the dissatisfaction and submit it in writing to the student's teacher (or other appropriate staff member, as necessary). All parties involved must be appropriately defined, and the problem must be clearly outlined.
- The recipient of the grievance (generally the teacher) must review the issue with his or her supervisor (generally the Principal) and respond to the parent within a reasonable time period.
- If the original recipient did not resolve the grievance, the parent should request a meeting with the recipient's supervisor. The supervisor should investigate the matter and schedule a meeting with the parent, the student (if necessary), and any other staff member (if necessary) within a reasonable time period.
- If either party does not resolve this grievance, the parent should then request a meeting with the school administration. School administration will investigate the matter and schedule a meeting within a reasonable time period.
- If a resolution was not reached at the three meetings, the parent may request a meeting with the Board, who will investigate the matter, and arrange a meeting within a reasonable time period. Current contact information for Board members will be listed on the school webpage.

1.6 EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (ATHLETICS, PUBLICATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS)

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

A. Describe the program of extracurricular activities planned for the charter school.
Note: Charter schools shall be permitted, if otherwise qualified, to be members of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Clubs and Special Events

As an integral part of the academic program, students will also be offered access to over 25 clubs and special events (e.g., virtual talent shows, virtual art galleries, cards for hospitalized children) through which they can explore interests beyond the classroom, develop leadership skills, and make friends within their program and with students from other schools supported by Connections. An online yearbook allows each student to create a personal page including photos, videos, responses to poll questions, and autographs collected from friends.

The students participate in clubs and events similar to a brick-and-mortar charter school such as First in Math, Day of Code, a student-managed school newspaper, a Stellar Speller spelling bee, and the Appetite for Geography which combines geography with world cuisine. Many clubs have a STEM-focus including:

- Brainteasers Club
- Digital Storytelling Club
- Environmental Club
- Gaming and Computer Technology
- Quiz Bowl
- Math Club I
- Math Club II
- Robotics Club
- Science Club
- Science in the Kitchen

Some of the clubs and activities include, but are not limited to:

- **Art Club** is designed to spark a student's creativity by exploring two-dimensional and three-dimensional art, photography, and graphic design through techniques and styles associated with each medium. Students have the opportunity to create original designs and artwork, share their artwork with peers, learn about appropriate critique guidelines, and provide feedback to other club members. (Grades: 6–12)
- **Arts and Crafts** encourages students to create crafts using materials found at home and in nature. Through the topics of culture, science, and math, students work on projects such as a cotton ball lambs, piggy bottle banks, and handprint spiders. (Grades: K–8)
- **Book Club** participants read selected books and share their observations with each other. Students read diverse books, discuss characters and share favorite books during LiveLesson sessions. (Grades: K–12)
- **Brainteasers Club** members solve puzzles, including anagrams, crosswords, and word searches, and other problems – such as crack the code, logic puzzles, and math codes – delivered to them through a weekly newsletter. Students are also encouraged to create their own brainteasers and share them on Message Boards and in student-made publications. (Grades: K–12)
- **Broadcast and Theater Arts Club** students learn about choreography, set design, and tech crew, for on- and off-Broadway productions. Working both individually and collaboratively, students are encouraged to write their own plays and musical scores. Students also learn about the history and trends in broadcast media, exploring the print, audio, and video mediums. LiveLesson session sessions provide opportunities for students to share their theatrical talents as well as segments similar to those on television news magazines. (Grades: 6–12)
- **Career Club** encourages middle and high school students to learn about potential careers and explore fields that interest them. Members identify and develop skills that will help them be successful in middle school, high school, college and professionally. The club enables middle school students to enter high school with more direction in mind, making them more likely to embrace and succeed in a high school program that prepares them for pursuing their career interests. It will allow high school students to better focus on their goals after high school, including applying to appropriate colleges or applying for jobs which align with their interests and goals. (Grades: 6–12)
- **Chess Clubs: Introduction and Advanced** members learn, socialize, and play in an atmosphere of friendly competition using an exclusive gaming site. After completing a tutorial, students are matched with competitors of the same skill level, and the online games begin. There are also monthly presentations by a Grandmaster from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and an end-of-year tournament. (Grades: K–12)

- **College Planning Club** is designed for students who are considering college. Members are guided through the college preparation and admissions process including: college planning, building and producing a resume, identifying career interests and potential majors, researching colleges, completing applications, and identifying financial aid and scholarship opportunities. Members develop a portfolio that focuses on elements sought by college admissions committees. (Grades: 9–12)
- **Debate Club** members learn internationally-recognized debate procedures and put them into practice during weekly LiveLesson sessions. Members learn the art of public speaking and critical thinking while working in collaborative teams. Research, reasoning, and understanding opposing perspectives form the foundation for weekly moderated debates. (Grades: 6–12)
- **Digital Storytelling Club** provides students the opportunity to use a variety of computer programs to incorporate pictures and audio to tell their original tales. They share their stories through LiveLesson sessions to get feedback from their peers and in the Virtual Library for the community to enjoy. (Grades K–12)
- **Environmental Club** members exchange ideas about ways to keep the planet clean and discuss global issues such as alternative energy, trash collection and recycling, and allocating limited resources. Activities show students how they can influence these issues on a local level. Members also hear from experts and professionals who work on environmental issues. (Grades: K–12)
- **First-Generation Club** is for students in grades 9-12 who aspire to be the first in their families to graduate from college. This club provides mentoring, advice, and personal development activities to help members understand, plan, and prepare for the college application and admissions process. LiveLesson sessions and Message Boards support and encourage discussion. Members develop a portfolio that includes elements sought by college admissions committees. (Grades: 9–12)
- **Gaming and Computer Technology** allows students who have an affinity for technology and gaming to explore and discuss gaming styles and genres, careers in the gaming and technology industry, and share their original work in LiveLesson sessions. Individual and collaborative projects may include creating elements of video games and investigating Internet safety and cyber threats. (Grades: 6–12)
- **Leadership and Global Awareness Club** challenges students who are natural leaders in their communities to take on a leadership role at the state, national, and international levels. Students meet regularly to discuss, plan, and share service learning projects and outcomes. Additionally, students learn about various global cultures historically and currently in an effort to better prepare themselves for careers and lives in our global economy. (Grades: 6–12)
- **Math Club I:** First in Math® members take part in a math competition by playing interactive games on the First in Math® website. The online play reinforces a wide range of skills, from simple addition to solving for x- and y-variables. Students work at their own pace, and earn points as they master various concepts and practice test-prep exercises geared to appropriate grade levels. (Grades: K–8)
- **Math Club II:** Math Olympiads welcomes students in grades 4-8 to compete in the international Mathematical Olympiads. These gifted and talented math students meet twice a month: first to review high-level problem-solving strategies and techniques, and next to apply their skills in the official completion and accrue points that will determine annual winners. (Grades: 4–8)
- **The Monitor: Student Newspaper** is Connections' student-managed, student-staffed newspaper. The writers and editors work together to write and organize content for sections of the newspaper including news, entertainment, sports, and school happenings. (Grades: 6–12)

- **Movie Club** members learn about film genres, acting, special effects, and musical compositions around monthly themes. Student film buffs gain opportunities to demonstrate their creativity and collaborate with others to create their own movies as part of a virtual showcase. (Grades: K–12)
- **Music Club** is for students who enjoy performing, composing, or listening to music. Members explore various musical genres, lyrics, and instructions and have opportunities to collaborate and exercise their creativity by designing their own musical instruments or participating in a virtual showcase and talent show. (Grades: K–12)
- **Pen Pals** is a classic way to build friendships. Students develop their skills in letter writing, written expression, and penmanship while making friends with other students across the country. (Grades: K–12)
- **Pens and Lens:** Student Literary Magazine is the monthly web-based magazine which recognizes and publishes original student work. This recognition encourages and inspires others to pursue both writing and photography. (Grades: K–12)
- **Poetry Corner** allows middle and high school writers to work together in exploring the language of poetry. Weekly forums are held to share and critique work. (Grades: 6–12)
- **Quiz Bowl** members compete in weekly academic competitions, applying their knowledge of fun facts and trivia. Students with correct answers are randomly selected and recognized in the weekly newsletter and overall winners are named at the end of the school year. (Grades: K–12)
- **Robotics Club** members learn how robots are used in popular culture, scientific studies, and commercial enterprises. Students work together through LiveLesson sessions to program a robot to navigate an obstacle course. Their creativity is encouraged as they plan, design, and submit drawings of their ultimate robots. No previous computer coding experience is required, and no materials are required for participation. (Grades: K–12)
- **Science Club** students work with the scientific method by planning experiments and observing the world. They experiment at home and share the processes and results with their peers. They also predict outcomes and alter variables of experiments conducted in LiveLesson sessions. (Grades: 6–12)
- **Science in the Kitchen** is for elementary and middle school students who want to apply their research skills and scientific knowledge by conducting experiments using household items. Students' kitchens double as laboratories for conducting safe, simple experiments. Club members then discuss their results online with fellow students. (Grades: K–8)
- **Sports Club** students who enjoy athletics explore a variety of sporting activities. Members discuss the similarities and differences of seasonal sports and have the opportunity to learn about training techniques and fitness programs. Students also use Activity Tracker to document personal fitness habits and routines. (Grades: K–12)

In addition to clubs and activities, Advance will produce monthly newsletters that celebrate student and school successes, showcase student work, provide tips from teachers, and highlight upcoming events. Advance will apply for a chapter of the National Honor Society. Of schools supported by Connections nationwide, 19 are members of the National Honor Society and 15 are members of the National Junior Honor Society.

Talent Networks

Students who have demonstrated outstanding talent in the performing arts, competitive sports, or science, technology, engineering, and math will have the opportunity to flourish in the Connections Academy Talent Networks devoted to fostering focused growth. The Connections Academy Talent Networks will give students the opportunity to network with other students in their fields of interest.

Students attending schools supported by Connections will have the opportunity to participate in three different talent networks with a focus on sports, the visual and performing arts, and science, technology, engineering, and math. These talent networks are virtually facilitated programs designed for students enrolled in grades 6-12 who are actively involved in competitive sports, the visual and performing arts, or advanced STEM coursework (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). These programs provide students the opportunity to network with other students in their fields of interest, meet engaging guest speakers, and take part in projects and competitions to help students excel in their areas of interest.

The Connections Academy Talent Networks are facilitated at a national level and include:

- Exploring college and career options;
- Specialized instruction through student-focused groups and activities;
- Networking and collaboration opportunities between like-minded students;
- Enrichment activities, including presentations by artists, athletes, professionals in the field, and subject matter experts; and
- Lettering opportunities.

STEM Talent Network

As described previously, students who demonstrate talent in science, technology, engineering, and/or math can apply to participate in the Science and Technology Talent Network. Components of the Science and Technology Talent Network include project based learning activities, collaborative projects, competitions, and networking opportunities devoted to fostering growth in the STEM disciplines. Membership is an ideal way for students to cultivate their burgeoning talents, enrich their academic lives, and enjoy opportunities to interact with other like-minded students and professionals, including faculty from higher education institutions such as Harrisburg University of Science and Technology.

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.

Agreements with Local School Districts

If a student would like to participate in the extracurricular activities offered by his/her district of residence, the district must provide the student an opportunity to participate. This means that if the district holds tryouts for the team, it must allow cyber charter school students the same opportunity to try out for the team. If approved, the Board will create relationships in the form of Memoranda of Understanding with local school districts to ensure adherence to Section 1719-A (14), which states:

“Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, no school district of residence shall prohibit a student of a charter school from participating in any extracurricular activity of that school district of residence: Provided, that the student is able to fulfill all of the requirements of participation in such activity and the charter school does not provide the same extracurricular activity.”

The Board has budgeted to provide some financial support to students who wish to participate in activities beyond what Advance offers to currently enrolled students including activities such as, but not limited to, sports, theater, music, or clubs not currently offered to students. The Board will set a budget for these funds each year. The students must be in good standing from a participation perspective to qualify and must apply to have their activity approved in advance. The Principal and/or designee will review each application and determine the amount to contribute to the student's activity in accordance with any Board-adopted policy or guidance. The Principal will report annually to the Board on how the money was spent (for example: how many students participated, what types of activities did they participate in, feedback from students, and actual amount spent).

Advance will endeavor to also work with local school districts to promote the district's extracurricular activities to Advance's students. Advance will pay the reasonable incremental costs incurred by these districts if students do participate in order to encourage expansion of the students' community.

I.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.*

Using Technology to Provide Curriculum and Instruction

Advance will use Connections' proprietary Educational Management System (EMS), Connexus, as the foundation for our cyber school. Connexus is a combination of a learning management system, student information system, and communication tool that enhances all aspects of a cyber school from enrollment, curriculum, human resources, teaching/learning, and evaluation. Connexus creates a rich, vibrant cyber classroom experience that allows parents, teachers, and students to work together in a supportive environment. The comprehensive, reliable, and user-friendly system is designed to guide students through a rigorous curriculum in a way that also meets their individual learning needs. Students and parents will be able to access Connexus 24 hours per day from any Internet connection.

Connexus integrates key functions and services that are critical to maximizing the academic experience and performance of enrolled students for both the education program and school operations. Advance will have personalized access to Connexus through the creation of a branded registration page, login page, and Connexus menu bar. Connexus allows teachers, students and parents to:

- View daily, weekly, and monthly schedules at a glance;
- Access all lessons and course assignments;
- Monitor progress through an up-to-the-minute Grade Book;
- Receive alerts and communicate through secure WebMail messages ;
- Communicate with teachers and other students and families via message boards; and
- Provide ratings and written feedback about specific lessons and overall learning experiences.

Connexus allows parents, counselors, teachers, Learning Coaches, and students to work together in a safe and supportive environment.

LiveLesson sessions will allow teachers and students to interact with one another synchronously in a cyber classroom. Teachers will use the LiveLesson tool regularly to convene groups of students together to focus on particular learning topics, and may also use LiveLesson for independent student work groups to collaborate on

activities, via chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing. In addition, teachers will collaborate synchronously with students and Learning Coaches through phone calls to discuss the PLP and conduct Curriculum Based Assessments (CBAs).

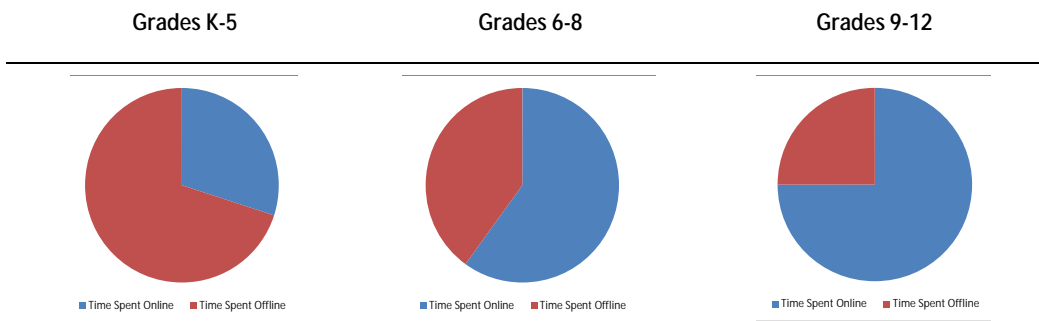
Threaded discussions on course-based message boards are also used as appropriate by grade level to provide opportunities for collaboration and interaction among students. In addition, courses will incorporate graded asynchronous online discussions which are required for all students. This tool creates important opportunities for collaboration and interaction among students, increases writing skills, and provides opportunities for a “real-world” audience.

Along with the use of LiveLesson sessions, Teachlet tutorials will dramatically increase the effectiveness of the instructional model. Teachlet tutorials are highly interactive asynchronous tutorials that are incorporated into most lessons and provide students a dynamic, fun and engaging way to learn the concepts they need to complete the lesson. They incorporate graphics, video, and audio to show students the concepts and ideas they will need to complete the lessons.

For the past two years, Teachlet tutorials and other multimedia presentations have been created in HTML5. As current Teachlets (originally created in Flash® to provide maximum media impact for minimum bandwidth) are updated, they will be converted to HTML5 to support iPad and tablet functionality.

Given the balance of modes and media for learning at Advance, actual time spent working online for students will vary according to each student’s developmental level, learning needs, and learning styles. As illustrated in Figure 21, students in grades K-5 may spend 15-30% of their school day online; students in grades 6-8 may spend about 50-75% of their school day online; and students in grades 9-12 may spend 75+% or more of time online.

Figure 21. Time Spent Online by Grade Span



Since the majority of the work is done offline for students in grades K-5 including reading books and writing, students will have a flexible schedule. Although the hours of instruction per week will vary depending on the pacing option chosen, Advance will provide the minimum 900 hours per year of instruction for students in grades K-5. For students in grades K-5, between 15 and 30% of the school day will be centered on interactive online courses.

Students in grades 6-8 will be provided with a prescribed schedule, although students may work with teachers as needed to create more accommodating schedules. About 50-75% of the school day will be centered on interactive online courses. Advance will provide at least the required 990 hours of instruction per year.

When students move into grades 9-12, they will maintain their prescribed schedule. Again, students may work with teachers to create modified schedules. About 75+% of the school day will be centered on interactive online courses. Although the hours of instruction per week will vary based on the pacing option chosen, Advance will provide at least the required 990 hours of instruction per year at the secondary level, and considerably more for 9-12 students who choose the Accelerated Pacing Option.

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

Improving Student Achievement through Technology

Advance will improve student achievement through the use of Connexus. Intervention Indicators will be displayed in Connexus to facilitate a teacher's identification of students who may be in need of additional differentiated instruction or intervention in math, reading, or both. These indicators are data-driven codes and are the first step of multi-tiered instruction. These indicators facilitate teachers' abilities to ensure that all students learn at high levels of achievement. These indicators/codes will be displayed on the Teacher Home Page to facilitate the teachers' ability to identify which students may be in need of additional instructional support.

These codes will be used to identify students who may be at risk of failure, assist teachers in determining and implementing appropriate instructional interventions, and monitoring the effectiveness of interventions. Figure 22 illustrates the Intervention Cycle and explains the face codes used to determine a student's status. Face codes for Intervention Indicators are updated during each school year, based on formative assessment.

In addition, at both the section and individual student levels, the Assessment Objective Performance Reports (AOPR) can be generated displaying not only the essential skills and standards for a course, but also exactly where in the curriculum each of these is assessed. The AOPR, shown in Figure 23, will provide real-time student performance on each of the essential skills and standards based upon individual assessment items which measure standards-based objectives that students should master by the end of that grade level. Data can be sorted to identify students who have mastered or not mastered specific objectives. Teachers can run this report as frequently as they like to see exactly how students are progressing with regard to each of the skills and standards for that subject and grade. This method accomplishes the following:

- Enhances the multi-tiered instruction model;
- Identifies essential skills and standards by subject/grade level;
- Identifies how and where these essential skills and standards are assessed within the program;
- Provides a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RtII) model;
- Provides access to and analysis of real-time data to determine mastery/proficiency;
- Incorporates data-driven decisions throughout instruction;
- Maximizes use of the instructional support programs, resources, and data;
- Identifies the need for tiered interventions for non-mastered/proficient skills and standards; and
- Identifies students' response to the implemented interventions.

Figure 22. Intervention Cycle

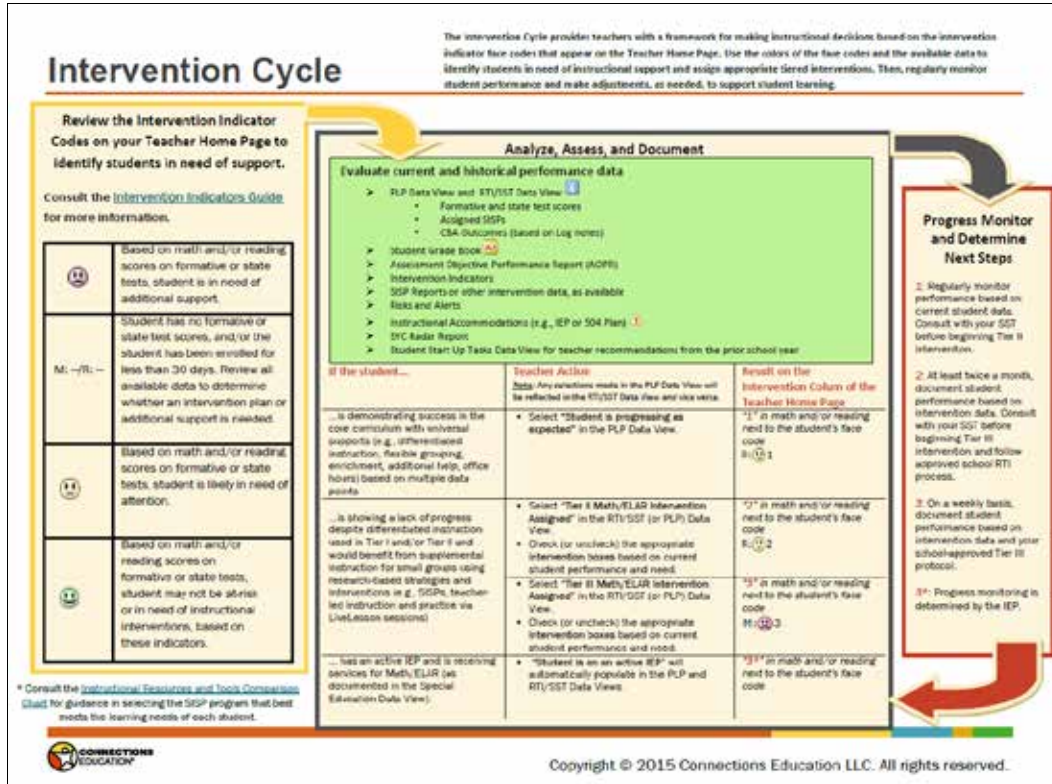
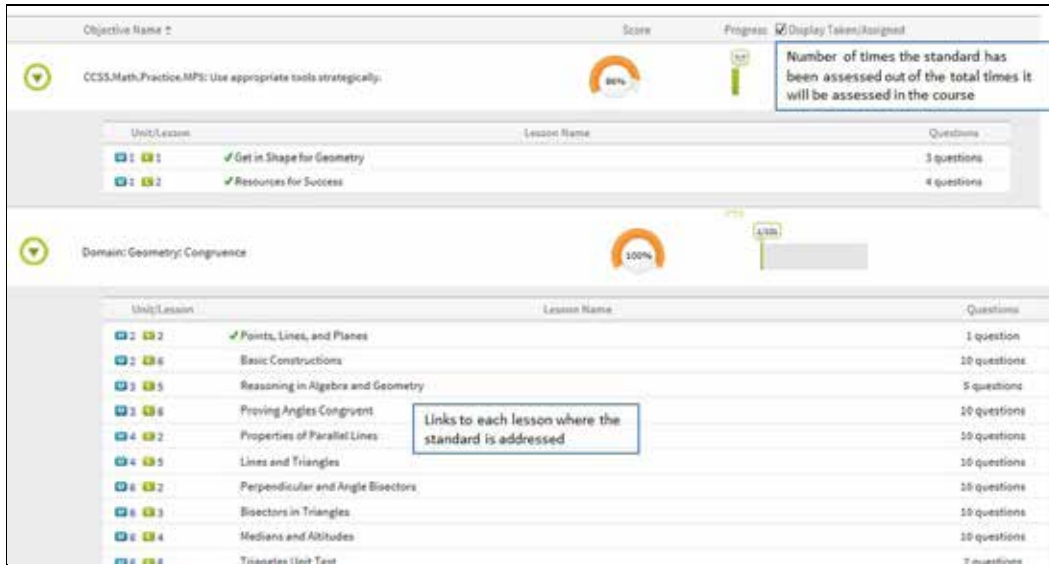


Figure 23. Assessment Objective Performance Report (AOPR) Screen Shot



Students who are working below grade level based on mandated assessment results will also benefit from research-based intervention programs focusing on building proficiency in reading and math skills. Parents will be notified if their students qualify for these programs, and their cooperation will be secured for a series of intensive LiveLesson sessions with the student and his or her teacher focusing on areas needing improvement. The student will continue in the regular curriculum while receiving intervention, but the LiveLesson sessions will allow for focused remediation on topics likely to be problematic on the next mandated assessment.

Teachers will also implement the SSTAIR Instruction Model, a systematic approach to instruction, ensuring that all students receive the necessary level of support via technology throughout the cyber learning process. Beginning with identified essential skills and standards based on the Pennsylvania Academic Standards and the NGSS, teachers will be able to easily see what students should know and be able to do by the end of a specific grade in each of the core area subjects.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RtII)

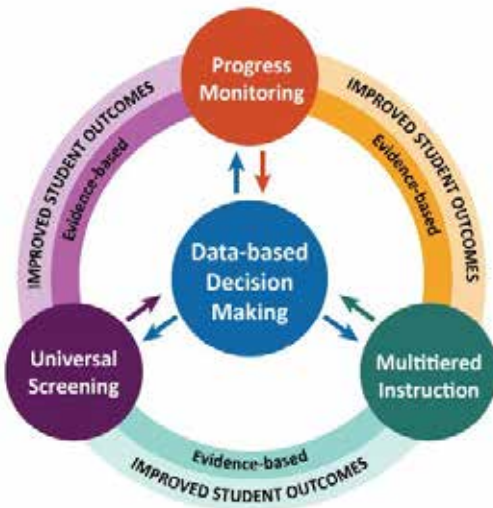
Timely intervention is critical, and schools must implement an instructional model that is designed to address both academics and behavior through a systematic problem-solving approach. Advance's multi-tiered instructional model will aim to help all students meet with continuous academic and behavioral success. Advance will use a wide range of evidence-based instructional strategies and resources for all students with fluid movement between the tiers and levels of support. Teachers will increase the frequency and intensity of the intervention, or instructional support, based on students' responsiveness and learning/behavioral needs. Through the use of early identification and implementation of research-based strategies and tools, Advance will reduce the number of students who are at risk for learning and behavioral challenges.

Data provided via Connexus will be used by all teaching staff throughout the school year to implement a structured system of instructional supports, similar to a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RtII) model. These supports will include curriculum that is based on state and national standards, a high quality core instructional program, use of universal screeners, data-based decisions, tiered supports and services, involvement and engagement of Learning Coaches, and ongoing professional learning for staff.

Students who are struggling with the evidence-based and standards-aligned core curriculum will be identified by teachers as early as possible so that differentiated activities can be assigned and student progress can be monitored closely. For students demonstrating a more intensive need (Tiers II and III), the tiered approach will allow for more instructional support and increased progress monitoring. Decisions regarding students in Tiers II and III will be made in cooperation with the school's Student Support Team (SST). The SST will be part of the multi-tiered system of support, as illustrated in Figure 24, and will be facilitated by Connexus. Teachers will have a great deal of formative data to help identify students' greatest area of instructional need. A teacher's Home Page will show, for each student, an icon indicating if a student is at risk of being below proficient at the conclusion of the school year and if interventions have been identified and provided. The teacher may use his or her professional judgment to override these indicators and log the decision and rationale within Connexus. However, in cooperation with the SST, data will be collected at regular intervals to demonstrate that these student-level decisions are effective for each student. All efforts will be made to meet each student's needs within the general education program.

Figure 24. Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RtII)

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support/Response to Intervention and Instruction



Tier I

Tier I is the first level of a multi-tiered approach to a system of instructional and behavioral supports. The core curriculum refers to the Connections research-based core reading and math curriculum that is aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards. In addition to core coursework, the core curriculum includes teacher use of differentiated instruction that meets the needs of all students throughout the school year. All students have access to the core curriculum; work through their lessons; engage with interactive content such as Teachlet® tutorials, videos, virtual labs, and manipulatives; and demonstrate their understanding through multiple types of assessments. All instructional resources are part of the first level of a multi-tiered approach to support (Tier I). Teachers will regularly use a variety of instructional resources and strategies to enhance and extend learning through differentiated and personalized instruction. The vast number of approved instructional tools will allow teachers to fill in skill gaps and extend learning while providing additional evaluative data on student achievement.

Differentiation refers to the variety of instructional strategies and lesson modifications that teachers use with students with distinct learning needs or who temporarily need extra support to master a particular skill or concept. On a regular basis, teachers will plan and implement instruction that is differentiated and personalized. Through the use of varied instructional strategies and practices, teachers will engage all students while still holding them accountable for mastering the essential skills and standards. Differentiation involves thoughtful planning for the following:

- Instructional practice used to deliver instruction to students;
- Instructional design used to deliver content to students;
- Assessment used to evaluate student learning;
- Lesson content used to support and extend concepts and skills; and
- Instructional groups to meet the needs of small groups of students.

The goal of differentiation is always the same—making sure all students master essential skills and standards—but teachers may use different instructional methods to help students meet those expectations. When differentiation strategies fail to produce progress, Tier II intervention should be considered.

Tier II

When students do not make progress despite differentiated instruction within the core curriculum used in Tier I of instructional support, teachers will need to consider Tier II support. When moving a student from Tier I to Tier II, teachers may consult with the school's Student Support Team (SST). Areas where students struggle at the Tier I level and require Tier II support may include the following:

- Reading fluency
- Reading comprehension
- Math fluency
- Math computation
- Behavior

Tier II will generally begin after a general education teacher has tried a variety of instructional supports and differentiation strategies over a four-week time frame and has documentation showing that the student is not responding successfully.

Tier II instructional support can use many of the same instructional strategies and/or research-based programs that were used for differentiation as part of Tier I; however, it is the increase in the frequency and intensity of their use that defines it as Tier II. Intervention will be explicit, systematic, and targeted to the greatest area of student learning needs. Frequent and formal logged progress monitoring will be a critical part of the implementation of this tier. Tier II intervention will focus on the greatest area of need so data collection must be detailed, clear, and only regarding one area from baseline (first probe of performance) to progress monitoring. Targeting multiple areas in an intervention cycle makes it difficult to understand the source of learning challenges and collect precise data.

Tier II instructional support is typically provided two to three times a week for 20–30 minutes per session. The support comes from a research-based intervention that is explicit, systematic, and targeted to the student's greatest area of learning needs. Tier II behavior support is provided with the same frequency in cooperation with the Learning Coach.

Tier III

Tier III includes the most intensive and frequent level of instructional support and is the next step in the multi-tiered approach for students who have not been successful in the core curriculum that includes differentiation activities and Tier II supplemental interventions. Tier III interventions are facilitated and monitored by the general education teacher who increases the occurrence of synchronous direct instruction through the extensive use of LiveLesson sessions, blended face-to-face instruction, and other instructional strategies and research-based programs that are explicit, systematic, and targeted to specific student learning needs.

Students enrolled in the Tier III level of intervention receive at least two additional days of 20–30 minutes of instruction for a total of four to five days a week to focus more intensively on skill deficits and areas of concern. Through Tier III interventions, students may be assigned a personalized course of study that allows for increased learning time in their areas of academic need. Time spent on electives and other supplemental courses is often minimized to focus on basic skills. Lessons may need to be skipped and assessments in the language arts or math course may need to be dropped to ensure the student has sufficient time to participate in Tier III intervention activities. Tier III behavioral support will also be provided at increased frequency and intensity. As needed, additional resources such as counseling staff will be engaged. Focused, specific data collection related to behavioral antecedents will be used to inform any referrals for behavioral evaluations.

In addition to an increased focus on core curricular content, Tier III teachers incorporate additional resources to assess and monitor student performance and address students' instructional needs. Tier III fosters a strong foundation in basic academic and behavioral skills and increases self-confidence as the student progresses through the program.

Figure 25 is the teacher's home page where he/she can track if students are on target, if they have overdue lessons, or if they are falling behind (Figure 26). Figure 27 shows a specific student's Grade Book.

Figure 25. Teacher's Homepage

CONNECTIONS ACADEMY Hi, Jen Teacher | [Feedback](#) | [Account Settings](#)

HOME | SECTIONS & STUDENTS | PLANNER | MORE

My Dashboard | Links | Announcements

All Sections: * Has no active students Total 18 students

My LiveLesson Room

My Data Views

Look Who's New!

You have 4 students who will be joining you soon.
[Give them a warm welcome!](#)

You have 7 students with instructional accommodations.

4 students On Track
3 students Approaching Alarm
1 student Alarm

Overall Score

81% - 100%	2
61% - 80%	4
71% - 90%	3
61% - 70%	1
50% - 60%	1
A/A	1

Overall Overdue Lessons

Caught Up	1
1-3 lessons	1
4-10 lessons	1
10+ lessons	1

To Do List

- Check in My Students or My Sections for assessments needing grading.
- Review the [Accountability Radar](#).
- Please complete your [Teacher Intent to Return](#).
- Check [SkillsTimer](#) reports.
- Review attendance for [My Teacher's Homeroom \(MyCA\)](#).
- View students' [overdue lessons](#).
- Review [Teacher Assignment Report](#).

Multitiered Interventions

Math

Year	1	2	3	3*
Proficiency	1	1	1	1

Reading

Year	1	2	3	3*
Proficiency	1	1	1	1

Figure 26. Students with Overdue Lessons

ID	My Students	Days Enrolled	Absence	Missions	Overall Score	Total Lessons	Alerts	Information
126187	Demo, Gavin	77	8	None	70%	26 lessons	3	M-W-
126188	Demo, Aaron	80	5	None	80%	24 lessons	3	M-W-
94331	Demo, Ieda	80	2	None	80%	24 lessons	3	M-W-
49061	Demo, Muffy	80	4	None	70%	24 lessons	3	M-W-
17440	Demo, Tyler	80	5	None	80%	1 lesson	1	M-W-
13059	Demo, Jody	80	7	None	70%	24 lessons	3	M-W-
20382	Demo, Amanda	80	8	None	70%	24 lessons	3	M-W-
12437	Demo, Claire	80	3	1st Year	80%	24 lessons	1	M-W-
12497	Demo, Maric	80	7	None	70%	24 lessons	3	M-W-

Figure 27. Specific Student Grade Book

Section	Score	Grade	Lessons Completed	Teacher	Objectives
Algebra 2.0	67%	D	25/28 (100%)	Teacher, Jen	148 objectives
Mathematical Reasoning 2.0	8%	F	64/84 (100%)	Teacher, Jen	11 objectives
Algebra 1.0	90%	F	98/98 (100%)	Teacher, Jen	83 objectives
Mathematics 1.0	-	-	85/85 (100%)	Teacher, Jen	11 objectives
Math 1.0	-	-	0/0 (0%)	Katempere, Pam	32 objectives
Physical Science II	77%	F	61/83 (100%)	Teacher, Jen	20 objectives
Statistics	-	-	85/87 (100%)	Special, Kay	11 objectives
Sports Management	22%	F	22/22 (100%)	Teacher, Jen	11 objectives
Test for student transfer to Algebra 2	-	-	9/9 (0%)	Teacher Demo	112 objectives
Overall	33%	-	336/488 (82%)	-	-

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

Technical Support

Through our agreement with Connections, Advance will provide 24/7/365 technical support through Online Help in Connexus; live phone support via toll-free phone service and email to parents, students, and staff Monday through Friday 9 AM–9 PM Eastern Time and on-call support all other times. Technical support will address all hardware, software, networking, and connectivity issues. Technical support will be effective even when supported remotely since both the hardware and technology will be provided by Connections and the support technicians (all Connections full-time and US-based employees) will be familiar with hardware models and custom imaging parameters.

Connections technology support staff members have an expansive knowledge of computer technology and Connexus. They will help troubleshoot any problems students are having with Connexus. The support team members also have remote diagnostic tools that allow them to see a student's computer and correct problems from afar.

Calls and emails are routed directly to the Technical Support staff on duty. After hours and on weekends, requests for help are recorded and responded to the next business day.

- Support team phone: [800-382-6010](tel:800-382-6010)
- Support team email: support@connectionseducation.com

Online Resources

Through our agreement with Connections, Advance will provide numerous online resources for parents, students, and staff. The extensive Online Help system is searchable and easy to use. It contains a wide array of how-to topics about the following:

- Using features of Connexus
- Troubleshooting problems with your computer
- Using the software on your computer

Connections also provides detailed training online that is interactive and engaging. It covers topics such as:

- Helping students be successful in a cyber school
- Staying organized
- Curriculum differences across grade levels
- Using Connexus

Connections has taken experience and tips from families in schools they support and combined them with the expertise of their staff to create useful examples and scenarios that will help families to be successful.

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

Security Measures for Confidentiality of Data

The Acceptable Use policy for Connexus is provided in Appendix F.

Connexus contains several unique and efficient mechanisms for families and schools to communicate with one another. Since Connexus is a closed system, no communication can be made to or from anybody outside of the system. Parents or legal guardians can control what, if any, of their student's information is posted and accessible to others in the School Directory. To set or modify these options, parents can go to the SIF (Student Information Form) – School Directory Data View to adjust their student's permissions at any time. The SIF School Directory Data View is accessed from the student's Connexus home page under Data Views or through the student's "information" icon.

Connexus maintains a complex system of roles, permissions, and locations to control access to data and files. For example, a user has the teacher "role" in his or her school "location" and therefore is only able to access information about students in his or her school but is not able to access information about students in other schools. Likewise, a Principal (role) of a school (location) is only able to access information about students and teachers in his or her school and cannot access information about other locations.

Access to data is controlled by "role" also. In order to perform a particular job, a user has the necessary role(s) that will facilitate doing his or her job. For example, the enrollment staff is able to view, enter, and report on data about students for facilitating the enrollment process. Teachers can view, enter, and report on data to facilitate the learning process.

Data Center

Connexus servers are hosted in an enterprise-class tier 3 data center. This facility is secured electronically with 24 hour guards. Access to the site is strictly controlled by select administrators. All Internet communications to and from the Connexus servers are encrypted. Regular vulnerability scans and a rigorous patching process are in place to identify and address vulnerabilities in a timely fashion. Connections also employs industry standard equipment (e.g., firewalls, intrusion prevention systems), and services to further limit attack vectors.

Network and Systems Operations

Connections' multi-layer network employs a modular, scalable design that provides multiple levels of security, redundancy, and fail-over. The network is built on a platform of redundant routers, firewalls, switches, and redundant content and load-balancing solutions. This design enables Connections to maintain a high-availability network infrastructure while minimizing downtime.

Security Management

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

Data Backup

To ensure that valuable data is available when needed, Connections has built a quality infrastructure that affordably protects Websites and content.

Site Monitoring & Site Security

Connections' security services provide a complete end-to-end Information Assurance, and Vulnerability Detection solution. Staff members at the Network Operations Center (NOC) monitor the web-hosting environment 24/7/365. In the event that a Website is not meeting the appropriate operating and performance criteria, alerts are sent automatically to the Connections' NOC staff and engineering teams to resolve the issue as soon as possible. Site Monitoring includes:

- Monitor HTTP Service & SSL for HTTP service for availability and response times
- Perform Server PINGs
- Monitor Server URLs for availability, content and response times
- Display current status of all monitored components on a user-authenticated site
- Automatically alert notification if established thresholds are exceeded
- Monitor server CPU Utilization, disk space, memory, services and bandwidth
- Execute SQL queries to ensure database are functioning properly

Infrastructure Security Components

- Ensure high availability firewalls through a high level of network access and information availability, as well as integrity and privacy with the redundant structure that supports synchronization and automatic failover
- Operate a corporate VPN to create efficient trust relationships for both site-to-site and desktop-to-host operations.

Fault Tolerance and Redundancy

Connexus has fault tolerance and redundancy built into it at every level. If any one component in Connexus fails, its load is immediately picked up by other components and service is not interrupted. The power system at the NOC, where Connexus technology components are housed, has redundant generators and Internet connections. Multiple systems monitor all components of Connexus, including hardware and software, 24/7/365. Alerts are sent immediately whenever an issue is detected, from a bug in the software or a course to a server failure, and Connections' technology staff responds to every alert with immediate and appropriate action. Regular Connexus releases occur every two weeks and hotfixes when necessary can be applied any time. Operating system, firmware, and service patches are applied to all systems on an ongoing, scheduled basis with patches typically being applied to production systems after a testing period in other environments. From a user perspective, such as students, Learning Coaches, and teachers, should a power outage occur due to inclement weather, Connexus data and features will remain undamaged. The Grade Book, scheduler, course completion data, and other elements will continue to remain updated and will be available when the user regains power and logs back into the system.

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

Authenticity of Student Work

Advance will use CheckMyWork, a plagiarism-prevention tool based on similar programs such as Turnitin, an online plagiarism prevention tool, to help teachers and students identify and correct inappropriate re-use of content. Following established guidelines, students will be required to run their essays and other authentic assessment documents through CheckMyWork before submitting these assignments to the teacher, and attach the CheckMyWork report URL to their submissions. This gives students an opportunity to correct any unintentional plagiarism and allows teachers to see at a glance where academic integrity issues may exist.

Proctoring Exams and Test Security

Advance students will participate in state proficiency tests depending upon grade level. The school will set up in-person, proctored locations for state testing. Advance acknowledges that Section 1744-A (2) encourages cyber schools and school districts to work cooperatively to accommodate students' needs in mandated testing. If needed, and where applicable, Advance will work with an intermediate unit or a school district to request reasonable access to facilities for the administration of standardized tests.

The variety of assessment forms also promotes security. A student's work will begin with a placement process, providing the teacher with a solid baseline against which to compare online assessments to follow. Frequent online quizzes, periodic online and offline unit tests, (some of which are randomized and/or timed), CBAs, and the standardized pre-, mid-, and post-tests will be compared against the student's portfolio samples to detect any mismatches. Teachers will be specially trained in telephone and WebMail message questioning techniques to evaluate student mastery of concepts.

Students and parents suspected of inappropriate assessment behavior will be confronted immediately and subjected to standard disciplinary action. All students will be required to sign the Honor Code indicating their understanding of the expectations of academic honesty. Cheating, plagiarizing, or other acts of academic dishonesty are directly counter to the principles of academic excellence and harm most those students who engage in such activities—they cheat themselves of the opportunity to fully develop their intellectual abilities. The Honor Code will serve to reinforce students' commitment to academic excellence, and all students must sign this Honor Code.

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

Hardware, Software, and Internet Subsidies

We have included the technology specifications as they are being filled now in similar schools supported by Connections. When Advance opens in 2016, the makes/models may vary but each unit will have comparable performance specifications. Families will receive the following:

- One laptop computer per student in grades K–12
 - Hardware
 - § HP model laptop
 - § Intel i-series processor
 - § 15.6-inch LCD LED display w/ integrated webcam
 - § 4 GB 1600MHz DDR3 (1 DIMM)
 - § 500 GB Hard drive
 - § 24X DVD/CDRW (fixed)
 - § 10/100/1000 NIC
 - § Broadcom® 802.11 a/b/g/n Wireless
 - § Bluetooth 4.0®
 - § 3 USB 2.0
 - § Headphone/line out
 - § External USB Dial-Up Modem provided as necessary

- Software
 - § Microsoft Windows 7 Professional
 - § Microsoft Office 2010
 - § Symantec AntiVirus
 - § Ad-Aware SE Anti-spyware protection
 - § Other software installed includes: Adobe Acrobat Reader, Flash Player, Shockwave Player, and Windows Media Player
 - § CyberSitter® Internet filtering software is available upon request
- Extras
 - § Headset/Microphone combo
 - § Unlimited Technical Support
- One printer per household: Each household will be eligible to receive or be reimbursed for one standard HP Desktop printer in the first year of enrollment.
- Subsidy for Student Technology Support Stipend: Each household receives a stipend paid three times a year to assist with the cost of Internet service and printer ink.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

II.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?*

Need for an Innovative Cyber School in Pennsylvania

Students whose instructional needs will be effectively met by an innovative cyber charter school, offering year-round and flexible scheduling and STEM activities and experiences, include:

- Students in need of flexible pacing options for meeting state education standards (Advance will offer multiple calendar options: traditional, year-round, and accelerated);
- Students interested in pursuing science, technology, engineering, and math post-secondary or career options;
- Students pursuing artistic or athletic careers or career development opportunities that require a flexible schedule or specialized coursework;
- Students in need of accelerated or expanded coursework opportunities;
- Students living in rural communities who have limited access to public school options;
- Students not on pace with their peers in school;
- Students coping with social issues who may particularly benefit from personalized instruction;
- Students who are homebound due to illness or disability;
- Students who are homeless; and
- Students with special learning needs.

Other cyber learning options are currently available in Pennsylvania but they lack a flexible pacing option offering students a new way to personalize their education to meet their specific needs.

The additional STEM offerings, especially in the lower grades, will also offer a unique opportunity for both students and teachers to expand their interests and expertise. According to the STEM Education Coalition⁴⁷, they are trying to establish, as one of their core policy principles, "...a high-priority for STEM-focused projects, programs, and curricula in education programs that support classroom teaching and learning and out-of-school experiences such as afterschool, co-curricular, and summer programs." At a recent STEM Education Coalition Policy Forum, speakers noted, "Children and their parents are actively pursuing participation in STEM focused informal education activities, and it takes the schools, informal education centers (such as science centers and museums), local business and industry partners, and parents working together in their communities to successfully engage young people in STEM subjects and projects beyond traditional curriculum."⁴⁸

In 2014, the Alliance for Science and Technology in America (ASTRA) highlighted in their Pennsylvania STEM Report Card⁴⁹ that overall, 30% of Pennsylvania high school students are interested in STEM careers based on

⁴⁷ <http://www.stemedcoalition.org/>

⁴⁸ <http://www.stemedcoalition.org/2015/07/08/informal-stem-education-101-what-we-mean-when-we-talk-about-informal-stem-education/>

⁴⁹ <http://ostrc.org/stem/documents/PennsylvaniaSTEMReportCard.pdf>

their intended college major or career aspiration. When disaggregated by gender, the report reflects that 16% of female high school students and 44% of male high school students in Pennsylvania were interested in STEM careers. The gender gap in interest in STEM Careers in Pennsylvania is a key part of Advance partnering with organizations like Pennsylvania Girls Collaborative Project and the Carnegie Science Center that have experience in increasing female participation in STEM. By race, the gap in interest in STEM exists as well. Though approximately 35% of Asian-American and 30% of White high school students in Pennsylvania are interested in STEM careers, only 24% of African-American and 26% of Hispanic high school students in Pennsylvania are interested in STEM careers. The racial gap in interest in STEM Careers in Pennsylvania is a key part of Advance partnering with One Bright Hope Foundation of Philadelphia, a predominately African-American and Hispanic accelerated high school that has proven to graduate students who enter credit deficient.

A 2012 Report by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry⁵⁰ highlighted importance of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) on the state's economy and its impact on annual salaries of those trained in STEM. Per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Pennsylvania alone is estimating that by the year 2018 there will be over 300,000 jobs that will relate to STEM fields – over 50% of which will need some level of post-secondary education."⁵¹

The average annual salary for a STEM occupation in Pennsylvania was \$62,210 while annual salary for non-STEM occupation was \$39,650.⁵² In 2010, 1-in-5 jobs in Pennsylvania were STEM jobs. Advance will emphasize STEM to prepare students for successful, high paying careers, throughout Pennsylvania.

Advance will exclusively provide cyber education and the faculty will become experts in serving students in this format. Just as specialization occurs in other areas, Advance will specialize in cyber education by leveraging its partner's 13 years of expertise supporting cyber schools across the country, ten of those include supporting a cyber school in Pennsylvania. Teachers will be experts in online pedagogy with experience in STEM, passionate about delivery, skilled in the technology, and excited to personalize instruction to students throughout Pennsylvania.

The growing demand for cyber education is also substantiated nationally by the dramatic growth of cyber charter schools across the country. The most recent available figures count 316,000 students having attended fully cyber schools in the 2013-2014 school year. Thirty states plus Washington DC had full-time cyber schools operating statewide in the 2013-2014 school year.⁵³ Several statewide cyber charter schools have selected to partner with local school districts to operate. In Colorado, Wyoming, and Oregon, local school districts authorize and oversee statewide cyber schools. Cyber and blended learning opportunities are also now offered in all 50 states, at least for some students.⁵⁴

In March 2012, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the [Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College](#) released a joint statement regarding *Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through*

⁵⁰http://francis.edu/uploadedFiles/Content/Home/About_Us/Outreach_Centers/Science_Outreach_Center/Past_Events/Ed%20Legge%20Central%20STEM%20BP%20061413.pdf

⁵¹<http://www.cpwdc.org/stem/>

⁵²http://francis.edu/uploadedFiles/Content/Home/About_Us/Outreach_Centers/Science_Outreach_Center/Past_Events/Ed%20Legge%20Central%20STEM%20BP%20061413.pdf

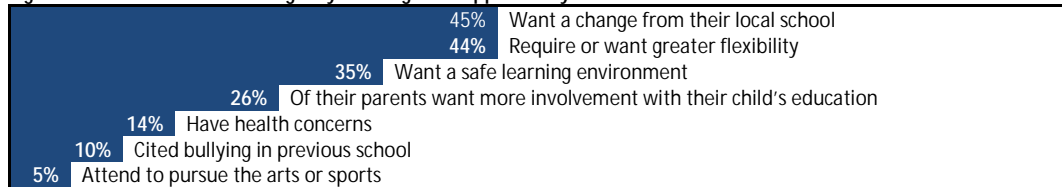
⁵³<http://kpk12.com/states/>

⁵⁴http://www.kpk12.com/wp-content/uploads/EEG_KP2014-fnl-lr.pdf

Age 8. The statement expresses a key message: "When used intentionally and appropriately, technology and interactive media are effective tools to support learning and development."⁵⁵

Advance will also allow students to matriculate at a traditional pace, at a faster pace, or at a slower pace. Advance anticipates that it can help credit-deficient students achieve their goals and be successful. For example, across all schools in the country supported by Connections that have had a high school for four or more years, 30% of students enter the school credit deficient. Students are looking for additional options to help them with their academic goals and prevent them from dropping out. Students enter a cyber school because their current educational environment is not working for them and they seek a more individualized approach. Cyber education is not an appropriate placement for all students but it is another option that is successful for some students. Many students find success in a cyber environment where previously they may have experienced failure. Figure 28 lists the reasons parents considered enrolling their child in cyber schools supported by Connections throughout the country.

Figure 28. Reasons for Attending a Cyber Program Supported by Connections



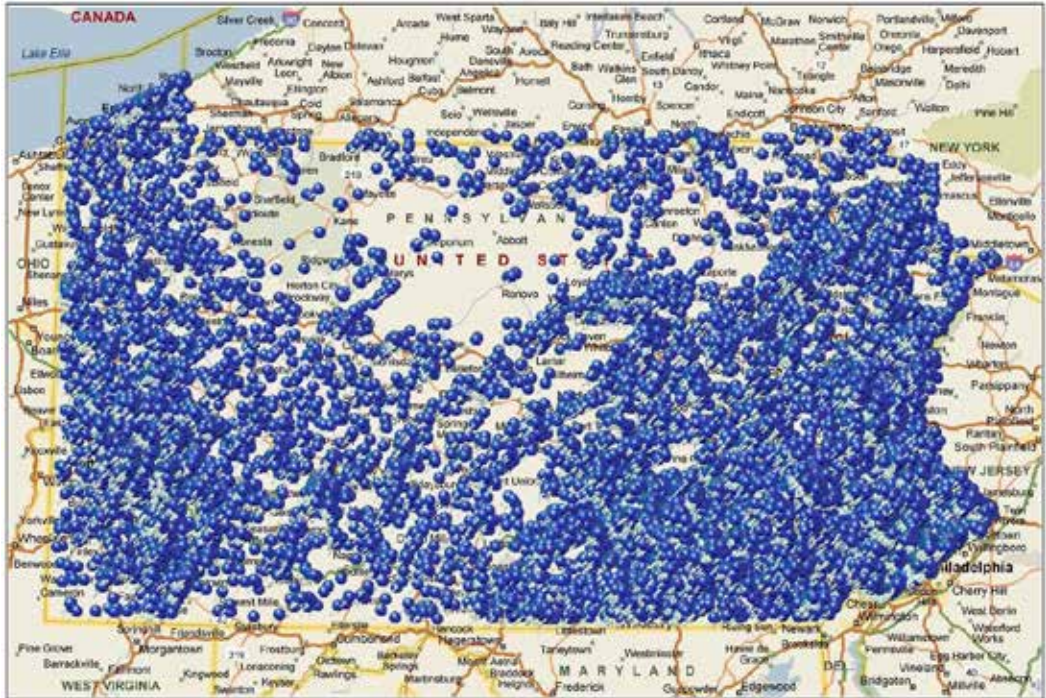
Evidence of Support

The Board has been tracking the interest in cyber schooling expressed by families throughout Pennsylvania. There is great need across the state for additional cyber school schooling options. Our proposed school, Advance, will meet a need that cannot be met by current options. Since January 2013, over 45,000 families have inquired about a cyber school option for students with Connections. Figure 29 illustrates the location of the families who contacted Connections interested in a cyber school in Pennsylvania.

Advance has also demonstrated, through attendance at both online and in-person information sessions throughout the state, and through an online survey, an interest in this innovative cyber charter model. The support for Advance is not only evidenced by the signatures on the petition, but from letters of support from community-based institutions serving both K-12 and higher education (provided in Appendix G).

⁵⁵ <http://www.naeyc.org/content/technology-and-young-children>

Figure 29. Location of Interested Students and Families



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

Cyber School is Appropriate to Address Need

Cyber schools started in the U.S. in the mid-1990s with the wider spread use of the Internet. In Pennsylvania, after the charter school law was passed in 1997, the first cyber charter opened its virtual doors in 2000. Enrollment in cyber charters has increased every year from 582 students in the 2000-01 school year to 21,824 students in the 2013-14 school year.⁵⁶ Demand for cyber schools has not diminished. With the unique offerings of flexible pacing and STEM-enrichment, Advance will provide Pennsylvania students with an additional educational option that is not currently available. The school will provide flexible scheduling for meeting Pennsylvania Academic Standards. Advance will offer multiple calendar options: traditional, year-round, and accelerated (for high school students). The families interested in taking advantage of the flexible pacing option live in every part of Pennsylvania. Therefore, a statewide cyber school is an excellent way to make a school with flexible pacing options available to them.

The school will add STEM opportunities, activities, and experiences for all grades. The unique cyber school model allows the STEM Coordinator, Board of Trustees, and school leadership to bring family, school, and community together to expand students' awareness, exposure, and participation in STEM-related activities.

⁵⁶ http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/annual_reports/7357/2008_charter_school_annual_reports

Beginning in grade 9, school counselors will work with each student individually on graduation plans with a focus on appropriate courses, credits, and post-secondary planning. Students at all grade levels will participate in clubs, activities, and electives to complete the full-school experience.

Advance can offer students anywhere in the state hundreds of courses, dozens of clubs and activities, and access to resources that will help prepare them for the global economy they will be living and working in as adults. Many of these clubs will provide students STEM experiences and opportunities. The personalized approach of cyber learning will provide important skills to students including independent thinking, problem solving, and collaboration not only with people in their community but potentially across the globe.

11.2 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?*

Enrollment Projections

Figure 30 lists the enrollment projections for the first five years. Per the Charter School BEC, 24 P.S. §17-1701-A, Advance will report to the PDE an increase or a decrease of 30% or more in its anticipated enrollment as set in this application.

Figure 30. Enrollment Projections

Year	Grade	Enrollment
1	K-9	500
2	K-11	1,500
3	K-12	2,500
4	K-12	3,500
5	K-12	4,500

Ultimate Enrollment Goal

Advance's enrollment goal is 4,500 students by Year 5. Advance has a responsible plan for school growth (balancing the desire to serve as many students as possible each academic year with the quality and academic focus of the school) that positions both the students and the school for future success. Advance hopes to responsibly grow from 500 students (Year 1) to up to 4,500 (Year 5) through a combination of parent outreach, comparatively high student retention rates (cyber school retention rates tend to be lower than brick-and-mortar schools), and word-of-mouth recommendations and referrals by current families.

Grades Served

Advance will serve students in grades K-9 in Year 1, students in grades K-11 in Year 2 (with an increase in enrollment to reflect adding the additional two grades), and students in grades K-12 in Year 3 and beyond.

Entry Age for Kindergarten Students and Beginners

For students in Kindergarten, Advance will enroll students who meet the admission age that is determined by their resident school district.

For students in First Grade, Advance will enroll students who are six years old on or before September 1 in the school year for which they are enrolling.

Students Per Grade/Grouping

Figure 31. Students Per Grade/Grouping

	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21
Total	500	1,500	2,500	3,500	4,500
K	35	69	96	134	172
1	36	73	102	142	183
2	39	82	117	164	211
3	40	84	121	169	217
4	43	93	135	189	243
5	46	103	153	214	275
6	51	117	176	246	316
7	60	145	223	312	401
8	67	164	254	355	457
9	83	215	339	474	609
10	0	183	286	401	515
11	0	173	269	376	484
12	0	0	232	324	417
Total	500	1,500	2,500	3,500	4,500

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

Community where Site will be Located

School leadership and staff will be located in the school site in the city of Harrisburg, the capital of Pennsylvania. Harrisburg is only 100 miles from Philadelphia and 200 miles from Pittsburgh.

One of our STEM higher education partner, Harrisburg University of Science and Technology (HU), is located in Harrisburg. Advance has had initial discussions with HU about partnering to enrich the experience of both Advance teachers and students. Harrisburg is also home to several colleges such as Penn State-Harrisburg, Dickinson College, Lebanon Valley College, and Elizabethtown College. Initial conversations have begun with several institutions and will continue throughout the planning year to identify and define unique opportunities for both students and faculty.

Penn State-Harrisburg's teacher education programs are accredited by NCATE and offer specialization in elementary education, early childhood education, secondary education, English, social studies, and mathematic. ESL and reading specialty certifications and master's programs in teaching and curriculum and literacy education are also available. Penn State-Harrisburg and the school of Behavioral Science in Education (BSE) sponsor the Capital Area Institute for Mathematics and Science (CAIMS+).⁵⁷

Advance will be serving students statewide. Meeting the needs of both urban and rural students is important to the Founding Board. Almost half of the school districts in the state are rural and over a quarter of the state's population live in a rural county, according to The Center for Rural Pennsylvania.⁵⁸ Reaching students who might otherwise not have an opportunity to participate in a variety of enriching experiences is an exciting component of Advance.

⁵⁷ <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/capital-area-institute-for-mathematics-and-science>

⁵⁸ http://www.rural.palegislature.us/rural_urban.html

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

Selection of Location

Advance will serve students throughout Pennsylvania but the location for the school site was chosen in part because Harrisburg is centrally located in the state. Advance is interested in partnering with the numerous higher education, non-profit, government, and community organizations in and around Harrisburg. Locating the school in Harrisburg also affords the school the ability to hire from a pool of qualified teachers.

Because the State Capitol building is located in close proximity to Advance's site, policymakers and other key stakeholders will have opportunities to visit the school and experience firsthand the method of teaching in this unique environment. Harrisburg is also in close proximity to one of our proposed STEM higher education partners, Harrisburg University of Science and Technology (HU), which will be convenient for teachers undergoing professional development at the university. Advance has had initial discussions with HU to enrich the experience of both Advance teachers and students. Advance's Harrisburg-based students and teachers participating in some of the HU offerings will have access to a state-of-the-art university dedicated to training the next generation of STEM professionals. There may also be opportunities for Harrisburg-based Advance teachers seeking a graduate degree in education or STEM to earn their degree or take classes at HU while teaching full time with Advance.

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

Unique Demographic Characteristics of Student Population

In statewide cyber schools supported by Connections nationally, the demographics of the schools typically mirror the demographics of the states. Of the students who attend schools supported by Connections, over 48.3% met the federal Free and Reduced Meals (FARM) guidelines mirroring the national average of 48.1%.⁵⁹ In 2014, the Pennsylvania Department of Education reported that 48.1% of its students were eligible for FARM. Enrolled families will include many of modest means as well as single-parent/dual-working-parent households.

The Kids Count Data Center⁶⁰ reported 15.4% of students with disabilities in 2013-2014 school year. Students with disabilities generally require special education through their schools, intermediate units or approved private schools. For 2014-15 school year, schools supported by Connections nationally reported serving an average of 11% of students requiring IEPs and 5% of students requiring Section 504 plans.

Primary Language Spoken

The primary language spoken will be English.

⁵⁹ http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d12/tables/dt12_046.asp

⁶⁰ <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/Tables/2724-students-with-disabilities--number-and-percent-of-students-enrolled-in-special-education?loc=40&loct=2#detailed/2/any/true/1249/any/9736>

II.3 DISTRICT RELATIONS/EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT

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

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

Evidence of Sustainable Support

The success of Advance will be founded on its ability to provide its students and parents with a learning environment that meets their individual needs. In this application, Advance has demonstrated support sufficient to sustain and maintain the school as an on-going entity. The Board has demonstrated long-term, sustained, support for the school by generating a petition signed by XX residents in Pennsylvania and XXXX parents demonstrating interest pre-enrollment in Pennsylvania.⁶¹ The XX signatures represent 100% of the proposed first year enrollment of 500 students.

Comment [R2]: Just a note here to make sure we update this when all the petition numbers are in.

The Board has prioritized creating and sustaining partnerships with organizations that complement the school's emphasis on STEM. We have attached letters of support from Pennsylvania-based organizations and institutions that Advance will work with during the planning stage to ensure our STEM curriculum is reinforced with extra-curricular activities they provide and that Advance teachers have opportunities for professional development.

Our six-member Board represents a group of passionate education advocates who live across the state. The Board brings a wealth of experiences to Advance and has secured support letters (included in Appendix G) from the following individuals and partners:

- Pennsylvania Chamber of Commerce
- Pennsylvania Coalition of Charter Schools
- Academy of Natural Sciences, Drexel University
- One Bright Ray Foundation
- Bartram Gardens
- Carnegie Science Center
- Pennsylvania Girls Collaborative Project
- Harrisburg University of Science and Technology

Comment [R3]: Make sure we have all these letters in the appendix before final draft, and if not remove the ones we have not received.

⁶¹ <http://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/2a46g58928>

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

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.

Notifying Districts in Pennsylvania

Advance will be a state-wide cyber charter school open to every school age student in Pennsylvania. The Board has generated and posted a letter to superintendents off all 500 school districts in Pennsylvania notifying them of our application and of our intention to notify them if the application is approved. The letter (attached in Appendix H) also requests the opportunity to partner with the school districts to ensure we best serve the needs of the students from their district who enroll in Advance.

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

Collaborative Relationships with School Districts

In the letter to superintendents of all 500 school districts, the Board has shared its intention to partner with school districts to ensure students from their districts are best served. For example, Advance may establish relationships with individual school districts on matters concerning students with special needs and students intending to play sports or engage in extra-curricular activities in their resident district.

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.

Scope of Community Backing for the School

The success of Advance and its students is predicated on the support of communities. Support for Advance from individual and organizational partners is reflected in the collected support letters (included in Appendix G).

III. GOVERNANCE

III.1 PROFILE OF FOUNDING BOARD

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

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

The Pennsylvania non-profit corporation, Advance Cyber Charter School, is the applicant submitting this charter application and will govern the school and will hold the charter. Advance Cyber Charter School is incorporated as an independent, public, non-profit corporation and is not a subsidiary of another entity, or in any way connected with, or under the control of another entity. As public officials, members of the Advance Board of Trustees will be subject to the provisions of the Public Official and Employee Ethics Act, 65 P.S. §1101-1113 ("Ethics Act") and will file Statements of Financial Interest & Code of Conduct by May 1 each year. In addition, as members of the Board of Trustees they will have legal obligations under the Charter School Law and the Public School Code. The Advance Board of Trustees will be a good and effective steward of public money and provide independent governance of the school's administrators.

Makeup of Board

The Board members are parents, educators, and business and community leaders who are committed to bringing an innovative cyber charter school for students in grades K-12 to Pennsylvania. Current Board members have unique skills and expertise in cyber education, technology, internal controls, and financial analysis. Additionally, at least one parent of an enrolled student will be recruited to join the Board. These qualifications will help ensure the success of the school and the effective representation of key stakeholders.

Names of the Founders and their Background and Experience

The Board consists of six members. Each Board member brings unique skills and expertise to support Advance and make decisions regarding the operation of the school, including budgeting, curriculum, and operating procedures. Advance will be a statewide school and as such the Board members have community ties across the state. There is a wide range of expertise on the Board demonstrating the capacity for initial start-up operations and the successful launch of the school for fall of 2016.

- **David Taylor, Board President:** Mr. Taylor is Executive Director and First Vice President of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association (PMA), a statewide trade organization representing the interests of manufacturers in the state's public policy process since 1909. Mr. Taylor is a 1990 graduate of Dickinson College, where he earned Bachelor of Arts degrees in History and Dramatic Arts. He previously worked for the Research Department of the Republican National Committee in Washington D.C., the late state Sen. John J. Shumaker (R-Dauphin), and the Pennsylvania Leadership Council.

Immediately prior to joining PMA in 1997, he worked in the Washington D.C. office of U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Allegheny), where he served as the staff writer for issues before the U.S. Senate Armed Services, Foreign Relations, Intelligence, and Veterans' Affairs committees.

Mr. Taylor serves on the boards of directors of the Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association, the Lincoln Institute for Public Opinion Research, the Pennsylvania Leadership Council, the Foundation for Free Enterprise Education, the Pennsylvania eCommerce Association, and the Pennsylvania Business Council Education Foundation. Since 2010, Mr. Taylor has represented the northeast U.S. on the board of directors of the Conference of State Manufacturers Associations. He is also an Advisory Committee member of the Pennsylvania Steel Alliance.

In 2012, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett appointed him to the Governor's Manufacturing Advisory Council. In 2006, the Central Pennsylvania Business Journal named him one of the "Top Forty under 40" business leaders. In 2002, he was appointed by President George W. Bush to serve on a review panel for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management's Presidential Rank Awards program.

In the community, Mr. Taylor serves as President of Gamut Theatre Group, home of the Harrisburg Shakespeare Company and Popcorn Hat Players Children's Theatre. He is also a member of Central Pennsylvania MENSA.

- **Brian Leinhauser, Board Treasurer:** Mr. Leinhauser is a founding partner of the MacMain Law Group, LLC in Malvern. He represents charter schools as a solicitor and special labor counsel, addressing all manner of school issues, including: general contract law and compliance issues; employment matters, special education and charter renewal or revocation before school districts, PDE, and the Charter Appeal Board. Previously, he was an Associate Attorney for Lamb McErlane, PC in West Chester and an Associate for Campbell, Durrant & Beatty, PC in Pittsburgh. He earned his Juris Doctorate from Duquesne University School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Villanova University.
- **Joseph Harford, Board Secretary:** Mr. Harford has over 14 years of experience as an IT data security consultant and business owner. As an entrepreneur, he grew a business from start-up to millions in annual sales through effective business planning, creative sales techniques, and innovation. He has expert knowledge and skills in all facets of Sales, IT Data Security, Enterprise Account Management, Strategic Alliances, and Dynamic Business Presentations. He is recognized by clients and colleagues as a consummate professional with a high degree of personal integrity. He is known for a passion for excellence, a talent for resourceful business solutions, and a capacity for motivational leadership. He has earned two degrees from Pennsylvania State University: a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Science. He is also currently enrolled as doctorate student at Penn State studying Workforce Education and Development.
- **Paul Donecker:** Mr. Donecker has earned several professional certifications including: a Supervisor School Psychological Services K-12, a School Psychologist K-12, and a Comprehensive Social Studies. He is a licensed psychologist by the Commonwealth. He previously worked in the School District of Lancaster for 37 years until retirement. He has taught a variety of subjects in the area of social studies. He has earned two degrees from Millersville University, a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Science.
- **Gail Hawkins-Bush:** Ms. Hawkins-Bush is the Founder, President, and Director of the Overbrook Educational Development Corporation. This educational consulting firm collaborates with community organizations and public and charter schools to foster systemic school reform. She is the former Chief Administrative Officer of Hope Charter School founded by the Juvenile Justice Center and located in the West Oak Lane section of Philadelphia. Previously, Mrs. Hawkins-Bush held the position of Chief Operating Administrator and Director of the Alliance for Progress Charter School founded by the Women's Christian Alliance in North Philadelphia. Before this undertaking, she was Co-Director of the Philadelphia Education Summit, an initiative of former mayor Edward Rendell, former Mayor John Street (then City Council President) and Ernest Jones, President & CEO, Private Industry Council that was designed to involve the public in dialogue around systemic school reform and public engagement.

As a former consultant for the Philadelphia Education Fund and Temple University, she worked with numerous groups to develop and conduct programs that have benefited public schools in the North Philadelphia area. Mrs. Hawkins-Bush has completed all of the necessary coursework toward a Ph.D. in Urban Education and is a Doctoral Candidate at Temple University. Before returning to school to finish her Ph.D. studies, she was Dean of Student Services at Harford Community College in Bel Air, Maryland. Before this endeavor, she held three major positions at CommUnity College of Philadelphia.

Ms. Hawkins-Bush is also a member of several organizations, such as The Coalition of 100 Black Women and the National Political Congress of Black Women and Blacks for Educational Options. She has received numerous awards, including the Image Award from the Black Women in Sports Foundation.

She attended Central State University in Ohio and Cheyney University in Pennsylvania where she earned a B. A. in Education. She also earned her M.Ed. in Counseling Psychology from Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio. She received a Fellowship to the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts where she was awarded a Certificate in Educational Administration.

- **Dr. Alex Schuh:** Dr. Schuh is the founder and Director of FRONTIER 21 Education Solutions, an education research and evaluation firm in Bala Cynwyd, PA. He holds a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied in the Policy Research, Evaluation, and Methods program. His graduate work included policy research and evaluation, test construction and administration, collaborative learning, and uses of computer media for learning. Dr. Schuh earned his B.A. from Yale University in Anthropology.

Dr. Schuh is an experienced educational evaluator, directing evaluation research projects for a wide variety of government agencies, schools and community based organizations. He has conducted both qualitative and quantitative evaluations of many local and national education programs, including Children’s Scholarship Fund programs in multiple states, federal Enhancing Education through Technology (EETT) grants, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, distance education programs, museum-school partnerships, after-school programs, reading programs, technology integration programs, charter schools and teacher training projects.

Since 1997, Dr. Schuh has helped to design and establish more than 40 charter schools across the country, including the first residential charter school, a bilingual (English/Spanish) virtual school, and a charter school based on the ideas of emotional intelligence. Under his Direction, FRONTIER 21 has helped to support the implementation, turnaround and improvement of dozens of charter schools, through fundraising and grant writing, curriculum writing and program development, strategic planning, and assessment implementation and analysis.

References for Each Trustee

Figure 32 includes references for each Trustee.

Figure 32. Trustee References

Name	References
David Taylor, Board President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Rick Santorum, c/o Matt Beynon, National Communications Director -- Santorum for President, 703-307-8633 • Frederick W. Anton III, Chairman, Pennsylvania Manufacturers' Association, 717-232-0737 • Hon. Samuel E. Hayes, House Majority Leader/Republican Whip, Secretary of Agriculture, 814-632-6390
Brian Leinhauser, Board Treasurer	

Name	References
Joseph Harford, Board Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carl A. Marrara, Director of Government Affairs, PA Manufacturers' Association, marrara@pamanufacturers.org • Kevin Shivers, Executive State Director, NFIB/Pennsylvania, Kevin.Shivers@nfib.org • Jason E. High, Chief of Staff, State Senator Scott Wagner, jhigh@pasen.gov
Paul Donecker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Kirk Fisher PAPSA@aol.com 717-892-3988 • Dr. John Tardibuono jtardibuono@aol.com 717-371-3123 • Dominic DeFilippo defilippo@dejazz.com 717-606-6724
Gail Hawkins-Bush	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ernest Jones Esquire, Former President of Urban Affairs Coalition, 2405 North 52nd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19131 • Dr. Denise Wing, Public School Administrator , 2412 North 54th Street, Philadelphia, PA 19131 • Nancy Kirby, Assistant Dean at Bryn Mawr College , 429 Montgomery Avenue, Apt. C-204, Haverford, PA 19041
Dr. Alex Schuh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ed Poznek, CEO, Maritime Academy Charter School 215-535-4555 • Mike Whisman, CEO, Charter Choices, Inc. 215-481-9777 • Ann Waiters, CEO, Education and Community Services, Inc. 215-219-1901

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.

Founding of the Board

As an experienced cyber charter board member previously, David Taylor, Board President and President of the Pennsylvania Manufactures Association, has seen firsthand the need for other educational options for students to be prepared for today's jobs. Mr. Taylor acted as the incorporator in August 2015. He was involved in the writing of this application for submission. Mr. Taylor has continued to gather other interested Pennsylvanians who want to bring this innovative educational option to students in the state. These individuals offer qualifications and skills that will result in an independent and effective Board, as illustrated by their resumes in Appendix I.

Community Groups Involved in Charter Planning

At the direction of the Founding Board, representatives engaged with a number of community based institutions throughout Pennsylvania during the planning process including higher education institutions like Harrisburg University of Science & Technology (HUST) and the Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University. During this process, these institutions were helpful in identifying potential professional development opportunities for Advance teachers and also enrichment opportunities for Advance students. In particular, HUST has committed to providing faculty and resources to support Advance teachers with professional development, to support Advance students with live synchronous online career exploration sessions, and to provide HUST faculty as guest speakers in Advance's STEM Talent Network. In addition, students will have the opportunity to participate in HUST STEM Exploration Camps including "Exploring LEGO Robotics," "Nanobiotechnology Explorations," and "Exploring Computer Coding."

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel will work with school leadership and the Founding Board during the planning year to develop a program which would provide discounted access to the their facility, assistance in organizing Family Nights for Advance students, and student participation in their annual Science Fair. Advance teachers will benefit from The Academy of Natural Sciences of Drexel University professional development in areas of Habitats, Paleontology, Plants, Ecosystems, and Biodiversity. The university will collaborate with Advance teachers to align their lessons plans with student visits to their facility.

One Bright Ray High School is an accelerated school in Philadelphia that serves credit deficient students. The school uses an accelerated pacing model to place credit deficient students back on track for graduation. The school has committed support to provide Advance with teacher-to-teacher professional development for teachers serving credit deficient students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This training will ensure Advance's accelerated pacing model is successful in putting students back on track for graduation.

The Pennsylvania Girls Collaborative Project supports programs that promote gender equity and access including "Science Cheerleader," "Science Exploration for Girls," and "Sisters in STEM". The Pennsylvania Girls Collaborative Project will provide support to Advance students and faculty throughout Pennsylvania through programs, training, and access to STEM-related events and programs in their community through access to the largest STEM database directory in the United States.

The Carnegie Science Center, through their Chevron Center for STEM Education and Career Development, will help Advance foster high-quality teaching through professional development, provide opportunities to apply STEM curriculum in their Center, and give Advance students access to programs including, "Fab Lab," "CanTEEN" career exploration for girls, and summer camps. Carnegie Science Center will also collaborate with Advance teachers to align their lessons plans with student trips to the Center.

Bartram Gardens has committed to partner with Advance to help parents and students apply Advance's STEM curriculum during Parents Nights, individual visits, and summer camps. Bartram Gardens will support professional development of Advance teachers in the area of Botanical Science as well as collaborating with Advance teachers to align their lessons plans with student trips to the Gardens.

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

Recruiting Board Members

The Board will recruit additional members as necessary to form a diverse and well-balanced Board. Any member of the greater Pennsylvania community may seek appointment to the Board, with the exception of employees of Advance and Connections or any person who has been convicted of a felony. The Board will aim to have a parent of an enrolled student on the Governing Board once the school is open.

III.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 first of January, Christmas, or Saturdays unless Monday is the weekly holiday for the entire school year)*
 - *Adopting textbooks*
 - *Appointing or dismissing charter school administrators*
 - *Adopting the annual budget*
 - *Purchasing or selling of land*
 - *Locating new buildings or changing the locations of old ones*

- *Creating or increasing any indebtedness*
- *Adopting courses of study*
- *Designating depositories for school funds*
- *Entering into contracts of any kind where the amount involved exceeds \$200*
- *Fixing salaries or compensation of administrators, teachers or other employees of the charter school.*
- *Entering into contracts with and making appropriations to an intermediate unit, school district or Area Vocational/Technical School for the charter's proportionate share of the cost of services provided or to be provided by the foregoing entities.*

Management of the School

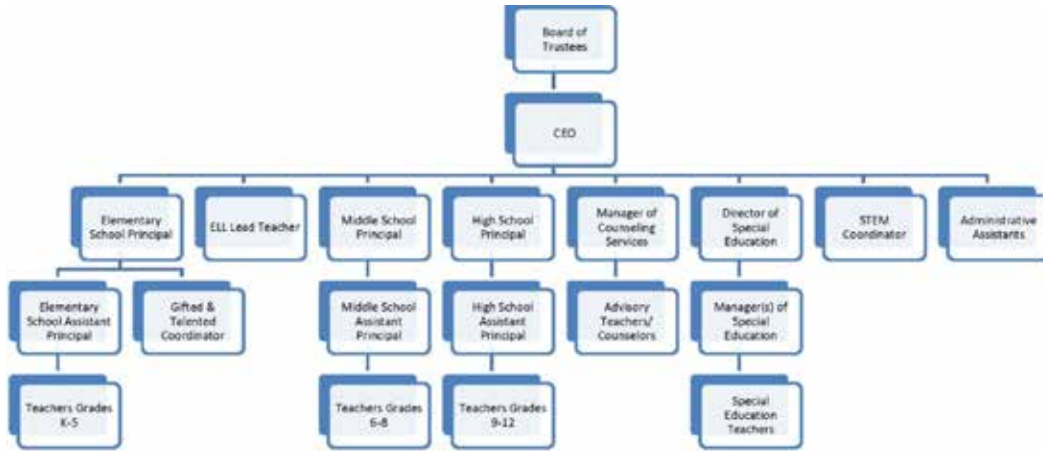
The Pennsylvania non-profit corporation, Advance Cyber Charter School, is the applicant submitting this charter application and will govern the school and will hold the charter. Documentation confirming the filing for the school's non-profit corporation status is provided in Appendix J. The Board of Trustees currently consists of six members, representing education, business, and the community. The Board will employ all staff including the Principal and teachers.

The operating structure of Advance will be similar to a traditional educational environment, with the Principal implementing the policies and procedures of the Board while supervising the teaching staff. The Principal will be responsible for the instructional leadership, curriculum implementation, personnel decisions, facilities management, and any special staffing needs. The Principal will manage the teachers ensuring that each student successfully completes his/her instructional program. The Principal will be responsible for the overall school operation working with parents, students, support staff, and highly qualified teachers who virtually facilitate the student instructional program. In addition, through a Professional Learning Community (PLC), the Principal will have access to the experience, expertise, and best practices of their colleagues leading schools supported by Connections throughout the nation. Curriculum development will be contracted to Connections.

Figure 33 is the anticipated organizational chart for Advance for Year 5 with staffing and positions to support a student body of 4,500. All employees on the organizational chart will be employed by the Board. By Year 5, the Board anticipates employing the following:

- 1 CEO
- 3 Principals
- 3 Assistant Principals
- 12.8 Administrative Assistants
- 1 Director of Special Education
- 2 Managers of Special Education
- 2 Managers of Counseling
- 1 STEM Coordinator
- 1 Gifted & Talented Coordinator
- 33.3 K-5 Teachers
- 98.9 6-12 Teachers
- 11.6 Advisory Teachers/Counselors
- 1 ELL Lead Teacher
- 31.3 Special Education Teachers

Figure 33. Organizational Chart for Year 5



Affirmative Vote

In Appendix K, we have included the minutes from the meeting during which the Board approved by affirmative vote the Statement of Agreement with Connections. The Board of Trustees will record each affirmative vote of a majority of the members showing how each member voted in order to take action on the following subjects (as noted in the By-Laws attached as Appendix L):

- approving the school calendar;
- adopting textbooks;
- appointing or dismissing charter school administrators;
- adopting the annual budget;
- deciding matters related to the operation of the school, including, but not limited to, budgeting, curriculum, operating procedures, and determining general, academic, financial, personnel, and other policies subject to the school’s cyber charter school charter and applicable law;
- employing, discharging, and contracting with necessary professional and nonprofessional employees subject to the school’s cyber charter school charter and the provisions of applicable law;
- approving the hire or termination of contractors and determine the terms and policies under which contractors shall provide services;
- approving the adoption of courses of study;
- approving the appointment or dismissal of school staff;
- approving the creation or increase of indebtedness and designate depositories of school funds;
- approving contracts;
- determining the salary, compensation, and all terms and conditions of employment of school administrators, teachers and other staff; and
- approving the entry into contracts with intermediate units, school districts or area vocational/technical school for the cost of services provided or to be provided by the foregoing entities.

The Board has contracted with Connections for the benefit of a smooth school start up, quality academic materials for students, and national best practices expertise and guidance. Connections has a proven record of success collaborating with public cyber schools and consistently strong ratings from parents.

The Board has also contracted with Connections for special education instructional support due to its experience and positive track record working with and supporting students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, and English Language Learners.

Open Meetings Act

The Board will meet at least eight times per year, but will meet more often if needed to conduct school business in a timely fashion. The regular Board meetings will typically be held at the school site and according to the schedule that will be set by the Board at their Annual Meeting and as set forth in the Open Meetings Act annual resolution. All public board meetings will be advertised as mandated by law in publications of general circulation at the beginning of each school year and posted on the school's website. Board members will be allowed to attend telephonically, according to the limitations of the Open Meetings Act. The agenda for all meetings will be posted at the location of the meeting in accordance with Open Meeting laws and will also be posted on the school's website or any other location identified in the annual resolution to ensure reasonable notice to the public and the school's constituency. The public may directly address the Board at meetings, and members of the public, including parents, will also be able to attend Board meetings via teleconference upon advance request in a manner set by the Board. All Board members will be provided training on compliance with the Open Meetings Act.

B. How will the Board of Trustees be selected?

Selecting the Board of Trustees

Trustees will be elected at a duly organized meeting of the Board by a majority of the Trustees then in office. Members will take office immediately at the annual meeting, or other meeting, at which they are elected. Vacancies on the Board will be filled by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board, or by a sole remaining Trustee, and each person so elected will serve for the balance of the unexpired term. Trustees will be divided into three classes, each class consisting of, as nearly as possible, an equal number of members. The members of the first class will hold office for an initial term of one year; the members of the second class for an initial term of two years; and the members of the third class for an initial term of three years. At the close of each annual meeting, the successors to the class of members whose terms expire that year will commence to hold office for a term of three years or until their successors have been identified. In the event of an increase in the number of Board members, the remaining members will assign the newly created position to the appropriate class or classes so that the three classes continue to consist of, as nearly as possible, an equal number of members.

Once the new Board is seated, the Board members will choose officers as per the bylaws. The officers of the Board will be a President, a Treasurer, and a Secretary.

After the initial Board is selected, the Board will also develop a Nominating Committee which will bear the responsibility of recruiting and interviewing prospective Trustees.

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

Maintain Continuity between Founding Board and Board of Trustees

The current Founding Board intends to transition to the Board of Trustees upon approval of the cyber charter application. Trustees will serve staggered terms ensuring the Board will not have all members terms end simultaneously.

Sustaining the continuity of the vision of the Founding Board requires careful scrutiny of prospective Trustees' commitment to the school's mission as well as continually educating Trustees as to the scope of their legal responsibilities such as duty of loyalty, obedience, and faithfulness to the school's mission. To that end, Advance will hold annual Board retreats centered on effective Board development.

As initial Trustees leave the voting Board, Advance will establish an Advisory Board to provide non-binding strategic advice with greater flexibility in structure. The Advisory Board would not have authority to vote on official matters or bear legal fiduciary responsibilities.

In addition, Advance will actively seek to recruit educators, stakeholders, and professionals to become members of the Board.

Board Training

Board members plan to attend all required governance trainings to ensure that we have ongoing knowledge about governance, oversight requirements, department rules, policies, and procedures. In addition, the Board will allocate funds to attend trainings sponsored or certified by the PDE.

Additional training may also be acquired to ensure smooth operations and effective board practices conducted by a reputable third party vendor. Other trainings may include Effective Board Governance of Public Charter Schools online training module series as well as specific training provided in person, via the Internet, and in print. Training topics may include charter school basics, responsibilities, conflict of interest, effective meeting management, quality Board leadership and policy development. In addition, Board members will have the opportunity to participate in various regional and national conferences to network with other charter board members and further their development as effective board members.

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

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board

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

- protect the legal interests of the charter school and adhere to all applicable laws,
- develop and prepare the school budget,
- practice financial management strategies,
- act as fiduciary of the school,
- provide academic program approval,
- establish a framework for the budget process,
- authorize major expenditures, substantial program changes, etc.,
- elect the officers of the corporation and determine their terms,

- ensure that the charter is achieving its vision and mission,
- set Board policy,
- evaluate and monitor the activities and success of the Principal and other members of the school leadership team,
- govern the operations of the school but leave daily operations to the Principal,
- exercise sound legal and ethical practices and policies,
- manage liabilities wisely,
- advocate good external relations with the community, school districts, media, neighbors, parents, and students,
- hire and evaluate the Principal annually,
- hire contractors, negotiate service agreements, and hold contractors accountable for performance under such agreements,
- review and renew the contract with the cyber educational services provider,
- comply with state and federal reporting requirements,
- practice strategic planning,
- ensure adequate resources and manage them effectively,
- assess the organization's performance including monitoring achievement of accountability framework,
- attend mandatory training annually that is relevant to effective leadership of the charter school,
- act as tribunal for disciplinary hearings,
- approve real estate transactions, and
- negotiate and enter into a charter with PDE.

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

Facilitating a Productive Relationship between the Principal and Teachers

Advance will take the following steps to facilitate a productive relationship between administrators and teachers.

- Weekly meetings
- PLCs
- Open communication
- Training
- Evaluations

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

Parent and Student Involvement

Parents and students will provide leadership and input in school decision-making where appropriate. The Board will meet approximately eight times per year in open, public session to ensure transparency in operation.

Parents actively participate in the school and with the Board. The Board may create ad hoc parent/Learning Coach advisory groups to provide guidance on particular subjects such as community partnerships and neighborhood outreach. Parents will also be encouraged to be involved with the Board's activities. The schedule and agenda for all Board meetings will be posted to the school website. Advance will make all Board minutes available to families on request and will report on Board activities in the newsletter. The Board will aim to have at least one member of the Board be the parent of an enrolled student. The Board will also have a public comment policy to support parent interaction.

As stated previously, parents may participate in Advance in many ways, including:

- Parent representation on the Board
- Board Committees
- StarTrack ratings
- Community Coordinators
- Club Orange

Students provide feedback on courses and teachers. As stated previously, input will be gathered on an ongoing basis via StarTrack. A StarTrack box requesting text feedback and ratings on a five-star scale is embedded in virtually every lesson in the curriculum and on the home page for each Learning Coach. Data gathered from this feedback is examined carefully and acted upon by school staff and Connections. For the 2014-2015 school year, 913,103 lesson ratings were submitted by currently enrolled parents and students attending schools supported by Connections, with an average rating of 4.21 out of five stars.

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 citizen, 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 by-laws.*

By-Laws

The by-laws for the Board of Trustees which outline the number of members, length of terms, offices, committees, grounds for removal, and relationship with school administration are provide in Appendix L. Upon approval of the charter, the by-laws will be reviewed for adoption by the Board.

The bylaws contain a provision for “failure to organize or neglect of duty.” The bylaws 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 will, as a private citizen, engage in any business transaction with Advance or Connections, be employed in any capacity by Advance or Connections, or receive from Advance or Connections any pay for services rendered to Advance or Connections. The Board of Trustees will adopt a conflicts of interest policy as well as a Code of Ethics for compliance with the Ethics Act as well as its obligations as a non-profit corporation under state and federal law (particularly for the 501(c)(3) status).

The Board has a designated a Treasurer, Brian Leinhauser, who will receive all funds including local, state, and federal funds and privately donated funds. The Treasurer will also make payments out of the same on proper orders approved by the Board, signed by the President or Vice President of the Board. The Treasurer may pay out 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 will previously have been approved by the Board, and by which prompt payment Advance will receive a discount or other advantage.

The by-laws also contain procedures for dismissal of an employee. The Board is mindful as well of its obligations as a Board of a non-profit corporation.

Articles of Incorporation

The school’s Articles of Incorporation are included in Appendix M.

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

Board Member Contact Information

Figure 34 includes trustees’ names, addresses, and phone numbers. Resumes are included in Appendix I.

Figure 34. Trustee Information

Name	Address	Phone Number	Resume (in Appendix I)
David Taylor, Board President	3715 Roundtop Road Elizabethtown, PA 17022	(717) 298-1105	✓
Brian Leinhauser, Board Treasurer	101 Lindenwood Drive, Suite 160 Malvern PA 19355	(484) 318-7802	✓
Dr. Joseph Harford, Board Secretary	10808 Conestoga Court Huntingdon, PA 16652-7002	(814) 599-0242	✓
Paul Donecker, Trustee	1300 Pennscott Dr. Landisville, Pa 17538	(717) 898-3415	✓
Gail Hawkins-Bush, Trustee	5111 Dakota Street Philadelphia, PA 19131	(215) 878-7494	
Dr. Alex Schuh, Trustee	178 Summit Lane Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004	(610) 771-0108	✓

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

Contract with Service Provider

The Statement of Agreement between the Board and Connections is included in Appendix N. A letter from Board Counsel to the Board regarding provider selection is included in [Appendix O](#).

Advance has contracted with Connections Academy of Pennsylvania, LLC, to provide the cyber educational program outlined in this charter application. Advance's Board of Trustees will maintain ultimate control of the cyber charter school. The Statement of Agreement details the respective roles of the Board and Connections and the services provided. The Board will employ all staff, including the Principal. The Principal and the Board have the authority to hire and terminate employees or contractors and the Principal has the responsibility to provide the day-to-day direction and supervision.

The Board will maintain responsibility for ensuring that Advance meets all educational, fiscal, and programmatic goals outlined in the charter. The Board will regularly review the services and will set expectations for reporting from Connections to the Board. Under the Statement of Agreement, Connections will be subject to a performance review, conducted at the Board's discretion. The Board will have the right to terminate its contract with Connections if performance obligations are not met and Connections is unable to cure such deficiency after being given reasonable notice, as more fully described in the Statement of Agreement.

IV. FINANCE AND FACILITY

IV.1 FINANCING

- A. *Develop a preliminary startup and operating budget. Use the Pennsylvania Department of Education budget templates available at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/general_fund_budget/12777/pde-2028/606285; draft a preliminary operating budget covering all projected sources of revenue, both public and private, and planned expenditures.*

Preliminary Startup and Operating Budget

The preliminary startup and operating budget using the PDE template is provided in Appendix **ix P.**

Due to current state funding uncertainties, the Board has decided to prepare the budget assuming a reduction in per pupil funding of 8% from current rates. If this funding reduction does not materialize, the Board will seek to increase instruction-related expenditures and to increase its financial reserve. The Board has also conservatively budgeted retirement/pension/tax expenses to match the current PSERS employer contribution rates, although an alternative lower-cost retirement option may be pursued. The Board has also expressly avoided contracting for any services on a “% of revenue” basis, opting instead to procure certain services on the basis of students eligible for billing to districts and/or PDE. This provides a better match of expenses to revenue and will enable the Board to more easily assess the value of the services it is receiving from its service providers. STEM programmatic resources are budgeted to start before the school’s first year of operation to ensure this important initiative is ready on Day 1. Other start-up expenses, such as facility and administrative staff, have been budgeted and will be funded through an interest-bearing loan from Connections. This loan is anticipated to be repaid in full with interest by the end of the second year of operation as shown in the budget. A letter from Connections COO & CFO is provided in Appendix Q.

- 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.*

Competitive Purchasing Procedure

Advance will follow all financing procedures in Section 1725-A of the Charter School Law. Advance will follow the requirements of the Charter School Law, specifically § 17-1715-A(10) charter school requirements for all construction projects and construction related work.

Advance will adhere to or fall within the parameters of the following process:

- A. Seek informal price quotations on purchases that are under \$5,000 except in cases of emergency or when the materials purchased are of such a nature that price negotiations would not result in a savings to the school.
- B. Whenever possible, obtain three competitive price quotations on purchases that are over \$5,000 for a single item, or \$10,000 in aggregate.
- C. Purchase student equipment via RFP, in aggregate, prior to each school year, in order to provide students with the most recent technical advancements, as available and if applicable. This is done in relation to best practices rather than required by law.
- D. This will not apply to those purchases exempted from bidding requirement, as described in 16 Pa.C.S.A. sec. 1802(h).

Bids will be obtained and opened by the school. All orders or contracts should be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder; however, consideration can be given to:

- A. The quality of the item(s) to be supplied
- B. Its conformity with specifications
- C. Suitability to the requirements of the school
- D. Delivery terms
- E. The past performance of vendor

In addition to these factors, the Board may consider and provide a preference to bidders:

- A. Which use a Pennsylvania-based business as the primary contractor
- B. Which use one or more Pennsylvania-based business as subcontractors

The Board reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

The school is authorized to purchase all items within budget allocations that have been previously approved.

The Board will be advised, for prior approval, of all purchases of equipment, materials, and services when the purchase exceeds the function. In the event when an emergency purchase is required in order for the school to maintain its current level of operation, the purchase will be brought to the attention of a designated member of the Board and will subsequently be ratified by the Board at the next regular meeting.

In order to promote efficiency and economy in the operation of the school, the Board requires that the school periodically estimate requirements for standard items or classes of items and make quantity purchases on a bid basis to procure the lowest cost consistent with good quality.

Whenever storage facilities or other conditions make it impractical to receive total delivery at any one time, the total quantity to be shipped, but with staggered delivery dates, will be made a part of the bid specifications.

Before placing a purchase order, the school shall check as to whether the proposed purchase is subject to bid, whether sufficient funds exist in the budget, and whether the material might be available elsewhere in the school. All purchase orders shall be numbered consecutively.

All services/products purchased by the school will be confirmed as received prior to any payment being released to a vendor.

In the interests of economy, fairness, and efficiency in its business dealings, the Board may require that:

- A. Opportunity be provided to as many responsible suppliers as possible to do business with the school.
- B. A prompt and courteous reception, insofar as conditions permit, be given to all who call on legitimate business matters.
- C. Where the requisitioner has recommended a supplier, the school may make alternate suggestions to the requisitioner if, in his/her judgment, better service, delivery, economy, or utility can be achieved by changing the proposed order.
- D. Upon the placement of a purchase order, the school will commit the expenditure against a specific line item to guard against the creation of liabilities in excess of appropriations.

Employees may be held personally responsible for anything purchased without a properly signed purchase order or authorization.

The Board may acquire office equipment as defined in law by lease, by installment payments, by entering into lease-purchase agreements, or by lease with an option to purchase, provided the contract sets forth the terms of such a purchase.

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

Fund Raising Efforts

The Board does not anticipate relying upon fundraising efforts to generate capital or to supplement the per pupil allocations (PPA). The Board will focus the school's greatest level of attention on instructional activities and will evaluate any need to pursue fundraising opportunities in the future. As a protective measure to ensure financial sustainability, Advance will work with Connections to establish terms that protect Advance from deficits by offering "service credits" (discounts on Connections-provided products and services) as needed. A letter from the Connections' COO/CFO is provided in Appendix Q.

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 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 Oversight

The Board is responsible for the oversight and approval of school financial policies and procedures. The Board will ensure that Advance will establish systems and controls that will result in the timely completion of financial reporting as required by law, regulation, or the charter, including a report of budgeted and actual expenses. The Board will provide any information required by the PDE.

Daily financial services will be provided by Connections directly or through a Pennsylvania-based third party provider (in whole or in part). The agreement with Connections gives the Board the ability to contract directly for these services with a third party provider (in whole or in part) and no services rendered by the third-party service provider will be duplicative of any services provided by Connections.

Depositing Funds

The Treasurer of the Board will deposit funds belonging to the school in a depository account approved by the Board. Reconciliation of this account will be performed monthly and transactions will be reviewed to ensure funds have been deposited in a manner consistent with the policies of the school. Advance will maintain its accounts at a federally insured banking institution within the state in compliance with applicable state laws.

Investing Funds

Based upon the cash balances of the school, the Board may invest school funds in a savings account at a federally insured banking institution. The Board will ensure that any investment of school funds will be maintained in an authorized account.

The Board will invest charter school funds subject to the standards set forth in 24 PS 4-440.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code. Example investments include:

- 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 of 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.

Financial Processes

Advance will follow a financial and accounting plan that is compliant with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and will provide an accurate accounting of all of its finances, ensure sufficient information for audit purposes, and provide data in the format needed for accurate and timely reporting.

The Board will use a sound budgeting and forecasting policy and procedures to monitor revenue and authorize expenditures according to any restrictions placed on such revenue. Developing the annual budget will be an iterative process incorporating input from key stakeholders, including the Principal and designated members of the Board. A preliminary budget based on initial assumptions will be presented to the Board and will be approved by the Board before the start of the school year. This budget will then be compared to the actual and forecasted results on a monthly basis.

Advance will develop and maintain simple check request and purchase order forms to document the authorization of non-payroll expenditures. All proposed expenditures will be approved by a designee of the Board. The designee will review the proposed expenditure for approval and to determine whether it is consistent with the Board's adopted budget. Supporting documentation will be required for all expenditures.

Advance will use industry-standard accounting software to ensure proper bookkeeping. The school will maintain detailed accounting records consistent with the accounting and financial reporting manuals prescribed by PDE.

Financial Reporting

Each month, Advance will produce a set of detailed financial statements that include a statement of activities, a balance sheet, bank reconciliations, invoice detail, payroll registers, any grant fund expenditures, cash receipts from all sources, and a transaction listing of all activity. The Treasurer of the Board will be provided with access to such financial documents for review as an increased measure of oversight and governance.

During the Board's regularly scheduled meetings, a financial report will be presented that will include the current results of the school's financial activities along with a comparison of projected annual costs and the annual approved budget. Budget variances and matters of financial significance will be discussed with the Board and necessary actions and Board approvals will be taken.

Annual Report

The Treasurer will settle the accounts annually with the Board for each school year. Pursuant to 24 P.S. §4-437, Advance's accounts will be audited annually.

Once Advance's charter is approved and prior to the end of the first fiscal year, the Governing Board will enter into a contract with an independent Certified Public Accounting firm chosen by the Board to conduct an audit of its annual financial statements. The annual financial report (PDE-2057) will be completed and filed with the PDE by October 31, beginning with October 31 after the first year of operations. The audit will be conducted in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards and will meet the specific compliance requirements set forth by Pennsylvania.

IV.2 FACILITY

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

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

Address of Physical Facilities

Advance will lease permanent space for administrative and teaching staff located at Governor's Plaza North, 2101 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA to serve as the main site where administrative and teaching staff will work. Student records will be maintained at this location. The site will be available for PDE staff to visit when the school is in operation and interacting with students.

The initial physical facility will need to be flexible for growth and future needs. The site will include at least one conference room with doors for use in IEP conferences and other special education related activities. To the extent that the site will be used for student support, the site will be used only for testing, tutoring, and supplemental services related to special education.

As the school grows, the Board may explore additional satellite facilities throughout the state. Advance understands that facilities will be for auxiliary services and not to act as brick-and-mortar schools. Students will be at physical locations only for the time needed to participate in these services and activities. As suggested in the Basic Education Circular from 2013 and revised in 2015, Advance will utilize any satellite sites for standardized and/or other testing, tutoring, and/or supplemental services such as special education services.

At least 60 days prior to opening any additional facilities, Advance will provide the PDE the following:

- The name and description of each individual activity and service to be provided at the facility.
- The identification of necessary background and clearance records for the individuals providing services at the facility.
- An explanation of whether the facility is necessary for providing the service and, if so, why.
- A description of alternatives in place for providing the services at locations or in methods other than at the facility to ensure equitable access to the services by students who are not able to travel to the facility.
- Copies of policies concerning student presence at a physical facility, including:
 - Policies for when student presence at the facility might be required, such as for standardized testing or for student and/or parent meetings with school staff.
 - Policies on how presence at the facility is monitored.
- Any additional information requested by PDE.

Through an area survey of Harrisburg, potential types of site locations were evaluated during the summer of 2015. In Appendix R, we include a letter of intent between the Board and the owner to lease a property located at Governor's Plaza North, 2101 North Front Street, Harrisburg, PA. Once the charter is finalized, Advance will follow a specific, fast-paced process for securing this lease, or locating comparable space and also conducting start-up procedures.

This process includes:

- Initial requirements reviews
- Site inventory (space) surveys
- Down-selection of spaces for physical review
- Physical on-site space reviews
- Down-selection of spaces for competitive proposal process
- Proposal and Best-and-Final submissions
- Selection of spaces
- Lease negotiations and execution
- Landlord demos and build-outs
- Installation of Tenant improvements
- Occupancy

The facility selected by the school will be approximately 6,000 rentable square feet depending upon community, site availability, and needs of the school. The facility will be located in standard office space. The school will enter into a five-year lease with extension options at the school's election. Key factors considered in the selection process that will be included:

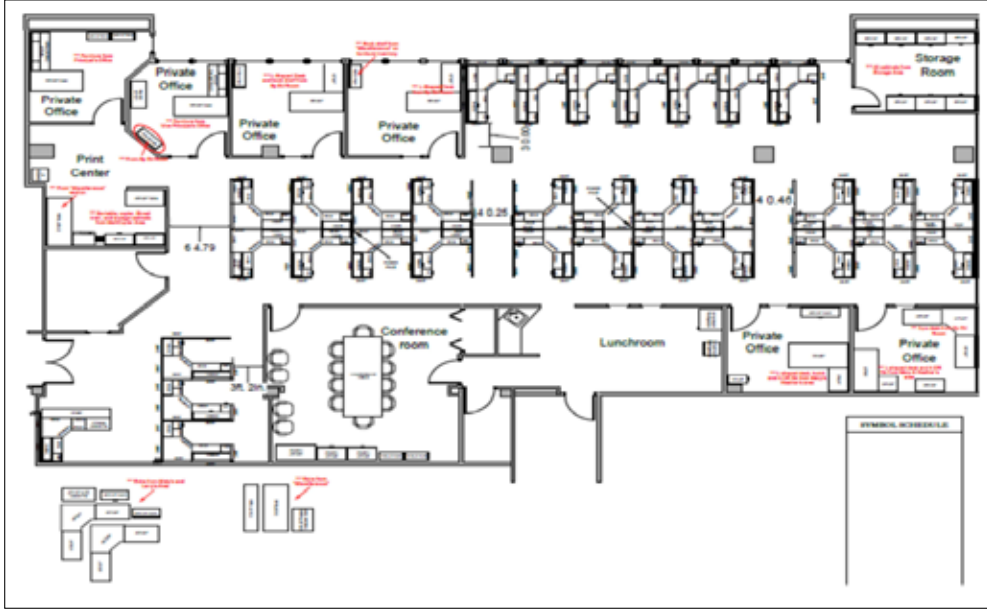
- ADA compliance
- Suite layout
- Stability of landlord
- Ability of landlord to provide a turn-key solution
- Cost on an annual and a full term basis
- Security for both the facility and the surrounding area
- Safety for teachers and staff
- Ease of access (location) for teachers and staff
- Special termination provisions in the event of charter suspension or revocation
- Technology availability, including bandwidth for school operations
- Lighting (natural and otherwise)

The school will tailor the build out of the facility to meet the specific needs of the school. During the search for a facility, the Board will identify locations which already have an existing build out close to what the school's facility needs will be to minimize build out costs.

Figure 35 is a sample layout/floor plan for a 6,000 square foot facility which will include:

- Reception area
- 33 workstations and 5 offices
- 1 LiveLesson Room and 1 Conference Room
- IT/MIS Room
- Storage
- Kitchenette area
- Bathrooms in common area of building

Figure 35. Facility Floor Plan



Ownership of the Facilities

A letter of intent to lease has been signed and is included Appendix R. The formal lease has not yet been signed since the charter has not yet been approved. The Board will do so once the charter is approved. Certain key terms are included in the lease. These include, but are not limited to:

- early termination provision in the event of charter revocation or non-renewal;
- turnkey demo and build-out of space by landlord at landlord's expense;
- options for renewal;
- Rights of First Offer or First Refusal, when possible, on contiguous space;
- inability of landlord to re-locate the premises;
- rent abatement in the event of diminution of space;
- insurance terms consistent with Advance's policies;
- pre-approval for tenant's improvements (voice/data/electric); and
- financial terms.

- 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.*

Site Suitable for Cyber Charter School

The site for the school's administrative offices is identified in the Letter of Intent to Lease. This building will include administrative offices and infrastructure for school operations. The site will be in compliance with the necessary building and zoning codes as well as accessible to individuals — including staff, parents and students — with disabilities.

Having the teachers located in the physical center allows for expanded professional development opportunities, ensures quality control and visibility into the teaching process by school administration, and promotes collaboration amongst teachers to excel student achievement. The site can also host parent teacher conferences as needed. As previously stated, students will participate in state proficiency tests depending upon grade level. The school will set up in-person, proctored locations for state testing throughout the state based on the geographic location of the student population. Advance wants to make clear that any school sites will be for auxiliary services and not primary locations as brick-and-mortar schools. The Board is aware and will follow the Basic Education Circular, "Cyber Charter School Operations and Proper Use of Physical Facilities" issued July 2013.⁶²

Advance has analyzed several locations, including potential shared/joint use facilities, based upon criteria needed to run an effective cyber school. Advance has also considered potential regional locations throughout the state to be responsive to families including families from disadvantaged and rural areas, while complying with Charter School Law. Cyber education requires minimal build out and can be accomplished in the timeframe needed. Criteria used to analyze facilities include:

- Central location — easy access from major roadways, allowing students and staff from various areas to reach the facilities easily. The facilities will have adequate space for teacher cubicles, a Principal's office, a conference room, and a break room/kitchenette.
- A certificate of occupancy, air-conditioning, heating and illuminated fluorescent lights, male and female bathrooms, parking, handicapped accessible, and fully equipped with sprinklers and other fire safety equipment.
- Necessary infrastructure to support the computer network and phone system.
- In compliance with or capable of modification to bring them into compliance with all local building, zoning and health and safety requirements.
- Meet all local minimum Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- Ample parking accommodations.
- Comprised of approximately 20% office space and 80% open area for cubicles.
- Secure location for storing testing materials and protected student data.

Advance will take the necessary steps to secure the Certificate of Occupancy for the school site.

⁶²

<http://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/Codes%20and%20Regulations/Basic%20Education%20Circulars/Purdons%20Statutes/Cyber%20Charter%20School%20Use%20of%20Physical%20Facilities.pdf>

Renovation to the Facility and Compliance with Applicable Building Codes

Advance's space demolition and subsequent build-out, performed by the landlord, will result in a typical office environment. The landlord will provide turnkey solutions with standard building finishes, pursuant to a Computer Aided Design (CAD) test fit provided to the landlord by Advance. This method of securing space – with the landlord responsible for demo and build-out enables Advance to mitigate risk in standing up the workspace and take advantage of the landlord's experience in meeting local building codes. Advance will provide the space layouts to guide the landlord's efforts and then establish and understand the landlord's amortization schedule for tenant improvements.

Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities

The site will meet all local minimum Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. It will include at least one conference room with doors for use in IEP conferences and other special education related activities. The facilities will comply with all applicable state and local health and safety requirements. Advance will follow applicable city planning review procedures.

Services of the Facility

Heating, ventilating, lighting, and water will be supplied to the premises by the landlord as part of the lease agreement. Janitorial services may be provided by the landlord or Advance will need to contract for services to maintain a clean environment within the premises (as stated herein).

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

Maintaining Facility on a Daily Basis

The lease for the site will provide for necessary repairs and for janitorial service.

In the event the lease for the site does not provide janitorial services, then Advance will source and contract with a reputable janitorial service for its cleaning needs. To the extent that the landlords are not required in the lease to maintain the equipment in the premises (e.g., HVAC), then Advance will source and contract with reputable contractors and enter into service agreements.

Maintaining Facility on an Extended Basis

The selected facility will have a full service management group under contract by the landlord to handle maintenance, repairs, and necessary improvements to the space. If the chosen facility does not have a management team then Advance will contract with a reputable management company to maintain the property on an extended basis throughout the lease term.

Advance will take the necessary steps to secure the Certificate of Occupancy (CO) for the site. Depending on local protocols, the CO may be for the entire facility inclusive of the site.

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

Acquisition of a Facility/Land

The school's cyber education model requires only leased office space as the school site for both the teachers and administrators to conduct school operations. This significantly reduces financial risks associated with large debt obligations that are often assumed by traditional schools.

E. Describe facility financing plans.

Facility Financing Plans

With the anticipation of utilizing leased facilities, the Board does not intend to secure any long-term debt to finance the purchase of a school facility.

Our build-out will be an office environment suitable for optimizing site operations. The landlord will provide a turn-key solution with standard building finishes based on our CAD test fit. We anticipate capital outlay to occupy the leased space to be fairly minimal and limited to furniture and equipment, not Leasehold Improvements.

IV.3 LIABILITY AND INSURANCE

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

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

Health Insurance Benefits

Per charter school law, Advance will offer a health care benefit package similar to that of an aggregate of local school districts. The comprehensive package will include a choice of major medical plans, vision coverage, dental coverage, life and disability insurance, as well as paid sick leave.

An amount equaling 20% of employee payroll has been allocated for these benefits, an amount sufficient to provide for a competitive package of health benefits. Data from the National Compensation Survey indicate that in 2010 only 25% of employers that offer health benefits allocated in excess of 18.6% of payroll for the coverage.⁶³

Insurance Coverage

The school will have a comprehensive insurance program in place as dictated by applicable laws and the approved charter. The insurance program will include , but is not limited to Commercial General Liability, Sexual Abuse and Molestation, Educator's Legal Liability, Employment Practices, Liability, Crime (Employee Dishonesty), Property, Automobile, Workers Compensation, and Directors & Officers Liability. The policies will cover the school's operations, extracurricular activities, and volunteer activities. Copies of the certificates of insurance evidencing ability to provide coverage are included in Appendix E.

Through its Statement of Agreement with Connections, Advance will be included under the existing comprehensive Connections' insurance program and able to take advantage of the efficient pricing available due to competitive national pricing. The insurance program will include the following policies and limits and include the school's operations, extracurricular activities, and volunteer activities.

⁶³ <http://kff.org/health-costs/issue-brief/snapshots-employer-health-insurance-costs-and-worker-compensation/>

- Commercial General Liability - \$25,000,000 total limit
- Sexual Abuse and Molestation - \$10,000,000 total limit
- Educator's Legal Liability - \$10,000,000 total limit
- Employment Practices, Liability - \$10,000,000 total limit
- Crime (Employee Dishonesty) - \$5,000,000 total limit
- Property - Insured to replacement cost value
- Automobile Liability - \$25,000,000 total limit
- Workers' Compensation - Statutory
- Directors & Officers Liability - \$1,000,000 total limit

IV.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)

Enrollment Procedures

Equal Opportunity Student Recruitment Plan - Student recruitment and enrollment policies need to be balanced with the mutual goals of ensuring that families are aware of their choices with the Board's need to be fiscally conservative. Enrollment will follow all Pennsylvania rules and regulations generally beginning in March for the school year starting in September.

Through its recruitment/marketing and application guidance activities, Advance will regularly disclose full details about its program and encourage families to carefully consider its academic and parental involvement demands before applying. Advance will also provide tools (such as contact with other parents, with permission, and contact with a Connections counselor, if desired) to help parents decide whether Advance is truly the right fit for their children and themselves.

As stated previously, Advance will contract with Connections to implement and conduct the enrollment process on behalf of Advance, under the oversight of the Board and in accordance with placement and withdrawal policies and procedures adopted by the Board and reviewed by Board Counsel, which are consistent with local, state, and federal law. The enrollment policies will be reviewed by Board Counsel and approved by the Board as part of the overall school handbook.

Connections' enrollment service center provides student enrollment and placement support, as well as enrollment processing, set up, and support in compliance with local, state, and Federal law, and acts acting as Advance's agent throughout the enrollment process. The enrollment process is fully integrated with and supported through Connexus.

Families may commence the enrollment process online using Connexus or by calling a toll-free number for assistance. Connexus is available to students and their families, and to other authorized users according to their permissions, 24/7/365.

A detailed description of the Enrollment Procedures is provided in Section I.4.F of this application.

Reports of Enrollment and Withdrawals

Advance will follow Section 1748-A of the Charter School Law. Within 15 days of enrolling a student, Advance and the parent or guardian, will notify the student's school district of residence of the enrollment through the use of the notification form developed by the PDE.

If the student's school district receiving the notification determines that the student is not a resident of the school district:

- Within seven days, the school district will notify Advance and the PDE that the student is not a resident and provide the basis for the determination.
- Within seven days of receiving the school district notice of non-residency, Advance will provide a response to both the school district and the PDE.
 - If Advance agrees that the student is not a resident of the school district, it will determine the proper district of residence and notify the correct district of residence of the enrollment through use of the notification form developed by the PDE.
 - If Advance reconfirms that the student is a resident of the school district, it will indicate so in the response. The school district may then appeal to the PDE for a final decision.

If a student becomes ineligible or leaves the charter school, Advance will ensure all appropriate paperwork is submitted and/or forwarded to the new school and Connexus will be updated. As per Section 1748-A of Charter School Law, Advance, and the parent or guardian, will provide written notification to the school district of residence using the Charter School Notification form within 15 days following the withdrawal of a student. The Charter School Notification form includes the student's name, last known address, and withdrawal date.

Attendance Procedures

Students in a cyber school program will not have physical classrooms but still must meet all regulatory requirements for attending public schools. Attendance will be tracked and reported through Connexus. Learning Coaches will ensure that students meet their school's attendance requirements and that the student's attendance is properly documented within Connexus.

While students will have a great deal of flexibility regarding when and where they complete their coursework, they will nevertheless be held fully accountable for meeting all state-mandated attendance requirements. Attendance recorded by the Learning Coach and verified by teachers will ensure Advance is properly calculating and adequately monitoring that students complete 30 instructional hours per week and 180 instructional days per school year.

Entering attendance is expected to be taken seriously as a regular part of the school day for the Learning Coach. Advance will verify that the attendance records are accurate, which includes not only the attendance hours recorded by the Learning Coach, but also the lesson and assignment completion rates and the amount of communication the student has with the teacher. During course design and alignment, lesson and assignment completion times are estimated, thus student lesson and assignment completion can be used to estimate amount of student time spent on learning.

Student attendance will be verified by both teachers and Learning Coaches and logged within Connexus. All students must complete assigned lessons and submit assessments. Students and/or their Learning Coaches must also participate in/respond to telephone calls, WebMail messages, and/or web conferencing (LiveLesson sessions) contacts, as well as in-person contacts (if required) with a teacher during the school's regularly scheduled school hours.

Teachers also verify attendance records on a regular basis. If a teacher has concerns about the validity of a student's attendance records, he or she may revise the student's recorded hours of attendance based work completion rates and/or contact the school's Attendance Coordinator for further assistance. A Learning Coach will be notified if attendance records are changed. Therefore, even if a Learning Coach records a high number of instructional hours in the attendance records, if a student's work completion rates are not on track and/or if he or she fails to communicate on a regular basis with the teacher, he or she will be flagged for review using an Approaching Alarm or Alarm status. This Approaching Alarm or Alarm status is displayed in Connexus and will require follow-up action from the school to ensure that the student completes his or her lessons, assessments, and required weekly hours of attendance. In reviewing attendance documentation, teachers must determine that each student has met or exceeded the required amount of instructional time stipulated by state regulations.

Advance's administration will monitor and review attendance records on a weekly basis. After a predetermined amount of time (usually 10 days) or as of a specific date (per state regulations), Connexus will no longer allow a teacher or Learning Coach to edit past attendance records. Any requests for adjustments to the "locked" records must first go to the Homeroom Teacher (in writing via WebMail or email) for review and approval and then to the Attendance Coordinator for adjustment.

While schools will not be kept open for students or staff on weekends and select holidays, students may record attendance hours on Saturday and/or Sunday to meet their weekly requirements. However, if a student does not participate in school activities on any day Monday through Friday, his or her Learning Coach MUST enter 0 hours on this day.

These expectations and procedures for attendance will be documented in the School Handbook, alongside the state requirements for weekly and annual hours of instruction. Parents must agree to the policies in the Handbook when completing enrollment. Attendance procedures will be addressed in trainings for all stakeholders (Learning Coaches, students, teachers, and administrators). If a student accrues too many unexcused absences, Advance will follow state law in reporting non-attendance and truancy.

Unexcused Absences and Truancy

Per section 2E of the Basic Education Circular, Compulsory Attendance and Truancy Elimination Plan (24 PS 13-1332), in order to actively engage in cases of habitual truancy, Advance staff will report cases when a student has been absent three days, or their equivalent, without a lawful excuse. If a pattern of truancy develops, Advance will initiate a systemic response to address student attendance. Advance will engage with parents neglectful in providing written excuses or written excuses in a timely fashion.

Regular attendance is imperative to maximize student learning. Advance will offer flexibility regarding how many hours each day students spend on school work and which days of the week they complete that work. Due to this flexibility, Advance will have a zero tolerance policy for truancy. Parents will be held legally responsible for ensuring that their students are fully participating in school, even if they have designated another adult as their student's Learning Coach.

In order to avoid truancy, the parent must ensure that the following activities take place:

- Learning Coach enters attendance hours each day of school;
- Student completes all assigned lessons and assessments;
- Student participates in educational activities for an appropriate number of hours, as outlined in the school handbook;

- Student is available for regularly scheduled telephone calls with teachers;
- Student attends all assigned LiveLesson® sessions;
- Student demonstrates that he/she is doing his/her own schoolwork;
- Student attends mandatory state testing; and
- Learning Coach communicates with the homeroom teacher in advance if student needs to deviate from the regular school calendar (for example, switching a vacation and school day).

If a student's teachers become aware that the student is not fully participating in school as required by state law and Board policy, the student may be marked with an unexcused absence at the teacher's discretion. In addition, the Attendance Coordinator may override the number of attendance hours previously entered by a Learning Coach by entering the code for an unexcused absence (U) if the student's teachers believe the student has not participated as required. The final decision about whether an absence is considered unexcused will be made by the Principal.

Missing a day of school will be defined as missing a day's worth of hours in one week.

Child Accounting

When billing resident school districts for local revenue, charter schools are required to calculate Average Daily Membership (ADM) for each student. Advance will use the policies listed herein to establish the First Day Educated and Last Day Educated for each student.

V. ADMINISTRATION

V.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.*

Publicizing the School

Advance will publicize to attract a sufficient pool of eligible students, including students with special needs and ELL students in the following ways. Marketing will include broad reach media channels covering all geographies as well as reaching out to diverse students and families in the state.

- **Direct mail:** Advance will conduct direct mail campaigns announcing the school to families with students throughout Pennsylvania. In a typical mailing, a postcard will be sent out inviting parents to attend an Information Session, visit the website, and/or contact the call center.
- **Website:** Connections will create and maintain a website with a special link to Advance. The website will contain information about Advance, its approach, its curriculum, and FAQs and their answers. The site will also include enrollment information and procedures, information sessions schedules, and other useful tools for prospective students and their families.
- **Media outreach:** Advance will make use of diverse paid media, for example, advertisements in local newspapers, radio, and online media. Advance will also make use of non-paid/earned media, primarily to shape public opinion, raise awareness of the school and share family/school news.
- **Referrals/word of mouth:** As Advance grows, it anticipates that an increasing number of families who come to the school will enroll due to positive feedback received from their friends, community members, traditional school leaders and family. In schools supported by Connections nationally, 93% of parents say they would recommend the Connections program to parents whose children are not enrolled in the program.
- **Search Engines and Social Media:** Advance will be linked to leading Internet search engines with local reference capability to help Pennsylvania families looking for a cyber school option to find this high-quality school. In addition, Advance benefits from Facebook, Twitter, and other social media outreach conducted by parent advocates.

Connexus will allow for accurate collection and analysis of the school's demographic data. The data collected in this way will then be used to generate reports for the Board and the PDE. It may also be used to evaluate and modify the school's outreach and recruiting strategies when necessary. The Board and all school staff will focus on accountability and abide by student data privacy laws and regulations. Figure 36 provides a sample calendar of recruitment activities. The calendar will be revised and finalized once the school is approved.

Figure 36. Calendar of Recruitment Activities to Open in Fall of 2016

Recruitment Activities Calendar	
August 2015 – January 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Connections to select locations and finalize schedule of activities Face-to-face and Virtual Information Sessions
January 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PDE approves charter application
March 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch school website Issue press release announcing Advance’s approval Begin advertising (broadcast and online) Email and call prospective families Mail postcards to prospective parents Attend targeted community events Re-launch school’s Facebook page
April 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue advertising (broadcast and online) Email and call prospective families Attend targeted community events Pitch stories and promote information sessions through local media Begin information sessions (online and in-person)
May 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue advertising (broadcast and online) Email and call prospective families Attend targeted community events Pitch stories and promote information sessions through local media Continue information sessions (online and in-person)
June 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue advertising (broadcast and online) Email and call prospective families Attend targeted community events Pitch stories and promote information sessions through local media Mail postcards to prospective parents Continue information sessions (online and in-person)
July 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue advertising (broadcast, print, and online) Email and call prospective families Attend targeted community events Pitch stories and promote information sessions through local media Continue information sessions (online and in-person)
August 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue advertising (broadcast and online) Email and call prospective families Attend targeted community events Pitch back-to-school stories and promote information sessions through local media Back-to-school parties Continue information sessions (online and in-person)
September 6, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Day of School
September 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue online advertising Email and call prospective families Pitch stories promoting school staff and interesting family stories to local media Continue online information sessions
October 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email and call prospective families Pitch stories promoting school staff and interesting family stories to local media Continue online information sessions
November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email and call prospective families Pitch stories promoting school staff and interesting family stories to local media Continue online information sessions
December 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email and call prospective families Pitch stories promoting school staff and interesting family stories to local media Continue online information sessions
January 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email and call prospective families Pitch stories promoting school staff and interesting family stories to local media Continue online information sessions Build local content on website (student and staff profiles)

Recruitment Activities Calendar	
February 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin online advertising for the 2017-18 school year • Email and call prospective families • Pitch stories promoting school staff and interesting family stories to local media • Continue online information sessions
March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin advertising (broadcast, print, and online) for the 2017-18 school year • Email and call prospective families • Mail postcards to prospective parents • Attend targeted community events

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

Outreach to Students and Families

Upon approval of the charter, Advance will actively recruit families that represent the full cultural, demographic, and socioeconomic range of Pennsylvania. Advance will use a variety of means to inform families about its services and provide them an opportunity to enroll, including:

- **Information sessions:** Advance will conduct multiple information sessions across Pennsylvania to assure that families from a variety of communities are able to participate. Information sessions may be online, and families may attend the session from home via their computers. Advance will educate families about the school and provide a complete array of information, including its curriculum, teaching methods, technology resources and testing requirements. The Board hosted 2 information sessions, both virtually and in-person, prior to submitting the charter application. Sessions were held on the dates/times listed previously in Figure 20.
- **Telephone and e-mail outreach:** Advance will contact families who request information by telephone, electronic mail, and postal mail in order to provide literature and other valuable program information that prepares families for a successful cyber school experience.
- **Telephone/e-mail information service:** Advance will launch and maintain a toll-free information line and an email information service to answer parents' questions.
- **Community and youth services partnerships:** As part of its outreach process Advance will provide information about the school to the community that may include: youth-serving organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs, parent groups, health-related organizations, and organizations for young actors, dancers, and athletes.

V.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.

Admission Methods

Advance will be open to all eligible students statewide and will not discriminate in its admission policies or practices. The Admissions Policy is included in Appendix S with the Board Policies.

Advance will actively work to ensure a statewide racial and ethnic balance in the school; however, in such a manner to ensure nondiscriminatory preference or practices. Partnerships and outreach efforts using a variety of community and youth organizations may aid in this process. Through extensive community outreach and full disclosure about the school's program, Advance will attract those students and families who are most committed to student success in a cyber school setting. As part of that process, Advance will be certain to provide parents with a clear and accurate picture of the cyber learning experience so they can make the most

appropriate choices for their students. This will be accomplished through virtual and in-person Information Sessions, Parent-to-Parent Events, and School events. Advance will strongly encourage families to attend an Information Session prior to enrollment, explaining the benefits and importance of attending a session.

Connexus ensures accurate collection and analysis of student information and demographic data. The data collected in this way will then be used to generate reports for the Board and the PDE. It may also be used to evaluate and modify the school's outreach and recruiting strategies when necessary. The Board and all school staff will focus on accountability and abide by student data privacy laws and regulations.

No tuition: As a public school, Advance will not charge tuition or any prohibited fees. Outreach communications and the school handbook will inform families that the school is tuition-free.

Non-sectarian: As a public school, Advance will be non-sectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and all other operations.

Place of residence: Admission to Advance will not be determined according to the place of residence of any pupil, or his or her parent or guardian, within Pennsylvania, except for such restrictions or preferences that are required or allowed by law. However, the school's enrollment process will include rigorous screening for verification of residency (address check, etc.). This important process will ensure that only Pennsylvania residents are allowed to enroll in the school.

At various times during the school year, to comply with state regulations and reporting, and/or testing processes and requirements, Advance may temporarily "freeze" enrollment. Students can continue to register and submit documents during this defined "enrollment freeze". Once the temporary "enrollment freeze" is over, students will again be able to complete the enrollment process. The Board will delegate to the Principal the authority to define and implement these temporary "enrollment freeze" periods. Students and families will be notified of these dates.

Eligibility Criteria

As per Section 1723-A, Advance will be open to all students statewide on a space available basis and will not discriminate in its admission 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.

Students must meet minimum/maximum age requirements and will be subject to Pennsylvania current age restrictions for public school admission and funding or qualify for an exception as noted in state regulations.

For students in Kindergarten, Advance will enroll students who meet the admission age that is determined by their resident school district. Advance will follow 24 P.S. § 13-1304 Admission of beginners, which states, *"Admission shall be limited to beginners who have attained the age of five years and seven months before the first day of September if they are to be admitted in the fall, and to those who have attained the age of five years and seven months before the first day of February if they are to be admitted at the beginning of the second semester."*

For students in first grade, Advance will enroll students who are six years old on or before September 1 in the school year for which they are enrolling.

As per 22 Pa. Code Section 11.12 the maximum age for high school students is 21 years of age.

Specific state requirements for enrollment eligibility will be available for interested families on the school's website. The school will abide by all federal, state, and local policies and guidelines for student admission and will not impose admission requirements that are inconsistent with these policies and guidelines.

The school will comply with the McKinney-Vento Act regarding homeless students. Students who meet the definition of homeless shall not be barred from enrolling due to lack of required documents. The Principal will serve as the liaison for homeless students.

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

Compliance with Special Education Laws for Admission

Open and Fair Admissions Process: Advance admissions procedures will comply with IDEA 2004 and Civil Rights protections. Advance will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and will comply with the same Federal and State audit requirements as do other public schools in Pennsylvania.

The Special Education policies, including non-discrimination policies, are included in Appendix C.

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.

Timetable Used for Admitting Students

Tentative Enrollment and Lottery Dates (Subject to Change) Enrollment Dates:

- Enrollment begins: Tuesday 3/1/2016
- Lottery Determination Date/Close of Open Enrollment: Friday 4/1/2016
- Lottery If Needed: Monday 4/11/2016

Lottery Procedure (if required)

Advance is committed to admitting as many students in grades K-12 by Year 5 as possible and does not envision holding a lottery. Should there be the setting of firm enrollment limits and projected grade levels served, the following procedure will be implemented:

Advance will hold an annual open application period during the spring semester of each school year for the following school year. During this period students who are interested in enrolling must begin and complete the enrollment process through Stage 2, with the exception of course placement. No student will be admitted during the application period.

For the first year, as per Section 1723-A, after accounting students of parents or guardians who actively participated in the development of the school, if there are more students that have completed the process through Stage 2 (with the exception of course placement) than the enrollment cap allowed for the school year, a random lottery will be conducted to determine who is eligible to enroll.

If the school is not oversubscribed and no lottery is needed, students will be enrolled on a first come/first serve basis as they complete the enrollment process.

If a random number lottery is needed, Advance will post the date, time and location of the lottery on its website Enrollment page. The lottery will be open to the public but attendance is not required. The lottery may or may not be conducted in grade clusters. The grade order in which the lottery is drawn and the total number of students selected may vary each year depending on the number of students who receive an enrollment preference.

Advance will use an electronically generated random number lottery to determine who can attend. The lottery will be open to the public but attendance is not required. If a random number lottery is needed, Advance will post the date, time, and location of the lottery on its website enrollment page.

When all slots are filled via the lottery, students not selected will be placed on a waiting list in the order of their lottery number and made an offer to enroll in descending order as space becomes available. The waiting list is for one school year only and will not carry over from school year to school year. A new application must be submitted each year.

After Advance's first year, the school will give enrollment preference to:

- (1) Students who have been admitted to the school through an appropriate admission process and who remain in attendance through subsequent grades;
- (2) Siblings of students already admitted to or attending Advance; and
- (3) Children of those actively involved in the development of the cyber charter school, including children of Board members. The spaces will be reserved until a published date and will be released if not filled.

Students selected in the lottery will be provided an offer of enrollment. The offer of enrollment must be accepted within a specified period or the student will forfeit his/her space to the next student on the waiting list. After an offer of enrollment has been accepted, students will have a designated period of time to complete all enrollment requirements or forfeit their space to the next student on the waiting list.

As previously stated, Advance does not anticipate an enrollment cap and therefore does not foresee the need for a lottery.

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

Enrollment Policies Further the Mission

Advance's mission is to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program.

Through its partnership and outreach efforts, Advance hopes to ensure a statewide racial and ethnic balance in the school. Through extensive community outreach and full disclosure about the school's program, Advance will have broad outreach throughout the state and parents will have a clear understanding of the cyber learning experience so that they can make the best choices for their students. Advance will therefore attract those students and families who are most committed to student success in a cyber school setting from across the state.

Through Advance's enrollment process as described in Section I.4.F and the Admissions and Eligibility Criteria set forth in Section V.2.A of this application, students will be admitted in a non-discriminatory manner, yet provided with a Personalized Learning Plan to maximize individual achievement. Connections provides dedicated teams to support the families extensively throughout the enrollment process to ensure that they are supported and understand the cyber school model.

With the goal of serving as many students as possible, Advance hopes not to have to limit its enrollment through the imposition of a cap and lottery. However, should a cap be imposed, Advance's lottery selection process allows for fair and equitable selection of students in the event that more students apply than can be accommodated. Preferences in the lottery process for children of parents/guardians who have actively participated in the development of Advance, students already enrolled and their siblings will help committed families handle the logistics of successful participation in the cyber school.

V.3 HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION

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

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

The Board will employ all staff of the school including the Principal and teachers. The Board proposes to partner with Connections via the Statement of Agreement to provide human resource services, including recruiting, to ensure Advance is staffed by well-trained and effective cyber learning professionals. Connections has extensive experience in recruiting, screening, and qualifying staff for high-quality cyber schools. Connections serves and reports to the Board.

Hiring a Principal

Through the Statement of Agreement with the Board, Connections will recruit the Principal and assist the Principal in recruiting the staff. However, the Principal is responsible for the daily oversight and hiring/firing of school staff with the approval of the Board. It is anticipated that the recruiting of the Principal will begin immediately upon charter approval, as the Principal needs to be hired prior to teacher and staff recruitment.

The search process will begin with posting the job, advertising for the position through multiple avenues, screening candidates, and identifying the top candidates for Board consideration. The Board will review the job description to ensure it is clear about expectations and delineation of roles. Strategies to attract highly qualified staff will be implemented to include posting on Connections national website, Career Builder, as well as post on the professional and institutional websites which may include iNACOL, National Charter School Association, National Association of Secondary Principals, and PA REAP. Additionally, job fairs will be attended throughout the state. The Board will interview, select, and hire the Principal.

The Principal will ideally hold an advanced degree with a minimum of five years teaching experience and some management or administrative experience. A former principal who is technologically proficient with good communication skills is ideal. The Principal will build consensus and inspire teachers to teach, students to learn, and parents to engage in their child's learning while following the mission of the school. The Principal will be responsible for the overall school operation working with parents, students, support staff, and teachers who virtually facilitate the student instructional program.

Ideally, the Governing Board anticipates hiring a candidate by April of 2016. In addition, all candidates will undergo thorough screening procedures including background checks, comprehensive reference checks, a technology skills assessment, and a social media background check, as well as others checks as required by state law.

Daily management of the school will be the Principal's responsibility while overall governance will be the responsibility of the Board. The Board will annually evaluate the Principal based upon performance. Annual performance will be based upon meeting school goals, evaluation of assigned competencies, and input from other key stakeholders like Connections staff that interact with the Principal. The Board will adopt pay scales, performance criteria, a performance appraisal system, and disciplinary policies for all employees, including the Principal. Explanation of such policies will be integrated into the Employee Handbook adopted by the Board. A draft Employee Handbook is included in Appendix T.

Hiring Teachers

Cyber learning requires an additional skill set and professional development. A focus on individualizing education for students and a high level of comfort with technology will be included in screening candidates for positions. In partnering with Connections, high quality teachers knowledgeable in their content areas will be attracted to join the team. With their solid content knowledge and passion for individualizing instruction, the Board will engage Connections' professional development services to provide them with the necessary skills and pedagogy to teach online and maximize their skill set statewide.

The school will recruit staff through a variety of channels, including traditional methods for posting job opportunities, plus networking with educational organizations; outreach via enrolled families; and special outreach to teachers and administrators who are seeking an alternative environment. Ideally, teachers will be hired at least 30 days prior to the start of the school year. In addition, all candidates will undergo thorough screening procedures including background checks, comprehensive reference checks, a technology skills assessment, as well as any additional checks as required by state law. Details of the background check clearances, standards, and requirements are located in sections (F) and (G). The school's background check and clearance policy, which includes the employment history review, is attached in Appendix S with Board Policies.

Employment history reviews will be conducted for applicants who will be employed in positions involving direct contact with children. Employees of independent contractors must participate in the employment history review prior to the start of employment with a new school entity even though they remain employed by the same independent contractor (24 PS 1-111.1.)

These additional steps will be followed for all applicants who are educators even if the applicant is not being hired for a position for which certification is required.

Even though the Board has plans to retain Connections for staff recruitment, the Board will be responsible for approving all school positions.

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

Targeted Staff Size

The staffing plan in Figure 37 promotes low student-to-teacher ratios, appropriate instructional support, and resources allowing teachers to teach and students to learn. The staffing needs are aligned with the mission and vision of the school supporting the breadth and depth of the cyber school environment. Connexus and the additional support through lessons plans, curriculum, educational resources, staff, professional development, and technology support provides the school staff and leadership the opportunity to focus on the personalized learning experience of each student. The Board will consider this experience and the needs of Advance in determining future staffing needs.

Figure 37. Staffing Plan

Position	Year 1 2016-17	Year 2 2017-18	Year 3 2018-19	Year 4 2019-20	Year 5 2020-21
Total Number of Students	500	1,500	2,500	3,500	4,500
CEO	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Principal	1.0	1.0	2.0	2.0	3.0
Assistant Principal	0.0	2.0	1.0	3.0	3.0
Administrative Assistant	1.4	4.2	7.1	10.0	12.8
Director of Special Education	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Manager of Special Education	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
Manager of Counseling	1.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
STEM Coordinator	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Gifted & Talented Coordinator	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Teachers (K-5)*	5.5	12.5	18.0	25.9	33.3
Teachers (6-12)	6.0	26.6	49.7	74.3	98.9
Advisory Teachers/Counselors	0.9	3.6	6.4	9.0	11.6
ELL Lead Teacher	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Special Education Teachers	3.2	9.6	17.3	24.3	31.3
Student-to-Teacher Ratio	30:1	28:1	27:1	26:1	26:1

* includes home room teachers for Elementary grades

Student-To-Teacher Ratio

The student-to-teacher ratio decreases from 30:1 in Year 1 to 26:1 in Year 5. Cyber learning allows for a flexible staffing plan that can grow, retract, or expand with the enrollment of the school and is not limited by facility space. Since classroom management, lesson plan development, and scheduling issues are minimized in a cyber classroom, slightly higher class ratios than a face-to-face classroom are warranted.

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

Professional Development Plan

Advance has engaged Connections, through the Statement of Agreement (Appendix N), to provide training and professional development for teachers. Training is integrated into the Connections program and aligned with the student curriculum, student pedagogy, student information system, data, evaluation systems, and other services.

Teachers will benefit from ongoing and effective professional growth. The training begins with an initial teacher orientation course and several days of face-to-face pre-service training. Teachers will be provided with an interactive program manual as a resource to training course segments and specific Connections professional development courses. Teachers will build a strong foundation for teaching in the cyber environment with student success as a focus. Graduate courses in cyber learning, professional learning communities, and weekly teacher updates will keep teachers up-to-date and on the road to being experts in cyber learning.

In April 2015, the Connections Professional Development Model was recognized with a silver award for Best Practices for Distance Learning Programming by the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA). This prestigious award recognizes organizations that have designed and delivered outstanding and comprehensive best practices in distance learning programming, including program content and delivery, integration of technology, presentation, and impact on participant learning. The USDLA International Distance Learning Awards are presented to five major sectors of distance education and training and include the Pre-K - 12, Higher Education, Corporate, Government, and Telehealth markets.

Teacher professional development is critically important in ensuring that the staff is optimally effective at teaching in a cyber environment and addressing the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in their daily instructional practice. The school will use the *National Standards for Quality Online Teaching* published by the International Association for K-12 Online Learning (iNACOL)⁶⁴ and the Connections *Core Standards for Facilitating Student Learning*, as guides for pinpointing necessary teacher skills and professional development requirements.

The *Core Standards for Facilitating Student Learning* are:

- provide high quality instruction resulting in student learning,
- personalize student programs,
- monitor student performance and provide timely feedback and intervention,
- monitor student participation,
- communicate frequently,
- document and review all interactions, and
- collaborate and develop professionally.

Advance will provide its teachers with a comprehensive teacher training and professional development program to equip them with the following:

- a working knowledge of the curriculum and Pennsylvania Academic Standards,
- strategies and best practices for cyber learning and instruction,
- the ability to utilize and navigate the tools of Connexus,
- the ability to develop Personalized Learning Plans (PLP),
- information on the forms of assessment and how to utilize test results to guide instruction and monitor student progress,
- knowledge of program processes and policies, and
- information on how to foster a cyber school community.

With the approval of the Board, the Connections Professional Development team will focus on coordinating, planning, delivering, and continuously supporting professional learning initiatives through a systematic and comprehensive multi-year professional development plan. The Professional Development team provides educators with professional growth opportunities designed to increase student achievement, personalize learning for students preparing for college and careers, and increase teaching effectiveness. In addition, Connections will support specific professional development needs as determined by the Principal and in alignment with school goals.

⁶⁴ National Standards for Quality Online Teaching, iNACOL, www.inacol.org, <http://www.inacol.org/resources/nationalstandards/NACOL%20Standards%20Quality%20Online%20Teaching.pdf>

Teacher Induction Program

During the 2016-17 school year, Advance will identify an Induction Coordinator and form a council to develop an induction program for new teachers and education specialists in accordance with the requirements established by Title 22, Chapter 49, Sections 49.16 and 49.83 of the Pennsylvania Code. The council will:

- develop the goals and competencies for the induction program,
- determine how the needs of new teachers will be assessed,
- define the role of new teacher mentors and the process for selecting mentors,
- identify monthly activities/topics to support new teachers,
- identify how teacher participation and program completion will be documented, and
- define the metrics that will be used to monitor and evaluate the induction program.

The Advance Teacher Induction Council will submit their induction plan for state approval prior to 8/1/2017.⁶⁵

The scaffolded, supportive, and intensive training and professional learning sessions delivered by Connections, and described herein, along with additional training from Advance staff and collaboration with mentor teachers, will support first year and novice teachers as they develop their skills and become high quality educators and reflective practitioners.

Professional Learning

Connections will provide teachers with ongoing professional development activities throughout the year, delivered by the Connections' Professional Development team. (The list herein does not include training from Human Resources or any professional learning provided by School Support Operations or School Year Cycle training, which may also be provided by Connections should the Board request those trainings). Presenters with various backgrounds and areas of content expertise will conduct live sessions on a rotating basis. Teachers will be required to attend sessions virtually on topics such as:

- implementing specific research-based instructional strategies,
- using effective teaching practices and communication skills for a cyber environment,
- utilizing the state and national standards to inform instruction,
- using technology to engage students in collaborative learning activities, and
- using data to guide instruction.

The Principal will develop a systematic approach to professional development for all staff. Topics for trainings will be selected based on school goals, student performance data, national initiatives in education, and research-based best practices. Connections offers monthly trainings for all schools. The annual professional development series focuses on:

- making data-driven instructional decisions,
- identifying risk factors that may require more intensive instructional interventions,
- monitoring student performance based on data available at different points in the school year, and
- providing strategies for giving effective feedback to students and evaluating evidence of learning.

⁶⁵ <https://www.psea.org/uploadedFiles/TeachingandLearning/Certification/InductionGuidelines5%2003%5B1%5D.pdf>

Foundations for Teaching at a School Supported by Connections

Research on effective professional development indicates that professional development must be intensive, ongoing, and connected to practice. Teachers need to try out new ideas and strategies with their students and to reflect on the results of these strategies. Intensive professional development, especially when it includes application of knowledge to planning and instruction, has a greater chance of influencing teaching practices, and in turn, leading to gains in student learning. Advance staff will participate in Connections' Foundations for Teaching program to transition from teaching in a brick-and-mortar school to teaching in a cyber school. Teachers will learn about the school year cycle and associated tasks, and become familiar with instructional tools and resources used to engage learners.

Professional learning sessions will use evaluation surveys and collaborative tools to elicit teacher and administrator feedback. Audits, evaluations, and site-visits will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the training and to ensure initiatives are implemented with high fidelity.

Professional Learning will be:

- **Intensive** – Participants will identify the purpose of educational practices and examine how they can be implemented in the cyber environment. Participants will collaboratively discuss strategies that can be implemented with students.
- **Ongoing** – New instructional strategies and the latest learning research will be connected to topics presented and discussed in prior sessions to demonstrate how specific educational practices form the “big picture” of effective instruction. Further discussion and exploration at the school level will strengthen these connections.
- **Connected to Practice** – Following each session, participants will apply what they have learned to their professional practice. They will integrate precise, targeted strategies into their planning and instruction, and reflect on the outcomes through the Teacher ePortfolio data view, a cyber portfolio which allows them to document their attendance and upload resources related to their professional learning.

Teachers may also attend “open office hours” with the Connections' Professional Development for individualized assistance and guidance with school year cycle tasks, planning and implementing instruction, determining the best supplemental instructional support for students, and creating a nurturing learning environment.

Teaching in a cyber environment offers flexibility and allows for a greater level of professional learning throughout the school year. Although designated professional development days will have a specific focus, additional professional learning support will be available on a daily basis. Teachers will have multiple opportunities for seeking assistance and support with instructional strategies for engaging students and families, making decisions based on data, and completing school year cycle tasks in a timely and efficient manner. Advance will receive multiple levels of support from the Connections' Instructional Services Department, including the School Support Teacher Help Desk. Connections will provide a team of specialists dedicated to meeting the needs of the school.

Figure 38 lists the training and professional development programs and initiatives that will be facilitated throughout the first school year. It provides a sample of the types of professional development and instructional support that is typically provided to teachers and staff during their first year working at a school supported by Connections. Each session is one hour in length.

Figure 38. Sample Professional Learning Schedule and Topics–Year 1

Topic and Timeframe	Activity
First 8 Days (prior to students starting school) Preparing for a Successful School Year	The Principal, along with members of the Connections’ Instructional Services department, will plan and facilitate learning and collaborative activities around the topics listed below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome, Ice Breaker, and Team Building • Story 4 • Review of school mission, vision, goals, policies, and procedures • Teacher Orientation Course • Introduction to Connexus • Demo accounts • Core Standards for Facilitating Cyber Student Learning • School Year Cycle • Students in Distress • Student Start-up Tasks, Welcome Calls, and Logging • Teacher Start-up Tasks • Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) • Effective and Collaborative Communication • Planning for a Successful First Week • Professional Learning Communities • Serving Special Education Students Online • Adobe® Connect™ • Grade level meetings • Curriculum Based Assessments (CBAs) • Giving Feedback to Students
Exploring Your Courses	This training will be completed by content-area teachers within the first 30 days of employment or when assigned this specific role. The training will be completed in Connexus and the topics covered are included below. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome to the Connections Education Family • Exploring a Course • Supports to Enhance and Facilitate Instruction • Beyond Your Course: Instructional Services • Additional Supports
September 2016 How is teaching online different from teaching in brick-and-mortar?	Introduction to the School Year Cycle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Formative Assessments and Encouraging Student Participation • Welcome Calls, Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBAs), and Escalation • Monitoring and assisting homeroom students with attendance, participation, and contacts • Using the School Year Cycle Radar Report to monitor escalation • Response to Intervention: Using Intervention Indicators to review, identify, and implement interventions • Role of a facilitator of learning and how to analyze data to deliver targeted instruction • Synchronous targeted instruction using Adobe Connect • Using the Advance Teacher ePortfolio to capture attendance and participation in all training and professional learning

Advance Cyber Charter School Application

Topic and Timeframe	Activity
<p>October 2016</p> <p>Assessing and analyzing student performance data</p>	<p>Using the Section Performance Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing and using the report to monitor student participation and performance • School Year Cycle Radar report - Accessing and using the report to monitor homeroom students' attendance, contacts, and participation • Assessment Objective Performance Report (AOPR) – real-time data showing student mastery of essential skills and standards • Differentiating learning using resources from the Instructional Support database and Shared Content <p>Using LiveLesson Session Tools to Engage Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polls, Applets, and Pods – tools within Adobe Connect for keeping students engaged in learning and assessing understanding
<p>November 2016</p> <p>Higher-level questioning and data-driven decisions</p>	<p>Curriculum Based Assessments (CBAs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing and making instructional decisions for personalizing instruction • Strategies for increasing rigor through the use of higher level questions • Planning targeted instruction for groups of students • Assessing mastery and providing opportunities for practice • Aligning curriculum to national and state standards
<p>December 2016</p> <p>Preparing for the end of the first semester</p>	<p>Setting Section Stages Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing student grade books to determine when they are ready to have Section Stages set to Complete • Completing the process of setting Section Stages to Complete • Making changes after Section Stages have been set to Complete <p>Marking Lessons at Midyear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall Preliminary Retention Data View • Identifying the purpose of this Data View • Completing the Fall Preliminary Retention Data View
<p>January 2017</p> <p>Preliminary Promotion and Retention</p>	<p>Setting Section Stages Review</p> <p>Preliminary Promotion/Retention Recommendations in Part B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying promotion criteria • Using the School Year Cycle Radar to identify a student's recommendation status • Reviewing Connexus suggestions and inputting recommendations • Conducting follow-up phone contacts and WebMail messages • Pulling individual teacher radar data for review <p>Formative Assessment Midtest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivating students to participate • Encouraging Learning Coach training and participation • Sample questions, student expectations, and preparing students for next generation assessments
<p>February 2017</p> <p>Helping Homeroom Students Succeed and Preparing for High Stakes Assessments</p>	<p>Helping Homeroom Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing best practices for intervening with students in Approaching Alarm or Alarm status • Reviewing best practices for ensuring high levels of student engagement <p>Preparing for High Stakes Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of sample questions, student expectations, and strategies for preparing students for next generation assessments • Continuing to use the AOPR for to analyze academic progress • Continuing to differentiate using resources from the Instructional Support database and Shared Content

Topic and Timeframe	Activity
March 2017 Engaging Students in Learning	Engaging Students in Learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing grit and persistence, maintaining engagement, and understanding learning styles
April/May 2017 Closing Out the School Year	Reflecting on the First Year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing professional learning goals for the next school year Introduction to the Professional Learning 100 Series Overview Recommendations for the next teacher

To support the STEM focus of Advance, the professional learning sessions described in **Figure 39** will also be offered to all teachers of STEM subjects during the 2016-17 school year.

Figure 39. Professional Development to Support Numeracy

1, 2, 3: Developing Number Sense Series (Audience: Teachers K-2)	
Session 1:	Session 1 focuses on strategies, resources, and activities designed to promote student engagement and exploration with whole numbers. Teachers will investigate what number sense is, what it looks like in a variety of contexts, and how to best develop number sense with their students.
Session 2:	Session 2 will focus on developing communication in mathematics. During the session, participants will discuss ways that encourage students to communicate their ideas about numbers, apply key facts to novel contexts, and identify how to create useful representations that can be applied to solving problems.
½, 1/3, ¼: Developing Number Sense Series (Audience: Teachers grades 3-5)	
Session 1:	Session 1 focuses on developing strategies, resources, activities designed to promote student engagement and exploration with fractions and decimal numbers. Teachers will spend time exploring the essential components needed to help students evolve into confident mathematicians.
Session 2:	Session 2 will focus on developing communication in mathematics. During the session, participants will discuss ways to provide learners opportunities to make sense of, and reason about, numbers. Teachers will work collaboratively to develop strategies that encourage students to communicate their ideas about numbers, apply conceptual understanding to novel contexts, and identify how to create useful representations that can be applied to problem solving.
Unlocking Math	
Session 1: Helping Parents Understand the Shift in Mathematics	Session 1 will focus on helping teachers develop a plan for sharing the shift in standards with parents. Teachers will investigate the changes in standards and the accompanying shifts in instructional practices before drafting a plan to share that understanding with parents.
Session 2: Multiplication/Division	Session 2 will focus on developing teacher understanding of the algorithms, as well as alternatives to the standards algorithms. Time will also be spent on developing understanding of the relationship between multiplication and addition, division and subtraction, and multiplication and division.
Session 3: Decimals	Session 3 will focus on increasing teacher understanding of the place value system. Teachers will spend time investigating the base-ten system, multiplying and dividing by powers of tens and finding real-world applications to use with students.
Session 4: Fractions	Session 4 will focus on deepening teacher understanding of fractions. Teachers will spend time investigating unit fractions, common denominators, concepts of equivalency and games that increase conceptual understanding of fractions.
Unlocking the Power of Science: Engaging Students in Online Science Instruction	
Session 1	Labs, dissections, and experiments: Oh my! Science naturally lends itself to making real world connections, collaboration, and questioning. But how can science teachers incorporate all of these aspects of science in the online environment? Join us as we focus on making online science instruction engaging, and utilizing the Assessment Objective Performance Report (AOPR) to help with assessing student progress and mastery of core science concepts and skills.

Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, and after completion of the foundational topics covered during the first year, Advance teachers will participate in Connection's systematic multi-year professional development plan. Connections takes a "flipped learning" approach to professional development which requires teachers to view a video and/or read an article or complete a pre-session activity prior to attending the synchronous professional learning session. This "flipped model" approach provides teachers with background on the session topic so that the actual session can focus on practice and application of new skills and concepts. After each session, teachers will upload an "artifact" to their professional learning e-portfolio demonstrating how they are using their professional learning to personalize instruction, implement new instructional strategies, make data-driven decisions, and reflect on their teaching practices. The e-portfolio requires teachers to provide evidence of their learning, based on the objectives of the professional development session. School leaders provide teachers with feedback on their artifacts following the sessions, as well.

Descriptions of Professional Learning Sessions (PL 100, PL 200 and PL 300)

Second year teachers and new school staff will participate in Connections' Professional Learning (PL) 100 series which focuses on:

- making data-driven instructional decisions,
- identifying risk factors that may require more intensive instructional interventions,
- monitoring student performance based on data available at different points in the school year, and
- providing teachers with strategies for giving effective feedback to students and evaluating evidence of learning.

Training emphasize the "instructional shifts" required to support the level of rigor demanded by the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, next generation assessments, and college and career readiness expectations. During these professional learning sessions, teachers will be placed into cyber groups (e.g., chat pods, breakout rooms) for discussion and application activities with grade level/subject area teachers, when possible. For example, teachers of STEM subjects will work together to discuss application of the session objectives within the courses that they teach.

Third-year teachers and school-based staff will participate in Connections' Professional Learning (PL) 200 series. The PL 200 series focuses on the learning sciences—deliberate practice, meaningful feedback, student engagement and motivation, multi-tiered intervention, and the role of mastery and transfer. PL 200 sessions engage teachers in thinking more critically about the topics presenting during the PL 100 sessions and provide additional opportunities for application of skills and strategies that impact student achievement across all grade levels and subject areas.

STEM teachers will also have the opportunity to participate in PL 300 sessions in order to learn from their content area colleagues at other schools supported by Connections across the country. These sessions require teachers to discuss and apply the strategies presented during prior professional learning sessions within the content area(s) that they teach. The following subject teachers are grouped together for these professional learning discussions.

- Middle School Math
- Middle School Science
- High School Math
- High School Science
- Business Management, Entrepreneurship, Technology, Engineering, and Student Development
- Career Technology Education and Certification Prep

In the PL 300 series, teachers of students in grades K–5 will be grouped by grade band K-2 and 3-5 instead of by subject area since most teachers in these grades are teaching all subject areas. Advance will also provide time during the PL 300 sessions to focus on specific content areas. The facilitator will be able to guide discussions by asking targeted questions for content areas such as math and science. Teachers will discuss research and strategies for topics such as: providing feedback, engagement, developing grit, and motivating students

In Appendix U, we provide a sample professional learning schedule and topics for Years 2, 3, and 4. It is based on Connections' multi-year professional learning plan, timeframes, and session topics at the time of this application submission.

In addition to these required professional learning sessions, Connections will also offer a number of "Optional Professional Learning sessions." These sessions are available to all Advance teachers who seek to expand their professional knowledge. Each topic will be designed for specific content area teachers and grade level teams and will include strategies for effectively and actively engaging students in the learning process.

As a continuation of synchronous online professional development sessions, teachers will be expected to continue the conversation within their vertical and horizontal Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). This allows for true application of new strategies and resources as teachers strive to personalize instruction and make data-driven decisions. Professional development sessions use evaluation surveys and collaborative tools to elicit teacher and administrator feedback. Audits, evaluations, and site-visits will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the training and to ensure initiatives are implemented with high fidelity.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Advance will implement school-based Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). In addition, Advance will have a virtual, robust Professional Learning Community Resources (PLCr) portal in Connexus which will list professional development opportunities as well as message boards, recorded LiveLesson sessions, shared resources, and more. The portal will be dedicated to shared values and vision, collaboration, shared decision-making, collective creativity, and supportive and shared leadership. Teachers will connect to the latest educational conferences, webinars, online courses, professional organizations, and research/education updates. Through the use of a PLC, teachers will be encouraged to share and collaborate with colleagues in Pennsylvania and across the country in their support of student learning. Educators will stay current with new products and resources, through continued collaboration and participation in regular curriculum meetings. Teachers will follow pertinent school news and announcements through weekly issues from Connections' Human Resources' Communications team.

The School Support team will provide exceptional communication, support and training to school based staff. This team will share program, procedural, and school-based information (weekly communications within the *Scoop*); support school staff with operational flow; operate the School Support Help Desk; and develop, deliver, and evaluate training initiatives (on subjects such as school-year-cycle, Connexus functionality, and student and teacher performance and participation). The Human Resources team will provide substitute teacher services.

Teachers will participate in ongoing collaborative online discussions in Connexus through the Teacher Course Liaison program. Discussions will be led by teachers who have experience facilitating online conversations between teachers who teach the same course. This program will provide teachers the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions about a variety of instructional topics related to the courses they teach. Teachers describe this area as "a community created and dedicated to shared values and vision, working and learning collaboratively, shared decision making, collective creativity, and supportive and shared leadership."

Continual Teacher Training

Initial and Returning Teacher Orientation Course

The professional development provided by Connections is designed to assist teachers to develop and improve their instructional skills and expertise, stretch themselves in new areas of teaching and learning, and maximize their potential as educators. In addition to the professional learning sessions, described previously, Connections provides intensive training to teachers and other school staff prior to and throughout the school year. Training sessions focus on the “how to” — the basic tools and skills that teachers need to know and understand in order to teach in a cyber environment, navigate Connexus (e.g., how to access the Grade Book, how to modify a lesson), and complete the tasks associated with the School Year Cycle of activities. Before the start of each school year, all teachers will complete two courses:

1. Either the *Teacher Orientation Course* (for new teachers) or the *Returning Teacher Orientation Course* (for returning teachers) and *Exploring Your Courses*. All teachers (and the Principal) will complete the Teacher (or Returning Teacher) Orientation Course. This course will be delivered through Connexus, and contains lessons, assessments, and links to online tutorials. These courses will prepare teachers for teaching through the Connexus platform. It covers curriculum, assessment, personalizing instruction, school year events, grading and the Grade Book, communication, and essential Connexus tools. Upon successful completion of these courses and assessments, teachers will be ready to begin instruction. Teachers are expected to earn a grade of 80% or higher in these courses.
2. In *Exploring Your Courses*, teachers will explore the curriculum and instructional resources they and their students will use during the school year. Lessons will focus on using instructional resources to differentiate curriculum, using data to make instructional decisions, engaging students in the learning process, and supporting teachers as they work to enhance their teaching practices. This course contains multiple assessments through which teachers and the professional development staff evaluate teacher understanding, preparedness, and effective tools to communicate and collaborate with colleagues.

Pre-Service Face-to-Face Training on Unique Aspects of the School

In its first year, Advance will provide approximately ten days of professional development prior to the school year starting. Staff will engage in several days of face-to-face training and orientation on site with materials, guidance, and topics. The focus of this training will be best practices in a cyber learning environment, advanced orientation to the curriculum and Connexus beyond what is included in the self-guided course, and substantial training on working effectively with students, Learning Coaches, and parents. New updates to Connexus, interventions, and data dashboards for the school year will also be included. In addition, Advance will conduct professional development each month at the school site.

The pre-service, face-to-face training and professional development will occur before the start of the school year and includes reviewing, discussing, and activities on:

- The Core Standards for Facilitating Student Learning, which are the essential values, vision, and protocols through which teachers and school leaders work together.
- School Year Cycle, the flow of the online school year, including the key milestones and student performance data used to guide, monitor, and assess student learning (e.g., Welcome Call, PLP discussions, Curriculum-Based Assessments, and Grade Book).
- Navigating Connexus, including practice with lessons, assessments, grading, evaluating student learning, providing feedback, customizing students’ programs, and recording (logging) contacts, conversations, and instructional interventions via demonstration student, teacher, and Learning Coach accounts.

- School-based PLC work, including building collaboration within and across grade levels.
- Ensuring teachers are prepared to have a student-centered, successful first-day, first-week, first-month of school, and entire year of school

Additional Professional Learning Resources

During the school year, ongoing professional development sessions will also be offered based on teacher feedback from surveys completed after professional learning sessions, and other needs as identified by the Principal and leadership team at Advance. In addition, these resources will be available to all school staff to support their professional learning.

- **The School Interactive Program Handbook:** The school will use a Program Handbook as a resource for teachers and school personnel to use all year. It contains policies, procedures, and “how to” components that aid the teachers on a day-to-day basis. These “how to” components will also have accompanying on-line tutorial segments that visually demonstrate each process.
- **Professional Learning Community Resources (PLCr):** The PLCr website will be dedicated to assisting school-based staff with shared values and vision, networking and collaboration resources, shared decision-making, collective creativity, and supportive and shared leadership. The PLCr is divided into four quadrants: Professional Learning, Multi-tiered Instructional Support, Networking, and School Support. Each quadrant will contain links to resources to unite the commitment to student learning through collaboration in the school community and a variety of instructional tools designed to personalize the learning experience for students.
- **Shared Content:** Shared Content is a collection of libraries sorted by content area that contain teacher-created instructional resources. These resources are tagged by course, grade, unit title, lesson title, key words, and other relevant data so teachers can easily upload or download them for implementation with students.
- **Instructional Support Database:** The Instructional Support database provides teachers with resources that provide students with additional practice with the skills and standards covered in the curriculum. These resources can be used with students at any intervention level when skill deficiencies become evident in English Language Arts/Reading, Math, Science, and Social Studies.
- **The Scoop:** All teachers will receive a weekly electronic newsletter that highlights improvements to the curriculum and Connexus, teacher tasks associated with the School Year Cycle, new procedures, shared tips, and community-building activities.

Supporting School Leaders

Through its Statement of Agreement with Connections, new school administrators will be provided with a robust onboarding program in order to make the transition to cyber school leadership as simple as possible. This program will include support from many different departments and will begin with an online orientation course. This course walks the administrator through their role at the school, the support available to them, information on supporting teachers, data management, and school year operations.

In addition, all new administrators will be matched with a Connections’ mentor who is currently in a similar role at another school supported by Connections. Mentors meet with their mentee weekly and maintain an ongoing record of these meetings.

Throughout the first year, new administrators will also become part of a Boot Camp which allows them time to work with each other as well as various teams to focus on transitioning to leadership in a cyber school, school operations, leadership development, and professional learning communities.

Figure 40 describes the various types of training support available to Advance school leaders.

Figure 40. Available Training for Advance School Leaders

School Leader Support	Description	Audience
Boot Camp 101	<p>Monthly Meetings with a focus on School Year Cycle (SYC), operations, and instructional leadership. Participants focus on a <u>PLC book study</u> to learn how to lead the teams. Topics will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Introduction to Human Resources · Progression Planning · Teacher Evaluations · Managing Employees · Managing PLCs · RTI Process · SYC Radar Report · Quarterly Metrics 	All new Assistant Principals and Principals
Mentoring	<p>Mentors will be assigned to new school leaders at Advance. Mentors will have weekly conversations with their mentees. Connections experienced Professional Development staff will provide them with a sample of topics to discuss, but conversations will focus on the needs of the mentee that week. A private log will be maintained by the mentor and monitored for any concerns.</p> <p>Mentees will also be asked to complete a survey rating their comfort level with various competencies. These scores will help guide mentoring conversations as well as other trainings as needed.</p>	All new Assistant Principals and Principals
New School Leader Orientation	<p>This required course will provide information on the operations and procedures school leaders will need during the year. It serves as an introduction to Connections, to Connexus, and the role of school leader. A score of 80% is required to pass this course and it must be completed within the first 30 days of joining the school.</p>	All new Assistant Principals and Principals
Orientation Quick Start Lessons	<p>The Principal QuickStart lessons designed to help new administrators get up to speed quickly on critical tasks that are a part of the School Year Cycle (SYC). Each lesson is presented in an engaging multimedia format and should take no more than 10 minutes to view. Current lessons include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Day in the Life of a Virtual School Principal · QuickStart Overview · Understanding Data & Reports · Creating a Sectioning Plan · Creating a Professional Development Plan · Creating a State Testing Plan 	All new Assistant Principals and Principals
School Leader Professional Learning Communities	<p>All school leaders, including new school leaders, will be assigned to a PLC with others in the same position. Teams will be self-selected by each person selecting a topic. When possible participants will be grouped by level (elementary, middle, high) to make sure they can find a common focus. These teams will create a SMART goal and support each other in the data analysis as well as researching best practices and supporting professional growth.</p>	All Assistant Principals and Principals

School Leader Support	Description	Audience
School Data Training (SDT)	School leadership will lead weekly meetings to focus on school specific SYC data.	School Leader is invited and encouraged to invite their leadership team
Summer Retreat	School leaders participate in an annual summer retreat to network, discuss best practices, and plan for the school year with their teams.	All school leaders
General Principal's Meeting	Principals meet monthly with the Connections' School Leadership Team and appropriate departments to discuss current topics and to provide guidance as needed.	All school leaders

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

Advance will strive to offer a work environment that provides opportunities for each employee to maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards. The following incorporates Advance's core employment values:

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

Upon approval of the charter, the Principal, working in consultation with Connections, and with Board approval, will employ, fix the salaries of, assign, terminate and discharge all employees of Advance.

Upon approval of the charter, the human resources policies in the attached draft Employee Handbook (Appendix T) will be reviewed by Board Counsel to ensure they comply with applicable federal and state labor laws, regulations, and rules and will be approved by the Board. The attached draft Employee Handbook contains general employment policies and procedures and all policies contained within and are subject to change.

Human Resources Policies for Salaries

Advance will offer competitive compensation with annual performance-based salary reviews, and annual bonus incentives based on school and individual performance.

For teaching positions, a salary range will be determined based on research of market compensation and financial considerations at the time of posting. Initial employment offers will be based on specific criteria, including years of experience, education, and other relevant skills/qualifications. After the initial hire, compensation increases and incentives will be based on performance. Teachers may receive an annual salary increase based on performance ratings.

With Board approval, teachers can apply for the following career ladder opportunities and assume additional responsibilities in order to earn additional compensation as follows:

- Coordinator Teacher – base plus 4%
- Lead Teacher – base plus 9%
- Master Teacher – base plus 15%

For non-teaching positions, a salary range will be determined based on research of market compensation and financial considerations and incorporating the state required minimums. Initial employment offers will be based on specific criteria, including years of experience, education, and other relevant skills/qualifications. After the initial hire, compensation increases and merit pay will be based on performance.

Both salary increases and bonus incentive payouts are contingent on the fiscal performance of the school and the bonus incentive is tied to teacher's intent to return for the next school year. The Board will have the ability to adjust the percentages in the event that the school does not meet financial expectations.

Human Resources Policies for Contracts

All employment is "at-will" as governed by the laws in the state of Pennsylvania. Employment can be terminated by either the employee or the employer at any time, for any reason, with or without notice.

Offers of employment are contingent upon satisfactory reference and background checks as well as receipt of valid certification documents and fingerprint clearances as required or any other approvals as listed in the offer letter.

Human Resources Policies for Hiring and Dismissal

Hiring

The principles of equal employment opportunity will be vital to the school's success. These principles extend to all aspects of employment including recruitment, hiring, assignment, training, compensation, benefits, terminations, educational assistance, social and recreational programs, promotions, and transfers. Advance is committed to creating and fostering a work environment free from unlawful discrimination and harassment and one in which decisions and terms of employment are not based in any way on race, creed, color, religion or religious affiliation, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital status, disability, genetic information, or veteran status, or other category protected by law.

Continued success in equal employment opportunity depends not only on the commitment and involvement of those directly responsible for staffing the school but also on the dedication of all employees. Assuring equal employment opportunity is a fundamental and direct responsibility of everyone. All personnel are charged with making a personal commitment to practice and enforce the principles of this policy, including the following:

- Recruit, hire, train, promote, transfer, and provide opportunities without regard to race, creed, color, religion or religious affiliation, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, marital status, disability, genetic information, or veteran status, or non-job related characteristic.
- Ensure that promotion decisions are made in accordance with equal employment opportunity requirements by imposing only valid, job-related requirements for promotional opportunities.
- Ensure that all personnel actions relating to compensation, benefits, transfers, terminations, layoffs, training, and education assistance are administered in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Additionally, a manager who has a personal or professional relationship with an applicant for employment must disclose this relationship in writing at the outset of the hiring process. In order to maintain objectivity in hiring decisions, it may be necessary for the manager to be excused from the interview process.

Dismissal

- **Notice and Severance:** We will request that employees who plan to resign notify their manager in writing at least two working weeks prior to their last day. For those employees in a supervisory capacity, three weeks of notice will be requested. Vacation and other forms of leave should not be used during the notice period. The purpose for advance notice will be to provide for an orderly transition of the employee's duties in a professional manner. Employees who are considered at risk for accessing confidential information during the notice period may have their duties adjusted during this time period or may be requested to work at home or may be excused from their work responsibilities. The right to work through the end of a notice period is at the school's discretion.
- **Last Pay and Payment of Leave:** Employees who resign or are terminated will be paid through the last day worked, including any overtime worked. Employees will be paid for unused vacation leave according to the terms of the vacation policy. An employee will be considered to have terminated employment as of the last day worked, for all pay and benefits purposes. Medical, dental, and vision benefits end on the last day of the month in which the employee has terminated employment.
- **Return of Property and Equipment:** As provided in the property and equipment policy, an employee must return any of these items in their possession no later than their last regular day of employment. On or before the employee's last day of employment, the employee will be required to sign a Certificate of Separating Employee, certifying that the employee has returned all company materials. If an employee fails to return company property, they may be billed for the value of any property and equipment issued and not returned in working condition equivalent to when it was received, normal wear and depreciation excluded.
- **Continuation of Benefits:** The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) allows eligible employees to extend health insurance for up to 18 months (at their own expense) following termination of employment. Additional information about COBRA will be provided in the Employee Benefits Guides.
- **Exit Interviews:** In instances where an employee voluntarily leaves the school's employ, we would like to discuss the reasons for leaving and any other impressions that employee may have about the school. If the employee decides to leave, the employee will be asked to grant the school the privilege of an exit interview. During the exit interview the employee can express himself/herself freely. It is hoped that this exit interview will provide insight into possible improvements we can make. All information will be kept confidential to the extent possible.

Human Resources Policies for Benefits

Employees will have access to a robust benefits package including health benefits (medical, dental, and vision coverage). In addition, employees will have the opportunity to take advantage of a variety of voluntary benefits including tuition assistance, a confidential employee assistance program, certain discount programs, term life and accident insurance, as well as other voluntary benefits. Per charter school law, Advance will offer a package of health care benefits similar to an aggregate of local school districts.

Employees will also receive annual paid time off to include annual holidays, vacation, personal, and sick leave, as well as additional forms of leave such as bereavement leave and jury duty leave, as needed.

Employee Grievance Policy

The Board will encourage open and direct lines of communication between employees at all levels of the organization. The Board respects the intelligence of its employees and their ability to speak for themselves. It benefits everyone when employees feel free to bring questions, suggestions and concerns directly to their managers. Examples of issues that should be handled through this resolution process include: concerns about the application of school policies and procedures within the school to school staff, parents, and students; concerns about personnel decisions directly involving an individual or decisions affecting other individuals at the school; work conditions; questions about the competence and overall fitness of a colleague or a supervisor; and regulatory compliance.

1. If the issue does not involve a violation of school policy or an ethical or regulatory requirement, meet with at least two levels of administration. An employee must, in good faith, make every attempt to resolve the issue with his or her immediate supervisor and, if that is not successful, then with his or her next level supervisor, which will generally be the principal. Fear of retaliation, which is prohibited, is not a legitimate reason to skip this step. If the issue does involve a violation of school policy or an ethical or regulatory requirement, then the employee should proceed directly to step 2.
2. Put the Issue in Writing. If the immediate supervisor or the next level supervisor cannot resolve the issue, or if the issue involves a violation of school policy or an ethical or regulatory requirement, put the issue in writing. It is important to describe the issue, the desired result, and the proposed solution to the issue. This step should occur as soon as possible and in no event more than 20 business days after the occurrence of the problem.
3. If the issue relates to a personnel matter or work condition, contact Human Resources. After an employee fully describes the issue in writing, Human Resources will help them and their supervisor consider how policies, procedures, and practices relate for the issue. Often, the policies in the employee handbook will dictate a resolution to the issue. If the issue involves a school policy or an ethical or regulatory requirement, the employee can contact a member of the school administration. Human Resources will provide the name of the appropriate contact or they can contact the appropriate individual.
4. If the issue is not resolved by either Human Resources or School Services, an employee can request that the matter be presented to the Board for final consideration. The contact information for the Board is located on the school's web site. The Personnel Committee will be the main point of contact. Should the Personnel Committee not resolve the matter, the issue will be brought to the full Board.

Employee Discipline Policy

Employees will be expected to meet certain standards of work performance and conduct. These include, but are not limited to, those outlined in the employee handbook as well as in the employee's job description. Employees who do not meet the standards and expectations may be given the opportunity to improve

performance and/or conduct through the disciplinary process. The nature of the discipline used, up to and including immediate termination of employment, will depend upon the conduct of the employee and the relevant circumstances. It is not a guarantee of continued employment when an employee is placed on an improvement plan as part of the disciplinary process. Employees are expected to meet their performance expectations daily.

The Board may, at any time, request that the Principal, in coordination with Connections' Human Resources, promptly investigate and take action to address any complaints or concerns regarding the performance or conduct of any Teacher or staff member. The Principal will provide a prompt report to the Board on any and all actions taken in response to such a request.

Advance will ensure that it complies with investigatory regulations to confirm that all employees who have direct contact with children have not been the subject, been investigated, dismissed, or otherwise disciplined for misconduct with a student. Upon learning that an employee has been the subject of an aforementioned investigation, Advance will take the steps as required by Pennsylvania law.

In accordance with the Educator Discipline Act (24 P.S. §§2070.1 *et seq*), Advance will file within 15 days a mandatory report with the PDE for any educator who:

- has been given notice of intent to dismiss or remove for cause;
- resigned, retired, or otherwise separated from employment after any allegations of misconduct;
- is alleged to have committed sexual abuse or exploitation involving a child or student or who is alleged to have engaged in sexual misconduct with a child or student; or
- who the chief school administrator has reasonable cause to suspect has caused physical injury to a child or student as a result of negligence or malice.

E. Identify the proposed faculty.

Faculty

Advance has not hired any faculty yet.

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.

Reporting Criminal History Records

The Charter School Law also requires an applicant to include a criminal history record and an official clearance statement regarding child injury or abuse. 24 P.S. §17-1719-A (15), (16). Since Advance has not hired staff yet, it is not impossible to provide criminal history records and child abuse clearances at the time of submitting this application. These documents will be provided to PDE as soon as staff has been hired.

Advance will contract with Connections to provide background checks and criminal history records. Upon an offer of employment, Connections will run a background check through the third party vendor, EBI. This background check will run a social security number verification, a state and county check, and a sex offender registry check.

In compliance with Section 111 of the Public School Code, individuals required by law will, in addition to the FBI background check, submit their fingerprints to be run by the Pennsylvania State Police to make sure there are no adverse records in the State Police Central Repository.

In accordance with 24 P.S. Section 111, all applicants for employment at Advance, excluding employees who do not have direct contact with students, must undergo state and federal background checks. Background checks will be no more than one year old at the time of application. Administrators will make and keep a copy of the original background checks.

As required by state law, applicants for employment will be required to produce three documents verifying the checks that they have completed:

- Pennsylvania State Criminal History Record (Act 34) where the applicant will submit information online to be run through the PATCH system. The system will generate a report that is sent directly to the applicant for submission to Advance;
- Child Abuse Report (Act 151) which requires the applicant to complete an application to be submitted to the Department of Public Welfare to investigate whether the applicant has been the subject of, or is currently the subject of, an investigation for child abuse, sexual abuse, or the like, or has ever been disciplined by any employer, public institution, or other authority for such an offense. The Department will in turn send a report back to the applicant, which is to be submitted to Advance;
- Federal (FBI) Criminal History Report (Act 114) whereas the applicant will submit their fingerprints to the State Police to be run through the FBI repository for criminal history of the applicant;

In addition, the applicant will be required to submit the following forms to Advance:

- Arrest / Conviction and Certification Report (Act 24) or PDE-6004, this form that must be completed by the applicant affirming they have/have not been convicted of certain crimes listed on the document.
- Sexual Misconduct / Abuse Disclosure Release (Act 168) this release must be completed by the applicant for their current employer, any previous employers that were school entities, and any employer where the applicant was employed and held a position with interaction with children.

Failure to accurately report required information will subject the candidate to discipline up to, and including, denial of employment or termination if already hired, and may subject the candidate to civil and criminal penalties. Advance may use the information for the purpose of evaluating an applicant's fitness to be hired or for continued employment and may report the information as permitted by law.

Individuals may be employed for a single period, not to exceed 90 days, as a provisional employee if all of the following conditions are met:

- The applicant has applied for the three required clearances and the applicant has provided a copy of the completed forms to Advance.
- Advance has no knowledge of information pertaining to the applicant that would disqualify him/her from employment.
- The applicant swears or affirms in writing that he/she is not disqualified from employment pursuant to the grounds for denying employment in § 6344 (c) of the Child Protective Services Law or has not been convicted of an offense of a similar nature to those crimes under the laws or former laws of the United States, or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of the Commonwealth.
- The applicant is not permitted to work alone with children and must work in the immediate vicinity of a permanent employee.

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.*

Clearance Statements

Upon being offered employment, any candidate who has direct contact with students must obtain and submit to Connections a clearance statement for the preceding year from the Department of Public Welfare. The clearance letter is to state that the employee is not named as a perpetrator of an indicated/founded child abuse or neglect report, or is named as the individual responsible for injury/abuse in an indicated/founded report. This document must be submitted prior to employment.

Clearances must be obtained every 36 months. Timelines for renewed clearances will be based upon the date of each individual clearance. Clearances are transferrable within the school and a person need not obtain a new clearance letter to change positions within the school.

Advance will maintain copies of the required information and require the individual to produce the original documents prior to employment or acceptance to serve in any such capacity, except provisional employees for limited periods

Individuals may be employed for a single period, not to exceed 90 days if all of the following conditions are met:

- The applicant has applied for the three required clearances and they provide a copy of the completed forms to Advance.
- Advance has no knowledge of information pertaining to the applicant that would disqualify him/her from employment.
- The applicant swears or affirms in writing that he/she is not disqualified from employment pursuant to the grounds for denying employment in § 6344 (c) of the Child Protective Services Law or has not been convicted of an offense of a similar nature to those crimes under the laws or former laws of the United States, or one of its territories or possessions, another state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico or a foreign nation, or under a former law of the Commonwealth.
- The applicant is not permitted to work alone with children and must work in the immediate vicinity of a permanent employee.

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

Hiring Highly Qualified Teachers

Advance will ensure the school complies with the regulations for Highly Qualified and Certification of Charter School Teachers.⁶⁶ *At least 75% of the professional staff of a charter school must hold appropriate Pennsylvania certification. The charter must list the general qualifications for non-certificated staff and additional criteria are established. The staff may bargain collectively, but not as part of the school district's*

⁶⁶ http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/purdon%27s_statutes/7503/cyber_charter_schools/507354

bargaining unit. Protections are built into the bill to allow teachers to transfer to a charter school without penalty to employee rights: seniority, right of return, retirement, health benefits and tenure."

During the interview and onboarding process, transcripts, certifications, and test scores will be submitted to the Connections' onboarding team for initial evaluation. These documents will be kept by onboarding until the employee is hired. Upon being hired, the documents will be uploaded into the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) for instant access by teachers and the human resources department.

Advance will review all documentation to ensure that the employee does have the necessary documentation and experience to be labeled 'Highly Qualified' under the NCLB and Pennsylvania state regulations. This includes making sure the employee:

- Holds at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, and
- Demonstrates subject matter competency for the core content area through completion of a PRAXIS test, major/graduate degree, obtaining a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certificate, or through the Pennsylvania HOUSSSE program.

If an employee has not submitted the necessary documentation, the Connections Human Resources team will contact the employee to ensure that the documentation is produced.

V.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.*

Advance is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students, and conveys this commitment through its written policies—in the form of the school handbook, which all students must review as part of the enrollment process—and its collaboratively developed school culture.

Student Conduct Policies

The school will have a detailed student handbook (a draft student handbook is provided in Appendix V) that will include a clear and fair set of roles and responsibilities for students, Learning Coaches, and school staff that complies with the students' due process rights and aligns with the school's mission. Parents/guardians will be provided with access to the handbook at the beginning of the enrollment process.

Appropriate conduct will be expected of all students. As a personalized, high-expectation cyber school, Advance anticipates being able to effectively manage student discipline issues. The expectations for student conduct will be explained in the handbook and will include steps to be followed in the event of misbehavior. Advance will follow formal due process procedures to manage the discipline of students. In addition, the cyber curriculum will allow the school to minimize academic interruptions caused by suspensions; students may be expected to work regardless of their disciplinary status.

The school will regard academic honesty as key to its mission, and will expect all stakeholders to understand that cheating, plagiarizing, or other acts of academic dishonesty are directly counter to the principles of academic excellence and harm most those students who engage in such activities. By engaging in academic misconduct, students cheat themselves of the opportunity to fully develop their intellectual abilities. As part of the school start-up tasks, all students will be required to sign the Honor Code indicating their understanding of the expectations of academic honesty. It will be expected that students will adhere to the Honor Code

throughout the school year, and that all schoolwork submitted in order to meet course or class requirements represents the original work of the student. The Honor Code will serve to reinforce students' commitment to academic excellence and integrity. Students and parents suspected of inappropriate academic behavior will be confronted immediately and subjected to standard disciplinary action as described in the handbook.

The handbook will include practices the school will use to promote effective discipline, a list of offenses which may result in suspension or expulsion, an explanation of the rights of students with disabilities, and policies and procedure for due process. Advance will establish and adopt suspension and expulsion policies that will be distributed in the school handbook. Advance's discipline, suspension, and expulsion policies will be in accordance with student's rights and with applicable law.

Reflected in the school handbook will be a careful protection of the rights of disabled students through the fair application of due process. A student with a disability may be removed from school for disciplinary reasons to the extent the removal is applied to non-disabled students, as long as the removals do not constitute a change of placement.

Advance will not discriminate in its discipline policies or practices on the basis of intellectual ability, status as a person with a disability, proficiency in the English language, or any other basis that would be illegal under applicable state and/or federal laws (24 P.S. section 17-1723-A(b)(1)).

There are special rules in Pennsylvania for excluding children with disabilities for disciplinary reasons as set forth in Chapter 711 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code (which adopt by reference 20 U.S.C. § 1415(k) and 34 CFR §§ 300.530-300.536) as well as the Procedural Safeguards Notice available through PaTTAN.

Advance personnel may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis, when determining whether a change of placement, made in accordance with the following requirements related to discipline, is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates a school code of student conduct.

To the extent that they also take such action for children without disabilities, school personnel may, for not more than 10 consecutive school days, remove a child with a disability (other than a child with mental retardation) who violates a code of student conduct from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting, or suspension. School personnel may also impose additional removals of the child of not more than 10 consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct, as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement (see Change of Placement Because of Disciplinary Removals for the definition) or exceed 15 cumulative school days in a school year. Once a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for a total of 10 school days in the same school year, Advance must, during any subsequent days of removal in that school year, provide services to the extent required.

If the behavior that violated the student code of conduct was not a manifestation of the child's disability (see Manifestation determination) and the disciplinary change of placement would exceed 10 consecutive school days, school personnel may apply the disciplinary procedures to that child with a disability in the same manner and for the same duration as it would to children without disabilities, except that the school must provide services to that child as described herein under Services. The child's IEP Team determines the interim alternative educational setting for such services. Under Pennsylvania special education regulations, a disciplinary exclusion of a student with a disability for more than 15 cumulative school days in a school year will be considered a pattern so as to be deemed a change in educational placement (explained under Change of Placement Because of Disciplinary Removals). Advance will be required to issue a NOREP/Prior Written Notice to parents prior to a removal that constitutes a change in placement (removal for more than 10 consecutive days or 15 cumulative days).

The services that must be provided to a child with a disability who has been removed from the child's current placement may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting. Advance will only be required to provide services to a child with a disability who has been removed from his or her current placement for 10 school days or less in that school year, if it provides services to a child without disabilities who has been similarly removed. Students may have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and may be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by Advance.

A child with a disability who is removed from the child's current placement for more than 10 consecutive school days must continue to receive educational services, so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; and receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment, and behavioral intervention services and modifications that are designed to address the behavior violation so that it does not happen again.

After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for 10 school days during one school year, or if current removal is for 10 consecutive school days or less, and if the removal is not a change of placement (see definition herein), then school personnel, in consultation with at least one of the child's teachers, will determine the extent to which services will be needed to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP.

If the removal is a change of placement (see definition herein), the child's IEP Team will determine the appropriate services to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP.

Manifestation Determination

Within 10 school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of a violation of a code of student conduct (except for a removal that does not constitute a change in educational placement i.e., is for 10 consecutive school days or less and not a change of placement), Advance, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team (as determined by the parent and Advance) must review all relevant information in the student's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- if the conduct in question was caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to, the child's disability; or
- if the conduct in question was the direct result of Advance' failure to implement the child's IEP.

If Advance, the parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team determine that either of those conditions were met, the conduct must be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability.

If Advance, the parent, and relevant members of the child's IEP Team determine that the conduct in question was the direct result of Advance' failure to implement the IEP, Advance must take immediate action to remedy those deficiencies.

If Advance, the parent, and relevant members of the IEP Team determine that the conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the IEP Team must either:

- Conduct a functional behavioral assessment, unless Advance had conducted a functional behavioral assessment before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred, and implement a behavioral intervention plan for the child; or
- If a behavioral intervention plan already has been developed, review the behavioral intervention plan, and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior.

Except as described herein, Advance must return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and Advance agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

Whether or not the behavior was a manifestation of the child's disability, school personnel may remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting (determined by the child's IEP Team) for up to 45 school days, if the child:

- Carries a weapon (see the definitions herein) to school or has a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of Advance;
- Knowingly has or uses illegal drugs (see the definitions herein), or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance, (see the definitions herein), while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of Advance; or
- Has inflicted serious bodily injury (see the definitions herein) upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the PDE or Advance.

Definitions

Controlled substance means a drug or other substance identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in section 202 (c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812(c)). Illegal drug means a controlled substance; but does not include a controlled substance that is legally possessed or used under the supervision of a licensed health-care professional or that is legally possessed or used under any other authority under that Act or under any other provision of Federal law.

Serious bodily injury has the meaning given the term "serious bodily injury" under paragraph (3) of subsection (h) of section 1365 of title 18, United States Code.

Weapon has the meaning given the term "dangerous weapon" under paragraph (2) of the first subsection (g) of section 930 of title 18, United States Code.

Notification

On the date it makes the decision to make a removal that is a change of placement of the child because of a violation of a code of student conduct, Advance must notify the parents of that decision, and provide the parents with a procedural safeguards notice.

Change of Placement Because of Disciplinary Removals

A removal of a child with a disability from the child's current educational placement is a change of placement requiring a NOREP/prior written notice if:

- The removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days; or
- The removal is for 15 cumulative school days total in any one school year;
- The child has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because:
 - The series of removals total more than 10 school days in a school year;
 - The child's behavior is substantially similar to the child's behavior in previous incidents that resulted in a series of removals;
- Of such additional factors as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another; and
- Whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change of placement is determined on a case-by-case basis by Advance and, if challenged, is subject to review through due process and judicial proceedings.

Determination of Setting

The IEP team must determine the interim alternative educational setting for removals that are changes of placement, and removals under additional authority and special circumstances.

General

The parent of a child with a disability may file a due process complaint to request a due process hearing if he or she disagrees with any decision regarding placement made under these discipline provisions; or the manifestation determination.

Advance may file a due process complaint to request a due process hearing if it believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

The hearing officer may:

- Return the child with a disability to the placement from which the child was removed if the hearing officer determines that the removal was a violation of the requirements described under the heading Authority of School Personnel, or that the child's behavior was a manifestation of the child's disability; or
- Order a change of placement of the child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if the hearing officer determines that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

These hearing procedures may be repeated, if Advance believes that returning the child to the original placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

When the parent or Advance has filed a due process complaint related to disciplinary matters, the child must (unless the parent and the PDE or Advance agree otherwise) remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of the hearing officer, or until the expiration of the time period of removal as provided for and described under the heading Authority of School Personnel, whichever occurs first.

Special Rules for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

The disciplinary removal of a child with intellectual disability attending Advance for any amount of time is considered a change in placement and requires a NOREP/prior written notice (if the disciplinary event does not involve drugs, weapons and/or serious bodily injury). A removal from school is not a change in placement for a child who is identified with intellectual disability when the disciplinary event involves weapons, drugs, and/or serious bodily injury.

According to certain assurances the Commonwealth entered into related to the PARC consent decree, Advance may suspend on a limited basis a student with intellectual disability who presents a danger to himself or others upon application and approval by the Bureau of Special Education and only to the extent that a student with a disability other than intellectual disability could be suspended.

Protections for Children not yet Eligible for Special Education and Related Services

If a child has not been determined eligible for special education and related services and violates a code of student conduct, but Advance had knowledge before the behavior that brought about the disciplinary action occurred, that the child was a child with a disability, then the child may assert any of the protections described herein.

Basis of Knowledge for Disciplinary Matters

Advance must be deemed to have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability if, before the behavior that brought about the disciplinary action occurred:

- the parent of the child expressed concern in writing that the child is in need of special education and related services to supervisory or administrative personnel, or a teacher of the child;
- the parent requested an evaluation related to eligibility for special education and related services under Part B of the IDEA; or
- the child's teacher, or other Advance personnel expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child directly to Advance's director of special education or to other supervisory personnel of the Advance.

Advance would not be deemed to have such knowledge if:

- the child's parent has not allowed an evaluation of the child or refused special education services; or
- the child has been evaluated and determined to not be a child with a disability under Part B of the IDEA.

If prior to taking disciplinary measures against the child, Advance does not have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability, the child may be subjected to the disciplinary measures that are applied to children without disabilities who engaged in comparable behaviors.

However, if a request is made for an evaluation of a child during the time period in which the child is subjected to disciplinary measures, the evaluation must be conducted in an expedited manner.

Until the evaluation is completed, the child will remain in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services. If the child is determined to be a child with a disability, taking into consideration information from the evaluation conducted by Advance, and information provided by the parents, Advance must provide special education and related services in accordance with Part B of the IDEA, including the disciplinary requirements.

[Referral to and Action by Law Enforcement and Judicial Authorities](#)

The state and federal regulations do not:

- Prohibit an agency from reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities; or
- Prevent State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a child with a disability.

Subsequent to a referral to law enforcement, an updated functional behavior assessment and positive behavior support plan are required.

If Advance reports a crime committed by a child with a disability, then Advance must ensure that copies of the child's special education and disciplinary records are transmitted for consideration by the authorities to whom the agency reports the crime; and may transmit copies of the child's special education and disciplinary records only to the extent permitted by FERPA.

Cyber Learning Policies

Advance will encourage the use of technology to promote students' learning. Teachers will provide a safe environment for their students to ask questions without the fear of hurtful behavior from other students in the cyber class. The personal rapport that each teacher develops with his/her students ensures a safe learning environment for all.

The Board plans to select a technology provider that will have all computers equipped with heightened Internet security settings, and Internet filtering software that can be activated upon request. If using their own computer, the Technical Support provider will help students configure Internet security settings and find additional Internet filtering software.

Advance will strictly prohibit any form of bullying/cyber bullying, harassment, hazing, or other destructive actions that may cause emotional and/or physical harm to students. School policies regarding these prohibited behaviors will be documented in the school handbook. Staff trainings regarding student safety are a critical part of the Connections professional development plan. Advance will educate administrators, teachers, families and students on bullying prevention strategies and techniques. Part of the training will stress the impact of bullying and why it is important for schools to develop and sustain bullying prevention strategies. As required by law, Advance will post a copy of its Anti-bullying Policy on its website.

Advance will encourage the promotion of positive interpersonal relations between members of the school community, and defines harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, or hazing toward a student, whether by other students, staff, or third parties, as "prohibited behaviors" that will not be tolerated. The school handbook will explain that this prohibition includes aggressive behavior, physical, verbal, and psychological abuse, and violence within a dating relationship. These types of behavior are forms of intimidation and harassment and are strictly prohibited, regardless of whether or not the target of the prohibited behavior are members of a legally protected groups, such as sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, marital status, age, or disability. The Board will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions that cause or threaten to cause bodily harm or personal degradation.

This policy applies to all school-related activities, including but not limited to cyber school-related activities such as LiveLesson sessions; participation in clubs, activities, WebMail messages, discussions, and message boards; and in-person activities such as state testing, field trips, open houses, and any other in-person school-related activities on or off school property. The school handbook will make it clear that every student is

encouraged, and every staff member is required, to report any situation believed to be prohibited behavior directed toward a student. All reports will be investigated with appropriate disciplinary consequences as laid out in the school handbook.

Student Safety

Advance will provide a safe and supportive environment by keeping students safe from online predators and solicitors. Advance takes student safety and well-being seriously. Advance is committed to following and implementing health and safety requirements applicable to public cyber charter schools. Students should be able to learn in a safe and comfortable environment. Advance will require two courses focused on safety:

- **Internet Safety** - An Internet Safety Course for students, parents, and Learning Coaches is provided by Connections. It is an i-SAFE course that provides information about the various threats, challenges, and safety protocols needed to work and learn online. It contains valuable information about practicing safe behaviors online. This course will also be required training for all school staff.
- **Students in Distress: Recognizing and Responding** - The Connections course, Students in Distress: Recognizing and Responding, will be required for all staff and designed to help teachers and other school staff become familiar with the signs of distress such as bullying/cyber bullying, neglect and abuse, depression or other issues that would keep them from doing their best and to know how to respond promptly and professionally when they observe such signs or behaviors.

All members of school staff must complete the trainings at the beginning of the school year, and then refer to the trainings throughout the year as needed. Completion of trainings is tracked to ensure all staff members have completed them in a timely manner.

Learning Coaches will be asked to communicate and collaborate with teachers and other school staff as the staff members work to fulfill their professional roles in supporting student safety and well-being. They will be asked to involve additional parties as appropriate to address concerns and to always keep student safety and well-being at the center of the conversation.

Technical Support will assist families with installing programs that enable automatic blocking of adult, phishing, and identity theft sites via DNS filtering. Technical Support can assist families with modifying browser security settings that limit potential malicious activity and installing CyberSitter.⁶⁷

School Safety Plan

Advance recognizes its need for a school safety plan (22 Pa. Code Chapter 10 et seq.)

Advance is committed to providing a safe, orderly learning environment for students. To make this a reality the Board will develop a comprehensive school safety plan that incorporates the provisions of Act 26 and includes protocols for responding to crisis situations, including an outline of the steps that will be taken to finalize Advance's Safety Plan. The document will be reviewed and updated once the staff has been identified and hired in order to modify and change this plan to meet the "real" needs of the school, the facility, its staff and the community. The steps that will be taken to review and modify the final safety plan include the following:

⁶⁷ <http://cybersitter.com/>

- Form a School Safety Committee that includes: Board; school administration, community representatives; representatives of the local police and fire department; and parents.
- Review Act 26, "The Safe Schools Act".
- Review the local school districts safety plans to ensure accordance.
- Review safety plans from other municipalities for content and presentation ideas.
- Develop goals and timelines.
- Draft school safety plan.
- Circulate draft safety plan to the Board, the school administration, and community partners for review.
- Finalize the School Safety Plan.

School safety will be the primary responsibility of the Principal and his/her designee. They will oversee the security systems of Advance as well as the behavior of the students and reporting Act 26 violations. In addition, all staff members will be expected to report to administration any inappropriate behavior in the school environment. It is the primary responsibility of staff to create a climate of respect and educational focus. Students will also be expected to set a tone of respect, order, and purposefulness. Particular responsibility will fall to staff to model good and safe behavior and to correct or report to the school administration inappropriate or unsafe behavior or events.

In accordance with 23 P.S. 6311 et seq, all school employees will be mandated reporters and must report suspected abuse as follows:

When child abuse is suspected, the law requires the school employee to immediately make an oral report of suspected child abuse via the statewide toll-free telephone number ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313 or an online written report.

If a school employee makes an oral report to ChildLine, the school employee must follow-up with a written report, which may be submitted electronically, within 48 hours.

A mandated reporter must personally make the report. Advance administration may assist the school employee in making the report (for example, sit with school employee for support if the school employee is uncomfortable in the process) as long as they do not interfere in any way with the making of the report. Afterward, the school employee should inform administration about the report.

The school employee will not be required to investigate or be certain of the abuse, or even know the name of the person who is suspected of abusing a child. The responsibility will be to make a report when the school employee has reasonable cause to suspect child abuse. ChildLine will forward the report to the appropriate county child welfare agency, who will investigate the circumstances and may contact school employee for additional information or if there are additional questions.

Advance will require that all employees receive the mandated reporting training. Mandated reporters who hold a professional license or certification under the Department of State and mandated reports who work for an agency that is licensed, supervised, or registered with the Department of Human Services will be required to receive training.

Possession of Weapons

Possession of weapons in the school setting is a threat to the safety of students and staff and will be prohibited by law. A weapon will include but not be limited to any knife, cutting instrument, cutting tool, nunchaku, firearm, shotgun, rifle, replica of a weapon, and any other tool, instrument or implement capable of inflicting serious bodily injury. A student will be considered in possession of a weapon when the weapon is found on the person of the student, in the student's locker, desk, backpack, or in the student's vehicle, and the weapon is under the student's control while the student is on school property, on property being used by the school, at any school function or activity, at any school-sponsored activity held away from the school, on any conveyance providing transportation to a school or school-sponsored activity, or while the student is on his/her way to or from school.

Advance will prohibit students from possessing and bringing weapons and replicas of weapons into any school buildings, onto school property, to any school-sponsored activity, and onto any public vehicle providing transportation to school or a school-sponsored activity or while the student is coming to or from school.

The Board will expel for a period of not less than one year any student who violates this weapons policy. Such expulsion will be given in conformance with formal due process proceedings required by law and Board policy. The Principal may recommend modifications of such expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis (24 P.S. 13-1317.2).

In the case of a student with a disability, including a student for whom an evaluation is pending, Advance will take all steps required to comply with state and federal laws and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies.

The Principal or designee will react promptly to information and knowledge concerning possession of a weapon. Such action will be in compliance with state law and regulations and with the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement officials and the school's emergency preparedness plan (22 Pa Code Chapter 10 et seq).

The Principal or designee will immediately report incidents involving weapons on school property, at any school-sponsored activity or on a conveyance providing transportation to or from a school or school-sponsored activity to the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school's property, in accordance with state law and regulations, the procedures set forth in the memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement and Board policies (22 Pa Code Chapter 10 et seq).

The Principal or designee will notify the parent/guardian of any student directly involved in an incident involving weapons as a victim or suspect immediately, as soon as practicable. The Principal or designee will inform the parent/guardian whether or not the local police department that has jurisdiction over the school property has been or may be notified of the incident. The Principal or designee will document attempts made to reach the parent/guardian (22 Pa Code Chapter 10 et seq).

In accordance with state law, the Principal will annually, by July 31, report all incidents involving possession of a weapon to the Office for Safe Schools on the required form (24 PS 13-1303-A).

The Principal will annually inform staff, students and parents/guardians about the Board policy prohibiting weapons and about their personal responsibility for the health, safety and welfare of the school community.

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

Policies Regarding Expulsion and Suspension

All students enrolled in the school will be expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules for the school, and parents and Learning Coaches will be expected to cooperate with the school staff in helping students to maintain this conduct. The student code of conduct will be included in the student handbook.

Discipline Measures

There will be three levels of disciplinary measures utilized by the school: 1) Warning, 2) Suspension, and 3) Expulsion. Each level has associated conduct breach definitions and corresponding disciplinary actions that may occur.

Warning

Students that receive warnings from the school will have a conference (via phone or in person) with their parent(s) and the school administrator(s), and the incident will be formally documented in writing and will become part of the student's permanent record. The student will not have a disruption in schooling and will not be removed from the class (Connexus).

Warnings will be issued when a student demonstrates a breach of expected conduct, but not as serious as those listed under the suspension and/or expulsion categories in this handbook.

Suspension

When a student is suspended, he or she will be temporarily removed from Connexus or a school sponsored program or activity. The length of a suspension will be determined by the Principal (up to 10 days at a time). A suspension will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

During a period of suspension as defined by the Principal, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of Connexus will be restricted. Student access to WebMail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, and/or all of Connexus may be revoked. In such cases where the student's access is completely revoked, the Learning Coach is responsible for logging on to Connexus and obtaining the student's assignments, responding to WebMail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his or her schoolwork during a suspension. Violations that may lead to suspension include, but are not limited to, the following breaches of conduct:

- Criminal or delinquent acts are acts defined as criminal under federal and state law, and any applicable municipal or county criminal ordinances.
- Sexual harassment means unwelcome or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature (verbal, non-verbal or physical) when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of the advancement of a student in school programs or activities such that this conduct substantially interferes with a student's learning or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment.
- Disruptive conduct means willful conduct which: (1) materially and in fact disrupts or interferes with the operation of the school or the orderly conduct of any public school activity, including individual classes; or (2) leads an administrative authority to reasonably forecast that such disruption or interference is likely to occur unless preventive action is taken.
- Gang related activity is disruptive conduct.

- Refusal to identify self means a person's willful refusal, upon request from school personnel known or identified as such to the person, to identify himself or herself accurately.
- Refusal to cooperate with school personnel means a student's willful refusal to obey the lawful instructions or orders of school personnel whose responsibilities include supervision of students.
- Cheating on tests or daily work: A student who knowingly participates in copying, using another's work, and representing it as his or her own (for example, students transmitting their work electronically for another student's use), or who provides other students with test answers, answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation.
- Plagiarism: A student's use of another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). It includes copying material from a book, copying-and-pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to help with coursework.
- Abusive conduct: A student who uses abusive language or engages in abusive conduct in the presence of others either in person or electronically/virtually.
- Bullying: A student that repeatedly engages in negative actions against another student in an attempt to exercise control over him or her.
- Harassment: A student who demonstrates verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the school's programs that: 1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment, 2) unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational performance, or 3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.
- Vandalism: A student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency(ies).
- Theft and robbery: A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the school of that property. The threat or the use of force or violence is considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.
- Violation of acceptable use policy: Students who violate the acceptable use policy in one form or another are open to disciplinary action including suspension. This would include signing on as parents.
- Repeated violation of any disciplinary issues.

Expulsion

When a student is expelled, he or she will be separated from the school for an extended period of time, or permanently, for disciplinary reasons. An expulsion will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others, possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, under the influence of or possession of, or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia. Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

The school will not discipline students protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), or the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) unless the school complies with the requirements of those acts.

Discipline for Students with Disabilities

Please refer to the previous description of discipline for students with disabilities. If a student with a disability violates a code of conduct, he or she will be disciplined according to the discipline measures described herein for up to 10 days. Upon subsequent violations that result in suspensions that exceed 10 days, the school will determine if the behavior manifested from the student's disability. If the school determines that the violation is not a manifestation of the student's disability, the school will apply the discipline procedures to the student in the same manner and for the same duration as the procedures would be applied to students without disabilities. However, if it is determined that the violation manifested from the student's disability, the school will conduct a functional behavior assessment and develop a behavior plan to address the behavior violation so that it does not recur.

Due Process for Students (22 Pa. Code Section 12-.6-12.8)

Exclusion from School may take the form of suspension or expulsion.

- 1) Suspension will be exclusion from school for a period of from one to 10 consecutive school days.
 - (i) Suspensions may be given by the Principal or his/her designee.
 - (ii) A student may not be suspended until the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and given an opportunity to respond. Prior notice of the intended suspension need not be given when it is clear that the health, safety, or welfare of the school community is threatened.
 - (iii) The parents or guardians will be notified immediately in writing when the student is suspended.
 - (iv) When the suspension exceeds three school days, the student and parent will be given the opportunity for an informal hearing consistent with the requirements of the Pennsylvania Code.
 - (v) Suspensions may not be made to run consecutively beyond the 10 school day period.
 - (vi) Students will have the responsibility to make up exams and work missed while being disciplined by suspension and shall be permitted to complete these assignments within guidelines established by the Board.
- 2) Expulsion will be exclusion from school by the Board for a period exceeding 10 school days and may be permanent expulsion from the school rolls. Expulsions require a prior formal hearing pursuant to the Pennsylvania Code.
 - (i) During the period prior to the hearing and decision of the Board in an expulsion case, the student will be placed in his/her normal class except as set forth in subsection (ii).
 - (ii) If it is determined after an informal hearing that a student's presence in his/her normal class would constitute a threat to the health, safety or welfare of others and it is not possible to hold a formal hearing within the period of a suspension, the student may be excluded from school for more than 10 school days. A student may not be excluded from school for longer than 15 school days without a formal hearing unless mutually agreed upon by both parties. Any student so excluded will be provided with alternative education, which may include home study.
 - (iii) Students who are under 17 years of age are still subject to the compulsory school attendance law even though expelled and will be provided an education.

- 3) The initial responsibility for providing the required education rests with the student's parents or guardian, through placement in another school, tutorial, or correspondence study, or another educational program approved by the Principal.
- 4) Within 30 days of action by the Board, the parents or guardians will submit to Advance written evidence that the required education is being provided or that they are unable to do so. If the parents or guardians are unable to provide the required education, Advance will, within the 10 days of receipt of the notification, make provision for the student's education. A student with a disability will be provided educational services as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004.
- 5) If the approved educational program is not complied with, Advance may take action in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. Chapter 63 (relating to the Juvenile Act) to ensure that the child will receive a proper education. See Pennsylvania Code § 12.1(b) (relating to free education and attendance).

Exclusion from classes—in-school suspension

- 1) A student may not receive an in-school suspension unless the student has been informed of the reasons for the suspension and has been given an opportunity to respond before the suspension becomes effective.
- 2) Communication to the parents or guardian will follow the suspension action.
- 3) When the in-school suspension exceeds 10 consecutive school days, an informal hearing with the Principal or designee will be offered to the student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the 11th school day in accordance with the procedures in the Pennsylvania Code.
- 4) Advance will have the responsibility to make provision for the student's education during the period of the in-school suspension.

Hearings

- (a) *General.* Education is a statutory right, and students will be afforded due process if they are to be excluded from school. In a case involving a possible expulsion, the student is entitled to a formal hearing.
- (b) *Formal hearings.* A formal hearing will be required in all expulsion actions. The hearing may be held before the Board or an authorized committee of the Board, or a qualified hearing examiner appointed by the Board. When a committee of the Board or a hearing examiner conducts the hearing, a majority vote of the entire Board will be required to expel a student. The following due process requirements will be observed with regard to the formal hearing:
 - 1) Notification of the charges will be sent to the student's parents or guardians by certified mail.
 - 2) At least three days' notice of the time and place of the hearing will be given. A copy of the expulsion policy, notice that legal counsel may represent the student and hearing procedures will be included with the hearing notice. A student may request the rescheduling of the hearing when the student demonstrates good cause for an extension.
 - 3) The hearing will be held in private unless the student or parent requests a public hearing.
 - 4) The student may be represented by counsel, at the expense of the parents or guardians, and may have a parent or guardian attend the hearing.
 - 5) The student has the right to be presented with the names of witnesses against the student, and copies of the statements and affidavits of those witnesses.
 - 6) The student has the right to request that the witnesses appear in person and answer questions or be cross-examined.

- 7) The student has the right to testify and present witnesses on his/her own behalf.
 - 8) A written or audio record shall be kept of the hearing. The student is entitled, at the student's expense, to a copy. A copy will be provided at no cost to a student who is indigent.
 - 9) The proceeding will be held within 15 school days of the notification of charges, unless mutually agreed to by both parties. A hearing may be delayed for any of the following reasons, in which case the hearing will be held as soon as reasonably possible:
 - (i) Laboratory reports are needed from law enforcement agencies.
 - (ii) Evaluations or other court or administrative proceedings are pending due to a student invoking his/her rights under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act 2004 (20 U.S.C.A. § § 1400—1482).
 - (iii) In cases in juvenile or criminal court involving sexual assault or serious bodily injury, delay is necessary due to the condition or best interests of the victim.
 - 10) Notice of a right to appeal the results of the hearing shall be provided to the student with the expulsion decision.
- c) *Informal hearings.* The purpose of the informal hearing is to enable the student to meet with the appropriate school official to explain the circumstances surrounding the event for which the student is being suspended or to show why the student should not be suspended.
- 1) The informal hearing is held to bring forth all relevant information regarding the event for which the student may be suspended and for students, their parents or guardians and school officials to discuss ways by which future offenses might be avoided.
 - 2) The following due process requirements will be observed in regard to the informal hearing:
 - (i) Notification of the reasons for the suspension will be given in writing to the parents or guardians and to the student.
 - (ii) Sufficient notice of the time and place of the informal hearing will be given.
 - (iii) A student has the right to question any witnesses present at the hearing.
 - (iv) A student has the right to speak and produce witnesses on his/her own behalf.
 - (v) Advance will offer to hold the informal hearing within the first five days of the suspension.

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

Mandatory Student Attendance Plan

Students must meet all regulatory requirements for attending public school in the state. These requirements include attending school for 180 days and completing a required number of hours of instruction per year. In order to make the state's required hours per year of instruction manageable, families are encouraged to have students complete the hours of schooling each week listed in Figure 41. All attendance requirements will be documented by both Board policy as well as in the handbook. The school's documents explaining attendance requirements will emphasize the value and importance of school attendance without over-reliance on punitive measures for non-attendance.

Figure 41. Hours of Schooling Each Week

Grade(s)	Recommended Hours per Week	Required Hours per Year
K-6	25 hours, but will vary by pacing option	900
7-12	30 hours, but will vary by pacing option	990

Since Advance will offer three different pacing options, the instructional hours per week will vary depending on which option the student chooses.

- **Traditional Pacing Option:** Students will attend school for 180 days, at 5 or 5.5 hours per day during fall and spring semesters, for a total of 900 or 990 hours annually based on grade level.
- **Year Round Pacing Option:** Students will attend school for 180 days, at 4 hours per day during the fall and spring semesters, for a total of 720 hours for the fall and spring semesters. Year Round students then must also complete a 41-day summer session, taking 2 courses at 4 hours per course per day (8 hours total for 2 credits, totaling 328 hours for the summer session), bringing their annual total to 1,048.
- **Accelerated Pacing Option:** Students will attend school for 180 days, at 5.5 hours per day during fall and spring semesters, for a total of 990 hours for the fall and spring semesters. Accelerated students then must also take at least 1 course during the summer session at 4 hours per course per day and may not take more than 2 without school administration approval. If Accelerated students average 1 credit per summer session, they may be able to finish high school in 3 years.

Advance will require students complete 21 credits and all required courses to graduate. This can be met if the student earns 6 credits during each of the fall and spring semesters for 3 years and earns an additional 1 credit each summer. The student will need to devote up to 8 hours per day for 41 days each summer to complete 2 courses and earn 1 credit. Students may complete more if approved by the Principal.

It should be noted that the attendance and hours of instruction requirements will be measured on a fiscal school year (July 1 through June 30) basis. The school's proposed first day of class is in September 2016. Therefore, the Year Round Pacing Option will not be offered in the first year, because students would not be able to meet the days and hours requirements by June 30, 2017.

The Year Round Pacing Option will be offered starting in July 2017. The students who choose this option will be able to accumulate the required annual number of days and instructional hours by June 30, 2018 and each fiscal year thereafter.

The Accelerated Pacing Option will be offered beginning in September 2016, because students who choose this option will fulfill their 180 day/990 hour requirement by June 30, 2017. In each subsequent year these students will exceed these requirements by varying amounts, depending on how many courses they take in the summer session.

Hours of schooling per day and/or week will be accumulated by completing lessons, assessments, portfolio items, labs, attending direct instruction sessions, attending educational field trips, participating in state mandated assessments, and by participating in other educational activities.

Failure to attend mandated LiveLesson sessions, state testing, or respond to WebMails and phone call messages from teachers may be counted against documented attendance hours.

Although there is more flexibility in a cyber program than in a traditional school with regard to when instruction occurs, students and Learning Coaches should be aware that the school calendar reflects the days on which teachers will be available to students.

Learning Coach Responsibilities

- **Record Hours of Schooling:** For each instructional day, Learning Coaches will enter a 0 – 9 in Connexus to indicate the number of hours of schooling that occurred. They should aim to meet the weekly hours of schooling listed above to ensure compliance with state regulations. Learning Coaches may also ask for assistance from the school to enter attendance records if they are unable to access a computer on a given day. If a student is absent, the Learning Coach must send information to the school about the absence, and the school determines if the absence can be classified as excused. The teacher or administrator will then enter an “E” or “U” for that day’s attendance.
- **Complete Defined School Year:** Regardless of the number of hours of schooling a student may complete prior to the last day of the school year (as defined in the school year calendar), students will be required to meet the weekly required instructional hours up to and including the last day of the school year.
- **Vacations or Days Off:** Students will be allocated “vacation” days based on the number of weekdays in the school calendar that are marked as non-school days/holidays/vacation. For example, a student may choose to work on Presidents’ Day, but then take the following Monday off. The Learning Coach would record hours of attendance on Presidents’ Day, as though it were a regular school day, and then mark the Monday off as “V” for vacation. Whenever a student wishes to take a regular school day as a vacation day (that is, will not be completing any educational activities), the Learning Coach should seek approval from the student’s teacher in advance.

Students who start after the beginning of the school year will not be permitted to take vacation time for any school holiday or vacation days that occurred prior to their start date. For example, if a student starts school September 5 but school officially started August 18, the student is not entitled to use Labor Day as a vacation day, but is still entitled to all vacation days that are scheduled after his/her official start date.

If a student has used his or her allotment of vacation days, any scheduled school day on which no educational activities are completed (i.e., no hours are recorded) will be treated as zero hours. If that student is able to meet the weekly recommended hours on the days in which he/she does work, then the zero hour day will not adversely affect the student’s attendance percentage. If the hours are not made up during that same week, however, the student will be considered absent.

School Responsibilities

- **Review Attendance Records:** Teachers will monitor and review attendance records on a weekly basis. They will remind Learning Coaches to enter the hours of schooling every day.
- **Monitor Attendance Issues:** The Homeroom Teacher and Homeroom Advisory Teachers (HATs) will monitor student attendance. They will contact families with low attendance rates, and will work to help them stay in compliance. Teachers and administrators will also identify and record excused absences, and can alter Learning Coaches’ attendance records (with proper documentation), if necessary.
- **Maintaining the Integrity of the Attendance Data:** The attendance system prohibits further editing of attendance data after certain points. Any requests for adjustments to the previously verified records must go to the student’s homeroom teacher (Elementary school) or the homeroom support teacher (Middle and High school) (in writing) for review, approval, and adjustment.

- **Official Attendance Records:** The Connexus attendance system will be the record of Learning Coach documented attendance. It is, however, only one of many sources used to determine if a student is meeting the minimum instructional hours required. If it has been determined by the homeroom or homeroom support teacher that a student has not completed enough work to meet attendance records, the teacher or administrator may override the Learning Coach record. If a student regularly does not complete enough work to remain on track, despite repeated assistance and intervention on the part of the teacher or school, then the student may be subject to sanctions up to and including contacting the student's District of Residence to formalize truancy proceedings.

Attendance Status and Escalation Systems

Enrolled students are in one of four attendance statuses at all times:

- On-Track
- Approaching Alarm
- Alarm
- Exempt

On occasion, none of the first three escalation statuses will be appropriate for a student. The student will be placed in "Exempt" status and escalation will not apply; however, all program requirements will still be applicable.

Attendance status will be based on several criteria and is a combination of measures that indicate if a student is demonstrating adequate participation (and therefore attendance) in the program. This not only includes the actual attendance hours recorded by the Learning Coach, but also lesson and assessment completion rates and dates, and amount of communication with the teacher. Therefore, even though a Learning Coach may record a high number of instructional hours in the attendance records, if a student's work completion rates are not on track or if he or she fails to communicate on a regular basis with the teacher, he or she will be placed in an Alarm status.

When a student is in the Approaching Alarm status, he or she is in danger of being removed from active rolls. The student will be removed from the active rolls if the student is truant for 10 or more consecutive days. The school will work with the family to help get the student's attendance back on track. If the school's repeated efforts fail, the student will be escalated to the Alarm status which could quickly lead to the student being removed from the school's active roles.

Truancy

If a student is not adequately engaging in the program, or has accumulated more than three unlawful absences, Advance will be required to work with the family to create a Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP). Advance will comply with the Truancy Elimination Plan and Conference Policy, which is attached with the Board Policies in the Appendix S.

According to the PDE's Compulsory Attendance and Truancy Elimination Plan Basic Education Circular, the TEP will be developed cooperatively with involved stakeholders through a school-family conference, which is required upon the school's notice to the student's parent/guardian upon the third unexcused absence. Teachers are the first line of defense for compulsory attendance, as they are the first to recognize students with possible attendance issues. Therefore, a plan of action will be implemented, including (but not limited to):

- sharing and reviewing school policy on attendance and student responsibilities with students and families;
- contacting the student's parent/guardian upon absence;
- meeting individually with students to discuss reason(s) for absence;
- following up with the Principal (or assigned administrator);
- making referrals to school counselors; and
- collaborating with Student Assistance Teams as appropriate.

The school will notify the parent/guardian regarding the need for a joint conference upon the third unexcused student absence. The school-family conference will engage all participants involved in the student's life to explore possible solutions to increase the student's school attendance. Maintaining open communication between the student and adults will facilitate positive outcomes.

The purpose of the school-family conference is to discuss the cause(s) of the truancy and to develop a mutually agreed upon plan to facilitate regular school attendance. The school-family conference will provide both parties with the opportunity to identify, understand, and explore all issues contributing to the student's truant behavior. Participation by the student and family will be an integral component for this conference. In addition, representatives from relevant and/or involved community-based agencies, community and school services, and school personnel will be invited to participate, as needed. During the school-family conference, a TEP will be developed cooperatively with the student and other meeting participants.

Issues to be addressed at the school-family conference will include but not be limited to:

- appropriateness of the student's educational environment;
- possible elements of the school environment that inhibit student success;
- student's current academic level and needs;
- social, emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral health issues;
- issues concerning family and home environment; and
- any other issues affecting the student's attendance.

The participants in the school-family conference will work collaboratively to conduct a holistic assessment to determine the reason(s) the student is exhibiting truant behavior. Every member will have a vested interest in and responsibility for determining an appropriate plan to assist the student to succeed both socially and academically. This school-family conference will also provide an opportunity to ensure that both the student and the family clearly understand the legal ramifications of not adhering to the state's compulsory attendance requirements. This methodology will promote full understanding and appreciation of the root causes of truancy as well as the resultant personal and societal impacts when truant behavior is not adequately addressed.

The primary goal of the school-family conference will be the development of a comprehensive TEP which is understood by, agreed upon, and supported by the student, the parent/guardian, the school representatives, and all other conference participants. The TEP may include but not be limited to the following components as appropriate:

- identification and provision of appropriate academic supports by the school and/or community organization(s);
- identification and provision of appropriate social, emotional, physical, mental, and behavioral health supports from the school and/or community organization(s);
- identification of the school environment issues that affect the student's success and solutions to address these issues;
- explanation of the student's strengths and responsibilities related to the TEP;
- explanation of the family's strengths and responsibilities related to the TEP;
- clarification of method(s) used for monitoring the effectiveness of the TEP;
- explanation of the consequences for each stakeholder if the TEP is not fully implemented; and
- discussion of the benefits for successfully implementing the TEP.

The TEP will substantiate efforts made by the school, the family, and other vested third parties to assist the student in addressing and resolving school attendance issues. This comprehensive system of supports and services will provide documentation of the "good faith" effort between the school and the student's family should future action be required (e.g. citation to the magisterial district judge and referral to the county children and youth agency, disciplinary action, expulsion, etc.).

A notice will be sent to the parent/guardian after each unlawful absence. Unlawful absences will not trigger a formal response until the school has exhausted all efforts to work collaboratively with the parent/guardian to address the truancy of the student and until the student has three unlawful absences over the course of the school year. Schools are a critical part of a child's support system and have a significant opportunity to assist children and families.

(1) First Unlawful Absence

Parent/guardian will receive a notice of unlawful absence. The legal penalties established by law for violation of compulsory attendance requirements will be attached to the notice. In addition to stating the legal punishments, the name and telephone number of a school contact person will be included. Parents will then be able to contact a specific person to request assistance in resolving the child's truant behavior.

(2) Second Unlawful Absence

Parent/guardian will receive a second notice of unlawful absence. Once again, the legal penalties established by law for violation of compulsory attendance requirements and the name and telephone number of a school contact person will be included. Additionally, another offer of assistance should be made to the parent.

(3) Third Unlawful Absence

Parent/guardian will receive a third notice of unlawful absence by certified mail providing "official notice of child's third illegal absence." Attached to this notice will be penalties for violation of compulsory attendance requirements as they pertain to both the student and the parent/guardian, including information that three days after giving such notice, the student or parent/guardian who again violates the compulsory attendance requirements shall be liable without further notice.

Advance will coordinate a school/family conference to discuss the cause of the child's truancy and develop a mutually agreed upon plan to resolve truant behavior. Issues to be reviewed at the

school/family conference include the appropriateness of the child's educational environment, current academic difficulties, physical or behavioral health issues, and family/environment concerns. At the end of the conference, all parties will sign a comprehensive School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP) that is agreed to by the school representative, the child, and the parents and/or family. The plan could include accessing academic and social/health supports from the school and community organizations, an outline of family/parent and student responsibilities, and levels of performance monitoring that include rewards and consequences.

(4) Subsequent Unlawful Absence

After agreeing to a SAIP, or if there is not agreement on a TEP and three days have passed since the parent/guardian received the official notice of the child's third illegal absence, if a child is unlawfully absent, at any point within the school year, an official notice of unlawful absence will be sent home. The purpose of this correspondence is to inform the child's parent/guardian that the child has violated the SAIP or, if there is not a SAIP, to inform the child's parent/guardian that the child has again violated the compulsory attendance requirements, and advise the parent/guardian that a notice to the school district of residence has been made which will result in a citation immediately being sent to the magisterial district judge. To ensure the parent/guardian receives the notice, the notice will be sent through certified mail. After this step, the school is not obligated to inform parents in writing of absences but Advance will continue to call the parent/guardian to inform them of additional truant behavior.

(5) Referral to County Children and Youth Agency

(a) Children Under 13 Years of Age: Any child who has not attained the age of 13 who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance requirements and is habitually truant, will be referred by the school to the local county children and youth agency for services, which may include addressing family issues that may be responsible for the child's truant behavior, or possible adjudication as a "dependent" child under the Juvenile Act. The referral to the county children and youth agency may be in addition to proceeding against the parent/guardian by sending the citation to the appropriate magisterial district judge or a school may decide to refer a family to the local county children and youth agency instead of sending a citation to the appropriate magisterial district judge. If the parent/guardian provides written consent, a copy of the SAIP should be forwarded to the county children and youth agency.

(b) Children 13 Years of Age and Older: Any child who has attained the age of 13 who fails to comply with the compulsory attendance requirements and is habitually truant may, in lieu of being prosecuted, be referred by the school to the local county children and youth agency for services, which may include addressing family issues that may be responsible for the child's truant behavior or, possible adjudication as a dependent child under the Juvenile Act.

(c) Habitually Truant: The School Code defines habitually truant as absence for more than three school days or their equivalent following the first notice of truancy given after a child's third unlawful absence.

If a child of any age continues to be truant after these actions have been taken, Advance may file citations with the local magisterial district judge citing the child's continued truancy on a weekly basis. It is imperative that the local magisterial district judge be kept informed if truant behavior continues after a plan is in place.

Advance will report to the student's school district of residence when a student has accrued three or more days of unlawful absences. It is the responsibility of the school district to enforce the compulsory attendance laws in accordance with the Public School Code.

For cyber charter schools, a school district may file truancy documents with the magisterial district judge in whose jurisdiction the charter school student resides, which is where the cause of action arose and where the parent/guardian may be served. Advance will cooperate with school districts by providing necessary documentation for the truancy filings, and attending the hearings to provide testimony, if necessary.

In order to maximize student learning, regular attendance is imperative. Advance will offer a great deal of flexibility about how many hours students spend each day on school work and on what days of the week they complete that work. Parents are held legally responsible for ensuring that their students are fully participating in school, even if they have designated another individual as their student's Learning Coach.

In order to avoid truancy, the parent must ensure that the following activities are taking place:

- The student completes assigned lessons and assessments.
- The student participates in educational activities for an appropriate number of hours and the parent or Learning Coach records these attendance hours in Connexus on a daily basis.
- The student is available for regularly scheduled telephone calls with teachers at least once every two weeks.
- The student is able to demonstrate that he/she is doing his/her own schoolwork (the Honor Code and Curriculum Based Assessments support this).
- The student attends mandatory state testing.
- The parent or Learning Coach has communicated with the homeroom teacher in advance if he or she needs to deviate from the regular school calendar (for example, switching a vacation and school day).

V.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.

Figure 42. Timetable of Projected Steps

TASKS	June 2015	July 2015	Aug. 2015	Sep. 2015	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015	Dec. 2015	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016	May 2016	June 2016	July 2016	Aug. 2016
APPLICATION															
· Submit charter application (September)				x											
· PDE approves application (January)								x							
GOVERNANCE															
· Develop and approve policies	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x					
· Approve parent and student handbook								x	x	x	x	x	x		
· Conduct training			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
· Hold Regular Meetings			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
LEGAL															
· Secure counsel		x	x												
· Execute contract with Connections		x	x	x											
· File non-profit Articles of Incorporation				x											
· Review and execute Charter								X	X						
· File for 501c3 status									X	X					
· Secure insurance		x	x					x	x	x					
PERSONNEL															
· Determine payroll and benefits compliance		x	x	x	x	x	x	x							
· Establish staffing model	x	x	x												
· Determine certification and background check requirements	x	x	x												
· Approve employee handbook and	x	x	x					x	x	x	x				

TASKS	June 2015	July 2015	Aug. 2015	Sep. 2015	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015	Dec. 2015	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016	May 2016	June 2016	July 2016	Aug. 2016
employment policies															
· Recruit Principal candidates								x	x	x					
· Review Principal candidates								x	x	x					
· Select Principal								x	x	x					
· Train Principal											x	x	x	x	x
· Recruit remaining staff								x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
· Train staff													x	x	x
FACILITY															
· Procure letter of intent to lease with potential landlords		x	x	x											
· Identify/tour sites		x	x	x	x	x	x								
· Select preliminary Sites/RFPs					x	x	x	x	x	x					
· Negotiate/finalize lease								x	x	x					
· Renovate & build-out								x	x	x	x	x	x		
· Secure inspections/Certificate of Occupancy											x	x	x	x	x
· Move-In for school start														x	x
CURRICULUM															
· Verify state course codes								x	x						
· Fine-tune alignments to state standards								x	x	x					
· Determine course limits and/or restrictions								x							
· Complete any necessary curriculum enhancements								x	x	x	x	x	x		
STUDENT RECRUITMENT															
· Determine marketing budget		x	x	x											
· Create website			x	x											
· Launch website			x	x											

TASKS	June 2015	July 2015	Aug. 2015	Sep. 2015	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015	Dec. 2015	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016	May 2016	June 2016	July 2016	Aug. 2016
· Develop and implement outreach plan (grassroots, PR, advertising, online marketing, collateral, direct mail, etc.)						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
· Create info session presentation for in-person and virtual parent/student information sessions		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
· Host parent/student information sessions		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
· Application period								x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
· Enrollment period										x	x	x	x	x	x
· Hold Student/parent orientation											x	x	x	x	x
FINANCE/BUSINESS/DATA REPORTING															
· Finalize and approve school budget								x	x	x					
· Establish bank account								x							
· Apply for start-up grants								x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
· Determine eligibility and application process for Title and or IDEA funding											x	x	x	x	x
· Establish external data reporting protocols/processes								x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
· Secure independent auditor											x	x	x	x	x
· Validate State Legal Entity created and authorized and required regulatory reporting								x							
STUDENT SERVICES															
· Determine requirements for Special Education and ELL		x	x	x											
· Determine requirements for Gifted and Talented		x	x	x											
· Research IEP enrollment age specifications		x	x	x											
· Confirm minimum graduation		x	x	x											

TASKS	June 2015	July 2015	Aug. 2015	Sep. 2015	Oct. 2015	Nov. 2015	Dec. 2015	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2016	Mar. 2016	Apr. 2016	May 2016	June 2016	July 2016	Aug. 2016
requirements (credits and course requirements)															
• Work with Principal to create progression plan(s)								x	x	x					
TECHNOLOGY															
• Determine technology offering rules		x	x	x											
• Develop a Technology Plan, determine the approval process								x	x	x					
• Install technology at site; test technology prior to school opening													x	x	x
RESEARCH and ASSESSMENT															
• Determine state test requirements, dates	x	x	x												
• Determine the proficiency levels for the state assessment	x	x	x												
• Create a state testing plan	x	x	x							x	x	x	x	x	

V.6 SAFETY

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

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

Safety of School Building

The facilities will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety laws, regulations, and requirements. Advance will follow applicable city planning review procedures. Advance, working with the landlord, will ensure the property is inspected by a local building inspector and the local fire department.

Although not anticipated, if necessary, Advance will request approval from the municipal licensing authority for use of any explosives and flammable compounds or liquids in connection with courses taught at the school.

Advance will apply for certificates, licenses, and so forth as part of the planning process.

Compliance with Health and Safety Laws

Advance will be in compliance with or capable of modification to bring the school into compliance with all local building, zoning, and health and safety requirements.

Certificates of Occupancy

Since students will be present in the school headquarters only on the rare drop-in basis, and will not gather there for instructional activities, no special zoning will be required beyond standard commercial use. 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.

Advance will ensure the facility has a certificate of occupancy, air-conditioning, heating, illuminated fluorescent lights, male and female bathrooms, parking, is handicapped accessible, and is fully equipped with sprinklers and other fire safety equipment. If Advance contemplates any regional learning center facilities to accommodate testing, related services, etc., such facilities will appropriately zoned.

V.7 SCHOOL HEALTH SERVICES

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

School Health Services

Advance will contract with local health services providers throughout the Commonwealth to accommodate enrollment as required to provide services to students and to meet the requirements of Article XIV: School Health Services of the Public School Code.⁶⁸

Parents and students will receive information about the school's health services in the parent/student handbook including requirements, assistance and programs the school offers to students.

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

School Nursing Services

The School Nursing services, provided through contracts with local health services providers, may include:

- 1) A vision test
- 2) A hearing test
- 3) A measurement of height and weight which shall use the measurement to compute a child's weight-for-height ratio
- 4) Tests for tuberculosis under medical supervision
- 5) Such other tests as the Advisory Health Board may deem advisable to protect the health of the child. Vision tests will be given at least annually and other tests at intervals established by the Advisory Health Board. ((a) amended July 11, 2006, P.L.1092, No.114)

Advance will maintain a comprehensive health record which will include the results of the tests, measurements, and regularly scheduled examinations and special examinations and which will be protected for confidentiality. The student's health record will also include medical questionnaires completed by the student's parent or guardian.

68

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/LI/uconsCheck.cfm?txtType=HTM&yr=1949&sessInd=0&smthLwInd=0&act=014&chpt=14>

Advanced Cyber PDE 2028 Budget		Start Up	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Account Code	Revenues						
6000	Local						
6944	Receipts from other LEAs in PA (Regular)		3,895,331	11,685,993	19,476,655	27,267,316	35,057,978
6941	Receipts from other LEAs in PA (Special)		1,558,202	4,674,607	7,791,011	10,907,415	14,023,820
6000	Total Local	0	5,453,533	16,360,599	27,267,665	38,174,732	49,081,798
7000	State Sources						
7000	Total State Sources						
8000	Federal						
8511	IDEA		49,200	147,600	246,000	344,400	442,800
8514	Title 1		104,000	312,000	520,000	728,000	936,000
8515	Title 2		13,000	39,000	65,000	91,000	117,000
8000	Total Federal	0	166,200	498,600	831,000	1,163,400	1,495,800
9000	Other Financing Sources						
9910	Advance	300,000	0	0	0	0	0
9000	Total Other Financing Sources	300,000	0	0	0	0	0
	TOTAL REVENUES						
	EXPENDITURES						
1000	Instruction						
1100	Regular Instruction Programs						
100	Personnel Services-Salaries	0	606,281	2,065,865	3,582,830	5,281,921	6,956,415
200	Personnel Services- Employee Benefits	0	355,826	1,231,668	2,169,762	3,234,120	4,244,804
300	Purchased Professional & Technical Services						
	<i>EMS License</i>	0	157,500	472,500	787,500	1,102,500	1,417,500
500	Other Purchased Services						
538	<i>Student Internet Connection (Stipend)</i>	0	191,520	548,244	913,740	1,279,237	1,644,733
590	<i>Testing Costs</i>	0	25,000	75,000	125,000	175,000	225,000
600	Supplies						
640	<i>Supplies and Curriculum</i>	0	695,463	2,191,330	3,655,176	5,177,704	6,693,579
700	Property						
750	<i>Student Computers</i>	0	431,680	1,295,040	2,158,400	3,021,760	3,885,120
750	<i>Student Printers</i>	0	7,500	22,500	37,500	52,500	67,500
1100	Total Regular Instruction Programs	0	2,470,769	7,902,147	13,429,909	19,324,741	25,134,651
1200	Special Instruction Programs						
100	Personnel Services-Salaries	0	198,360	501,080	865,290	1,196,390	1,527,490
200	Personnel Services - Employee Benefits	0	116,417	298,744	524,020	732,550	932,074
300	Purchased Professional & Technical Services						
330	<i>Special Education Direct Services</i>	0	328,865	986,595	1,644,325	2,302,055	2,959,786
330	<i>Special Education Program Support Services</i>	0	136,800	410,400	684,000	957,600	1,231,200
600	Supplies						
640	<i>Supplies and Curriculum</i>	0	216,087	513,320	852,574	1,133,146	1,420,371
1200	Total Special Instruction Programs	0	996,530	2,710,139	4,570,209	6,321,741	8,070,921
1000	Total Instruction	0	3,467,299	10,612,286	18,000,117	25,646,482	33,205,572
2000	Support Services						
2100	Support Services - Students						
100	Personnel Services-Salaries	0	38,655	154,620	274,880	386,550	498,220
200	Personnel Services- Employee Benefits	0	22,687	92,184	166,467	236,685	304,014
300	Purchased Professional & Technical Services						
330	<i>Student Support Services</i>	0	Waived	559,350	932,250	1,305,150	1,678,050
330	<i>Enrollment and Placement Services</i>	0	171,500	514,500	857,500	1,200,500	1,543,500
	<i>EMS License</i>	0	78,750	236,250	393,750	551,250	708,750
500	Other Purchased Services						
590	<i>Technical Support & Repairs</i>	0	90,000	270,000	450,000	630,000	810,000
2100	Student Support Services	0	401,592	1,826,904	3,074,847	4,310,135	5,542,534
2200	Support Instructional - Staff						
300	Purchased Professional & Technical Services						
348	<i>EMS License</i>	0	78,750	236,250	393,750	551,250	708,750
	<i>Instructional Staff Support Services</i>	0	29,700	89,100	148,500	211,950	274,050
500	Other Purchased Services						
580	<i>Travel/Conferences</i>	0	15,000	45,000	75,000	105,000	135,000
590	<i>Professional Development</i>	0	37,250	111,750	186,250	264,125	340,875
700	Property						
750	<i>Staff Computers</i>	0	21,780	65,340	108,900	155,430	200,970
2100	Support Instructional - Staff	0	182,480	547,440	912,400	1,287,755	1,659,645

Advanced Cyber PDE 2028 Budget		Start Up	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
2380	Administration						
100	Personnel Services-Salaries	139,395	370,438	748,334	1,096,322	1,358,360	1,646,126
200	Personnel Services- Employee Benefits	40,425	217,410	446,157	663,933	831,724	1,004,466
300	Purchased Professional & Technical Services						
330	<i>Legal Services</i>	20,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
330	<i>Regulatory and Reporting Services</i>	0	22,500	67,500	112,500	157,500	202,500
330	<i>Student Records Management</i>	0	13,500	40,500	67,500	94,500	121,500
330	<i>Human Resources Support</i>	0	34,650	103,950	173,250	247,275	319,725
330	<i>School Operations Support</i>	0	292,500	877,500	1,462,500	2,047,500	2,632,500
500	Other Purchased Services						
520	<i>Insurance</i>	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
510	<i>Board Related Expenses</i>	10,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
530	<i>Postage & Shipping</i>	0	7,500	22,500	37,500	52,500	67,500
540	<i>Advertising</i>	5,000	2,500	7,500	12,000	14,000	16,000
530	<i>Printing</i>	0	5,000	15,000	25,000	35,000	45,000
600	Supplies						
640	<i>Office Supplies</i>	0	15,000	45,000	75,000	105,000	135,000
800	Other objects						
810	<i>Dues and Fees</i>	0	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500
2380	Total Administration	216,320	1,015,998	2,408,941	3,760,505	4,978,359	6,225,317
2400	Pupil Health						
300	Purchased Professional & Technical Services						
330	<i>Contracted Staff</i>	0	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
2400	Total Pupil Health	0	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
2500	Business						
300	Purchased Professional & Technical Services						
330	<i>Business Services</i>	0	67,500	202,500	337,500	472,500	607,500
330	<i>Audit Services</i>	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
330	<i>Internet Subsidy Payment Processing</i>	0	13,500	40,500	67,500	94,500	121,500
330	<i>Recruitment Services</i>	0	137,200	411,600	686,000	960,400	1,234,800
2500	Total Business	0	238,200	674,600	1,111,000	1,547,400	1,983,800
2600	Operation & Maintenance						
400	Purchased Property Services						
430	<i>Facility Support Services</i>	0	25,000	25,000	50,000	75,000	100,000
440	<i>Rent and Utilities</i>	54,000	108,000	108,000	158,000	208,000	258,000
500	Other Purchased Services						
538	<i>Internet and Phone</i>	20,000	40,000	50,000	60,000	70,000	80,000
600	Supplies						
640	<i>Maintenance and Repair</i>	0	5,000	5,000	10,000	15,000	20,000
700	Property						
740	<i>Deprecation</i>	0	60,000	60,000	80,000	100,000	120,000
2600	Total Operations and Maintenance	74,000	238,000	248,000	358,000	468,000	578,000
2000	Total Support Services	290,320	2,081,270	5,710,885	9,221,752	12,596,648	15,994,296
3000	Noninstructional Services						
800	<i>Extracurricular</i>	0	12,500	37,500	62,500	87,500	112,500
	Total Noninstructional Services	0	12,500	37,500	62,500	87,500	112,500
5000	Other Financing						
5100	Debt Service						
800	<i>Interest</i>	0	0	39,899	0	0	0
900	<i>Principal</i>	0	0	300,000	0	0	0
5100	Total Debt Service	0	0	339,899	0	0	0
5000	Total Other Financing	0	0	339,899	0	0	0
	TOTAL EXPENDITURES	290,320	5,561,069	16,700,570	27,284,369	38,330,631	49,312,368
	NET INCOME	9,680	58,664	158,629	814,296	1,007,501	1,265,230
	FUND BALANCE	9,680	68,345	226,974	1,041,270	2,048,771	3,314,001