



Reach Cyber Charter School  
BOARD MEETING

Pursuant to the Pennsylvania Open Meeting Laws, notice is hereby given to the members of the Reach Cyber Charter School Board and the general public that the Board will hold a meeting open to the public on:

**Date and Time:**

Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

**Meeting location:**

750 East Park Drive, Suite 204  
Harrisburg, PA 17111

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Below is an agenda of all items scheduled to be considered. Unless otherwise stated, items may be taken out of the order presented on the agenda at the discretion of the Chair.

Reasonable efforts will be made to assist and accommodate persons with a disability. Please contact Heather Woodward at 443-867-2287.

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call – D. Taylor
- II. Public Comment – D. Taylor

The Board welcomes participation by the members of the public both in-person and telephonically. To address an item on the agenda, before the scheduled start of the meeting, an individual must provide their name and a short description of the agenda item on which they wish to comment to the Chair, along with any materials they want to have distributed to Board. Individuals who wish to address the Board telephonically must contact the Principal or Board President by phone or by email at least twenty four (24) hours before the scheduled start of the Board meeting. If the individual wants to provide any written materials to the Board, these should be emailed to the Principal or Board President at least twenty four (24) hours before the scheduled start of the meeting.

The total time for any individual to present, either in person or via telephone, on an item on the agenda shall not exceed three (3) minutes, unless the Board grants additional time.

Individuals desiring to make a formal presentation to the Board on an item not on the agenda but desiring it be placed on the agenda must provide notice and written submissions detailing the subject of the presentation to the Principal or Board President at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting. Any such presentations shall not exceed fifteen (15) minutes in duration, unless otherwise permitted by the Chair.

- III. Routine Business – D. Taylor
  - a. Approval of Agenda

IV. Oral Reports

- a. Principal's Report (MSR attached) – J. Swan
  - i. Update on State Testing
- b. Financial Report (attached) – K. Helt

V. Consent Items – D. Taylor

- a. Approval of Minutes from the January 18, 2017 Board Meeting (attached)
- b. Approval of Staffing Report (attached)
- c. Approval of LiveSpeech Invoice (attached)
- d. Approval of Title 1 Parent Involvement Policy (attached)
- e. Approval of the 2017-2018 School Year General School Handbook (attached)
- f. Approval of the 2017-2018 School Year State Specific School Handbook (attached)

VI. Action Items

- a. Approval of Connections Education Invoice for January (attached) – K. Helt

VII. Information Items

- a. Outreach Plan for the 2017-2018 School Year (to follow) – S. Pryor
- b. Legislative Update (to follow) – A. Jay
- c. Partner School Leadership Team (PSLT) Update – R. Graver
  - i. Update on Winter Principal's Conference

VIII. Adjournment and Confirmation of Next Meeting – Wednesday, April 19, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.



**MONTHLY SCHOOL REPORT**

**Reach Cyber Charter School**

January 2017

EOY 15-16		1/31/2016		12/31/2016		1/31/2017		
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	%Change

**ENROLLMENT DATA**

<b>School Enrollment</b>										
		0	0%	0	0%	803	100%	881	100%	N/A
	Reach Cyber Charter School	0	0%	0	0%	803	100%	881	100%	N/A
<b>Grade Distribution</b>										
<b>Grades PK-2</b>										
		0	0%	0	0%	166	21%	181	21%	0 %
	KG	0	0%	0	0%	69	9%	74	8%	0 %
	1	0	0%	0	0%	43	5%	48	5%	0 %
	2	0	0%	0	0%	54	7%	59	7%	0 %
<b>Grades 3-5</b>										
		0	0%	0	0%	196	24%	209	24%	0 %
	3	0	0%	0	0%	55	7%	57	6%	0 %
	4	0	0%	0	0%	68	8%	71	8%	0 %
	5	0	0%	0	0%	73	9%	81	9%	0 %
<b>Grades 6-8</b>										
		0	0%	0	0%	314	39%	347	39%	0 %
	6	0	0%	0	0%	75	9%	88	10%	0 %
	7	0	0%	0	0%	123	15%	133	15%	0 %
	8	0	0%	0	0%	116	14%	126	14%	0 %
<b>Grades 9-12</b>										
		0	0%	0	0%	127	16%	144	16%	0 %
	9	0	0%	0	0%	127	16%	144	16%	0 %
<b>New/Returning to CE</b>										
	New	0	0%	0	0%	803	100%	881	100%	0%
	Returning	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
<b>Total YTD Enrollment</b>										
	Enrolled, not Grad	0	0%	0	0%	803	86%	881	85%	0%
	Prior To Engagement	0	0%	0	0%	25	3%	27	3%	0%
	Withdrawal During School Year	0	0%	0	0%	108	12%	133	13%	0%
	Graduate	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
	<b>Total YTD Enrollment</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>936</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1041</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0 %</b>
<b>Withdrawal Reason</b>										
	Different/Better Schooling Option (Not related to socialization)	0	0%	0	0%	81	75%	104	78%	0%
	Life Change	0	0%	0	0%	11	10%	11	8%	0%
	Mismatch Academic	0	0%	0	0%	3	3%	3	2%	0%
	Getting started with the school was too difficult	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	1	1%	0%
	Mismatch Family Schedule	0	0%	0	0%	6	6%	6	5%	0%
	Regulation	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
	Student wants more socialization	0	0%	0	0%	3	3%	4	3%	0%
	Unhappy with the school (teachers, leadership)	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
	Applying for next school year	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
	Deceased	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
	Inactivity	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%	0%
	Missed Deadline	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
	Required Documentation Incomplete	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%
	No Reason Given	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0%



**MONTHLY SCHOOL REPORT**

**Reach Cyber Charter School**

January 2017

EOY 15-16		1/31/2016		12/31/2016		1/31/2017		
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	%Change

**HOUSEHOLD DATA**

Household Data									
Active Households	0	N/A	0	N/A	650	N/A	715	N/A	0%
Graduated	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0	N/A	0%
WD Prior To Engagement	0	N/A	0	N/A	22	N/A	23	N/A	0%
WD During School Year	0	N/A	0	N/A	92	N/A	111	N/A	0%
Students Per Active HH	0.00	N/A	0.00	N/A	1.24	N/A	1.23	N/A	0%

**STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS**

Ethnicity									
Hispanic or Latino	0	0%	0	0%	121	15%	127	14%	0%
Not Hispanic or Latino	0	0%	0	0%	682	85%	754	86%	0%
Race									
Asian	0	0%	0	0%	15	2%	17	2%	0%
Black/African American	0	0%	0	0%	231	29%	247	28%	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%	7	1%	6	1%	0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0%	0	0%	27	3%	30	3%	0%
White	0	0%	0	0%	579	72%	640	73%	0%
Distinct Race/Ethnicity									
Hispanic or Latino	0	0%	0	0%	121	15%	127	14%	0%
Multiple Races	0	0%	0	0%	45	6%	47	5%	0%
Black/African American	0	0%	0	0%	169	21%	184	21%	0%
White	0	0%	0	0%	462	58%	516	59%	0%
Asian	0	0%	0	0%	4	0%	5	1%	0%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%	0%
Gender									
F	0	0%	0	0%	447	56%	490	56%	0%
M	0	0%	0	0%	356	44%	391	44%	0%
FARM Eligibility									
Qualifies for free	0	0%	0	0%	462	58%	511	58%	0%
Qualifies for reduced	0	0%	0	0%	79	10%	85	10%	0%
Refused to report	0	0%	0	0%	100	12%	102	12%	0%
Prior Schooling									
Charter School (Public)	0	0%	0	0%	63	8%	70	8%	0%
Home School	0	0%	0	0%	50	6%	50	6%	0%
No Prior School	0	0%	0	0%	51	6%	51	6%	0%
Online (Virtual) Public School	0	0%	0	0%	58	7%	65	7%	0%
Private/Parochial School	0	0%	0	0%	60	7%	66	7%	0%
Public School	0	0%	0	0%	474	59%	534	61%	0%
Prior Schooling Not Reported	0	0%	0	0%	47	6%	45	5%	0%
Special Populations									
Gifted	0	0%	0	0%	11	1%	20	2%	0%
504	0	0%	0	0%	14	2%	18	2%	0%
IEP	0	0%	0	0%	130	16%	142	16%	0%
None	0	0%	0	0%	648	81%	707	80%	0%



**MONTHLY SCHOOL REPORT**

**Reach Cyber Charter School**

**January 2017**

	EOY 15-16		1/31/2016		12/31/2016		1/31/2017		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	%Change
<b>Disability</b>									
Autism	0	0%	0	0%	13	10%	14	10%	0%
Cognitive Disability	0	0%	0	0%	5	4%	5	4%	0%
Emotionally Impaired	0	0%	0	0%	17	13%	17	13%	0%
Hearing Impaired	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%	3	2%	0%
Other Health Impaired	0	0%	0	0%	21	17%	25	18%	0%
Specific Learning Disability	0	0%	0	0%	51	40%	55	40%	0%
Speech/Language Impaired	0	0%	0	0%	16	13%	17	13%	0%
<b>Primary Language</b>									
No Language Reported	0	0%	0	0%	803	100%	881	100%	0%

**PERFORMANCE DATA**

<b>Contacts Per Week</b>									
Met	0	0%	0	0%	651	81%	719	82%	0%
Not Met	0	0%	0	0%	152	19%	162	18%	0%
<b>Escalation Status</b>									
Alarm	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	128	15%	0%
Approaching Alarm	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	63	7%	0%
Exempt	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	0%	0%
On Track	0	0%	0	0%	803	100%	687	78%	0%

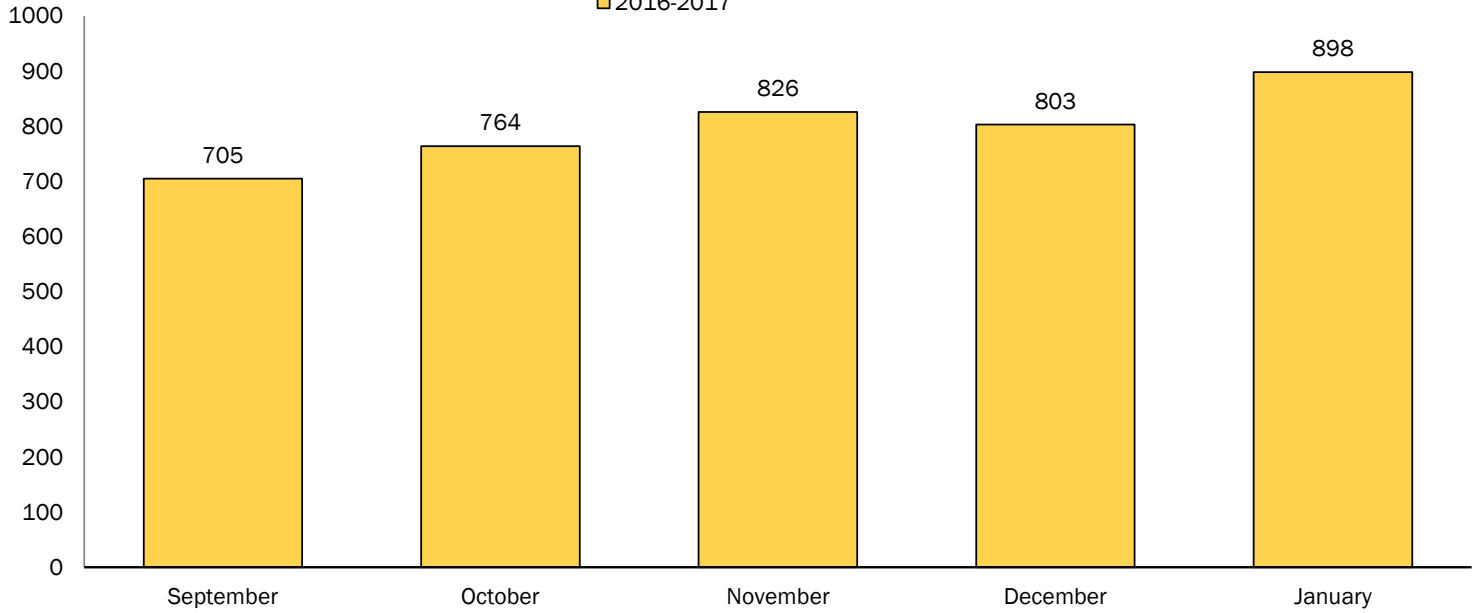
**Performance Metrics**

<b>Grades PK-2</b>									
Average Performance		0 %		0 %		89 %		87 %	0%
Average Participation		0 %		0 %		98 %		99 %	0%
Average Attendance		0 %		0 %		90 %		93 %	0%
<b>Grades 3-5</b>									
Average Performance		0 %		0 %		81 %		78 %	0%
Average Participation		0 %		0 %		100 %		106 %	0%
Average Attendance		0 %		0 %		98 %		100 %	0%
<b>Grades 6-8</b>									
Average Performance		0 %		0 %		64 %		66 %	0%
Average Participation		0 %		0 %		90 %		109 %	0%
Average Attendance		0 %		0 %		89 %		92 %	0%
<b>Grades 9-12</b>									
Average Performance		0 %		0 %		63 %		68 %	0%
Average Participation		0 %		0 %		90 %		104 %	0%
Average Attendance		0 %		0 %		90 %		91 %	0%
<b>Total Average Performance</b>		<b>0 %</b>		<b>0 %</b>		<b>73 %</b>		<b>73 %</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Average Participation</b>		<b>0 %</b>		<b>0 %</b>		<b>94 %</b>		<b>105 %</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total Average Attendance</b>		<b>0 %</b>		<b>0 %</b>		<b>91 %</b>		<b>94 %</b>	<b>0%</b>



### Monthly Student Current Enrollment Comparison

■ 2016-2017



**REACH Connections Academy**  
**Revenue and Expense Statement Fiscal Year 2017**  
**Period Ended January 31, 2017**

	January-17 Actual	YTD Actual	Annual Forecast	Annual Budget	Variance - Favorable (unfavorable)
<b>Forecasted Enrollment</b>					
Funded Enrollment			773	850	(77)
<b>Revenue</b>					
Regular Ed Funding	519,126.29	3,766,838.60	6,423,460	6,936,199	(512,739)
Special Ed Funding	194,319.87	1,599,012.26	2,824,837	1,985,898	838,939
Subtotal	<u>713,446.16</u>	<u>5,365,850.86</u>	<u>9,248,297</u>	<u>8,922,097</u>	<u>326,200</u>
Title I	-	-	177,000	177,000	-
Title II-A	-	-	22,000	22,000	-
Title VI - IDEA B	-	-	-	-	-
E-Rate	-	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Income	-	20.00	20	-	20
Subtotal	<u>-</u>	<u>20.00</u>	<u>199,020</u>	<u>199,000</u>	<u>20</u>
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b><u>713,446.16</u></b>	<b><u>5,365,870.86</u></b>	<b><u>9,447,317</u></b>	<b><u>9,121,097</u></b>	<b><u>326,220</u></b>
<b>Compensation Expense</b>					
Salaries - Administration	35,512.32	140,096.58	381,543	586,720	205,177
Benefits - Administration	7,102.46	28,019.32	76,309	117,344	41,035
Pension - Administration	1,770.64	13,270.01	32,247	58,672	26,425
Taxes - Administration	2,576.68	13,513.18	34,624	52,805	18,181
Subtotal Administration	<u>46,962.10</u>	<u>241,861.18</u>	<u>524,722</u>	<u>815,541</u>	<u>290,819</u>
		-			
Salaries - Teachers	102,759.73	305,277.43	1,073,476	1,473,687	400,211
Benefits - Teachers	20,551.95	61,055.48	214,695	294,737	80,042
Pension - Teachers	5,109.43	28,134.30	99,788	147,369	47,581
Taxes - Teachers	7,366.05	31,931.74	99,187	132,632	33,445
Subtotal Instructional Staff	<u>135,787.16</u>	<u>562,186.11</u>	<u>1,487,146</u>	<u>2,048,425</u>	<u>561,279</u>
<b>Total Compensation Expense</b>	<b><u>182,749.26</u></b>	<b><u>804,047.29</u></b>	<b><u>2,011,868</u></b>	<b><u>2,863,966</u></b>	<b><u>852,098</u></b>
<b>Connections Products and Services</b>					
Curriculum and Instructional Support Services	142,152.67	667,078.67	1,393,104	1,490,135	97,031
Student Connexus License	56,210.00	216,860.00	493,139	535,500	42,361
Student Technology Assistance Services	86,130.33	443,963.33	893,025	948,430	55,405
Enrollment/Placement/Student Support Services	46,648.00	326,536.00	589,575	612,255	22,680
School Operations Support Services	52,195.00	201,370.00	457,915	497,250	39,335
School Business Support Services	-	-	-	-	-
Special Ed Program Support Services	48,750.00	185,250.00	438,750	194,517	(244,233)
Professional Development Services	3,875.00	12,500.00	41,625	40,056	(1,569)
School Staff Support Services/human resources support	17,485.00	47,500.00	158,175	139,394	(18,781)
Facilities Support Services	2,083.33	14,583.33	25,000	25,000	-
Short term substitute teachers	15,300.00	45,750.00	54,900	-	(54,900)
Direct Course Instruction Support	1,404.54	7,830.54	14,682	-	(14,682)
<b>Total Connections Products and Services Fees</b>	<b><u>472,233.87</u></b>	<b><u>2,169,221.87</u></b>	<b><u>4,559,890</u></b>	<b><u>4,482,537</u></b>	<b><u>(77,353)</u></b>

**REACH Connections Academy**  
**Revenue and Expense Statement Fiscal Year 2017**  
**Period Ended January 31, 2017**

	January-17 Actual	YTD Actual	Annual Forecast	Annual Budget	Variance - Favorable (unfavorable)
<b><u>Pass-Through Expenses</u></b>					
Office Supplies	2,365.82	6,569.82	22,000	25,500	3,500
Copiers/Reproduction	438.11	1,038.03	7,500	8,500	1,000
Office Postage	-	663.44	10,000	12,750	2,750
Student Testing & Assessment	-	-	38,600	42,500	3,900
Staff Recruiting/Background Checks	91.80	21,039.35	40,000	3,900	(36,100)
Staff Training/Prof. Dvlpmnt.	291.66	2,408.80	22,000	24,000	2,000
Travel and Conferences	-	3,763.64	23,500	25,500	2,000
Team Building	-	-	-	-	-
Maintenance & Repair	-	10,950.76	15,000	8,500	(6,500)
High Speed Internet	459.98	2,946.71	20,000	20,000	-
Telephone	222.99	526.62	20,000	20,000	-
Office Rent (including utilities)	8,916.65	53,499.89	108,000	108,000	-
Expensed Equipment	-	9,823.73	20,000	-	(20,000)
Expenses Pending Allocation	1,692.69	2,924.37	2,924	-	(2,924)
Student Technology Support Stipend	-	65,963.73	219,000	314,118	95,118
Student Printers	-	-	33,700	35,700	2,000
Special Education Direct Services	5,343.07	22,016.46	485,000	395,220	(89,780)
Contracted Pupil Health Support	-	-	8,500	8,500	-
STEM Programmatic Expenses	-	-	56,000	60,000	4,000
Extracurricular Activities	-	-	19,000	21,250	2,250
<b>Total Pass-Through Expenses</b>	<b>19,822.77</b>	<b>204,135.35</b>	<b>1,170,724</b>	<b>1,133,938</b>	<b>(36,786)</b>
<b><u>Other School Expenses</u></b>					
Banking fees	-	2.00	1,000	1,000	-
External Audit	-	-	20,000	20,000	-
Dues	1,290.00	1,290.00	3,000	2,500	(500)
D&O Insurance	-	2,793.00	4,000	1,500	(2,500)
Legal Services	-	8,881.40	15,000	10,000	(5,000)
Board Related Expense	-	2,091.79	20,000	20,000	-
Graduation Expense	-	-	-	-	-
Student Activities	-	409.95	410	-	(410)
Other School Expense	-	10.00	100	-	(100)
Accounting Services	15,098.92	27,298.92	75,000	68,850	(6,150)
<b>Total Other School Expenses</b>	<b>16,388.92</b>	<b>42,777.06</b>	<b>138,510</b>	<b>123,850</b>	<b>(14,660)</b>
<b><u>Adjustments and Credits</u></b>					
Deficit Protection Credit	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Adjustments and Credits</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total Program Expenses Before Depreciation</b>	<b>691,194.82</b>	<b>3,220,181.57</b>	<b>7,880,992</b>	<b>8,604,291</b>	<b>723,299</b>
Capital Outlay	-	105,395.29	215,000	215,000	-
<b>Total Program Expenses Including Depreciation</b>	<b>691,194.82</b>	<b>3,325,576.86</b>	<b>8,095,992</b>	<b>8,819,291</b>	<b>723,299</b>
<b>Net Increase (Decrease)</b>	<b>22,251.34</b>	<b>2,040,294.00</b>	<b>1,351,325</b>	<b>301,806</b>	<b>1,049,519</b>
<b>Beginning fund balance</b>	<b>2,018,042.66</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Ending fund balance</b>	<b>2,040,294.00</b>	<b>2,040,294.00</b>	<b>1,351,325</b>	<b>301,806</b>	<b>1,049,519</b>



**REACH Connections Academy  
Balance Sheet  
January 31, 2017**

**ASSETS**

**Cash and Short Term Investments:**

Cash:Checking \$1,999,812.98

**Total Cash and Short Term Investments 1,999,812.98**

**Other Current Assets:**

Pupil Funding Receivable 3,366,045.88

**Total Other Current Assets 3,366,045.88**

**Total Current Assets 5,365,858.86**

**Fixed Assets:**

**Property Plant & Equipment:**

Leasehold Improvements 6,620.90

Computer Hardware 98,774.39

Accum Depr:Leasehold Improvements (73.28)

Accum Depr:Computer Hardware (8,581.10)

**Net Fixed Assets 96,740.91**

**Total Assets \$5,462,599.77**

**LIABILITIES**

**Current Liabilities:**

Due to (from) Connections Academy 3,049,067.31

Accounts Payable 179,076.77

Pension Payable 58,291.08

WH Federal 39,129.70

**Total Current Liabilities 3,325,564.86**

**Total Liabilities 3,325,564.86**

**FUND BALANCE**

Invested in Capital 96,740.91

Change in Fund Balance 2,040,294.00

**Ending Fund Balance 2,137,034.91**

**Total Liabilities and Fund Balance \$5,462,599.77**



Reach Cyber Charter School  
MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
Wednesday, January 18, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.

Held at the following location and via teleconference  
750 East Park Drive, Suite 204  
Harrisburg, PA 17111

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**I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

In Mr. Taylor's absence and at his request, Mr. Harford called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. when all participants were present and able to hear each other.

Board Members Present: Alex Schuh, Gail Hawkins-Bush, Paul Donecker, and Joe Harford (via phone);

Board Members Absent: David Taylor;

Guests via Phone: Jane Swan, Principal; Michael Hinshaw, school staff; Kevin Corcoran, Charter Choices, Financial Consultants; Rachel Graver, Connections staff; (in person); Ken Helt, Amanda Jay and Heather Woodward, Connections staff (via phone).

**II. Public Comment**

There were no public comments made at this time.

**III. Routine Business**

a. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Taylor asked the Board to review the Agenda distributed prior to the meeting. There being no changes noted, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Agenda for the January 18, 2017 meeting of the Reach Cyber Charter School Board of Directors, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

**IV. Acceptance of Board Member Resignation, Brian Leinhauser**

The Board reviewed Mr. Leinhauser's resignation letter as submitted noting his busy law practice as a reason for his resignation. The Board thanked Mr. Leinhauser for his service to the school and the Board. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, the resignation of Board Member, Brian Leinhauser, is hereby accepted effective January 18, 2017.

The motion passed unanimously.

## V. Consideration and Appointment of Board Member Candidate

This item was tabled.

[Mr. Hinshaw joined the meeting at 8:07 a.m.]

## VI. Oral Reports

### a. Principal's Report

Ms. Swan reviewed the Monthly School Report with the Board, highlighting changes from last year's report and trends in this year's report to date. She noted that the school's current enrollment is 863 students. The Board discussed the growth and work done by the leadership team and school staff in support of the school. The Board thanked all involved for their hard work.

#### i. School Activities Update: Weather Station Installation and Update on Field Trips

Ms. Swan updated the Board on school activities, including an update on the weather station installation and field trips for students. She reviewed the turnout, from staff, students and media during the implementation of the weather station on December 13, 2016. Ms. Swan shared the school's excitement for the upcoming activities in support of the weather station.

#### ii. School Operations Metrics

Ms. Swan presented this item to the Board. She reviewed the data included in the Board materials, highlighting the school's performance as compared with other Connections' partnering schools of similar size and years in operation. Board members discussed the metrics data with Ms. Swan.

[Mr. Harford left the meeting at 9:22 a.m. and Ms. Hawkins-Bush assumed the chair for the remainder of the meeting.]

### b. Financial Report

Mr. Helt discussed the school's financial statements with the Board. Mr. Helt reviewed the revenue and expense statements, as well as the current forecast. He further noted that all financial documents had been reviewed with the school's financial consultants prior to the meeting.

## VII. Consent Items

Ms. Hawkins-Bush asked the Board Members whether there were any items from the Consent Items that they wanted moved to Action Items for discussion, or tabled. There being no items moved, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, the Consent Items:

- a. Approval of Minutes from the November 16, 2016 Board Meeting;
- b. Approval of Staffing Report;
- c. Approval of LiveSpeech Invoice(s); and

- d. Approval of Reach Cyber Charter’s Special Education Policies and Procedures Manual; are hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

**VIII. Action Items**

- a. Approval of Connections Education Invoices for November and December

Mr. Helt reviewed the Connections invoices for the months of November and December, as drawn from the financial report presented earlier in the meeting and contained in the Board materials. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Connections Education invoices for the months of November, in the amount of \$679,920.00, and December, in the amount of, \$727,238.35 as presented, are hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

- b. Approval of Revised Fee Schedule for the 2016-2017 School Year Resulting from VOIP Decision

Mr. Helt reviewed the Revised Fee Schedule for the 2016-2017 School Year resulting from VOIP decision previously discussed and decide upon by the Board. There being no further discussion, a motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that the Revised Fee Schedule for the 2016-2017 school year, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously.

- c. Approval of Funded Enrollment Target for 2017-2018 School Year

Ms. Swan reviewed the proposed enrollment target for the 2017-2018 school year of 1,700 students and sought Board input in regards to the number. The Board had a discussion and agreed that this was a good target to set for the upcoming school year based on staffing and budget. The motion was made and seconded as follows:

RESOLVED, that funded enrollment target for the 2017-2018 school year, as presented, is hereby approved.

The motion passed unanimously

**IX. Information Items**

- a. Legislative Update

Ms. Jay provided the Board with an update on recent legislative activities in the state, which may impact the school.

b. Partner School Leadership Team Update

Ms. Graver presented to the Board on behalf of Connections' School Leadership Team.

c. Upcoming LiveLesson® Session and Curriculum Town Hall

Ms. Woodward presented this item to the Board. She reminded the Board that they will be soon be receiving a link to a LiveLesson® session presentation intended to provide a more in-depth look at the Outreach plans for the upcoming school year prior to the next Board meeting's documentation and request for approval. She further reminded the Board of the timing of the upcoming Curriculum Town Hall presentation as part of the annual review process for Curriculum consideration.

[Ms. Swan, Mr. Hinshaw, Mr. Corcoran, Mr. Helt and Ms. Jay left the meeting at 9:45 a.m.]

**X. Executive Session – To discuss any matter involving the employment of a person (65 PA CSA § 708(a)(4)) – School Leader Mid-Year Review**

The Board entered into an Executive Session at 9:46 a.m. The Board cited the following for entering into the Executive Session: To discuss any matter involving the employment of a person (65 PA CSA § 708(a)(4)) – School Leader Mid-Year Review. Board members entered into the Executive Session via a roll call vote. All present remained for the Executive Session.

Open Session resumed at 10:03 a.m. via a roll call vote. No action was taken during Executive Session.

**XI. Adjournment and Confirmation of Next Meeting - Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.**

Mr. Taylor inquired if there was any other business or discussion. There being no further business or discussion, he noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. The Board being at the end of its agenda, the meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Staffing Report

New Hires

Name	Area	Compensation	Bonus Potential	Start Date
N/A				

Departing Employees

Name	Area	Last Day of Work	Reason for leaving
N/A			

Promotions/ Position Changes

Name	Former Position	New Position	Compensation	Bonus Potential	Start Date in new position
N/A					



**CONNECTIONS**  
EDUCATION®

1001 Fleet Street, 5th Floor

Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: (443)-873-1779

Invoice	140796
Date	1/26/2017
Page	1

## Invoice

Reach Cyber Charter School  
 Brian Leinhauser Esq, Board Treasurer  
 750 East Park Drive, Suite 204  
 Harrisburg PA 17111

Purchase Order No.		Customer ID	Payment Terms		
1954260		0001124	NET30		
QTY	Item	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price	
1.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Initial Meeting - Inital Conference - December 2016	\$60.00	\$60.00	
2.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Cancellation<24 hours-Excused-30 minutes-December 2016	\$37.35	\$74.70	
6.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Cancellation<24 hours-Unexcused-45 minutes-December 2016	\$56.03	\$336.18	
48.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Cancellation<24 hours-Unexcused-30 minutes-December 2016	\$37.35	\$1,792.80	
4.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Group Speech Therapy (2 students)-30 minutes-December 2016	\$30.15	\$120.60	
1.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	IEP Conference-30 minutes-December 2016	\$37.35	\$37.35	
3.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Group Speech Therapy (3 students)-45 minutes-December 2016	\$45.23	\$135.69	
3.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	IEP Conference-15 minutes-December 2016	\$18.68	\$56.04	
11.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Group Speech Therapy (3 students)-30 minutes-December 2016	\$30.15	\$331.65	
9.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Individual Therapy-30 minutes-December 2016	\$37.35	\$336.15	
8.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Group Therapy (1 student)-30 minutes-December 2016	\$30.15	\$241.20	
1.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Cancellation<24 hours-Unexcused-60 minutes-December 2016	\$74.70	\$74.70	
2.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	IEP Conference-45 minutes-December 2016	\$56.03	\$112.06	
1.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Group Speech Therapy (2 students)-45 minutes-December 2016	\$45.23	\$45.23	
3.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Cancellation<24 hours-Unexcused-15 minutes-December 2016	\$18.68	\$56.04	
5.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Individual Therapy-45 minutes-December 2016	\$56.03	\$280.15	
1.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Group Speech Therapy(3 students)-15 minutes-December 2016	\$15.08	\$15.08	
2.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Cancellation<24 hours-Excused-45 minutes-December 2016	\$56.03	\$112.06	
2.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Group Speech Therapy (2 students)-15 minutes-December 2016	\$15.08	\$30.16	
1.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Group Therapy (1 students)-45 minutes-December 2016	\$45.23	\$45.23	
3.00	REACH LIVESPEECH	Assessment-Reevaluation Assessment-December 2016	\$350.00	\$1,050.00	

*Please note invoice number 140796 on remittance. Thank you.*

Discount	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,343.07</b>

**Make all checks payable to Connections Education and send to:**  
 32369 Collection Center Dr  
 Chicago, IL 60693-0323

February 6, 2017

To: Reach Cyber Charter School Board of Directors  
From: Dr. Jean Swenk, Director, Federal Programs Support  
cc: Jane Swan, Principal  
Subject: Approval of Title 1 Parent Involvement Policy

Reach Cyber Charter School expects to receive an allocation of federal Title 1, Part A funds for the current school year. Schools which receive this funding are required to have a Board-approved Parent Involvement Policy describing how the school will encourage parental engagement. Reach will distribute the policy, along with a Parent Involvement Compact, to the school's staff, families and students, once federal funding is received. The Compact is not required to be approved by the Board but we include it for your review.

Thank you.



## Parent Involvement Plan: Reach Cyber Charter School

### GENERAL EXPECTATIONS

#### **Introduction**

Parent and family involvement and engagement are critical to the success of Reach Cyber Charter School and integral to improving student academic achievement. Parents serve as Learning Coaches and play an active role in the learning process, providing input and communicating regularly with teachers. Parents have access to their student's Grade Book at any time by logging into the school's proprietary education management system, Connexus®. This provides parents with transparency into their student's academic performance on a day-to-day basis.

This document explains how Reach Cyber Charter School will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for involving parents in its Title I, Part A programs, consistent with Section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Those programs, activities, and procedures are planned and operated with meaningful consultation with parents of participating students, including a Parent Involvement Compact consistent with Section 1118(d) of the ESEA. This document also explains how the school provides opportunities for parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children to participate. The school provides information and school reports required under Section 1111 of the ESEA in an understandable and uniform format (including alternative formats upon request) and, to the extent practicable, in a language parents understand. The school involves parents of students served by the Title I, Part A program in decisions about how Title I, Part A funds reserved for parent involvement are spent.

If the plan for Title I, Part A, developed under Section 1112 of the ESEA, is not satisfactory to the parents of participating students, the school will submit any parent comments with the plan when the school submits the plan to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Accompanying this Parent Involvement Plan is Reach Cyber Charter School's *Parent Involvement Compact*.

#### **A Description of How Reach Cyber Charter School Will Implement Required Parent Involvement Policy Components**

Reach Cyber Charter School builds the school's and parent's capacity for strong parent involvement. This ensures effective involvement of parents and supports a partnership among the school, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities specifically described herein.

1. Reach Cyber Charter School provides assistance to parents in understanding topics such as Pennsylvania's academic content and academic achievement standards, state and local academic assessments including alternate assessments, how to monitor their child's progress, and how to work with educators. The school provides materials and training to help parents work with their student to improve their student's academic achievement and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parent involvement.
  - During the school year, teachers and parents communicate regularly via WebMail, telephone, and LiveLesson™ sessions. Teachers formally conference with parents regularly. In addition, parents are directly involved in checking daily student work for completeness and may view student grades and other progress indicators in real time.
  - Parents have the opportunity to be intimately familiar with their students' progress on a day-to-day basis. The school's unique Connexus technology platform ensures that all parents have access to complete data about their children's learning on a 24/7 basis. In Connexus, parents view, in real time, an indicator of whether their student is on track and making adequate progress. Students who are not on track are identified as "approaching alarm" or on "alarm" if and when certain thresholds are reached related to completion of lessons, attendance, contact with the teacher, and/or submission of required assessments or portfolio assignments. The school contacts the parent of any student in "alarm" or "approaching alarm" by WebMail, and when on "alarm," by certified mail and/or telephone, to discuss issues impeding the student's progress and to discuss strategies for getting back "on track." Parents are also provided with frequent reports on their student's progress. For students who are struggling, school staff meet weekly at staff meetings to develop an intervention plan that directly involves the student's parent.
  - Materials to encourage parent involvement are provided (with no cost to the family) including online training, a handbook, and school newsletters. Daily lesson plans are accessible 24/7 and enable parents to review and understand the objectives of each lesson so that they can support their student's learning effectively. The teaching and administrative staff and curriculum and technical support staff are also available via WebMail or telephone to provide required assistance and advising support.
  - Reach Cyber Charter School provides ongoing training and support to help parents carry out their important role while making optimum use of the available technology tools and professional teacher support. The school's specific training and support efforts include a Parent Orientation to familiarize parents with the features and components of Connexus. The training also includes building an effective understanding of the academic program (content, standards and assessment) as well as real-time tools for monitoring and improving student performance.
  - Reach Cyber Charter School holds parent-teacher welcome calls during which the Parent Involvement Compact is discussed as it relates to the individual child's achievement. If there are performance concerns, or if students are falling behind

and in escalation, the student's teacher contacts parents via phone and/or WebMail and includes other teaching or administrative staff as needed. The call focuses on the student's performance and what actions need to occur to get the student back "on-track". Teachers may also set up an in-person meeting to discuss any student or parent concerns and to work collaboratively to set goals and identify a timeline for improvement.

- Parents have multiple opportunities to shape the overall school experience. They can volunteer to chaperone student field trips, serve as community coordinators, assist with student activities, serve on the school's Board of Directors and/or Parent Advisory Committee as well as participate in Title I planning meetings.

2. Reach Cyber Charter School involves the entire school staff, parents, and students in the joint development of its Parent Involvement Plan and Parent Involvement Compact for improved student academic achievement under Section 1112 of the ESEA and to build and develop a partnership with parents in the process of school review and improvement to help children achieve Pennsylvania's high standards under Section 1116 of the ESEA.

At least one meeting is held annually, with the option to participate via telephone or LiveLesson session, to discuss the Parent Involvement Plan and Parent Involvement Compact. Further feedback is solicited through multiple avenues, including the "feedback" link on Connexus, phone, WebMail, monthly school newsletters, field trips and back-to-school activities, and other parent-oriented activities. The StarTrack™ system is a rating system that allows parents to rate and comment on each lesson in which they engage from a low of one star to a high of five stars. The Board intends to maintain at least one parent representative among its members. The school also surveys parents each year in order to evaluate the school on a number of criteria, including student progress, teacher support, and the quality of curriculum.

3. Evaluation of the Parent Involvement Policy and Parent Involvement Compact

Reach Cyber Charter School conducts an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of this Parent Involvement Policy in improving the quality of its Title I, Part A plan. The evaluation includes identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in parent involvement activities (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background). The school uses findings of the evaluation of its Parent Involvement Policy and activities to design strategies for more effective parent involvement, and to revise, if necessary (and with the involvement of parents) its parent involvement policies. Evaluation methods include:

- Hold at least one annual meeting, with the option to participate via telephone or LiveLesson

- Administer an annual parent satisfaction survey which includes questions about academic interventions.
  - Solicit feedback through multiple avenues, including the “feedback” link on Connexus, telephone, newsletters, and WebMail
4. Reach Cyber Charter School educates its teachers, principals, and other staff on how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners; on the value and utility of contributions of parents; and on how to implement and coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and schools.

Reach Cyber Charter School is committed to providing high-quality and ongoing professional development for both parents and staff to improve instruction and drive toward proficiency on academic standards. Reach Cyber Charter School provides teacher training and professional development programs to equip teachers with the following:

- A working knowledge of the Connections Academy® curriculum.
  - How to communicate and work effectively with parents/families.
  - How to utilize and navigate the tools in Connexus
  - How to develop personalized learning plans and individualize instructional programs, including communicating with parents regarding instruction.
  - Review of the different forms of assessment and how to utilize test results to guide instruction.
  - Knowledge of school processes and policies.
  - How on-site staff and virtual teachers work collaboratively in the best interest of each student.
5. Reach Cyber Charter School ensures that information related to the school and parent- programs, meetings, and other activities, is sent to the parents of all participating children, including parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, in a format and language parents can understand (including alternative formats upon request) and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand.
- Reach Cyber Charter School makes effective use of all available technologies to distribute information to parents.
  - In addition, parents are encouraged to set up conferences to discuss their student's performance.
  - Regular newsletters announce upcoming school events and are available online to all parents.
  - Certain critical communications may also be provided in print format. For example, the parent training modules are available in print as well as online, and official communications from the school about compliance or discipline issues are also provided via hard-copy mail upon request.
  - The school also develops and makes available, via Connexus, a school handbook that details all policies and procedures specific to the school. Translation of materials or

availability of materials in other formats (e.g., for those who have difficulty with their vision) are made available upon request.

6. Reach Cyber Charter School builds the school's and parent's capacity for strong parent involvement to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school involved, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities.

As a virtual learning school, Reach Cyber Charter School is able to use technology and the working partnership between parents and the school staff to facilitate the full participation of parents who might otherwise face barriers to involvement. For example, parents with disabilities who might otherwise find it difficult to participate in their child's brick-and-mortar classroom can readily interact through our online tools and resources. Reach Cyber Charter School makes every effort to provide information in an understandable language and format so that parents can actively participate in their student's schooling.

7. Reach Cyber Charter School provides parents of students receiving Title I services reasonable access to staff and opportunities to volunteer, participate, and observe their child's lessons. The school also provides other reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request.
  - Students have the opportunity to participate regularly in both face-to-face and virtual community activities. Face-to-face activities include field trips and community outings. Teachers use the telephone quite extensively in communicating with students and parents.
  - WebMail is the proprietary private email system included in Connexus. WebMail is a "closed" system. Students, parents, and teachers may only use it to communicate with each other, and are protected from spam, contact from strangers, and other mainstream email issues.
  - Once enrolled, families have access to an area of Connexus called the Message Boards. These boards contain moderated conversations between parents, students, teachers, and specialists. All members can access and review these boards. Parents can choose to limit their student's access to the boards by going to the student's Student Information Form and making the appropriate adjustments.
  - Other examples of support to be provided for parent involvement activities include, but are not limited to: providing multiple ways to attend meetings (face-to-face, phone, LiveLesson sessions, and recordings), translating materials upon request, and holding one-on-one meetings and so forth.

PART IV. ADOPTION

This Parent Involvement Policy has been developed jointly with, and agreed on with, parents of students participating in Title I, Part A programs, as evidenced by agenda and minutes of annual parent meetings.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Directors of Reach Cyber Charter School on the date signed below and will be reviewed annually.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of Authorized Official)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

# Reach Cyber Charter School Parent Involvement Compact

*Parents, students, and the entire school staff have a shared responsibility to help students achieve academic success.  
This Parent Involvement compact lists mutual responsibilities for attaining the school's mission.  
This compact, signed by a school representative, a parent and the student, is in effect until revoked.*

Reach Cyber Charter School and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) agree that this compact outlines how the parents, the students, and the entire school staff will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve Pennsylvania's high standards.

## Reach Cyber Charter School Commitments

- Involve parents in planning, reviewing, and improving the school's parental involvement policy, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.
- Involve parents in developing the school-wide program plan, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way.
- Hold at least one annual meeting to inform parents of the school's participation in Title I, Part A programs, and to explain the Title I, Part A requirements, and the right of parents to be involved in Title I, Part A programs.
- Provide information to parents of participating students in an understandable and uniform format, including alternative formats upon the request of parents with disabilities, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents can understand.
- Provide opportunities (upon request) for regular meetings so that parents can provide suggestions, and participate, as appropriate, in decisions about the education of their children. The school will respond to any such suggestions as soon as practicably possible.
- Provide to each parent an individual student report about the performance of their child on the state assessments in at least math, language arts, and/or reading.
- Provide each parent timely notice when their child has been assigned or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified within the meaning of the term in section 200.56 of the Title I Final Regulations (67 Fed. Reg. 71710, December 2, 2002).

## Parent/Guardian Commitments

I understand that my participation in my child's education will positively impact his/her achievement and attitude. Therefore, I will do my best to:

- Ensure that my child participates in school regularly.
- Establish a time and quiet place for my child to complete schoolwork.
- Ensure that my child participates in all required state testing
- Support the school in its efforts to maintain proper discipline.
- Read school communications and respond when necessary.
- Attend school functions, support school activities, and make every effort to maintain regular contact with my child's teachers.
- Actively participate in decisions relating to the education of my child.
- Show an interest in my child's well-being and encourage my child to do his/her best.
- Share information and concerns about my child and about the school, and work together with the school to resolve problems.

## **Student Commitments**

I know that my education is important and that I am responsible for my success. Therefore, I will do my best to do all of the following:

- Participate in school regularly and be prepared with all materials, including homework and a positive attitude.
- Put forth my best effort that includes paying attention and participating in class discussions, and asking for help when needed.
- Cooperate with other students and adults involved in lessons and classes.
- Respect the rights and property of others and follow all school rules. This includes showing respect by not acting in a hostile manner or creating fear in others.
- Use appropriate language to communicate with adults and other students and be responsible for my own behavior.





From: Mathew Moldawer  
To: Connections Academy Boards  
Re: School Handbook: General Portion for 2017-18  
Date: February 15, 2017

Attached for board approval is a redlined version of the School Handbook: General Portion for SY 2017-18. This document has been provided to and reviewed by your Board’s handbook designee, and carefully reviewed by your school’s leadership team and key Connections Academy staff. Once board-approved, the General Portion will be posted in the Virtual Library in early March, 2017 for the opening of enrollment for the 2017-18 school year. Just as a reminder, the General Portion attached is in draft format and will be double-checked for typos and formatting prior to being posted to the Virtual Library.

For your convenience, a summary of the changes to the General Portion is provided below.

**General Information**

*The school year 2016-2017/16-17 was updated to 2017-2018/17-18.*

**2.4 The Connections Academy Commitments**

*Added Connection’s commitment to the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act.*

**6. High School Programs and Policies**

*The language under “Placement” was rearranged to read more clearly.*

**7.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)-Eligible Students\***

*Language was changed to better reflect the requirements of IDEA.*

**7.2 Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 Eligible Students\***

*Language was changed to more clearly explain Section 504.*

**7.3 English Learners\***

*“Language” from “English Language Learners” was removed.*

**9.7.4 School or Connections Use of Student Images, Recordings, and School Work**

*“Student Property” was replaced by “Connections Media Property”*

**Appendix 3 –Connexus Terms of Use**

*The most current version of the policy was inserted.*

**Appendix 4-Privacy Policy**

*The most current version of the policy was inserted.*

Please let us know if we can aid in the review process in any way or if you require further information on a specific policy or section of the revised handbook.



# School Handbook General Portion

20176-20187

## Welcome to your Connections Academy virtual school!

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Your school is designed for students to learn at the highest levels possible. Our rigorous curriculum, personalized learning approach, and engaging virtual classroom sessions make learning challenging and relevant. Our student-centered approach means that each child receives the educational support he or she needs to succeed. Whether it's one-on-one discussions with our highly-trained team of professionals who are focused on your student's well-being; virtual sessions using LiveLesson® session technology; supplementary educational opportunities; clubs and activities; or our rigorous, standards-based curriculum, everything your school provides revolves around ensuring student success.

Your school's dedicated teachers and administration are focused on your student's well-being and fulfilling the Connections Academy mission: *to help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program.*

Parents/guardians (Caretakers), your role in a Connections Academy school is unique in public education. You are a true partner in your student's education and have unprecedented access to your student's teachers and other school personnel. You must also ensure that you and your student comply with all school policies outlined in this Handbook and in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement. Sections in this Handbook marked with an asterisk (\*) have additional information in the Supplement. Please read both of these documents carefully and contact your school or Connections Academy Customer Care with any questions you have. To reach your Connections Academy school, visit [www.connectionsacademy.com](http://www.connectionsacademy.com), enter your zip code, then select Visit School Site. Learning Coaches and Caretakers can see detailed school contact information from their Connexus® login page. Your School-Specific Handbook Supplement, found in the Virtual Library in Connexus®, also contains complete school information. To contact the Connections Academy central office, call 800-382-6010 or send an email to [support@connectionseducation.com](mailto:support@connectionseducation.com).

Congratulations on joining the Connections Academy family. Together, we can ensure your student has a safe and successful experience at your Connections Academy school.

We look forward to working with you and wish you a successful 2017-2018 academic year!

## Getting Ready: Quick Tips

### Get to Know Connections Academy's Policies

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Please take some time before the school year starts to understand the policies in this General Handbook and your School-Specific Handbook Supplement. You and your student are bound by the policies in these documents, so please refer to these handbooks throughout the year to ensure you and your student are in compliance with Connections Academy policies and procedures.

### Getting Ready for the School Year

---

Learning Coaches and students should check their To Do list on their home page in Connexus® every school day. **Be sure to complete the assigned orientations and trainings** you find there – this will help ensure that you and your student get off to a great start for the school year.

Set up your student's "learning area."

- Dedicate a space for keeping school materials and supplies organized
- Place your student's "classroom" in a quiet area that is free of distractions
- Create a filing system for portfolio assessments, student work, and important papers
- Create a showcase area to display your student's work
- Review your calendar, set a schedule, and post the daily routine


If you're waiting for a computer delivery from Connections Academy, review the set up requirements and make sure everything you need is in place, including Internet service, so when your computer arrives, you are ready to go. Please note that you can access assignments and complete work in Connexus without receiving your materials first. If you are using your own computer, take time to review the system requirements in Connexus Help (accessed via the **MORE** tab on the ToolBar) to ensure you are set up properly. As soon as you are enrolled and set up with your internet access, you can get started with your schoolwork!

Learning Coaches can also prepare for their role by exploring the many family support resources Connections Academy offers. From the Homepage, select the Links tab, then select Learning Coach Central, where you'll find a "Getting Started Checklist," a link to the "Prepare for Success" website, [announcements about LiveLesson sessions designed specifically to help Learning Coaches support their students in adjusting to virtual learning](#), and much more!

## Need help?

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Our Connexus Help has a lot of the answers! Select the **MORE** tab on your toolbar in Connexus and then select the Help button. You can also call Connections Academy at 800-382-6010 or send a WebMail message to Technical Support if you have any issues with your computer, Connexus, or accessing the Internet.

If you want to get to know your teacher(s) check out the Teacher Communication Data View. To access this Data View, select your student's name from your homepage. From there, you will see the courses your student is taking. Select the  icon beside the teacher's name and then select and view the teacher's Teacher Communication information. Review the teacher's prior experience and qualifications; courses taught; contact information, and more!

**Welcome to Connections Academy! We hope you have a great year.**

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been approved by each of the Connections Academy schools' governing school boards or other authorizers as required. The most current version of this General Handbook, and its companion document, the School-Specific Handbook Supplement, is available online in the School Handbooks section of the Virtual Library in Connexus.

Sections of the General Handbook that have additional information in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement are denoted by an asterisk (\*) in the table of contents. Please be sure to refer to your School-Specific Supplement for additional, school-specific information on these topics. All policies in this General Handbook apply to grades K–12 unless otherwise noted. However, as high school programs vary from state to state, information related to high school is found in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

## 2 SCHOOL MISSION AND OVERVIEW

### 2.1 *Mission Statement\**

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Connections Academy schools help each student maximize his or her potential and meet the highest performance standards through a uniquely individualized learning program. Check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for your school's individual mission statement.

### 2.2 *Program Overview*

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Connections Academy's high-tech, high-touch, virtual "school without walls," combines the best in virtual education with very real connections among students, families, teachers, and the community. The program combines a first-class curriculum, high-quality teachers, state-of-the-art technology, community connections, and a personalized learning process that work together to maximize student learning.

### 2.3 *Nondiscrimination Statement*

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Practices that exclude, deny benefits to, or otherwise discriminate against any person on the basis of ethnic group identification/ethnicity, marital status, race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, physical or mental disability, athletic performance, language proficiency in English or another language, prior academic achievement, or age in the admission to, participation in, or receipt of the services under any of the

Connections Academy and its affiliated entities educational programs and activities, or in employment practices are strictly prohibited. Age limitations may only be imposed in response to mandatory state-specific requirements established by the laws of the state under which that particular Connections Academy school operates.

The non-discrimination statement is in accordance with the provisions of Title VII of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, Title IX of the *Educational Amendment of 1972* (Title 9), Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (Section 504), [the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended \(ADA\)](#), the *Age Discrimination Act of 1975*, and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)*. Individuals who are designated to coordinate Connections' compliance with these laws are detailed in the [Nondiscrimination Policy](#).

Schools are required to adopt and publish grievance procedures providing for prompt and equitable resolution of any complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited by state and federal law. See the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.

## 2.4 The Connections Academy Commitments\*

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Each Connections Academy school has high expectations for its students and their families and requires them to commit to the rigorous educational program that has been implemented. In return, each Connections Academy school holds itself to high standards and makes the following commitments:

- The school will contact the student and his or her Caretaker on a regular basis and treat them as valued and respected partners in the common goal of student academic success
- The school will partner with the student and family to provide a Personalized Learning Plan (PLP) to meet the student's individual learning needs
- The school will provide a quality instructional program, including curriculum, instructional materials, and a certified, well-trained teaching staff.
- The school will support the student and family with the training needed to learn how to use Connexus and provide encouragement needed to fulfill their responsibilities
- The school will make a strong effort to incorporate all stakeholders' feedback for the continued improvement of the program.

- The school will encourage the student’s social interaction with other school students and families by supporting community coordinators and school staff in their efforts to organize various field trips and community events. The school’s Get Connected! program helps facilitate these opportunities to connect, and at some schools, provides private Facebook groups where Caretakers and Learning Coaches can “meet” to arrange study groups and other informal gatherings.
- For students with disabilities, the school will follow Individualized Education Program (IEPs) to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The school will also follow students’ Section 504 plan requirements for services and modifications to address each eligible student’s unique individual needs as required by law or regulation. See your school’s Handbook Supplement for details.
- The school will support Caretakers in providing school records or other required information when seeking to transfer their student to another educational program where proper procedure is followed in accordance with state and federal law.
- The school will comply with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). (See Appendix 2 for the Connections Academy FERPA policy.)
- The school will comply with the provisions of the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA). (See Appendix 4 for the Connections Academy Privacy Policy, including COPPA statement).
- The school will provide approved Caretakers access to student records and related school information through Connexus in accordance with applicable federal and state law.
- The school will always operate with the best interests of the student in mind.

### 3 SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND ROLES

This section provides information about how your school is organized and on the various roles and responsibilities for everyone involved in the school.

### 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities

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#### *Caretaker (Parent or Legal Guardian)*

Connections Academy schools apply the term “Caretaker” to the student’s parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) who enrolls the student and satisfies the student’s enrollment requirements. All Caretakers are automatically given “Learning Coach” (see below) access in Connexus so they are able to perform the Learning Coach duties. Caretakers must agree to and sign the Parent/ Learning Coach Acknowledgement (PLCA) as part of the enrollment process. While Caretakers automatically have the Learning Coach access, they may also designate another adult or adults as Learning Coaches either *in addition to or in place of* the Caretaker. Even if the Caretaker designates another adult or adults as Learning Coach, the Caretaker will continue to have the Learning Coach access in Connexus. The Caretaker always has full and final responsibility for the child’s education and educational decision-making with the school, and therefore must be available to the school staff as needed for discussions related to the student’s educational and other school-related needs.

#### *Learning Coach*

The Learning Coach is the adult who performs tasks such as recording attendance, reviewing lessons, providing supervision, and communicating with teachers. Each student will have at least one Learning Coach who is generally the student’s Caretaker. However, Caretakers may designate another adult or adults as the student’s Learning Coach (es), either in addition to or in place of the Caretaker, for daily oversight of the student’s school work and school-related activities, by completing the Designated Learning Coach form. As noted above in the definition of Caretaker, the Caretaker always has full and final responsibility for the child’s education and educational decision-making with the school, and therefore must be available in a timely manner to the school staff as needed for discussions related to the student’s educational and other school-related needs.

**The duties and responsibilities of the Learning Coach are detailed in this Handbook and in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement, so it is important that both Caretakers and Learning Coaches read both documents carefully.**

The Get Coaching! Program is designed to assist Learning Coaches and Caretakers in understanding and fulfilling their role in their student's education at a Connections Academy school. Through the Get Coaching! Program, we ~~hope to~~ provide Learning Coaches and Caretakers with ongoing support, provide access to resources and facilitate connections with other Learning Coaches. The Get Coaching! Program resources are available under Links on the Learning Coach and Caretaker homepage.

Under certain circumstances, a student who is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor may request to be his /her own Learning Coach. To discuss this option, the student should contact either the Connections Academy Enrollment Team during the enrollment process, or the school leader once enrolled.

### *Student*

The student's role in a Connections Academy school is to learn to the best of his or her abilities. Therefore, students should expect to take age-appropriate individual responsibility for their own learning. This is accomplished by applying themselves to their studies in a focused and serious manner, working hard, becoming engaged in the lessons and activities, asking questions, exploring their personal interests, improving areas of academic weaknesses, and capitalizing on strengths. Students at all times are expected to complete their own work and uphold the principles of the Connections Academy Honor Code (Appendix 1).

### *Eligible Student*

"Eligible student" at Connections refers to students over eighteen (18) years of age and emancipated minors. Other uses of 'eligible student' will be qualified with what they are eligible for – for example, "504-eligible students."

### *School Leader*

This individual is responsible for the administration of the school and ensuring students are provided with the support and assistance they need. The school leader's title may vary from school to school such as principal or executive director. Check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for your school leader's contact information.

### *Homeroom Teacher (Elementary Students)*

Unless a participating Connections Academy school has chosen to provide Family Connections Coordinators (FCC) to families, each elementary student is assigned a homeroom teacher. The homeroom teacher serves as the family's central point of contact with the school and works with the student and his or her Learning Coach to develop and implement the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP). Generally, the homeroom teacher will also be the teacher for most or all of the student's subjects. The homeroom teacher is responsible for making instructional decisions such as providing instructional interventions; interacting synchronously with students for instructional purposes; verifying the student's course work; providing timely feedback to students on their academic work; issuing final course grades, reviewing and approving adjustments to students' schedules (such as vacations and/or field trips), and making recommendations regarding promotion and retention to the school leadership. Homeroom teachers or Family Connections Coordinators may assist with things such as confirming and arranging standardized testing plans (dates, times, locations, etc.) working with Learning Coaches to run the Scheduler (adjusting the student's Planner within Connexus), addressing basic technical concerns, and assisting with the process for marking and/or changing student attendance. The name of the teacher for each of the student's courses is listed next to the course name on the Connexus home page and in the Grade Book so that students and Learning Coaches can easily identify and contact teachers as needed.

### *School Counselor, Homeroom Teachers, and Advisory Teacher (Middle and High School Students)*

Unless a participating Connections Academy school has chosen to provide Family Connections Coordinators to families, each middle and high school student has an Advisory Teacher, Homeroom Teacher, and/or School Counselor (titles may vary by school). The Advisory Teacher, Homeroom Teacher or School Counselor assists students and Learning Coaches with course selection, student transfers, graduation requirements, college and career planning, interpersonal counseling, course placement changes as needed, and general academic guidance. A School Counselor or other qualified staff member is available to assist with high school credit or college/career questions or to help with post-high-school plans including career, college/university, the military, or the workforce.



Note: Some Connections Academy schools have chosen to provide Family Connections Coordinators (FCC) in lieu of Homeroom or Advisory teachers. Please review the description of a Family Connections Coordinator [below on page 15](#), which describes how the FCC provides many supports of a Homeroom or Advisory teacher.

### *Subject-Specific Teacher*

The subject-specific teacher is the primary contact for students and Learning Coaches for subject-specific questions. These teachers are responsible for handling the following instructional issues:

- providing timely and relevant feedback on student work including grading and updating progress reports
- facilitating instruction using research-based strategies and resources to address skill gaps -with a particular assessment or concept
- managing the course scope, pacing and sequence to ensure a student's academic success
- personalizing the curriculum, including modifying lessons and assessments
- proctoring state and/or federally mandated tests

Subject-specific teachers proactively monitor each student's progress using Connexus and through regular contact via phone, streaming audio and video (LiveLesson sessions), and WebMail messages (our Connexus-based email system). Subject-specific teachers provide small and large group instruction to their students on key concepts and skills; add, expand, or modify assessments based on the student's demonstrated mastery of the material; assign and score assessments and portfolio items, and provide feedback on the student's performance to the student, Learning Coach, and Family Connections Coordinator, or homeroom/advisory teacher. Teacher feedback is provided through the use of rubrics, assessment grades, as well as phone conferences, WebMail messages, and LiveLesson sessions. Depending on a student's needs and grade level, subject-specific teachers provide instruction in a variety of ways to address the needs of each student. Subject-specific teachers evaluate students in their corresponding subject area(s), provide instructional resources based on the student's learning needs, prepare student progress reports (at ~~these~~ schools that issue them), verify the student's course work, issue final course grades, and make promotion or retention recommendations (for students in grades K–8).

Generally, middle and high school students will have a different subject-specific teacher for each course. Elementary students will have the same subject-specific teacher for most subjects; these teachers may also be the student's homeroom teacher.

### *Substitute Teachers*

Substitute teachers are teachers who meet the state requirements for being substitute teachers in their state. They serve as homeroom and/or subject-specific teachers when the regular Connections Academy teacher is not available for an extended period of time (e.g., on military or medical leave, etc.). Substitute teachers perform all of the duties of a teacher or subject-specific teacher.

### *Teaching Assistants*

Teaching assistants may perform many of the duties of a homeroom teacher or subject-specific teacher, as defined above. However, teaching assistants are not permitted to issue final course grades and work under the supervision of a certified teacher.

### *Family Connections Coordinators (FCC)*

The Family Connections Coordinator (FCC) is a new role being introduced in Connections Academy to some schools starting with the 2016-17 enrollment season. The FCC's role is to serve as a single point of contact between the family and the Connections Academy school to provide support to families and students for non-teaching tasks. The FCC's primary focus is on building a lasting relationship with the families they ~~serve~~support, guiding them through processes and holding regular check-ins from the time a family expresses an interest in the school through ~~to~~ the student's graduation.

### *Community Coordinators (Caretaker Volunteers)*

Community Coordinators are typically Caretakers of students in the school, though in some states they may also be teachers at the school and are known as School Event Representatives. Community Coordinators and/or School Event Representatives help create opportunities for community projects, field trips, and group meetings with other students and parents. They also serve as a clearinghouse for information about local extracurricular activities and events. Schools provide information to families at the start of the school year about how to become a Community Coordinator and will distribute ~~to families~~ the Community Coordinator's contact information to families. If you have a question or a suggestion related to a local activity

or opportunity, ~~you should~~ contact your assigned Community Coordinator or the School Event Representatives.

### *Student Support Teams*

The Student Support ~~I~~team (SST) is comprised of several teachers and/or staff members and one or more administrators at the school. This team may also go by another name, such as Response to Intervention (RTI) or Student Assistance Team (SAT). The Student Support team meets regularly to discuss student progress, focusing on students who appear to be struggling in one or more subjects. Students are identified as struggling based on universal screening assessments conducted with all students, teacher and/or Learning Coach observation and knowledge of the student and/or a review of the student's academic performance, participation, and/or attendance levels documented in Connexus.

The Student Support team shares information among its members about a struggling student's academic and/or other challenges, and makes recommendations for instructional interventions that may be implemented. SST members also perform regular data collection on progress of these interventions, and other relevant information. The team develops and recommends additional instructional strategies and resources for the student's teacher(s), Caretaker, and Learning Coach, and then follows up to ensure that these strategies are indeed helping the student make adequate progress and show academic improvement. Caretakers are kept informed regarding interventions and student progress.

## **3.2 Required Student Safety Trainings for School Staff \***

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Connections Academy takes student safety and well-being very seriously, and believes that students should be able to learn in a safe and comfortable environment. Therefore, in addition to the comprehensive set of required courses and trainings for school staff that focus on educational practices, teachers are required to take two courses that focus specifically on student safety:

- **Internet Safety** - This course provides valuable information about practicing safe behaviors online.

- **Students in Distress: Recognizing and Responding** - This course is designed to ensure teachers and other school staff are familiar with the signs of student distress and 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 refer to the trainings throughout the year as needed. The Sschool leadership tracks staff completion of these trainings to ensure all staff members have completed the trainings in the required time frame. Caretakers and Learning Coaches are asked to communicate and collaborate with teachers and other school staff as the y-school staff members work to fulfill their professional roles in supporting student safety and well-being. They are 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.

### 3.3 School Information\*

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Contact information for your school is found in the School Specific Handbook Supplement.

### 3.4 School Schedule

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Connections Academy students and/or their Learning Coaches may develop their own schedule to fit their specific needs, both in how they structure each school day and their overall schedule, as long as no state or local regulations are violated. However, students must still attend school regularly, meet their school's specific attendance and/or instructional hour requirements, correspond with their teachers, and complete lessons and assessments as expected. (See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for specific requirements.)

Students must also be available during regular school hours for any required phone conferences or participation in LiveLesson sessions, unless school-approved alternate arrangements can be made. Most teachers are available only during regular school business hours. Students will be informed of these hours and any individual variations in teacher schedules at the beginning of each course and through the Teacher Communication Data View.

#### 3.4.1 The ~~2017~~-~~2018~~ School Calendar\*

Your school's calendar is in the School Specific Handbook Supplement.

### 3.4.2 Required Instructional Hours\*

This information is in the School Specific Handbook Supplement.

### 3.4.3 Emergency Closure Plans\*

*Note that some schools may have a separate Emergency Closure Plan.*

If a school's office(s) closes due to an emergency such as hazardous weather conditions, the school will send Caretakers a "must read" WebMail message explaining the details of the office closure. The school will also record a voice mail message announcing the details of the office closure and the availability, or lack of availability, of teachers and other school services.

Please note that Connections Academy Centralized Support Services and some teachers are located in different areas of the country where conditions may be different from those in the local school office location. Such services may be occasionally interrupted even when school operations are running as usual, or vice versa.

Even if a school's office(s) or Centralized Support Services closes due to hazardous weather or other emergencies, students should still plan to complete lessons and mark their attendance for the day if they are able to work either online or offline, unless otherwise notified by their school.

## 3.5 Enrollment, Withdrawal, and Transfers

---

Specific state requirements for enrollment eligibility are available on your school's page on the Connections Academy website. To find these requirements, select the Enrollment tab at the top of the page, and then select Eligibility Requirements.

All Connections Academy schools abide by all federal, state, and local policies and guidelines for student admission and do not impose admission requirements that are inconsistent with these policies and guidelines. These policies and guidelines include compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act regarding homeless students, including but not limited to, enrolling homeless students in a timely manner even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment (e.g. proof of residency or previous academic records), and providing those students with services comparable to services offered to students not experiencing homelessness. The school leader or his/her designee shall serve as the liaison for homeless students.

At various times during the school year, to comply with mandated enrollment caps, state regulations and reporting, and/or testing processes and requirements, some schools may temporarily “pause” enrollment by holding students on a wait list for a defined period of time those students who are in Stage 2 of the enrollment process. After the temporary “pause” of enrollment is over, students will again be able to move forward with completing the enrollment process. The school board or authorizer has delegated to the school leader the authority to define and implement these temporary “pauses” of enrollment periods. These temporary “pause” dates will be posted on the school’s website where information about enrollment can be found.

Some schools also have enrollment caps and therefore may implement a lottery system. Schools may also close enrollment at some point in the year, as permitted by state or local regulations. Check your school’s website for more information.

### 3.5.1 Returning Students

Currently enrolled students whose Caretakers plan for them to continue with Connections Academy for the next academic year must indicate their intent to have their student continue with Connections by completing a data view in a Connexus. The Intent to Return form and updated student information should be submitted prior to the end of the school year. Caretakers will be provided with detailed information on how to complete these tasks, **which should be completed as soon as the Caretaker knows that the student intends to return the following year (but no later than the end of the current school year).**

Caretakers of students who have withdrawn from a Connections Academy school but wish to return to the **same** school for a different school year, or whose students are enrolled in a Connections Academy school but wish to enroll in a **different** Connections Academy school for the next year, should call the Enrollment department at 800-382-6010 for detailed enrollment instructions that are appropriate to their situation.

[If a student wishes to return to a Connections Academy school after withdrawing, they should contact the Enrollment department at \(800\)382-6010 to reactivate their account.](#) Note that these students should **not** complete a new online registration.

### 3.5.2 Kindergarten and First Grade Admissions\*

*This information is found in your School- Specific Handbook Supplement.*

### 3.5.3 Enrollment after the Start of the School Year or Semester\*

Students may generally enroll after the start of the school year if (1) space is available, subject to any other local limitations, and (2) the open enrollment period for the school year has not passed. Students who enroll after the start of the school year or semester will be placed at the appropriate starting point in the curriculum based on work already completed, the school's specific enrollment policy, and discussions between the family and the school's teachers and/or school counselor. Students will also participate in a special orientation course for students who enroll after the start of the school year.

### 3.5.4 Dual Enrollment in Another K–12 Program\*

This information is in the School Specific Handbook Supplement

### 3.5.5 Dual Enrollment in a College or University


Interested students who are academically and socially ready may wish to consider supplementing their Connections Academy curriculum with college-level courses in schools where dual enrollment in a college or university is available. While this option will apply primarily to high school students, some advanced middle school students may also wish to consider this option where permitted. All students should consult with their school counselor or advisory teacher *prior to enrolling in college courses* to be sure they are fully informed about specific state requirements as well as the benefits and responsibilities of adding one or more college course(s) to their workload.

### 3.5.6 Withdrawing from School\*

Students may withdraw from the school at any time, provided that the Caretaker provides Connections Academy with either evidence of homeschool registration consistent with state requirements or the name and location of another public or private school that the student will attend.

Prior to withdrawing, the Caretaker and/or Eligible student (in the case of an emancipated minor) should discuss with a school staff member the student's reason(s) for withdrawing as it may be possible to address issues so that the student does not need to withdraw. If a student or Caretaker is experiencing a problem with a teacher, he or she should contact the school leader, Director, or Vice President of Schools to discuss possible solutions other than withdrawal.

The student's Caretaker and/or Eligible student generally may begin the withdrawal process in either of two ways; however, please note that some states may only offer one option.

- 1) From the Caretaker home page in Connexus, select the student's  and go to the *Initiate Student Withdrawal* Data View. Complete the requested Next Schooling information and select Save and Finish to submit the form.

***Please note that this method should not be used to indicate that a student does not intend to return for the following year (i.e., Intent to Return). Use of the Initiate Student Withdrawal Data View will result in the immediate withdrawal of the student for the current year.***

- 2) Contact your teacher by phone or WebMail message and inform your teacher of your intent to withdraw your student(s). If you use the WebMail system, be sure to include the date of the student's expected exit from the school and the name of the qualified educational program that your child will be using instead. You will then be contacted by the school to acknowledge your intent to withdraw your student.

*See the Educational Materials Provided by the School and Technology sections for information concerning the return of school equipment and materials as part of the withdrawal process.*

### **3.5.7 Location Change\***

Connections Academy defines four types of "Location Change" and has specific policies related to each type. Any time a student engages in a Location Change, the Caretaker *must* contact the school leader to discuss the change and ensure the student remains compliant with all Connections Academy, state, local, and other applicable regulations and policies. The four types of Location Change, and the related policies, are listed below:

1. **Permanent In-Area Location Change: change of residence within the school's service area.** *Example: The family purchases a new home during the school year.* For this type of location change, the Caretaker ***must***:



- a. contact the Connections Academy Enrollment team to notify them of the location change as soon as possible but **no later than 30 days after the move**. The Caretaker must provide *new* proof of residency documentation and updated student contact information to the Connections Academy Enrollment department within thirty (30) days of the move. Failure to provide an updated proof of residency may result in withdrawal from the school, as permitted or required by federal, state, or local policies and guidelines for enrollment.
  - b. inform the student's homeroom, or advisory teacher, or Family Connections Coordinator.
  - c. continue to meet the school's eligibility requirements as long as the student moves within the school's service area
2. **Temporary Location Change: Travel or relocation away from student's residence for longer than three (3) weeks.** *Example: The family stays with a relative in another state for two (2) months.* For this type of location change, the Caretaker **must** contact the school leader **prior to the Location Change** for permission to make the Location Change. The school leader will make a determination per state requirements if the student can make this Location Change and remain eligible to stay enrolled in the school.

If the school leader grants permission for the Location Change, the Caretaker will be required to complete a *Location Transfer Request Form* available in the Virtual Library and submit it to the school. The school leader will sign the form and provide the Caretaker with a copy of the form. This copy will serve as formal written approval from the school leader for the student to remain enrolled during the temporary Location Change.

*Note:* Stationary computer equipment (desktop computers and monitors) may **never** be taken out of the state for Temporary Location Changes. Laptops, where provided may move temporarily with the student, **as long as the student remains actively enrolled in the school and updated address and contact information for temporary location has been received by Connections Academy.**

3. **Alternate Learning Location(s) Change: Student learning regularly occurs in an alternate location but there is no change in the student's residence.** *Example: The student's Learning Coach is a neighbor, and the student regularly works at the Learning Coach's home.* For this type of location change, the Caretaker **must** contact the school leader **prior to the location change** to confirm that this Location Change will not affect the student's enrollment eligibility.

If the school leader grants permission for the Location Change, the Caretaker will be required to complete a *Location Transfer Request Form* and submit it to the school. The school leader will sign the form and provide the Caretaker with a copy of the form. This copy will serve as formal written approval from the school leader for the student to have an alternate learning location or locations. **Note:** Caretakers are always responsible for Connections-provided equipment and materials, regardless of where the materials/equipment are located. See Section 10, Educational Materials Provided by the School, for more information.

***In any of the above types of Location Change, the student must continue learning activities and must still comply with all state testing and other state and school requirements.***

4. **Permanent Out-of-Area Location Change: Move to another state.**

If a student moves out of state, **all** computer equipment and curriculum materials must be returned to Connections Academy, even if there is another Connections Academy school that operates in the state where the student is moving.

***The following actions related to Location Change may cause the student to be immediately withdrawn from the school:***

- engaging in any type of Location Change without notifying the school leader and/or the Connections Academy Enrollment Team
- failure to complete and submit any required Location Change forms
- failure to provide the Connections Academy Enrollment Team and/or the school with any additional required documentation
- failure to receive specific written permission to remain enrolled when engaging in any form of Location Change

If a family moves to another state where there is a Connections Academy school and the family would like to enroll in that school, the Caretaker should contact the Connections Academy Enrollment Team as soon as the Caretaker knows when and where the family is moving. The student will need to be withdrawn from the current school and then enrolled in the new school, *if eligible for enrollment in the new school*. Eligibility requirements may differ between the schools, and some states provide different rules for members of the military, so **it is important that the family contacts the Connections Academy Enrollment Team as soon as possible to determine if the student is eligible to enroll in the new Connections Academy school**. The Caretaker should also notify the school leader that the student is moving.

While Connections Academy will do its best to accommodate students wishing to enroll in another Connections Academy school, this enrollment cannot be guaranteed. Each school is governed by state-specific enrollment rules and procedures, and Connections Academy must comply with these rules and procedures (e.g., the school in the new state may have an enrollment cap that has already been met and/or may have a waiting list.)

**Note:** For students with IEPs, the family is encouraged to contact the Special Education Director in the new Connections Academy school *prior to enrollment* to discuss the special education services provided in the new school.

### 3.5.8 Learning Environments and Working with Multiple Students

It is essential that the Learning Coach designated to support students in the Connections Academy virtual school environment fully understand their responsibilities and is able to perform them as required. Therefore, one Learning Coach may **not** support more than four (4) students without special permission from the school. Additionally, if the group learning environment requires the transfer of Connections Academy equipment or materials, Caretakers must complete the *Location Transfer Request Form* (as described in the Location Change section in this handbook) and be granted permission to move materials/equipment.

## 3.6 Assessment

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It is essential that student performance is regularly assessed. Your school uses the following types of assessments to determine students' skill levels, to evaluate performance, assign educational plans, and to develop a permanent school record.

### 3.6.1 Pretesting, Mid\_testing, and Post\_testing to Measure Academic Progress

At the beginning, middle, and end of each academic year, the school may administer the Longitudinal Evaluation of Academic Progress™ (LEAP) or other evaluation tools as pre-, mid-, and post-assessments to students in grades K–12. These assessments provide instructional guidance for teachers and Learning Coaches, help teachers to construct and implement the Personalized Learning Plan (PLP), and measure the student's academic gains over the year.

#### *Exempting Alternate Assessment Students from LEAP Participation*

Students who have an IEP who have been designated as participating in alternate state testing are exempt from mandatory pretesting, mid\_testing, and post testing. However, at the Learning Coach's request, the student may still complete the testing and receive scores.

### 3.6.2 Assessments within the Curriculum

As they progress through their courses, students will engage in many different types of formal and informal assessments. —All assessment types are listed below, though not all courses or grade levels will have all of these assessment types. Note also that some assessment types count more heavily towards the student's final course grade than others. For example, the grade a student earns on a Unit Test or Portfolio has a bigger impact on the student's final grade than a Quiz does. (Assessments are listed in alphabetical order).

#### **Graded Assessments**

**Discussion:** Discussion assessments are found in grades 3–12, and allow students in the same section to communicate with each other during a semester; each student's contribution to the discussion is graded by the teacher based on the discussion rubric. The discussion window remains open throughout the semester. After the semester closes, students have to send WebMail messages directly to their teachers to reply to discussion posts. **Final exams** test students on the course knowledge they acquired during a semester. Final exams contain multiple question types and are embedded with lesson content.

**Participation:** Typically, participation accounts for five percent (5%) of a student’s overall grade. Some courses may contain participation assessments in which students document their participation in an activity, such as Time to Talk or a LiveLesson session; in these instances participation accounts for ten percent (10%). Whether to include participation in the student’s grade, and the requirements to earn full participation credit for a course, are determined by each Connections Academy school.

**Portfolio Item:** A portfolio is an assessment type that requires students to submit documentation (e.g., essays, presentations, reports, graphic organizers) to their teachers electronically through the Drop Box or via physical mail. Students in grades 9–12 are expected to submit their portfolios through the Drop Box. Portfolio items are reviewed and graded by the teacher.

Most portfolios include a rubric designed to help the student understand the expectations for this lesson. For portfolios in English courses, students have approximately five (5) days between submitting their rough drafts and final drafts. Note: Not all courses use these conventions.

**Pretest\*:** Pretests assess students’ prior knowledge of a subject and are customized based on the skills addressed. The questions are automatically scored, so they cannot contain any type of question that requires teacher review or grading. Pretests align to the unit objectives, and they assess the major skills and concepts for that unit. Pretests are similar in length to a quiz (usually 10–15 multiple choice questions) and are embedded in lessons.

**Quick Check\*:** Quick checks are non-cumulative assessments added to the end of some lessons in grades 1–12. Quick checks for all elementary courses are graded but not weighted. Quick checks for most middle and high school courses are graded and weighted, and they account for five percent of a student’s overall grade.

Quick checks are brief (usually 3–5 multiple choice questions), and the questions are automatically scored, so they cannot contain any type of question that would be graded or reviewed by a teacher. Quick checks are embedded in lessons.

**Quiz\*:** Quizzes, which typically contain 5–10 questions, are longer than quick checks and cover material from more than one lesson. Though some questions may require teacher grading, most quiz questions are automatically scored. Quizzes are embedded in lessons.

**Unit Test\*:** Unit tests cover material from all lessons in a specific unit. Unit tests are longer than quizzes, contain a variety of question types, and are weighted more heavily than quizzes toward a student's final grade. Some questions on a unit test may require teacher grading.

*\*This assessment type must be completed in one sitting. Students cannot answer some questions, save their work, and return to complete the remaining portion of the assessment at a later time.*

## Non-Graded Assessments

The following assessment types are also found in the curriculum, but do not have an impact on the student's grade.

**Course Survey:** Course surveys are non-graded assessments that ask students for their opinions regarding a course and the student's teacher. Surveys are usually placed at the end of a course, and may be linked through the student Data View.

**Online Practice\*:** Online practice assessments allow students to answer practice questions for a particular lesson or unit so they can measure their own grasp of a subject or concept. The questions are automatically scored, so they cannot contain any type of question that requires teacher review or grading. These assessments are not graded, may occur several times in a lesson, and may be embedded or linked within a lesson.

**Reflection:** Reflection assessments are used in math courses to get students thinking about their relationship with mathematical concepts from a unit (or preceding units) and about themselves as learners and mathematicians. These assessments contain mainly multiple-choice questions, but they may also contain short answer questions. Reflections are scored but do not impact students' final grades.

**Skills Check:** These are brief assessments used to gauge students' learning in kindergarten through second grade. The Learning Coach completes these diagnostic assessments to keep the teacher updated on the student's progress. Skills Checks are also used in many high school math courses as a diagnostic assessment completed by the student prior to embarking on a new lesson. Skills checks are scored but do not impact a student's final grade.

*\*This assessment type must be completed in one sitting. Students cannot answer some questions, save their work, and return to complete the remaining portion of the assessment at a later time.*

## Informal Evaluations

Informal evaluations are tools used to gauge the student's level of mastery of the material. These evaluations are not included in the student's grade, but provide valuable feedback to teachers and Learning Coaches about the student's areas of strength and areas needing additional support or intervention.

- **Check for Understanding:** Questions provided by the school to the Learning Coaches to ask the students to gauge the development of certain skills.
- **Curriculum-Based Assessments (CBAs)** —Synchronous, or real-time, communications between the student and the teacher used to gather formative information on students' understanding of concepts. Students are required to participate in a minimum of eight CBA's a year but teachers often administer many more. Teachers conduct two types of CBAs: verified curriculum-based assessment (VCBA) and diagnostic curriculum-based assessment (DCBA).
  - VCBA's are used to confirm student comprehension of concepts previously assessed and graded as successfully completed with scores of B or higher.
  - VCBA's are informal phone conversations or individual LiveLesson sessions with the student in which the teacher asks a variety of questions about recently completed assignments to verify that the student has done the work independently and that the student has grasped the key components of the lesson(s). The content to be covered is not specified ahead of time, other than being part of "recently completed assignments" such as a reading passage or solving a set of mathematics problems.
  - DCBA's are used to identify specific skill or concept issues students are having, develop strategies for remediation, and determine future instructional support that may be necessary to help underperforming students achieve success. These contacts occur during the regularly scheduled phone calls and are targeted toward students who receive a C or lower on an assessment or have an overall GPA of less than B.

### 3.6.3 Mandatory Testing\*

Public schools are required by state and federal law to administer state standardized tests to students in specific grades. Additionally, Connections Academy schools require all students to participate in at least one proctored test each year, which will usually be the state-mandated test. Therefore, all students enrolled in a Connections Academy virtual public school will be required to participate in the state standardized testing program, consistent with state law.

The school will work closely with Caretakers, Learning Coaches, and students as they prepare for required testing. If a student is not able to participate in testing, the Caretaker will be required to document the reason(s) for nonparticipation, and the student may be required by the school to take a makeup test.

There are serious consequences for both the school and the student when students do not participate in state testing. Therefore, students who fail to participate in required testing may be subject to disciplinary action consistent with state law.

## 3.7 Personalized Learning\*

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### 3.7.1 The Personalized Learning Process

Connections Academy teachers work with Learning Coaches and students to customize student learning experiences based on specific academic needs, learning pace, learning styles, and personal interests. This program personalization is an ongoing process that also includes the creation of a written plan (the Personalized Learning Plan, or PLP) that all members of the learning team follow.

The personalization process includes the following components: initial academic placement and course selection, performance testing, [interest inventories](#), review of student work samples, detailed phone conferences, goal-setting, adjustment of student schedules and lesson pacing, lesson modifications and/or enrollment in instructional intervention programs, attendance in LiveLesson sessions, enrollment in elective courses, and strategies for families to implement throughout the year. The process also includes several goal-review and adjustment sessions including a final conference at the end of the school year to review progress.



### 3.7.2 Adding Elective Courses (Elementary and Middle School)\*

Before requesting to register for electives, students in grades K through 8 must generally meet the following criteria:+

- be enrolled in school for at least 30 days
- have completed their initial assessments (e.g., LEAP or other pretesting, and/or state testing)
- be in good academic standing (overall grade of 70% or higher)
- maintain acceptable attendance (i.e., be “On Track”)
- have all start-up tasks complete, including completion of student orientation courses and Welcome Call (start of school year call with teacher).

Schools may define additional criteria for permitting students to enroll in electives. After these criteria are met, teachers will work with families to select appropriate electives, approve the student’s selection, and enroll the student in the elective course(s).

*+Some states permit electives to be selected at other times. All criteria noted above are subject to state laws and/or regulations. Please see the School Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.*

### 3.7.3 How Families Can Personalize Instruction

Students and Learning Coaches work closely with their teachers to personalize student programs, but families can also personalize their learning programs in several different ways.

- **Pacing and Scheduling**—Subject to requirements including, but not limited to, the required days of attendance and/or hours of instruction required and other applicable state or local regulations, the school allows students and their Learning Coaches to structure the school day to best meet the student’s learning needs. The online Scheduler allows students in grades K–8 and their Learning Coaches to select which days of the week they would like to schedule certain courses and how many lessons of each subject per day they plan to complete. This flexibility accommodates different learning styles and needs; however, the personalization of pacing and scheduling must not impact the overall amount of work that is required of each student, which is determined exclusively by state requirements and is overseen by the school’s leadership.

Most high school students have significantly decreased flexibility in the schedule so they can learn and work together (e.g., in discussions and on collaborative projects). High school students who may benefit from a more flexible schedule should speak with their advisory teacher, Family Connections Coordinator, or school counselor to make appropriate adjustments.

- **Limits to Program Flexibility**—Every student is expected to master the essential skills and standards covered by the school's rigorous curriculum, which is designed to meet or exceed each state's standards. Families may work with teachers to adjust pacing and assigned lessons for each student; however, it is imperative that students participate fully in the school's standards-based curriculum and complete the lessons and assessments assigned by the teacher(s).

### 3.7.4 Placement Changes during the School Year (Elementary and Middle School)\*

Counselors, administrators, teachers, school leaders, and the Connections Academy staff work together to make sure that each student's initial course placement is accurate and appropriate. Although it is possible to request a change in placement after the student is enrolled, Connections Academy recommends that *before* requesting a placement change, students work in their assigned courses, look ahead in the curriculum for the year, and discuss with the school any specific challenges the student is having with the course work and/or grade level placement. The student's teacher may also be able to tailor the current curriculum to better meet the student's individual needs.

To request a placement change, the Learning Coach should contact the student's teacher. The school leader or their designee will have final say in approving or disapproving placement changes.

*Please see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for information on the High School Add/Drop process.*

## 3.8 Course Completion\*

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Course completion definitions may vary by state but are critically important when requesting either midyear course completion or late course completion options (below).

### 3.8.1 Midyear Course Completion (Elementary and Middle School)

Before requesting to move on to the next course or level, students should work with their Learning Coaches and teachers to make sure they have learned as much as possible from the course. Teachers can provide enrichment and extension activities for students who have the ability to reach greater depth ~~and absorb greater detail~~ in their studies. Electives may also be available for students who have completed a required or core course prior to the end of the school year.

The decision to advance to a new level of a subject or subjects mid-semester or midyear will be made collaboratively by the Caretaker, Learning Coach, teacher, school counselor (if applicable) and school leader. Students may be eligible for a mid-semester or midyear placement change if they can demonstrate the following outcomes:

- mastery of current-course content
- exploration of enrichment and extension opportunities offered throughout the curriculum
- sufficient in-depth involvement with the course material as determined by the teacher

The teacher will review these criteria to determine the student's eligibility for a placement change. If the student is deemed eligible, the teacher will request the placement change on behalf of the student. Generally, if a midyear curriculum promotion occurs, the student's final grade level will remain the same. As with other placement changes, the school leader will have final say in approving or disapproving placement changes.

**Note:** All schools have a deadline for shipping materials that occurs in the spring semester. After that date has passed, curriculum changes that require shipped materials are no longer available to students. Teachers will notify Caretakers if placement change requests cannot be completed for this reason.

### 3.8.2 Late Course Completion

Students who require extended time to complete assessments after the school year has ended should check with their school to see if the school or state permits students to complete courses beyond the end of the school year. Students **may** be granted an extension allowing them to turn in work **up to two weeks** after their school's last official day of classes, but there is no guarantee an extension will be granted, and extensions beyond two weeks will not be provided. Students are not permitted to use this extension for the purpose of accelerating their studies

over the summer. Unless a school or state provides additional funds to operate an official summer school program (or the student qualifies for extended year services through special education), no additional services or materials will be provided for learning activities over the summer. For students with an IEP, Extended School Year (ESY) services are determined by the student's IEP teams.

## 4 ATTENDANCE\*

Students in this virtual public school program have no physical classrooms but still must meet all regulatory requirements for attending public schools in the state. These requirements are documented in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement, but they generally include attending school for a required number of days and/or completing a required number of hours of learning. Caretakers and students are jointly responsible for ensuring that students meet their school's attendance requirements, and that the student's attendance is properly documented as required by the school (see the Attendance section of your School-Specific Handbook Supplement). School authorities are responsible for enforcing attendance laws. Students not attending school as mandated by law will be considered truant.

Although there is more flexibility in the Connections Academy program than in a traditional school setting, with regard to instructional time, students are still expected to follow the school calendar. Specific school calendars and the required days and hours of instruction are posted in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

### 4.1 Caretaker and Learning Coach Responsibilities for Attendance

**All Grade Levels:** State law<sup>s</sup> requires that Caretakers take responsibility for ensuring that their student(s) attends school. Most Connections Academy programs require that the Caretaker or designated Learning Coach record attendance daily. (Refer to your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for details on attendance recording requirements.) The Learning Coach Orientation includes information on how to record attendance. In addition, all students must complete assigned lessons and submit specified assessments to their teachers. Attendance should be equated to work completion. If the student does not complete assigned lessons, then attendance hours should not be marked by the Caretaker or designated Learning Coach. Students and/or their Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches must also participate in/respond to regular telephone, WebMail message, and/or Web conferencing (LiveLesson presentations)

contacts, as well as in-person contacts (if required) with a teacher during the school's regularly scheduled school hours.

**Elementary and Middle School: Grades K-8 (not all grades may be available at every school):** To meet attendance requirements and successfully complete their lessons, students in elementary and middle school will need assistance from a Learning Coach. The student's need for assistance will range from fairly substantial assistance to relatively minor assistance and will vary depending on the student's age, ability to be self-directed, and to comprehend the materials. In addition, students must be in a safe and secure environment, which generally requires that the student have adult supervision during the entire school day to meet health and safety regulations. Check your state's laws to determine the age when a child can be left unattended.

**High School (Grades 9–12; may not be available at all schools):** Students are expected to perform their school work independently. However, where attendance is required to be reported, the Learning Coach must still report daily attendance in Connexus and verify that the student has completed the assigned lessons and assessments. The Learning Coach is also expected to be available for regular teacher conferences. While students may not need adult supervision during the school day, they must still be in a safe and secure environment. Check your state's laws to determine the age when a student can be left unattended.

## 4.2 Marking and Verifying Attendance\*

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### *Recording, Verifying, and Changing Attendance Records in Connexus*

Learning Coaches are expected to record attendance in Connexus at least weekly; at some schools, Learning Coaches are required to record attendance daily. Be sure to follow your school's requirements for recording attendance to avoid the risk of having your student in Alarm status and/or in danger of being considered truant.

After the Learning Coach has entered *and saved* hours of attendance in Connexus, he or she is not able to edit the student's attendance. If the Learning Coach makes an error marking attendance, the Learning Coach must contact the student's teacher if he/she wishes to have the attendance record changed. Before the school can change the attendance record in response to a Learning Coach request, the Learning Coach may be required to demonstrate that the original entry was an error, and provide documentation to support the change. Because attendance is

subject to “lockdown” (see below) at certain intervals, Learning Coaches should contact their student’s teacher as soon as they discover they have made an error in recording attendance.

Learning Coach–recorded attendance alone is not sufficient to properly verify student attendance. Teachers also verify attendance records on a regular basis and may change a student’s attendance status if there is insufficient evidence to verify attendance, and/or if they are unable to determine if a student was participating in learning. In reviewing attendance documentation, teachers must determine that each student has met or exceeded the required amount of instructional time stipulated by each state’s regulations. The School-Specific Handbook Supplement outlines how many learning hours or minutes must be demonstrated within a specific time frame.

Teachers may make changes to attendance records for the following reasons:

- **Upon request by a Learning Coach to record attendance**—If requested to do so by the Learning Coach, teachers may enter the appropriate attendance code in a blank attendance field *because the Learning Coach is not able to access a computer or does not have Internet access*, but the student has been able to continue his or her studies using offline materials. Teachers will note in the student’s log the reason for the Learning Coach’s request and may request additional documentation that the student was engaged in learning. This method of recording attendance should only be done in exceptional circumstances.
- **Upon request by a Learning Coach to correct an error**—If a Learning Coach makes an error entering the attendance code, he/she may request that the teacher enter the correct code. Teachers will note the basis for the request in the student’s log and may request additional documentation.

- **Upon review by a teacher or other authorized school staff to validate attendance—**  
A teacher or authorized school staff member will change the number of hours worked to a “0,” or the “present” code may be changed to an excused or unexcused absence code, if, after communication with the Learning Coach and/or a review of the student’s activity in Connexus, the teacher or staff member believes there is insufficient evidence to support that the student was in attendance (e.g., insufficient lesson completion, teacher contact, and/or assessment completion, including state test attendance).

In all cases, a teacher or another school staff member will discuss with the Learning Coach any perceived differences between the student’s recorded attendance and his or her documented lessons completed and assessments submitted. If the teacher or other school staff member makes any changes to the student’s attendance record in Connexus, he or she will promptly inform the Learning Coach and document the change in the student’s log. Learning Coaches who have disputes related to attendance should follow the dispute resolution procedures in the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

### *Attendance Lockdown*

Schools are required to regularly report attendance records to their respective state education agencies. To ensure that reports are accurate, at set intervals, student attendance records are “locked down;” that is, they can no longer be edited by anyone other than a small number of authorized school personnel. Lockdown generally occurs every two weeks (meaning that any dates that are 15 or more days in the past can only be edited by authorized school personnel), but some schools have defined dates.

After attendance records have been locked down, teachers are **not** able to make changes to attendance records. Therefore, Learning Coaches should make requests to update attendance records **as soon as they realize they have made an error**. To request alterations to the attendance record for days that are far enough in the past that they are “locked down,” Learning Coaches should still contact their student’s teacher, but they should be aware that their student’s teacher must then discuss the attendance alterations with the appropriate authorized school personnel.

### *The School Day*

Students must complete a certain number of instructional hours per day as required by local law and regulations. In most states, instructional hours can be distributed differently each day as long as the total required number of instructional hours is met weekly; however, Learning Coaches should check their School-Specific Handbook Supplement's Attendance section for specific information about the school's required daily and weekly hours of attendance. The school day is not limited to certain hours for start and end times; however, the school's teaching staff is only available during the school's hours of operation. Learning Coaches must also be available for their scheduled phone conferences during these times.

### *The School Calendar*

Each school operates according to a set school calendar, which includes days when teachers will not be available due to professional development (all other Support Services are available during these days), and days when the school is completely closed (no Support Services are available during these days). Student learning may continue during any days when the school is closed. (Refer to the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for information on how to record attendance per specific state rules.) All work must be completed as of the last day of school, except as provided in the Late Course Completion section of this handbook. School work that is not completed as of the last day will receive an incomplete or failing grade.

### *Types of Absences*

Specific attendance rules and regulations regarding different types of absences vary by school. Reasons for excused absences may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Health problems**—Students are unable to participate in school work due to physical or mental health problems. If a student misses more than three (3) consecutive school days, the Learning Coach or Caretaker must send a written note or WebMail message to the student's teacher(s) documenting the health issue. The school may also require a doctor's note for absences of more than three (3) consecutive days.



- **Other excused absences**—Examples of other reasons for excused absences include a family illness that requires the absence of the student, a death in the immediate family, religious holidays, family trips that can be taken only during the normal school calendar year (see the section below on extended absences), court appearances requiring the student’s attendance, attendance at special events of educational value that have been approved by a teacher, and other special circumstances that show good cause, have been approved in advance by the school’s leader, and for which the family provides appropriate documentation if required by the school.

If a student misses school for an excused absence, the student is still responsible for completing all required lessons and assessments for the school term.

If a family is requesting an “excused absence” for any reason, the family may be required to submit a doctor’s note or other documentation supporting the request.

- **Unexcused absences**—Absences that are not approved by the school will be considered unexcused. In some states, students may be withdrawn from school for truancy if they have excessive unexcused absences. See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement Attendance section for details.

### *Extended Absences*

If a Learning Coach is aware that a student is going to be unable to complete his or her learning activities for more than three (3) consecutive school days, the Learning Coach should contact the teacher as soon as possible to inform the school of the planned absence. Students will still be expected to complete all the required work by the end of the school year. The school may also request documentation of the reason(s) for the planned absence.

### *Varying the School Holiday Schedule*

If families wish to work during the school’s designated holiday period(s) and then take an equivalent number of vacation days at another time, they should contact their teachers for approval at least one (1) week prior to the requested change. Teachers and school administrators will consider factors such as mandatory school events (testing, etc.) and the school’s attendance regulations when reviewing such requests, and they will notify Caretakers if the request can be granted. If the request is allowed, teachers will help the family adjust learning schedules, as appropriate, to ensure proper attendance and compliance with state

regulations. *Please note that some states do not allow school hours to be recorded on weekends or school holidays. Please check with your teacher and be sure to read your School-Specific Handbook Supplement's attendance section before considering this option.*

#### 4.3 Attendance Status and Escalation Systems\*

Connections Academy Learning Coaches are required to use Connexus to regularly mark hours or days of attendance and/or document lesson completion. Attendance in Connections Academy schools goes beyond daily hours spent on schoolwork and includes other criteria such as contact with the teacher and the student's rate of lesson and/or assessment completion. These criteria, which may vary ~~from state to state~~ to ensure compliance with state-specific requirements, are combined to constitute "attendance" at a Connections Academy school. If any one (or more) of the attendance metrics is not being met, Connexus will trigger what Connections calls "escalation." Escalation is an indicator to the student, Learning Coach, Caretaker, and teacher that the student is at risk of non-compliance for attendance. Every student is therefore always assigned one of four status levels in Connexus: On Track

1. Approaching Alarm
2. Alarm
3. Exempt\*

Students *meeting or exceeding* the minimum requirements for their state will show "On Track" status. Students *not meeting* the minimum requirements for their state are placed in "Approaching Alarm" status or "Alarm" status. When students are in "Approaching Alarm" or "Alarm" status, teachers will notify the Learning Coach and Caretaker of their concerns, help the family understand why the student is in that status, and make every effort to work with the student and Caretaker to ensure the student returns to "On Track" status as soon as possible. Learning Coaches can, at any time, select the Approaching Alarm or Alarm status link, located in the Attendance column on the Learning Coach home page, for details about the student's attendance status.

Students who are in "Alarm" status for extended periods of time may face disciplinary actions as permitted and/or required by state law, including referral to appropriate agencies for truancy. See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for details on attendance requirements, truancy, and escalation.

*\*Exempt status is rarely used and generally only for students with serious illnesses or other major but temporary circumstances that prevents them from completing work in a timely manner, who are expected to be able to catch up and return to “On Track” status prior to the end of the school year. Some students may also have modifications specified in an approved IEP or Section 504 plan that dictate exempt status.*

## 4.4 Truancy\*

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Students who fail to meet legal attendance requirements, which may include reported attendance, required contact with teachers, submission of assessments, and documentation of lesson completion may-shall be considered truant, and the school may institute truancy proceedings, or otherwise report the student to the appropriate authorities, including courts, as is consistent with state law. Please check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for truancy policies.

## 5 GRADING AND STUDENT EVALUATION\*

Students are evaluated based on several types of assessments, such as quizzes, tests, portfolio items, and discussions as described in *Section 3.6.2 Assessments within the Curriculum*. Teachers and substitute teachers are responsible for grading students’ work. Only the teacher or substitute teacher is allowed to issue the final grade for the course.

### *The Grade Book and Progress Reports*

The Grade Book allows all Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches and upper-level students (students in grades three and above) to view grades from both electronic assessments (immediate and automatic postings) and written work (posted by teachers after work is evaluated). The Connexus Grade Book is available to Learning Coaches and these students 24 hours a day, seven days a week (excluding regularly scheduled maintenance as noted in *Section 10.2.1 Use of Connexus*) and always reflects the student’s current status in each course in which s/he is enrolled (overall grade, grade in each course, grades on assessments within each course, and the number and percentage of lessons the student has completed).

Some schools provide Progress Reports that are snapshots of students’ Grade Book during a certain time period (e.g. the first quarter of the school year) which may include teacher feedback and comments. For those schools, Progress Reports are created and posted at certain times per year based on a schedule set by those schools which use them.

## *Grading Time Lines*

Most assessments, other than portfolio assessments, should be graded by the teacher within two (2) school days. Portfolio assessments will generally be graded by the teacher within five (5) school days of receipt and the grade posted to the Grade Book. Specific grading schedules and portfolio expectations are initially explained in the Welcome Call and then are posted on teachers' Message Boards and in student planners.

## **5.1 Placement, Promotion, and Retention (Elementary and Middle School)\***

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### *Placement*

During the Connections Academy enrollment process, the student's Caretaker is asked to submit academic documentation for the student that includes the student's most recent academic progress. This information is reviewed and verified by the Academic Placement Services team, the school counselor, the manager of special education, and/or the school leader, who then collaborate to determine the most appropriate course placement for the student. Students may also be requested to complete a skills assessment that will help determine mastery of previously completed coursework and readiness for Connections Academy curriculum. Caretakers will review and confirm they agree to the course placement prior to the student starting their coursework. Please note that through this process, Connections Academy may make a decision regarding placement that may differ from the student's prior placement; however, for students with an IEP, placement will be in accordance with the student's IEP.

### *Promotion/Retention of Returning Students*

Near the end of the school year, teachers make a recommendation to their school leader regarding promotion or retention for each of their students in grades K through 8. These recommendations are based on the following student performance information:

- successful completion of language arts and math courses (based on school's grading scale)
- performance across all courses
- lesson completion across all courses
- attendance
- proficiency levels on assessments, including state testing

*\*See the School Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.*

For third grade students to be promoted to fourth grade, they must also demonstrate proficiency in reading.

Based on state regulations or authorizer requirements, additional promotion criteria may be established for certain grade levels. Please see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for more information.

Decisions about retaining students due to inadequate progress or lack of proficiency will be made on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with applicable state regulations, by the school leader. The school staff will contact the Caretaker of students who are in danger of retention in early spring and will discuss what options are available and best suited to the individual student's needs. It is possible that a student not apparently in danger of retention in early spring may need to be retained at the end of the school year; the school will make every effort to ensure that the Caretaker is aware of this as soon as possible.

Teachers, school administrators, and school leaders review and discuss the recommendation and work together to make a final decision about promotion/retention for each student. ***Some states may have state specific regulations regarding the promotion and retention of students. Therefore, if there are any discrepancies between the above-listed criteria and state regulations, state regulations will be followed.*** Please see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for more information.

### *High School Coursework Completed in Middle School\**

Students not yet in high school who are academically ready to take high school courses may do so with appropriate approval, but should be aware that issuing high school credit is determined by local and/or state regulations. Furthermore, some states may require students to pass End of Course exams to receive credit for the course and/or to graduate. Please see your School-Specific Handbook Supplement – High School Programs and Policies section, and/or contact your school if you are interested in this option.

## **6 HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM AND POLICIES\***

Please refer to your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for complete high school policies.

## Placement

During the Connections Academy enrollment process, the student's Caretaker is asked to submit academic documentation, ~~that documents the student's~~ provides a record of the high school credits the student has earned and attempted, and any courses in progress, during his/her high school career. This documentation is used to assist the Academic Placement Services department and the school counselor with determining what courses are needed for the student. Initial course placement will be based on high school credit earned and in line with graduation requirements, typical course sequences, and post-secondary goals established by the student during the enrollment process.

Caretakers review and confirm they agree to the course placement prior to the student starting their coursework. ~~Please note that through this process, Connections Academy may make a decision regarding placement that may differ from the student's prior placement; however, for students with an IEP, placement will be in accordance with the student's IEP.~~

## High School Credit

Only high school-level classes provide high school credit toward graduation (unless required by a student's IEP team in states where permitted). A student in grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 who is taking courses from the K–8 curriculum can meet attendance requirements but will not receive credits toward graduation for K–8 courses. In some cases, students who are dually enrolled with a college or university may also earn high school credits for those courses. Check with the school counselor or the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for state-specific information.

# 7 SERVICES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

## 7.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)-Eligible Students\*

~~Subject to any specific state limitations,~~ the school complies with the requirements described in the IDEA as well as state special education regulations and statutes in order to ~~as~~ provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students who have a qualifying disability under the IDEA. ~~requiring special education services.~~ In general, this includes (but is not limited to) identifying and evaluating the needs of students with disabilities under the IDEA, developing Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs), determining appropriate placements in the least restrictive environment for students with IEPs, and implementing IEPs in the appropriate

~~educational~~ placement determined ~~necessary~~ by the IEP team. ~~To comply with state-specific standards and requirements, special education policies may vary from school to school.~~ When a student initially enrolls in Connections Academy with an existing IEP, the school either implements the IEP as written or provides the student with comparable services until a new IEP is developed by the IEP Team. Specially designed instruction for students with IEPs is most often delivered in LiveLesson sessions. In the virtual environment, FAPE is provided in the LiveLesson classroom, including instruction from a special education teacher and any related services. It is important for students receiving special education services to attend these sessions designed to address their IEP goals.

Connections Education complies with the requirements of the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS). As of August 2006, federal law requires publishers of K-12 curriculum to provide a digital version of textbooks and other related materials. The IDEA established the format of these digital versions as the NIMAS. The NIMAS applies to printed textbooks and related printed core materials that are written and published primarily for use in elementary and secondary schools and are required by Connections Education for use by students. Students eligible to receive specialized formats produced by NIMAS files include students who are (a) blind (a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction or fields less than 20 degrees), (b) visually impaired (a visual impairment with corrections and regardless of optical measurement that prevents the student from reading standard print), (c) physically disabled (a physical limitation that prevents the student from reading standard print), and (d) print disabled (having a reading disability resulting from an organic dysfunction and of sufficient severity that it prevents the student from reading printed materials).

The IEP team determines the instructional program, modifications, and accommodations needed for students with disabilities, including the need for accessible instructional materials and assistive technology. Connections Education assumes responsibility for providing accessible formats and assistive technology to students who need alternative access with these accommodations documented in an IEP or Section 504 plan.

## **7.2 Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 Eligible Students\***

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Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (the “Act”), ~~commonly referred to as §504~~, is a federal statute designed to prohibit discrimination and to ensure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits comparable to those of non-disabled students. A “§504-Eligible Student” is a student who either (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. Section 504 plans are typically written for students who are disabled as defined in § 504 of the Act, and who require accommodations and modifications to their instructional program (which may include services and/or assistive technology) but who do not require specialized instruction in order to receive a free appropriate public education benefit from their educational program. When a student enters Connections Academy with a § 504 plan developed by his or her previous school, Connections Academy will review the plan and supporting documentation and comply with § 504 of the Act. Connections Academy requires staff members to be cognizant of the needs of § 504 students and to ensure that students receive appropriate accommodations and modifications.

## **7.3 English Language Learners (ELL)\***

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Federal and state regulations require that schools determine students’ “primary or home language” and take “appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by [their] students in [their] instructional programs.” To meet this requirement, Connections Academy asks Caretakers to complete a primary home language survey based on the regulations of the state in which they reside. Responses are then reviewed to identify all students whose primary or home language is not English. Connections Academy schools then administer English Language Proficiency assessments to determine students’ language acquisition levels in compliance with Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act and to determine students’ language acquisition levels. Children receive a planned instructional program of English as a second language (ESL) instruction at their developmental and instructional level to facilitate the acquisition of English language skills. This instruction is provided by each school’s highly qualified ELL teacher with frequency determined by students’ language proficiency levels. This may include consultation with the Learning Coach, teacher modification of content lessons and/or assessments, and direct instruction via LiveLesson sessions pursuant to state requirements. Services that promote language acquisition include instructional support to help



EL $\frac{L}{L}$  students attain proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students with limited English proficiency receive individualized attention that facilitates fluency in English and is based on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) framework. The proficiency of EL $\frac{L}{L}$  students is assessed annually using state-specific instruments. Students who are exited from EL $\frac{L}{L}$  programming enter into a monitoring phase.

## 7.4 Gifted Students\*

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Students may be identified as gifted during a student's initial placement process or after the student has been enrolled. Students are identified as gifted based on past performance and additional evidence as requested by the school's gifted program staff. Course placement and recommendation is completed through consultation with the Learning Coach.

Gifted students may be placed in special gifted math, science, and language arts courses in grades 3–8 and in Honors or Advanced Placement courses in high school. Students may also be assigned above grade level course or accelerated course work. In some states, gifted students may also receive a Gifted IEP or other regulatory designation that may have specific requirements. See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.

Note: Gifted Literature ~~language~~ Study (for grades 3-8 as part of the English/Language Arts gifted program) uses a shared inquiry model taught through LiveLesson sessions. Students in this program may be required to attend LiveLessons at certain times on certain dates. Please check with your child's school for details before enrolling in this program.

## 8 COMMUNITY EVENTS, TRIPS, AND ACTIVITIES\*

Connections Academy strongly encourages families to get together for events, trips, study sessions, and other activities. The activities may have educational and/or socialization benefits for students and are generally organized by parent volunteers. Parent volunteers organizing events may have different titles by school, including Community Coordinators, Family Involvement Coordinators, or School Event Representatives.

**Sanctioned Events vs. Non-sanctioned Events**—Some field trips are sanctioned events, sponsored by the school; others are non-sanctioned events that do not involve the school.

**Information Sharing** —Parent volunteers gather and share information (i.e., school’s community message board, Facebook group messages, invitations sent via WebMail, or other communications channels) about events, activities, services, performances, and other opportunities that might benefit students and families. This information is strictly the personal opinion of the parent volunteer or other families, and the school bears no responsibility or liability for its accuracy or usefulness. Furthermore, any use of this information, or participation in an Event or activity, is solely at the discretion of each individual Caretaker.

**Caretaker Responsibility for Students at Events** - The Caretaker assumes responsibility for his/her safety and the safety of his/her student(s). The Caretaker also agrees to supervise his or her student(s) and any other minor children in his/her charge in attendance. The school assumes no liability for anyone who attends an event based on information included on the school’s community message board. When school staff is present, they will be responsible, in conjunction with the Caretaker, for general supervision of students, and will prioritize student safety.

**Special Arrangements**—Parent volunteers may work to develop relationships with local schools, districts, and other providers of activities (e.g., the YMCA), as appropriate, to arrange opportunities for student participation and access to activities.

### *Sanctioned Events*

Sanctioned events must have educational and/or social value and must be preapproved by the school leader or designee. The parent volunteer will have all adults in attendance sign the Connections Academy Sanctioned Waiver, Release, and Event Permission Form at the official event. Caretakers should complete the Media Consent and Release Data View for each student who attends an event prior to attending the event. If the adult supervising the student at a sanctioned event is not the Caretaker, s/he must provide the community coordinator or school event representative with a signed, written note from the Caretaker confirming that the designated adult has permission to supervise the student at the sanctioned event and is authorized to execute the Connections Academy Waiver, Release, and Event Permission Form as an agent of the Caretaker.

In most states, and in accordance with state or local policies, a sanctioned event may be counted as a school day upon receiving approval from the school leader or his/her designee. **Please consult your school supplement for more information.** After this approval is granted, Caretakers may record as attendance the number of hours spent at the sanctioned event. It is not necessary for students to complete lessons on days when they attend sanctioned events, though families should plan ahead to ensure the student completes enough lessons in the day or days before and/or after the event to remain on track. Any school work scheduled on an “event” day must still be completed, though it does not have to be completed on the event day.

Sanctioned events are posted on the school’s message board as “sticky” threads, which are those threads noted in green on the Message Boards. Overnight official events require special approval, and background checks on all adults and chaperones may be conducted as allowable or required by state law. Many schools require that Caretakers RSVP in advance for sanctioned events. This allows the school to send an adequate number of staff to the event, and for the school to know who planned on attending in case the event must be cancelled due to weather, etc.

**Note:** There may be additional fees charged in order to attend these activities, as permitted by state law.

### *Non-sanctioned Events*

Non-sanctioned events have not been approved by the school and will *not* be counted as a school day. Non-sanctioned events may be posted on the school’s message board but not as “sticky” threads.

Families participating in both sanctioned and non-sanctioned events do so voluntarily and assume and accept all risks associated with their participation. Families participating in these events agree to release and hold harmless the school, its affiliates, directors, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers from any and all liability in the event of an accident or incident in route to, during, and returning from, which is related to, arises out of, or is in any way connected with the non-sanctioned event. The school will not accept financial responsibility for any necessary emergency care and/or transportation for anyone attending a non-sanctioned event.

## 9 CONDUCT, DUE PROCESS, AND COMMUNICATION\*

Connections Academy strictly prohibits any form of bullying/cyber bullying, harassment, hazing, or any other similarly destructive behaviors toward any member of the school community, by any member of the school community, in any school environment or at any school activity.

Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches who believe they or their student(s) may have been subjected to inappropriate behavior by anyone affiliated with their school should immediately contact the school leadership or the Connections Academy main support line at 800-382-6010 to report any concerns. See also Sections 9.2 and 9.5 of the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

Caretakers and Learning Coaches, as well as students, are expected to abide by the Prohibited Behaviors policy in Section 9.2 of the School-Specific Handbook Supplement, and any other sections covering appropriate conduct and communication. Caretakers or Learning Coaches who engage in any prohibited behaviors, directed toward any member of the school community, may, as disciplinary action, have their access to Connexus suspended or terminated at the discretion of the school leader. Suspension or termination of Connexus access is the Connections equivalent of being suspended or expelled ~~banned~~ from the school premises and all school activities. Therefore, Caretakers or Learning Coaches whose Connexus access has been suspended or terminated will not be permitted to contact the school staff at school, home, or other locations; to visit school premises; contact any Connections staff; or attend field trips or other school activities, until the disciplinary issue has been resolved and their Connexus access is restored. All communications with the school must therefore be conducted through the student, or through another Caretaker or Learning Coach responsible for that student.

The suspension or termination of a Caretaker or Learning Coach’s access to Connexus may or may not impact the student’s ability to continue to remain enrolled in and learning at his or her Connections school. The student’s ability to continue will depend on the student’s age, level of independence, and/or the availability of another Caretaker or Learning Coach for the student. If needed, the Caretaker or Learning Coach who’s Connexus access is suspended or terminated may appoint another adult as the student’s Designated Learning Coach by –contacting the [student’s school’s](#) Board in writing to request the Designated Learning Coach form. If the school does not have a board, the Caretaker or Learning Coach should contact the School Leader, Director of Schools, or Authorizer (see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for grievance policy). Prior to the termination of the account, the Learning Coach or Caretaker will be notified via WebMail of the impending suspension or termination of their account, and will be given till the end of the next school day to complete the Designated Learning Coach Form, if needed.

The Caretaker whose Connexus access has been suspended or terminated may appeal this suspension to the school’s Board in writing by sending an email or letter to the school Board president. Only written appeals will be considered. Board contact information can be found on the school’s website. If the school does not have a board, the Caretaker or Learning Coach should contact the Director of Schools in writing (see the School-Specific Handbook Supplement for grievance policy).

The school community includes but is not limited to teachers, administration, staff, Caretakers/Learning Coaches, students, volunteers, and school vendors.

## ***9.1 Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco-Free School***

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Connections Academy is a drug-free, alcohol-free, and tobacco-free environment. The use of controlled substances, alcohol, and/or tobacco is prohibited at all face-to-face school events and activities such as but not limited to field trips, testing, and graduation ceremonies. This applies to all members of the school community including students and their families, teachers, staff, and visitors.

The use of tobacco, including smoking tobacco, chewing tobacco, e-cigarettes, or snuff, or the possession of or use of any of the following by any member of the school community while on school premises or at a school event or activity as described above, will be considered a violation of this policy:

1. alcoholic beverage(s)
2. Illegal, controlled, and/or dangerous substances and/or narcotics (unless prescribed by a physician for medical purposes, and properly documented as such), or substances purported to be such. Illegal, dangerous or controlled substances and substances purported to be such include, but are not limited to, narcotics, amphetamines, marijuana, cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, barbiturates, prescription or non-prescription drugs of any nature and medications such as diet pills, caffeine pills, bath salts, and others.
3. drug paraphernalia

It shall also be a violation of this policy for any member of the school community to sell or distribute, or attempt to sell or distribute, tobacco products; e-cigarettes; drugs or drug paraphernalia; illegal, dangerous or controlled substances, or any substances purported to be such, while on school property or at school events or activities.

If a Connections student attends a school event or activity under the influence of or in possession of an illegal, dangerous, or controlled substance or alcohol, the student's Caretakers and local authorities will be notified. The student's Caretakers will be notified if a student is found to be in possession of or using tobacco products or e-cigarettes. Caretakers will be required to make arrangements for immediately removing the student from the school event or activity in such event.

Any non-student member of the school community who attends a school event or activity under the influence of or in possession of alcohol or illegal, dangerous, or controlled substances or substance purported to be such will be asked to remove themselves from the school event or activity. Local authorities may be notified at the discretion of the school leader depending on the nature of the violation. Any non-student member of the school community who attends a school event or activity and uses tobacco products or e-cigarettes will be informed of the school's tobacco-free policy for a first violation. If more than one violation occurs, further action may be taken by the school.

If a student is found to be engaged in communications arranging for the sale or exchange of alcohol or illegal, dangerous, or controlled substances or any substances purported to be such at a school event or activity, the student will be removed from the school event or activity and the school will contact both the student's Caretaker and local authorities to report this behavior. Any other member of the school community found to be engaged in communications arranging for the sale or exchange of alcohol or illegal, dangerous, or controlled substances or any substances purported to be such at a school event or activity will be removed from the school event or activity and the school will contact local authorities.

Students who fail to comply with this drug-free, alcohol-free, and tobacco-free policy will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the School-Specific Handbook Supplement disciplinary policies. All other school community members in violation of this policy will be asked to leave the event or activity and/or will be reported to local authorities.

In all cases, this policy will be implemented in accordance with any applicable state laws. See your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.

## ***9.2 Bullying and other Prohibited Behaviors\****

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Please refer to your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for your school's policy.

## ***9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students\****

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Appropriate conduct is expected of all students at the school. Students are guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution.

## ***9.4 Academic Honesty\****

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–The school regards academic honesty as key to its mission and essential in the virtual environment. Students in all grade levels (K through 12) and their Caretakers are required to review the Honor Code at the beginning of each school year and indicate their agreement to abide by it. Teachers will discuss the Honor Code and its meaning with their students and the students' Caretaker(s) at the beginning of the year. It is expected that all students will adhere to the Honor Code throughout the year and all schoolwork submitted to meet course or class requirements represents the original work of the student.

In addition, students are expected to be proactive in ensuring they are adhering to the principles of academic honesty by:

- completing, and reviewing as needed, the Academic Honesty section of their Orientation
- agreeing to, and referring to as needed, the Connections Academy Honor Code
- using, in accordance with their school policy, tools provided in Connexus to ‘self-check’ for academic honesty (e.g. plagiarism-checking software).

Any form of academic dishonesty will cause a student to be subject to disciplinary action. The following principles are critical to maintaining academic honesty:

- Students must not submit work of any kind that is not their own work.
- Students must not plagiarize in any work (written, multimedia, oral, creative, etc.).
- Students must not solicit answers or post assessments, assignments, answers to assessments or assignments, or any other Connections Academy curricular materials on any media including social media or social sharing websites that can be seen by other students or other third parties, *unless specifically instructed do so as part of the curriculum (e.g. a discussion assessment)*.
- Students must not give or receive unauthorized assistance on assessments.
- Learning Coaches must not give assistance on assessments.
- Students must not present any forged document or signature to the school.
- Learning Coaches must not present any forged document or signature to the school.

### *Completing School Assessments*

When completing assessments on the computer or on paper, students and Learning Coaches should follow these simple guidelines to ensure that assessments are meaningful, worthwhile, and completed in accordance with the principles of academic honesty:

- Students should complete all assessments **independently**, and without assistance from their Learning Coach, any other persons, or any external resources. If any support is required of the Learning Coach, the assessment instructions will clearly indicate this.



- Assessments are “closed-book.” They should be completed without the support of any outside resources such as textbooks, workbooks, lesson plans, dictionaries, the Internet, or the student’s Learning Coach or any other individuals. In the rare instances where assessments are not closed-book, the instructions will clearly specify that the student may use supporting materials. If you have any questions about what may or may not be appropriate for use during an assessment, contact your teacher.
- Skills Checks (in the lower grades) should be completed by the Learning Coach. These short assessments provide an opportunity for the Learning Coach to share with the teacher his or her observations about the student’s progress.
- **It is never appropriate for students or Learning Coaches to share with anyone, in any format, the contents of any Connections Academy assessments.**

## **9.5 Grievance Procedures for Caretakers\***

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*Please see your School- Specific Handbook Supplement for your school Grievance policy.*

## **9.6 Communication**

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### **9.6.1 Communication Systems**

Connexus contains several unique and efficient mechanisms for families and school staff members to communicate with one other. Because Connexus is a closed system, no communication can be made to or from anybody outside of the system. Caretakers 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, Caretakers should go to their student’s SIF (Student Information Form) – School Directory Data View to adjust their student’s permissions at any time.

The following communications systems are described in detail in Connexus Help.

- School Directory
- WebMail
- Message Boards
- Virtual Library
- Teacher feedback on assessments
- Home Page Announcements

- LiveLesson Sessions
- Connexus “Feedback” link
- StarTrack Rating System

Note that the Directory includes names of students enrolled in other Connections Academy schools (in other states and locations), and therefore the student’s information would be available in the Directory to students and Learning Coaches in other Connections Academy schools. Caretakers may restrict access to Directory Information during the enrollment process. See the Third Party Access to Student Information section, below, for more details.

In situations where a student, Caretaker, and/or Learning Coach is deaf and/or hard of hearing, that individual may request an additional method or methods for communicating with teachers and other Connections staff outside of Connexus (e.g., instant messaging). Connections and/or a student’s IEP Team will determine **annually** what messaging tool(s) are approved for use in these situations. Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches should contact the school to discuss their situation and request approval to use an authorized additional communication tool(s). Connections will then assist families with the installation of the Connections-authorized additional communication tool(s). When so authorized by Connections, and when used in accordance with the terms agreed upon by the school and the Caretaker/Learning Coach, the use of the additional communication device(s) will not be considered a violation of the Connections Terms of Use policy. Connections Academy reserves the right to disallow and/or disable the use of the authorized alternative communication tool at any time if Connections deems that the tool(s) is being used inappropriately and/or not in accordance with the agreement between the Caretaker/Learning Coach and the school.

Learning Coaches, teachers, and students are advised that all messaging communication is archived and available for review by Connections at any time.

### 9.6.2 Communication Requirements

Both students and Learning Coaches are required to have regular synchronous communications with their teachers. Acceptable types of communication—and whether the contact is more often with the student or the Learning Coach—vary among the grade levels and by school.

## Student and Teacher Communication

Connections Academy expects that most students will have daily contact with their teachers through a combination of phone calls, WebMail messages, LiveLesson sessions, face-to-face interaction, and the daily review of assessments via the electronic Grade Book. At a minimum, all students will interact synchronously (e.g., via phone, LiveLesson session, or face-to-face) with a teacher every two weeks so the teacher is able to monitor academic progress and verify student learning. Note that some schools require additional contact; check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for details.

### 9.7 Student Information Access

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#### 9.7.1 Collection and Release of Student Information by the School (FERPA)\*

The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) is a federal law that gives parents/legal guardians (referred to as “Caretakers by Connections Academy”) and students over eighteen (18) years of age, attending a post-secondary institution, and/or emancipated minors (Eligible Students) certain rights regarding the student’s educational records. These rights include the ability to review and correct educational records and the protection of a student’s educational records and “personally identifiable information” from unauthorized disclosure. For complete FERPA information, see Appendix 2, FERPA notification. See also the Release of Student Information and Educational Records to Third Parties below.

FERPA rights are extended to both the Caretaker and non-custodial parent/guardian unless the school is provided with a judicial court order (custody order, protective order etc.), state statute, or legally binding document that specifically revokes or restricts a non-custodial parent’s/guardian’s FERPA rights. If a state law and/or enforceable court order provides the noncustodial parent/guardian’s greater or more restrictive access than provided for by FERPA, that state law and/or court order will be followed.

Other statutes protecting students include the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (“PPRA”) (See Appendix 6, Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment Policy) and the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (“COPPA”) (See Appendix 4, Privacy Policy), as well as state law in the state in which the student is enrolled.

## 9.7.2 Parental Access to Teacher Qualification Information\*

Families have access to basic background information about the school's teachers. This information, found in Connexus through the teacher's Teacher Profile Data View, includes teacher qualifications, experience, and photos.

## 9.7.3 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 Caretaker or Eligible Student*. This occurs in two situations: Directory Information and situations in which FERPA permits the school to release educational records without consent (see below). 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 by Connections Academy 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, s/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*

The school 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. For more information on exceptions to the prior written consent rule, see Appendix 2, FERPA Notification.

### *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.


For more detailed information on FERPA, please see Appendix 2, [FERPA Notification](#).

### **9.7.4 School or Connections Use of Student Images, Recordings, and School Work**

To help illustrate the school program and to celebrate student successes, Connections and/or the school may want to film, interview, and/or photograph students and their work (all collectively referred to as “[Student Connections Media](#) Property”) to duplicate, broadcast, distribute, and/or display.

In order for Connections/the school to use [Student Connections Media](#) Property, proper consent must be obtained through the *Media Consent and Release CA- Student* Data View in Connexus. This Data View is completed by the Caretaker/Learning Coach (or by the student, if the student is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor). [Student Connections Media](#) Property may be used for the purposes and time frame stated in the Data View.

If the Caretaker or student prefers not to have [Student Connections Media](#) Property used by Connections/the school for purposes other than the student’s academic program, this should be indicated in the *Media Consent and Release CA –Student* Data View.

The election on the Media Consent and Release Data View can be changed at any time. From the Connexus Caretaker Home Page, select the student’s  and go to the *Media Consent and Release CA- Student* Data View.


**Clubs and Activities/Talent Networks:** This *Media Consent and Release Data View* also applies to [Student-Connections Media](#) Property pertaining to Clubs and Activities (such as *The Monitor* School Newspaper, *Pens and Lens*, and others) and /or to the Talent Networks (Sports Talent Network, Visual and Performing Arts Talent Network, and Science and Technology Talent Network). An election (Yes or No), must be made in the *Media Consent and Release Data View* in order to participate in Clubs and Activities and/or the Talent Networks.

### 9.7.5 School or Connections Use of Learning Coach/Caretaker Images and Recordings

To help illustrate the school program and to celebrate successes, Connections and/or the school may want to film, interview, and/or photograph a Learning Coach/Caretaker (all collectively referred to as “Depiction”) to duplicate, broadcast, distribute, and/or display.

In order for Connections/the school to use any Depiction, proper consent must be obtained through the *Media Consent and Release CA- Learning Coach/CT Data View* in Connexus. This Data View is completed by the Caretaker/Learning Coach. Any Depiction may be used for the purposes and time frame stated in the Data View.

If the Caretaker/Learning Coach prefers **not** to have any Depiction used by Connections/the school, this should be indicated in the *Media Consent and Release CA- Learning Coach/CT Data View*.

The election on the *Media Consent and Release Data View* can be changed at any time. From the Caretaker Connexus home page, select the Learning Coach/Caretaker  and go to the *Media Consent and Release CA- Learning Coach/CT Data View*.

## 10 EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

### 10.1 Use of School Educational Materials

The school provides each student with the temporary use and possession of various educational materials. These materials are shipped to the verified home address of the student, and a Packing List (in the box of curriculum materials) lists all the items the student should have received. Families should check the contents of the curriculum box against the Packing List and **call Connections Academy Support Services at 800-382-6010 within seven (7) school**

**days** of receipt if anything is missing or damaged. Caretakers are encouraged to keep the original packaging that materials were shipped in to facilitate their return at the end of the school year.

Note: The school may provide textbooks and/or materials which are in useable rather than new condition.

In addition to the Packing List, an online Materials List, customized to your student's courses, lists both the items included in the box and the additional materials you will be responsible for providing. To access the Materials List, select your student's name under My Household in Connexus. From the Tools area of the My Student page, select the Materials List link. Use the Materials List to see what materials are supplied to you and which materials you need to supply.

### *Purchase General Supplies*

Though many of the items you need for school are supplied by your school, you may need to provide some general school supplies such as pens and pencils, highlighters, note cards, file folders, notebooks, a ruler, disposable items for science projects, etc. A Learning Coach may see this list by logging into Connexus and selecting their student's name. To the right under Tools there is a link to a Materials List that provides a list of materials for each course.



You will also need to be sure you have printer paper, a printer, and printer ink cartridges. Check your School-Specific Handbook Supplement to see exactly what supplies and equipment your school supplies as this varies from school to school.

### *Authorized Locations for School-Provided Materials*

The only authorized location for any school-provided materials is the address to which the materials were shipped by the school. Any movement of materials to any other location must be specifically authorized by the school using the Location Transfer Request Form (contact the school leader for this form). Failure to obtain authorization may result in the repossession of, or invoicing for, the materials. Caretakers are responsible for providing the school with updated contact information (physical address, phone numbers, email addresses, etc.), including any

validation for that contact information as required by the school, and keeping the information updated on the Student Information Form in Connexus. Note that because Connections may need to ship materials to the student, a P.O. Box alone is not a sufficient mailing address; Caretakers must provide a physical address to which materials can be shipped.

#### Ownership of School-Provided Materials

All school educational materials remain the property of the school and/or the school's vendor partners. Further restrictions to the use of school educational materials are as follows:

- The resale or attempted resale of any educational materials constitutes theft and may subject the seller to invoicing and/or legal action.
- Refusal to return any educational materials constitutes theft and may result in invoicing and/or legal action.
- Any attempt to copy, reproduce, republish, download, post, broadcast, transmit, make available to the public, or otherwise use the educational materials in any way except as specifically directed by the school is not permitted.
- The adaptation, alteration, or creation of a derivative work from any school material is a violation of Connection Academy's Intellectual Property rights and is not permitted. Any use of school material except as specifically directed by the school requires prior written permission from the school or the owner of the materials.

All school educational materials, including WebMail messages, computers, and other technology, remain the property of the school and/or the school's vendor partners. The school or its vendor partner (as the case may be) reserves the right to, at any time and for any reason, either directly or through law enforcement, inspect educational materials and review any content or activity conducted on or through the use of school-provided educational materials, including WebMail, computers, and other technology.

Note: The use of the computer by anyone except the student for a purpose other than to support the student in his/her education program is strictly prohibited. Any violation of this policy may result in loss of the student's privilege to use school-provided technology. Any unauthorized use of a school-provided computer is subject to search without notice by the school, its vendor or law enforcement.



## 10.2 Returning School Educational Materials and Equipment

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All school-provided **non-consumable** (identified as such on the packing and materials lists) materials and equipment must be returned to Connections Academy or to a location designated by Connections Academy for any of the following reasons:

- The school year has ended. Note: The school leader may permit the family to retain the materials for the summer in special cases, but under no circumstances can non-consumable materials be kept past August 1. If the family has indicated intent to return for the following school year, Connections Academy may not require the family to return equipment.
- The student is no longer enrolled in the school (for any reason).
- The student has an extended absence away from his or her residence as defined in the Attendance section.
- The materials are being repossessed due to a violation of the Parent/Legal Guardian (Caretaker) Acknowledgment or of the policies outlined in this Handbook.
- The student has completed the related courses and is being assigned to new courses requiring different materials.
- The school is upgrading or replacing the equipment.
- The student has had an approved placement change for a course.
- Equipment and/or materials were sent in error or do not match the packing list.

**Note:** If the student withdraws from the school after being enrolled in the school for less than 120 calendar days and/or has used less than 10 percent of the consumable materials, then **all materials** (both consumable and non-consumable) must be returned to the school.

Except when materials were sent in error, or in cases of missing or damaged equipment, Connections Academy will contact the Caretaker by phone or by mail to make arrangements for the return of equipment or materials. The Caretaker has seven (7) days from the receipt of the return instructions to return all requested materials and/or equipment. Caretakers should NOT initiate a return shipment until they have been contacted by Connections Academy and provided with instructions. Families who arrange return shipping on their own prior to being contacted by Connections Academy will not be reimbursed for shipping costs.

Except in the case of repossession, Connections Academy is responsible for the cost of return shipping as long as the Caretaker follows the return instructions and coordinates the return with Connections Academy. The Caretaker is responsible for being at home during the required period for a United Parcel Service (UPS) or Federal Express (FedEx) pickup or for transporting the equipment to an authorized UPS or FedEx center. The Caretaker will be responsible for the shipping cost of any items that were forgotten in a return shipment and/or were not properly packed and returned. To find a local, authorized UPS or FedEx shipping outlet, refer to the following websites:

- [UPS](https://www.ups.com/dropoff?loc=en_US) (https://www.ups.com/dropoff?loc=en\_US)
- [FedEx](http://www.fedex.com/locate/index.html?locale=en_US#start) (http://www.fedex.com/locate/index.html?locale=en\_US#start)

In all cases, Caretakers must maintain a copy of the UPS or FedEx return receipt. All non-consumable materials shall be returned in the same condition as delivered with the exception of normal wear and tear. Caretakers will be responsible for, and may be invoiced for, any damage to the materials.

Caretakers shall be responsible for keeping all packing materials provided by Connections Academy and returning all equipment in its original packaging. If the original packaging is not available, Caretakers must purchase replacement packaging at an authorized UPS or FedEx center at their own expense. Caretakers will be invoiced for any damages resulting from improper packaging and/or shipping procedures. If materials and/or equipment are not received by Connections Academy and the UPS or FedEx receipt bearing a valid tracking ID is not available, the Caretaker will be responsible for the cost of replacing any missing materials and/or equipment.

The failure to complete a timely return of any equipment or materials upon request shall constitute a theft and may result in invoicing or legal action as outlined in the Caretaker Due Process section of the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

**Important:** Any computer files that need to be kept by the family should be extracted and any CD/DVD materials must be removed from computers before they are returned to Connections Academy. Neither Connections Academy nor the school has any responsibility for returning any CD/DVD materials returned in the computer, nor to maintain or restore any files.

Connections Academy equipment is **not** available for purchase.

## Technology

A virtual school requires the use of technology to promote and support student learning. All school participants, including Caretakers, students, and staff, will use Connexus and the Internet to communicate and share information. In addition, the student, Caretaker and Learning Coach-(es) must all be reachable by phone for required communications with teachers and other school staff.

The school's hardware and software requirements for accessing Connexus can be met by using the equipment provided by the school according to your school's specific agreement. If the school does not provide this equipment, families may use a personal computer, a computer in a public institution, or any other computer as long as the equipment used meets the Connections Academy specifications (see the Use of Personal Equipment section) and permits the student and/or Learning Coach to have access for a period of time adequate for completing the required lessons each day and throughout the year. Due to certain licensing restrictions, some of the additional software provided with the school computer may not be available for use on personal computers. Families with computers provided by Connections Academy may contact Technical Support if they have specific questions about the computer's software or hardware.

### 10.2.1 Use of Connexus

Regular use of Connexus is required in order to participate in the school. The school provides training on using Connexus, and users are required to complete this training. Anyone using Connexus must also comply with the [Terms of Use Policy](#) (Appendix 3). By using Connexus, users agree that they have read, understood, and will comply with these terms.

Connexus is generally available 24 hours a day, except for a regularly scheduled weekly maintenance window from 4:00–7:00 a.m. Eastern Time on Sunday. There may be other scheduled maintenance times when Connexus will not be available; these scheduled maintenance times will generally occur in the early morning or on weekends. Users will be notified in advance of any maintenance that is anticipated to disrupt service for an extended period of time.

## Security and Privacy

Security and privacy are very important to maintaining the integrity of the information stored in Connexus and are taken very seriously at Connections Academy schools. Each Connexus user is responsible for keeping his or her user name and password confidential; this responsibility

includes frequently changing the password to prevent unauthorized use. User names and passwords should not be provided to anyone at any time. Additionally, Learning Coaches are responsible for taking reasonable precautionary measures to ensure that students never obtain or use their Learning Coach's passwords. Everyone using Connexus should be aware of the Privacy Policy, which is included as Appendix 4 of this Handbook, as well as on the log in page of Connexus. Connections Academy agrees that it will comply with the terms of this Privacy Policy.

Caretakers and students having difficulty using Connexus should be sure they have completed all available trainings and accessed the help resources available from their home pages. If, after completing the training and accessing the help resources, Caretakers and/or students are still unable to resolve their problems, they should consult their teachers for questions relating to the educational program or contact Support Services for any technical questions.

### **10.2.2 Technology Provided by Connections Academy\***

Please see the Technology section of your school's website or your School- Specific Handbook Supplement.

### **10.2.3 Use of Connections Academy Equipment and Installed Software**

At some schools, households are provided with temporary use (during administration of state assessments, etc.) and possession of equipment and software provided by Connections Academy. All equipment and software provided to households shall at all times remain the property of Connections Academy.

#### *School Equipment*

Caretaker are responsible for confirming that any equipment provided by Connections Academy matches the Packing List. They must notify Connections Academy Support Services within seven (7) school days of receipt of equipment of any discrepancies between the Packing List and what was actually received, or if any equipment does not arrive in good working condition.

Though Connections Academy may provide used equipment for student use, any equipment provided will be in good working condition and should function in accordance with the requirements of the school's educational program. Used equipment is supplied with only Connections Academy-authorized software installed. All computer hard drives are reimaged and reconfigured prior to being shipped to the next user.

The only authorized location for any materials is the address to which the materials were shipped by Connections Academy. Any movement of materials to any other location within the state must be specifically authorized by Connections Academy, and stationary computer equipment (desktop computer and monitor) can never be taken out of the state. Laptops, where provided, may move temporarily with the student ***as long as the student has completed the Location Change Request Form, has been approved for the Location Change by the school leader, and the student remains actively enrolled in the school.*** Please contact your school leader to obtain a Location Transfer Request form if you expect to move (see section 2.5.7, Location Change).

Failure to obtain authorization can result in the repossession of, or invoicing for, the materials. Caretakers are responsible for providing the school with up-to-date contact information (address, phone numbers, email addresses, etc.), including any validation for that contact information as required by the school, and keeping the information updated on the Student Information Form in Connexus.

Any equipment provided by Connections Academy is to be used only for school purposes, although limited access to personal email using a personal ISP and web-based email account is permitted. However, the use of Microsoft® Outlook®, Microsoft Outlook® Express, or any other email program that is installed directly onto the computer (“unauthorized email”) is not permitted.

The use of unauthorized email programs risks contaminating the Connections Academy computer with a virus, which could result in charges for repairs to the computer and additional penalties. Anyone using any unauthorized email programs risks permanently losing any email if the Connections Academy computer has to be restored, reimaged, or returned for repair. Connections Academy will not be responsible for loss of any such emails.

### *Software*

All software settings, default configurations, and administrative privileges will be maintained at the original settings unless a change is authorized by Technical Support.

Connections Academy equipment may contain software that permits remote access to the equipment, permits its use to be monitored, or enables it to be shut down remotely. Personal information is not collected or maintained by Connections Academy, and any access is only for the purpose of making repairs, verifying acceptable use, or disabling equipment.

Each software application provided by Connections Academy must be used in accordance with the license and/or use agreement that accompanies that software application. Breaking a license agreement is an illegal act and is punishable by law. Under no circumstances can Caretakers or students redistribute any software provided to them by Connections Academy.

Modification of any equipment or software without Connections Academy's consent is strictly prohibited and may result in financial charges to the household for any required repairs.

The Technical Support representatives must retain an administrative account on each computer. Under no circumstance will Connections Academy provide administrator rights over the system configuration. Users who tamper with the administrative account access will forfeit their rights to the assistance provided by Support Services and may be required to return all Connections Academy computer equipment.

Software installation may also be required when adding approved external hardware. Approved external hardware includes, but is not limited to, printers, keyboards, mice, and USB devices. When purchasing these external hardware devices, families may contact Technical Support representatives, who may assist with installation if staff resources are available. The maintenance of such additional devices is solely the responsibility of the purchaser. In no case may any hardware be installed that requires the computer to be opened.

Educational software not provided by Connections Academy may be installed only if specifically authorized by Technical Support. The decision to permit the installation is solely determined by Technical Support. Caretakers will be responsible for the costs of any repairs required as a result of unauthorized software installation.

#### **10.2.4 Use of Personal Equipment and Software\***

Caretakers may use their own equipment and software as long as they meet the requirements detailed in this section. Connections Academy has no responsibility for providing any support for equipment or software that is not provided by Connections Academy.

If Caretakers do not have access to equipment and software necessary and the school does not provide it, their student(s) may be eligible to apply for a hardship scholarship.

Users can log into Connexus from different devices, such as a mobile phone, tablet, or desktop computer. Most devices are regularly tested to ensure accessibility and functionality.

For the best experience, Connections recommends that users update software and Internet browsers regularly on each device. The following desktop browsers are recommended to access Connexus:

- Internet Explorer
- Google Chrome
- Apple Safari

Headsets with microphones are provided where two-way audio use is required by Connections Academy.

Many of the courses available in Connexus require the use of Adobe® Flash® Player. Some courses also require the use of productivity software compatible with Microsoft® Word®, Excel®, and PowerPoint®. Some courses may have requirements in addition to what is indicated above; these requirements can be found in each course's Course Directions and Tips.

### 10.2.5 Use of the Internet\*

Refer to your School- Specific Handbook Supplement for your school's internet policy.

#### *Internet Safety*

Users should be aware that **some material accessible through the Internet may contain items that are illegal, obscene, defamatory, inaccurate, or potentially offensive to some people. Some of this material may be harmful if accessed by minors.** In addition, it is possible to purchase certain goods and services via the Internet, which could result in unwanted financial obligations for which a student's Caretaker would be liable. Connections Academy believes that the benefits to Users from access to the Internet, in the form of information resources and opportunities for Users' collaboration, exceed the disadvantages. However, all Users must understand and practice acceptable and ethical use.

To help all users understand acceptable and ethical use, Connections Academy offers an *Internet Safety* course, which all Connections staff members are required to take. Connections strongly recommends that all Caretakers and Learning Coaches also take this course, which is available in the To Do section of the Caretaker and Learning Coach's Home Page. Caretakers and Learning Coaches may also review all Internet sites that their student(s) may visit in each course by selecting the "backpack" icon in each course. While Connections Academy has carefully screened these sites and believes they are appropriate for students, this tool makes it easy to review all links. Caretakers and/or Learning Coaches who are uncomfortable with any of the linked sites should contact their child's teacher to discuss alternatives.

Connections Academy also strongly recommends that Caretakers and Learning Coaches monitor their minor student's Internet time. To that end, Connections Academy will support and respect each family's right to decide how to manage access. To assist Caretakers in ensuring safe and appropriate use of the Internet, Connections Academy provides the following:

- An Internet Safety Course, which all Learning Coaches are urged to complete. A link to the course is provided on the Learning Coach Home Page at the beginning of the school year (or when the student first enrolls) and is always available to Learning Coaches through the Virtual Library.
- All computers provided by Connections Academy are configured with default security settings for their Internet browser. There are additional levels of security that can be added which will further help block offensive content. For more information please call Technical Support at 800-382-6010.
- All computers provided by Connections Academy have Internet filtering software installed. This software can be activated (or deactivated, once activated) upon request. **If you wish to activate the filtering software, call Technical Support at 800-382 6010.** Please be aware that Internet filtering software, while potentially very helpful, is imperfect and may block some educational or other appropriate content in addition to blocking potentially inappropriate or offensive content. .



### *Internet Requirements*

Use of the Internet is a requirement for the Connections Academy program. Caretakers are responsible for arranging for Internet service to be available during the school year. Internet service must meet minimum standards for speed, availability, and compatibility to meet Connexus requirements. These minimum standards include the following:

- high-speed Internet service
- the use of a firewall that will permit access to Connexus.

### *Internet Service Providers (ISPs)*

–Contact Support Services for any questions concerning the selection of ISPs. Connections Academy is not responsible for problems with or maintenance of Internet service accounts. The ISP should be contacted directly for help with these issues.

Use of the Internet may also result in the installation of malware if proper procedures are not followed. Caretakers may contact Support Services for assistance with configuring a computer to limit malware, which can include pop-up ads, spyware, and other inappropriate material. (See Appendix 5 for additional information concerning malware.)

### *Internet Subsidy\**

In some schools, Connections Academy provides payment of an Internet subsidy, but there must be at least one student enrolled in the school at the time of the payment. The Internet subsidy will be paid according to a payment schedule determined by Connections Academy. If a student enrolls after the start of the school year, the Internet subsidy will be prorated; however, due to the high cost of processing small payments, no prorated payments will be made for amounts less than \$5.00. Some students may be allowed a higher reimbursement for high-speed service if it is required by their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or if they are receiving additional remediation services that require high-speed service. The school will notify any Caretakers who are eligible for additional reimbursement.

The Internet subsidy may be terminated by Connections Academy if the Caretaker(s) are in breach of the provisions of the Parent/Legal Guardian (Caretaker) Acknowledgment and/or the School Handbooks. As permitted by State law and/or regulation, if Connections Academy has invoiced a household for damage to or theft of a school-provided computer or any other school asset(s), Connections Academy may withhold payment of the Internet subsidy until the invoice is fully satisfied, and/or may apply the Internet subsidy towards payment of the outstanding invoice.

### **10.2.6 Compliance with Connexus Terms of Use**

Any use of Connexus, Connections Academy equipment, or Internet using Connections Academy equipment must be in compliance with Connexus [Terms of Use](#), which is included in Appendix 3. Any violation of the Connexus Terms of Use while using Connections Academy computer equipment may result in warnings, usage restrictions, the loss of a computer or Internet subsidy (where provided by Connections Academy), confiscation of the equipment, expulsion from the school, as well as other disciplinary actions or legal proceedings. The determination as to whether a use is in violation of this policy and the penalties imposed are at the sole discretion of the school and are subject to the guidelines of the Caretaker Due Process section of the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

### **10.2.7 Malfunction/Damage/Loss/Theft of School Equipment and/or Installed Software**

Caretakers are solely liable for any loss, damage, or misuse of computer equipment provided by Connections Academy while in their possession or the possession of students or Learning Coaches.

#### *Accidental Damage to Equipment*

Where damage to the equipment and/or software is not intentional (accidental) but is caused by user negligence or carelessness, the school will limit Caretaker liability for repairs for the first instance to a maximum of \$250 plus the cost of shipping. The school will cover the portion of the cost over \$250 for the first incident.

For all subsequent accidental damage, the school will invoice the Caretakers for the full cost of the repair or replacement plus the cost of shipping.

Accidental damage to equipment includes *but is not limited to* damage caused by carelessness or negligence such as leaving equipment in an area where it is exposed to excessive heat or cold, damage to equipment caused by spills or liquid, dropping equipment, etc.

### *Non- Accidental Damage to Equipment*

Where damage to the equipment and/or software is caused by a user and is not accidental or is the result of repeated failures to follow the school's policies and directions, the Caretakers will be invoiced for the full cost of the repair or replacement plus shipping.

Examples of such damage include, but are not limited to, vandalism or malicious destruction, opening the computer casing, installation/removal of internal hardware components, installation/removal of software without the school's permission, and/or manipulation of system BIOS settings. Caretakers may appeal a determination of damage as not being accidental by following the procedures in the Caretaker Grievance section.

### *Loss or Theft of Equipment*

On the first occurrence, where there has been a loss or theft of Connections Academy equipment, Caretakers will be responsible for a maximum replacement charge of \$400, plus the cost of shipping a replacement, provided that the following information is submitted to the school:

- a copy of a filed police report or insurance loss report; and
- documentation from the insurance carrier confirming that no reimbursement is available under homeowner's or renter's policies or a notarized letter from the Caretaker indicating that they are not insured.

If this documentation is not provided—or if there are any subsequent incidents of loss or, theft—Caretakers will be responsible for the full replacement cost of any equipment and software.

### *Removal of Malware*

Connections Academy will charge Caretakers for requests to remove malware that they have installed accidentally or intentionally on Connections Academy's equipment according to the following schedule:

- First incident: no charge.
- Second incident: twenty-five dollars (\$25).

- Third incident: fifty dollars (\$50).

Further offenses may provide grounds for repossession of the affected equipment, including any charges for return shipping. Refer to Appendix 5 in this Handbook for further information.

### *Notice to School*

Caretakers must notify Connections Academy (via WebMail message or by calling Support Services) of any malfunction, loss, or damage to computer equipment from any cause whatsoever within seven (7) school days of the loss or occurrence of the damage. Caretakers must contact Technical Support for any and all repairs and must follow all instructions for repair as directed by the Technical Support representatives. Caretakers must not contact the manufacturer or a third party to repair the computer equipment unless instructed to do so by a Technical Support representative. If Caretakers do not comply with this policy and if there is any evidence of manufacturer or third party involvement, the school may void the damage limitation it offers for accidents and may invoice the Caretakers for the full cost of repair or replacement.

### *Payment of School Invoices*

In the event Caretakers are invoiced for any repair by the school, payment will be due within five (5) days from the date of receipt of an invoice from Connections Academy. All outstanding invoices must be paid before additional repair services or a replacement computer can be provided. Failure to pay any outstanding invoice will be handled as provided for in the Grievance Policy for Caretakers section of the School-Specific Handbook Supplement.

## **10.2.8 Contacting Support Services**

Support Services can be reached by calling 800-382-6010 and then selecting the appropriate menu selection for Support Services, by emailing [support@connectionseducation.com](mailto:support@connectionseducation.com), or by using the WebMail message feature in Connexus and sending a message to Support Services (included in the WebMail address book under Parent and Student Services).

The Support Services Team is available during the school's calendar year from 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Voicemail messages can be left for Support Services at any time.

The Support Services Team should be called for the following reasons:

- Equipment or materials supplied by Connections Academy do not match the items listed on the Packing List.

- A user cannot log in to Connexus.
- Equipment, software, or materials supplied by Connections Academy do not function or have been damaged or lost (be sure to check any training resources or the Online Help section of Connexus first).
- A request needs to be made to authorize the installation of hardware or software on equipment supplied by the school.
- More information is needed about obtaining an ISP or assistance is needed with creating ISP accounts for providers preinstalled on school equipment.

When contacting Support Services via email, WebMail message, or voicemail message, please clearly describe the issue and provide specific contact information for a Support Services representative to respond to your issue. When submitting a service request, families should provide the following information:

- Caretaker and student name
- phone number (including extension), email address, and state or school
- brief description of the problem (If contacting Support Services via email, include this information in the email subject line.)
- Issue Aware tracking ticket number if the issue is a continuation of an existing request (If contacting Support Services via email, include this information in the email subject line, in the voicemail message, or to the Support Services representative.)
- level of severity
- detailed description of the problem, including any steps required to reproduce the problem

The Support Services representatives' response times depend on the severity of the issue. Support Services strives to respond to all issues within 24 hours, though the response could be that more time is needed, depending on the complexity of the issue identified.

## APPENDIX 1 – HONOR CODE

Connections Academy, a virtual school dedicated to student achievement at the highest level, expects academic honesty to be a core value for all its students, Caretakers, and staff. By making the choice to enroll in an alternative, study-at-home program, our students (and/or their Caretakers) have taken charge of their education and demonstrated a genuine desire to fulfill their academic potential.

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. Our Honor Code serves to reinforce our students' commitment to academic excellence, and all students in grades six and above must sign this Honor Code as part of the Connections Academy enrollment process.

*As a Connections Academy student, I know that academic honesty is critical to my own success, as well as to the mission of my School. I also understand that an Honor Code is, by its nature, limited not only to those situations spelled out in the code, but includes the spirit of honesty and ethics implied by the written code. I agree that I will uphold not only the letter of this code but also its implied intent of ongoing commitment to full academic honesty.*

I agree that I will ...

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

- read and understand the contents of both the *Student Handbook: General Portion* and my school's *Handbook Supplement*.
- adhere to all Connections Academy Student Conduct guidelines for proper use of the Internet and of all Connections Academy's equipment or materials provided to me.
- accept the consequences, including disciplinary action, of breaking this Honor Code. (More information on Discipline and Due Process for Students can be found in the *Handbook Supplement*).

My signature below confirms that I have read, and agree to abide by, the Connections Academy Honor Code.

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Student Signature & Date

## APPENDIX 2 – FERPA ANNUAL NOTIFICATION AND POLICY

*Last Reviewed and Updated: October 12, 2015*

*This FERPA Annual Notification and Policy may be updated periodically. The most current version is always available from the [login page of Connexus](#). Any changes will be effective as soon as they are posted in Connexus.*

**Connections Academy® schools (collectively referred to as “the School”) comply fully with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (“FERPA”).**

### *Overview*

FERPA is a Federal law that is administered by the Family Policy Compliance Office (Office) in the U.S. Department of Education (Department). 20 U.S.C. section 1232g; CFR Part 99. FERPA applies to educational agencies and institutions (e.g., schools) that receive funding under any program administered by the Department.

FERPA gives custodial and noncustodial parents alike certain rights with respect to their children's education records, unless a school is provided with evidence that there is a court order or State law that specifically provides to the contrary. Otherwise, both custodial and noncustodial parents have the right to:

1. Access and inspect their children's education records;

*\*See the School Specific Handbook Supplement for additional information.*

2. Consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the records (except in certain circumstances specified in the FERPA regulations, some of which are discussed below);
3. Seek to have the records amended; and
4. File a complaint with the Department.

When a student reaches 18 years of age or attends a postsecondary institution, he or she becomes an “eligible student”, and all rights under FERPA transfer from the parent to the student. The term “education records” is defined as those records that contain information directly related to a student and which are maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution.

FERPA generally prohibits the improper disclosure of personally identifiable information derived from education records. Thus, information that an official obtained through personal knowledge or observation, or has heard orally from others, is not protected under FERPA. This remains applicable even if education records exist which contain that information, unless the official had an official role in making a determination that generated a protected education record.

### *Right to Inspect and Amend Educational Records*

Under FERPA, a school must provide a parent, legal guardian or Eligible Student with an opportunity to inspect and review his or her child’s education records within 45 days following its receipt of a request. A school is required to provide a parent with copies of education records, or make other arrangements, if a failure to do so would effectively prevent the parent from obtaining access to the records.

Parents, legal guardians, and Eligible Students possess the right to request and receive from the School the following: (1) an explanation of information in the student’s education records; (2) a copy of all or part of the student’s education record; and (3) a list of the types and locations of the student’s education records collected, maintained, or utilized by the School.

A written request identifying the records to be inspected must be provided to the School. The school official will arrange for access and will notify the parent or Eligible Student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If copies are requested, the School may charge the requesting party reasonable copying costs.



Parents or Eligible Students requesting an amendment should complete the *FERPA Request to Amend Educational Record Form* available in the Virtual Library and clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading and submit this to the School Principal. If the School decides not to amend the record, the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student shall be notified in writing and shall be required to file a Request for *FERPA Formal Hearing Form*, found in the Virtual Library under Forms to request and receive a records hearing review. At this time, additional information shall be provided to the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student regarding the hearing process procedures.

FERPA was intended to require only that schools conform to fair recordkeeping practices and not to override the accepted standards and procedures for making academic assessments, disciplinary ruling, or placement determinations. Thus, while FERPA affords parent the right to seek to amend education records which contain inaccurate information, this right cannot be used to challenge a grade, an opinion, or a substantive decision made by a school about a student.

Additionally, if FERPA's amendment procedures are not applicable to a parent, legal guardian or Eligible Student's request for amendment of education records, the school is not required under FERPA to hold a hearing in the matter.

### *Disclosure Without Consent*

Parents or Eligible Students possess the right to prevent disclosure of educational records to third parties except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. The following are examples, including but not limited to, instances that do not require the School to obtain prior written consent. A school may release education records to/for:

- School officials with legitimate educational interests. School officials include the following: persons employed by the School, whether paid or unpaid, administrator, supervisor, instructor, support staff or school Board of Directors members; authorizing bodies or districts, vendors employed by or under contract with the school, such as an attorney, auditor, consultant, etc.; or a parent, student or volunteer serving in an official school capacity. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities for the school.

- Other schools when a student graduates or transfers. Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll. Upon receipt of the request, the school will make reasonable attempts to notify the parent or the Eligible Student of the request and the date the records were forwarded.
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid
- Accrediting institutions.
- Compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.
- Appropriate officials in the case of a health or safety emergency.
- Charter school authorizers and/or state and local authorities within a juvenile system pursuant to applicable state law.

### *Directory Information*

FERPA permits the School to designate certain information contained in student educational records as Directory Information. Directory Information is generally defined as information not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released.

FERPA permits a School to disclose Directory Information for any purpose to third parties, unless the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student has exercised the right to opt-out of the release of their Directory Information. A parent, legal guardian or Eligible Student may opt-out of having his/her Directory Information released by completing the Authorization to Withhold Directory Information Form found in the Permissions Manager section of the Student Information Form (SIF). If refusal is requested, the Directory Information will not be disclosed except with the consent of the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student or as otherwise allowed by FERPA. This is an annual election.

The following information regarding students is considered Directory Information by the Connections Education LLC and its affiliated schools:

- student name
- student city of residency
- student webmail address
- student telephone number
- student grade level

If an opt-out form is not received, the School will assume that there is no objection to the release of the designated Directory Information.

Federal law requires schools receiving federal monies to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following three categories of Directory Information for high school students:

- student name
- student address
- student telephone number

However, the law affords parents/legal guardians the option to refuse disclosure of such information by completing the *Authorization to Withhold Directory Information Form*.

### *Disclosure With Consent*

Written consent or a subpoena must be obtained prior to the release of personally identifiable information to any party not in the Disclosure without consent list or not categorized as Directory Information.

Prior to requesting consent, the School shall provide the parent, legal guardian, or Eligible Student a written request form that requires the following information:

- A specific description of the information or record to be released.
- The party or agency to which the information will be released and their address.
- The written request must be signed and dated by the requestor.

Prior to complying with a subpoena requesting the release of student education records, the school will notify the parent, guardian, or Eligible Student and provide seven (7) to ten (10) calendar days, depending on the situation, to quash such a subpoena.

### *Custody, Dependency And Post Secondary Course Records*

FERPA rights are extended to both the custodial and noncustodial parent unless the School is provided with a judicial court order, state statute, or legally binding document that specifically revokes a noncustodial parent's FERPA rights.

In order for a parent or guardian to continue to have access to an Eligible Student’s educational records, the parent or guardian has to demonstrate dependency as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code by producing the most recent tax return or completing the forms at the Family Compliance Office website (this does not apply to emancipated minors), or the student has to execute an *Authorization to Release Educational Records of Eligible Students to Parents/Legal Guardians Form*.

If a student takes a course at a postsecondary institution, the FERPA rights are accorded to the student for any such course. In order for Connections Education LLC, parents, or any third parties to get access to such educational records, the student is required to complete an *Authorization to Release Post-Secondary School Records Form*.

### *Right To File A Complaint*

Parents, legal guardians, or Eligible Students who have concerns or questions should e-mail to [legal@connectionseducation.com](mailto:legal@connectionseducation.com). Additionally, parents, legal guardians, or Eligible Students may file a complaint with the following:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901  
Phone: 202-260-3887

## **APPENDIX 3 – CONNEXUS TERMS OF USE**

*These Terms of Use may be updated periodically. The most current version is always available from the [login page of Connexus](#). Any changes will be effective as soon as they are posted in Connexus.*

Last **Reviewed and Updated**: December 20, 2015.

### *Applicable To All Users*

#### **Acceptance of Terms**

By using this Education Management System (“Connexus<sup>®</sup>”), you (hereinafter referred to as the “User” or “Users”) agree to all terms, conditions, and notices contained or referenced in these Terms of Use (“Terms”). These Terms apply to your use of Connexus<sup>®</sup> and all materials, information, software, content, products, and services that are owned or licensed by Connections Education LLC (“Connections”) and included in, or available through, Connexus<sup>®</sup>, (“Connections Content”) as well as any content owned or licensed by a 3rd party content provider that is included in, or available through Connexus with that 3rd party’s permission (“3rd Party Content”) (Connections Content and 3rd Party Content collectively, “the Content”). If the User is a minor, he or she shall be the responsibility of his or her parent/guardian, who shall ensure that the User adheres to the Terms.

Any 3rd Party Content uploaded or otherwise made available by a 3rd Party is and remains the sole property of the 3rd Party or the 3rd Party licensors. By uploading or otherwise making available any 3rd Party Content, you automatically grant and/or warrant that the owner has granted Connections, the perpetual royalty-free, non-exclusive right and license to use, reproduce, publish, distribute, display, and transmit the 3rd Party Content through the channel into which you have uploaded or authorized Connections to upload the 3rd Party Content. You also permit any User of Connexus with access to that channel, subject to your restrictions, to access, view, store, and reproduce the 3rd Party Content to the same extent permitted herein. To the extent provided for in the specific terms of the governing agreement between Connections and 3rd Party, 3rd Party Content may be removed, obscured, altered or modified by the 3rd Party, subject to the terms and conditions set forth herein with respect to the use of Connexus.

Connections reserves the right to change these Terms at any time, effective upon posting the updated Terms on the Connexus<sup>®</sup> log-in page. The most current version is always available by clicking on the Terms of Use link located at the bottom of the log-in page of Connexus.

## Permitted Use

Connexus® is to be used for the purpose of accessing the education program licensed by or for the benefit of the User(s). Connections grants the User the non-exclusive, non-transferable, limited license to access, visit, use, view, and print the Content, solely for the User's own personal non-commercial use in connection with such education program, provided the User keeps intact all copyright and other proprietary notices. Use of the Content or materials for any purpose not expressly permitted in these Terms is prohibited.

Users may not (1) remove, obscure, or alter the Content in any way except as agreed to in writing by Connections, (2) use Connexus® in any manner that could damage, disable, overburden, or impair any Connections server or the network(s) connected to any Connections server, or interfere with any other party's use and enjoyment of Connexus®, 3) gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to any accounts, computer systems, or networks connected to any Connections server through hacking, password mining, or any other means, or 4) obtain or attempt to obtain any materials or information through any means not intentionally made available through Connexus®.

Any use of Connexus for the following purposes is strictly prohibited. By using Connexus®, you agree that you will NOT

- Send, receive, or display pornographic, obscene, sexually explicit material, or any material harmful to minors
- impersonate any person or entity (through the use of their password or other means), including any employee or representative of Connections
- copy or distribute content included in Connexus® (including postings on the Message Boards, WebMail messages, or curriculum materials, including answer keys) without the owner's permission
- solicit or collect information about the Users or members of this site, especially for the purpose of transmitting, or facilitating transmission of, unsolicited or bulk electronic email or communications
- use the school-provided communication services in connection with surveys, contests, pyramid schemes, chain letters, junk e-mail, spamming, or any duplicative or unsolicited messages (commercial or otherwise)

- upload files that contain viruses, Trojan horses, worms, time bombs, cancelbots, corrupted files, or any other similar software or programs that may damage the operation of another's computer or property
- solicit or collect personal information (including name, address, and phone number) from anyone under eighteen (18) years of age without verified parental consent
- display threatening or offensive material, including using swear words, offensive, vulgar, or obscene language
- display racist, prejudiced, or discriminatory messages or pictures
- violate any state or federal law
- reveal another User's or a minor's personal address, phone number, or similar information to others without their consent or verified parental consent.
- violate any copyright, trademark, patent, trade secret, or other intellectual property laws or otherwise use intellectual property of another individual or entity without the owner's permission—this includes providing links to and including other copyrighted or trademarked material from third parties in Connexus® (including posting on the Message Boards or in WebMail messages) without permission as well as using any trademarks, service marks, or other marks in social media or other websites without the owner's permission
- trespass in another's folders, work, or files
- promote commercial activities except as agreed to in writing by Connections
- advertise products or services or engage in political lobbying
- defame, harass, insult, abuse, stalk, threaten, attack, or otherwise violate the legal rights (such as privacy and publicity) of another person or interfere with another person's work, including, but not limited to, sending unwanted WebMail messages or e-mail
- provide material support or resources to (or conceal the nature, location, source, or ownership of material support or resources of) any organization(s) designated by the United States government as a foreign terrorist organization pursuant to Section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Each User will have a user name and password (the “Log-in Information”) for the purpose of accessing Connexus® and the Content. Users must keep all Log-in Information strictly confidential, and all Log-in Information may be used only by the assigned User. Users are responsible for maintaining the security and confidentiality of all Log-in Information and for preventing access to Connexus® and/or the Content by unauthorized persons using a User’s Log-in Information. Users are responsible for any and all activities that occur under their account. Users must notify Connections immediately of any unauthorized use of their account or any other breach of security. Notwithstanding the foregoing, certain employees of Connections will be permitted to “log in as” someone other than themselves, after receiving the approval of their supervisor and undergoing specific training.

### **Proprietary Rights**

The User acknowledges and agrees that certain of the information available in Connexus® is protected by various copyrights, trademarks, service marks, patents, trade secrets, or other intellectual property rights and laws and may only be used as permitted by law and with the permission of the owner. Except as expressly authorized by Connections, Users may not sell, license, rent, modify, distribute, copy, reproduce, transmit, publicly display, publicly perform, publish, adapt, edit, or create derivative works from or otherwise exploit the Content or features in Connexus® in any form or medium. Users are fully responsible for their own use and for ensuring such use does not infringe on the rights of Connections or third parties. In addition to potential legal action, any unauthorized use including copying or reposting of Connections or third-party intellectual property may result in one or more of the following: termination of access to Connexus®, school-based disciplinary action, and/or removal from the school, course offering or program of study.

### **Copyright Infringement**

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We comply with the provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act applicable to Internet service providers (17 U.S.C. 512). Unless otherwise stated in any specific DMCA designation provided by Connections, please provide us with written notice ("Notice") by contacting our Designated Agent at [legal@connectionseducation.com](mailto:legal@connectionseducation.com).

To be effective, the Notice must include the following:

- A physical or electronic signature of the owner, or a person authorized to act on behalf of the owner, ("Complaining Party") of an exclusive right that is allegedly being infringed upon;
- Information reasonably sufficient to permit Connections to contact the Complaining Party, such as an address, telephone number, and if available, an electronic mail address;
- Identification of the allegedly infringing material on Connexus® ("Infringing Material"), and information reasonably sufficient to permit Connections to locate such material on Connexus®;
- Identification of the copyrighted work claimed to have been infringed upon ("Infringed Material"), or if multiple copyrighted works on Connexus® are covered by a single Notice, a list of each copyrighted work claimed to have been infringed (please be specific as to which Infringing Material is infringing on which Infringed Material);
- A statement that the Complaining Party has a good faith belief that use of Infringing Material in the manner complained of is not authorized by the copyright owner, its agent, or the law; and
- A statement that the information in the Notice is accurate, and under penalty of perjury, that the Complaining Party is the owner or is authorized to act on behalf of the owner of an exclusive right that is allegedly infringed.

## Trademarks

Connexus® contains trademarks and service marks of Connections and of third parties. These marks may only be used in accordance with Connections' [Trademark Usage Guidelines](#) within the Website Terms of Use on the public website. For permission to use the Connections name or logo or any Connections marks outside of the Trademark Usage Guidelines, contact [legal@connectionseducation.com](mailto:legal@connectionseducation.com). Any use of any Connections marks that does not comply with the Trademark Usage Guidelines is strictly prohibited.

## Links

Connexus® may contain links to other websites or other resources that are provided for the User's convenience. Unless otherwise noted, these linked sites are not under the control of Connections and Connections is not responsible for the content available on third-party-linked sites. Connections makes no representations, warranties, or other commitments whatsoever about any third-party websites or third-party resources that may be referenced, accessible from, or linked to Connexus®. A link to a website does not mean that Connections endorses the content, the website owner or use of such website. In addition, Connections is not a party to or responsible for any transactions the User may enter into with third parties, even if the User learns of such parties (or uses a link to such parties) from Connexus®. Accordingly, the User acknowledges and agrees that Connections is not responsible for the availability of such external websites or resources, except where specifically contracted for, and is not responsible or liable for any content, services, products, or other materials on or available from those websites or resources.

## Privacy

You agree that your use of Connexus is also subject to the [Privacy Policy](#), which is part of these Terms.

## Export Control

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No software from this site may be downloaded or otherwise exported or re-exported (i) into (or to a national or resident of) any country to which the U.S. has embargoed goods; or (ii) to anyone on the U.S. Treasury Department's list of Specially Designated Nationals or the U.S. Commerce Department's Table of Deny Orders. By downloading or connecting to Connexus®, you represent and warrant that you are not located in, under the control of, or a national or resident of any such country or on any such list

## Warranty and Other Disclaimers

Connections is committed to ensuring the accuracy of all information included in Connexus<sup>®</sup>, subject to the following limitations:

- Connections will use reasonable efforts to keep the information current and to ensure the accuracy or completeness of materials available through Connexus<sup>®</sup>. However, materials available through Connexus<sup>®</sup> are not promised or guaranteed to be correct, current, or complete, and may contain inaccuracies or typographical errors.
- The User acknowledges that Connections is not liable for the conduct of any party using Connexus<sup>®</sup> or for any defamatory, offensive, infringing, or illegal materials contained on Connexus<sup>®</sup> or in any Communication Service, and Connections reserves the right to correct any errors or omissions and remove any materials from Connexus<sup>®</sup> at its sole discretion and without liability of any kind.

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CONNECTIONS EXPRESSLY DISCLAIMS TO THE FULLEST EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW ALL EXPRESS, IMPLIED, STATUTORY, AND OTHER WARRANTIES, GUARANTEES, OR REPRESENTATIONS, INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, THE WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, AND NON-INFRINGEMENT OF PROPRIETARY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS. WITHOUT LIMITATION, CONNECTIONS MAKES NO WARRANTIES OR GUARANTEES THAT CONNEXUS<sup>®</sup> WILL BE UNINTERRUPTED, TIMELY, SECURE, OR ERROR-FREE. THE USER UNDERSTANDS AND AGREES THAT IF THE USER DOWNLOADS OR OTHERWISE OBTAINS MATERIALS, INFORMATION, PRODUCTS, SOFTWARE, PROGRAMS, OR SERVICES, THE USER DOES SO AT THE USER'S OWN DISCRETION AND RISK AND THAT USER WILL BE SOLELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY DAMAGES THAT MAY RESULT, INCLUDING LOSS OF DATA OR DAMAGE TO THE USER'S COMPUTER SYSTEM. SOME JURISDICTIONS DO NOT ALLOW THE EXCLUSION OF WARRANTIES, SO THE ABOVE EXCLUSIONS MAY NOT APPLY TO THE USER.

### **Limitation of Liability**

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL CONNECTIONS BE LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, PUNITIVE, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES THAT RESULT FROM THE USE OF OR INABILITY TO USE CONNEXUS® OR ANY COMMUNICATION SERVICE. THIS LIMITATION APPLIES WHETHER THE ALLEGED LIABILITY IS BASED ON CONTRACT, TORT, NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, OR ANY OTHER BASIS, EVEN IF CONNECTIONS HAS BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE. BECAUSE SOME JURISDICTIONS DO NOT ALLOW THE EXCLUSION OR LIMITATION OF INCIDENTAL OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, CONNECTIONS' LIABILITY IN SUCH JURISDICTIONS SHALL BE LIMITED TO THE EXTENT PERMITTED BY LAW.

### **Release**

THE USER HEREBY RELEASES AND FOREVER DISCHARGES CONNECTIONS, ITS AFFILIATES, EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS, OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS, AGENTS, SUCCESSORS, AND ASSIGNS ("RELEASED PARTIES"), FROM ALL ACTIONS, CAUSES OF ACTION, INJURIES, CLAIMS, DAMAGES, COSTS, OR EXPENSES OF ANY KIND GROWING OUT OF OR RELATED TO THE USER OR USER'S MINOR CHILD(REN)'S USE OF CONNEXUS® OR ANY COMMUNICATION SERVICE. THE USER UNDERSTANDS THAT THIS IS A FULL AND COMPLETE RELEASE TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT ALLOWED BY LAW OF ALL CLAIMS AND DAMAGES TO WHICH YOU OR YOUR MINOR CHILD(REN) MAY HAVE AS A RESULT OF HIS OR HER USE OF CONNEXUS® REGARDLESS OF THE SPECIFIC CAUSE THEREOF.

### **Indemnification**

Upon request by Connections, the User agrees to defend, indemnify, and hold harmless Connections and its affiliates, employees, contractors, officers, directors, third-party content providers and licensors from all liabilities, claims, and expenses, including attorney's fees, which arise from the User's use or misuse of Connexus®, Content, or any Communication Services. Connections reserves the right, at its own expense, to assume the exclusive defense and control of any matter otherwise subject to indemnification by the User, in which event the User will cooperate with Connections in asserting any available defenses.

## **Governing Law, Choice of Law, and Forum**

The use of Connexus® shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Maryland, excluding its conflicts of law rules. The User expressly agrees that the exclusive jurisdiction for any claim or action arising out of or relating to the User's use of Connexus® shall be filed only in the state or federal courts located in the State of Maryland, and the User further agrees and submits to the exercise of personal jurisdiction of such courts for the purpose of litigating any such claim or action.

## **Severability and Integration**

Except for other agreements signed by the User with Connections, these Terms constitute the entire agreement between the User and Connections with respect to use of Connexus®. If any part of these Terms is held invalid or unenforceable, that portion shall be construed in a manner consistent with applicable law to reflect, as nearly as possible, the original intentions of the parties, and the remaining portions shall remain in full force and effect.

## **Termination of Use**

If the User violates these Terms, the User may be barred from future use of Connexus® and/or subject to legal action. Cause for such suspension, termination and/or deletion shall include, but not be limited to, (a) breaches or violations of the Terms, or of other incorporated agreements or guidelines, (b) requests by law enforcement or other government agencies, (c) a request by you (self-initiated account deletions), (d) discontinuance or material modification of Connexus (or any part thereof), (e) unexpected technical or security issues or problems, (f) extended periods of inactivity, and/or (g) engagement by you in fraudulent or illegal activities. Termination of your account may include (x) removal of access to all offerings within Connexus®, (y) deletion of your password and all related information, files and content associated with or inside your account (or any part thereof), and (z) barring of further use of Connexus®. Further, you agree that all terminations for cause shall be made in Connection's sole discretion and that Connections shall not be liable to you or any third party for any termination of your account, or access to Connexus®.

## **Additional Terms Applicable to the Connections Community of Schools, Including All Nexus Schools, Only**

### **WebMail, Message Boards, and Other Communication Services**

Connections offers an internal email system, Connections WebMail, through Connexus, as a service to certain Users in connection with those education programs that provide for webmail service. Webmail allows those Users to interact with other Webmail Users. Connections cannot guarantee the security of any information that such Users disclose in WebMail messages, and the Users do so at their own risk. Sent WebMail messages are accessible only to the author and recipients, as well as other authorized personnel for the purpose of maintaining system integrity and to ensure that Users are acting responsibly and legally as required by these Terms.

WebMail messages are also not guaranteed to be private and may be monitored. Messages relating to or in support of illegal or obscene activities or that otherwise violate these Terms may be reported to the appropriate authorities and may result in the loss of privileges, removal from the User's respective education programs, and/or legal action.

Connections also operates academic Message Boards located within Connexus<sup>®</sup> to facilitate the exchange of ideas, information, and opinions between Users whose respective education program provides access to Message Boards. These Users may only use the Message Boards for structured clubs, activities, and other educational uses as specified by each school department and as described on each Message Board. The Message Boards contain contributions that represent only the opinions of their respective authors and do not express the opinions of Connections. Use of the Message Boards is subject to the rules governing their use as provided when accessing them (see also the Links section below).

In addition to the WebMail system and the Message Boards, Connections may from time to time offer chat areas and/or other message or communication functionality designed to enable Users to communicate with others (each a "Communication Service" and collectively "Communication Services"). The User agrees to use Communication Services only in compliance with these Terms and as described on each Communication Service to post, send, and receive messages and materials that are proper and, when applicable, related to the particular Communication Service.

Any information that you submit to be posted to a Message Board or other Communication Service will be disclosed and available to all Users of that Communication Service and is, therefore, no longer private. We cannot guarantee the security of such information that you disclose or communicate online in public areas, and you do so at your own risk. Connections does not control or endorse the content, messages, or information found in any Communication Service; therefore, Connections specifically disclaims any liability with regard to the Communication Services and any actions resulting from a User's participation in any Communication Services. All participants acknowledge that any reliance upon such content shall be at the sole risk of the person so relying.

Although Connections has no obligation to do so, Connections reserves the right (i) to monitor anything posted to a Message Board or other Communication Services or anything sent via Connections WebMail, and (ii) to remove anything which Connections considers offensive or otherwise in breach of these Terms or for any other reason as Connections deems necessary in its sole and absolute discretion. Connections also reserves the right at all times to disclose any information as Connections deems necessary to satisfy any disciplinary investigation, applicable law, regulation, legal process, or governmental request, or to edit, refuse to post, or to remove any information or materials, in whole or in part, at Connections' sole discretion.

### **Use of School Work, Interviews, Photographs, and Videos**

Users may have the opportunity to provide material for inclusion in Connexus®. This material may include the submission of work samples; participation in clubs; postings on the Message Boards; text or other submissions for newsletters, newspapers, and yearbooks; writing WebMail messages; etc. Users represent that they own and/or control all of the rights to User's own material and that the public use of such material will not violate or infringe on the rights of Connections or any third party.

For Users enrolled in schools that are managed by Connections, only, by providing this information, Users within the Connections community of schools grant to Connections and to their school, a license to edit, use, reproduce, publish, display, perform, adapt, modify, create derivative works of, distribute, have distributed, and promote the material in any form, anywhere, and for any purpose in perpetuity.

Users may also have the opportunity to participate in a LiveLesson® session or view a previously recorded lesson. Connections cannot guarantee the security of any information disclosed by voice or text in a LiveLesson® session. Any information that a User submits or is captured in a LiveLesson® session may be disclosed and available to all Users and is, therefore, no longer private. Parents or legal guardians are responsible for any information disclosed by their minor children. Each recorded LiveLesson® session is either the property of Connections or Connections has been provided permission for its use. Users agree that in exchange for being permitted to participate in a LiveLesson® session, the Users have assigned all rights that the Users have in the Users' and the Users' minor child(ren)'s performance in the LiveLesson® session to Connections. Some LiveLesson® sessions may be recorded, and the User hereby agrees to the recording of LiveLesson® sessions in which the User participates and the inclusion of any information, including personally identifiable information (written or verbal), provided by the User during the LiveLesson® session.

## APPENDIX 4 – PRIVACY POLICY

*This Privacy Policy may be updated periodically. The most current version is always available from the [login page of Connexus](#). Any changes will be effective as soon as they are posted in Connexus.*

***Last updated: ~~October 13, 2015~~ June 24, 2016***

Connections Education LLC and its affiliates ("Connections"), a part of the global learning company, Pearson, respects your privacy and has established this privacy policy ("Privacy Policy") to let you know how we collect, use, manage, share, and protect information that we may gather when you visit our website, the websites of our affiliated schools, or the websites for either of our Education Management Systems, Connexus® or ROADS® (collectively, the "Websites"), or contact us by phone or other means. This Privacy Policy applies to the Websites where this Privacy Policy is posted and to information we gather from you over the phone, via conventional mail or in person.



Connections reserves the right to change this Privacy Policy at any time. If we make any material changes to this policy, we will post any revised Privacy Policy on the Websites. The most current version is always available by clicking on the "Privacy Policy" link located at the bottom of the Websites' home page. Any changes to our Privacy Policy will become effective upon posting of the revised Privacy Policy. **By using any of the Websites, you agree to the terms of the Privacy Policy in effect at the time of use. If you do not agree to the terms and conditions of this Privacy Policy, please do not use any of the Websites.**

### *Information We Collect*

We collect two types of information: (1) non-personally identifiable information that is routinely gathered as users navigate through a Website and (2) personally identifiable information voluntarily supplied by you.

### *Non-U.S. Users*

The Websites are hosted and operated in the United States and are subject to United States law. Any personal information that you provide to us is being provided to us in the United States and will be hosted on United States servers. You consent to the transfer of your personal information to the United States in order to receive services from Connections. If you are accessing a Website from outside the United States, please be advised that United States law may not offer the same privacy protections as the law of your jurisdiction.

### *Non-Personally Identifiable Information*

Each time you visit a Website, information is automatically gathered such as your IP address, domain name, the name of the page from which you entered the Website, which pages you view, and for how long you view them. This information is collected in order to improve the Website, remarketing and for trend analysis. As with most websites, we may use "cookies" to track usage, for marketing purposes and to improve your experience. A cookie is a text file that is placed on your hard disk by a Web page server. The cookies do not collect any personally identifiable information. Most web browsers automatically accept cookies, but you can usually modify your browser setting to decline cookies if you prefer. If, however, you choose to decline cookies, you may not be able to fully experience the interactive features of our Websites or have some of our services on the Websites function properly. Further information about cookies is available using the help function of your Internet browser.

We may use third-party cookies as part of remarketing activities we conduct with Google and/or other third-party vendors, to help provide you with relevant messaging as you use the Internet. As part of these remarketing activities, these third-party cookies may record your visits to our Websites and web sites visited prior. Such cookies can then be used to serve targeted messaging to you on other websites. You may choose to be exempt from the use of Google remarketing cookies at the [Google advertising privacy page](#). Alternatively, you may opt-out of remarketing on the Google network and similar networks at the [Network Advertising Initiative opt out page](#). Opting out will not prevent advertisements from being served to you on the Internet; it will only affect advertisements that utilize remarketing cookies to serve messaging on the specified networks. We are not responsible for the activities of other parties that may not comply with your opt-out requests.

Because non-personally identifiable information does not identify you, we reserve the right to use it for any purpose and to share it with third parties for any purpose. Please note that to the extent any non-personally identifiable information is combined with personally identifiable information, the combined information will be treated as personally identifiable information for as long as it is so combined.

### *Personally Identifiable Information*

We may collect personally identifiable information you provide voluntarily when requesting information, catalogs, enrollment, or other materials or to satisfy other requests. This information may include your first and last name, postal address, email address, telephone number and the names, date(s) of birth and grade level(s) of your child(ren). We may also collect credit card information from you.

Connections uses personally identifiable information voluntarily supplied by you to fulfill requests for information, deliver services to you or for your school, or to carry out the transactions you or your school have requested. For example, if you register for a Connections Academy school using a Website, information will be collected about you and your child(ren) in order to process your registration. This information will be included in Connexus®. Enrollment information that is collected in this manner may be provided to school districts or other third parties as required by state law, federal law, and/or school operating procedures.

Similarly, if you participate in a virtual learning program through your school and the school has contracted with Connections to utilize ROADS® in connection with the school's virtual learning program, personally identifiable information about you will be input into ROADS® by you and/or your school to facilitate the provision of virtual learning services to you.

Connections may also use personally identifiable information to communicate special messaging, new services, or upcoming events, to provide educational services to students and to otherwise support students, parents, legal guardians, and staff and/or your school with regard to matters such as academic progress, testing, attendance, customer service, or to share information with you related to legislative or regulatory initiatives that could potentially benefit or threaten virtual education in your state, to invite you to share your experience with virtual education, or in the event of an emergency. The information will be treated confidentially within Connections, in the same way that we protect other such confidential information.

We may share personally identifiable information within our affiliated companies and certain service providers. They will use this information to process transactions you have requested, provide customer service and inform you of products or services we offer that you may find useful. Our service providers may include consultants, vendors and companies that perform marketing services on our behalf. We require our service providers to protect your personally identifiable information and to use or disclose it only for the work they are performing for us, or as permitted by law.

Connexus® and ROADS® contain personally identifiable information that is maintained and accessible by third parties (such as service providers, content partners or vendors). These third parties are provided access to the minimum amount of information required to allow them to perform the tasks for which they have been engaged. Such third parties have agreed to maintain the confidentiality of such information and to use or disclose it only for the work they are performing for us, or as permitted by law. Additionally, Connexus® and ROADS® contain "student educational records" that will be protected by Connections in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and applicable state laws, and we will only retain and disclose educational records or provide access to them in compliance with applicable law.

If you do not want to receive information unrelated to your enrollment in the school via email from Connections, you can email us at [unsubscribe@connectionseducation.com](mailto:unsubscribe@connectionseducation.com) to be excluded from receiving emails from Connections. If you do not want to receive any further information from Connections you can also call us at 800-382-6010 ext. 5777 and ask to be removed from all of Connections' contact lists.

In the event that all or substantially all of Connections' assets are sold or transferred to another party, your personally identifiable information may be transferred to the acquiring entity. However, Connections will take steps to assure that the personally identifiable information is conveyed lawfully and in a manner consistent with the privacy policy under which it was collected.

Finally, we may disclose your personally identifiable information to third parties if we believe we are required to do so in order to comply with law (including court orders and subpoenas); to comply with lawful requests from law enforcement agencies or other governmental organizations; to enforce our Terms of Use; to protect the rights, privacy, safety, or property of Connections, our affiliated schools, our employees, or other users of the Websites; and/or to permit us to pursue available remedies or limit the damages that we may sustain. We otherwise exercise commercially reasonable care to not otherwise share or disclose the names of users or any other personally-identifying information with third-parties, except with your prior approval.

### *Message Boards/Discussion Threads*

We may offer message boards, or discussion threads through Connexus® ~~and ROADS@~~[or other education management platform](#). ~~We may also offer LiveLesson sessions; the Connections virtual classroom environment.~~ Please ~~be aware~~ remember that anyone may read your postings on a message board or discussion thread, ~~or view LiveLesson session content.~~ Furthermore, any information that you submit ~~to be posted~~ to a message board, or discussion thread, ~~or comments (verbal or in chat pod) included in a LiveLesson session, including your Connexus or ROADS account information,~~ will then be disclosed and available to all users of that message board, ~~or discussion thread or LiveLesson session,~~ and is therefore no longer private ~~or protected~~. We ~~cannot do not~~ guarantee the security of such information that you disclose or communicate online in public areas such as message boards ~~and~~ discussion threads ~~and in LiveLesson sessions,~~ and you do so. Therefore, all postings or discussions threads made by you are with which you participate are at your own risk.

### *Children Under 13*

Connections is concerned about the safety and privacy of children online. We take reasonable efforts to comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 (COPPA).

The Websites are not intended to solicit information of any kind from children under the age of 13, and we do not and will not knowingly contact or collect personally identifiable information from children under 13. The only personal information we receive about children under the age of 13 is information provided by the parent or legal guardian or information provided by the child as part of that child's participation in a course or courses as part of that child's K - 12 education program. By enrolling a child in such course or courses, a parent is consenting to the collection of that information. The parent or legal guardian has the option to agree to the collection and use of the student's information without consenting to the disclosure of the information to third parties.

It is possible that by fraud or deception by others we may receive information pertaining to children under the age of 13. If we are notified of the receipt of information under such circumstances, once verified, we will promptly obtain parental or guardian consent, and in the absence of such consent will delete the information. If you want to notify us that we have inadvertently received information for a child under the age of 13, please do so by emailing us at [legal@connectionseducation.com](mailto:legal@connectionseducation.com).

You can request to review, edit, or prohibit personally identifiable information of a child under the age of 13 from being used by Connections, its affiliates, schools, and vendors acting on behalf of Connections by making a request in writing to [legal@connectionseducation.com](mailto:legal@connectionseducation.com). Please note that if you make a request to prohibit personally identifiable information being used by Connections, its affiliates, schools, and vendors acting on behalf of Connections, your child may no longer continue to be enrolled in Connections and this may terminate his or her participation in the Connections program.

For information on our use of information covered by COPPA please contact us at the following:

Connections Education LLC

1001 Fleet Street, 5th Floor

Baltimore, MD 21202

Phone: 1-800-382-6010

Email: [legal@connectionseducation.com](mailto:legal@connectionseducation.com)

### *Security*

Connections takes reasonable steps to safeguard the personally identifiable information you provide. As effective as our safeguards are, no security system is completely impenetrable, so we cannot guarantee the absolute security of our database and systems, nor can we guarantee that personally identifiable information you supply will not be intercepted while being transmitted to us over the Internet.

### *Links*

The Websites contain links to other websites or other resources that are provided for your convenience. Such links, unless explicitly stated, are not endorsed by Connections. The information practices of those websites are not covered by this Privacy Policy or any other policies or terms applicable to the Websites. We recommend that you review any terms of use and privacy policies of any third party website linked to the Websites before providing any information to those websites or using their products and services.

### *California Privacy Policy*

California's "Shine the Light"

California residents ~~with~~ have the right to receive disclosures about any sharing of their personally identifiable information with third parties for use by the third party as part of their own marketing, and your choices with respect to such disclosures. Because we do not share your personal information with third parties for their own marketing use except as permitted by the Shine the Light law, we are exempt from having to meet this requirement; provided that in the event we elect to share personal information for such purposes in the future, we will secure your consent as required by the Shine the Light law. If you still wish to learn more about our compliance with this requirement, you may contact [legal@connectionseducation.com](mailto:legal@connectionseducation.com) or Connections Education LLC 1001 Fleet Street, 5th Floor, Baltimore, MD 21202 Attn: Legal Department with "Request for California Privacy" in the subject line.

### *California Do Not Track Disclosures*

1. Online Tracking and Advertising. We and certain service providers operating on our behalf collect information about your activity on our websites and applications using tracking technologies such as cookies, Flash cookies and Web beacons. Definitions for these tracking technologies, as well as information regarding how to disable them, are available below. This tracking data is used for many purposes including, for example, to:

- Provide useful features to simplify your experience when you return to our sites and applications
- Deliver relevant content based on your preferences, usage patterns and location
- Monitor and evaluate the use and operation of our sites and applications, including technical information about the device or browser you use to access our sites such as your device's IP address, cookie string data and (in the case of mobile devices) your device type and mobile device's unique identifier such as the Apple IDFA or Android Advertising ID
- Analyze traffic on our websites, including your browsing activity on our sites, which pages you visited and when
- Track the online ads we have served (or attempted to serve) to you, including how many times an ad has been served to you, what page the ad appeared on, and whether you clicked on or otherwise interacted with the ad

Tracking data collected by us and our service providers generally does not identify you personally and is not associated with your registration account. Should we associate this tracking data with your registration account, we will treat it as personal information.

## 2. Online Tracking Technologies

Examples of online tracking technologies include:

- Cookies. Cookies are pieces of information that a website places on the hard drive of your computer when you visit the website. Cookies may involve the transmission of information from us to you and from you directly to us, to another party on our behalf, or to another party in accordance with its privacy policy. We may use cookies to bring together information we collect about you. You can choose to have your computer warn you each time a cookie is being sent, or you can choose to turn off all cookies. You do this through your browser settings. Each browser is a little different, so look at your browser Help menu to learn the correct way to modify your cookies. If you turn cookies off, you won't have access to many features that make your guest experience more efficient and some of our services may not function properly.
- Flash cookies. We may use local shared objects, sometimes known as Flash cookies, to store your preferences or display content based upon what you view on our site to personalize your visit. Our third-party service providers also may use Flash cookies to collect and store information. Flash cookies are different from browser cookies because of the amount of, type of, and how data is stored. Cookie management tools provided by your browser will not remove Flash cookies. Learn how to manage privacy and storage settings for Flash cookies. If you disable Flash cookies, you won't have access to many features that make your guest experience more efficient and some of our services may not function properly.
- Web beacons. Web beacons are small pieces of data that are embedded in images on the pages of sites. Web beacons may involve the transmission of information directly to us, to another party on our behalf, or to another party in accordance with its privacy policy. We may use web beacons to bring together information we collect about your browsing behavior.

### **3. Do Not Track**

#### **You can opt-out of our tracking your online activity for targeted advertising purposes (Do**

**Not Track):** We respond to “do not track” or “DNT” signals sent from your browser. If our websites receive a DNT signal during a visit, we will not link data we collect to your browser identifier so that new data collected about you will not be used by us for targeted advertising purposes, but older data collected about you may still be used. You may choose not to receive targeted advertising from us and our service providers. To opt-out of tracking by us you should select “AdRoll” and follow the directions on this site. If you opt-out we may still collect some data about your online activity for operational purposes.



Currently, there are various browsers (such as Internet Explorer, Firefox and Safari) that offer a DNT option that allows you to set the DNT signal on your browser so that third-party sites know you do not want to be tracked. For more information on DNT or information on how to set the DNT setting in your browser, go to the Do Not Track website: <http://donottrack.us/>.

### *Contact Information*

If you have any questions regarding this Privacy Policy, please contact us by email at [legal@connectionseducation.com](mailto:legal@connectionseducation.com). Please note that email communications will not necessarily be secure. Accordingly, you should not include sensitive information in your email correspondence with us.

## **APPENDIX 5 – INFORMATION ABOUT MALWARE AND NUISANCE SOFTWARE**

There has been a dramatic increase in the existence of malicious and nuisance software that is often inadvertently installed on computer equipment as a result of using the Internet. This software exists as adware, spyware, and freeware—generally classified as “malware”—and can greatly impact the usability of the computer once infected. Malware is prevalent all over the Internet today, but it is still mainly generated from applications or sites that provide software or services that can be categorized as generally one of four types:

- **Peer-to-peer sites:** These sites offer free software that allows a user to connect to other users with the same software and share files.
- **Gaming and freeware sites:** These sites offer free games and tools that easily attract kids and encourage them to install the software.
- **Inappropriate sites:** Most of the malicious applications that get installed on the computer without the knowledge of the end user generally come from sites that are inappropriate in nature, such as pornographic sites.

- **Legitimate applications that have bundled free software:** Most software comes with additional free software that asks if you want to install it at the same time as the desired application. Many people just click “yes” instead of choosing not to install the unneeded bundled software, which often also includes access to pop-up ads.

Installation of malware and other nuisance software causes considerable problems in system speed and can even make a computer completely unusable. Removal takes considerably more time than fixing viruses and worms, which generally can be stopped by the security software already included on school equipment.

It is essential that the Terms and Conditions sections of all software, and particularly any free software, be reviewed closely. Many of them allow for the installation of other software or “tools” that can be a significant source of problems later on. Included below are common sets of terms that are clear warning signs that the User may be exposed to negative consequences. These are used by many of well-known software companies and service providers.

- **Example 1:** “[Company] values your anonymity and privacy. [Software name] does not contain or bundle malicious spyware. By clicking below, you will begin the installation of [Software name/description] software. By clicking below, you agree to the third-party end-user license agreement(s) set out below.”

**Comment:** This is designed to make the user feel comfortable but may expose the User to a variety of other unexpected consequences as a result of all of the other, often long and confusing license agreements.

- **Example 2:** “By installing the [Service], you understand and agree that the following changes may be made to your Internet Explorer browser and that the following functions may be performed by the [Service]: install a Search Toolbar in your browser that may, 1) block certain pop-up ads and pages; 2) display links to related websites and key words based on the information you view and the websites you visit; 3) store non-personally identifiable statistics of the websites you have visited; 4) redirect certain URLs including your browser default address bar search, DNS error page and Search Button page to or through the Service; and 5) automatically update the Service and install added features or functionality conveniently without your input or interaction unless you have chosen to be notified of such update in advance.”

**Comment:** This also indicates that they can install additional software without your permission.

- **Example 3:** “The web changes constantly and no technique can ever index all pages accessible on the web. As a result, [Company name] cannot guarantee the completeness or accuracy of the websites or URLs to which [Company name] Service link or refer.”

**Comment:** By not screening their website, any content, including content from pornographic sites, can be input as links or other forms of referrals.

Fixing problems caused by this type of software is very time-consuming. The time spent dealing with repeat offenders takes time away from responsible users and results in longer delays in helping them.

Please remember that it is essential that the activities of students be supervised. Students must be provided with clear guidelines for proper use of the Internet, including the fact that they should never accept any software download from the Internet without specific authorization from the Connections Academy Support Services team. The Support Services team can also provide assistance with security settings on your computer and can provide you with separate filtering software on request. Note that the hard disk drives of all school computers are completely erased prior to shipment to new families, and as a result, school computers do not come with any preinstalled malware or nuisance software. If any is found on a computer, it is a result of use by a family.

## APPENDIX 6 – PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT (PPRA) NOTIFICATION

***Last Reviewed and Updated: May 19, 2013.***

This Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) Notification (“PPRA Notice”) may be updated periodically. The most current version is always available from the [login page of Connexus®](#). Any changes will be effective as soon as they are posted in Connexus.

### *Description of Intent*

The School follows a philosophy of continuous improvement and honest, objective data analysis. This philosophy requires well-planned and sometimes independent research efforts to determine the effectiveness of the School's programs and strategies. From time to time, the School will collect and analyze student performance data and various measures of effectiveness. In addition, families may be asked to participate in surveys or focus groups. Such research shall always be undertaken ensuring student privacy is protected and in compliance with the PPRA. For example, the names of the student, Learning Coach, and family members will not be revealed, and results will only be reported in the aggregate or by subgroupings of sufficient size so that anonymity of the participants is safeguarded.

### *Rights Afforded by the PPRA*

The PPRA affords parents/legal guardians of minors certain rights regarding the School's conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and conduct of certain physical exams. These rights include the following:

- Requirement of parental consent prior to administering any U.S. Department of Education funded survey, analysis or evaluation that reveals information falling within the below categories ("Protected Information Survey"):
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes
  4. Illegal, antisocial, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or clergy
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

- The right to receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of the following:
  1. Any other Protected Information Survey, regardless of funding
  2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law
  3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others
- The right to inspect, upon request and before administration or use, of the following:
  1. Protected Information Surveys of students;
  2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes
  3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents or legal guardians to the student if the student is eighteen (18) years old or is an emancipated minor under state law or by court order.

### *Notification Procedures*

The School will work to develop and adopt policies regarding these rights in consultation with parents/legal guardians. The School will also work to make arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of Protected Information Surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes.

The School will directly notify parents of these policies annually in this PPRA Notice or after any substantive changes. The School will also directly notify by U.S. mail, e-mail, or other reasonably available method parents/legal guardians of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys described in this PPRA Notice and will provide an opportunity for the parent(s) or legal guardians to opt students out of participation of the specific activity or survey.

The School will make this notification to parents near the beginning of the school year if it has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at that time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents/legal guardians will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys covered by the PPRA and will be provided an opportunity to opt their students out of such activities and surveys. Parents or legal guardians will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. The following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales or other distribution
- Administration of any Protected Information Survey funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Education
- Any nonemergency, invasive physical examination, or screening as described above in the Rights Afforded by the PPRA.

### *Reporting a Violation*

Parents or legal guardians or students eighteen (18) years or older or emancipated minors who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint to the following:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5901  
Phone: 202-260-3887

## **APPENDIX 7 - CENTRALIZED SUPPORT SERVICES**

In addition to the staff located at the school, students and Learning Coaches have access to the centralized Connections Academy support center. Connections Help, within Connexus, also provides families with support and guidance outside of the Support Services business hours for live assistance.

### *Enrollment Services*

Call 800-382-6010 or send a WebMail message to your state's "Enrollment team" (Located under Enrollment in the WebMail address book) for questions related to the enrollment process, documents, or forms.

### *Academic Placement Services*

Call 800-382-6010 or send a WebMail message to the appropriate school specific “Academic Placement Advisor” option (located under “Placement” in the WebMail address book) for problems or questions related to student course placement during the enrollment process. Once the student is enrolled and progressing through his or her courses, placement questions should be addressed to school staff.

### *Technical Support*

Call 800-382-6010 and choose Option 5, or send a WebMail message to “Technical Support” for problems related to using Connexus and for hardware and software issues on Connections Academy-provided computer equipment.

### *General Information*

Call 800-382-6010 and choose Option 3, or send a WebMail message to “General Information” (located under Parent and Student Services in the WebMail address book). General Information can be used to inquire about general Connections Academy questions, shipping, and nontechnical issues that are not covered by Enrollment, Placement, or Technical Support.

### *Parent and Student Services*

The WebMail message addresses located under Parent and Student Services in the address book help make the connection between the home and school. They include services for Learning Coaches, as well as students, from addressing the needs of selected groups of students to changing student information.

All other types of questions should be directed to the school staff.



From: Mathew Moldawer  
To: Reach Cyber Charter School Board  
Re: School-Specific Handbook Supplement for 2017-18  
Date: February 15, 2017

Attached for board approval is a redlined version of your School-Specific Handbook Supplement for SY 2017-18. This document has been provided to and reviewed by your Board’s handbook designee, and carefully reviewed by your school’s leadership team and key Connections Academy staff. Once board-approved, the Supplement will be posted in the Virtual Library in early March, 2017 for the opening of enrollment for the 2017-18 school year. Just as a reminder, the Supplement attached is in draft format and will be double-checked for typos and formatting prior to being posted in the Virtual Library.

For your convenience, a summary of the changes to your School-Specific Handbook Supplement is provided below.

**General Information**

*The school year 2016-2017/16-17 was updated to 2017-2018/17-18.*

**3.3 School Information**

*The school’s address and phone number were added to the school information table.*

**3.4.1 2017-2018 School-Year Calendar**

*Under “Pacing Options for Students,” language was inserted to align with the school calendar section.*

**4.4 Truancy**

*The term “Truancy Elimination Plan” was changed to “School Attendance Improvement Plan”.*

Please let us know if we can aid in the review process in any way or if you require further information on a specific policy or section of the revised handbook.



# Reach Cyber Charter School School Handbook Supplement 20176-20187

This Supplement provides school-specific information in addition to the general policies documented in the School Handbook: General Portion. Because this Supplement does not constitute the full set of policies related to Reach Cyber Charter School, please be sure to read the School Handbook: General Portion along with this Supplement. Both of these documents may be updated during the year as needed. If there are any discrepancies between this Supplement and the General Handbook, the policies in this Supplement override policies in the General Portion and are the binding policies that should be followed.

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## 3 SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND ROLES

### 3.3 School Information

School Information	School Contact
Main School Address	<u><a href="#">TBD-750 East Park Drive, Suite 204 Harrisburg, PA 17111</a></u>
Main School Phone Number	<u><a href="#">TBD-717-704-8437</a></u>
School Hours	8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., M-F
Technical and General Support	800-382-6010
Lead School Administrator	Jane Swan
WebMail	All staff and support services are located in the Education Management System's (Connexus) WebMail address book.
Board of Trustees	Refer to the school website for the most current contact information.

### **3.4.1 The 2017~~6~~–2018~~7~~ School Year Calendar**

Reach 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. 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. Reach 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 first calendar that follows is the anticipated traditional and accelerated pacing student calendar for the 2016-2017 school year. The second calendar is the anticipated year-round pacing student calendar.

#### **School Calendar – Year 1**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
<i>First Day of School (All Students)</i>	September 6, 2016
<b>Thanksgiving Break</b> (No School in Session)	November 24 – 25, 2016
<b>Winter Break</b> (No School in Session)	December 23, 2016 – January 2, 2017
<b>Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday</b> (No School in Session)	January 16, 2017
<i>First Semester End Date</i>	January 23, 2017
<i>Second Semester Start Date</i>	January 24, 2017
<b>Spring Break</b> (No School in Session)	March 30 – 31, 2017
<b>Memorial Day</b> (No School in Session)	May 29, 2017
<i>Second Semester End Date</i>	June 2, 2017
<i>Last Day of School (Standard Pathway Students)</i>	June 2, 2017
<i>First Day of Summer Session (Accelerated Pathway Students)</i>	June 2, 2017
<b>Independence Day</b> (No School in Session)	July 4, 2017
<i>Last Day of Summer Session (Accelerated Pathway Students)</i>	July 31, 2017

## School Calendar – Year 2

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

### **Pacing Options for Students**

Reach students have the option of enrolling in a Traditional or Accelerated Pacing Option and beginning in July 2017 the options will be extended to include a Year Round Pace. These options are described in the chart below and in the Required Instructional Hours section. Note the Accelerated Pace is available for high school students only.



Pace Option	Description	Total Number of Credits per School Year
Traditional <u>(Standard)</u> Pace	Student participates in Fall and Spring semesters carrying full course load.	6.0 credits
Year Round <u>(Extended)</u> Pace  (Option begins July 2017)	Student participates in Fall and Spring semesters taking fewer courses AND in Summer session carrying the remaining credits to meet full year requirements.	6.0 credits
Accelerated Pace (for high school students only)	Student participates in Fall and Spring semesters taking a full course load AND in a Summer session carrying additional courses to exceed full year requirements.	7- 8 credits

### 3.4.2 Required Instructional Hours

Based on a 180-day school year:

- Grades K – 5 = 900 hours (5 hours per day)
- Grades 6 – 12 = 990 hours (5.5 hours per day)

Note that these are the minimum hours required by the state and that students are responsible for mastering all material, which may require additional time.

Elementary = K-5; Middle = 6-8; High = 9-12

Since Reach 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. This option will be offered starting in July 2017.

**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. This option is available for high school students only.

Reach 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 Lead School Administrator.

### **3.5 Enrollment, Withdrawal, and Transfers**

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Reach Cyber Charter School does not inquire into, nor does it discriminate, based upon a student's immigration status. All enrollment decisions are made in accordance with applicable Pennsylvania and federal law.

#### **Enrollment of Students Suspended or Expelled from another School**

Students who are currently under suspension from another school are permitted to enroll at Reach. However, the student must submit their disciplinary record in order to be *eligible* to attend field trips, school events, etc. Based on that disciplinary record, the Lead School Administrator will determine if and when attendance at these events is permitted.

Students who have been expelled from another school may only enroll in Reach if the Lead School Administrator and Superintendent of the District of Residence agree to the enrollment. Failure to disclose a prior expulsion may result in an immediate removal from Reach.

#### **3.5.2 Kindergarten and First Grade Admissions Policy**

## **Entry Age for Kindergarten Students and Beginners**

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

Reach 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."

### **3.5.3 Enrollment after the Start of the School Year**

Students may enroll at Reach at any time of the year. The enrollment team will guide families through the enrollment process to include verifying records, recommending placement, and answering questions about the program requirements. Families enrolling mid-year or mid-semester are subject to all the same enrollment requirements as families that enroll prior to the start of the school year or semester. To contact the enrollment team call 1-800-382-6010.

### **Additional Information for High School**

High school students entering mid-year or mid-semester must submit report cards, progress reports and/or teacher notes from their previous school as part of the enrollment process. Reach teachers review the student's work and progress up to that point in the semester, and enter an equivalent grade in to the Reach grade book that represents the student's content mastery. That grade will be averaged with the Reach grades earned in that same semester.

### **3.5.4 Dual Enrollment in another K-12 Program**

Because the school is a full-time program, students may not be concurrently enrolled in another public school on a full- or part-time basis. However, as provided by law, students may participate in extracurricular activities with their District of Residence.

In certain special circumstances, it may be possible for a student to participate in an activity at another local school within the parameters described below. Seeking such permission should be initiated *after* the start of the Reach school year.

To make these arrangements, Caretakers must obtain the *Request for Local School Activities* form from the Virtual Library. The form outlines the activity, lists contact information, and indicates that the cooperating Lead School Administrator agrees to: 1) not claim or collect any state, local, or federal funding for the student, and 2) assume all liability for that student while on the school grounds. Once the form is completed and signed, the Caretaker should present it to the Lead School Administrator, who will ensure that the student is in good standing and call the local school and make a final approval decision.

Violations of this policy may be grounds for disciplinary action.

### **3.6.3 Mandatory Testing**

Students attending Reach will be administered the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and Keystone Exams, as required by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

PSSA is a standards-based criterion-referenced assessment used to measure a student's attainment of the academic standards while also determining the degree to which school programs enable students to attain proficiency of the standards. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 3 through 8 is assessed in English Language Arts and Math. Every Pennsylvania student in grades 4 and 8 is also assessed in Science.

The Keystone Exams are end-of-course assessments designed to assess proficiency in the subject areas of Algebra I, Literature, and Biology. The exams include items written to the Assessment Anchors/Eligible Content aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts and to the enhanced Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Science.

All public school students, by their 11th grade year, must complete and score Proficient or Advanced on Keystone Assessments in Algebra 1, Biology 1, and English Literature or complete a Project Based Assessment in all 3 subjects. This is a Pennsylvania graduation requirement for the class of 2017 and beyond.

PSSA and Keystone Testing are administered at locations across the state during the testing windows. These site locations are determined by the school's population. Families will be required to take their students to these locations to complete all mandatory testing.

If you fail to participate in any of the state mandated tests, you will be considered truant for those testing days and may be subject to fines by your District of Residence. *Note: More specific information about the administration of the tests will be sent to families via WebMail after the start of the school year, including specific locations and times.*

**PSSA Exam Dates.** The PSSA exams will be given according to the calendar determined by the Department of Education; generally in April & May.

**Keystone Exam Dates.** All students who have completed courses for which a Keystone Exam is assigned must take the corresponding Keystone Exam.

Winter dates are offered in 2 waves, the first is generally offered in December and the second in January. Spring testing is generally offered in May and the Summer testing is generally offered in July and August.

## 4 ATTENDANCE

### 4.2 Marking and Verifying Attendance

Learning Coaches must document student attendance in Connexus, the Education Management System, and the school verifies that the attendance records are accurate. Parents should enter attendance daily whenever possible, but **MUST** enter it at least weekly.

#### Connexus Attendance Codes

The following attendance codes are available in Connexus:

Code	Definition of code	Who enters the code?
0 – 9	Hours of Schooling	Learning Coach <i>(and the school, as necessary)</i>
V	Vacation	Learning Coach
E	Excused Absence	Teacher or Administrator
U	Unexcused Absence	Teacher or Administrator

#### Hours of Schooling/Attendance

Students must meet all regulatory requirements for attending public schools in the state. These regulatory 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 following hours of schooling each week:

Grade(s)	Recommended Hours per Week	Required Hours per Year
K – 5	25 hours, but will vary by pacing option	900
6 – 12	30 hours, but will vary by pacing option	990

Hours of schooling per day and/or week are 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 WebMail and phone call messages from teachers may be counted against documented attendance hours.

Although there is more flexibility in the Reach 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 are available to students. Specific school calendars and the required days and hours of instruction are posted in the School Schedule section of this Supplement.

## Attendance Responsibilities by Role

### Learning Coach Responsibilities

- Record Hours of Schooling** - For each instructional day, Learning Coaches 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, per the Marking and Verifying Attendance section of the School Handbook: General Portion.

- **Alert the School of Excused Absences** – Learning Coaches cannot enter “E” attendance codes in Connexus. 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, per the guidelines listed in the School Handbook: General Portion. 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 in this Supplement), students are required to meet the weekly required instructional hours up to and including the last day of the school year.
- **Vacations or Days Off:** Students are 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.

Note that regularly-scheduled school holidays, vacations, etc. must still be marked with a “V” if the student did not complete any educational activities on that day; they are not automatically recorded as vacation days in Connexus.

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 monitor and review attendance records on a weekly basis. They remind Learning Coaches to enter the hours of schooling for all days of the week. If a teacher has concerns about the validity of a student’s attendance records, he or she may place the student in an “Alarm” status, and contact the school’s designated Attendance Coordinator for further assistance.
- **Monitor Attendance Issues** – The school’s Attendance Coordinator, along with the student’s Homeroom Teacher/Advisory Teacher monitors student attendance. They contact families with low attendance rates, and work to help them stay in compliance. Attendance Coordinators 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 at certain points. Any requests for adjustments to the previously verified records must be submitted to the school in writing for review, approval and adjustment.
- **Official Attendance Record** – The Connexus attendance system is 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 that a student has not completed enough work or that certain other program requirements have not been fulfilled, the Attendance Coordinator or Homeroom Teacher/Advisory Teacher may invalidate the Learning Coach record resulting in sanctions up to and including withdrawal. If a student regularly does not complete enough work to remain on track, despite repeated assistance and intervention on the part of the school, then the student may be subject to sanctions up to and including contacting the student’s District of Residence to formalize truancy proceedings.

### 4.3 Attendance Status and Escalation Systems

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Enrolled students are in one of four attendance statuses at all times:

1. On-Track
2. Approaching Alarm
3. Alarm
4. Exempt (rare)



Attendance status is based on several criteria, as outlined in the School Handbook: General Portion, 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 assignment completion rates, 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 Approaching Alarm or Alarm status. It is important to recognize that just marking proper attendance will not keep a student's attendance status On-Track.

When a student is in the Approaching Alarm status, he or she is in danger of being withdrawn. The school will work with the family to help get the student's attendance back on track. If these efforts fail, the student will be escalated to the Alarm status which could quickly lead to the student's official disenrollment.

Very occasionally, 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.

## 4.4 Truancy

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Reach is required to record student attendance in the same way as traditional public schools. If a student is not adequately engaging in the online program, or has accumulated more than three (3) unlawful absences, the school is required to work with the family to create a ~~Truancy Elimination Plan (TEP)~~School Attendance Improvement Plan. If the student continues not to engage in the program, Reach will contact the ~~student's District of Residence~~Pennsylvania Department of Education through the Pennsylvania Information Management Systems (PIMS) who may in turn contact the District Magistrate to pursue a truancy hearing and will drop the student from the active rolls.

In order to maximize student learning, regular attendance is imperative. The Reach program offers 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. Due to this flexibility, Reach has zero tolerance for truancy. Caretakers 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. The information below is intended to help Caretakers understand how to avoid having their student be considered truant, and to understand the consequences of truancy.

In order to avoid truancy, the Caretaker 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, as outlined in the *Required Instructional Hours* section (Section 3.4.2) of this Supplement, and the Caretaker or Learning Coach records these attendance hours in Connexus on a daily basis.
- The student is available for regularly scheduled telephone calls with teachers.
- The student attends any *assigned* mandatory LiveLesson sessions.
- The student is able to demonstrate that he/she is doing his/her own schoolwork.
- The student attends mandatory state testing.
- The Caretaker 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).

If the students' teachers become aware that the student is not fully participating in school as outlined above, the student will be marked absent at the teacher's discretion. The Lead School Administrator or teacher may override the number of attendance hours previously entered by a Learning Coach, changing the attendance hours to a 0, if the student's teacher(s) believe the student has not participated as required. These absences will be considered "unexcused." Absences are considered "excused" only for documented student illness or the death of an immediate family member. The final decision about whether an absence is considered excused or unexcused will be made by the Lead School Administrator.

### **Definition of "Missing a Day of School"**

Missing a “day” of school is defined as “missing a day’s worth of hours in a week.” Missing a day’s worth of hours in a week may be considered a day of unexcused absence if the student or Caretaker does not provide acceptable documentation to the school for those missed hours to be considered excused.

## 5 GRADING AND STUDENT EVALUATION

### Grading Scale (Elementary and Middle School)

Reach uses the following grading scale for grades K-8 (See *Section 6, High School Programs and Policies*, for the grading scale for grades 9-12):

Grade	Minimum %	Maximum %	Passing?	Grade Points
A	90	100	Yes	4
B	80	89	Yes	3
C	70	79	Yes	2
D	60	69	Yes	1
F	0	59	No	0

## 6 HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM AND POLICIES

### Promotion

The following credits are required to be promoted from one grade to the next:

Classification	Grade	Minimum # of Credits
Sophomore	10	5
Junior	11	10
Senior	12	16

At the time of a student's enrollment, school counselors will establish estimated grade levels based on preliminary information about previously earned credits. Student grade levels will be updated twice each year – once in the fall and again at the end of the school year. The automatic adjustments are based on the student's earned and verified credits recorded in Connexus.

In certain situations, the counselor, in consultation with the student, Learning Coach, and/or school administrator, may adjust the student's grade to most appropriately match the student's current academic needs.

### Graduation and Diploma Requirements

To be eligible to graduate and receive a diploma from Reach, 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.

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

## **Early Graduation**

At the close of the second semester, the Lead School Administrator, school counselor, and other staff will review each senior's records to ensure that these students have completed all graduation requirements. The Lead School Administrator will then initiate the "withdrawal for graduation" process in Connexus for those students who have completed all requirements.

Students who have completed all graduation requirements at any time prior to the end of the second semester of their senior year may request early graduation by contacting the Lead School Administrator. The Lead School Administrator and other appropriate school staff will then review the student's records to ensure that all graduation requirements have been met. After the Lead School Administrator grants approval for early graduation, he/she will initiate the "withdrawal for graduation" process. This includes marking the student's transcript to indicate graduate status. Once the student has graduated, the student will no longer be enrolled in Reach and will not have access to Connexus.

Unofficial transcripts will be available to students via Connexus *as long as the student is enrolled in Reach*, and official transcripts will be available at any time by contacting the school. Early graduates will receive their diplomas *at the end of the second semester*, when the rest of the graduating class receives their diplomas. Early graduates are welcome to join in any and all graduation activities offered by Reach, but must inform the school of their desire to participate in graduation activities at the same time they request early graduation.

## **Area and Subject Requirements**

Students must earn the following credits in the following areas and subjects.

<b>Subject</b>	<b># of Credits</b>
English	4.0
Mathematics	3.0
Science	3.0
Social Studies	3.0
Arts or Humanities or Both	2.0
Health and Physical Education	1.0
Additional courses from among those approved for credit toward graduation by the school including approved vocational education courses	5.0

Reach uses a standard whereby one credit equals approximately 180 hours of instruction (sometimes referred to as Carnegie Units).

### **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility**

In order to be eligible for National College Athletic Association (NCAA) scholarships, students must meet certain academic and other requirements, including but not limited to taking NCAA-approved high school courses. Many of Connections Academy's core and elective courses are NCAA-approved; however, students interested in NCAA scholarships should contact their school counselor to determine an appropriate course schedule that will help them meet NCAA requirements. Students should also visit the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) for more information.

### **Grades and Grade Point Averages (GPA)**

Students are awarded credit only for courses in which they have earned a grade of D- (60%) or higher. This applies both to courses taken at Reach and at other schools. Courses required for graduation must be re-taken by the student if a grade of D- (60%) or higher is not earned, and re-taking such courses may delay the student's graduation. The school's grading scale is below.

Semester and year-end grade point averages (GPA) calculations will follow a four point scale (below). GPAs will only include graded courses; pass/fail courses will not be averaged into a student's GPA. Passing grades for Honors courses are weighted with one-half (0.5) extra grade point. Passing grades for Advanced Placement (AP) courses are weighted with one (1) extra grade point.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Grade %</b>	<b>Passing?</b>	<b>Non-Weighted</b>	<b>Weighted (Honors)</b>	<b>Weighted (AP)</b>
A+	98 – 100	Yes	4.00	4.50	5.00
A	92 – 97	Yes	4.00	4.50	5.00
A-	90 – 91	Yes	3.67	4.17	4.67
B+	88 – 89	Yes	3.33	3.83	4.33
B	82 – 87	Yes	3.00	3.50	4.00
B-	80 – 81	Yes	2.67	3.17	3.67
C+	78 – 79	Yes	2.33	2.83	3.33
C	72 – 77	Yes	2.00	2.50	3.00
C-	70 – 71	Yes	1.67	2.17	2.67
D+	68 – 69	Yes	1.33	1.83	2.33
D	62 – 67	Yes	1.00	1.50	2.00
D-	60 – 61	Yes	0.67	1.17	1.67
F	0 – 59	No	0.00	0.00	0.00

## Class Rank

Reach will calculate the class rank for each high school student two times per year, shortly after the conclusion of each semester. Students who have not yet successfully completed any high school courses for credit directly from Reach will be excluded from the class rank calculation.

For the purposes of calculating the class rank, the student's cumulative GPA will be used, which may include weighted grades for Honors or Advanced Placement courses. Courses transferred in from other accredited institutions will also be included in the class rank as long as there is a grade assigned for that course.

The cumulative GPA is calculated to the hundredth of a point. Students whose class rank rounds off to the same thousandth of a point will be considered tied and will receive the same class rank. The ranking will compare students within the same grade level. The class rank is not included on the student's official high school transcript.

## Release of High School Educational Records

Reach will provide educational records, including official high school transcripts, class rank, test scores, and letters of recommendation to third parties such as post-secondary institutions, scholarship committees, and/or potential employers, only with prior written approval from the student's Caretaker, or from the student if he or she is 18 years or older or an emancipated minor.

To ensure that application deadlines are successfully met, the school requires advance notice of at least **10 working days for requests to provide educational records** to students, Caretakers, and/or third parties. We require **30 days' notice for letters of recommendation**.

**Note:** Class rank is only calculated twice a year.

Requests for records should be made using *the Authorization for Release of Educational Records Form* available in the Virtual Library under Forms, Colleges, and Careers.

## Prerequisites

Students must meet all course prerequisite requirements prior to registering in them.

Prerequisites are listed by each course's overview in the course catalog. Semesters A and B of a course cannot be taken concurrently (during the same semester).

## Duplicate Coursework: Repeating a Course



Students may repeat a course in order to improve their grade. Only the higher of the two grades will be included in the GPA. Credit will be awarded only once, for the higher of the grades. Both courses and both grades will show on the transcript.

## **Schedule Changes**

Students may request changes to their schedules within the first six weeks of enrollment or within the first six weeks of the semester. To add or drop a course, a Caretaker must make a request to the school counselor.

## **Transcripts**

Students are able to access ongoing information about their courses through their online grade books within Connexus. To request an official copy of a transcript, families must complete a *Transcript Request Form* (located in the Virtual Library) and submit it to the Lead School Administrator for approval and processing. Official transcripts are generated at the school. They have official school signatures, raised seals, and are sent in a sealed envelope. Caretakers are able to view a copy of the transcript through the Connexus at any time.

## **Credit from other Schools**

As part of the enrollment process, families submit their students' most recent report cards and/or transcripts. Counselors analyze previously earned credits and determine which credits will transfer to Reach. The school counselor may require complete unofficial transcripts or complete end-of-year report cards before approving a student's grade level and course selection. Official transcripts are required within the first 30 days of school for final credit transfer approval and for final course approval. Upon graduation or withdrawal, the official Reach transcript will display both the credits earned at Reach as well as any transfer credits.

## **Credit for Coursework Completed in a Non-standard School Program**

Students may request to receive credit for courses completed in previous educational settings other than fully accredited schools, including home school, non-accredited public, private, alternative or international schools.

There are three options for requesting and being granted credit by Reach for coursework completed in a non-standard school program.

1. **Assessment:** the student takes and achieves a passing grade (D-) on the Connections Academy exam(s) associated with the course. This may be the midterm and final exam or other proficiency exam as determined by the content area teacher. Alternatively, the student may take a state-approved standardized test. If the student achieves a score of “Proficient” or higher he or she will be granted credit for that course. The test(s) must be taken in a school-approved proctored setting.
2. **Portfolio:** The student submits a portfolio documenting coursework, which may include:
  - Samples of prior work
  - List of texts used in prior courses
  - Artwork
  - Writing samples
  - Report card from prior school/home school
  - Student Interview
  - Other materials as requested by the school counselor

The portfolio will be reviewed by each relevant content area teacher. The appropriate content area teachers will make final decisions about credit(s) to be granted for the student’s prior coursework.

For example, a student who shows sufficient evidence of having successfully completed Algebra I, Geometry, English 9 & 10, Earth Science, Biology, U.S. History, Government, and/or French I & II, will be granted credit by the relevant content area teacher for each of the courses documented, and will be placed in Reach at the grade level appropriate for the number of credits granted.

The school counselor and/or Lead School Administrator may review the student’s portfolio along with the content area teachers, but the content area teachers will be responsible for determining if the student is indeed proficient in the specific subject and whether or not credit is to be granted.

- 3. Competency:** Based on a portfolio of materials similar to, but perhaps less comprehensive than that listed in #2, the subject area teacher makes a decision about where to place the student. After the student has completed one full semester at Reach, the subject area teacher reviews the student's progress in the Reach course(s). If the student earns a passing grade in the course that follows a course taken in a non-standard school, the Lead School Administrator or counselor may award credit(s) for the course(s) taken in the non-standard school. This method of placement is only applicable to foreign language courses and certain other courses that occur in a clearly linear sequence.

Students may use any combination of the above-listed methods for requesting credit. For example, a student may choose option #1 for mathematics and science courses, #2 for humanities courses, and #3 for foreign language.

Credits for courses completed in a non-standard school program may be granted as described above, but no grades are assigned. Students receiving credit will be given a grade of "Pass," which is not included in the calculation of the student's GPA. These credits are not entered into the student's records until the student has completed a full semester in Reach.

### **High School Courses Taken in Middle School**

Students may earn high school credit for high school level courses taken during the middle school years. A middle school course for which high school credit is granted must cover the same content as the equivalent high school course, and must be approved by the school counselor in advance. Students must have approval of the school to pursue this opportunity. Check with the school counselor for more specific information.

### **Credit for Other Experiences**

Many students are involved in activities outside their school experiences, such as: music, dance, and art lessons, foreign language instruction, and participation on athletic teams. While Reach recognizes the value of these activities, they cannot be used to earn high school credit.

### **Independent Study**

Independent Study is a school-approved, student-centered, alternative method of learning that allows a student to earn regular education course credit while working on a standards-based, curriculum-aligned, independent project. Students work independently under the supervision of a certified teacher following a plan created jointly by the student, the Caretaker, and the teacher. Students who wish to earn credit for an Independent Study project must complete an application and have the approval of the teacher, school counselor, and Lead School Administrator in advance.

## **Students Driving To Sanctioned Events**

First and foremost, we highly recommend to Caretakers that students not be permitted to drive unaccompanied to Reach sanctioned events (“Event(s)”). Preferred options include having Caretakers or designated adults drive and supervise students, or having students use public transportation options. However, under certain circumstances students may need or wish to drive to an Event without supervision from an adult. In order to be able to drive unaccompanied to a Reach sanctioned Event, students must meet the following guidelines:

- Must be 18 years of age. Where students are under the age of 18, even though states may permit minors to drive, an adult is required to supervise a minor at an Event.
- Must possess a valid driver’s license.
- Must use a currently registered, inspected, and insured vehicle.
- Must be a student in good standing, with good attendance, and with no disciplinary actions noted in the student’s file
- Obtain school permission to drive unaccompanied to events.

In addition, it is the responsibility of the student who attends an Event without a Caretaker or designated adult to do the following:

- Document parental permission to drive to Events for the current school year by submitting a completed and signed *Sanctioned Event Student Driving and Attendance Authorization* to the School (form available from the Virtual Library or the school).
- Document school permission to drive to events by obtaining the Lead School Administrator’s (or designee) signature on the *Sanctioned Event Student Driving and Attendance Authorization*.
- Obey all time schedules.

- Obey all school rules including maintaining acceptable attendance and disciplinary standards. If a student arrives late, privileges may be revoked.
- Adhere to school rules and procedures for Events.

Under no circumstances shall the school be responsible for students who make their own personal travel arrangements and/or are not accompanied by an adult. The conduct of unaccompanied student drivers at Events shall remain the responsibility of their Caretakers. If a student driving to or from an Event is involved in an accident, Reach shall not be liable for any injuries or damage; all liability rests with the student, his/her Caretaker and/or any insurance maintained by the Caretaker and/or the student.

Under no circumstances shall students drive other students to an Event. If a student nevertheless permits another student or students to ride with him/her, Reach shall not be liable for any injuries or damage to any parties. The student, the student's Caretaker, and/or any insurance maintained by the Caretaker and/or the student, will be responsible for any and all injuries and/or any damage that may occur.

Even if a Caretaker does grant permission for a student to drive unaccompanied, it is important to note that driving a car to an Event is a privilege for a student and not a right, and such privileges may be denied or revoked by the school at any time. Safe driving practices must be adhered to at all times. Students who endanger other drivers, individuals, pedestrians, or property, and/or do not follow state laws or school rules and/or procedures for Events, may have their permission to drive unaccompanied to school Events revoked by the school. Furthermore, students may be reported to the police for further action.

## **7 SERVICES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS**

### **7.1 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Eligible Students**

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#### **Enrollment Requirements**

All Caretakers who indicate their students have special needs are asked to submit a copy of the student's most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP) as soon as possible after the enrollment process is complete. It is important that the IEP is current and complete, and that all educational assessments and evaluation reports that support the IEP are also submitted. Enrollment will not be delayed; Reach staff will work with families and with the student's prior school to obtain copies of necessary documents.

All documents are reviewed by the Director of Special Education, the student's IEP annual review date is noted, and an IEP meeting will be scheduled, if necessary. At the start of school, a member of the special education staff contacts the family to discuss specific student needs or to clarify information.

### **During the School Year**

At the beginning of the school year, the special education team ensures that teachers of students with IEPs have access to each student's IEP. The teachers are made aware of each student's special learning needs and required accommodations. Teachers are also given guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations and modifications.

### **Conducting IEP Meetings**

The special education team, including a special education teacher, plans for and schedules all annual reviews and other IEP-related meetings. The team contacts families and establishes mutually agreeable meeting times. Typically IEP Team meetings are held in a virtual LiveLesson classroom and on a conference line and occur in compliance with all state and federal laws.

### **Special Education and Related Services**

Some students qualify to receive special education as well as related services according to their IEPs. Due to the virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the Internet with real-time conferencing software. Reach will provide a continuum of special education and related service that may include alternative placements. The IEP team ensures that services are provided in compliance with the IEP.

### **Child Find**

Reach has established and implemented Board-adopted procedures to identify, locate, and evaluate all children who need special education programs and services. Child Find refers to activities undertaken by the school to identify, locate, and evaluate enrolled children who are suspected of having disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disability, and determine the child's need for special education and related services. The purpose is to locate these children so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available.

Reach's Director of Special Education will serve as the Child Find Coordinator and will provide Child Find information and public awareness outreach to school staff, Caretakers, local organizations and agencies. School staff will receive information on analyzing universal screening results (including LEAP and DIBELS assessments) to identify students in need of instructional interventions and, potentially, special education evaluation. Students in need of intervention may also progress through Reach's Multi-Tiered System of Supports/Response to Intervention and Instruction (MTSS/RtII). Staff training will include how to facilitate requests from Caretakers for evaluation.

Reach conducts systematic screening activities that lead to the identification, location and evaluation of enrolled children with disabilities. Identification activities are performed to find a child who is suspected of having a disability that would interfere with his or her learning unless special education programs and services are made available.

- Reach's MTSS/RtII frameworks helps teachers identify students in need of intervention who may not be meeting appropriate educational benchmarks.
- The screening activities include:
  - review of test data including statewide assessment results
  - review of academic progress
  - hearing and vision screening
  - assessment of student's academic functioning
  - observation of the student displaying difficulty in behavior
  - teacher and learning coach observations
  - determining the student's response to attempted remediation



Reach's statement about Child Find is accessible to the general public. The statement is located on the general school public website and is communicated through banner messages on Caretaker homepages within Connexus. In addition, all families enrolled in Reach 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* is also provided in all locations.

## **Student Support Team**

The Student Support Team (SST) at Reach is comprised of school administrators, general and special education teachers and staff, school counselors as needed and parents when appropriate. The team meets regularly to discuss the progress of students who are demonstrating difficulties with the Reach curriculum. Any academic or behavioral difficulties have been documented by the student's teacher in Connexus and are related to the student's academic performance, progress, participation, and/or attendance.

Teachers follow the SST referral process as they refer students for discussion. The team meets to:

- review student academic and/or behavioral difficulties,
- accommodations and modifications that have been implemented,
- attempted differentiation by the teacher of the content area of concern
- progress or regression noted by the teacher, and
- other relevant information.

After a thorough discussion, the SST members will offer suggestions, and will provide the teacher and Learning Coach with varying intervention strategies to implement with the student. An intervention strategy is planned, and systematic data collection by the Reach staff is implemented to resolve the issues. At subsequent follow-up meetings, the team discusses which strategies were implemented by the teacher and Learning Coach, how those strategies worked, how the student is currently performing, and if other strategies need to be explored or implemented.

If the members of the team determine that multiple strategies yielded no positive results, they will escalate their concerns to their managers and/or the special education team, as appropriate. Parents are also informed of the academic concerns. The SST may also elect to escalate the student's Reach warning status to the next level, thus informing the Caretaker and school administrator of the concerns. When appropriate, the SST will refer the student for a special education evaluation, and may do so at any point in the process.

### **Special Education: Educational Records Confidentiality**

Reach recognizes the need to protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information in the education records of eligible children. The policy stated below has been prepared to ensure the privacy rights to both the Caretakers and an eligible child in the collection, maintenance, release and destruction of these records. This policy incorporates provisions from 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 the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), and the Confidentiality Section of PA Special Education Regulations and Standards.

Information in this policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

**Destruction** – means physical destruction or permanent expungement of personally identifying data from a student's educational record so the information in those records is no longer personally identifiable.

**Directory information** – includes the following information relating to a student: the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and heights of members of athletic teams, dates of attendance, degrees and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended by the student, and other similar information.

**Education record/records** – means those records which are directly related to an exceptional student and are maintained by Reach. This includes records for a student who is currently or who in the past received special education and related services from Reach. Records include permission to evaluate, evaluation reports, IEP, Section 504, notice of recommended education placement, progress reports, etc. (Personal notes of instructional, supervisor, or administrative personnel are not considered to be part of education records.)

**Personally Identifiable Information (PII)** – includes data or information that identifies a student or a student’s family members, including but not limited to, name, address, telephone, personal identifier such as student number or social security number or by a list of characteristics or other information that, alone or in combination, is linked or linkable to a specific student that could be identified with reasonable certainty.

**Release** – the giving of access to or the allowance of inspection, transfer, disclosure, or communication of any portion of a student’s education records which includes in it personally identifiable information; the term also means release to any person by any means.

**Student** – means exceptional school age pupil or preschool pupil (eligible young child) with respect to whom an educational agency maintains education records.

**Parent** – includes a parent, guardian, or a surrogate parent who acts as a parent in the absence of a parent or guardian. Unless there is a state law or court order which provides to the contrary, the Intermediate Unit may presume that the parent has the authority to exercise the right inherent in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

**Eligible student** – a student who has attained eighteen (18) years of age, or is attending an institution of post-secondary education.

**Authorized school official** – means an administrator, supervisor, or instructor who has a legitimate education interest in the student’s education.

## Education Records

An education record shall be maintained for each child receiving special education services from the school at the following locations:

- A special education file shall be maintained in the Student File Room at Reach. This file shall be considered the complete special education file.
- A permanent record shall be maintained for each current child and stored in the school site.
- A health record for each currently enrolled student will be kept in a locked cabinet.
- A copy of the special education file, permanent file, and health file will be stored in the Records Room for students who are no longer enrolled in the school.

## Transferring Files to Other Districts

When files are transferred to other schools, the file will be sent to the requesting district after a copy is made and stored in Reach's Records Room. The school will notify parents when a request has been made by another school district for a copy of their child's file.

## **Viewing Files**

A Caretaker 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 eighteen (18) years of age or attending a post-secondary 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.

## **Parental Access Rights**

A Caretaker, eligible student, or designated representative shall have access to the student's education records within forty-five (45) days of receipt of written request in order to inspect, review or copy education records. The school may charge a fee for copying education records.

A Caretaker 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 Caretaker, the Consent to Release Information form must be completed by the Caretaker.
- A list of the types and location of the student's education record collected, maintained, or utilized by the LEA.

## **Accessing Records**

Reach 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 Caretaker has the right to inspect the access record of their child's records.

## **Maintenance Records**

The Director of Special Education shall 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 shall 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 school faculty and subcontracted agency employees, who collect or use personally identifiable information, receive in-service training regarding the implementation of this policy. In-servicing shall consist of providing, at the least, yearly presentation of the information to staff and subcontractors.

## **Destruction**

Reach will not destroy any part of an education record or personally identifiable information necessary for the education of a student who is enrolled or has been enrolled in the school.

## **Release of Information**

In order to protect the rights of the student and his/her parents/guardians against infringement of privacy, misinterpretation of data, inappropriate use, Reach will obtain the written consent of the student's Caretaker or the eligible student prior to disclosing personally identifiable information from the education records of a student, other than directory information, except when prior consent for disclosure is not required by law. Consent will be obtained using the Consent of Release Information form.

Prior consent for release of such information is not required when disclosure is:

- To authorized school official or subcontracted agencies have a legitimate educational interest (a **legitimate educational interest** for an authorized school official means that this official will have administrative, supervisory, or instructional duties with regard to the student's education program.)
- To officials of another school or school system in which the student is enrolled or intends to enroll; records will not be released without notifying the parents/guardians.
- To authorized representatives of the Comptroller General of the United States, the Secretary, or state and local educational agencies.
- To state and local officials or authorities, if a state statute adopted before November 19, 1974, specifically requires disclosures to those official and authorities.
- To comply with judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena, provided Reach makes a reasonable effort to notify the Caretaker of the student or the eligible student of the order or subpoena in advance of compliance.
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, education agencies or institutions provided such organization have received approval from Reach Board of Trustees.
- To a Caretaker of a dependent student, as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.
- In connection with a health or safety emergency, only if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals.

Written consent will be obtained prior to release of personally identifiable information to any party not mentioned above. Prior to requesting consent, Reach will provide the Caretaker or eligible student in writing with the following:

- A general description of the information or record to be released.
- The form of the release.
- The reason the release was requested.
- The party or agency to which the information will be released.

Whenever the student's school district of residence, Intermediate Unit, or the Department of Education requests the release of information, a charter school must comply with the request within ten (10) days of receiving the request.

When a school district in which the student is enrolled or intends to enroll requests the release of information, Reach will comply with the request within ten (10) days of receiving the request.

### **Parental Request for the Amendment of Records**

A Caretaker has the right to request that Reach amend information contained in education records collected, maintained, or used by Reach if she/he believes it to be inaccurate, misleading or in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student.

Subsequent to a request for an amendment, Reach shall decide whether to amend the disputed information within forty-five (45) calendar days after the receipt of the request to amend.

If Reach agrees to amend the disputed information, the Caretaker or eligible student shall be notified in writing.

If Reach decides not to amend the education record in accordance with the request of the Caretaker, Reach shall inform the Caretaker in writing of the refusal, the reason(s) for the refusal, and shall provide further notification of their right to request and receive a records review hearing.

The following procedure will be followed when the opportunity for a hearing is actualized:

- The hearing shall be held at a mutually agreed upon time and place within thirty (30) days after Reach receives the request of a hearing from the Caretaker.
- Reach shall give written notification to the Caretaker of the date, place, and time of the hearing not later than five (5) days in advance of the hearing.
- The Caretaker shall be afforded a full and fair opportunity to present evidence relevant to the specific information and reason(s) for requesting that information be amended, and may be represented at his/her own expense by an individual of his/her choice, including legal counsel.
- The hearing officer shall render a written decision within thirty (30) days of the conclusion of the hearing. This decision shall be based solely on evidence presented at the hearing and include a summary of the evidence and reasons for the decision.
- If the decision rendered is to amend the education records(s), Reach will inform the Caretaker of this in writing.

- If the decision rendered is not to amend the education records, Reach shall inform the Caretaker in writing of his/her right to place in the educational records of the student a statement commenting upon the information in the educational records and/or setting forth any reason for disagreeing with the decision of Reach. Parents/guardians will also be informed of their right to request an impartial due process hearing.
  - This response shall be maintained by Reach as part of the educational records of the student as long as the record or contended portion thereof is maintained by Reach.
  - If the educational records of the student or the contested portion thereof are disclosed to any party, the explanation shall also be disclosed to that party.

## Special Education: Independent Educational Evaluation

### Definition

An independent educational evaluation (IEE) means one or more individual assessment(s), each completed by a qualified examiner who is not employed by Reach.

### Right to an IEE

- A parent has the right to obtain an IEE at public expense if he or she disagrees with an evaluation obtained or conducted by Reach. The parent may be asked (but may not be required) to discuss their objection to the evaluation obtained by Reach, however the parent is entitled to only one IEE at public expense for each district evaluation.
- The parent has the right to an IEE at his or her own expense at any time, and the IEP team must consider the results.
- If a parent requests an IEE at public expense, Reach must without unnecessary delay, either:
  - Initiate a hearing under 34 CFR §300.507 to show that its evaluation is appropriate or,
  - Ensure that an IEE is provided at public expense.

### Reach and IEE



Reach administrators and special education teachers are familiar with the provision and procedures for IEE. Any inquiry from a parent requesting an IEE is directed to the Director of Special Education. All evaluation reports, including IEEs obtained by the parent at his or her expense, are discussed and reviewed at a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting that includes the parents and all pertinent school personnel. The results of the evaluation are discussed and considered by the MDT and a decision is made as to what role they will play in further educational program planning.

## **7.2 Rehabilitation Act of 1973: Section 504 Eligible Students**

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### **Enrollment Requirements**

Caretakers of students with Section 504 plans seeking to enroll in the school are asked to submit a copy of the Section 504 plan during the enrollment and academic placement process. When a student enters the school with a Section 504 plan developed by a prior school, the school will review the plan and supporting documentation and comply with Section 504.

### **During the School Year**

At the beginning of the school year, the 504 Coordinator ensures that teachers have access to a student's 504 Plan. The teachers are made aware of each student's special learning needs and are given guidance on how to make the necessary program accommodations.

Students who have Section 504 plans will participate in the regular education environment, with the use of supplementary aides and services. The regular education teachers (with the support of the Section 504 Coordinator and/or special education staff) will implement the provisions of Section 504 plans. A case manager will be assigned to notify teachers about the accommodations and to assist with and monitor implementation of the Section 504 plan.

Teachers will also have access to information as to accommodations and modifications on their home page.

### **Reevaluation**

The school shall establish procedures for periodic reevaluation of students, consistent with the requirements of Section 504. Transitions from primary grades to intermediate grades, elementary school to middle school, and middle school to high school are often appropriate times to review and update a student's Section 504 plan. For students who enter the school with an existing Section 504 plan, the schedule for the reevaluation will be determined by the Section 504 Coordinator based on the following: how recently the plan was developed, the appropriateness of the plan for the virtual school setting, changes to the student's impairment, etc.

### **Section 504 Accommodations**

According to their Section 504 plans, some students qualify for accommodations and modifications to their educational program. Due to the virtual nature of the school, the services are typically provided virtually over the internet with real-time conferencing software. The 504 Coordinator ensures the service is provided in compliance with the student's Section 504 plan.

### **New Referrals**

Throughout the year, both teachers and Learning Coaches may detect that a student is having difficulties with learning and they may believe there could be a need for accommodations and modifications, supplemental aides and services as required under Section 504. If documented strategies fail, the student will be referred to the school's Student Support Team (SST). This team will meet and suggest additional strategies and considerations, and they will also work to gather more information about the student's learning history and profile. They may even consult with a member of the special education team and/or Section 504 Committee. If all the recommended strategies fail, the team (along with the Caretaker) will consider a referral to the school's special education team and/or Section 504 Committee. Once the team receives the referral they will begin the process of determining if the student is in need of evaluations and a Section 504 plan.

Federal law requires the school to provide its students, regardless of disability, with an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the school's education program. Reach is committed to providing its students with equal access to its education program. We provide students with accessibility through resources tailored to each student's individual abilities and needs, including assistive technologies and individualized support.

If your student is in need of assistance in order to fully participate in Reach's education program, please contact the school's special education coordinator or 504 Coordinator. You can also obtain 24-hour technical support by calling the Accessibility Hotline at 888-639-5960.

## 9 CONDUCT, DUE PROCESS, GRIEVANCE, AND COMMUNICATION

### 9.2 Bullying and Other Forms of Prohibited Behavior

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Reach is committed to providing a safe, positive, productive, and nurturing educational environment for all of its students, and encourages the promotion of positive interpersonal relations among members of the school community.

Harassment, intimidation, bullying, cyber-bullying, and/or hazing toward any member of the school community, whether by or toward any student, staff, Learning Coach, Caretaker, or other third parties, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Examples of such prohibited behavior include, but are not limited to, stalking, bullying/cyber bullying, intimidating, menacing, coercion, name-calling, taunting, making threats, and hazing. 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 group, such as sex, sexual orientation, race, color, national origin, marital status, religion, or disability.

The following definitions are intended to provide guidance in assessing whether a particular behavior is a prohibited behavior. They are not exhaustive in their scope and are not intended to replace the intuition of the individual. When in doubt as to whether or not a particular suspected behavior is a prohibited behavior, you are urged to rule on the side of caution and report your concerns to the appropriate authority, as provided for in this policy.

**Harassment** - any intentional behavior or course of conduct (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) directed at a specific person or group of persons that causes substantial physical and/or emotional distress or harm and is sufficiently severe, persistent, and/or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, and/or abusive educational environment for the other person(s) and serves no legitimate purpose.

**Bullying** – a course of abusive treatment (whether written, verbal, graphic, or physical) that typically involves the use of force or coercion to affect others, particularly when habitual and involving an imbalance of power. It may involve verbal, written or cyber harassment, physical assault or coercion and may be directed persistently towards particular victims.

**Cyber-bullying** – the use of information and communication technologies, such as, but not limited to, cell phone, email, instant messaging, social media websites, Twitter, etc., to support deliberate and hostile behavior by an individual or group, that (i) is intended to harm others or (ii) that an objectively reasonable person would expect to cause harm to others. Cyber-bullying includes the posting or other transmission of text, video, or images that are embarrassing, demeaning, or threatening in nature, regardless of whether the subject of such text, video, or images directed, consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue posting or other transmission.

**Hazing** – the use of ritual and other activities involving harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, intimidation, abuse or humiliation for the purpose of initiating a person or persons into a group, regardless of whether such person(s) consented to or otherwise acquiesced in the at issue behavior(s) and action(s).

**Intimidation** – a course of behavior that instills fear or a sense of inadequacy.

**Violence within a dating relationship** - any behavior by a student exhibited towards that student's dating partner that is an attempt to gain and/or maintain power and/or control over a dating partner through violence, threats of violence, and/or physical, verbal, psychological, and/or mental abuse.

**Sexting** - knowingly using a computer, or any other device capable of electronic data transmission or distribution, to transmit or distribute to another minor any photograph or video which depicts nudity and is harmful to minors. Knowingly possessing a photograph or video that was transmitted or distributed by another minor as described above.

**Prohibited behaviors** include all of the above.

The school Administration (and Board, if applicable) will not tolerate any gestures, comments, threats, or actions which (i) cause, threaten to cause, or, an objective and reasoned third-party would find was intended to cause, bodily harm or personal degradation, or (ii) creates, or an objective and reasoned third-party would determine was intended to create, an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for any student, staff member, member of the administration, parent or guardian, or other third-party.

This policy applies to all school-related activities and/or engagements, including, but not limited to, online school-related activities such as LiveLesson sessions, participation in clubs and activities, WebMail messages, text messages, discussions, telephonic communications, and message boards; and in-person activities, such as state testing, field trips, open houses, and any other in-person school-related activities. This policy also applies to those activities or engagements which occur off school property if the student or employee is at any school-sponsored, school-approved, or school-related activity or function such as field trips or events where students are under the school's control, in a school vehicle, where an employee is engaged in school business, or where the prohibited behavior is facilitated through the use of any school property or resources.

Any student or student's Caretaker who believes that student, any other student, or other third-party, has been or is the recipient of any of the above-described prohibited behaviors should immediately report the situation to the school counselor, Lead School Administrator, or assistant principal. The student may also report concerns to teachers and other school staff who will be responsible for notifying the appropriate school administrator or Board official. Complaints about prohibited behavior against the Lead School Administrator should be filed with the Board President. Every student is encouraged, and every staff member is **required**, to report any situation that they believe to be prohibited behavior. Reports may be made to those identified above. If a student or other individual believes there has been prohibited behavior, he/she should report it and allow the administration to determine the appropriate course of action. Any teacher, school administrator, or school staff member who does not timely make a written report of an incident of prohibited behavior shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process.

All complaints about prohibited behavior shall be kept confidential and be promptly investigated. The Lead School Administrator or appropriate administrator shall prepare a written report of the investigation upon completion. Such report shall include findings of fact, a determination of whether any prohibited behavior(s) were verified, and, when prohibited acts are verified, a recommendation for intervention, including disciplinary action, shall be in the report. Where appropriate, written witness statements shall be attached to the report. When the target of the prohibited behavior is a student, the school shall provide that student with a written copy of the rights, protections, and support services available to him/her. If there is any evidence that the student has experienced physical harm as a result of the prohibited behavior, the school shall promptly communicate that information to the appropriate personnel, including, but not limited to, emergency personnel and /or law enforcement.

If the investigation finds an instance of harassment, intimidation, bullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior has occurred, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the school's disciplinary process. This may include up to expulsion for students; up to discharge for employees; exclusion for parents, guests, volunteers, and contractors; and removal from any official position and/or a request for a Board member(s) to resign. Individuals may also be referred to law enforcement officials. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for employees will follow the procedures outlined in the Employee Handbook. Remedial and/or disciplinary action for students will follow the procedures outlined in this Supplement.

When appropriate, the target(s) of the prohibited behavior (and/or such target(s) Caretaker(s)) shall be notified of the findings of the investigation, and, when appropriate, that action has been taken. In providing such notification care shall be taken to respect the statutory privacy rights of the accused perpetrator of such harassment, intimidation, bullying, and/or dating violence.

If after investigation the act(s) of prohibited behavior by a specific student is/are verified, the Lead School Administrator or appropriate administrator shall notify in writing the Caretaker of the perpetrator of that finding. If disciplinary consequences are imposed against such student, a description of such discipline shall be included in the notification.

**Retaliation** against any person who reports, is thought to have reported, files a complaint, or otherwise participates in an investigation or inquiry concerning allegations of harassment, intimidation, bullying, dating violence, or any other prohibited behavior will not be tolerated, independent of whether a complaint is substantiated. Such retaliation shall be considered a serious violation of school policy, and suspected retaliation should be reported in the same manner as prohibited behavior. Making intentionally false reports about prohibited behavior will not be tolerated. Retaliation and intentionally false reports may result in disciplinary action as indicated above.

This policy shall not be interpreted as infringing upon the First Amendment rights of students (i.e., to prohibit a reasoned and civil exchange of opinions, or debate, that is conducted at appropriate times and places during the school day and is protected by state or federal law).

## Complaints

Students and/or their Caretakers may file **written** reports regarding any suspected prohibited behavior by completing the *Report of Bullying, Aggressive, or Other Prohibited Behavior Form*, found in the Forms section of the Virtual Library, and sending this to the school. Such reports should be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of the suspected prohibited behavior(s), and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. Such reports may be filed with any school staff member or administrator, and they shall be promptly forwarded to the Lead School Administrator for review, investigation, and action.

Students and/or their Caretakers may make *informal* complaints of conduct that they consider to be prohibited behavior(s) by verbal report to a teacher, school administrator, or other school personnel. Such informal complaints shall be reasonably specific including person(s) involved, number of times and places of the alleged conduct, the target of suspected prohibited behavior, and the names of any potential student or staff witnesses. A school staff member or administrator who received an informal complaint shall promptly document the complaint in writing by completing the *Report of Bullying, Aggressive, or Other Prohibited Behavior Form*, found in the Forms section of the Virtual Library. This written report shall be promptly forwarded by the school staff member and/or administrator to the Lead School Administrator for review, investigation, and appropriate action.

## Privacy/Confidentiality

The school will respect the privacy of the complainant, the individual(s) against whom the complaint is filed, and the witnesses as much as possible, consistent with the school's legal obligations to investigate, to take appropriate action, and to conform with any discovery or disclosure obligations. All records generated under this policy and its related administrative guidelines shall be maintained as confidential to the extent permitted by law.

## Bystanders

Bullying involves not only those who are bullies and their victims, but also the bystanders who are witnesses. Reach recognizes that bystanders may be negatively affected by bullying, but that they also have the potential to play a positive role in responding to it.

Bystanders may be negatively affected in the following or other ways:

- be afraid of being associated with the victim of bullying for fear of becoming a target of the bully themselves
- feel discomfort or fear at witnessing bullying
- feel guilt, helplessness, or loss of control for not standing up to the bully
- be drawn into the bullying behavior by group pressure
- or feel unsafe in the situation.

Conversely, bystanders may be able to help victims of bullying by doing the following:

- Ask for help from a trusted adult such as a teacher, Lead School Administrator, or other school official.
- Help the person being bullied: create a distraction to focus attention on something else; try helping the person who is being bullied leave the scene by telling him/her that you need them to play a game or that an adult needs to see them, etc.
- Don't give bullying an audience: bullies are often encouraged by the attention they receive, so don't support them by watching.
- Set an example: do not bully others; don't encourage bullies; create posters against bullying; join an anti-bullying club; tell a bully that his/her actions are not funny.
- Be a friend to the person being bullied.
- Spend time with the person being bullied: talk to them; listen to them; tell them you think that bullying is bad; tell them to talk to a trusted adult for help.



The school's expectation is that student bystanders will report bullying to a school official or other appropriate adult in a timely manner. If it comes to the attention of the school leadership or staff that a student bystander did not report bullying, the school will initiate a conversation with the student regarding the school's expectations for bystanders to report bullying. Second and subsequent occurrences of non-reporting of bullying may subject the student to more serious disciplinary action.

Any student who is actively involved in bullying, may be subject to disciplinary action for bullying as described in *Section 9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students* in this Supplement.

### **Student Assistance Program (SAP)**

Reach will maintain a Student Assistance Program (SAP) to identify, intervene, refer and monitor students having school related programs because of drug, alcohol, and/or mental health issues, and other barriers to learning.

#### **What is Student Assistance Program (SAP)?**

The Student Assistance Program is a voluntary, systematic intervention process for students at risk by a team of trained, professional school personnel and community agency liaisons.

The **mission** of Reach's Student Assistance Program is to identify, intervene, refer, and monitor students having school related problems because of alcohol, drug, and/or mental health issues, and other barriers to learning.

The **primary goal** of the Student Assistance Program is to help students overcome those barriers in order that they may be more successful academically.

The SAP Team is committed to the utmost confidentiality in all aspects of the intervention process. Matters brought before the team will not be shared outside of the team, unless there is a professional/parental need to know. Parent permission is obtained before any student is interviewed by a team member. In situations where the health, safety, or welfare of a child is at risk, the SAP team is obligated to notify proper authorities.

#### **Who is involved?**

The **core of the program** is the Student Assistance Team comprised of teachers, administrators, school counselor, school nurse, and outside consultants trained to work with students.

### **How does SAP work?**

The Student Assistance Team receives referrals from parents, students, teachers, administrators, and other concerned school personnel. Referrals are made by contacting any member of the SAP team. A list of the SAP team members can be obtained by contacting the school. Students can refer themselves.

### **What happens after a confidential referral?**

After receiving a referral, team members gather information from other staff members who have had contact with the student. An informal team meeting is convened to determine the status of the referral. Parents are then contacted and asked to provide written consent before SAP services are initiated, and if consent is given, parents will be asked to provide similar information on the child. Parents or a student can decline participation in SAP at any time – the program is voluntary.

After compiling all information provided, the SAP team will then determine if recommendations for further services is necessary. The recommendations could be a conference with a SAP member or a request for an assessment provided by a trained specialist from a drug and alcohol or mental health agency. These specialists work with the team members to recommend appropriate action for that individual student. The team monitors and provides support for the student throughout the process.

## **Drug and Alcohol Abuse Policy**

Drugs and alcohol are prohibited at all school sanctioned events and in all Reach buildings.

Drug and alcohol abuse among young people is a major problem confronting our society and our community. For this reason a clear policy on drug and alcohol abuse is established for the students of Reach.

It is generally agreed that the most meaningful approaches to drug and alcohol abuse involve cooperative efforts on the part of students, Caretakers, the school, community and social agencies. Furthermore, the best contribution schools can make is to provide positive, meaningful learning and the development of an educational program of value for each individual student.

Students attend school so that they may develop to their fullest potential. Reach recognizes the need to manage and treat the problem of drug and alcohol abuse and plans to take appropriate measures to prevent the problem of such abuse and support the establishment of a SAP. The purpose of the SAP is three-fold:(1) to identify students who are having problems because of drug/alcohol use or due to mental health problems, (2) to intervene when appropriate either by personal contact or through support groups, and (3) to refer those students for appropriate help.

The SAP is not a treatment program. It seeks to improve identification of students who exhibit forms of "at risk" behavior, such as suicidal intent, depression, drug and alcohol use and abuse. It also provides for intervention by making referrals to outside agencies.

## **I. DEFINITIONS**

**Controlled Substances (Drug /Mood altering Substance/Alcohol):** Controlled substances, including but not limited to, alcohol, drugs, narcotics, and/or other health endangering compounds which include but are not limited to: alcohol, alcoholic beverages, tranquilizers, amphetamines, synthetic opiates, marijuana, LSD and other hallucinogens, glue solvent-containing substances, anabolic steroids, "look alike" drugs, prescription or over the counter drugs when in possession is unauthorized or such inappropriately used or shared with others, and all controlled substances identified in the following laws: Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 (P.L 91-513), the Pennsylvania Controlled Substance Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, Act of April 14, 1972 (P.M. 233, No. 64) as amended; and The Controlled Substance, Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act (P.S. 780-101, et. seq.)

**Look-alike Drugs:** Substances manufactured or designed to resemble - 1) drugs; 2) mood-altering substances; 3) narcotics; or 4) other health endangering compounds

**Under the Influence:** A student shall be considered "under the influence" if he or she has consumed a controlled substance within a time period reasonably proximate to his/her presence on school property, on a school designated vehicle, or at a school sponsored function (i.e., field trips, state testing)

**Student Assistance Program (SAP):** A multidisciplinary team that includes teachers, administrators, and counselor. This team is trained to understand and work with adolescent drug/alcohol/mood-altering substance use, abuse, and dependency. The team's primary role is to identify, intervene, and refer for treatment any student who is suspected of engaging in drug/alcohol/mood-altering substance use, abuse, possession, and/or distribution.

**Coordinator of Student Assistance Programs and Services:** A certified program specialist with an expertise in the areas of social restoration and student high-risk behaviors.

**Distribution:** To deliver, sell, pass, share, or give to another person, or to assist in distribution of any alcohol, drug, or mood altering illegal substance; actual, constructive, or attempted transfer from one person to another of any alcohol, drug, or mood-altering substance.

**Active Possession:** To possess or hold without attempt to distribute, any alcohol, drug, or mood-altering substance.

**Constructive Possession:** A person's knowing joint control and/or access with other persons to any alcohol, drug, or mood-altering substance.

**Cooperative Behavior:** The student's willingness to reasonably and helpfully work with staff and school personnel, and to comply with Student Assistance Program requests and recommendations.

**Uncooperative Behavior:** The student's resistance or refusal (verbal, physical, or passive) to comply with reasonable school personnel requests or recommendations. Defiance, assault, deceit, and flight are examples of uncooperative student behavior. Uncooperative behavior includes, but not by way of limitation, refusal to comply with Student Assistance Program requests and recommendations.

**Drug Paraphernalia:** Includes any equipment, utensil or item, which in the school administrator's judgment can be associated with the use of drugs, alcohol, or mood altering substances. Examples include but are not limited to roach clips, pipes and bowls, and includes all items as defined as drug paraphernalia in Section 102 of the Pennsylvania Controlled Substance Drug, Device and Cosmetic Act, 35 P.S. 780-102, as amended.

## **II. VIOLATION OF POLICY**

This policy is violated when any student, visitor, guest or any other person unlawfully manufactures, uses, abuses, possesses, constructively possesses, is under the influence of, distributes, or attempts to distribute drugs, alcohol, or any mood-altering substances, or drug paraphernalia on school premises, or at any school-sponsored activity anywhere, or while traveling to and from school or school-related activities utilizing transportation approved by the Reach, or who conspires, aids, or abets in the use, abuse, active possession, constructive possession, or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or any mood-altering substances.

### **Discipline, Rehabilitation, and Punishment**

Any student who violates this policy shall be subject to the following disciplinary, rehabilitative and punitive actions. The school reserves the right to use any other lawful measures deemed necessary to control and eliminate the use of drugs, alcohol, and other mood-altering substances even if the same is not provided for specifically in any rule or regulation enumerated herein.

### **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

A student possesses drug-related paraphernalia and/or a student possesses (actively or constructively), uses, or is under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or mood-altering substances.

#### **First Offense:**

1. An administrator shall immediately contact the student's Caretaker(s).
2. An administrator shall contact law enforcement authorities.
3. If necessary, an administrator shall schedule an informal hearing.
4. If after the informal hearing the administrator determines the offense has been committed by the student, the administrator may:
  - a. suspend (suspension as defined in Section 9.3 of this Supplement ) the student for seven (7) days;
  - b. require the student to participate in the SAP process and comply with the SAP recommendations, which may include an assessment from a licensed drug and alcohol facility at the students/family's expense.
5. Uncooperative behavior will lead to an additional three days of suspension.

**Subsequent Offense(s):**

1. The Lead School Administrator shall contact the student's Caretaker(s) and request that they report to the Lead School Administrator's office or conference via telephone if appropriate immediately.
2. The Lead School Administrator will contact law enforcement authorities.
3. The Lead School Administrator may schedule an informal hearing in accordance with Section 9.3 Due Process of this Supplement.
4. If after the informal hearing the Lead School Administrator determines the offense has been committed by the student, the Lead School Administrator may:
  - a. suspend the student for up to ten (10) school days;
  - b. require the student to participate in the SAP process and comply with the SAP recommendations, which may include an assessment from a licensed drug and alcohol facility at the students/family's expense;
  - c. have the option of requesting a formal disciplinary hearing to be scheduled before the Board, or a committee of the Board, in accordance with Section 1318 of the Pennsylvania School Code based on the findings of fact.

**If a student distributes a drug, alcohol, or mood-altering substance:**

1. The Lead School Administrator shall contact the student's Caretaker and request that they report to the Lead School Administrator's office or conference via telephone if appropriate immediately.
2. The Lead School Administrator may schedule an informal hearing in accordance with Section 9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students in this Supplement.
3. If after the informal hearing the Lead School Administrator determines the offense has been committed by the student, the Lead School Administrator may:
  - a. suspend the student for up to ten (10) days;
  - b. require the student to participate in the SAP process and comply with the SAP recommendations, which may include an assessment from a licensed drug and alcohol facility at the students/family's expense;
  - c. request a formal disciplinary hearing to be scheduled before the Board, or Committee of the Board, in accordance with Section 1318 of the Pennsylvania School Code.

## 9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students

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All students enrolled in Reach are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the rules for the school, and Caretakers are expected to cooperate with the school staff in helping students to maintain this conduct. Student codes of conduct are set forth in this Supplement. Students are also guaranteed due process of law as required by the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

### Discipline Measures

There are three levels of formal disciplinary measures utilized by the school: 1) Warning, 2) Suspension, and 3) Expulsion. Each level and its corresponding disciplinary actions are identified below.

#### 1. Warning

Students that receive warnings from the school will have a conference (via phone or in person) with their Caretaker 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 continue to have access to Connexus.

Warnings are issued when a student demonstrates a breach of expected conduct, but not as serious as those listed under the suspension and/or expulsion categories in this Supplement.

#### 2. Suspension

When a student is suspended, he or she is temporarily removed from class (Connexus) or a school sponsored program or activity. The length of a suspension is determined by the school administrator (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 Lead School Administrator, a student's permission to log on to and/or use parts of Connexus is restricted. Student access to WebMail, the message boards, online clubs/activities, 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 the Connexus and obtaining the student's assignments, responding to WebMail, and recording assessment responses for the student. The student should continue with his or her schoolwork during a suspension.

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

- *Cheating on tests or daily work:* A student who knowingly participates in copying, using another's work, and representing it as his or her own (for example, students transmitting their work electronically for another student's use), or who provides other students with test answers, answer keys, or otherwise uses unauthorized materials in an assignment or assessment situation.
- *Plagiarism:* A student's use of another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own. Plagiarism may occur deliberately (with the intention to deceive) or accidentally (due to poor referencing). It includes copying material from a book, copying-and-pasting information from the Internet, and getting family or friends to help with coursework.
- *Unexcused absences:* An unexcused absence is the absence of a student due to truancy, illegal employment or parental neglect.
- *Illegal absence:* Illegal absences are unexcused absences by a student who is under the age of 17 who are absent from school due to avoidable absences, parental neglect, illegal employment, unapproved family vacations, and truancy.
- *Abusive conduct:* A student who uses abusive language or engages in abusive conduct in the presence of others either in person or electronically/virtually.
- *Bullying:* A student that repeatedly engages in negative actions against another student in an attempt to exercise control over him or her.
- *Intimidation:* A student who engages in behavior intentionally meant to cause another person to fear harm or injury, be frightened into submission or compliance, or to feel a sense of inferiority.
- *Harassment:* A student who demonstrates verbal, written, graphic, or physical conduct relating to an individual's sex, race, color, national origin, age, religious beliefs, ethnic background, or disability that is sufficiently severe, pervasive, or persistent so as to interfere with or limit the ability of an individual to participate in or benefit from the school's programs that: 1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating or hostile environment, 2) unreasonably interferes with an individual's educational performance, or 3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's educational opportunities.



- *Vandalism*: A Student who intentionally damages or destroys school property or records (physical or electronic). In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency(ies).
- *Theft and robbery*: A student who takes money or other property (physical or electronic) with the intent to deprive another person or the school of that property. The threat or the use of force or violence is considered a serious breach of conduct. In these instances the school reserves the right to contact the proper law enforcement agency.
- *Sexual harassment*: A student who subjects another to any unwelcome sexual advances including verbal harassment, unwelcome or inappropriate touching, or suggestions, requests, or demands for sexual favors.
- *Violence within a dating relationship*: a student who attempts to maintain power and/or control over a dating partner through violence, threats of violence, and/or physical, emotional, and/or mental abuse.
- *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*.

### **3. Expulsion**

When a student is expelled, he or she is separated from the school for an extended period of time, or permanently, for disciplinary reasons. An expulsion will be documented in writing and will become part of a student's permanent record.

Violations that may lead to expulsion include, but are not limited to, any behavior that indicates that a student is a serious threat to the safety of others: possession of firearms, dangerous weapons, bombs, or explosives, criminal behavior, arson, under the influence of or possession of, or sale of controlled substances or paraphernalia. Suspensions or expulsions for children designated as exceptional follow all appropriate state and federal policies, regulations, and laws.

For those students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the disciplinary procedures required by the IDEA will be followed. In the event a student has disabilities under both Section 504 and the IDEA, both policies shall be followed in determining appropriate disciplinary actions. The student will continue to receive FAPE

## **Due Process for Students**

The following actions will be conducted by the school, per each of the disciplinary measures as outlined below:

### **Suspension (no more than 10 days)**

An informal hearing will be convened with the student, Caretaker, Lead School Administrator and other staff members as appropriate. The Lead School Administrator will inform the student and Caretaker of the allegations and an explanation of the evidence that supports the allegations. The student will be provided with an opportunity to present his or her version of the occurrence. If the Lead School Administrator determines that the incident(s) justifies suspension, written notice will be provided to the student and his/her Caretaker. The student will be provided all due process as required by law.

### **Suspension of over 10 days, or an Expulsion**

If the school determines that a student's conduct may warrant expulsion, the Lead School Administrator will provide written notice to the Caretaker of the student of his/her determination and the student's right to a hearing. Such notice shall include (1) date, time and location of hearing; (2) description of the incident(s) that is the subject of the hearing; (3) notice that the student and/or Caretaker have a right to review the student's school records prior to the hearing; (4) description of the hearing process and explanation of the consequences of an expulsion. At this hearing, the allegations and supporting evidence will be reviewed. The student shall have the right to present his or her version of the incident(s), call witnesses, cross-examine witnesses and be represented by counsel. After the hearing, the Lead School Administrator will make a recommendation for or against expulsion to the Board. Once the Board rules on the expulsion, the Lead School Administrator and/or the Board will provide notification to the student and Caretaker of the Board's decision and discipline determination. The decision of the Board is final.

## **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 above for up to 10 days. Upon subsequent violations that result in suspensions that exceed 10 total days or 15 cumulative days in a school year, 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.

## **9.4 Academic Honesty**

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### **Plagiarism**

Reach requires the original work of all students and in so doing, prohibits plagiarism of the work of others. Students shall be expected to properly cite the origin of work that is not the student's own. If work content, other than commonly known facts, is not properly cited, attributed, or credited, the work may be determined to be plagiarism.

Students may not plagiarize in written, oral, or creative work. In general, plagiarism occurs when a student uses another person's words, products, or ideas without proper acknowledgement of the original work and 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.

#### **First Offense**

The first time a student is determined to have plagiarized the work of other(s), the student will receive a warning. The student's teacher will contact the student to explain to the student the specific reason(s) why the work submitted is considered plagiarism, and will discuss with the student how to avoid plagiarizing again. The student will be required to resubmit the question/assignment with original work. If a student chooses not to resubmit the work, the student will receive a zero for that question/assignment.

#### **Second Offense**

The second time a student is caught plagiarizing, he/she will be required to redo the question/assignment, but can only receive up to half credit. If a student chooses not to resubmit the work, the student will receive a zero for that question/assignment.

### **Third Offense**

The third time a student is caught plagiarizing; he/she will receive a zero and will not have the opportunity to redo the question/assignment. Such repeated offenses of plagiarism by a student may result in a recommendation by the Lead School Administrator that the student be determined to be a repeat violator of school policy and a disruption of school discipline. Such recommendation may result in a determination to suspend or expel the student as outlined *Section 9.3 Discipline and Due Process for Students* in this Supplement.

## **Cheating**

Reach requires students to complete all assessments (i.e. tests, quizzes, and quick checks) individually without the aid of, but not limited to: (a) the internet, (b) textbook(s), (c) a Learning Coach, (d) or other students. In addition, assignments other than tests, quizzes, and quick checks must be the student's original work. NOTE: It is not allowable for students to submit work through their Learning Coach's account.

### **First Offense**

The first time a student is determined to have cheated on any assignment, the student will receive a zero for that assignment or assessment without the opportunity to make it up.

### **Second Offense**

The second time a student is caught cheating he/she will be required to attend a conference call with a teacher and the Lead School Administrator.

### **Third and Subsequent Offenses**

The third time (or subsequent times) a student is caught cheating, he/she may be required to complete the assignment/assessment in the school office under the supervision of a teacher.

## 9.5 Grievance Process for Caretakers

---

The school is committed to ensuring parent satisfaction, and takes its responsibilities for the provision of educational services to the student very seriously. These school responsibilities are set out in the Parent/Legal Guardian Agreement (PLCA) and the School Handbooks and include such things as: contacting the family regularly, delivering educational materials and equipment, and providing accessible support.

The school will also ensure the family and students adhere to their responsibilities stated in the PLCA and the School Handbooks, and when necessary, will discipline, suspend, or expel a student, invoice, refer to collections, or take legal action against the family for a breach of the agreement or a school policy. Reasons for such disciplinary actions include, but are not limited to, failure to attend mandatory state testing, obtaining property under false pretenses, failure to return materials, or violating the materials and equipment policies.

### Caretaker Remedies

If a Caretaker has concerns with the school's action or performance on any of the above-defined school responsibilities or disciplinary actions, he or she has the following remedies available:

#### Addressing Issues

For routine issues or for a first attempt at redress, contact General Information Services via phone at 1-800-382-6010 or via e-mail at [support@connectionseducation.com](mailto:support@connectionseducation.com).

For more serious issues and/or to address lack of resolution of the issue at a lower level, a detailed grievance procedure has been set forth below. All grievance proceedings will be conducted in a manner that protects the confidentiality of the parties and the facts. If a hearing is required for grievance proceedings, the parties will be provided with all due process procedures as required by law.

Where a Caretaker feels that there has been unlawful discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, or on the basis of disability, or when there are allegations of sexual abuse or any other unlawful misconduct on the part of the school or its employees, then the parent must activate the grievance procedures set out below and can directly report the complaint to the Lead School Administrator.

If charges are brought against a student for a breach of the PLCA, which could result in a suspension of up to ten (10) days or an expulsion, the due process procedures in the *Discipline and Due Process for Students* section of this Supplement are to be followed.

### **Grievance Process**

1. A Caretaker with the grievance must, in writing, report the dissatisfaction, and submit it 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.
2. The recipient of the grievance must review the issue with his or her supervisor and respond to the Caretaker within a reasonable time period.
3. If the original recipient did not resolve the grievance, the Caretaker should request a meeting with the Lead School Administrator. The supervisor should investigate the matter, and schedule a meeting with the Caretaker, the student, if necessary, and any other staff members, if necessary, within a reasonable time period.

If either party does not resolve this grievance, the Caretaker should then request a meeting with the Board, in writing, at least five (5) days before the regularly scheduled Board meeting. The contact information for the school Boards parent representative is set out in the contacts section of the handbook. Caretakers should contact the President of the Board with any concerns related to the grievance process or due process for a student. The Caretaker may also contact the PDE.

## **10 EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

### **10.2.2 Technology Provided**

Reach will provide each student with the following:

- One laptop computer per student in grades K–12 with appropriate hardware and software for accessing the educational program and ensure the online safety of students.
- 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.

Note: the most current information can be found in the Hardware and Connectivity section of your school-specific homepage.

## 10.2.5 Use of the Internet

### Internet Reimbursement

Families will arrange for Internet service for their students to attend school and, will be regularly reimbursed for the full cost of Internet service (and also printer ink), as outlined below. Reach will reimburse the families regularly so as not to cause financial hardship for families and so there is no disruption of schooling for the students. The reimbursement schedule will also factor in students enrolled in Reach's various pacing models.

If a family lives in an area that receives limited or poor Internet connections or needs assistance in arranging Internet service, please contact the school.

For students who select the accelerated pacing option or the year-round pacing option which requires participating in the program in the summer, Reach will ensure the families are reimbursed for Internet expenses over the summer months.

Each family will receive a payment for the cost of home Internet costs, printer supplies, or any other supply to support the students' educational programs. The payment will be distributed out three times during the year through a third party vendor, unless this disbursement schedule would create a family hardship. In this circumstance, the family should request an alternative ~~disbursement~~ disbursement schedule to remove the hardship. In order for the household to receive the payment, the following information is provided to the third party vendor contracted to issue the debit cards: name of individual to whom subsidy is being made and mailing address of person to whom subsidy is being made. No other information will be provided to such third party vendor.

### Debit Card Issuing Schedule

Debit Card Number	Cut Off Date for Debit Card Disbursement	Month Debit Card is Issued	Months the Debit Card Covers
1	November 15	December	September, October, November
2	February 15	March	December, January, February
3	May 15	June	March, April, May

Families must be enrolled at the time of the disbursement in order to be eligible. Families who were not enrolled for the entire payment period will receive a pro-rated payment. Families enrolled in the Year-Round pacing option will receive the subsidy for the summer months. Families enrolled in the Traditional and/or Accelerated pacing options are not given a subsidy for the summer months.

### Internet Safety Policy

It is the policy of REACH Cyber Charter School (“the school”) to:

- prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of inappropriate material via Internet, electronic mail, or other forms of direct electronic communications;
- prevent unauthorized access to and other unlawful online activity related to inappropriate material via the Internet;
- prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information
- comply with the Children’s Internet Protection Act (“CIPA’) (Pub. L. No.106-554 and 47 USC 254 (h).

To the extent practical, technology protection measures (or “Internet filters”) shall be made available for all computers accessible by students and placed on the computers located at the School site locations. As required by CIPA, this blocking technology is applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography or any other material deemed to be harmful to minors.

Technology protection measures may be disabled for adults or, in the case of minors, minimized only for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.



To the extent practical, the school takes steps to promote the safety and security of users of Connexus when using electronic mail, chat rooms, instant messaging, and any other form of direct electronic communications.

Specifically, as required by CIPA, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes: (a) unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking' and other unlawful activities; and (b) unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

To the extent practical, the school, through its handbook, the Connexus Terms of Use and its staff, is committed to educating, supervising and monitoring the appropriate usage of Connexus and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, CIPA, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act.

The School will provide age-appropriate training for students who use Connections Academy's Internet facilities. The training provided will be designed to promote Connections Academy's commitment to the standards and acceptable use of Internet services, as set forth in the School's handbook and the Connexus Terms of Use; and Student safety with regard to safety on the Internet; appropriate behavior while online, on social networking websites, and in chat rooms; and cyber bullying awareness and response.

This Internet Safety Policy was adopted by the Board of REACH Cyber Charter School at a public meeting, following normal public notice, on September 21, 2016.



Invoice	141363
Date	2/7/2017
Page	1

# Invoice

**Bill To:**

Reach Cyber Charter School  
 Brian Leinhauser Esq, Board Treasurer  
 750 East Park Drive, Suite 204  
 Harrisburg PA 17111

IA number	Customer ID	Payment Terms		
1909248	0001124	NET30		
Qty	Service	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price
1.00	BENEFITS	January Services	\$27,654.41	\$27,654.41
1.00	ENROLLMENT BASED	January Services	\$456,933.87	\$456,933.87
1.00	OTHER CA CHARGE	January Services	\$15,300.00	\$15,300.00
1.00	OTHER CA CREDIT	January Services	(\$2,435.87)	(\$2,435.87)

*Please note invoice number 141363 on remittance. Thank you.*

<b>Total</b>	\$497,452.41
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**Make checks payable to Connections Education and send to:**  
 32369 Collection Center Dr  
 Chicago, IL 60693-0323



Invoice	141364
Date	2/7/2017
Page	1

# Invoice

**Bill To:**

Reach Cyber Charter School-REIMB  
 Brian Leinhauser Esq., Board Treasurer  
 750 East Park Drive, Suite 204  
 Harrisburg PA 17111

IA number	Customer ID	Payment Terms		
1909248	0001124R	NET30		
Qty	Service	Description	Unit Price	Ext. Price
1.00	PASS THROUGH	January Services	\$30,868.62	\$30,868.62
1.00	WITHHOLDINGS	January Services	\$8,651.21	\$8,651.21

*Please note invoice number 141364 on remittance. Thank you.*

<b>Total</b>	\$39,519.83
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**Make checks payable to Connections Education and send to:**  
 32369 Collection Center Dr  
 Chicago, IL 60693-0323



Charges for the Following Period:

January 2017

**Compensation Expenses**

Benefits - Administration	\$ 7,102.46
Benefits - Instructional	20,551.95
	<u>27,654.41</u>

**Enrollment/Unit Based Charges**

Curriculum and Instructional Support Services - Upfront Fee	37,762.67
Enrollment/Placement/Student Support Services - Upfront Fee	46,648.00
Student Technology Assistance Services - Upfront Fee	35,541.33
Curriculum and Instructional Support Services - Monthly Fee	104,390.00
Student Connexus License - Monthly Fee	56,210.00
Student Technology Assistance Services - Monthly Fee	50,589.00
School Operations Support Services - Monthly Fee	52,195.00
Special Ed Administration Services - Monthly Fee	48,750.00
Professional Development Services - Monthly Fee	3,875.00
School Staff Support Services - Monthly Fee	17,485.00
Facilities Support Services	2,083.33
Direct Course Instruction Support	1,404.54
	<u>456,933.87</u>

**Pass Through Expenses** 30,868.62

**Short Term Substitute Teaching Services** 15,300.00

**Withholdings** 8,651.21

**Credit for Nonbillable Earnings Paid by the School** (2,435.87)

***Total Amount Due*** \$ 536,972.24



## Connections Education provides marketing expertise and services to Reach Cyber Charter School (Reach Cyber).

### Research and Analytics

- Primary and secondary market research
- Data collection, management, and analysis
- Ongoing evaluation of metrics to gauge effectiveness of efforts

### Marketing Communications

- Branding and advertising campaigns, program guides, and promotional literature
- Integrated, multichannel communications: events, email, direct mail, media, print, digital, and outbound telemarketing
- Campaigns to support family engagement and retention

### Online Advertising

- Comprehensive digital strategy including school website and robust online advertising campaigns
- Social media strategy and management

### Public Relations

- Public relations, including national and local media, reputation management, and crisis communications

### Regional Marketing

- Logistics expertise and support for community outreach
- Programs that promote parent engagement and referrals

### Marketing Program Management

- Program management to develop strategy, oversee tactical execution, and facilitate communication

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## Summary of 2016 Outreach Achievements



1. Aired television advertising in 4 major markets - Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Harrisburg–Lancaster-Lebanon-York, and Wilkes Barre-Scranton, reaching more than 90% of women ages 25–49 in these markets
2. Ran national cable in June and August, reaching previously uncovered markets
3. Aired radio on WURD-AM in Philadelphia with 78% of spots running during prime drive times
4. Aired television advertising in 3 major markets in December to support 2<sup>nd</sup> semester enrollment
5. Over 1,600 families learned about Reach Cyber via paid ads on search engines
6. Over 70 positive/neutral news stories published highlighting school launch and benefits, reaching 46 million in circulation and viewership. Coverage spans May (school approval) through Dec 2016
7. Over 1900 families learned about Reach Cyber via ads on Facebook
8. Generated over 10,000 fan actions on Reach Cyber’s Facebook page and over 1,850 page fans
9. Launched a large-scale social media campaign (Going for Gold)
10. Conducted 40 community outreach activities that resulted in nearly 65 enrollments
11. More than 430 families viewed a new “Sneak Peek into Virtual School” video on demand
12. 11% of newly enrolled families attended parent-led online orientation sessions
13. 16% of newly enrolled students were referred by current families
14. Attracted 30,623 visits to the Reach Cyber website
15. Tested and proved the value of Live Chat

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## Outreach in 2017

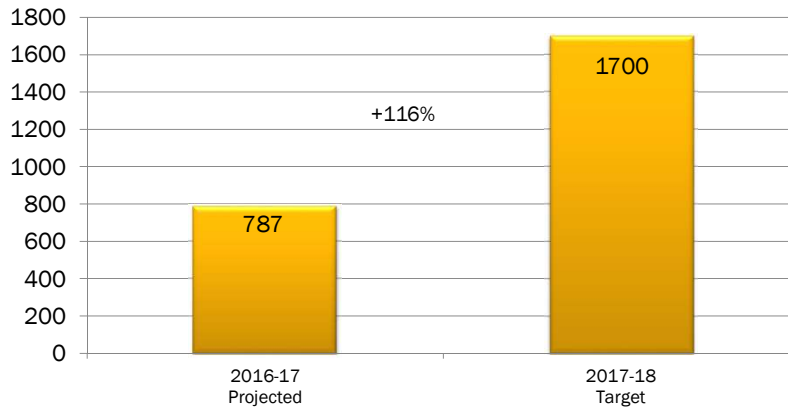
### 2016 Reach Cyber Enrollment Highlights\*

- On May 26, 2016, Reach Cyber Charter School (Reach Cyber) opened for enrollment for the 2016-17 school year.
- Despite the late enrollment launch, Reach Cyber attracted 5,094 inquiries from prospective families, and 1,940 students began the enrollment process.
- Through vigorous statewide outreach and awareness generating campaigns, as of February 3, 2017, Reach Cyber Charter School enrollment is 865 students, exceeding the 787 projected student goal.
- Engagement in outreach activities is positively correlated to enrollment completion, lower withdrawals, and academic success.
  - 83% of prospective families engaged in an outreach activity during the decision process (requested information, registered for an information session, made a phone call, etc.)
  - 21% of enrolled families participated in a grassroots activity.
  - The app-to-enroll rate is 38% and higher than the Connections Academy average.
  - From the start of SY 2016-17, through September 30, the post-enrollment withdrawal rate (4.1%) is lower than the Connections Academy average.

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\*Data as of 9/30/16

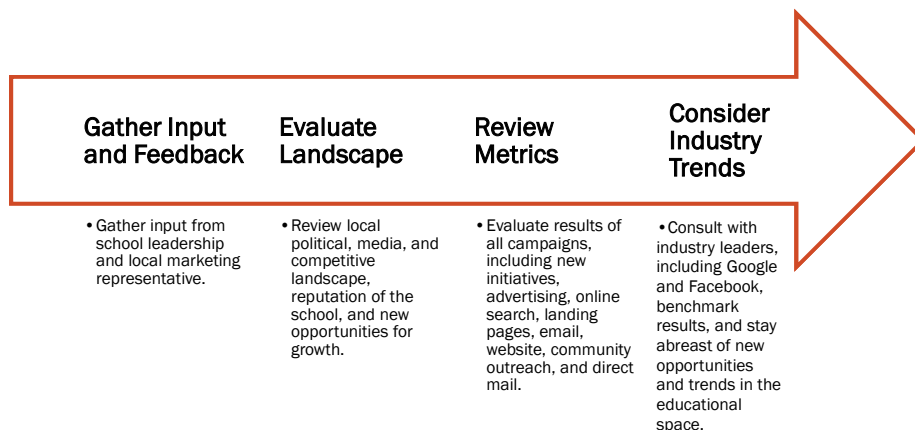
## 2017-18 Reach Cyber Enrollment



- Reach Cyber was projected to achieve enrollment of 787 FTE for the current school year. As of February 3, 2017, Reach Cyber exceeded the projected enrollment by 78 FTEs. For 2017-2018, a target enrollment of 1,700 is proposed—growing by over 116% (913 FTE).

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## Inputs to the Strategic Plan



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## Market Conditions and Media Landscape



- Cyber charter schools continue to dominate K–12 online learning options in Pennsylvania. However, there is increasing competition from district-based programs providing online courses to students as an alternative to cyber charters.
- Political challenges continue for Pennsylvania cyber schools. Education reform is a top objective of Governor Tom Wolf. Governor Wolf is slated to present his budget in February, and the revenue shortfall is now estimated to be close to \$2.8 billion. This makes charter school reform, including funding cuts, a very real possibility.
- Nationally, the media continued its scrutiny of cyber charter schools, though K12, Inc., received much of the focus. However, local media coverage of Reach Cyber Charter School was positive.
  - Local media outlets are most receptive to local student stories and school events.
  - Print media outlets across Pennsylvania have seen drastic cuts to staff, resulting in limited resources for covering all education topics.
  - Outside of the city of Philadelphia, media is more open to stories about online learning.

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Source: [Keeping Pace with K-12 Digital Learning, 2015](#)

## 2017-2018 Marketing Focus Areas



Build Broader Awareness as Quality Brand

- Create a relevant message that conveys quality, delivered through national advertising and other channels which provide wide reach

Targeted Communications

- Engage new families by targeting communications to their unique circumstances, and to where they are in the decision process

Improve the Mobile Customer Experience

- Expand and improving mobile presence throughout each family's, increasing demand generation, conversion rates, and retention

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Build Broad Awareness as a Quality Brand

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## Defining a Quality Virtual School

- Review Connections Education and industry messaging about what is a virtual school
- Develop communication tools that differentiate Reach Cyber from other schools
  - Year Round Pace (K-12)
  - Accelerated Pace (9-12)
  - STEM enrichment opportunities
- Gain a better understanding of families' perception of quality through research and internal surveys

**What is a Virtual School?**

...and how does it differ from other options?

	BRICK & MORTAR SCHOOL	TRADITIONAL HOMESCHOOLING	VIRTUAL PUBLIC SCHOOL
LOCATION	local, public school	home or other meeting place	home or other non-classroom location
CURRICULUM	aligned to state/federal standards	purchased curriculum of their choosing	aligned to state/federal standards
STATE TESTING	yes	no	yes
MATERIALS	materials provided by the school	materials purchased by family	curriculum and materials sent to family — most states provide a computer
INSTRUCTOR	state-certified teachers	parent or other designated instructor	state-certified teachers and Learning Coach
COST	free	all materials, lessons, and curriculum purchased by family	free

Infographic used to educate families on the differences between virtual school and other schooling options.

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## Goals for Spreading the Quality Message via Advertising



- Effectively communicate that Reach Cyber Charter School, a Pennsylvania Connections Academy is a high-quality school where students can get a great education and succeed in life, even if they attend school outside the traditional classroom setting
- Drive interest to the Reach Cyber website and call center during critical enrollment periods
- Maintain a high level of school awareness throughout the state



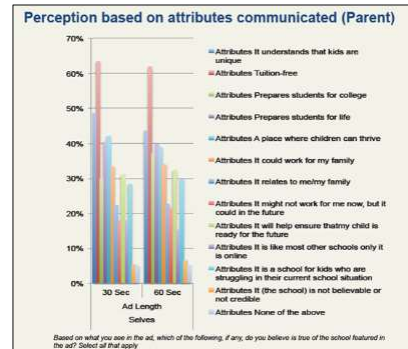
“This could work for me.”

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## Testing to Ensure Message Resonates with Families



- In late 2016, extensive quantitative and qualitative testing strongly indicated that an updated version of the “Two Selves” campaign would continue to drive interest and convey desired messaging points including that Connections Academy students:
  - Achieve academic success
  - Graduate to become productive, successful and socially competent adults
  - Thrive in the school



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## Attribution Modeling Shows National Cable is More Efficient



### Tracking TV – Spot by Spot

- In 2016, each TV spot was encoded so that an attribution model could track actions after TV spots aired – such as website traffic.
- Each action was further tracked to see if it resulted in an information request or enrollment.

### Key Findings

- National cable was **6x more efficient** vs. local television in terms of generating action.
- Most effective dayparts were Daytime (9A – 5P) and Dinner (5P -6:30P),

*These learnings will drive the media strategy for 2017, including a shift towards more national cable. We will continue to review the effectiveness of each ad and adjust as needed.*

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## Advertising in 2017



- Start the season with an updated “Two Selves” campaign.
  - Features new stories *and* incorporates more visuals about virtual school.
  - Maintains positive attributes from the original campaign.
  - By using three versions, allows us to incorporate gender, grade, and ethnic diversity, creating different positive outcomes.
  - Builds on the familiarity of the campaign without risking ad fatigue.
- Create :60 and :30 second versions of the spot.
- Use national advertising for blanket coverage in Pennsylvania – extending presence to previously unreachable DMAs.
- Supplement with local advertising as needed.



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## Secure News Coverage Highlighting Reach Cyber as a High-Quality School Option



- **Showcase student/family** human interest stories statewide.
  - E.g., "Happening Kid: Hunter Rodriguez" - *Bucks Happening*
- Offer Reach Cyber administrators/teachers to media as **expert sources**.
  - E.g.; "Op ed: Recognize and prevent cyber-bullying" - *York Dispatch*
- **Promote socialization** opportunities by pitching media/distributing photos from field trips.
- Explore **speaking engagement(s)** for Reach Cyber principal.
- Promote new hire **announcements** of key Reach Cyber staff.
- **Promote** new WeatherSTEM station
  - E.g., "Forecasting a bright future, Reach Cyber Charter School installs Weather Station" - *WHP*
- **Promote** info sessions, parent meetings, and other events.
- Include Reach Cyber in **current news trends** where appropriate.
- Highlight student/staff/school **achievements**.
- Promote school's **grade expansion** and additional **pacing options**.
- Collaborate with social media team to **amplify school news coverage on social media**.

\* Sampling of 2016 coverage in the appendix

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## Partner in Leadership



- Connections Education advocates for online schools on the national stage.
- Proactive thought-leadership: participation in media interviews, guest articles, national reporter relationships, coordination with State Relations.
- 2016 saw heightened debate about virtual schools in the media: Connections Education was there to promote, protect and defend online education for schools and students.
- Of note: participation in an *Education Week* feature helped establish Connections and the schools it supports as the thoughtful, quality virtual schools.

The collage includes three main items:
 

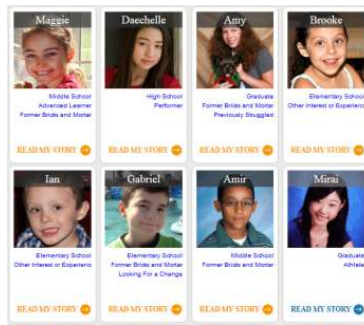
- A screenshot of an Education Week article titled "DIGITAL EDUCATION" with the subtitle "Tech topics and trends in K-12".
- A Twitter post from @ConnectionsEd dated November 22, 2016, with the text: "Putting student success first: Connections Education's journey to improve online learning".
- A news article snippet titled "Connections Education: A Defense of Cyber Charters" with the sub-header "Connections Education: A Defense of Cyber Charters" and the byline "By Connections Education's Jennifer Hill".

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## New Profiles and Display on Website



- Additional local Pennsylvania content will be added to the website, including:
  - Reach Cyber student profiles
  - Reach Cyber Learning Coach profiles
  - Reach Cyber teacher profiles
  - A video featuring Reach Cyber staff and families
  
- Test new website messaging and calls-to-action to increase the likelihood that a parent or student will request more information, register for an event, or begin the enrollment process.



**Sample layout.** Images are not actual Reach Cyber students.

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## Targeted Communications

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## Develop Personalized Messaging

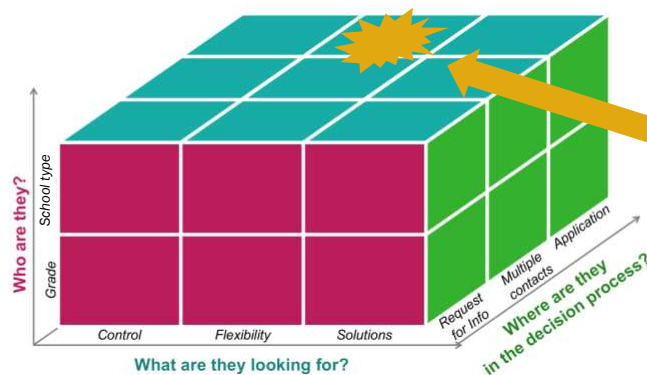


- Collect additional information via website forms and email questions in order to personalize future messaging and type of contact.
- Leverage information we collected previously, including giving customer-facing staff visibility into the family to improve the customer experience.
- Develop, implement, and continue to modify customized-messaging by utilizing data points such as applicants' level of engagement.
- Conduct research to develop a strategy for the unengaged audience.



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## Making Communications More Relevant for Each Family



6<sup>th</sup> grade girl whose parents feel the current school is not able to fully adapt to her skill level by subject area. They are in stage 1 of the application process and came straight to Reach Cyber as an applicant into Connexus.

Allows for grade level focus and engagement.

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## Incorporate New Messaging in Major Communication Channels



- **Email:**
  - “Consider us for the new school year”/ “We miss you” email
  - Monthly email messages to people looking for future years
  - Reminder about key dates
  - Highlight new offerings
  - Targeted communication to those archived accounts who were previously enrolled & withdrawn vs. those who never enrolled
- **Automated Messages (eIVR):**
  - Test various eIVR messaging to determine effectiveness, including a test where enrolled parents record the eIVR messages
- **Regional Marketing:**
  - Promote parties to families who haven’t engaged in the past year by including them in standard direct mail campaigns
  - Host virtual sessions for specific audiences
- **Outbound Calling**
  - Agents share resources, such as relevant blog posts, based on family specific needs

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## Expanding Social Media



- Increase use of **Facebook** video ads for more effective demand generation.
- Launch **Instagram** for increased mobile-specific reach and engagement with our target audience.
- Further leverage **Pinterest** with refined targeting and extensive creative testing for demand generation and higher conversion of interested families through enrollment.



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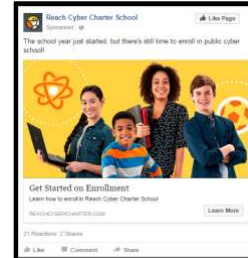
## Online Ads to Inform Families Who Have Already Expressed Interest



- Leverage ads across the Web and Facebook to better inform families who have shown interest by visiting the website or requesting information, as well as families still in the enrollment process.



Facebook Carousel Ad Example



Web Ad Example

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## Text alerts remind families about their event registrations.



- Text reminder sent for all in-person events the day before with event name, city, time of event and link to event page to get more details.
  - Info Session
  - Meet & Greet
  - Open House
  - Party
  - Parent-to-Parent
  - Enrollment Help Session

**Text message reads: "Reminder: Reach Cyber (event) @ (time) in (city, state). Details here: (link). Reply STOP to opt-out."**

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## Automated text alerts engage enrolling families on the go.



- Implemented text alerts in 2016 to engage enrolling, reminding them of next steps:
  - Series of 6 text alerts sent in Stage 1
  - Series of 6 text alerts sent in Stage 2
  - Series of 2 text alerts sent in Stage 3
- Additional “One-Off” Enrollment text alerts tested:
  - Increases Connexus sessions and phone calls.
  - Avg. Connexus session duration is ~5 minutes.
  - Avg. of 5 Connexus pages viewed per visit.
- Expanding usage in 2017 due to successful response.



Stage 1 Text Example



Enrollment Alert Example

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## Engaging Families on the Web



For all of ConnectionsAcademy.com:



The number of inquiries submitted through forms on the website increased 13% in 2016



Direct applications increased 32% in 2016



Rolling Live Chat out to all schools in 2017



Elevating focus of inbound calls in 2017

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## Improved Understanding of Visitor Behavior Used to Enhance Website Experience



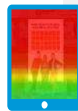
### Session Recordings

Allow CE to watch how visitors navigate the site to better align their interests.



### Click-maps

Allows CE to determine where visitors click most on the website.



### Heat maps

Allows CE to better understand what people actually view to prioritize calls-to-action.

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## Real-time survey tools uncover new family insights.



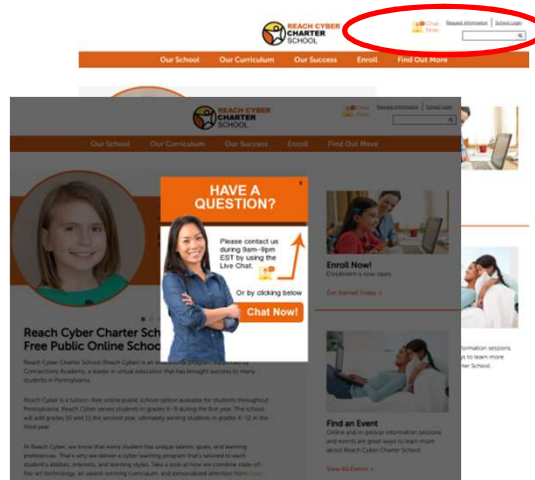
The screenshot shows the Reach Cyber Charter School website. The main content area features a testimonial from Caroline, a Reach Cyber student, with a photo of her. Below this is a section titled "Reach Cyber Charter School—Free Public Online School in Pennsylvania" with a brief description of the program. A survey overlay titled "CONNECTIONS EDUCATION" is visible on the right side of the page, asking "Why are you considering our school?" with several radio button options: Safe Environment, Distressed with Local School, My student has special needs, Personalized Learning, 24/7/365, Flexible Scheduling, Health Issues, Home Support, and Other.

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## Chat option allows families to get more information on-demand.



- Highly visible option giving users another way to interact and engage
  - Piloted in 2016 with positive results
  - Drove incremental lead volume
  - Improved conversion rates of existing leads
  - Rolling out for Reach Cyber in 2017

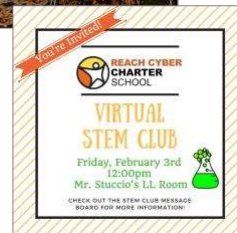


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## In Depth Conversations with Families Where They Live



- Family success stories and community outreach activities highlighted in local media.
- Families who attended information sessions (in-person or online) more than twice as likely to complete enrollment than families who did not attend.
- In 2017, we are planning\*:
  - 41 in-person information sessions statewide:
    - Central: 35%
    - Northeast: 29%
    - Southeast: 18%
    - Northwest: 6%
    - Southwest: 12%
  - 24 online sessions
  - Events, social parties, and Parent-to-Parent sessions throughout the state



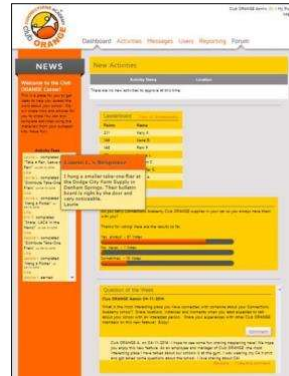
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\*Pending School Leader approval

## Encourage Parent Conversation



- Grow membership and motivate volunteers in Club ORANGE, the parent volunteer program open to all Reach Cyber caretakers.
- Facilitate promotion of Reach Cyber in local communities:
  - Distribute posters, flyers
  - Promote on social media, write online reviews
  - Attend events
- Encourage new family engagement with Club ORANGE families:
  - Invite members to recruiting events
  - Host **“Parent-to-Parent” meetings**
  - Drive visits to **“Contact a Parent”** web page
  - Expand promotion and offerings of **Parent-to-Parent Orientations** (live, online onboarding sessions)



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## Improve the Mobile Customer Experience

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## Connections Academy Blog provides helpful resources from any device.

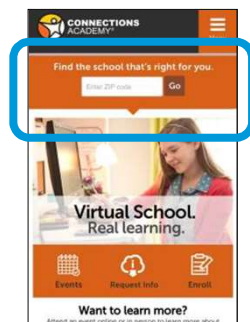


- Redesigned and optimized
  - More flexibility allows for rapid testing
  - Mobile-friendly design looks great on all devices
  - Much faster load time creating a better experience
  - A cleaner design with a more visually-pleasing look

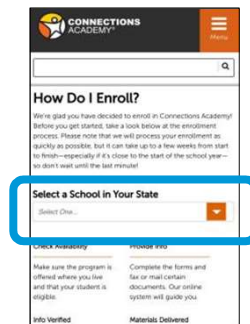


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## Testing Ways to Drive More Traffic from ConnectionsAcademy.com to ReachCyberSchool.com



Moving zip code locator higher on homepage



Adding state drop down to enroll page

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## Efficient Mobile Demand Generation



- Identify through testing the best way to capture families' information through a mobile experience:
  - ZIP auto-populates state/city
  - Facebook login auto-fill
  - Add lead form question: "Why are you considering virtual school"
- Optimize "Click to Call" opportunities for increasing the collection of prospective family data
- Assess testing opportunities to leverage second screeners watching TV spot with phone in hand – show a call-to-action to text for info

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## Click to Call Program



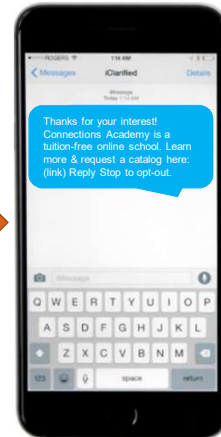
- Strategically expand Click to Call option where it's valuable for families who prefer to call since they are already on their mobile phone



*Families who complete an online advertisement form and call for more information are 55% more likely to apply than families who do not call.*

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## Second Screeners Encouraged to “Text for Info”



**Text message reads: Thanks for your interest! Connections Academy is a tuition-free online school. Learn more & request a catalog here: (link) Reply Stop to opt-out.**

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## Optimizations for Increased Mobile Views



- Website
  - Shorter ON24 Sneak Peek video for mobile
  - Improve page load time
  - More concise content on mobile version of various pages
  - Mobile optimized blog
- Email
  - Specific creative testing to improve response from mobile views
  - Determine placement of prominent phone numbers for mobile viewers

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## Effective Re-enrollment Tactics



- Leverage text message alerts during the Intent to Return process.
- More convenient for families to take action.
- Able to take advantage of “micro-moments” to secure returning enrollment tasks.



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## 2017 Outreach Plan Summary



### Build Broader Awareness as Quality Brand

- TV advertising
- Online advertising
- Public relations

### Targeted Communications

- Email campaigns
- Regional marketing
- Outbound calling
- Social media
- Text messaging
- Website experience
- Expanded use of chat

### Improve the Mobile Customer Experience

- Website
- Online advertising
- Inbound calling
- Email campaigns
- Text messaging

Collaboration – How we work together

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## Next Steps



- Strategy Planning – *December/January*
- Review Plan Detail with School Leader – February 2017
- Outreach Budget
  - The school's contribution toward the expense of the Connections Education–managed outreach program will be determined during review of the school's full budget that will be presented to the board for approval.
- Ongoing Collaboration With School on Outreach Plan
  - School leader will review materials including all communications, email messages, and the information session presentation.
  - School leader to meet with staff to discuss progress toward the enrollment goal, gather any additional local input, and discuss adjustments in tactics.
  - Monthly meetings with marketing representatives to communicate new initiatives, provide training, and share best practices.

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## Appendix

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## Sampling of 2016 News Stories



- Coverage of Reach Cyber **ribbon cutting ceremony**, Sept. 21 – *WHP-TV*
- Opinion editorial by **Principal Jane Swan**, Oct. 21 – *York Dispatch*
- **Interview** with Assistant Principal Michael Hinshaw, Dec. 14 – *WHP-TV*
- **Feature coverage** of student & martial arts competitor Hunter Rodriguez, December – *Bucks Happening*



Weather station installed at Reach Cyber Charter School



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# Memorandum

To: Members, Reach Cyber Charter School Board  
From: Amanda Jay, Senior Director, State Relations  
Cc: Jane Swan, School Leader  
Date: February 15, 2017  
Re: State Relations Update

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Thank you for your volunteer service on the Reach Cyber Charter School Board. Here is a short update on current state relations activities in Pennsylvania.

## Budget

Governor Wolf presented his budget on February 7<sup>th</sup>. His proposal included a modest increased for general education funding at 1.7 percent. However, we have confirmed that Rep. Reese will introduce his charter reform bill this year. We expect the bill to be similar to last year's HB530. We have talked to Rep. Reese about including the measures we found to be favorable from the previous bill including: elimination of redundant technology requirements, use of higher education facilities for testing, dual enrollment provision, clarification on special education interactions, and clarification on the regulatory authority of the Department.